

SOUNDS CHECK



Bhundu Boys still impressive

By Viv Maravanyika

IF one has to be absolutely objective, most concerts are predictable and, well, boring. The audience's response changes gradually as the show gallops on — not because the music is getting better — but it's to do with the brown and green bottle. regret.

There are others, for instance, who hide behind well choreographed dances and slick garb. But that's all about it. The music is hidden behind that facade. After a night of being bombarded by their music, you will be some kind of "wunder kid" to remember a single song.

Then there are others who let their music do the talking or rather make you do the dancing as it were. But the problem is that these bands or musicians do not come so often.

Well, I am glad there is still The Bhundu Boys, who fit in this genre. Having last seen them quite a couple of years back, I went to their concert at Harpers last Tuesday.

The calibre of the past members of the band can easily show that nothing short of a classy mu-

sician is accepted. Is there any other band that has managed to attract a crop of bassists of such finesse as that of The Bhundu Boys?

All of them had distinctive features, but which still reflected the true character of the "boys". Shepherd Munyama, Franco Kanda and David Mankaba, are all late. They all left their indelible marks on the band. The present bassist, Washington Kavhayi, is still carrying the torch.

But don't be fooled by the way he easily fits into the repertoire, because he is a former member of The Bhundu Boys. On Tuesday night, Rise Kagona, the band leader, chronicled the history of the outfit to me. It's too complicated to repeat here.

Back to the Harpers business. The Bhundu Boys were a powerful reminder that within the broad confines of Zimbabwean music, magic is still possible. It's remarkable, if one is resourceful, to note how much can be derived from this band.

Others who were featuring in the line-up, Gordon "Chamboko" Mapika on drums and keyboard wizard, Henry Ma-

timba, warmed up the evening tagging along the trademark high-energy guitar playing of Rise. But the rhythms remained wonderfully subtle.

Though the setting at the nightclub was a far cry from their usual scenario, they gave their best. Of course, you know The Bhundu Boys' music is all about being happy. Their usual sprinkle of a tourists audience and a sizeable number of local die-hard fans got a bit of fun although the time was just too short. Otherwise we heard only very few of our favourite tunes.

Some of the songs that we heard include Jekanyika, Chokudya Chose, Radio Africa, a mega mix that had Simbimbino and Chitima, Pombi and a whole host of new ones.

It wouldn't hurt if other musicians go and watch The Bhundu Boys, a few but well-meaning tricks of the trade could be learnt.

And for music fans who don't mind an evening of great fun, this is for you. I am told they are still around town, miss them and you will be doomed to an eternity of regret.