

MART RODGER MANCHESTER JAZZ

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ROYAL GARDEN JAZZ BAND'S 60TH ANNIVERSARY: Mart had a call from our good friends in Norway to ask him to join them for their 60th Anniversary. The band first met the boys from the Royal Garden Jazz Band when both bands played at the Dresden International Dixieland Festival in 1986, three years before German Reunification, and have been good friends ever since. Our band flew over for some anniversary celebrations with them in previous years, and they have been over here on a few occasions to join us on gigs which included Stockport Stomps, jazz club events, Wilmslow Leisure Centre, Lady Manners School, Bakewell, Stockport Town Hall, Fort Perch Rock, Romiley Forum etc. The 60th anniversary celebrations were to include a concert at Drammen Theatre and a jazz club performance the next day. Drammen is a few miles from Oslo and our band has played there before. Mart and Janet were met at Oslo Airport on the 15th October and were met by clarinet-player, Finn Arnesen. Mart had walked off the plane wearing a jokey Norwegian hat with reindeer-type antlers and Finn was very amused at the sight! He had a newspaper to show to us which gave coverage to the weekend's events. On the next day we spent time with Finn and his wife, Laila, then they took us to the Drammen Theatre where we were able to meet up with the Royal Garden Jazz Band and their families and friends. The concert featured the band for the first numbers of the set before they called Mart and trumpet-player, Sigmund Bjertnes, to play features with them. Mart and Finn played a great duet on "Trog's Blues" which was very well received by the packed audience. (We have received a CD of this duet and it is now on our website: manchesterjazz.co.uk) After the interval the local Big Band came on to play some very well arranged numbers, then the Royal Garden musicians played various solos with them. Both bands and guests played together on the last few numbers and it was a very entertaining evening. The next afternoon Mart played with the band again at their local jazz club, which was crowded all the time. One lady told Janet that she was too late to get a ticket for the concert which was sold out well in advance, so she made sure she was at the jazz club early enough for a seat! Mart thanks all the band for a delightful weekend – Finn Arnesen, clarinet, Petter Falch, who has returned to the band on trumpet, Jan Inge Melsaeter on trombone, Arild Berger on piano, Oivind Tangen on double bass and Egil Arnesen who plays banjo and drums. We were interested to learn from Oivind that he would be playing with a symphony orchestra the next day where there would be three other double bass players. A point of interest – Drammen Theatre was burned down by an arsonist some years ago among with other important buildings in Norway. The police were able to catch the person eventually as his habit was to watch the burning and he was spotted on camera watching the fire in Drammen as well as one in Bergen. The theatre was rebuilt exactly as it was before, externally and internally, using many photographs taken over the years. The band had played there before and after the fire in 1990 and 2000 and it was designed to be a copy of La Scala in Milan.

GOOSTREY VILLAGE HALL: We are sorry that we have had to stop playing at this venue, but the rental has been so high in the last couple of years that the donations to St. Luke's Hospice have had to be considerably reduced. Attempts to find another suitable venue are still ongoing and we hope to have more news before long. It is good to know that a total of £11,486 has been given to St. Luke's from the concerts at Goostrey.

MART'S 80TH BIRTHDAY PARTY: There will be a gig at Poynton Methodist Church on Wednesday, 9th March at 2.00 p.m. so Mart can celebrate his birthday in the way he wants. There will be no entrance charge but there will be a raffle, and donations will be gratefully received for two charities, Methodist Homes for the Aged and Adopt-A-Child who have Christian schools abroad. (Mart and Janet sponsor 9-year-old twin boys in Guatemala. You will see photos of them on the day.) The trio plays at Care Homes

MANCHESTER FILM FESTIVAL: The band has been booked to play at The Printworks on Saturday, 5th March during the Film Festival, prior to the world premiere of the film, "There's A Future In The Past". This is a documentary about the Brooklyn Jazz Musician, Vince Giordano, who brought music to "Broadwalk Empire" and numerous Woody Allen films. Vince will be playing alongside the band in the afternoon and his film will be shown at 7.00 p.m.

BACK TO POYNTON LEGION: After playing at Poynton Sports Club a few times we have decided to go back to Poynton Royal British Legion. At the Sports Club, the steps that lead up into the room and the position of the tables have not suited the band or the audience. However, as Thursday nights are not now available, our gigs back at the Legion will now be on the 3rd Monday of each month and will start at 7.30 p.m. This commences on Monday, 18th January.

A GOOD FRIEND'S FUNERAL: Harry Newton had followed the band for many years and we were very sorry to hear of his passing a few months ago. At Harry's request, the quartet from the band was to play at the funeral. He had arranged the whole event some time beforehand as he wanted the band to play certain numbers. This was quite usual, but his choice for the last number was definitely different. As the coffin disappeared through the curtains of the crematorium the band played "Wish Me Luck As You Wave Me Goodbye" and everyone present waved. Just as he wanted!

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MART IN SWEDEN: Mart's brother and his wife have lived in Sweden for over 40 years and they have recently sold their house and moved into a retirement apartment. In September Mart and Janet went over to see them and stayed in the centre of Stockholm. On the first evening they were recommended to try a restaurant very close to their hotel. It was very busy but they were able to wait in the bar area until they were notified that their table was available. There were some people sitting next to them and a couple looked at Mart and recognized him! They had arrived in Stockholm on the same plane that day to visit their family and were regulars at the Wilbraham Arms in Alsager! Mart has since met up with them again there. It was amazing to just sit down and find jazzfans next to you! Writing about it makes us recall other times that a jazzfan has turned up to say hello in an unexpected place. On one occasion, Mart was travelling to an appointment with his customer in Wells, Somerset, and had left at 4.00 a.m. as very few motorways had been started then. He was surprised to find a few miles of motorway open, with a service station, possibly Strensham. As he walked through the door at 7.00 a.m. to buy a coffee a lady came along and asked him if he had his clarinet with him! Another time was at Chicago O'Hare Airport as the band was to fly home from gigs in California and Arizona. A lady also going for the plane was Ann from Warrington, one of the jazzfans who used to come to hear the band when we played at Didsbury!

NEW STOCKS OF RECORDS: We have run out of several of our CD recordings and some have not been available for quite a while. "Manchester Delighted", "T'Ain't Nobody's Bizness If We Do" and "Moments Like This" are now back in stock, and we have also had a delivery from Jazzology in New Orleans of their CDs, "A Tale Of Two Jazz Cities" and "1997 Recordings for George H. Buck, Jnr." We also ordered a few copies of "The Zenith Six Plays Jelly Roll Morton" from America which, of course, features Mart on clarinet. On some of the tunes, Allan Dent is playing too. Alan Pendlebury, Chris's Dad, plays trombone on all tracks. This CD is a collection from two recordings made by the Zenith Six in February and July 1964.

MORE PLACES TO SEE THE BAND:

1st Monday of every month:

High Lane Conservative Club, SK6 8DR 8.00 p.m. 4th Jan., 1st Feb., 7th March, 4th April etc.

3rd Monday of every month:

Poynton Royal British Legion, George's Road, Poynton. SK12 1JY 7.30 p.m. 18th Jan., 15th Feb., 21st March, 18th April, etc.

4th Thursday of every month: Timperley Sports Club, Stockport Road, Timperley. WA15 7LU 2.00 p.m. 28th Jan., 25th Feb., 24th March, 28th April, etc.

27th Jan. Walton Hall Music Society, Warrington. 7.30 p.m.

31st Jan. Wilbraham Arms, Alsager. 8.00 p.m.

7th Feb. Rochdale Jazz Club 8.30 p.m.

26th Feb. Barmouth Music Society 7.30 p.m.

5th March The Printworks, Manchester Film Festival.

9th March Poynton Methodist Church 2.00 p.m. for Mart's Birthday .

19th March Boston Spa Jazz Club 8.00 p.m.

12th May Burton Jazz Club 8.30 p.m.

15th May Keswick Jazz Festival 12.00

4th June Bickerton Village Hall

10th and 11th June Kirkcudbright Jazz Festival.

26th June Wilbraham Arms, Alsager 8.00 p.m.

6th July Eaton Hall.

2nd July Fulwood Old Chapel 7.30 p.m.

28th July Psatter Hotel, Sheffield 8.00 p.m.

17th and 18th Sept. Lyme Hall, Disley

28th Oct. Medway Centre, Bakewell. 7.30 p.m.

JAZZ FESTIVALS: We have been invited to play at the Kirkcudbright Jazz Festival again in South West Scotland. This has grown into a much bigger Festival now than when we first took part in 2005. We will play on Friday and Saturday, 10th and 11th June. The Keswick Jazz Festival has also booked the band and we will be playing there at 12.00 and 6.00 p.m. on 15th May. Both will be well-attended events!

A CHRISTMAS CARD FROM THE USA In the Christmas post Mart received a card from America from a lady jazzfan we met years ago when we flew over to take part in the Festivals organized by Ed Zimbrick of the 10th Avenue Jazz Band and Pete Clute, who lived in San Francisco and was the pianist with the Turk Murphy Jazz Band. We met this lady and her husband at the Festivals and kept in touch. She sent a couple of our photo Christmas cards back to us as she had gone into sheltered housing and was having to pare down her possessions. It was good to hear from her and nice to know she had kept them so long.

RECORDING PLAYED AT A FUNERAL: We received the very sad news from our friend, Bob Delderfield, that his wife Pearl had sadly died. He arranged to have our recording of "Let's Sing Again" played as everyone filed in for the funeral. One of his friends has been in touch with Mart as a result of this and has since ordered some of our CDs. He told Mart that everyone there enjoyed hearing the record.

MUSIC SOCIETIES: We were invited to return again to play for Frodsham Music Society in December and it was a very enjoyable evening. We also have a return booking to play for Walton Hall Music Society, Warrington, on 27th January and look forward to it very much. Our visit to the Barmouth Music Society a year ago was very successful and we will be there again on 26th February.