

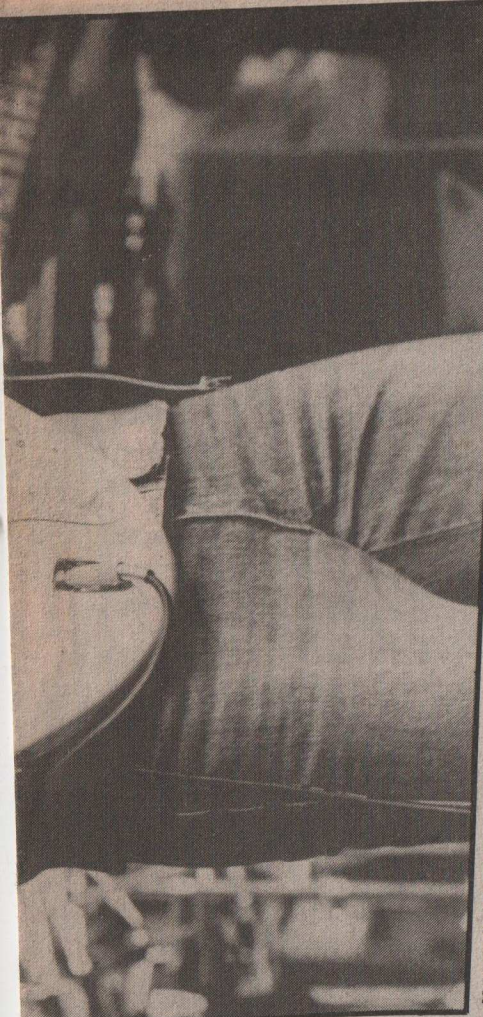
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KANDA BONGO MAN (top left) displays the returning art of the carefully frayed shirt; meanwhile **Talisman** (above) make a bid for the casual fans . . .

WOMAD ASHTON COURT FESTIVAL

Bristol

AFTER THE financial disaster of two years ago, the WOMAD organisers significantly scaled down their operation — but not their objectives — for this year's more community based event.

In spite of many obstacles they had been able to put together a highly respectable bill, but unfortunately, due to a number of other events taking place in Bristol last Saturday, allied to cloudy, windy weather, attendance was low.

Of the local acts that I caught **Restriction** acquitted themselves admirably. They were joined for their set by veteran JA session trombonist Vin Gordon, and the additional brass gave the backing more beef. Now that the vocals department is running more smoothly too, **Restriction** can mash it up with the best of them, while at the same time slip in some smooth lovers by way of contrast. Always enjoyable, and it's worth checking out

their recent 'Action' 12".

After sampling the jammy, jazzy doodlings of **Aguchi** I made my way towards the 'surprise' showing of **Hugh Masekela**. His 12 piece band are drilled to perfection yet still manage to put over the lithe, liquid quality that encapsulates the invigorating essence of African musics.

Hugh tempted providence by starting off with 'It's Raining', but fortunately his vibes were so good that the clouds passed over and the sun began to shine. Most of the other tunes were drawn from the 'Techno-Bush' LP and brought out the stunning vocal arrangements, plenty of chasing Masekela trumpet solos, and some excellent guitar work. Indeed one of the most effective sections of the close on two hour set was the opportunity for the up-front instrumentalists to solo against a mesh of guitar chords. It gave the space and wider scope to highlight just how good these guys are, and the audience greatly appreciated it.

Unhappily **Papa Levi** didn't turn up, but the extra time **Kanda Bongo Man** had was more than adequate compensation. When I saw

Kanda Bongo at the ICA last year it was an exhilarating experience, and the same thing happened again out of doors.

Bizarrely, I can still hear echoes of the Grateful Dead in the trilling inter-play of guitars and the bass/drums configurations, which is an off-beam counter-cultural shock, but the end result is hopelessly irresistible.

After such exuberance the massed ranks of **Onward International** and **Sonido ce Londres** with their brand of Latin jazz seemed a bit tame. They suffered on this point, and by the fact that the power output from the PA seemed weak. Another time for them soon in the future.

It fell to the durable **Talisman** to close the show and they rose undaunted to the task. They mixed old favourites like 'Nitty Gritty' with selections from their unjustly ignored 'Takin' The Strain' LP, and seem to be finding the path that will attract more widespread interest. Good luck to them.

A day that was a bit of a damp squib, but WOMAD still have plenty of ideas that deserve your support.

DAVE MASSEY