

Alligators at St Donat's

Socially a hit,
but that's it

By IFAN PAYNE

AS ONE of the Vale's pedagogues at our table at St Donat's said, "They are so loud you keep missing all the subtleties."

No, we didn't, because there weren't any.

My friend was referring to the performance by the Balham Alligators who did no service whatsoever to their audience, their reputation, nor to the St Donat's Arts Centre when they appeared there on Saturday evening. The group turned up minus their indispensable accordionist Geraint Watkins, and musically the event was downhill all the way from there.

The Balham Alligators were advertised as playing Cajan music, but the generally R and B that they actually played was as far from Cajan as Balham is from the Bajou. And this plus its poor execution was doubtless the stimulus for the early leavers in the audience.

Even without Watkins there was no excuse for a performance which was hampered by dull, rhythmically boring bass playing and by a crude sound system which was overloaded, smeared and ill-

balanced.

The poor quality of the sound had nothing to do with the auditorium acoustics, by the way, since it is not too many months since La Ciapa Rusa demonstrated how a well-balanced, well-adjusted, electronic system can enhance even more complex music.

I must point out, though, that for those who stayed the course the band was great to dance to, and so the evening was as socially a good time as it was musically a bad one.