

Midlands Group Meetings

May 18 2019

Midlands members were delighted that Bill Dean-Myatt was now well enough to join us to hear Phil Bennett's presentation **His Master's Jazz**.

Phil began with records from an era that I know is of great interest to him – the period of transition from arranged ragtime to improvised jazz. From 1914, the Six Brown Brothers played *That Moaning Saxophone Rag*; from 1918, the Savoy Quartet gave us *The Darktown Strutters Ball - A Jazz Melody* and from 1919, Joseph C. Smith's Orchestra, with Harry Raderman's 'laughing trombone', performed *Yellow Dog Blues*.

The first true jazz record played was *When My Baby Smiles at Me*. Although usually associated with Ted Lewis, the version played was by Art Hickman's New York London Five, recorded in 1919. The Original Dixieland Jazz Band, augmented by Bennie Krueger on saxophone, played *Home Again Blues* (1921). *Aunt Hagars Blues* (1923) and *Scissor Grinder Joe* (1924) were performed by the Virginians, a group of musicians from the Paul Whiteman Orchestra, playing Ferdie Grofe arrangements.

Pianoflage (1922) demonstrated the skill of Roy Bargy and Charles Dornberger and his Orchestra played a fine jazzy version of *Oh Sister, Ain't That Hot* (1923).

From the HMV B4000 series we heard Duke Ellington and his Orchestra in *Jubilee Stomp*, recorded in 1928, with prominent 'slapped style' double bass, and *Black Beauty*, a tribute to the late Florence Mills. Bennie Moten's Kansas City Orchestra, with pianist Count Basie, gave us *Milenberg Joys* (1932). Also from 1932 was the Washboard Rhythm Kings playing *Pepper Steak*. Back to 1929 for *I'd Love It* by McKinney's Cotton Pickers, with pianist Fats Waller, and *I'm Gonna Stomp, Mr Henry Lee* by Eddie's Hot Shots, a mixed race group - rare in the '20s.

The HMV B5000 series yielded *Bell Hoppin' Blues* (1926), hot dance music by Paul Whiteman's Orchestra and *Sugar Foot Stomp* (1925) by Fred Hamm and his Orchestra. Written by King Oliver and Louis Armstrong, this record Oliver's own recording. Many of the records were recorded by Victor in the USA and released on HMV; however, Victor's 'No 1 Hot Band', Jelly Roll Morton's Red Hot Peppers, were slated by British reviewers as "crude" and "out of date". *We heard Sidewalk Blues* (1926) – British tastes have changed – we loved it!

Vo Do Do De O Blues was recorded in 1927 by the Sylvians, a band from the Savoy Hotel group, augmented in the recording studio by Savoy Orpheans musicians. The Ambrose Orchestra included several American jazz musicians, we heard *Crying For The Carolines* (1930). Muggsy Spanier & His Ragtime Band, a pioneer traditional jazz revival group, despite their name, played *That Da Da Strain* (1939) and the Dixieland Jug Blowers, playing a variation on a traditional negro folk style, *Hen Party Blues* (recorded 1926 and released 1954) completed a fine recital.

Thanks to Marilyn for tea, coffee, cakes and biscuits, to Julie for playing the records and to Phil for yet another well-researched selection of gems from his record collection.

Richard Parkes