

Roger Browne

Roger Browne is an actor, singer, speaker, musician, director, composer and writer.

Born in Blackpool, in 1943, His first appearance in public was at the age of four, in the bandstand at Buille Hill Park, in his home city of Salford, singing songs from the hit film of the day, "The Jolson Story"

He first performed on stage, in 1951, performing ten Jolson favourites at Salford Central Mission.

He was heavily influenced by the music he heard on the radio and retired from singing at the tender age of eight, after his Central Mission appearance, to concentrate on playing the piano. Recordings by artists as diverse as Charlie Kunz, Winifred Atwell, Fats Waller, Lionel Hampton and the classical duo of Rawicz and Landauer, were a huge influence on that decision.

He joined his first jazz outfit, The Dallas Jazz Band in 1959, playing clubs around the North of England, including Liverpool's iconic Cavern Club, where they shared the bill with The Beatles and other Merseybeat favourites on many occasions.

In 1968, he was persuaded to revive his singing career, and from that, developed a love for Musical Theatre and the Great American Songbook, the seeds of which were sown during his "Al Jolson" singing days as a toddler.

His singing comeback and passion for the great American composers started as a member of the singing chorus in Lerner and Lowe's "Camelot" at The Palace Theatre in Manchester in 1968. Since then, he has appeared in, or directed, over 120 musical or dramatic productions.

Roger also loves drama and his most recent acting roles include Sir William Collyer, in Rattigan's "The Deep Blue Sea" Nathaniel Jeffcote in "Hindle Wakes" by Stanley Houghton and his most recent directorial credits include Edith Bagnold's "The Chalk Garden" and his own musical/dramatic creations, "The Kings Tiger Rag" and "Not Father O'Malley", a reflection of childhood in post war Salford, performed by the long established Manchester Athenaeum Drama Society.

As a jazz pianist, he has accompanied many top International and UK based jazz artists including George Chisholm, Humphrey Lyttleton, George Melly, Marion Montgomery, Stefan Grappelli, Louis Armstrong all-star, Bud Freeman, Scott Hamilton, Danny Moss etc. He has played in all the countries of the UK, America's West Coast, in California and Washington State, in Montana, Arizona, Canada's British Columbia, across the Caribbean, in Spain, Germany, Norway, Republic of Ireland and The Netherlands.

He has been the regular pianist with Manchester Jazz, formerly, Mart Rodger Manchester Jazz, since 1995, performing regularly in a succession of transatlantic cruises.

He is President of Stockport Operatic Society, having previously directed large scale musicals such as My Fair Lady, 42nd Street, Anything Goes, Music Man, etc, at The Plaza Stockport for them. His musical credits include principal parts or directorial roles in most of the Rodgers and Hammerstein musicals, the Gilbert and Sullivan Operas and playing the part of Hermann in Wagner's Tannhauser for Manchester Opera Group.

Roger, now, apart from playing piano for Manchester Jazz and various of his own groups, delivers talks about his amazing life of music, featuring stories, songs, and interpretations of music by Gershwin, Kern, Porter etc., in his own inimitable piano style.