

Tanks for the memory

ZAP!: good shot, Eric!



Pix by Paul Slat

MICHAEL SCHENKER GROUP

Hammersmith Odeon

FIVE YEARS ago, I stood goggle-eyed and gaping at the man in the leather jumpsuit and thigh-length boots bent emotionally over a white

Flying V with a shock of golden hair cascading over his shoulders as he ripped each individual seat out of the stalls with every stinging solo. But those of you who share those glorious UFO memories with me would be well-advised to cling on to them with gusto, because it might be all you'll get from Michael Schenker.

Tonight, the same man was

on the same stage in the same pose knocking out the same solos (which have long since lost their stimulative effect) with a thoroughly dull band who seem hard-pushed to produce anything more than average rock songs. I was as bored as I was disillusioned as I peered unconspicuously at the stage through my old copy glasses over a month dark

of the Financial Times, dressed as a rather sorry Alfred Hitchcock extra in a shoddy raincoat, due to Herr Schenker's ban on Sounds folk attending the show.

Yet I'd shuffled along to the Odeon quite open-mindedly under the circumstances (ie an awful new album) and was willing to give the man a fair chance to redeem himself. I

didn't wish to assist him further down the path of paranoia by giving him ANOTHER bad review - but how can I help it when the show his crew put on was so unbecoming?

Basically, MSG are inept. With Schenker blindly and totally ineffectively trying to recreate his former glories by inertly walking the same line, there's no-one around him to take the band by the short 'n' curlies and shake some fresh new life or originality into it.

Derek St Holmes looked hopelessly out of place as he stood uneasily alone at the side of the stage and contributed virtually nil to the guitar department, but he did help the struggling/straining Gary Barden with some valuable backing vocals as the poor singer desperately searched for his form of the first album, while keyboard player Andy Nye served only to give the band a fuller sound which it doesn't need. I preferred Schenker's raunchy approach.

'Captain Nemo' opened awkwardly, creaking straight into 'Rock My Nights Away'

SCREAMING DEAD/ NECROMANCY

Bristol

ON PAPER, a gig that could so easily be an evening for the children of the Damned, dedicated to No Future. In practice, a showing of two bands where it was readily possible to see who was more dead than alive.

Necromancy go from strength to strength, dramatic from the beginning with the diamond-hard pulse of 'Sackcloth And Ashes' and the stop/go fireworks of 'The Crow'. Necromancy represent a true waltz for the witches, and if there's any spark of imagination lurking in record company A & R depts, they should sign this lot up soon.

In a more tolerant mood, I might have found the Screaming Dead to be fun. But as they stand, they've too many debts to pay, from the jagged New York overtones, pseudo-Clash rebel ruses, Zal Cleminson antics from the guitarist and bandleader

That's the crux of the matter. Aye, there's the rub. Their aspirations are of a decidedly dubious nature. In fact, they stink. Echo And The Bunnymen may like you to think they are doing a great service by liberating places like the RSC theatre to rock audiences. In fact, they're doing themselves the favour. If they were honest, they'd confess that it's just one more rung on the ladder to that sort of unhealthy acquisitive middle-class respect that they so desire!

Success to them is continuing their eternal tussle with the bohemian intellect. To them, it's the attitude that counts! And it is this smart-ass sardonic one that they have cultivated so well. Audiences are kept gasping for cerebral breath. A student game, best kept for the halls of residence if you ask me.

Still, you can't say they aren't competent and that's a bit of an understatement. Echo And The Bunnymen played sometimes stunning songs and, at other times, quite ordinary ones. 'Heaven Up Here', 'Promise' and 'All I Want' swooped high above the others. Yes, I also liked lots of their fragile intros but then I got lost in the chiming, swirling fanciful ramparts.

It's funny, I did think they'd be much gentler. They weren't. You'll have to put that down as a preconception. They were resistant and pushing. Assertive in a word. Constantly alert,



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