

Welcome to the Al Jolson UK Festival 20th & 21st October 2012



85th
Anniversary

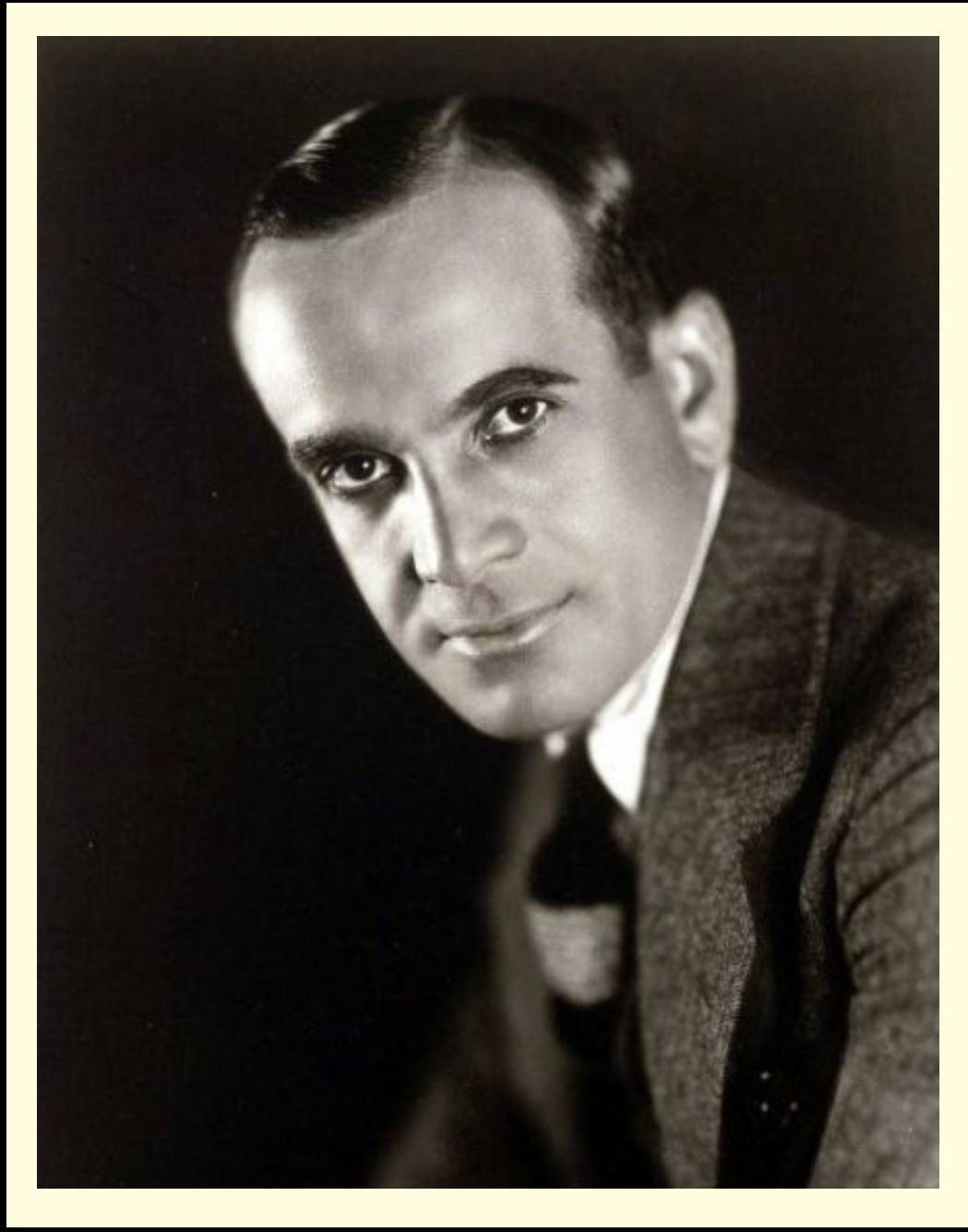
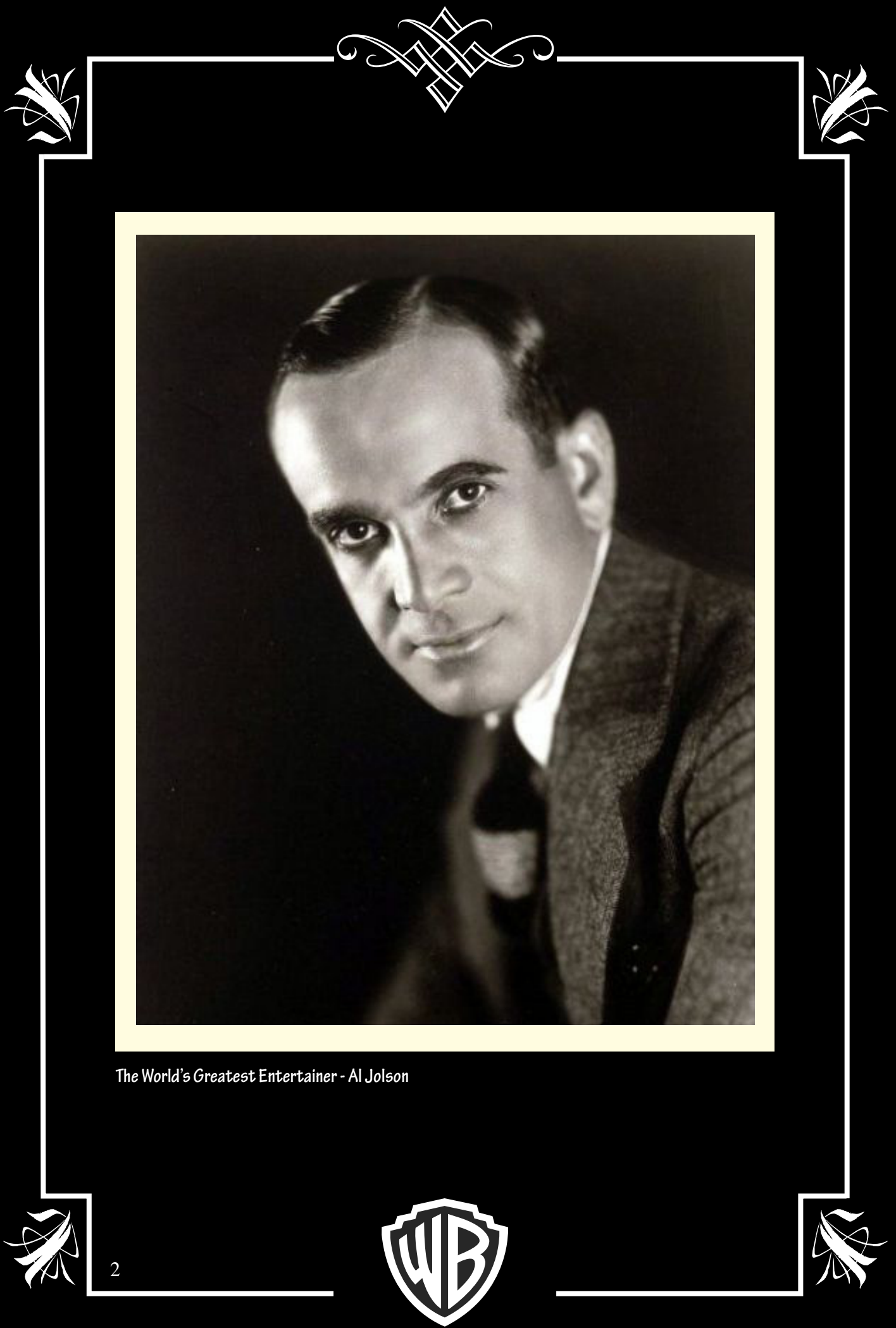
WARNER BROS. SUPREME TRIUMPH

AL JOLSON

IN

the **JAZZ SINGER**

Souvenir Programme



The World's Greatest Entertainer - Al Jolson





Al Jolson with May McAvoy



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Outside The Warners' Theatre 6th October 1927

Bromley - Saturday 20th & Sunday 21st October 2012

Welcome to the 2012 Al Jolson UK Festival

The JAZZ SINGER

The First Movie Heard Around The World

Dear Al Jolson Enthusiast

On behalf of the organising team of Mary & Trevor Hooper and myself, David McCarthy I bid you all a warm welcome to the 2012 Al Jolson UK Festival celebrating the life and times of the **World's Greatest Entertainer - Al Jolson**.

This year we have mostly followed the same format as last year's extended Jolson meeting though introducing new items to ensure a fresh approach. Starting with our social gathering and karaoke on Friday evening leading up to the start of our two day Jolson event which starts Saturday lunchtime. We also have for the second year running our newly introduced **Jolson Cabaret** that takes place on the Saturday night.

Last year we moved the original karaoke evening, which had started as just a friendly gathering for those that arrived early for the main day, from Saturday night to Friday night to make way for us to introduce our own entertainment evening which we call **The Jolson Cabaret**.

To supplement the talents of our Scottish Minstrel **Bill Campbell** and the comedic talents of **Mel Thomas** we are pleased to welcome once again the talented **Jolieanna Davis** and her father **Joe Sharman** who together with well loved regular **Stanley Blum** will be putting on a great show for us

We are also delighted to welcome back young **Claire Curran** who proved such a tremendous hit at our karaoke last year that we asked her to take part in the main Cabaret night.



A very talented young lady who I know you will all love watching perform.

This is our third year as Festival organisers and we think that this year will be bigger and better than in previous years - we hope you agree. This year we are pleased to bring you the talents of our friends from Germany **Andrea, Jens and Wyman** who will be talking to us about the work of the Vilnius Jewish Library in Jolson's homeland. Also we are delighted to welcome back **Michael Freedland** who has been working with both myself and long time Jolson enthusiast **Dennis Sykes** to bring you a Jolson Mastermind Quiz. This is the opportunity for all you Jolson fans to demonstrate your knowledge about the great Al Jolson.

This year marks the 85th anniversary of *The Jazz Singer*, the film that ushered in the revolutionary new media of talking pictures. The star of this groundbreaking film was of course Al Jolson and the film gave him his place in the history of cinema.

During the course of the year the organising team have been out and about helping me take the voice of Al Jolson to far distant places - well the wilds of Folkestone to be precise and you can read about this particular excursion within these pages.

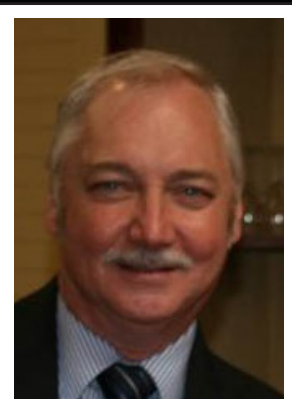
The voice and legacy of Al Jolson is strong in the UK thanks in part to these annual meetings which have been taking place in the Kent area for over 50 years now. Thank you for your continued support in helping to keep alive the name of Al Jolson for the 21st Century.

Dates for your diary: we have booked the Bromley Court Hotel for the weekend of 18th, 19th and 20th October 2013. Please put these dates in your diary and let your friends know that the UK Jolson Festival is an event not to be missed. Now sit back and enjoy with us the 2012 UK Al Jolson Festival Weekend.

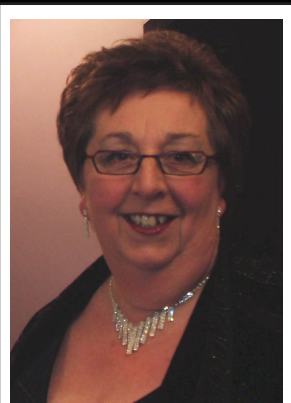
Best wishes David McCarthy
International Al Jolson Society UK Representative

David McCarthy

Organisers of the
Al Jolson UK Festival



David McCarthy



Mary Hooper



Trevor Hooper



Al Jolson with Eugenie Besserer

Programme

Saturday

Intro to the Festival

David McCarthy welcomes attendees to the Al Jolson UK Festival - with a little help from Al Jolson

Meet the Organisers

David McCarthy, Mary Hooper & Trevor Hooper - Organisers of the Al Jolson UK Festival.

Stars in Burnt Cork - Jolson wasn't the only one!

A brief look at the history of blackface entertainment and some of the famous (and surprising) stars that performed in blackface.

The Houses of Al Jolson

Trevor Hooper talks about his research on the houses of Al Jolson and also Jolson's earning power which he has converted as a comparison with today's money.

Beautiful Dreamer(s)

Wyman Brent talks about his work with the Vilnius Jewish Library in Jolson's homeland of Lithuania.

Wilde About Jolson

Larry Wilde interview with Stephen Longstreet the writer of The Jolson Story. Stephen, who died in 2002 at the age of 94 years talks (not exactly accurately!) about his memories of working on The Jolson Story

The Tale Of A Singing Fool

Desmond McCaffery presents a look at one of Al Jolson's greatest admirers, Eddie Fisher and Jolson's influence on the singer

Go Into Your Dance

Al Jolson feature film from 1935

The Jolson Story

musical highlights from the film

.....Break.....

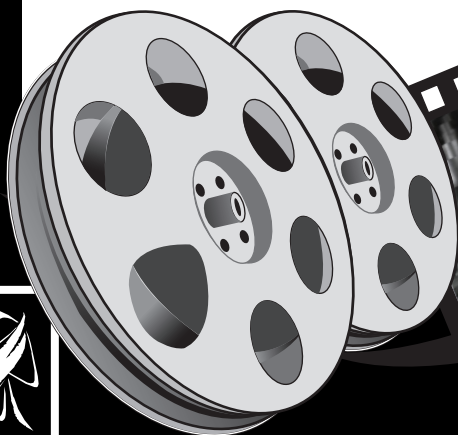
Room to be rearranged for the evening show

The Jolson Cabaret

An evening of entertainment hosted by Trevor Hooper, David McCarthy & Mary Hooper and featuring

**Bill Campbell,
Claire Curren,
Mel Thomas,
Jolieanna Davis,
Joe Sharman,
and Stanley Blum.**

Sundays programme is on page 15





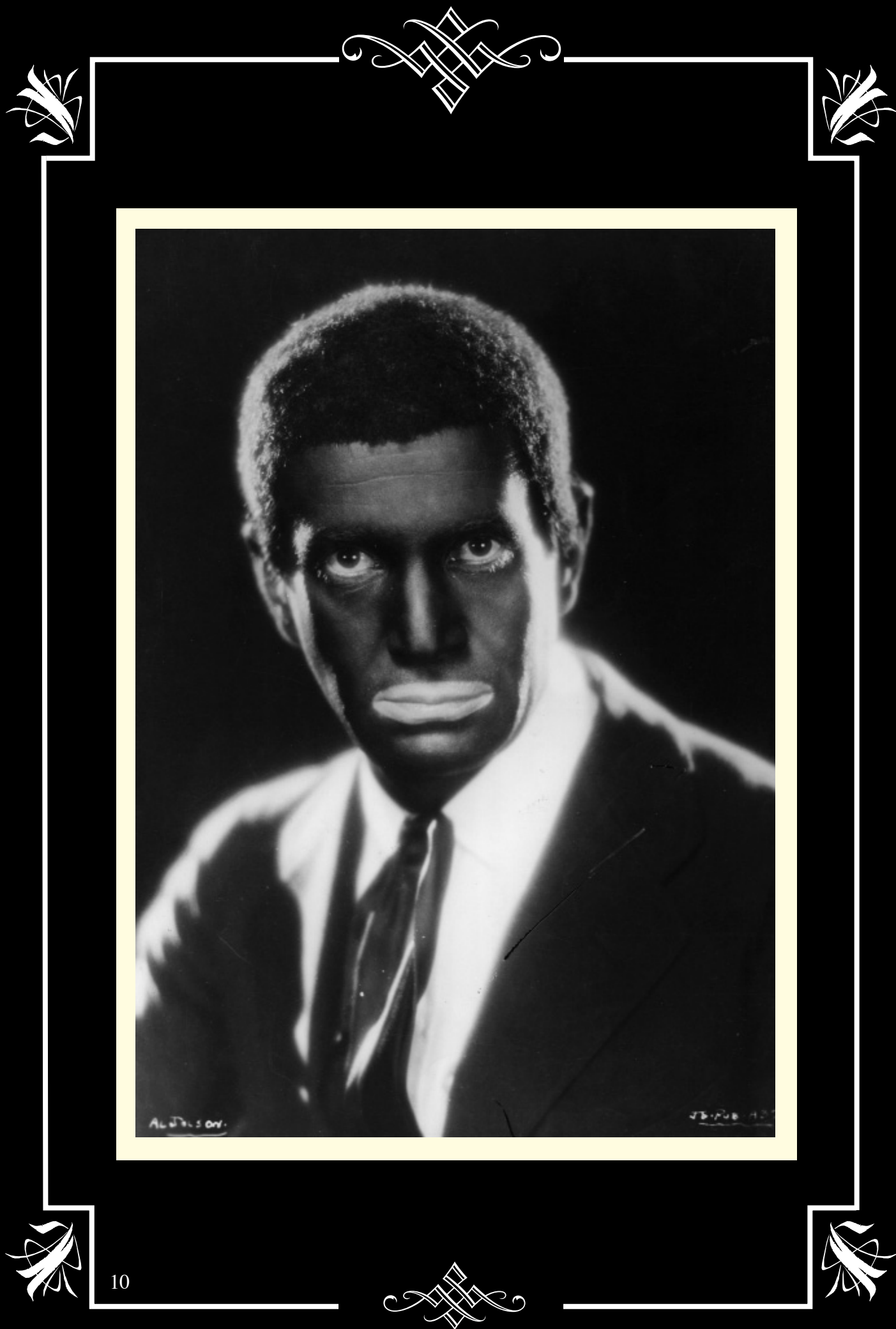
“Wait a minute - Wait a minute”! You ain’t heard nuthin’





n' yet." Wait a minute I tell ya - You ain't heard nuthin',





The JOLSON Cabaret



Bill Campbell

Jolieanna Davis

Claire Curren

Mel Thomas

Joe Sharman

Stanley Blum

Al Jolson

Evening in Folkestone

by David McCarthy

During last year's UK Al Jolson Festival of 2011 an idea was hatched between myself and regular attendee John Oliver. John is Chairman of the Capel Church Hall Re-Building Fund (now known as The Friends of St Radigunds) in the village of Capel-le-Ferne which is near Folkestone on the White Cliffs of Dover. The Friends of St Radigunds are raising funds together with the local community to pay for restoration work and to modernise the Church Hall.

I suggested to John that what his fundraising efforts needed was Jolson (well if you don't ask!!!) - he agreed and so the idea of running a Jolson evening as part of the monthly fund raising activity programme was put to the Vicar who readily agreed with the idea and a date was set for the presentation to take place on Friday 8th June 2012.

As you can see from this weekend of Jolson entertainment, there is a lot of equipment needed and this has to be transported to any location we go to. Without the help of Mary and Trevor Hooper I probably wouldn't have considered this function as there is a massive amount of setting up to do if we are going to do it correctly. By that I mean that I may well write and present the Jolson evening but who is going to do all of the other work? While I am getting the projector and laptop working Trevor is beaver away making safe the equipment so that the wires do not present a trip hazard (Health & Safety!) and setting up the screen and speakers for me. As for Mary, well she is responsible for setting up the memorabilia stand behind which she sits with a host of old Journals and membership forms etc.

From this viewpoint she also glares at me if I dare to run "The Spaniard That Blighted My Life" - a song that she HATES - but I run it anyway!

We arrived at the Church and John came out to let us in to set up the equipment. We were able to get in at 6:30pm and the presentation was due to start at 7:30pm - not long for setting up. Unusually the presentation was to take place in the Church itself rather than the Church Hall which was next door.

The Church interior was delightful and a superb setting for our presentation. The ambience of the room was conducive to the presentation and the acoustics were very good also. Rushing to get set up in time we were nervous to see people coming into the Church from 7pm. The evening wasn't due to start until 7:30pm and we weren't ready for them. It can prove very difficult to set up equipment and test it out when the audience is already milling around and wanting to ask questions.

Finally we were ready to run, the equipment was all working well and we were ready for our audience - most of whom were already seated!

John gave a nice introduction by talking from a very personal viewpoint about his love of Jolson and his visit to the graveside of Al Jolson in Hillside Memorial Park. With the appetite of those present wetted John welcomed Mary, Trevor and myself to the Church of St Radigunds to talk about Jolson.

I had been asked to break the evening into two sections, with a break for tea/coffee and the always present fund raising raffle. I therefore intended telling the story of Al Jolson's life for the first part of the evening and then elaborating on his career for the second half. Unlike our Jolson Festivals this audience were not Jolson fans - always a difficult task.

The first half of the show ran for 50 minutes and took the audience through the life of Al Jolson from his birth in Seredzius, through the family's move to America and his early interest in the world of show business. His rise to fame on the Broadway stage was covered as was his groundbreaking role in *The Jazz Singer*. Jolson's Hollywood career, his war work and of course his comeback years were all up on the screen with Jolson singing many of his big hits.



The first half of the evening came to an end with that sad October day in 1950 when Al Jolson passed away following his strenuous tour of Korea to entertain the troops.

During the break we were inundated by members of the audience coming over to say how much they had enjoyed the presentation and how little they had known about Al Jolson until this event. Mary and her memorabilia table was surrounded with attendees looking at the Journals and chatting as was Trevor who was ever present to answer the many questions. There were also very nice compliments made about the way the presentation had been put together and displayed on the big screen. Many thought that they were looking at a film with the seamless cutting together of pictures, video and audio.

During the intermission I was pleased to meet for the first time someone that many UK Jolson members have already known for a number of years - Harry Hall. Some of you may well remember Harry who owns and runs the pub called Jolson's in Folkestone (he did try to sell it a few years ago and thought he had a buyer but they backed out and rather than just close down

Harry decided to keep it going along with the Castle Inn in St Johns Church Road Folkestone which he also runs). He brought his wife, Mother and Sister over for the evening to support our Jolson event. It was good to see Harry, especially as he was wearing one of the hats and teeshirts that he had produced during the days when the pub was first named Jolson's and was opened by Jolson re-creator Clive Baldwin.

Following the break and the drawing of the raffle prizes, part two of the entertainment started. This time it was intended to let the audience hear even more of the Jolson voice and the varied styles of the man. To most people Jolson means Mammy or Sonny Boy. What they got from me was a mixture of songs ranging from the obvious such as Rockabye and Is It True What they Say About Dixie to the less obvious I Got Lucky In The Rain, My Melancholy Baby, My Blue Heaven and When I Leave The World Behind.

The evening finished at approximately 10pm with the song I'll Be Seeing You, played with a kaleidoscope of photographs that gave an overview of the Jolson career that they had learnt about in the first half of the evening.

With a nice round of applause from the audience the Rev Sue White, who was vicar of Capel until Easter this year made her way to the front of the Church to wind the evening up officially and to say how much she had enjoyed the presentation. She was surprised at how many of the songs she could remember from her own childhood and was delighted that the evening had taken place and how much she had appreciated learning more about the great Al Jolson. There were also requests made for us to make a return visit to Folkestone to talk again about Al Jolson - bring it on!

At least two people commented to John that they had not realised that Jolson was a white man performing in blackface!

Time to pack up the car after a very successful and happy evening of Al Jolson. Will Folkestone ever be the same again? The good news is that we have been invited back next year, so if any of you want to come a long to support a good cause and to hear the wonderful voice of Al Jolson please do so - you will be very welcome.

Michael Freedland



Author, journalist and broadcaster Michael Freedland is one of the UK's most renowned biographers of Hollywood legends.

His Radio 2 documentaries on Bing Crosby, Frank Sinatra and Judy Garland have won him both critical and public acclaim and his book on the moguls who made Hollywood further enhanced his reputation as one of the film industries finest chroniclers. Michaels recent book on Judy Garland, included interviews with people who knew Garland as a young girl, or worked with the star but who have never before spoken about their relationship with the iconic singer and actress.

Above everything else Michael is an Al Jolson enthusiast. His first book was a biography of Jolie and this much acclaimed book is now in its eighth separate edition.

His biography of Al is considered by many to be the definitive book on Al Jolson and with the eighth edition currently on sale it will be winning over new Jolson fans for many years to come.

Al was also the subject of both Michael's first radio show and his first TV programme. To cap this Michael's book about Al was the root of the West End show "Jolson" in 1996.

Wyman - Andrea - Jens

Andrea is a graduate student of modern German literature and media studies, philosophy, and art history at Kiel University in Germany. She has worked as an assistant stage director at Kiel Theatre, appeared as an extra in several international television and film productions, and received training in film direction at Movie College Munich. Since 2006 she has directed and edited various short films on Al Jolson in cooperation with Jens J. Reinke.



Wyman is a social entrepreneur from Lynchburg, Virginia. He has years of experience in voluntary work in various social sectors. He moved to Vilnius, Lithuania, in 2008 to found the Vilnius Jewish Public Library, the first Jewish public library in Lithuania since the liquidation of the Vilna Ghetto in 1943. The library opened in December of 2011. Wyman Brent is also an undergraduate student of communications and public relations at Southern New Hampshire University.

Jens is a graduate student of modern German literature and media studies, anglistics, and art history at Kiel University. Together with Andrea, Jens is the co-founder of AJ-Images Media Productions where he functions as producer and press relations officer. AJ-Images is currently working on a feature documentary about Al Jolson (On the Road to Al Jolson) which is supposed to be released in 2014.

Programme

Sunday

Intro to second day of the Festival

David McCarthy welcomes attendees to the second day of the Al Jolson UK Festival - with a little help from Al Jolson

Meet the Organisers

David McCarthy, Mary Hooper & Trevor Hooper - Organisers of the Al Jolson UK Festival.

The Warner Brothers Years

David McCarthy takes a look at the film work of Al Jolson at Warner Brothers

Al Jolson The Kraft Years

Paul Bowers introduces a 'new' Al Jolson CD (which will be available for purchase during the breaks)

Al Jolson - The Man and His Music

David McCarthy presents Al Jolson The Man and His Music, an audio visual trip through the musical works of Al Jolson

..... Lunch

We ask those of you that are not having lunch in the restaurant to retire to the outer Wellington Room so we can rehearse the afternoon session.

Jolson Mastermind Quiz

Michael Freedland aided by Dennis Sykes will conduct their version of Mastermind.

Contestants will be selected from those that have put their names forward on their booking forms.

Hallelujah I'm A Tramp

Al Jolson feature film from 1933 - this is the version made for the UK market with certain words removed!

..... Break



Al Jolson Top Ten

Results of the Festival vote for top Al Jolson recording

The Jazz Singer

Highlights from the groundbreaking film that opened on 6th October 1927 - 85 years years ago

The Cantor On The Sabbath

Cut from the film The Jolson Story, this version has been subtitled for those wishing to know what the song is about

Memories of Erle

A guest speaker will talk about his very personal friendship with Erle Jolson

Thank you

The Organisers of the 2012 Al Jolson UK Festival David McCarthy, Mary Hooper & Trevor Hooper say thank you to all involved with the Festival

"I'll Be Seeing You"

Our traditional sign off presentation (viewable on YouTube)

Al Jolson says goodbye as the two day Al Jolson UK Festival comes to a close for another year.





WARNER BROS. SUPREME TRIUMPH
AL JOLSON
 IN
The **JAZZ SINGER**

Jolson DVD Movies to collect from the International Al Jolson Society



The Al Jolson UK Festival
 held at
 BROMLEY COURT HOTEL, LONDON
 20th & 21st October 2012



Souvenir Programme designed by John Carter and printed by Regalprint Peterlee County Durham.