

# The Armagideon Times No.4

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*"A lot of people won't get no supper tonight."*

Although we don't think it's for the same reason Joe Strummer intended in "Armagideon Time," a lot of people won't be eating supper tonight. Instead, they will be spending all their money on the rereleases of the entire Clash catalog.

The six studio albums, three compilations and one boxed set have been restored to the way the band originally intended them to be heard. The Clash and producer Bill Price oversaw the mastering of each album from the original master tapes, and even the original album artwork has been recreated in its original design.

The albums include *The Clash (UK version)*, *The Clash (US version)*, *Give 'Em Enough Rope*, *London Calling*, *Sandinista*, *Combat Rock*, *Cut The Crap*, *The Story Of The Clash*, *The Singles and Super Black Market Clash*.

In addition, the boxed set, *The Clash on Broadway*, has been remastered and repackaged.

The Clash's sound has never been better, and it's finally represented in the fashion they originally intended and deserved.

The hype over *The Clash* arose in October of 1999, when Epic Records released the long-awaited live Clash album *From Here To Eternity*.

The album not only proved *The Clash* to be a powerful live band, but it also gave people an idea of how they would sound under the scope of the remastering process.

The Clash might never get back together, much to the chagrin of their fans, but *The Clash* are now back in some form. In fact, Epic Records has

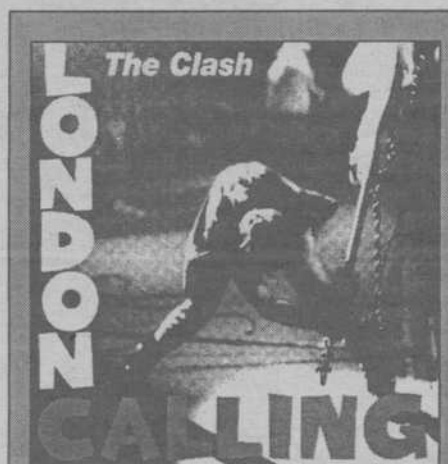
even released the UK version of their self-titled debut. It features a different track listing and order than the U.S. version.

These five album reviews cover some of the most significant work done by *The Clash*.

On their self-titled debut release, *The Clash* exploded onto the London music scene like a bomb. However, it is important to clarify which version of their first release is being spoken about.

That's right,

there are two versions of their first album available now. There's the U.S. version which most people are accustomed to, and then there is the UK version, which is the original version of the album available in the United States for the first time. The reason for this is that many record executives were unsure of how U.S. audiences would react to *The*



Artist: *The Clash*  
Album: *London Calling*  
Rating: ★★★★★ out of ★★★★★

Clash's sound. So when preparing the first album to be released in the United States the track listing was altered to improve their chances with American audiences. So songs like "Proter Blue," "48 hours," "Cheat" and "Deny" were replaced with "Clash City Rockers," "White Man in Hammer-smith Palais" and a cover of "I Fought the Law." Another difference between the UK and U.S. versions is the inclusion of "Complete Control" on the U.S. version, a song that denounces the decisions of the record companies in their handling of *The Clash*.

The result of these changes makes the two versions almost completely different albums. The UK version is much louder and faster and has a more direct message. The U.S. version is equally powerful but not as direct.

So even though both albums have many of the same tracks, the two distinct versions of *The Clash* can easily be seen as two different albums, each worthy of a space in your record collection.

*London Calling* is perhaps the finest album that *The Clash* ever recorded. Taking a slight turn off the avenue of punk rock, *The Clash* combined elements of rockabilly, reggae, rock and soul to create an album that has influ-

enced and continues to influence musicians from all walks of life.

*London Calling* continued to keep in tune with the Clash's views of society ("Lost In The Supermarket," "Death or Glory"), give people inspiration ("Wrong 'em Boyo," "Rudie Can't Fail," "I'm Not Down") and offer political commentary ("Spanish Bombs," "Guns of Brixton"). In comparison with the old version, this remastered version of *London Calling* boasts many advantages. The most noticeable difference is in the sound. The muffled playing and vocals are replaced with crystal-clear guitar, drums and vocals that don't sound as if they are being recorded down a hallway. (You can actually hear all the backing vocals clearly, as well.)

Also making its appearance for the first time as an "official" track on the album is "Train in Vain," which until now has never been listed as an official song on the album.

Originally released as a triple vinyl album, *Sandinista* is by far the most diverse album *The Clash* ever produced. The follow-up to *London Calling* is more produced than their previous efforts. The band uses many special effects with vocal arrangements that weren't evident in their previous albums. While it was a change of pace, it didn't exactly fit *The Clash*'s usual pace. Nevertheless, this album clocks in at more than 140 minutes, a feat more or less unheard of from any other punk band.

At about this time, Joe Strummer was getting into reggae music, and it's apparent in many of the songs. This album is perhaps the first punk album that forged many different genres. Of the different genres represented are rock, rockabilly, ska, gospel and rap. It might be funny when you think about it, but *The Clash* seems to pull it off in convincing fashion.

While it seems they over step their boundaries with a lot of the vocal effects, *The Clash*'s true roots are still evident in spirit. They are still lashing out with their insightful lyrics, but they played around with the message a bit.

*London Calling* might be *The Clash*'s most influential album, but *Sandinista* can provide a stronger foundation of versatility and diversity for *The Clash*'s sound. Fans might look to *London Calling* for initial inspiration to have it affirmed by *Sandinista*.

*Combat Rock* is probably the most well-known Clash album, not for its content from start to finish, but for its two radio hits, "Should I Stay or Should I Go" and "Rock The Casbah."

This album is more of a throwback to the earlier days of *The Clash*. This is a more suitable follow-up to *London Calling* than was *Sandinista*, but it nevertheless shows signs of evolution from

the two previous albums.

While it might lack a lot of the punkish bite of their early albums, the message remains, and it's obvious *The Clash* have moved on to conquer different genres of music.

"Know Your Rights" is a gutsy call-to-arms opener for the album. This "public service announcement with guitars" is more or less a true-to-form opener for the album. *The Clash* always did know how to open an album.

"Rock The Casbah" was a surprise radio and video hit that was more of a success for its beat

than for its lyrical content. Most of the boppers dancing to this beat had no clue what the song was about.

The song might have cast them into the limelight for the wrong reason; nevertheless, they were still there. "Should I Stay Or Should I Go" was the follow-up single to "Rock The Casbah," and it enjoyed success for more of the same reasons. The people liked the danceable beat and, in this case,

the senseless lyrics.

*The Clash* now had two popular radio hits and the fame that goes with it. The world tour that would follow would forever establish *The Clash* as one of the most sought-after and best live acts of the '80s prompting one fan in the liner's notes of *From Here To Eternity* to say: "I'd sell my grandmother to see *The Clash* in concert."



Artist: *The Clash*  
Album: *Sandinista*  
Rating: ★★★★★ out of ★★★★★



Artist: *The Clash*  
Album: *The Clash UK*  
Rating: ★★★★★ out of ★★★★★

Album: *The Clash US*  
Rating: ★★★★★ out of ★★★★★



Artist: *The Clash*  
Album: *Combat Rock*  
Rating: ★★★★★ out of ★★★★★