

Heart-Warming Hearts

The best gig for a long time was the response from the capacity audience that attended the welcome return of the Heart of England Jazz Band. What a grand evening we all had, listeners and dancers alike.



The first set began with one from the book of Duke Ellington, *Stevedore Stomp*, and stomp it did setting the tone for the evening's performance. Then came a number that was a hit for Kenny Ball in 1961 based on an old Russian melody Moscow Nights, retitled *Midnight in Moscow*. Then came another Kenny Ball hit but first made famous by Louis Armstrong in the film of the same name, *Hello Dolly* with trumpeter Pete Ainge supplying the vocal. After a piece called *In a Persian Market* came the old Joe Oliver composition *Chimes Blues* where the front line produced the peal of bells on clarinet, trumpet and trombone. Very melodic. Drummer

Nick Millward supplied the vocal on the next number on Fred Rose's *'Deed I Do*. Nick is the son of former band member Clive who sadly passed away just over a year ago. Next up was another Duke Ellington composition that he wrote in collaboration with trumpeter Bubber Miley, *Black and Tan Fantasy* and although Pete's trumpet did not growl as much as Miley's, the feeling was still evident in this moving piece. Onto Scott Joplin for the following number with probably his most famous composition, *Maple Leaf Rag* before Cornishman Kevin Grenfell on trombone gave us the vocal on Isham Jones *It Had To Be You*. The final number for the set was the old standard from Will Tyers, *Panama Rag*.

Set two began with Artie Matthews well known composition from 1915, *Weary Blues*, then the whole band got into vocalising on Ray Henderson's most famous composition, *Bye Bye Blackbird*. Back to the book of Duke Ellington once more with the moving *Creole Love Call* (no vocal though, after all who can match the wordless vocal from Adelaide Hall on the original!). Next was Clarence Williams' *Cushion Foot Stomp*, (a cushion was often placed under the stomping feet of pianists in recording studios to deaden the sound). A rarely heard Louis Armstrong piece came next with *Someday You'll Be Sorry* with Pete vocalising before Kevin gave us a superb rendition, very "Oryesque" with *Ory's Creole Trombone*. The final number for the set was Walter Donaldson's *My Baby Just Cares For Me* with the vocal by Kevin.

So onto the final set which began with *Bobby Shaftoe*, then came ragtimer Percy Weinrich's *When You Wore a Tulip* with the whole band supplying the vocal. A log awaited Brolly Parade followed this to the strains of *Bugle Boy March* before Nick gave us another vocal on *Sweet Lorraine*. Back to the pen of Kid Ory for the next piece, his celebrated *Muskrat Ramble*, then the band donned their beret's for *La Vien Rose*. Clarinettist Selwyn Newton supplied the vocal on this one. Then came the *piece de resistance* of the evening which began with Spencer Williams' classic *Royal Garden Blues*. The band played it in the usual way with each band member playing their solo breaks until it came to drummer Nick who began fairly sedately with his drum roll but gradually built up into a magnificent *tour de force* which just went on and on leaving us breathless. When we all thought he had finished he began a solo once more this time leading us into Paul Barbarin's *Bourbon Street Parade*, once again building up and up until the remainder of the band returned to the stage to finish the number off. A truly amazing performance by one of the very best jazz drummers around, of that I'm certain.

Unfortunately, that was the end of the evening's entertainment much to the disappointment of the over 100 people in attendance. It was truly a memorable night which the BJC hopes to replicate next year with this exciting band. *See you around the gigs...*

Paul