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Printable Story

Clash's Joe Strummer dies

By Anthony Barnes, Showbusiness Editor, PA News

23 December 2002

Punk pioneer Joe Strummer of The Clash has died at the age of 50, it was announced today.

The star – who was the band's guitarist, singer and songwriter alongside Mick Jones – died yesterday.

He had been touring with his most recent band The Mescaleros until last month, rounding off a tour in Liverpool.

The Clash were known for injecting left wing politics into punk and their album London Calling was named the best album of the Eighties by Rolling Stone magazine – despite being released in 1979.

His death was announced on his official website.

Public school–educated Strummer, who died at his Somerset home, is thought to have had a heart attack. Police said a post-mortem examination will take place tomorrow.

A spokesman for Avon and Somerset Police said: "We believe police did attend as the death at the farmhouse in Broomfield near Bridgwater was sudden."

A spokesman for the singer said: "He was just such a fantastic bloke and a pleasure to deal with."

Strummer, whose real name was Mellor, was married with children .

The rock icon was born in Ankara, Turkey, and was the son of a British diplomat.

He had long resisted lucrative offers to reform The Clash and preferred to develop new music rather than dwell in the past.

It long irritated him that the spectre of the band cast its shadow over his solo work.

As well as his music, Strummer also made a number of film appearances, mainly for his film director friend Alex Cox.

His movies included Straight To Hell and Walker for the maverick film–maker, but he also put in a cameo in Martin Scorsese's The King Of Comedy.

The Clash were respected around the world and were a key influence for many bands.

Their early three–chord punk squall of their self–titled debut album soon matured into funk, blues, reggae and dabblings with hip–hop.

Third album London Calling, a double LP, was widely seen as their finest and still continues to be hailed as one of the all–time great rock releases.

The group's fanbase was not reflected in chart positions during the band's lifetime. The 1979 single London Calling was their biggest hit, making it to number 11.

They finally achieved a major hit more than a decade later when Should I Stay Or Should I Go topped the charts after being used in a Levi's ad.

Like McCartney and Lennon, Strummer and Jones took turns in voicing the band's tracks, largely depending on who had written them.

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