

Northern Group MEETING MARCH 2017 (part 2) (omitted from FtR 62)

For Part two of the March meeting Dave Lomax played some fine recordings of the **Fletcher Henderson Band** from 1921 to 1927, with his usual informative narration.

James Fletcher Hamilton Henderson (1897 – 1952) was a pianist, bandleader, composer and arranger who helped move jazz from the early Dixieland style to swing music where he had a major role as arranger for Benny Goodman.

The first record played was a rare Black Swan issue of Lulu Whidby singing *Strut Miss Lizzie*, one of only two tunes she recorded. She was accompanied by Henderson's Novelty Orchestra, in April 1921. We heard about the introduction of OK Race Records and the court fights relating to lateral cut records. Another Black Swan issue gave us *Pretty Ways*, a non-vocal item by the Black Swan Dance Orchestra, led by Henderson.

The first record bearing Henderson's name was *When You Walked Out Someone Else Walked Right In*, a non-vocal rendition of an early Irving Berlin number on Puritan (another lesser known record label). The Henderson name was again on the label for *Midnight Blues* but this was singer Rosa Henderson, who was no relation to her band-leading accompanist. Don Redman was on alto sax and Coleman Hawkins on bass sax. Both were to play regularly with Henderson and each established themselves as jazz greats.

We heard two sides of a brown Vocalion by Henderson's Orchestra showing that our man was aware of the current dance craze with his *Charleston Crazy*. Having heard *Hard Hearted Hannah* with Buster Bailey on clarinet we then heard how Louis Armstrong joined Henderson's band, largely due to the pushing of his wife Lil Hardin who recognized her husband's massive talent. This was evident in *One of these Days*, recorded in November 1924 on Banner. It moved along steadily until Louis' solo leapt out of the speaker in unmistakable fashion. What talent for a band's 'third' trumpeter! This Louis solo was great, but the next one was even better as it was an electrical recording. This was *Money Blues* recorded on 19 May 1925 on American Columbia. As well as Armstrong, the band included Bailey, Redman and Hawkins, trumpeter Joe Smith, trombonist Charlie Green and Kaiser Marshall at the drum kit. Armstrong left the band about five months later.

The final two Henderson Orchestra records were *Clarinet Marmalade* from December 1926 (Tommy Ladnier had replaced Armstrong) and *Fidgety Feet* with Joe Smith providing the cornet solo. There was a trombone solo from Jimmy Harrison. He died of TB at a very young age. Dave then gave us a rousing finish with Bessie Smith in *There'll Be a Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight* on an English Parlophone. It was a legitimate entry in a Fletcher Henderson tribute as her Blue Boys consisted of Henderson sides-men: Joe Smith, Jimmy Harrison, Buster Bailey, Coleman Hawkins, Fletcher Henderson and Charlie Dixon.

This should have been the finale, but Dave played one more record. Jazz recording started in 1917 – 100 years ago – and to pay centennial homage we heard *Livery Stable Blues* on Victor 18255 (recorded on 27 February 1917 by the Original Dixieland Jazz Band). What a perfect way to end an excellent presentation – well done Dave!

Albert Pattison