

A Cornish Treat

Review of the Grenfell-Roberts Hot Five gig of 24th January

Who said that jazz was dying as there were no young musicians playing it any more? Piffle and codswallop! The Grenfell-Roberts Hot Five showed us all that not only were they playing jazz but were damn good at it as well! Kevin Grenfell was forceful and competent on trombone and his between songs repartee was most amusing. Amy Roberts on alto and occasional clarinet has come a long way since I first saw her three or four years ago. She has blossomed into a really excellent musician who is going to go a long way in jazz. I must not forget drummer Baby Jools who also has improved out of sight and drove the band along incessantly. The “old men” of the band were the ever excellent pianist Simon Banks plus the bass player whose name, I am ashamed to admit, I have forgotten! So onto the music



First up was Seymour Simons piece from 1931, All of Me which featured Kevin with the vocal. This was followed by James Hanley’s composition Indiana (from 1917 it was one of the first jazz recordings made). Next up was James P. Johnson’s Old Fashioned Love before both Kevin and Simon supplied the vocal on ragtime pianist Percy Wenrich’s famous composition When You Wore a Tulip. Simon Banks then played a solo, Pine Top’s Boogie Woogie, which was the first of it’s genre to be recorded in 1928. Clarence “Pinetop” Smith did not live to see his success however as he was shot and killed in a dance hall the following year. He gained his nickname as his rather pointed head resembled a pine cone! Back to the music then after that bit of useless information! Kevin then sang the Joe Young lyrics to Fred Ahlert’s famous I’m Gonna Sit Right Down and Write Myself a Letter. This was followed by an excellent rendition of Duke Ellington’s Mood Indigo. The final number for the rather long first set featured Kevin once more with the vocal on the light-hearted Buona Sera.

During the first interval whilst the band was deservedly whetting their whistles, a cheque for £237.00 was presented to jazz club member Arthur Newman who accepted it on behalf of Cornwall Air Ambulance. Many thanks to our many members who supported the raffle on the night of the Christmas Party where all proceeds raised for this excellent charity.

Set two began with Jean Schwartz’s Chinatown, My Chinatown - Kevin with the vocal once more as he did with the following piece, Jimmy McHugh’s and Dorothy Fields’ well known I Can’t Give You Anything But Love. Simon with the vocal on the next one, the amusingly named Sunny Clapp composition Girl of my Dreams. A trombone solo from Kevin came next with Harold Arlen’s famous Over the Rainbow which was followed by the old standard, Hughie Cannon’s Bill Bailey Won’t You Please Come Home named after a music teacher whose wife often gave him a hard time for getting home late after watching the composer and musician performing at a Missouri nightclub called Whistler’s Bar around 1905. Bailey and his wife divorced in 1910 and he died in 1954. It was then time for Amy to go solo this time on clarinet with Louis Alter’s 1946 piece Do You Know What It Means To Miss New Orleans? Before the second set closed out with Billy Mayhew’s It’s a Sin to Tell a Lie.

The third set began in a roaring fashion with Maceo Pinkard’s famous composition Sweet Georgia

Brown, Kevin once more with the vocal. A belated broil parade followed to the strains of Paul Barbarin's Bourbon Street Parade and quite a few broillies were evident despite it being a bit late. Next up was Shelton Brooks' immortal number The Darktown Strutters Ball which featured the vocal by Simon and keeping up the fast tempo the band broke into the old standard When the Saints Go Marching In, Kevin with the vocal. This most enjoyable evening came to an end with the number forever synonymous with Louis Armstrong, What a Wonderful World and wonderful perfectly describes the evening. After an absence of six weeks, jazz was back so it was fitting that this band kicked us off for 2010. They were vibrant and most enjoyable and no doubt we will be seeing them again. See you around the gigs... Paul