



## SLADE

It's that time of year again, where in every shop, on every advert, and on every compilation album you hear the thick raspy yam yam howl 'EETS CHRIIIIIISMMAAAAS'. Now, like me, you probably want to stick candy canes up your nose and head butt yourself into eternal oblivion every time you hear that track, but do you ever think about the band that produced it? I mean it's not their fault it was so massively successful or that it was played to death.

I like Slade. I grew up listening to my dad's Slade records and credit my father's taste in glam music for the weird, long-haired, make up wearing member of society I have turned out to be. So when I was given the opportunity to talk to Jim Lea, bass guitarist, arranger and unfairly labelled 'the most talented member of Slade' on account of his classical training, I eagerly accepted.

Jim Lea looks great for his age with unruly curly hair and a faraway stare. He looks like what you imagine when you hear the phrase 'aging British rock star'. Jim leaves large pauses between talking, and when recounting a particular memory he sometimes drifts off while reliving the thought in his head. I constantly catch him referencing a piece of paper, which has written on it all the things he wants to say about the Slade BBC Sessions Album he's here to promote.

I first get him to sign a record of my dad's Far Far Away, which I always liked but became more significant for me as I grew up and started travelling. The song's lyrics recall a band on tour experiencing what the world has to offer, but all the time remembering and missing home. I ask Jim if all the lyrics are real things that the band did while on tour, specifically the line 'had a red light off the wrist/without me even being kissed'. 'Noddy' he interrupts before I finish the sentence 'how did I know it was going to be Noddy?'

I think the reason that they're now not taken as seriously as their contemporaries, is because they were never seen to take themselves too seriously. When they first took their manager's advice to shave their heads and dress as skinheads, things didn't



