THE SKIDS
Glasgow Apollo
By Billy Sloan

The recent change in personnel and attitude has done wonders for the Skids. Drummer Mike Bailey, although still a bit rough around the edges, and bassist Russell Webb have added to the quality of their sound, ensuring a rich, polished edge while retaining their characteristic flair.

The band was held in the wrong place, the venue itself at odds with the mood. Dance music in dance halls. It was perhaps because of a collective frugality, a lack of the all-important anthemic vocals, that the sound was flat. Most irritating of all was a light show which made the band look like a hazard, as the band played mostly in the shadows.

What the Skids do now live is large, uninterrupted chunks of hard-driven rock. Six numbers were segued together, delivered rapidly, effectively, with no attempt to grab the audience by the throat and hold them to ransom for future choruses. This works only when the level of excitement is maintained. One soloist in the pack stands out like a sore thumb.

The Skids' use of effects, such as the squelching power bass, has the effect of a tube train passing beneath the building. The hook, without the kids' voices, is a positive let-down. The vocals are crude and bawled. 'Yankee Dollar' is also marred, this time by Adamson's forced keyboards on the sparse intro. Its contribution merely delays the impact, and only when he turns to his chug-a-lug R&B riffing that binds the number, does the song explode.

'O One Skin', 'Out Of Town', 'Dulce Et Decorum Est', 'Hurry On Boys', 'We're So Happy To Be With You', and the as yet undiscovered gem on the new album 'Womans' Winter' mirror the collective Skids appeal.

Screaming metallic guitar, rumbling power bass, Knee-deep leaflets, and non-stop vocal chatter — all purpose hate hymns.

As the band slip back into the frame so the problems will iron themselves out and the enjoyment level will soar. Modern James Last style anemic Celtic melodies single rhythms for dance meetings.

Yeah that's it — Joseph does look like the band's one true soul. Keep smiling.

BAD MANNERS
Bath University
By Fred Williams

If DEMIS ROUSSOS has been born 20 years later, in North London, he would have called himself Fatty Buster Bloodsvees and looked like this overweight, bald, in a white boiler suit, running on the spot, and doing the patter in a tongue that I didn't think possible.

Fatty dominates Bad Manners with a physical charisma which is obviously conquering and yet successful, when he's not stage-flying, focusing the entire output of the other six. They are a very shadowy, sound with substance. Look elsewhere for hidden depth and subtlety. Manners are the Motorhead of the 2-tone sound, and they like it that way. Wanna hear a ska version of 'Monsters of Rock'? 'Magnificent Seven'? 'Caledonia'? Coming right up. Try it for size.

My own interpretation bordered on the cynical for a while, but in the end I had to concede that all they're doing is having a good time the best way they know how.

If other people get off on it as well then that's a bonus, and who am I to find fault in it? You pay your money I suppose. Bad Manners might be rude but there's no damn sense given or taken.

FINGERPRINT
Paisley Bungalow
By Billy Sloan

I LOOKED at the pop charts and saw Kelly Marie, Sheena Easton and Olloway and yesterday's reviews and a rare slice of sad mediocrity by The Jam. I don't see Fingerprint

I expect you're all sitting there thinking the world is a pop combo who are everything you'd expect and that there's a lot better to be. They take chances, all the while subjecting themselves to insinuations and restrictions. For the moment...

DOLLAR
The latest single, "Takin' A Chance On You" On Picture Disc

Cliff Richard
Apollo Theatre, London
By Mike Nicolles

YOU GET a nice class of people at a Cliff gig, a mixture for you on the way out, don't go at you for taking notes, don't discourage you from complaining when you're baring your gums to your seat half way through the show.

Cliff deserves this kind of audience cos he's one of the good guys. Might he knocking 40 on the door but he's got the figure of a ballet dancer and shakes it to good effect. A little bit hackneyed, vaguely fey, maybe, but that's him and you ain't gonna change him. Nice line in threads, too. Glittery tart, shiny pants and a little silver bomber that made an entrance to match his own. And the lights? Wonderful, just wonderful. The sound balance of the nine piece band.

Whatever you think of the boy, that he stands for, his lowliness or his sexuality, you've got to admit that he's a professional which is why he's sold out the best of London's new rock theatres for weeks on end.

The best bit for my money was 'I'm No Hero' where they performed behind a chiffon screen which bounced off all footage of bull-fighters, hot air balloonists and the like. Actual heroes, y'see. Then for 'Deviil Woman' we had the artist as silhouette, throwing classic Cliff. Shapes from behind something or other.

Of course, at times things got a bit silly. Every time he mentioned the title of the new album the fans cheered. Just like Crackerjack, I thought. Then there was a song about Jesus called 'He's The Rock That Don't Roll', which is quite clever.

Towards the end lots of girls rushed forward and some (hopeful?) boys and he got given many boxes of chocolates and other nice things. As I'm writing this I'm in the Venue watching the Yachts. They're from Liverpool and I'm very good, but I bet they'll never be as big as Cliff.

He only gave us one encore and that was the great 'We Can't Afford No More'. The perfect end to a bloody marvellous night. Pity I missed the first half.

Rory Gallagher
Aylesbury Friars
By Phang

Rory Gallagher is one of those performers who "flies with the greatest of ease" through every phase in musical evolution. Last Wednesday he was playing to the people who had followed him for years, as well as new fans, most of whom must have left totally drained physically and emotionally.

The crowd responded ecstatically to Rory's older numbers, which included 'Moonchild', 'Brule Force And Ignorance' and 'Shadowplay'— the latter had everyone up and rocking, in the aisles.

His set has always been pretty lengthy, and tonight was no exception — he has an almost irritating habit of drawing out the end of each song.

The only break he had was to wipe the sweat off his face. — "Back in a minute, I'm off to take some of the cosmic stuff" — wonder what he meant by that?

The length of each encore felt like half the set all over again. "Bullying Blues' rock 'n' roll blues, Rory's face screwed up so tightly, determined to squeeze out as much energy as possible, and then a second encore. The crowd wanted more Rory, and they're going to get it, because he's here and isn't finished yet.

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