

Spear of Destiny/Skids live The Queen's Hall

The Queen's Hall is packed out on a rain-soaked December night before the first act takes the stage.

The Thames television indent from the 1970s followed by The Sweeney theme introduces Spear of Destiny, their opener Land of Shame is a Mott the Hoople style rocker complete with a hooky soulful sax riff. It's followed by Rocket Ship a more intense anthem with a killer chorus. It's not hard to see why the band have a solid cult following that spans generations.

My 13-year-old son, who is not easily pleased, thought they were excellent. Kirk Brandon's voice soars on Rainmaker and the band creates a vibrant atmosphere while reminding us that the 1980s produced some solid post-punk bands whose work still stands up today and for a new audience. Perhaps the band's best-known song remains the 1987 single Never Take Me Alive, the haunting Top Twenty hit has lost none of its potency.

Neither it would seem has the Skids front-man Richard Jobson who never stops moving around the stage from the moment he steps on it. Celebrating the 45th anniversary of their Days In Europa album they begin with Animation, the crowd sing along to every word and the front rows of the Queen's Hall begin to sway.

Connor Whyte does a stellar job recreating the late Stuart Adamson's iconic guitar parts. Jobson pays tribute to his old friend and bandmate at various points during a super-charged evening brimming with untamed passion. The spiky riff of Charade kicks off another anthem that gets the floor bouncing

immediately. I remember finding my uncle's white vinyl seven-inch of the band's hit (one of many) Into The Valley and was hooked.

The ambitious punk rock power remains yet it's strange to think the Skids, one of Scotland's most influential bands, were largely forgotten for many years. As Jobson points out tonight, it wasn't until U2 and Green Day covered The Saints Are Coming that he took a deeper look at his old band's legacy. Today he keeps it alive with aplomb; the Saints Are Coming still sounds like a cross between a Catholic hymn and a terrace chant.

If the pulse in the room and reaction tonight in Edinburgh are anything to go by then both of these bands are finally getting the credit they deserve.



Photo Richard Purden



Richard Jobson PHOTO Richard Purden