

# SMASH **HITS**



**THE ASSOCIATES  
ANNABELLA  
THE CLASH**

DURAN DURAN &  
BELLE STARS in colour

Hit Songs by **DONNA SUMMER**,  
**FUN BOY THREE**, **TIGHT FIT** & many others  
AUTOGRAPHED DEXYS ALBUMS TO BE WON!





Pic: Paul Slatery

The Clash (left-right): Mick Jones, Joe Strummer, Terry Chimes (standing) and Paul Simonon.

super-reliable Mr Chimes now whacking the drums for them. Whether he's to become a permanent member of the band or stay on wages, though, is still debatable.

"But, let me tell you, it's really difficult to teach a drummer all your stuff when you've been

playing for a long time. When he knows some of it, you're not in a hurry to replace him, I can tell you that. I don't want to have to do that all the bloody time. I'm happy with him. He can dress up in women's clothes for all I care.

As well as re-uniting with Chimes, the Clash have gone

back into partnership with their original manager, Bernie Rhodes, who they sacked a few years ago, accusing him of being less than scrupulous with their money.

"We couldn't find anyone to replace him, that's all," is Joe's

explanation.

But, after he'd ripped off your money?

"That's what friends are for."

And the last new move, the Mohican haircut?

"I felt like looking stupid and ugly... and I'm enjoying it."



# STRUMMERTIME

## and the living is easy

**Well, easier than the last 18 months of Clash History. Topper's left, Terry's joined, Joe's disappeared, come back and had his hair cut . . . and despite it all they're actually making money! Pete Silverton can't believe it either.**

Joe Strummer is nothing if not an honest person. He was talking about what he called "the addiction of fame", the need to be recognised in the street, the love of — as they say — the roar of the greasepaint and the smell of the crowd. I asked him if he only felt complete as a person when he was onstage.

"No, certainly not," he shot back, almost offended and frightened by the thought, "Heaven forbid . . . well, maybe."

Much has been written about how The Clash consider 1982 to be their "Year Of The Body". Admittedly, Strummer has run in a couple of marathons and Mick Jones no longer looks like an exotic creature which only emerges in the hours of darkness. But, more importantly, 1982 has been the year when The Clash faced up to a collection of truths.

After the "commercial suicide" (Strummer's words) of "Sandinista!", their triple album set, released in autumn '80, they've slimmed down their latest set of recordings to the more easily digested — and marketed — single album, "Combat Rock". Fortune has obviously favoured the slimmer one. The album has entered the Top Twenty of the US charts. And the second single taken from it in Britain — "Rock The Casbah" — has become a hit of sorts. They still refuse to appear on *Top Of The Pops*, declining to give the old warhorse an injection of their fresh blood.

But, for the first time since they started, The Clash are actually making money. They're not quite in the Rod Stewart tax bracket yet but they are turning a healthy profit, a pleasant novelty for them.

But, shortly before the release of their most successful album ever, the Clash shook themselves with a couple of distinctly uncommercial moves. Strummer — in an effort to discover whether he could still live without being a pop star — fled to France on the eve of a national tour, forcing it to be cancelled not once but twice. On

his eventual return, the band parted company with Nicky 'Topper' Headon, the drummer who'd been with them for five years, replacing him with Terry Chimes who did the honours on the first Clash album under the Strummer-inspired pseudonym of Tory Crimes.

Strummer shows every sign of being happier for having come through both those little upsets with his band still more or less intact. As I talked to him before a show in Irvine, a Scottish new town, he swayed gently to the music drifting in from the next room. Paul Simonon's "ghetto blaster" portable tape-machine provided a constant diet of South American music. Sambas, mambas, pampas, tangos and mangoes for all I know. The castanets clicked away like cheap dentures. Simonon seemed determined to force this brassy music under the noses of the rest of the band, perhaps using it as inspiration for the one track he'll write for the next Clash album. Strummer smiled and said it reminded him of a wonderful club in Paris, one which was like a set for a 1954 movie.

"I went to France because I wanted to see if you could still get a kick out of life. When you're touring, that's not life. It's so souped up, there's so many things flowing through your mind, you can't appreciate any of them. A town every day. You can't appreciate any of it."

"I was beginning to get fed up with either doing that or going underground in a recording studio for two months, coming out and going on tour again. I just wanted to see if I was still a person. I thought the best way would be to do something quickly, unexpectedly, take myself by surprise. And then just play it by ear. I didn't know what I was doing. I was just doing it. Perhaps I needed a half-term holiday."

It was such a spontaneous jump that he only realised what he'd done on his return. When people asked, why did you go?

"It felt good, good to be

anybody. I mean fame is peculiar, it's definitely addictive. But it did feel good to be like a tourist. Well, a cross between a tourist and a wino. Mostly, I sat around looking at *Sacre Coeur* with a bottle of wine in my hand.

"I was only recognised once but I talked my way out of it. I said that I was a Joe Strummer look-alike. I said I closely watched the photographs of Strummer and went out and bought the same clothes, the same shoes, everything."

Describing fame as "a love affair with your own ego", he admitted that the half-term holiday had taught him a lot about his need for fame.

"Not that it really disturbed me because I always had a sneaking suspicion that it was true anyway. Every time you get up on the stage, you have to be aware something's driving you up there. And it's not just the money. There's something inside you which says, if there's going to be somebody with a microphone, it's going to be ME."

Could you face the rest of your life without people asking for your autograph?

"Yeah, I hope so. I don't know if I could, in fact . . . but I expect I'll find out." Still hungrily uncertain about The Clash's future, he shrunk down into his bulky, battered leather jacket. As he pondered who'd be Top Of The Pops in the year 2000, I looked at his ears, now laid open to view by his savage Mohican haircut. Pointed at the top like a pixie's, they could well be the same set of listening devices Leonard Nimoy used in his characterisation of Dr Spock.

That night's Clash show was efficient in a way I'd never seen from them before.

While it was obviously not one of their greatest gigs — an unlikely prospect in the basketball hall of a vast sports centre set in the middle of a typically charmless industrial estate — there was a sureness and confidence in their performance. Mixing their very earliest material — "Janie Jones", "Garaqeland" — with

their very newest — "Should I Stay", "Rock The Casbah" — they no longer relied on passionate chaos to get their point across.

As the original punk band who've survived to the present day virtually intact, the Clash have incorporated a wide, varying body of songs without diluting their original sense of purpose. A not inconsiderable achievement. And something that Strummer still feels almost violently about. So violently, in fact, that Mick Jones admitted that — although he'd been in charge of the band until the start of this year — Joe had now taken over.

"It's partly ego, partly me, me," said Joe. "And, as in all good power struggles, there's got to be something to struggle against. As long as the music sounds good, I don't give two tosses who's in charge. But, at about the beginning of the year . . ."

"Perhaps I felt there was a danger that . . ." he tails off trying to find the correct, diplomatic phrase, " . . . like, after 'Sandinista', I was looking for the opposite, really. The way I look at it, Mick had his fling with that album. Then it was somebody else's turn."

"But, if the music's good and true, I couldn't care if there was a dog in charge, even Kermit."

As Strummer took charge, he also took in hand the tricky problem of their drummer, Topper, whose excessive living had taken him down paths that made it almost impossible for him to continue with the band. Despite the bitterness he must have felt towards Topper at the time, Strummer remained steadfastly loyal. Well, almost. The official line is that Topper left. I suggested that the truth was he'd been sacked by Strummer personally.

"Well, I told him that . . ." he started. "No wait a minute, the story is he left, don't you remember? He left while I was there, but it that way. He personally took leave of me."

Admirably loyal as he is to Topper, Strummer was visibly pleased to have the