

Rollin` Clones at the Barn

So, where do YOU stand on the Beatles v Stones controversy? This was a frequently-asked question for teenagers in the sixties and, for me, at least, it was always the Liverpool lads who held sway. The Rolling Stones were fine in their raucous way but seemed to me to lack the range and subtlety of the Beatles.....

Well, times change and Barn audiences have had the opportunity in the past 18 months to sample tribute bands for both supergroups. In December 2001 we had a splendid Beatles tribute band who faithfully created the magic sound with wonderful renditions of all the classics right through from Love Me Do to Let It Be. A great success for the Theatre: so follow that, The Rolling Clones!

Well, from the start of their show at the Barn on February 8th it was clear that they had got the sound right as the base and guitar was just like listening to the record as they played the intro to "Start Me Up". But the real test would surely be the singer for who could replicate the Stones' one-and-only frontman Mick Jagger?

But then on pranced the "Mick Jagger" - for it was surely him in his prime with the voice, the hair, the clothes and the style to take the show to a different level.

Has any one performer ever produced such an energetic, charismatic show on our well-trod stage? His patter and personality never once fell out of character as he led us through a succession of the Stones' greatest hits: Hey You Get Of My Cloud! was followed by 19th Nervous Breakdown and by the time we reached Let's Spend The Night Together there was hardly a soul in the auditorium not singing and

chanting along. Not just the words - when "Jagger" pointed the mike we responded - even to the extent of sheep and chicken noises during Not Fade Away! -

The other numbers during a splendid first half were the wistful Waiting On a Friend, the brilliant sing-along Ruby Tuesday and the bluesy Little Red Rooster, this featuring slide-guitar from "Brian Clones".

There were more great hits to follow in the second half: Gimme Shelter, You Can't Always Get What You Want, Street Fighting Man, Tumblin' Dice - so many of the rocking favourites that had been partially forgotten but, with time moving on, the audience on its feet, singing and dancing happily, you knew that not all the favourites could be included.....Then came Brown Sugar with its so-familiar intro and almost-as-familiar outro before a change of tempo for Miss You gave way to The Last Time. That's all shouted Jagger but we we knew there 'd be more: we may have had satisfaction but we hadn't yet had Satisfaction!

Sure enough back came Jagger and the band launched into this and finally Jumpin' Jack Flash to leave the audience demanding more.

This was a show that will remain long in the memory of everyone lucky enough to be present and, when the Rollin` Clones return to the Barn - as their audience here will surely demand - make sure you book early! you would not want to miss Charlie Rocks on drums, William Wy-eyman, Brian Clones, Ronnie Woodbine, Keith Rip-off and especially "Mick Jagger".

Beatles v The Stones? Yes it's still the Beatles for me. But Beatles v. The Rollin Clones - well, now I'm not so sure.....

Glenn Gershkoff

Carnival Capers

Always one of our very successful fundraising events of the year when we go away from the theatre and out in to the community to do our bit for the Oxted Carnival, sometimes entering a float and generally having fun and raising funds too.

In 1998 we were approached by the organisers, The Round Table, to run the tea tent as they had no one else prepared to do so. Daunted but unbowed we took on the challenge and the result was a magnificent tea and cakes stall that drew queues of customers. With over 900 cakes large and small, made by you our supporters, we made lots of money for the Barn 2000 project and obviously provided a most welcome service to the Carnival visitors. The following year and now with the benefit of experience we were pleased to be asked to repeat our efforts. However the next year we were asked if we would now do something different as the Tablers' wives had seen our success and wanted to do it themselves!!! Where had these people been before? The bar had been a flop the previous year and perhaps we would take that on instead, we refused as our licence at the Barn is static and cannot be taken around with us. We had taken on the tea tent at their express request so could see no reason why we should we move over to allow others to benefit from our success of the previous years particularly as we had personally invested much money into improving equipment especially for this event each year.

Reluctantly we were allowed to continue for 2001 but last year they tried to move us again and only by paying an increased and penal site rent much above what other stall holders were asked for were we able to serve our public, who expect to see us there now and clamour for our home made produce. We were told then, that this year 2003, they may well employ a commercial operator to provide the tea and cakes stall as they can demand an even higher site rental from them - what has happened to the willing wives and the deemed support for the community and local charities that is the essence of the Carnival we wonder????

As one of the oldest established groups in the area (since 1924 and older than the Round Table) and now a most active local charity (ie. not part of a national group) we are one of the groups the carnival is supposed to support and yes we received a donation in 1998 towards Barn 2000 for which we were extremely grateful. But we are great believers of self help and that is what our fundraising is about.

The management team for the carnival may well have changed this year, at the time of writing we do not know nor can we be sure of the policy that will be adopted. We hope to be there again, supporting the community and be assured your cakes and support will be called upon if we are allowed to do again what we have proved we are good at. If there is a problem again we shall take the debate to the Trustees of Master Park, the committee of the National Round Table and also put it in the public domain. We do hope that that will not be necessary and look forward to seeing you there on July 5th.

Bruce Reed