

THE LILAC TIME

The Milk Bar, London

Twas a sweltering, balmy night as Stephen Duffy's self-proclaimed "*quietest band in the entire universe*" wafted onstage to spread a little love with a barbed and rosy bunch of intricate pop songs.

Indeed, as a sensual summer cocktail of Donovan, The Beatles and The Monkees washed over the sweaty throng, it became clear that you don't need to blast the roof off to have a good time.

Accompanied by eddies of accordion and elegant guitar work, Duffy's hushed vocals weaved their melodic way through the first, second and imminent third albums — plucking poetic posies from each, pausing only for some whimsical banter between songs.

The heat may have moistened kaftans and reduced daisy garlands to strings of lank petals, but a crisp clear breeze was at hand with the beautiful ballad 'She Still Loves You', the banjo-picking ho-down of 'Return To Yesterday' and the post 'Sgt Pepper'-ish 'I Went To The Dance'.

The singles 'American Eyes' and 'The Girl Who Waves At Trains' provided the set's short swinging high spots, while a folky version of 'Raspberry Beret' capped a truly marvellous and mellow evening. Get ready for a summer of loveliness.

Gary Crossing