

Martin's Gig Scrapbook

From Lovatt with Love - from start to finish

"In November 2022, I was depping for the Syd Lawrence Orchestra and as I was setting up my instruments, I turned round to see the smiling face of Mike Lovatt who was playing lead trumpet, and I thought, 'This is going to be a good night!' It was! Several weeks later I messaged Mike to ask if he would consider coming down to play with the newly formed Front Row Big Band, and he said, "Yes!"



9am - Stage Door



Lin setting up the chairs



Katie arriving & Dean unloading his kit

10.45 am - The Front Row Big Band are warming up and waiting for Mike to arrive. I'm like a cat on hot bricks wandering in and out of the stage door. At 10.50 Mike and his wife Ann, walk around the corner in the winter sunshine. Mike sets up his music stand and trumpet and we start to play. In a 90 minute rehearsal, Mike whips the band into shape in a relaxed and easy manner.



Fine tuning...



Mike asks Dean (on drums) to play a bit louder - not an everyday occurrence!

2.28 pm - Mike's in the dressing room and I'm doing up my tie. We shake hands and I go...onto the stage to introduce the band.



Calm before the storm

The moment arrives and I announce Mike onto the stage. He counts in a breakneck version of Almost Like Being in Love - the band rises to the occasion. I feel proud of us all!



*Time to bring on.....
The Front Row Big Band.*



*...and I get to play a duet
with Mike.*



The Master at work.

Our lead Trumpet player, Dave wanders down to the front. Dave and Mike move to opposite sides of the stage and Mike, with his superb burnished sound, plays the first few notes of the Johnny Keating arrangement of Stardust. A few bars later, the melody switches to Dave with his beautiful full tone. I'm sitting in the sax section with the hairs standing up on the back of my neck!



*The Dynamic Duo
A sprinkling of Stardust*

It's a full house and Mike has the audience in the palm of his hand. In the interval, I'm besieged by people telling me how much they're enjoying the show, including many musicians who I haven't seen for years.



The audience hanging on Mike's every word



A view from the engine room of the band in full swing

What a fantastic afternoon.
We loved every minute...



Mike shows the audience how a trumpet is made and amazingly part of the trumpet is made in Norwich!



Mike's in the groove



Mike says, "It's days like this that remind me of why I'm a musician.. I had a ball"

There's nothing much more to say. Mike has said it all. At the end of the show, I turn to him and shake his hand, the band stands up spontaneously to applaud Mike and he applauds us.

The Front Row Big Band had a ball!



A job well done!

Photos by Chad Fielder