

THE SCOTSMAN
Thursday, 19 September 1996



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SCOTLAND'S NATIONAL NEWSPAPER

The Bhundu Boys
Cottier Theatre, Glasgow

Sue Wilson

A DOUBLE bill of worldbeat dance sounds, part of the Cottier's diverse Beamish Red Music Week programme, this Latin/Zimbabwean gathering proved a popular draw.

In the warm-up slot, Edinburgh's eight-piece Salsa Celtica - half Latin emigres, half local enthusiasts - quickly turned on the heat with their hard-driving beats and muscular wall of brass, the bass thudding softly against your sternum as the lead acoustic guitar skittered and scattered its rhythms around the tunes, now warm and rounded, now crisply dry and brittle.

Bursts of staccato vocal harmonies, by turns yearning and exultant, thickened the solid, surging mix still further, along with plenty of solo pyrotechnics from sax or trumpet and the occasional sensuously lyrical slow number. The whole achieved the authentic balance between crotch-level earthiness and sophisticated glamour.

The Bhundu Boys have won themselves plenty of friends in Scotland over the years, and once again proved why, the tumbling grooves and rapid-fire guitar licks of their trademark Jit-Jive sound soon filling the dancefloor to capacity.

The beats seem to take on their own hypnotic, unstoppable momentum, but the band rang plenty of subtle, loose-limbed changes over the set.

Their cover of the country classic *Ring of Fire* came over as something of a novelty item, but was nonetheless engaging for that. The Boys have had to recover from their share of hard knocks in recent years, losing several members to AIDS, but last night confirmed that their pals up here are still cheering them on - and deservedly so.