

Bullseye for Hunter

CLOSE your eyes during a Chris Hunter solo and you expect to open them to John Coltrane or Sonny Rollins.

It's rather absurd that the likes of Courtney Pine should be heralded as the trendy British saxophone hope when someone like Chris Hunter bears only aficionado fan status.

Hunter long ago went to work in New York, and is perhaps more of a naturalised American — in his blowing style at least.

Rarely will you hear soloing so hectic and yet so self-assured as on *Minor Infractions*, a pulsating highlight of the band's Jazz Club set.

All night, Hunter's spell-binding scaling cut through the band's unorthodox chord and rhythm shifts with the vision of a veteran twice his age.

On slower numbers, like a

moving version of the Jimi Hendrix tune *Little Wing*, he seems equally at home — even if the home is decorated with some pretty strange wallpaper.

In fact, seasoned session drummer Danny Gottlieb and bassist Ratso Harris looked as if they'd just stepped off the stage with Hendrix, circa 1969.

The most pleasing member of Hunter's accompanists — and arguably the best international pianist to sit on the Club's stage so far — was Gil Goldstein.

Zoe's Tune might have started off like the theme to some maudlin US comedy show, but Goldstein rescued it with a light, flowing touch — a welcome antidote to soloists who don't so much tinkle the ivories as bludgeon them to death.

All round, a night of some nerve-tingling playing.



□ Chris Hunter: vision of a veteran twice his age.