

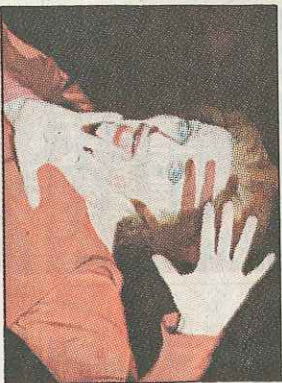
ALASTAIR MUIR

clarity, Mark Padmore's incomparably eloquent Orpheus was no less telling.

Six members of the London Sinfonietta under Ryan Wigglesworth faithfully delivered an acerbically expressive instrumental commentary.

A companion piece, Semper Dowland, Semper Dolens, set the mood with Birrwistle's elegiac recasting of seven pavanes by the Elizabethan composer. The minimal choreography allowed the dancers, comely and fluent as they were, tested one's forbearance, as I'm afraid did the unvaried pace and mood of this 40-minute sequence.

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Eurydice: Elizabeth Atherton

POP

SKATONICS

Hope and Anchor, NI

★★★★☆

DAVID SMYTH

IN this esteemed organ we don't often review covers bands in pubs but seven-strong Kent 2-Tone group The Skatonics were good enough to bid a sizeable sum of money in the Evening Standard's latest charity auction.

They could have had an audience with Brian Sewell or lunch with Sebastian Coe but opted instead to have an opinion expressed about their live performance, in print, by me.

Their generosity does not impede honesty when I say that their sweaty, brisk set was far more enjoyable than I thought it would be when first surveying the unremarkable scene.

Ably racing through the finest examples of possibly the most

joyous, danceable sound ever conceived – Monkey Man by The Maytals, Too Much Too Young by The Specials, The Skatallies' Guns Of Navarone and so on – how could they fail?

A crowd far smaller than they are used to in their home county belied its disappointing size by dancing, almost without exception, as if the floor was on fire.

Burly singer "Slick" joined them on the Bad Manners track Lip Lip Fatty and Baggy Trousers, one of a number of trips to the Madness back catalogue.

Despite having formed two years ago to play decades-old music, The Skatonics' arrival in London is timely.

Madness are lapping up praise for their first album in 10 years and The Specials have reformed to delirious reviews.

After bidding hard they'll be here it is: a raucous, rollicking, heavy heavy monster of a gig.

Cert 15, 100 mins
Four men go wild in Las Vegas in a well-

constructed comedy. Amusingly spiteful about the arrested development of the average American male.

Bachelor party: Bradley Cooper as one of the lads with a hangover

OPENING THIS WEEK

THE PREMIERE

Bruno

Empire Leicester Square
Wednesday

Lock up your sons – Bruno is on the prowl. Sasha Baron Cohen's latest creation, if you didn't know by now, is a glorious gay Austrian fashion buff with a penchant for adopting African babies and putting his genitals in close proximity to rappers' faces. But can he supplant Borat in our affections?

THE FIRST NIGHT

Been So Long

Young Vic
Wednesday

A new musical comes to London in the form of Che Walker's radical updating of his 1999 play *Been So Long* – a tale of love rivals coming to blows in a seedy Soho bar, with a score by Arthur Darvill that is promisingly described as a "soul/funk powerhouse". Soul star Omar plays the lead.

THE EXHIBITION

BP Portrait Awards

National Portrait Gallery
Thursday

The popular painting contest, now open to amateurs and professionals alike, attracted 1,901 entries this year, which have been whittled down to 56 works for this exhibition with three shortlisted for the £25,000 prize – including Annalisa Avancini's portrait of her friend Manuel looking a little the worse for wear.

Beyond Borat: Sasha Baron Cohen's Austrian fashionista alter ego, Bruno



compearance that's perfect for the credit crunch.