

A Rockin' River

Review of the Martin Bennett Old Green River Jazz Band gig of 26th September

This was not a gig for jazz purists, this was a gig for those who like their jazz rocking and rolling. The Old Green River Band did not disappoint in this form of playing. It was the debut at the BJC for their cornet player Ches Chesterman and boy! What a powerful player he is, ideally suited for this style of band.



In fact it was Ches who supplied the first vocal of the evening on the opening number, Cliff Friend's *Don't Sweetheart Me*. It was then on to the pen of the Father of the Blues W.C. Handy for his renowned *Yellow Dog Blues* before Martin gave us the vocal on a number that had the jivers licking their lips, *Rock 'n' Roll Baby*. Up next was Fred Meinken's 1921 composition, *Wabash Blues* before the excellent trombonist John Finch supplies the vocal on Louis Armstrong's *Someday You'll Be Sorry* that he composed in 1928. Then onto the pen of Duke Ellington for the lyrical and moving *Creole Love Call* before things sped up on Kid

Ory's *All the Girls Go Crazy* which featured Ches with the vocal and reedsman Howard Murray laying aside his saxes and picking up the clarinet for the first time. The final number for the set was one that Martin announced as *Round the Clock Blues* which was written by Berni Barbour in 1924 as *My Daddy Rocks Me With One Steady Roll*.

Set two kicked off with Abel Baer's 1924 piece *June Night* before Martin sang the Joe Goodwin lyrics to Larry Shay's *Tie Me To Your Apron Strings Again*. This was followed by Jimmy McHugh's *I Can't Believe That You're In Love With Me*, John returning with the vocal this time. The band then went back to 1911 for the jaunty and popular Nat Ayer composition *Oh, You Beautiful Doll*. Another Rock 'n' Roll delight followed with a typical Martin Bennett rendition of Clarence "Pine Top" Smith's immortal *Pine Top's Boogie Woogie*. All the dancers were up swinging to that one. It also signalled the end of the second set which had the hoofers thankfully catching their breath.

Set three began with a number forever associated with Louis Armstrong, Seymour Simons' and Gerald Marks' 1931 composition *All of Me* featuring another John Finch vocal. This was followed by a number I had not heard before which featured a vocal by Martin, *Pink Champagne*. Next was a real stomping rendition of a real jazz piece Lew Pollack's famous composition from 1914 *That's a-Plenty*, then a return to Rock 'n' Roll Boogie featuring a vocal by Ches called *Fisherman's Blues*. The penultimate number came with Sigmund Romberg's *Lover Come Back to Me*. The final number for the evening's entertainment came with a foot tapping rendition, with a combination of Rock 'n' Roll and African rhythms, of *Everybody Loves Saturday Night*.

It was definitely an evening for the dancers who must have shed pounds with their exertions! I particularly liked Howard's work on baritone sax and Ches Chesterman's cornet was wonderful. I am sure once all those dancers get their breaths back they will be demanding the return of Martin Bennett's Old Green River Jazz Band. I will join them in that!

See you around the gigs... Paul