

GOING UNDERGROUND

LOUISE STICKLAND LOCKS INTO THE TRANSGLOBAL GROOVE PIX: MARK THOMPSON VENUE: SOUTHAMPTON GUILDHALL



TRANSGLOBAL UNDERGROUND: A RAPTUROUS EXPERIENCE

It was a dull, drizzly, uninspiring Thursday night that found the LIVE! on-tour team of Mark Thompson and Louise Stickland zooming down the M23 to Southampton University, where the former's navigational astuteness was the first of many assets bestowed upon the evening.

Having negotiated our way into the equally unfauciful West Refectory building at the Uni we approached the crew catering area. From half-way down the corridor, the unmistakable strains of lighting designer Skippy were resonating around the building. The Trans

Global Underground crew and band were in high spirits. Characteristically, Skippy was in full piss-taking swing, entertaining the creasing-up troops.

Having completed five weeks playing the dives of Europe, the often disastrous 'crew and band on one bus' budget philosophy had actually paid off, reaping the great bonus of fun for all. TGU's second album *International Times* has just been released and their unique, unaffected and subtle blend of dance and political correctness, with a host of culturally diverse traditional rhythms, notably Egyptian and Arabic, has captured the groove imaginations of 1994's hottest dancefloors.

It was a great tribute to the

aesthetic skills of all concerned in the production that, with a bit of imagination, they managed to transform the brick squashed, brick-angularity of the West into a pulsating club. TGU kicked off shakily for the first number, but thereafter everything flowed effortlessly into a powerful and infectious tribal groove. I'd challenge anyone to keep still for more than 30 seconds of this, and even security had to make a conscious effort to avoid becoming enveloped in the rapturous experience of TGU seeping into every joint! The visual and acoustic impact, even on a

small stage was compelling. From the striking, charismatic lead vocalist Natacha Atlas to the multiple fusion of sounds, TGU are a band that excel as a live act.

For the European part of the tour, LD Skippy rose to the ever-present challenge of using house rigs. A gritty realist, he acknowledges the fun of being in the "back to basics" situation where your ingenuity has to rise to the occasion. Having lit the Utah Saints and The Grid over the last two years, where the main idea was to light everything but the band, he has relished getting into lighting TGU as a band, not as a concept.

Now back from Europe, Skippy is spoilt. He has four Golden Scan 3's, six floor cans with scrollers and two strobes. All gear is from the Spot Co except the Rainbow scrollers that come from Neg Earth. This is theoretically augmented each night with 24 par cans provided by the venue, though with Southampton being so small, he has just six PARs a side for washes.

Skippy controls the lot from a



SKIPPY: HOUSE RIGS

Jands 24:48. This is only the third of the UK dates, so he is still operating much of the show live as opposed to pre-programmed. But there's no evidence of any shortage ➤