

# The Slade Archive : 1980's LIVE reviews

## 1980 - SLADE / U2 / DISCHARGE - THE LYCEUM

Euphoria, excitement, acclaim, celebration - you name it, Slade commanded it tonight, roaring out of the swirling mists of time like conquering heroes returning to their native land. 'Retgression' you scream, 'Bollox' I say, Slade were by far the punkiest band on the bill, but then the opposition wasn't that hot . . .

*\* Review of Discharge and U2 follow which are not really very interesting, but the U2 review concludes as follows: Underneath the glittery surface U2 would appear to be nurturing some severely unhealthy elements . . .*

Which is more than can be said for Slade, who presented one of the most pleasurable hours of job rock it's ever been my pleasure to 'oi-oi' to this year. The atmosphere had enough electricity to supply the domestic power needs of the USA for five years - the crowd was like a huge slice of the Kop 80 minutes into a 5 - 0 thrashing - and Slade fed off it growing huger and more manic before our very eyes.

Honestly, I'd put money on it that this ain't the same band I watched striving rather desperately at the Music Machine last year. It's as if the Reading triumph and the top 50 EP has pumped 'em full of new adrenalin and energy and confidence because the stage literally exploded in a mass of smoke bombs, silly trousers, toppers, bowlers, whooping and a wailing and other expressions of purest glee. I must admit I'd only come to see the old classics - 'Everyday', 'Take me bak 'ome', 'Cum on feel the noize', 'Gudbuy T' Jane', 'Mama weer all crazee now', 'Get down and get with it', et al - but like the old one goes, nostalgia ain't what it used to be and before I knew it I was quite frankly swept off my feet by the sheer hard rocking power of the re-born band.

The new Slade hit with the power of an out-of-control subway train, putting most of the much-mooted NWOBHM to shame. 'Night starvation' is a case in point, possessing more balls than a bingo caller and featuring Jimmy and Dave pogoing goofily along to its punky pace. Other highlights had to include the arms-in-air classic 'Everyday' and the show stealing newie 'The wheels ain't coming down', and as encore justifiably followed encore, the evening dissolved in my memory as a gorgeous celebration of high energy entertainment, random football chants and carefree singsonging. Sham were never this good at it . . .

## GARY BUSHELL - SOUNDS, November 1st 1980

1981 - HAMMERSMITH ODEON

"Here's a number for all of you who don't get enough," announced Noddy Holder. "It's called 'Night Starvation!'" suddenly it clicked: *none* of these people get enough. One saw the whole thing - the identification with fearless macho guitar heroes, the aggressive phallic imagery, the Roger Dean trip - as one big fantasy myth of overpowering ubiquitous masculinity. To be precise, a really heavy scene. Slade however, who made this blinding revelation possible, don't quite fit in with it.

What freak of evolution has turned these jesters of Glam Rock into monsters of HM? Perhaps it was to be expected that all the various practices overturned by the new wave should form some kind of alliance to run it out of town for good. Whatever it was, Slade are onto a good thing, and they know it. Heavy Metal's major weapon is that it doesn't need to apologise; it never entertains the concept of selling out. The more successful a band is, the more "power" it has.

At least Heavy Metal fans make a point of enjoying themselves. I must even admit to a twinge of nostalgia on my own part - those great stacks of Marshall amps, the hush as the lights went down, the red lights winking out of the darkness. . .

And yet, as with all those supergroups way back when, the excitement came before the show and not during it. The moment Slade broke into their first rock blues, the sheer sexlessness froze me into stoical rigidity. I became a martyr to my ears. The only thing that made up for this complete musical de-sensitisation was their undeniable visual appeal; the delightful Dave Hill in a stetson, Noddy Holder's mutton chops, even Jimmy Lea's green violin. But despite this, despite even Holder's unique voice, numbers like 'The wheels ain't coming down' or 'We'll bring the house down' are just vulgarised Southern rock without the raunchiness.

Of the old hits, 'Take me bak ome' and 'Cum on feel the noize' (one of several enjoyable encores) were the most enjoyable. The uniform blandness of everything else was equaled only by the delight and apparent devotion of their new audience.

BARNEY HOSKINS - MELODY MAKER - 1981 (Obviously the odd one out in the hall . . . Why did he bother to go?)

## 1981 - BLACKBURN KING GEORGE'S HALL

**Tonight was a time for forgetting work, politics, reality . . .music. A decade of Slade. A handful of hits and cult status. Keep singing. Four cowboys; Noddy Holder's powerful voice at the helm. They could do no wrong tonight. Oldies, newies . . . songs of no real fixed abode - they were all given an equal cheer. And the coloured lights and the dry ice . . . well it was all really . . .**

**Good old fashioned fun and a collection of memorabilia. Keep spending. All 300 of the fans here had bought something. T-shirts and badges to remember the best night of their lives. And what a story to tell their friends. History in the making it was. Keep Slading. You'll bring the house down on me one day.**

## Alan Entwistle (SOUNDS)

1982 : KEELE UNIVERSITY CHRISTMAS BALL

Ah Slade! The very name evokes memories of the old Radio 1 club, when the world first had its ears syringed by THAT voice bawling out 'Get down and get with it'. Since then Slade have enjoyed the heady heights of super-stardom and plummeted back down into the obscurity from whence they came. Nothing if not resilient, they spent some time in America until their rebirth in the unlikely ashes of Reading Festival. In the 80's, Slade are louder and ruder than they've ever been and more fun!

From the start they waste no time in whipping the assembled revelers into the seething, sweaty mass that is par for any Slade gig. Noddy is his usual mix of Clockwork Orange Alex and the artful dodger. Dave Hill struts and swaggers the whole time, while ripping out lead guitar riffs of a standard that makes him the thinking man's Angus Young.

The real surprise though, is Jimmy Lea. In addition to his bass duties, he finds time to trundle through 'purple haze' as well as a nifty fiddle solo, part of it played behind his back. Dexy's who, John?

At the sharp end, Noddy keeps a firm hand on the atmosphere, pushing it to the edge of chaos, but never allowing it to peter over the edge. As for the songs, well need you ask? Apart from Gary Glitter, very few people can play an entire live set comprised of hit singles. Slade could if they wished, which they didn't. There are favourites of course: 'Gudbuy T Jane' and the immortal 'Get down and get with it', as well as later material, 'Lock up your daughters' 'We'll bring the house down' and so on.

The only time the pace relaxed was during the new single C'est la vie' which is the nearest Slade ever get to being romantic. The crowd responded with arm waving, while those who knew it sang along in tearfully drunken unison, ignoring the beer that slopped all over the floor and neighbours' clothes. There were a few glasses smashed and there were a couple of times when the lighting desk was in grave danger of taking a walk across the ballroom, but the atmosphere never hinted at the ugliness that ruins so many good-time gigs these days.

The encore was a medley of 'Cum on feel the noize' and 'Mama weer all crazee now'. and that was it. But what about THAT single? Back they came, Noddy wearing a full Santa Claus costume and asking us if there was anything we'd like to hear. "You'd bloody better, after I've put this f\*\*\*ing lot on!" was his considered opinion and they went straight into the song. Considering the number of times they must have played it, Slade could be forgiven for a cursory run-through, but that's not their way. Like everything else, it was done with foot to the floorboards. On this showing, Slade are maintaining the philosophy that's sustained them through the last decade: "Make 'em have it!"

Reviewed for SOUNDS by SIMON SCOTT

1983 : LOUGHBOROUGH UNIVERSITY

I HAD a yearning to be right at the front. Defying the crushing mass of the crowd for the opportunity to gaze into the mouth of Noddy Holder.

I wished my eyes could extend out like a little pair of marbles on the ends of stalks to reach deep down inside, past the yellowing teeth, the fetid tongue, the tonsil scars, way down yonder to examine just where that coarse Yodel comes from. There's definitely something lodged in the body of Noddy Holder that could be removed after his death (although some would prefer it done sooner) and exhibited in the Authorised Medical Personnel Only section of some pioneering research hospital.

There, one December day, it would send shivers of terror streaking through the veins of young medics by bawling from its glass case: "*Merrie Christmas Everybody...!*"

Noddy Holder's voice, is a dream (!) topping to Slade's otherwise unremarkable but high-horsepower racket. That vinegar gargle reels off intros and chants too transcendental to repeat, making little sense when not delivered with the sage-like wisdom of the master.

Dave Hill wears a cowboy hat in place of a mortar board and plays guitar like graduate of BBC2's Rockscool. He takes a batch of two-note riffs, presents them this way, that way, back to front, upside down, inside out and laces either end of each song with a grandiloquent yet somehow poetic overkill.

And then there's Jimmy Lea. Watching Jimmy Lea is a show in itself. Kicking his bass. Eating his bass. Playing 'Purple Haze' on his bass. Jumping all over the PA. Leaving, then returning for a delectably oafish violin solo.

Slade are a perfectly rounded entertainment. A celebration of the ritual in pop-rock (with all the narrow boundaries that that glib category implies). Slade neither stretch nor contract into anything above or beyond their immediate selves. Thoughts of their potential metaphysical resonance are dulled when they start chucking bog rolls. There is a kind of excitement: the controlled kind. Like a box of safety matches, Slade are inflammable but not dangerous. Not that they need to be. The Streamers are thrown back and forth. Arms are raised. 'You'll Never Walk Alone'. The building seems to move. I was lounging on the balcony and the sea of hands below took on the eerie to-and-fro motion that the carpet had the last time I was seriously drunk (August 3rd 1978). But this time, I didn't throw up.

REVIEWED BY MICK SINCLAIR FOR SOUNDS.

1983 : LOUGHBOROUGH UNIVERSITY *"Reviewed" by David Quantick for the NME (a paper not renowned for having any sense of humour whatsoever).*

**'MAMA WEER ALL CLISHAYZ NOW'**

Here they are again, being famous. With 'My oh my' doing well, 'Merry Xmas everybody' pottering about, and with royalties from Quiet Riot's 'Cum on feel the noize', Slade ought to be looking like an interesting band. Unfortunately, Slade have a dogged determination to be as ordinary as possible.

Tonight their audience was made for them; a collection of cider-filled students in the worst of 1978 fashion, they were old enough to remember Slade's golden days and tasteless enough to appreciate the drivel that Holder, Hill and co now turn out. So tasteless that the cheers for 'We'll bring the house down', that unfulfilled brikkies promise, were louder than those for 'Take me bak 'ome', 'Mama weer all crazee now' and the like.

In the 1970's Slade's combination of melody, the Holder voice and a rocky stance made for a mad thunderous record with a bright red label. Nowadays, they're content with an extremely sane thunderous noise.

There is a kind of poetry about something like Merry Xmas everybody (the descending chords and the despairing vocals gave lines like 'Does your granny always tell you that the old songs are the best?' a good pop grace. But put that next to 'Lock up your daughters' (which sounds like a song about locking up your daughters and is a bout as interesting as mucking out your hamsters)

or the atrocious 'A night to remember' and you have got to get down on your knees and thank the good lord that you never had the slightest desire to see Slade do an evening of bad heavy metal. Take me back home.

1982 HAMMERSMITH ODEON - 'HOLDER HOLDS ON'

As the house lights dimmed the stage exploded and the early seventies on eight legs took the stage at the Hammersmith Odeon. Noddy Dave, Kim and Don. Remember the hats? The suits? The platform boots?

Somewhere along the line Slade have been caught up in the heavy metal movement, but with the exception of re-hashed Whitesnake riffs in the shape of 'Lock up your daughters', the link is a weak one. Admittedly, the Slade patches can be caught rubbing uncomfortably frayed edges with the Sabbath and Rainbow ones, but you can't judge a market by a bikers back.

No, beneath the wailing guitars and pounding drums is a pop band. Give it a few years and I can see the SingalongaSlade albums in the party favourites section in your local record shop.

From the second they took the stage the crowd were with them, and every number precipitated frenzied audience reaction. They must have been doing the same act for years now.

Jimmy Lea is an absolutely masterful entertainer and bass player, and still knocks out one of the best rock and roll violin behind his head, under his elbow, between his legs. And he didn't miss a note. Dave Hill storms the stage looking - caricature of his former self. His slightly overweight body is squeezed uncomfortably into a one piece leopard suit, with feet perched menacingly in a stacked pair of white cowboy boots. A hat secure on his head for the majority of the gig, but when one of the two models who joined the band onstage for one number took it off, it sent him diving for a re-claim as his bald patch was there for all to see. Still, it doesn't matter Dave - we still love you. Or "Go on, Dave, you ugly bastard!" as one fan behind me exclaimed.

Slade haven't got anything new to offer, but they can still get on stage and deliver. While everyone reminisces about the time the Stones, The Who and Quo have remained together, just remember this lot have been without a single lineup change for over 12 years. Let's wait and see if todays pop darlings are still delivering in the 90's. Somehow, I think Slade will be.

TONY HORKINS - SOUNDMAKER, January 8th 1983.