

Richard Scott, the Chairman of the Board, presented the September programme of the CLPGS at the Conway Hall on 19th September. “Doo Wop Gems From “American Graffiti”” was the title which was an exploration of the music used as the sound track to George Lucas’ 1973 film, American Graffiti. Set in 1962, this was an American coming-of-age film which would perhaps strike more of a resonance with teenagers in the US rather than the UK, but none the less was a staggering world-wide commercial and artistic success, grossing more than \$200,000,000 for a \$777,000 outlay.

The film was vaguely autobiographical of George Lucas’ own teenage years and was set in his actual hometown of Modesto during the end of the last school summer holiday prior to the protagonists leaving to go away to college. The soundtrack, which was the main thrust of Richard’s programme, was made up of Doo Wop numbers from the mid to late 1950s. Doo Wop was originally an African American genre originating in the 1930s, owing much to the earlier Barbershop close-harmony singing, and popularised in the mid to late 1950s. By the time of Doo Wop’s peak popularity, other minorities in America, such as Puerto Ricans and Italians were also forming groups. Even to the extent that “The Crests”, who’s music featured in the film, were racially mixed, an unusual occurrence in that period of American history.

Richard’s presentation was arranged chronologically with the tracks being played in the same order as the film, with a brief description of the scene that would have been presented on the screen. Rather than just play the soundtrack LP album, Richard brought along the rare original recordings with publicity shots of the groups concerned. Given that these records would have been used by teenagers in the 1950s they were all in remarkable condition and played extremely well.

The Crests, previously mentioned, opened the evening with “Sixteen Candles” before moving through The Diamonds, in appearance looking uncannily like the early Beatles, with “The Stroll” and eventually finishing with The Crows performing “Gee”.

Altogether a well presented and thoughtful presentation of a type of music we don’t often play (but perhaps we should) at our meetings. The nearly full house showed it’s appreciation to Richard in the usual way.

Tim Wood-Woolley