



Dixie Comes To Ardrishaig

I've heard people say "I don't like Jazz". To me that refrain sounds similar to someone saying "I don't like books". Jazz is not a singular form of music, it's not constrained to just one mode. It's almost impossible to define in just a few words, it embraces a wide and eclectic variety of styles.

On Saturday night 9th April in the Ardrishaig village hall, courtesy of the Mid Argyll Arts Association, a large audience was treated to the pure straight and simple form and sound of New Orleans, Louisiana and Dixieland early jazz.

The Ugly Bug Ragtime Three in the form of John Burgess on clarinet and saxophone, Ross Milligan on guitar and banjo, and Andy Sharkey on string bass were warmly welcomed to the hall. They started the evening with a tune from around 1916 called Daisies Won't Tell. The upbeat foot tapping Dixie swing music was just the perfect start to an evening that blended ragtime and Dixie swing with soft melodies. With John alternating between clarinet and saxophone and Ross swapping between guitar and banjo they ensured that the audience were kept guessing what style the next number would be.

Whilst some of the tunes were instantly recognisable a feeling existed that we may possibly have heard all of them before, perhaps in old black and white movies or in the new movies recreating the old America of the 20's 30's and 40's. We were transported, through the wonderful music, to another world 'across the pond' - all that was missing was the speakeasy atmosphere, the heavy laden smoke filled room, the cocktail waitresses and of course the illicit booze. Thankfully Ardrishaig Hall had a cafe atmosphere with the audience encouraged to BYOB and their own nibbles.

The music of Al Jolson, Louis Armstrong and Edinburgh born Archie Semple were among the numbers played. The Ugly Bug Ragtime Three were playing music from the golden era of jazz when tunes were only 4 or 5 minutes long and before the arrival of the free jazz and avant garde styles. This was music to tap your feet to, to smile with appreciation and to sit back and enjoy. Mid Argyll Arts Association deserves huge praise for securing the services of these three very talented individuals. Their CVs list numerous performances with world class musicians, orchestras, involvement in film scores and concerts in Europe and North America now they can add Ardrishaig to that list!

Finally is it possible to get tennis elbow from too much foot tapping?!!

R.J Finlay