

abrió y dentro nos esperaban los NHB al completo para satisfacer nuestras ansias. Había, lógicamente, unos cuantos aseguratas que nos obligaron a pasar de uno en uno, y no entretenernos demasiado. Mark, que se encontraba tras un mostrador, era principalmente el más solicitado, mientras que Ed Bicknell, en un rincón suplicaba irónicamente: ¿nadie quiere una firma mia?, soy un manager muy importante... " (Jordi Calmet, Barcelona)

Apesar de.... de algunos puntos repetitivos, de nuestras pequeñas críticas, del hecho de tenerse que desplazar para poder ver a los NHB en directo y, bla, bla, bla... siempre es reconfortante, poder escuchar a los Hillbillies rasgar sus instrumentos.

Ah, por cierto, se nos olvidaba citaros un dato curioso, ¿Sabíais que la entrada del concierto de Londres era de color verde? (El mundo es un pañuelo.....)

POP: Mark Knopfler and his country cousins are having a good time in their own sweet way

STILL plugging their only album, *Mining Presumed Having A Good Time*, released in 1990, and still apparently having just that, Mark Knopfler's extra-curricular collective, the Notting Hillbillies, concluded a lengthy British tour with a London show that was as relaxed and good-natured as their name. Built around a nucleus of like-minded crooners from Knopfler's past — guitarists Brendan Croker and Steve Phillips, who both played with him during his apprenticeship in the blues clubs of Leeds, and keyboard player/guitarist Guy Fletcher, who was latterly a member of Dire Straits — the band was recently mandated to play a couple of charity concerts and ended up mixing the length and breadth of Britain.

Swinging London

Spared the vulgar demands of the promotional merry-go-round and safely cocooned from any remotely modern developments, musical or fashionable, the Hillbillies applied themselves with edgierish enthusiasm to what was clearly a labour of love. The presence on drums of the silver-haired Ed Bicknell, who holds down a day job as Knopfler's manager, contributed to the informal tone. But he was certainly no slouch, looking and playing rather like Charlie Watts (in jazz mode) and laying down a great '60s Diddley beat on *Cutting Cuts*.

The latter was one of several Dire

The Notting Hillbillies Shepherd's Bush Empire

Straits songs included in the set, although Knopfler was at pains to point out how many of them had been covered by bona fide country acts such as Waylon Jennings (*Setting Me Up*), the Judds (*Water Of Love*) and Randy Travis (*Are We In Trouble Now*, from Knopfler's second solo album).

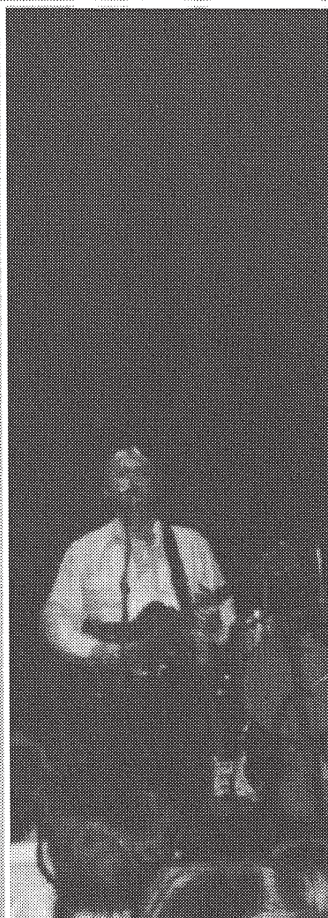
But although these were elegantly played and greeted with tremendous enthusiasm by the jam-packed audi-

ence, it was the more traditional western swing and country-blues material that coated the best performances, notably *Blues Stay Away From Me*, *KC Moan* and *That's All*, the latter boasting the most marvellous four-part gospel harmonies.

Despite the democratic organisation of affairs which gave Phillips and Croker a roughly equal quota of lead vocal and guitar duties, Knopfler was effortlessly the dominant presence. His honeyed guitar line on *Your Own Sweet Way*, an understated yet so eloquent, was like a lover's whisper, while his gruff, languid vocal on *I'm the Fool* was laden with a quietly heartfelt melancholy.

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Crítica del concierto de Londres aparecida en el The Times (27/5/97)



Fotos (Londres 23/5/97): Carlos Taurel

