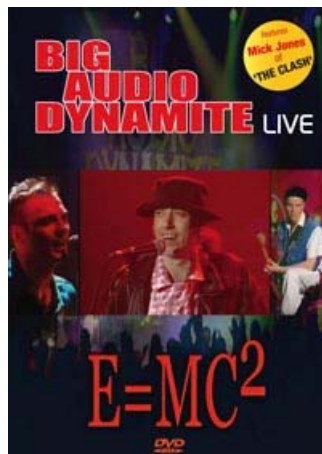


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## Live: E=MC2 Big Audio Dynamite




Guys in punk bands aren't ever happy. After the release of the Clash's seminal **Combat Rock** in 1982, the band's two leaders, Mick Jones and Joe Strummer, had a parting of the ways. Strummer preferred to stick to the punk sensibilities that had given the Clash their credibility, while Jones opted for mixing music styles with his new group Big Audio Dynamite. Since then, a few Joe Strummer DVDs have filtered out, but now, for the first time, a Big Audio Dynamite performance has been released on DVD. Filmed in 1992 at London's Town and Country Club, **Live: E=MC2** is an energetic and exciting set of eight songs from the BAD canon.

Basically this is pretty 'groovy' stuff, with a melodic feel the Clash never had (though I'm not damning them). BAD mixes some great elements (which I guess was Jones' intention when he split with Strummer). Perhaps not as innovative now as it was then, the mix of the beat box and sampling was still a very different direction for Jones. Of the songs, "Medicine Show," "Rush," and "The Bottom Line" work best for me. There's just the right amount of sampling with a good steady groove from Jones and Company. When the band relies too heavily on the samples, as it does on some of the 'older' BAD songs, then we sometimes get groove, samples...and not much else. Jones' voice is definitely distinctive, but it, along with some of the backing vocals, lack a certain strength and conviction.

The DVD ends with a stellar version of Prince's "1999." It's almost worth the price of the DVD to see this, a perfect example of what I like best about Big Audio Dynamite, who know how to get into a groove, throw a few samples into the mix and never take themselves too seriously. I am ever wary of rock music concerts that show too much of the audience singing, dancing...and playing air guitar (God forbid) while I'd much rather be watching the musicians. Fortunately, **Live: E=MC2** shows you a solid performance from a band that seems to be having a great time on stage, playing around, and experimenting with a barrage of manufactured grooves and samples — something that would eventually change the way people listen to music today.

~ Ralph Greco, Jr.

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