

Just one word describes this gig by the New Orleans Heat - Superb! The huge audience in attendance had nothing but praise for this group of marvellous musicians who, despite playing a lunchtime gig at the Hartland Hotel, were full of verve and vigour as they stomped their way into our hearts. They seem to get better each time they appear at the BJC.

First up was a fast paced version of Billy Hill's oft played 1933 composition, The Old Spinning Wheel which was followed by How We Danced at the Mardi Gras with the first of many vocals by Gwyn Lewis. Gwyn was really entertaining throughout the evening not only with his vocals but also blowing a powerful cornet and occasional flugelhorn. Next up was James Hanley's piece from 1919, Breeze, with Gwyn once more vocalising as he did on the following number We Shall Walk Through the Streets of the City. An unusually slow rendition of an old classic Corrine Corrina came next, this time with a vocal by the band's outstanding clarinettist John Scantlebury. While this one was slow, the following piece was definitely not, the quick-fire Harrington Gibbs 1922 Charleston era composition, Runnin' Wild. This was followed by a number not heard for quite a while here at the BJC, one that conjures up images of Hula Girls in paradise, Coconut Island. The band then went into a well deserved break after performing the Latin tinged Jambalaya.

Set two began in barnstorming fashion with Lew Pollack's popular piece which he wrote back in 1914, That's a Plenty. Then came a broily parade, and what a broily parade to the strains of Eugene Bartlett's popular parade number Just a Little While to Stay Here with the vocal by Gwyn once more. Next came the rather risqué Byron Gay penned Four or Five Times (well, it would have been risqué, or even downright disgusting if the original lyrics were sung!). This was followed by a cakewalk, the fad that preceded the ragtime period with a number called At a Georgia Camp Meeting written by Kerry Mills back in 1897. It was then time for the splendid trombone player Mike Taylor out front on his own to give us his party piece going solo on Maceo Pinkard's classic Sweet Georgia Brown, backed up most ably by the rhythm section who in turn gave us short solo breaks as well. With Gwyn and John returning to the stage, the band swung out with Eddie Munson's Ida, Sweet as Apple Cider with John supplying the vocal. This time Mike and Gwyn left the stage leaving John to do a clarinet solo on a spiritual In the Upper Garden during which Barry Grummett also played an outstanding solo on piano. With Gwyn and Mike still absent, John swapped his clarinet for alto sax playing and singing Seymour Simons' 1931 piece All of Me. The final number of set two featured a vocal by Gwyn on the old spiritual Hallelujah, I'm Walking with the King.

There certainly was a large array of prizes for the raffle which included a new CD of the New Orleans Heat kindly donated by bandleader Barry Grummett. In these circumstances, it is not unheard of for a member of the band to win it back! Well not this time, but they did win three other prizes including a bottle of Scotch!

So onto set three which began with a number I think was called Ting-a-Ling Go the Bells? Something like that anyway. A surprise second broily parade was sprung upon us as the band hit out with Joe Avery's Piece (Listening to this you can see how Rock'n'Roll started!). John Scantlebury then returned with a vocal on another spiritual What a Friend I Have in Jesus which was followed by Richard Whiting's I Can't Escape from You with the Leo Robin lyrics sung by Gwyn. An animated Gwyn gave us the vocal on the next number too, Kid Ory's All the Girls Go Crazy About the Way I Walk. The band then turned to the King Oliver bandbook when they played Dippermouth Blues, a number he co-wrote with his up and coming second cornettist Louis Armstrong in 1923. The name came from an early nickname of Louis as his mouth was said to resemble a water dipper! Much to the delight of the Jivers in the audience, the band played a real Rock 'n' Roll rendition of the blues classic, Will Shade's Kansas City Blues with the vocal performed by John. That certainly had everyone up and dancing on the jam packed dance floor. The final number for the evening came with a number called On the Trail to Home Sweet Home with Gwyn singing the vocal and also saying the farewells of the band.

Well, what a brilliant night's entertainment this was with all the musicians in exceptional form. Well in excess of 100 people witnessed one of the best gigs ever at the club all hoping that it won't be that long before we witness them here at the BJC again. Superb!

See you around the gigs...

Paul