

London; 17 September 2019

I don't know how many Austrian members our Society has but it's a fair bet that Dr Otto Cichocki is the first to deliver a programme at one of our London gatherings. His presentation was entitled **Swing Across the Channel**. To help set the mood Otto began with Bessie Smith and *There'll be a hot time in the old town tonight*. He then took us on a tour of 'hot' music from Europe featuring recordings from the late 1930s and 1940s from France, Germany, what is now the Czech Republic and Scandinavia.

Beginning with France, we heard the important figure of Philippe Brun (*Boogie Woogie*); three US musicians who contributed to French bands: Eddie South (here with Django Reinhardt: *Sweet Georgia Brown*), Fletcher Allen and Dickie Wells; and others including Charles-Henry (*Djangomania*) and Etienne Ferret (*Blue Guitar*). The sounds from Germany were distinctly different including the Comedian Harmonists (*Creole Love Call*) and some examples of officially sanctioned hot music from the war years: the Brocks Quartett, Horst Winter (the German Benny Goodman) and Willy Berking. Czech recordings included Kamil Běhounek's hot harmonika (*Tiger Rag*) and the Orchestr Karla Slavika (*Basin Street Blues*). Sweden's Svenska Hotkvintetten played *Opus 5* and Thore Ehring *Irritation Blues* while from Norway Cecil Aagaard and his Swingsters gave us *Blues Upstairs*. Lastly, Denmark and Svend Asmussens Sekstet playing Duke Ellington's *Ring dem bells*.

In all, Otto gave us 30 recordings, largely played on original 78s of excellent quality. This type of music is well named. Whenever I looked around quite a number of us were, if not swinging, at least swaying a little, and pretty well every foot I could see was tapping. It was a *tour de force* from Otto who we hope might be persuaded one day to give another programme.

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