

ROADRUNNER



Pix by Simon Archer

VICE SQUAD'S Lia: but is she such a stickler for discipline?

Porn again!

VICE SQUAD Bristol

COMING BACK into 1984 with high spirits and new blood, Vice Squad have made a pledge to stand strong and stand proud with their desire for greater recognition, fame and fortune. Part of that determination must stem from proving to the world that it was not Beki Bondage that made Vice Squad, the rest from the more simple need of building to survive.

The atmosphere for this home-town debut was spoilt by the decision of the club management to exclude a lot of Squad fans (on whatever spurious grounds they used) which meant a somewhat depleted audience. But the band were undaunted, blasting into their set with a buzz-saw blend of the twin guitars of Dave and Sooty, giving the ears a healthy dose of punk that was fresh, alive and contemporary.

Vice Squad have always done more than virtually any other punk band to take a wider view of the boundaries within which they operate: that's been apparent right from 'Last Rockers'. With the new line-up the horizons have broadened still further and the band are now able to travel a route that crosses the borders of punk and hard rock. If they play their cards right, the American market is wide open for them because the ingredients — instrumental toughness, rough commerciality, youth rebellion and an attractive singer — are just right.

The new singer, Lia, is a more than adequate replacement for Ms Bondage. She's a tough cookie who will stand on her own merits, although the one

minor foible is that her voice recalls the throaty urging of Pauline Murray. But the effect is good, cutting straight through to the listener, crisp and clear.

The songs were a mix of old and new, giving vent to feelings against war and the excesses of the music industry ('Propaganda' and 'Rock And Roll Massacre') or asking the right kind of questions which are so often neglected ('Black Sheep' and 'What's Going On'). There were a couple of surprises too, with the covering of Bowie's 'Saviour Machine' and the irreverent yet singularly appropriate 'Times They Are A'Changing' (punks take note).

Above all, it was a gig which brought all round enjoyment. The group were obviously glad to be back playing 'live' — even the normally po-faced Mark's face lit up on a couple of occasions, and Sooty enlivened him further by his antics at the back of the stage.

Here's hoping that high spirits lead to big rewards, because for Vice Squad it's now or never.

DAVE MASSEY



LIA: 'tough cookie'

which big Stuart Adamson

obscure 'pibroch's from the

Sweet, illegal fragrances

Technology.

They might benefit visually