

The Antique - A Class Act

Review of the Antique Six gig of 9th May

There is one thing you can rely on when the Antique Six visit the Bude Jazz Club—superb entertainment. They really are a class act. Led by one of the best traditional jazz drummers in the country, Graham Smith, they bounced from go to whoa and left many dancers exhausted by evening's end. With a front line that any band anywhere would be proud of, the impressive Chris Mercer on trumpet, the always excellent Chris Pearce on reeds and the gifted Richard Leach on his trusty trombone. The rhythm section excelled too, alongside Graham was Ian Parry driving the band along on bass and Clinton Sedgley in great form on banjo and especially guitar. Oh, you poor fools who missed this gig!



The entertainment began with a stomping rendition of Ray Bauduc's famous *South Rampart Street Parade*, followed by an even faster number in W.C. Handy's classic from 1917, *Ole Miss*. The boys then turned to the pens of Con Conrad and J. Russel Robinson for the 1920 composition *Singin' the Blues* which they played in the style of the 1927 recording by Frank Trumbauer's orchestra with Bix Beiderbecke. A great number that was way ahead of its time. It was then time for the first vocal of the evening with Chris Mercer singing the James Dempsey lyrics to George Mitchell's *Ace in the Hole*. The Duke Ellington composition *Stevedore Stomp* came next and boy, didn't they

hit this one a breakneck speed! The two "Chrisses" then left the stage for Richard to do his party piece backed just by the rhythm section with Joe Burke's *On Treasure Island*. With the full band back on deck, the Antiques went bluesy with Clarence Williams 1923 composition *Kansas City Man Blues* before signing off the first set with a rousing rendition of Jelly Roll Morton's classic *Black Bottom Stomp*. Time for the band then to take a deserved break to lubricate their chops.

The first number of the second set was Sandy Brown's composition honouring the independence of the country that had recently changed its name from the Gold Coast to Ghana, called *Go Ghana*. Then came a number written by Henry Clifford in 1926 for his band The Dixieland Jug Blowers, *Memphis Shake*. Things then got funereal (at first anyway) with an authentic rendition of Jelly Roll Morton's *Dead Man Blues* featuring Chris Mercer with the spoken words accompanied by the mournful exhortations from the remainder of the band. The next number I was a bit baffled by as the original title was in German. Although I do speak a wee bit of the language, I only caught the first word which was *Schlaffen*...the rest is a mystery, but basically it meant something like Goodnight Sweet Prince. Chris Mercer sat this one out (couldn't he play trumpet in German?). The next one was a Percy Venable and Louis Armstrong composition *You Made Me Love You (When I Saw You Cry)*. Richard then called for the brollies to be unfurled as the band struck out with Eugene Bartlett's bouncing funeral march *Just a Little While to Stay Here*. The second set closed out with a piece of stomping ragtime which had all the dancers up and bouncing, James Scott's 1914 composition *Climax Rag*.

As usual, the second interval brought about the drawing of the raffle and one of the winners was member Judith Smith who was recently back from hospital after her horrible accident. I received a card from Judith thanking all members who signed her get well card whilst in hospital. It was certainly a great relief to see her back with us and cheerful to boot, although not quite ready for jiving yet. Good On Yer Judith (to quote an old Aussie expression!).

Talking of jiving, set three began with a jazz number that could be said to lead into the Rock'n'Roll era, *Joe Avery's Piece*, written in the early 1940's by New Orleans trombonist Joe Avery, the number's riff was copied



for several early Rock'n'Roll numbers. Slowing things up a bit, the band turned to the book of King Oliver for a number he jointly composed in 1923 with the second cornet player in his Creole Jazz Band, a young Louis Armstrong, called *Canal Street Blues*. Ian Parry then came to the fore laying aside his bass and borrowing Clinton's banjo he performed a most amusing solo vocal with a number called *If My Nose Was Running Money!* (If my nose was running money, I would blow it all on you, but unfortunately it's not!). Hilarious. Back to the full band with correct instrumentation then and Joe "King" Oliver's *Chimes Blues*. In the original, Lil Hardin, future wife of Louis Armstrong, played the chimes riff on piano and later bands played it on trumpet,

trombone and clarinet collectively, but the Antique used Clinton's banjo and it worked well. Next up was Benny Davis' *Copenhagen*. The name came not from the capital of Denmark but a brand of snuff used by Davis' tuba player one Ole Olsen which he used on a regular basis and often caused him to sneeze whilst playing! Chris Mercer and Richard then vacated the stage leaving Chris Pearce to give us a great solo performance on clarinet and saxophone with Leigh Harline's *When You Wish Upon a Star*. Ian on bass and Clinton on banjo also chipped in with a couple of fine solo breaks. It was then Graham's turn to show us what he could do on Sholem Secunda's *Beir Mir Bist Du Schön*. The number began ordinarily enough with the full band but halfway through the front line left the stage leaving Graham and bassist Ian on their own for Graham to give a superb drum solo as they slipped into *Big Noise from Winnetka*, then while still playing, standing up and using his drumsticks on the strings of the bass for a while before returning to his drum chair without missing a beat! Excellent, but the photo taken was a bit frightening—Look at those eyes (right)! On to the final number of the evening which was the band's usual sign off piece *Goin' Home* during which Chris Mercer not only sung the lyrics but asked for appreciation for each member of the band in turn, which we most certainly did!

What an evening's entertainment we had! We here at the BJC are not only lucky to have one of the best jazz venues in the country, but we had one of the best bands in the country to do it justice as well! Can't wait for their return.

See you around the gigs...

Paul