

Dear KCCA Members,

I hope you enjoyed our last concert and I know you would like to read this review. I have one request from our artists. If you took a picture of them on stage, can you please send it to me and I will pass it on to them. They would like to post the pictures on their website and we can add them to our website as well, with your permission of course.

Thank you,
Betty

The Dime Notes Create Spirit of the 1920's by Neville Bowman

One of the features I most enjoy about the Kelowna Community Concert series of concerts is the contrast from one performance to the next. While the calibre of the talent is almost always excellent, the diversity of music and presentation is refreshing. A case in point was the most recent performance by The Dime Notes, a UK based quartet specializing in 1920s era New Orleans style jazz. Whereas the previous show had the Kelowna audience sitting stunned by the true brilliance of young Kevin Chen performing Liszt, this time around I doubt there wasn't a toe tapping to the energetic music of Jelly Roll Morton and Duke Ellington.

100 years ago the aisles would have been full of dancers. 100 years ago, Dime Notes would have more likely been playing in some smoky dance hall, standing room only, with an energy and buzz taken on by an appreciative audience. It would have been a great party! What that 1920s crowd would have missed however is the nuance, the subtle touches to the music that the theatre stage allows. Dime Notes is a very tight band, a pleasure to listen to, where every little crescendo and cutoff is together, musicians listen to each other and respond as one, such an essential thing in any group but especially where improvisation is concerned.

Andrew Oliver (piano) seems to be the leader of the group, though speaking duties were shared with amazing clarinet player David Horniblow. Andrew is more than just a pianist (he pronounces it properly, thank-you sir!), he has a very in-depth historical knowledge of the music and the musicians of the era, adding a real legitimacy to the performance and providing interesting stories to go along with the tunes. His solo performance to start the second half was very impressive, showing that the music can be as technically and rhythmically demanding as any other. David Horniblow was ideal on clarinet, showcasing the range and power of a sometimes derided instrument. I really enjoyed his musicality and improvisational skills. Bassist Louis Thomas did an excellent job on a borrowed bass (thanks to Steven Buck), enjoying a few solos but mostly sticking to the style of the era very effectively. Then we had the absolutely rock solid rhythm guitar of Dave Kelbie. Rhythm guitar is just that, it keeps a steady rhythm. It's an important role, and while some may have commented it seemed "monotonous", I was amazed how he never faltered, his sound was so consistent, his energy driving. Not an easy role, but done expertly.

There is something about this style of music that transports us back. While classical music is older, it's almost too detached, while at the same time ubiquitous. Dime Notes plays a style that takes us to a whole other time with which we can still feel connected. With a focus on Jelly Roll Morton's music, (Stratford Hunch, Why, Grandpa's Spells), plus a variety of other composers (including themselves), the energy was always up, always moving forward. Some of the faster pieces pushed them to show off very impressive "chops" as we say in the jazz world. I almost wish the band had shown a bit of that energy on stage, as they were physically fairly subdued, but that is truly my biggest critique. (I know some of the audience suggested it sounded a lot of the same feel, but remember, this was the dance music of the era. Try going into a modern dance club and see what it's like...).

This is group I will definitely look for on their next tour. Fun music, great musicianship, and even chocolate for those with a sweet tooth. Keep an eye out for Dime Notes, and maybe take some dancing shoes, just in case.

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