

London; 18 April 2017

In his latest programme Steve Paget took a look at some well known and some lesser known **British and American Dance Band Vocalists** in recordings from the 1920s and 1930s. Steve began with an explanation of how dance band music was influenced by the coming of the jazz age and how vocalists became progressively more commonplace in what had once been predominantly instrumental music.

With literally hundreds of singers to choose from, Steve had sought to select a representative sample, alternating between American and British artists. Men featured in the first half of the programme and ladies in the second. The men were Bing Crosby, Sam Browne, Chick Bullock, Al Bowlly, Arthur Fields, Leslie Sarony, Irving Kaufman and Maurice Elwin; and the ladies were Annette Hanshaw, Elsie Carlisle, Ella Logan, Billie Holliday and Vera Lynn. Steve introduced each artist with an account of their lives and careers with additional commentary on their vocal styles. With most of the artists getting two outings, we heard an impressive 24 discs, all original 78s and all of excellent quality. The song titles are too numerous to list but the following may give a flavour of what was a consistently enjoyable programme: *Young and Healthy, That's my weakness now, It had to be you, Love is the sweetest thing, Fat flat fish, I wonder what is really on his mind, Strange Fruit.*

It's a fact of life that living artists who recorded on 78 rpm records are becoming something of a rarity. So it was a nice touch that Steve included Vera Lynn in his selection so soon after the celebration of her centenary. We heard *It's a sin to tell a lie* from the start of her recording career in the 1930s and *Aufweideseh'n sweetheart* from rather later.

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