

## **INTRODUCTION TO THE LAUNCH OF EMILY RYTMEISTER'S FILM, ROGER FRAMPTON COMES ALIVE!**

**by Hart Cohen\***

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*The film 'Roger Frampton Comes Alive!' was premiered at Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre on November 3, 2022, when it was introduced by Professor Hart Cohen.*



*Emily Rytmeister: the launch of her film, "Roger Frampton Comes Alive!" on November 3, 2022, was her special night....*

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## **Introductory remarks**

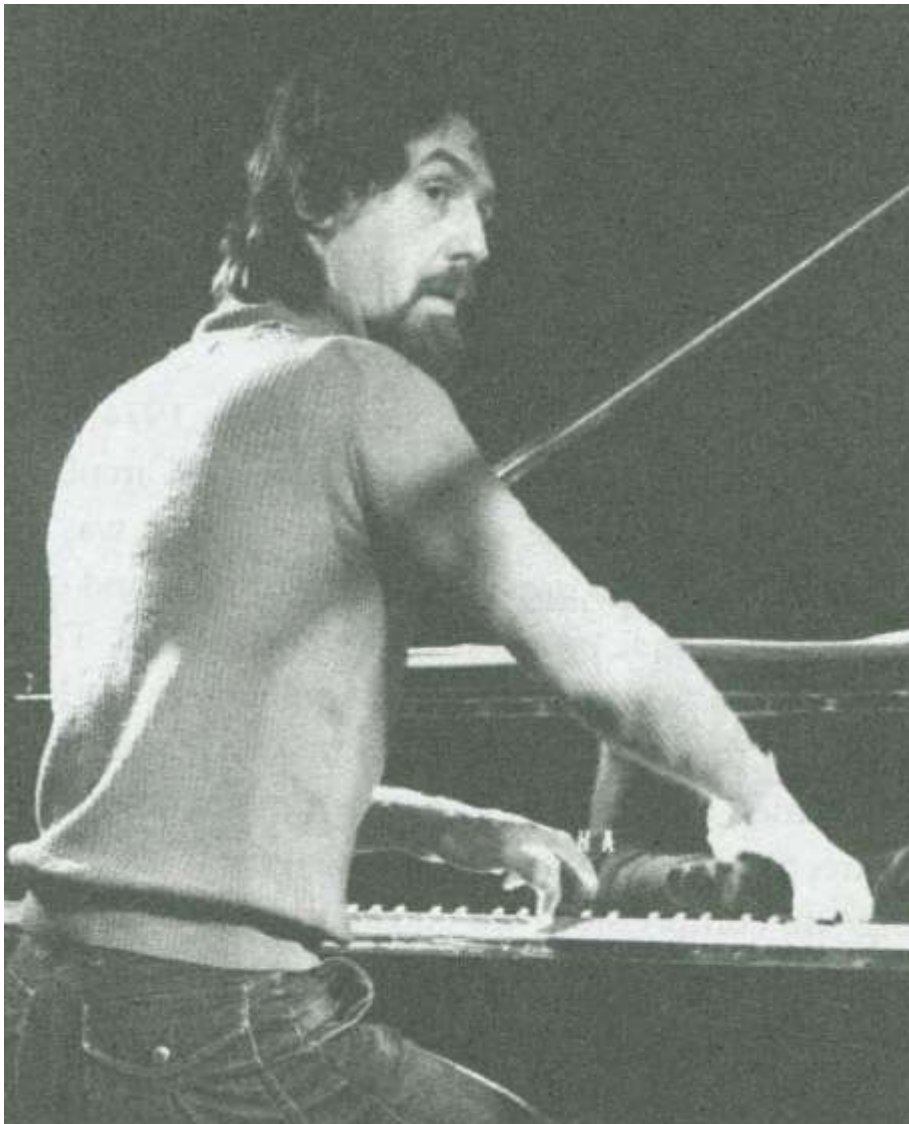
My intent is to keep my introduction to Emily Rytmeister brief. As this is the launch of her film, “Roger Frampton Comes Alive”, it is Emily’s special night.

When Emily first called on me with the proposal for a doctoral dissertation to make a documentary film about her father, the accomplished jazz musician and academic, Dr Roger Frampton, I was immediately interested. The combination of jazz and documentary film was attractive to me but there was also a compelling story that underpinned the proposal. Emily is Roger’s daughter and so the film would have this important relationship at its core. This suggested the project would be one of passion and a labour of love.



*Roger Frampton with his daughter Emily, then aged 21, pictured in 1995: the project would be one of passion and a labour of love... PHOTO COURTESY EMILY RYTMEISTER*

As a long-standing academic having supervised several PhD and DCA candidates over a long period of time, I sometimes ask myself, “is it all worth it?”. When someone like Emily comes along, the answer is emphatically “yes”. Her persistence in working on this film and dissertation was unrelenting and showed remarkable dedication in the face of family demands, pandemic-related concerns and constraints and creative and research challenges. It took enormous resolve and resilience in the face of sometimes intense emotional and difficult moments. Emily’s work not only prevailed but succeeded both creatively and as a work of scholarship. So there are at least two achievements here: a beautifully made documentary film and a scholarly and carefully researched thesis. A third outcome is the re-mediation of the life of Roger Frampton whose music and personality does truly come alive through the film and in this sense the work is one of love and respect for an important musician whose music has been revived and celebrated.



*Frampton: his music and personality does truly come alive through the film...*

*PHOTO COURTESY AUSTRAL JAZZ CREDIT JANE MARCH*

## **Roger Frampton Comes Alive as a documentary/biographic landscape**

Emily's film found its purchase in a genre of documentary film sometimes referred to as "domestic ethnography" (Renov, 1999). The approach is one where autobiographical practice is at least a part of the process of encountering the subject—a family member—of the work. In this regard Emily's engagement is also a working through of her relationship to her father, Roger and the grief felt deeply at his passing. As both biography and autobiography the film navigates carefully around the potential trap of hagiography and opens the many sides of Roger's personal life through multiple interviews sourced from those who knew him best including both family members and professional collaborators.



*The film opens the many sides of Roger's personal life through multiple interviews sourced from those who knew him best, such as drummers John Pochée (above) and Phil Treloar (below)... SCREENSHOTS FROM THE FILM*



Based on the many participants in this project each interview fragment is a kind of micro-story. This opens the prospect of a future work that could offer up these extended accounts in greater detail.

While the film stays within a chronology based on Roger's life, it will also be remembered for the music tracks, much of it composed and performed by Roger and retrieved from multiple archives. Archives can work powerfully as historical documents, when re-mediated through the practice of film.

So, this is a film that has at its heart the mining of a rich archive interwoven with Roger's life story. It shows the points of contact between filmmaking and archival sources and how they can be deployed. They support a trajectory where the story of an artist's life is rendered in the sounds and performances of his music. Emily's commitment to this modality of documentary is unwavering and establishes the film as both an important historical document as well as an intimate and loving portrait of Frampton.



*Hart Cohen: I will see the film as a work of dedication, where its author found a life-affirming story in the biographic landscape of her father's life and work...*

There is a substantial jazz filmography to which Emily's film will be added and with special attention to Australian jazz, it will be a most valued contribution in Australia. I will personally see the film as a work of dedication—where its author found a life-affirming story in the biographic landscape of her father's life and work. In the process of confronting and working on sometimes difficult memories, Emily, in this filmic poem to her father, radically re-made the trajectory of her own life. And we are all the richer for it.