

SECRET IS REVEALED!

SUBCULTURE is alive and kicking in a massive derelict cinema.

For the past month, anyone strolling past the abandoned Camberwell Green Odeon on a Saturday night will have heard weird and disturbing noises from within.

Step through the smashed doors and you're inside London's biggest illegal music venue — and what was the underground scene's best kept secret.

As many as eight groups and dance acts appear on stage between 9 p.m. and the early hours of Sunday morning.

by
GERARD SAGAR

There are no toilets, seats or bar. Light and amplification is powered by a petrol generator, sound-proofed in a room behind the stage.

The entertainment is diverse in style but consistently high in quality.

A recent show — it costs £1.50 to get in — featured punk, reggae, freeform modern jazz and African drum sounds from groups with names like Screaming Whistlers, Bronko, Cidsilla Daze and Von Magnet.

About 300 punks, rastas and rock-

abilities were scattered across the cavernous ground floor and balcony. Numbers are growing week by week.

Surrey property firm Robinson Enterprises want to demolish the building and build a petrol station.

The cinema has been empty since jean retailers Dickie Dirts ceased trading in 1982.

But the man who organises the undercover shows — he calls himself Michael J, J.T., or J.B., depending on who he's talking to — wants the Odeon to become permanent.

"The area needs something like this," he said.

"We are making it work without money and building it up by word of mouth."



● Michael J — also know as J.T.

