



Think about it, Georgie Fame has cut sides with Van Morrison and Prince Buster, he started his musical life in Marty Wildes backing band, his was the only UK act to be invited to perform with the first Motown Review when it hit London in the mid-1960s, and the story is that Ronan O' Rahilly started Radio Caroline to get his records played on the radio. No wonder when the BBC made the programme The Birth of Cool he was front and centre and phrases such as "his musical credentials were as cool as the cut of his style setting clothes" are common place in articles about him. Yeah, Georgie Fame may just be **the** true Mod Father, yeh yeh and ah yeh yeh.

And at almost 65 years old he is still looking good in slicked back hair, white T shirt and grey waistcoat. Georgie Fame takes to the small raised stage at the Horns in Watford, rests his pint of black stuff on top of the Hammond and seemingly without even the merest trace of a nod, a finger click or even eye contact he hits the first note of Green Onions bang on with his sons Tristan on guitar and James on drums right there on the money.

He's quoted as saying – "When I stop touring I'm only playing 2 gigs, Ronnie Scott's and The Horns", seems his old pal Denis who runs the place is a regular host so he's relaxed and comfortable 'back home'. But when, 2 numbers in, Georgie asks Denis over the PA to adjust the levels on the fold back 'cos if I sing too loud its starts to whistle' some smart arse offers the advice 'well just whistle the songs instead' the retort is anything but comfortable and relaxed: "When I want your opinion I'll give it to you" offers Mr Fame to great approval all round and then, being the completist that he is, he credits Ronnie Scott with the put down.

Yes, you don't just get 2 hours of cool soul, jazz and ska you also, as you used to get with George Melly, get an encyclopaedic walk through record labels, old gigs, stories and requests for information on CD reissues of Ray Charles Tangerine label "Cause I know there are some real aficionados here tonight".

Green Onions gives way to Louis Jordan's Don't Send Me Flowers When I'm In The Graveyard and we're away with Mose Allison and the like all the, while instrumental breaks making all kinds of musical references including, at one point, the Woody Woodpecker Song until the announcement "Someone asked us for something a bit different" and Tristan Powell features on the great Jim Reeves classic 'He'll Have To Go' – in the style of Ry Cooder of course, with Georgie taking the Flaco Jimenez accordion parts.

Just as we head for the break we're warned "This where we mess it up with a capital F" and what Denis has since told me has become a Georgie Fame / Horns tradition takes place with the current band playing live to a backing track of Georgie Fame and the Blue Flames playing Yeh Yeh on Ready Steady Go back in the day. Amid complaints that the 60s line up play it too fast and the instrumental break is 8 bars too long it's smiles all round as the first half closes somewhat oddly to a verse and chorus of 'For Those in Peril on The Sea'!



A 21st century paced Yeh Yeh gets things going after the break; there's a nice anecdote about Chas Chandler and Jimi Hendrix, tales of a recent Japanese tour, musical memories of Prince Buster and a 'prototype' of a track, a cover of Jambalaya, from a planned album. Someone approaches the stage and requests a song – "The trouble is I can never remember the words to that one" is the response and as the weary traveller returns to his table the man at the microphone reels off the first verse and chorus, "Can never remember the words" he muses.

Bonnie & Clyde, Point of No Return, Getaway (wryly referred to as 'a petrol advert'), they all roll by and suddenly its time for the last waltz, literally; a few goodbyes, "Thank you for coming out tonight" then a rip through I Love the Life I Live and it's goodnight. He says he'll be back, Denis promises he'll be back and I know I'll be back.

