

Talent without fame

HAVE YOU ever heard of Paul Clingman, Edi Nederlander, Brian Bebbington or John Clegg? If you have, then I guarantee you are in the minority—and it is a pity because it shows South Africa's lethargic deafness to our own, promising musicians.

I have mentioned only a few. How about Lynn Dawson, the Casaloma Brothers, Richie Morris, Sipho Mchunu, Jeriam Bhana, Ian Lawrence or Mel Miller?

However, I cannot blame the public entirely for this poor state of affairs.

I was speaking to David Marks, chairman of SAFMA (South African Folk Music Association) the other day, and he waxed eloquent on the subject, slating the business attitudes of record companies into the bargain.

He said: "They are trying to dictate a commercial pace that is not every musician's cup of tea."

But, as I tried to point out to David, he may be surprised at the changing attitudes of some record companies these days. He may find they are more inclined to give their support to "music" for talent's sake than they ever were in the past.

After all, trends are changing so fast that perhaps, aesthetics aside, this type of indulgence will be a gamble worth taking.

But getting back to the subject of whose fault it is, there comes a point when promising musicians have to take a long, hard look at their own attitudes to the fame-game. Do they really want recognition badly enough to put themselves out to get it, or are they content to groove along on their music alone — like Mike Dickman, for example, who is picking berries somewhere along the coast, with only his songs for company?

Mike is not the only culprit. There are so many others opting-out. I think our solution probably lies midway between public and musician, with the record companies acting as mediators. We also depend on people like David Marks to

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bring them all together.

He mentioned his next "Free People's Concert" to be held at Wits on Republic Day. He said: "I hope these festivals make people more aware. It is also a get-together for musicians and intended to create an interest in the songs of today."

"It is a great pity that our musical roots only go as deep as the grooves of last week's imported album. I want, more than anything else, to see our local singers make it. They must just be recognised as musicians — they don't neces-

sarily have to make money out of it all."

We can argue the point indefinitely and find wrong on all sides. However, if any of the artists I have mentioned here stir up patriotic enthusiasm, go along to Wits at about 11 am on Wednesday. They will all appear at some time during the day so you will have your chance to get acquainted.

There are others I have not mentioned—Cornelia and Kevin Hinds, Richie Morris, Ahmed Mukhtar, South Country Band and the poet, Mike Dues.

Hear them at Wits



BRIAN BEBBINGTON



EDI NEDERLANDER



PAUL CLINGMAN



MIKE DICKMAN