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Strummer's lasting culture Clash

Strummer (left) formed The Clash after seeing the Sex Pistols

Clash frontman Joe Strummer, who died on Sunday, will be remembered for his band's social conscience as well as his great rock tunes.

In the late 1970s, the Sex Pistols may have grabbed the headlines, but The Clash became the more considered, musically intelligent voice of a generation.

Tapping into the disaffection of class and race struggles in urban Britain, Strummer led the band to national prominence with songs like White Riot, their first single in 1977, which included lyrics on how "all the power's in the hands/of people rich enough to buy it".

They attracted a growing following by hitting a similar nerve, with songs like Clash City Rockers and White Man in Hammersmith Palais, railing against unemployment and social inequality.

Click here to watch The Clash perform Clash City Rockers

But the message was brutally honest, not "worthy", and for those who did not buy into it, there was always the damn good rock music.

But the band really announced themselves to the world with the rallying cry London Calling, which went to number 11 in the UK in 1979.

Born John Graham Mellor in 1952, Strummer was the son of a diplomat and was given a middle-class upbringing at boarding school in Surrey before going to study art in London - before deciding that it was a "lousy set up".

He had immersed himself in music since childhood, and his own musical career began

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when he started busking with a ukulele at Green Park tube station.

He played in two bands, the Vultures and the 101ers, but when The Sex Pistols supported the 101ers in west London in 1976, Strummer saw the possibilities open up for him and was inspired to form The Clash.

The band members drifted apart in 1983

The band went on to be firm fixtures on the music scene in the late 70s and early 80s, having 13 UK top 40 hits and, with the Pistols, the Jam and the Specials, producing the soundtrack of an era.

Throughout their careers, The Clash were active in social causes, headlining Rock Against Racism concerts, while Strummer and bandmate Mick Jones were arrested for a string of offences from vandalism to stealing a pillowcase.

The band also broke down musical boundaries by combining punk with reggae, soul and dance.

They worked to break the US market - which they did - but the band imploded after its members drifted apart in 1983.

The group formally split in 1986, and Strummer went on to pursue various brief projects in the music and film worlds.

He starred in several films, such as Straight to Hell and Jim Jarmusch's Mystery Train, and released a solo album in 1989.

Strummer formed a new band, The Mescaleros, in the late 1990s

A short stint filling in for Shane MacGowan as frontman for The Pogues was followed by a period of public inactivity in the 1990s - but he began to rediscover his passion for music when he appeared on the Black Grape single England's Irie in 1996.

While rumours of a Clash reunion always came to nothing, he took to the stage with a new band, the Mescaleros, who were working on a third album when he died.

But it was with The Clash that he made the biggest impact, and will leave the biggest mark.

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