

Shine on you crusty diamond

DAVE GILMOUR ★

Royal Festival Hall

Max Bell

WHEN Dave Gilmour sold his Notting Hill house and gave the £4.5 million proceeds to Crisis, most people roared: "What a ruddy good wealthy bloke."

Dave's former muckers Pink Floyd might be considered fair game for Walking With Beasts — the Jurassic rock period — but Gilmour is ageing up nicely.

The last time he was at the RFH, as part of the Robert Wyatt Meltdown season, he gave a decent account of the acoustic guitar arts, apparently, without subjecting the audience to dated nonsense like Oi! Teacher! Leave those Old Etonians alone!

Last night's rerun offered more Barrett and Bizet. There were no inflated pigs or too many ideas above one's power station. Always the most methodical of players, Gilmour sounded like he'd worked his programme out to the nth degree. He's no great improviser, yet his linear skills maintain their own dynamic. I prefer Stephen Stills myself, but you can't have everything.

An academic Shine On You Crazy Diamond, sifting the Syd tribute via slivers of Floydian history from Meddle and Ummagumma, ushered in an ensemble eager to satisfy the paymaster general with chorale, cello and agreeable noises. Je Crois Entendre Encore and a flimsy new piece called Smile showed them off. One tilted one's parasol appreciatively.

Therein the dilemma: to play the librarian card, or hope for impossible acid reverie? Neither perhaps, since Gilmour's no frontman. He was embarrassed by Pink's fanatics, unsure of the artistic point of the whole.

Rock's aristocracy is a bind. Old classics like Wish You Were here, hmm? Jolly good show but not really relevant anymore, are they? Where's Viv Stanshall, now we need the blighter?



Jurassic rock: Dave Gilmour