



Our 37<sup>th</sup> Season of Jazz Concerts got off to a truly splendid start! There was drama too when our President, Digby Fairweather, went down with Covid just before the 23<sup>rd</sup> and Alistair Allan had the task of finding a `dep' for Digby! Luck was with him - Peter Rudeforth was free and arrived with his trumpet and flugel horn at the ready! We were all looking forward to seeing Digby, our President, who was very disappointed, but has promised to make an appearance at OJC during the current Season

However, before the performance started, a few words of welcome were spoken by Howard Nicholson who at the end of the 36<sup>th</sup> Season in May, announced his retirement as Chairman of Ongar Jazz after over 30 years and welcomed Alistair Allan to take over the driving seat. Although this change becomes truly official at the **Club's AGM on 21<sup>st</sup> October**, Howard and Alistair had been working together for some time to ensure a smooth transition. Howard Nicholson also said, *'I may be retiring, but I will definitely still be around and am confident that Alistair Allan will bring great music for us all to enjoy!* We hope that the AGM on 21 October will be well attended!

In recognition of Howard's contribution to Ongar Jazz Club over so many years, the OJC Committee presented him with a beautiful engraved glass plaque (see picture below) and gave his wife, Patti, a lovely bouquet of flowers. Howard was overwhelmed, but managed to say a big `Thank You' to Alistair, the OJC Committee and the Members for this beautiful gift which he would treasure. He also said how much he was looking forward to enjoying the music the Club brings to Ongar for many years to come.

The audience applauded Howard and Alistair enthusiastically and the evening got off to a flying start with the band playing, appropriately, *Strike Up and Band* by Gershwin. It featured a terrific drum solo by John Elmer and introduced all the musicians playing led by Alistair on trombone with Peter Rudeforth on trumpet and flugel horn, Julian Marc Stringle on clarinet and saxophone, Nick Dawson on keyboard and Murray Salmon on bass. *The Wabash Blues* was next, followed by *Everybody Loves My Baby* that featured another tremendous drum break by John Ellmer. Julian Marc Stringle changed the mood completely playing *Bossa Nova* by Artie Shaw and throughout the evening each instrument enjoyed a special spot. Peter Rudeforth gave us Errol Garner's *Misty* on flugel horn and later joined Alistair on trombone as Julian sang *I can't give you anything but love, baby'*. Murray Salmon played the double bass with great tenderness and John Ellmer kept the base rhythm driving along. Nick Dawson on keyboard was a joy to hear and watch, and he sings so well too! Throughout the evening he supported the band and played some lovely solos including *Chicago* and a beautiful piece, *Poor Butterfly*, based on the opera La Boheme. The band were really great and it was clear to us all that they loved making jazz together - and we all loved it too!

OPJC fans had turned out in large numbers. We had a bumper audience – almost to the point where we were full! During the evening Alistair announced that all future concerts would be priced at £15 and the membership subscription was being dropped. Another change is that as from the October Concert, the evening will be in two one hour sessions with one interval, rather than the three sets. Musicians prefer playing two longer sets with only one interval – better for their continuity and musical flow – and it also means that the concert can close a bit earlier at 10.30pm, helpful on dark winter nights! We are also very pleased that the Bar in the Budworth Hall has been re-opened and

the Ballroom furnished with new very smart, comfortable chairs. In future we can definitely sit in greater comfort! Ongar Jazz Club has been a regular hirer of the Budworth Hall Ballroom for very many years and has always supported the activities of the Ongar Community Association. We make donations to local charities through our raffles that are supported so generously by OJC members. We wish the new Management of the Ongar Community Association every success in the future.

The OJC Annual General Meeting (a future event as I write this) was on **Friday 21<sup>st</sup> October at 7.0pm** prior to welcoming an old friend, Dave Browning who has played for OJC many times before with Hugh Rainey, but now leads his own band - **Dave Browning's Jazz Cats**. He will be leading the band from his stride piano, playing high energy jazz in the Chicago style – sure to be a very entertaining evening.!

**Friday 18<sup>th</sup> November, 8.0pm Simon Nelson's Dixie Mix.** Making their first visit to OJC, this is one of the country's most engaging and hardworking bands - sure to give an entertaining show with a feel-good factor designed to please all.

Another new band for OJC, follows on **Friday 9<sup>th</sup> December, at 8.0pm – The Forest Hill Owls**. It's always good to hear new bands and I'm sure OJC will give a warm welcome to this band making their first visit to Ongar Jazz Club.

To make sure of your seat, it's wise to book in advance and this can be done either by phone by contacting Paul Keska on 01277365670, or Mobile 07768 815390 or by post. Send your reservation details together with a cheque made out to Ongar Jazz Club *at least two weeks before the date*, to Paul Keska, 25B Coopers Hill, Ongar, Essex CM5 9EE. You can also book online via the OJC website – [www.ongarjazzclub.co.uk](http://www.ongarjazzclub.co.uk) and pay by bank transfer, details are on the website. It's ok to pay on the night on the door, but with such a terrific programme of top rate jazz forthcoming, it's wisest to book in advance to avoid disappointment! There is also a wealth of information about jazz and Ongar Jazz Club on our website – so it's worth looking at!

Here's to live jazz in Ongar and I look forward to meeting you!

*Patti Nicholson*

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