

go well "Skinheads were associated with aggro, reggae, heavy right wing politics and football violence all that not good stuff, I said to the manager 'you haven't thought this through' so we were booked to play those gigs. I think that's were Noddy learnt to banter with the audience, all the while we were thinking 'how the bloody hell are we going to get out of this alive?'"

So Slade caught the Glam bus and this is why, I think, only reason that they don't occupy the same status in rock history as the other midland legends such as Black Sabbath and Led Zeppelin. The glam rock affections, the glitter, the boots, the capes, the hats were never really worn with conviction by the band themselves – the androgyny and mystery that made Glam Rock weird and exotic in Marc Bolan and David Bowie, in the hands of four, straight, working class men from the midlands became silly and fancy dress. Also the brief stint of naming their singles like a fourteen year old girl with a head injury 'Coz I Luv You' 'Mama Weer All Crazee Now' and 'Skweeze Me, Pleeze Me' while fun at the time, doesn't exactly look good in retrospect. When I ask Jim about it he's very dismissive, as if it doesn't bother him; "Whatever it was, it happened. But even our smallest top twenty hit was massive. Noel Gallagher often says how much of an influence we were - people often say they sound like the Beatles but I think they sound like us".

During the early years, being asked to come in and record for the BBC was a massive privilege according to Jim. "Live we feared no man. For three years we'd been playing any gig that would have us, by then we were down to muscle, no fat left on us at all. It was a great band to be in from that point of view, but records never really did us justice, never really capture us". Back then of course the BBC, being the respectable institution that it was, must not have known what to make of this sweaty, working band who complained that the carpet muffled the stamping parts of the songs until the technicians got them a door. 'The BBC sessions were recorded on ancient equipment, Dan Dare type stuff with valves and tubes, and you thought Ming the Merciless was going to walk in. No stereo just a massive speaker that they mixed it on.'

As far as musical respectability Slade have always been victims of their own success. They will never be remembered as the great musicians, or terrific songwriters that they were. The BBC sessions are a great historical document, not only of a hardworking band at their best, but of a band stripped of the gimmicks just making the music they love.

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