

CIRCLE JERKS

VICIOUS CIRCLE Bristol

WHERE A local group attracts some sort of 'biz' interest I try to make a point, as a dutiful correspondent, of checking them out. Vicious Circle have recently had a session with Peter Powell, and at the time I was surprised they'd achieved that, considering they had made few waves outside of the Bristol circuit.

The group used to be known as Face To Face, but they've gone through more changes than that of name. On-stage they've gone multi-media, with a TV set pouring out images, lights flashing in sync with sections of the music, and the guitarist, bassist/singer and keyboards player being joined by an energetic, highly visual 'percussionist'.

What you see certainly attracts the eye, but unfortunately, what you hear isn't so aurally arresting. Most of the songs get subjected to the 'big sound' treatment, burning bright with almost missionary zeal, with gleaming shards of guitar and pummelling rhythms.

As a result, it's like someone who's done the Exegesis seminar, because the soul seems to have been burnt out of the music. The path has been trodden by a Flock Of Seagulls.

I was left cold by the aridity of the territory Vicious Circle wish to occupy. Perhaps they are trying *too* hard, and need time to reflect on whether the implications of their name (and direction) will be a self-fulfilling prophecy.

DAVE MASSEY

MUSICA ELECTRONICA VIVA

Bloomsbury Theatre

SO WHAT'S a review like this doing in a paper like

unwillingness to listen.

Actual 84, the fifth in an annual series of festivals, ended its week long residence at the Bloomsbury Theatre with a prime example of how exciting improvised music can be.

Musica Electronica Viva have been in existence for nearly 20 years now. Formed in Rome, they've toured throughout Europe and the USA with a line-up that was as unpredictable in number as their music was in style.

The attraction of MEV's improvised music lies in the ability of each instrumentalist to react to what his companions are playing, and to curtail any egotistical joyrides he might be tempted to embark upon. In this way, the music is constantly fresh, spontaneous, imaginative, full of life. There was one point in their hour long set when all five musicians stopped at the same time; the ensuing five seconds of silence were so powerful, so tense, so *silent* that you could have heard cells dividing.

I'm not going to make a habit of this, but the occasional airing of views on otherwise ignored music isn't going to hurt anyone. Chances are you'll be pleasantly surprised by what you hear.

DAVID ELLIOTT

PETE SHELLEY/ INDIANS IN MOSCOW/THE UMBRELLA

Electric Ballroom

IT PAYS to be punctual. Just think, an extra jar and I'd have missed the Umbrella.

Opening up (ha ha) with a nifty '60s-ish number followed by the classic *Persuaders* theme, the seven piece combo from Liverpool got the evening off to a flying start.

They've a neat taste in flowery shirts but it would be