

Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2016 REVIEW: Bad Manners at The Biscuit Factory ****



Those who read my ramblings on these pages (and I thank you both) may be aware of my love of ska music. So when one of the leading purveyors of this music genre of the last forty years took his band to Edinburgh on Friday night, the opportunity to go and see the legendary Bad Manners was one not to be missed – particularly as the venue was an unusual setting – the Leith Biscuit Factory, once used by Crawford's biscuit company and but a ten-minute walk from where I live.

Bad Manners joined Kansas Smitty's, London's favourite jazz and julep bar, for one night only on Friday. Until Sunday 28th August, Kansas Smitty's has teamed up with Alba Events and legendary bourbon brand, Jim Beam, to take over the ex-industrial space of Leith's Biscuit Factory and bring something entirely new to the Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

Buster Bloodvessel (real name Douglas Trendle) has fronted Bad Manners since 1976 and while band members have come and gone during these four decades, the band's popularity is as huge as ever. Fans know what to expect when they go to a Bad Manners gig – an almighty ska music knees-up from start to finish. The ebullient Buster is fast approaching 60 years old but his boundless enthusiasm remains the same as always.

Bad Manners have had a string of hits over the years and all the old favourites were belted out with the infectious enthusiasm we have come to expect from Buster and the boys. Starting off with *This is Ska*, the fans were treated to all the band's hits such as *Lorraine*, *Walking in the Sunshine*, *My*

Girl Lollipop, Can't Take My Eyes Off You and Special Brew and others. The 80-minute set came to end with *Lip Up Fatty* and the *Can-Can*. The size of the venue may have contributed to the less than perfect acoustics but it was still an enjoyable gig.

The kings of ska, Madness, performed a memorable set at Edinburgh's Corn Exchange a couple of weeks ago. Bad Manners have always been somewhat in the shadow of Suggs and co. but their performances over the years have never failed to disappoint. Friday night was no exception.

Edinburgh Reporter Review: ****