

## SWING FEVER 16 AUGUST 2009

Swing Fever returned to the Bude Club with a vengeance on 16th August. This long awaited gig was greeted with eager anticipation and they served up a brand of jazz that took in the music from Benny Goodman to Oscar Peterson and the chamber jazz style of Jimmie Noone, Doc Poston and Earl Hines. This group of superb musicians did not disappoint, they were all class through and through and the audience responded accordingly. The hirsute leader Chris Walker excelled on clarinet, alto and baritone saxophone and was most capably supported by the man who has been voted Britain's best clarinettist on many occasions, the always excellent Dave Shepherd and any band containing the agile fingers of pianist Craig Milverton has got to be worth listening to and Craig is at the Bude Jazz Festival this year so don't miss him! Stan Bourke's prowess on his drums perfectly suited the band and his occasional solo breaks were great. Rounding out the rhythm section was John Burgess on double bass who excelled in driving the band along and I particularly liked his occasional foray with the bow. So, on then to the music.



Harry Warren's fast paced Nagasaki was the first number out but the amusing vocal was not used as is the norm, in fact this evening's performance was all instrumental with not a vocal in sight! Next up was Ted Shapiro's If I Had You from 1928 before the boys turned to a Louis Armstrong classic I Want a Big Butter and Egg Man (named after mid-western farmers who flocked to Chicago for fun and games after the harvest was over, their pockets flushed with money to spend on whiskey, women and song!) Dave Shepherd then left the stage leaving just Chris out front to perform a moving composition

by the great Oscar Peterson in honour of the tragic civil rights activist Martin Luther King called Hymn to Freedom. Chris then vacated the stage and Dave returned for a solo piece which began rather confusingly but ended up being Vincent Youmans' Tea for Two! This was followed with a number from the pen of prolific composer Jimmy McHugh, I Can't Believe that You're in Love with Me before the band signed off an excellent first set with Ray Henderson's stomping composition The Varsity Drag.

The second set began with a broil parade to the strains of Joe Avery's Piece (written by and named after a pioneering New Orleans trombonist). Not too many broillies around, but they did a couple of circuits of the auditorium. This was followed by a number unknown to me by the name of Softly as in the Morning Sunrise. Then it was time for Craig to take centre stage as both Chris and Dave took a breather. He played a great rendition of Richard Rodgers' My Heart Stood Still and upon completion received a grand ovation. Next up was one of Irving Berlin's most famous compositions, from 1930, Puttin' on the Ritz. They boys then played Jimmie Noone's most famous composition, Apex Blues. It was named after the Chicago speakeasy in which his band, the Apex Club Orchestra, performed. By the time he recorded it though, the club had been shut down by the police for prohibition violations. Swing Fever played it with almost the same instrumentation as the original Apex band with Dave taking on the Jimmie Noone role, Chris playing alto as Doc Poston did on the recording, Craig playing a la Earl Hines and Stan playing the Johnny Wells part on drums. The only difference being Bud Scott played guitar. The final number for the set was a

number credited to Nick LaRocca but was in fact based on an ancient quadrille, Tiger Rag.

Onto the final set which began with an old Germanic piece Bei Mir Bist Du Schoen, then came the old standard from 1922, Ted Snyder's The Sheik of Araby which was followed by Look Up that Lonesome Road. Dave Shepherd left the stage once more for Chris to perform Brother Can You Spare a Dime? before they swapped over for Dave to perform Arthur Gibbs' Runnin' Wild from the 1922 revue of the same name. With all the band on stage once more, they played a Benny Goodman medley, Body and Soul, Moon Glow, Sugar and Memories of You. In fact the band wound up the evening's superb entertainment with two more Goodman classics, Stompin' at the Savoy and Flying Home.

What a long ovation they received at the conclusion of the evening with many saying it was the best band they have seen at our club. Without a doubt Jim has his writing implements in hand ready to pencil them in again for next year. One final word from me...Fantastic!

See you around the gigs...

Paul