

WITHOUT A SONG

by Paul Andrews*

The late Paul Andrews, then living in Perth, Western Australia, wrote the following about the 1970s on Facebook on July 1, 2014.



Saxophonist Paul Andrews... PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN

It seemed that a jazz room opened every month with maybe 20 different joints presenting energetic live music. Bruce Viles opened a new club, The Basement, and it became the hangout for musicians. Horst Liepolt's ceaseless energy and enthusiasm to produce, record and promote Australian jazz was relentless. He was at every gig for more than a decade and wherever something was happening, it seemed Horst was there too.



From R-L, Bruce Viles, Horst Liepolt, Max Merritt, pictured in The Basement with unidentified couple... PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN

After midnight, the Basement busied with musicians, aficionados and bandleaders. I would often get a gig offer while at the bar. Someone would ask when I was available and we would share gigs and dates (this is before mobile phones or internet).

Students sometimes performed too, but the greatest names in jazz would play in that room over the next decade. The players we were listening to at night became our teachers at the Con during the daytime. Local players started writing original tunes and performing them. I heard other bands playing Bernie McGann's *Mex* and his beautiful *Spirit Song* or John Sangster's *Hobbit*.



A shot from the era being described by Paul Andrews, L-R, trumpeter Warwick Alder, bassist Jimmy Nana, drummer John Morrison, guitarist Ian Date, saxophonist Andrews... PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN

Bobby Gebert had some original tunes and occasionally we would get to hear them. Roger Frampton was writing too and inspiring us all. Australian jazz continued to develop its own attitudes: impressionistic, not so concerned with the blues but with fresh ideas derived from a certain naivety that draws the inquiring listeners on-board. Driving rhythm sections and brilliant virtuoso horn players were the norm.



Bobby Gebert (above) had some original tunes and occasionally we would get to hear them. Roger Frampton (below) was writing too and inspiring us all.... GEBERT PHOTO COURTESY JAZZ MAGAZINE; FRAMPTON PHOTO COURTESY JAZZ DOWN UNDER



We all listened to Ian Neil on ABC radio; he had a nightly jazz program that was on air for 20 years or more, mostly that was the only jazz on radio, until community radio evolved in the 80s. Horst Liepolt had created 44 Records to record modern jazz and the scene was really something in Sydney at that time! The jazz is acid,

saxophones everywhere. An array of funk, Latin percussion, chanting and horns playing original music driven by many inquiring minds, all members of a crazy gifted kin.



ABC broadcaster Ian Neil (far right), pictured with Horst Liepolt (far left) and unidentified third person, probably an ABC technician... PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN

Another amazing person arrived on the scene about this time, a master musician and cool educator in Howie Smith, who set up the first jazz studies program in Australia and brought a completely new school to us sax players. The jazz audiences were keen, looking for some excitement, Australia had elected Gough Whitlam as Prime Minister and Sydney started buzzing. Howie had come at the right time too.



Howie Smith (left): a master musician and cool educator... PHOTO COURTESY JAZZ DOWN UNDER

My view of Australian politics is obviously limited, but I think the election of a Labor government in 1972 can't be overlooked as an important factor in what happened in jazz in the seventies. It seemed to me that all the arts were beneficiaries. We saw the rebirth of the film industry, dance and visual arts too. I have to say it was one of the most exciting scenes I have ever been a part of and, no matter what caused it to happen, I'm grateful to have been a part of it. Howie turned our heads right around with his effective and humorous approach.