



Jazzing it up! (A total amateur's view)

Ardrishaig Hall was packed out on Saturday March 11th, the cabaret style tables having to be fitted so close to each other that it was with difficulty the 5 artistes wound a way through them to perform. All this for a jazz night.

It has always been so that some folk love jazz and others hate it. I am not an expert in any way at all, and while I understand the principles generally what I truly enjoy is the dance response to the music. In 1927 Queen Victoria's daughter (married to the Duke of Argyll) expressed her distaste saying how tired she was of hearing jazz and that she abhorred the way it dominated the scene. It is also recorded that Henry Dickens (son of the novelist) wrote "I can only regard jazz as a passing phase in music and not one that is likely to endure". Here we are in 2018 with jazz ever developing.

Growing up in Uganda I heard the village drummers in the distance every night and so always knew the underlying power of communication by drum. Later lessons swiftly taught me that the complex intricacies of the rhythms were way beyond me, however much I tried, however much help I was given. Later still came training in jazz dance as a separate style so I knew all about jazz hands, jazz boxes, jazzy hips and head, and loved trying 'all that jazz' even when struggling to combine all the moves and rhythms. And so it was that I found the evening with the Colin Steele Quintet enthralling.

I could not listen and analyse because I see the music as much as hear it. Choreographing with patterns and shapes and colours takes over, while ideas for dance pieces pop in and out. The players improvised so brilliantly and seamlessly that it all became a stream of movement. I wish my own dancers were such experts at awareness of the others sharing their space, time, music and movement. What a fantastic event it would be to have such a talented group of musicians playing while a team of professional dancers used to improvisation work interpreted the flow of music. A recording that pins the spontaneous sounds would be essential for any more permanent choreography, as every performance is different, and cd's were indeed available, (as we were modestly reminded!)

The musicians were delightful to chat to, relaxed, entertaining, knowledgeable, enthusiastic, and so interesting. They gave their all for a great evening. But I am glad they did not have any pa system with them! The hall acoustics are very good and any further amplification would have been overwhelming - as it was some of those with hearing impairment needed to adjust or remove hearing aids (and still enjoyed the sounds).

Anne Beckitt

Mid Argyll Community Dancers