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Last salute to Westway by Joe Strummer's cortege

Sarah Hall
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The Guardian

Joe Strummer, the political conscience of punk, was cremated in a private ceremony yesterday in the area of west London that fired the revolutionary music of the Clash.

As befitted a songwriter who dubbed his music "the sound of the Westway", his funeral cortege passed many of his old haunts in Ladbroke Grove - including the pub, then named the Elgin, where the Clash played their early gigs 25 years ago - en route to the West London Crematorium.

A rebel to the last, Strummer's coffin was adorned with a Stetson and stickers reading "Vinyl Rules" and "Question Authority".

Just a month ago, the Clash's frontman, who died of a heart attack on December 22, performed what was to become his final gig for the striking firefighters - and yesterday a fire engine preceded the hearse in tribute to him.

Among the mourners were Strummer's widow, Lucinda, and stepdaughter, Elize, who were with him when he died at his home in Broomfield, Somerset.

Also at the funeral were his two daughters, as well as musicians and artists he had influenced, including Mark Berry of the band Happy Mondays, and the artist Damian Hirst.

Strummer, who with Mick Jones formed punk's greatest songwriting partnership, led the Clash to worldwide success in the late 1970s.

Recently he found further success with his new band, the Mescaleros.

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