

Barnhart-Fryer, They're On Fire

Review of the Barnhart-Fryer Red Hot Seven gig of 23rd May

We all knew that the reappearance of Jeff Barnhart and Jim Fryer at the Bude Jazz Club would be special, but this visit was extra special, a total entertainment package that delighted the capacity audience that packed out the auditorium. This was a slightly different line-up than their usual All-Stars band with John Maddocks replacing George Huxley and Ceri Williams taking on Gordon Whitworth's chair. On past performances one might have been forgiven thinking that this band would be slightly poorer because of it, but definitely not so. We all know John from past performances at the club with his own Jazz Men and as usual he was absolutely superb. It was Ceri's first appearance in front of us and he showed what a powerful and talented trumpet player he is.



They stomped off with Nick LaRocca's and Larry Shields' 1918 classic *At the Jazz Band Ball* then without resting it was into a fast rendition of Louis Armstrong's *I Want a Big Butter and Egg Man*. Continuing with the Armstrong theme, this time with a number written by Louis' wife Lil called *Gate Mouth* (one on the many early nicknames for her husband). After those three up tempo numbers, it was time to slow things up as Brian Mellor swapped his banjo for the guitar and Jim supplied the crooning vocal on *At Sundown*. Keeping things slow, it was then

time for John to give us a real low down dirty blues singing the Jelly Roll Morton lyrics to *Buddy Bolden's Blues*. To wrap up the first set, Jeff abandoned his piano to take up Jim's trombone (I've never seen him do that before!) whilst Jim played second trumpet to Ceri on King Oliver's classic *Snake Rag*.

After the briefest of breaks, set two began with a fast paced old ODJB number *Fidgety Feet* before Jim took on the vocal duties on a number he dedicated to Osama Bin Laden called *Nobody's Sweetheart Now!* Jim and John both played excellent extended solo breaks on trombone and clarinet respectively. It was then time for Ceri to sing a growling vocal on Jelly Roll Morton's risqué *Winin' Boy Blues* during which he blasted out a most powerful solo on trumpet. Not to be outdone, it was then time for John to come to the fore as both Ceri and Jim left the stage as he tackled Duke Ellington's *C Jam Blues* with two great solos firstly on clarinet and then on tenor sax. Jeff also featured with an extended piano break. Jeff then continued crooning James Hanley's 1919 composition *Breeze* during which the irrepressible Annie gave us a lovely solo on bowed bass. The final number for the set came with Papa Charlie Jackson's tongue-in-cheek *Shake That Thing* where Jeff sang the lyrics that encouraged each member of the band to take a solo in turn.

As soon as I had completed calling the raffle numbers, which only took about ten minutes I think, the band was back on stage once more and stormed into Armand Piron's and Pete Bocage's catchy *Bouncin' Around*. I meant to request Brian Mellor sing *Let the Light from the Lighthouse*, but I forgot, but he sung it anyway! All the band joined in this jaunty spiritual and it brought out the Jive Club to strut their

Charleston Stride. Brolly Parade time then (I thought they had forgotten!). The number used was different from the norm as they swung out with Clarence Williams 1924 composition *Cake Walkin' Babies from Home*. Slowing things up only fractionally, the band then tackled Carmen Lombardo's *Sweethearts on Parade* with the vocal duties shared between Jeff and Jim during which they both tried to out-scat each other brilliantly. Slowing things right down, Jeff sang a blues which I assume was called *Stealin' Away* during which John played a moving solo on alto sax. Jeff then once more abandoned his piano to take up the trombone as they belted out a rousing rendition of Sidney Bechet's famous *Dans les rues d'Antibes* before the band signed off with Isham Jones *I'll See You In My Dreams* with Jeff singing the Gus Kahn lyrics.

Wow! What a performance from a top band chock full of top musicians that really left me breathless (and I wasn't even dancing!) At the end the whole audience showed their appreciation for the long awaited return of Jeff and Jim and the band. Jim flew back Stateside the following day, but he and the rest of them will be back for the Jazz Festival in August which I for one can't wait for.

See you around the gigs...

Paul