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Clash star Strummer dies

The Clash in their heyday: Strummer is third from left

Joe Strummer, the leader of legendary Seventies punk band The Clash, has died of a suspected heart attack aged 50.

A spokesman for Strummer, real name John Graham Mellor, said the singer died at home in Broomfield, Somerset, on Sunday.

A post mortem examination is to be performed to confirm the cause of death.

Strummer formed The Clash in the mid Seventies. Along with the Sex Pistols, they were the figureheads of the punk scene that put London on the map as the centre of the musical world.

> **"The Clash was the greatest rock band - they wrote the rule book for U2"**
>
> Bono

U2 frontman Bono paid tribute to Strummer on Monday saying: "The Clash was the greatest rock band. They wrote the rule book for U2. It's such a shock."

Bob Geldof - a musical contemporary as frontman for the Boomtown Rats - said he admired their refusal to sell out.

"I know for a fact they were offered huge amounts of money," he told the BBC's One O'Clock News.

"They just said no, that isn't really what we stood for. That's truly admirable. They were very important musically but as a person, he was a very nice man." **The Clash's hits**

Left-wing singer Billy Bragg said: "Within The Clash, Joe was the political engine of the band, and without Joe there's no political Clash and without The Clash the whole political

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edge of punk would have been severely dulled."

The Clash arguably gave punk a classic pop sensibility and their vital spirit in turn influenced later bands such as the Manic Street Preachers.

They were politically aware and became known as champions of left-wing causes. They even called their 1980 album Sandinista, after the left-wing guerrilla movement in Nicaragua.

London Calling
Should I Stay Or Should I Go
Rock The Casbah
White Riot
Tommy Gun
Bank Robber
White Man In Hammersmith Palais

They were anti-racist and noted for inflammatory, intelligent punk songs such as London Calling, White Riot, White Man In Hammersmith Palais and Tommy Gun.

Click here to watch a clip of The Clash performing Clash City Rockers

The band, who also boasted Mick Jones, Topper Headon and Paul Simonon, became huge stars in the US.

Rolling Stone voted London Calling, their classic 1980 album (released in 1979 in the UK) as the best album of the Eighties.

Their 1982 song Should I Stay Or Should I Go was their biggest US hit, and was posthumously used in an ad for jeans manufacturer Levi's.

The Clash had huge record sales, but had signed a deal with their record company that denied them huge profits. They wore this as a badge of pride, claiming it ensured they still kept to their punk ideals.

Strummer led the band until 1986, after sacking Mick Jones. The band released their last album, the poorly-received Cut The Crap, the same year.

Members of the Clash were believed to be considering a one-off reunion in 2003, as part of their induction ceremony at the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame in the US.

Strummer had long resisted reforming the band, and was said to be annoyed that the

Bono pens Mandela song

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defunct group's songs overshadowed his work with new band The Mescaleros, which had more of a world music slant.

Joe Strummer, on the left: Huge legacy for UK music

In recent years, apart from The Mescaleros, Strummer played with The Pogues and featured in several films, including Alex Cox's Walker and Straight To Hell, and Jim Jarmusch's 1989 Mystery Train.

Strummer's family have asked that instead of floral tributes, money is paid to the Mandela SOS fundraising concert, which is aimed at raising awareness of the Aids epidemic in Africa.

The artist had been due to take part in the show on 2 February, from Mandela's former prison on Robben Island.

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