



Passion Is a Fashion: The Real Story of the Clash

By Pat Gilbert

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The only internationally successful, million-selling group to emerge from the late seventies London punk scene, the Clash set out to change the world with a potent mix of politics, iconic imagery, and blazing rock 'n' roll. It was an agenda mirrored in the Clash's music, which swiftly evolved from ferocious punk rock to incorporate reggae, ska, funk, jazz, soul, and hip-hop. *Passion Is a Fashion* draws on over 70 interviews with the key participants in the story—roadies, producers, friends, and fans—and conversations with the Clash: Joe Strummer, Mick Jones, Paul Simonon, and Topper Headon. The first book to give real insight into what went on behind the scenes during the Clash's ten-year career, it charts the Clash's picaresque progress through the days of the early punk scene and their groundbreaking Rock Against Racism gigs, to the arduous touring, to their break out in America, and the making of the classic *London Calling* album, all the way to the band's eventual dissolution and the sudden, sad death of frontman Joe Strummer. Gritty, compelling, and above all authoritative, *Passion Is a Fashion* is the biography the Clash has long deserved.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Former *Mojo* editor Gilbert presents an entertaining, definitive look at what is arguably punk rock's seminal band. For a group known for its integrity and political ethos, the Clash—Joe Strummer, Mick Jones, Paul Simonon and Topper Headon—had surprising origins, constructed and ruled with an iron fist by impresario Bernie Rhodes, a friend and contemporary of Sex Pistols creator Malcolm McLaren. Gilbert charts the Clash's rise—from long days spent in dank, freezing rehearsal spaces—to their descent: Headon's drug addiction and dismissal, personality conflicts, management problems and a bad record deal. Still, theirs is a triumphant story. The Clash bonded with fans like no other band in the late 1970s, choosing to play small venues over arenas, even designing their own fashions. Critically, the band was often vilified, especially for its experimental triple album, *Sandinista!* But, Gilbert shows, despite being called sellouts for signing with CBS, the Clash defined what it really means to be punk by eschewing the trappings of rock stardom, resisting the pressure to write hits and seizing the creative freedom to do innovative things, such as infusing their music with reggae and ska. Sadly, Strummer unexpectedly died in 2003 from an undiagnosed congenital heart defect. Photos.

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Review

"A page-turning look at a band that blended fierce leftist politics with an eye for fashion." -- *Rock Pile*, November 2005

"Fills in [the Clash's] roots with admirable clarity...Gilbert not only does the Clash proud, he does them justice." -- *Village Voice* 7/5/05

"Gilbert breaks some new ground while providing a detailed history of the legendary band from inception to dissolution." -- *Idaho Statesman*, 12/25/05

"Portrays beautifully the fine art of falling apart ...Likely to last while weightier tomes languish in dustbins." -- *East Bay Express* 7/27/05

"Rare and wonderful...[Gilbert] digs deep to tell the story of punk rock's most potent, powerful and political band." -- *Eonline.com* 7/12/05

"The definitive biography of the band ...Entertaining and insightful...A must for die-hard Clash fans...and all those fascinated by pop culture." -- *Curled Up with a Good Book* 7/25/05

"This is a heartbreaking and heartening story of punks growing up and growing old, the real story indeed. Essential." -- *Library Journal*, starred review 5/1/05

"[Gilbert's] grasp of that band goes far beyond stale stuff...A model for all band bios." -- *Illinois Entertainer*, December 2005

"[Gilbert] weaves a blow-by-blow narrative rich in color and loaded with trivia." -- *Harp Magazine* June, 2005

"[Told] lucidly and readably, at a brisk, even pace...plenty of new information...research-wise Gilbert has done some serious legwork." -- *Boston Globe* 5/29/05

About the Author

Pat Gilbert is a former editor of *Mojo*, the best-selling and internationally acclaimed music magazine. He has also contributed to *Q* magazine, the *Guardian*, the *Times*, and the *Sunday Times*.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Leslie Marcellus:

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Peggy Mitchum:

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