

Records in Review

The Clash - London Calling
Epic E2 36328
The Clash - "London Calling"
By Armaggeddon Time

The sticker on the shrink wrap proclaims 18 songs from the only band that counts. That's not quite right. There are 19 songs.

London Calling the Clash's third album is one of the most important and best albums to be released in the last few years. In an interview just prior to the release of Give Em Enough Rope their first or second album depending on where you're from, Paul Simon states that they weren't the best punk band in the world; they were the best Rock band in the world.

London Calling is indeed not a punk record (whatever that was anyway) but an excellent rock album. The energy, passion and anger are still there, but isn't that what rock and roll is all about? The first thing one notices about this record is the sound. The Clash's first album had a harsh and brittle sound. The sound suited the period in which it was recorded but does not carry over into today. The second record, which was produced by the oppressive Blue Oyster Cult producer Sandy Pearlman had a slick AOR quality that didn't fit the band.

For their third and best album they have called in ex-Mott the Hooper mentor Guy Stevens and the result is magnificent. Stevens had long since been ostracized from the British music scene as a hopeless eccentric. This record should pave his way back to an influential position. He has taken the band pared back the sound cleaned it up and added a bit more bottom.

The band members have always been ardent supporters of reggae music and the influence shows very clearly in this record. Reggae has always been very socially conscious lyrically and musically the instrumentation has been sparse. The Clash have always

been political and have learned the art of having the holes in a song say as much as thenotes; they now let the songs run in and out of the gaps.

The album blasts open with the title cut. The song is a call to arms to the apathetic. It tells a tale of war and nuclear disaster. It contains a short bridge of feedback and echoed screams that collapse back to the original chorus. In short it does what an opening cut should: it grabs you by the lapels and demands your attention.

"Jimmy Jazz" is a fast shuffle that opens with phased guitars and pleasant whistling. This light opening is contrasted sharply with the story of police looking for Jimmy Jazz and torture and persecution. Musically the song falls apart somewhat near the end.

The first reggae tune *Rudie Can't Fail*. It is taken in double time and has a splendid backing of muted horns.

Spanish Bombs is another political song. It deals briefly with the Spanish Civil War and then concentrates on the current Basque terrorist war for independence. The churning guitars set the mood perfectly.

The Guns of Brixton is a medium paced rocker with an eerie guitar intro. It describes an IRA type holiday battle and an encounter with storm troopers. With *Spanish Bombs* and *The Guns of Brixton* the Clash have effectively restated their opposition to Facism, which is having a resurgence in England with the rise of the National Front. The Clash have combated this in their songs, interviews, and support of the Rock against Racism alliance.

Wrong Em Boys lightens the mood considerably. It's a reggae cover. The band is plowing through Stagger Lee when Joe Strummer yells to "start all over again". They then launch into a boisterous version of the song complete with a stax-style horn backing.

Death of Glory is simply a good solid rock and roll song with a killer chorus. The most outstanding fact about it is that it is the first rock song since Lou Reed's *Rock 'n Roll* to use the words *rock n roll*. It is a far cry from the hype and posturings of *Styx* and *Foreigner* et. al.

Koka Kola is probably the strongest cut on the album after the title cut. The song is a scathing attack on the vast Madison Avenue advertising blitz and the California cocaine culture. The band picks up where they left off with their earlier *I'm So Bored With The USA*. Even though they changed the spelling of the title they still sing about the "pause that refreshes in the corridors of Power." They even haul Hamilton Jordan into the act, "Coke adds life...in the White House."

Lovers Rock starts out as a well crafted pop nugget. It even boasts vocal harmonies, and could slip into a few AM play lists until a short guitar solo transforms it into a rock song.

The 19th song in this set is *Train in Vain*. Originally it was intended as a freebie in the New Musical Express but it got bogged down in negotiations and was added to the album after the artwork was completed, hence no credit on the sleeve or label. The song is 2 1/2 minutes of pure pop that would make Nick Lowe drool.

London Calling is a perfect summation of the seventies, especially the last half. Not every cut is a triumph but there is not a single loser in the lot either. The album is one of the best to be released in the last five years.

The B side of the Clash's current English single is not available on an album. It too is reggae; a cover version of a Willie Williams hit of a few years ago. (A hit in England that is.) It is a haunting and powerful song with a moody organ intro and a loping rubbery bass line.

Not many bands can release 20 good songs in one shot but the Clash have done so with success. This is a band that will bear watching for a few years to come.

J.F. Butalnd

Folk Collective

The Folk Collective holds its 8th Coffeehouse of the season this coming Sunday evening March 9th, starting at 8:30. The place is the Tarten Room of the STUD (ie. Alumni Memorial Centre next to Memorial Hall.) The duo of Bill Lauf, a singer and guitarist from Vermont and Marc Lulham, a renowned Canadian and Fredericton folkster, who plays recorders, harmonicas penny whistles and autoharp, will be the featured entertainment. These two musicians have recently formed a partnership and cooked up an exciting repertoire of traditional blues, and original material by Lauf. Their tunes and good humour are guaranteed to please everyone.

Meanwhile the Open Stage Night continues each Thursday in the Woodshed (top floor of the SUB) starting around nine o'clock. Musicians are invited to come take the stage for a few songs and the general public is invited to listen, chat, drink a coffee and enjoy the atmosphere. The regular Woodshed counter will be open.

Nitecap

by
Ross A. Libbey

Before I do anything else, I would personally like to thank all those people who submitted drinks to the Nitecap Contest and made my March Break enjoyable. I spent 2 or 3 most enjoyable evenings trying out quite a number of them and testing them out on relatives and friends in Southern Ontario.

This week's recipe is for a drink that looks almost as good as it tastes.

The Pusse Cafe

- 1) 1/4 oz Grenadine
- 2) 1/4 oz Green Creme de Menthe
- 3) 1/4 oz Tia Maria
- 4) 1/4 oz Triple Sec
- 5) 1/4 oz Brandy

These are all to be layered, not mixed, (in order) in a small liquer glass and after admiring the appearance for several minutes (seconds, for those of you in a hurry), downed in one shot.

*Note- If you flame the brandy, this drink becomes The Flaming Flamingo!

**Note 2- Stay tuned next week for the exciting conclusion to The Nitecap Contest.

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Jarvis Workshop planned

Fredericton audiences recently enjoyed an opportunity to witness the unique dance technique of

Toronto dancer, Judy Jarvis following an extensive tour of the Atlantic provinces, Ms. Jarvis

plans to make a return visit on Saturday March 8. At this time she will conduct a modern dance workshop comprised of two classes. The Advanced class for people with some dance experience will begin at 10 a.m. ending at 11:30. The Introductory level, also 1 1/2 hours in length is scheduled for 12 noon and is for those with little or no dance background. Both classes will take place in the Studio, located in the Lady Beaverbrook Gym at a cost of only \$3.50 per class. Members of the interested public are invited and encouraged to attend. Organized by the Maritime Contemporary Dance Company, this day of dance is sponsored by the Recreation and Regional Development Branch of the Department of Youth, Recreation and Cultural Resources.

ARTS UP THE HILL

On Sunday, March 9, 2-4 p.m.
You are Invited to Meet
The Photographers of
UNB CAMERA CLUB
Annual Exhibition of Prints and Slides
Continues until March 16

Also showing until March 12
ENVIRONMENT
Paintings by Robert Percival of Saint John
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