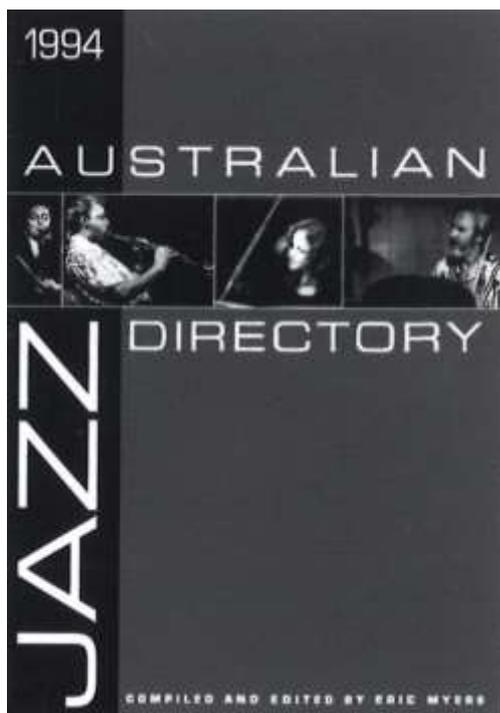


JazzChord, Jan/Feb 1994

The *Australian Jazz Directory* is with the printer at last, and many of you who are reading this edition of *JazzChord* will receive your copy of the *Directory* shortly, if you made an advance purchase. I don't mind saying that preparing the *Directory* has been a monumental task, undertaken in my office over many months, with assistance from a procession of hardworking administrative assistants. No such directory, attempting to document the full range of jazz activity in Australia, has ever been attempted before. I trust that people in the jazz community will find this book helpful. Naturally, there will be some omissions and errors but, let me assure you, every effort has been made to ensure that it is as comprehensive and as up-to-date as possible.



*As announced in the last edition of *JazzChord*, **Peter Jordan** (long-time office-bearer of the Sydney Improvised Music Association) has succeeded Gail Brennan as jazz writer for the *Sydney Morning Herald's* arts page. Owing to his full schedule as a news journalist with ABC Radio, however, Peter has agreed to share the job with **John Shand**. John is probably best-known for his work in the Australian *Jazz Magazine*, which I edited from 1980-86, and his book on the film Industry, *Don't Shoot The Best Boy!*, which he wrote with Tony Wellington (who also wrote regularly for *Jazz Magazine*). Gail Brennan continues to write record reviews for the *SMH's* Monday TV supplement *The Guide*, and is working on a book with the working title *Australian Jazz Sub-Cultures*, to be published by the University of NSW Press.



Peter Jordan (above) and John Shand (below): sharing the jazz writing on the Sydney Morning Herald's arts page.



*I hope that **John Shand** and **Peter Jordan** will be able to cope with the frustration of writing for the *Sydney Morning Herald*. When I was in the job, for about two-and-a-half years, 1980-1982, the worst aspect was the anxiety of opening the newspaper on a given morning, and finding what the sub-editors had done with my article or review. Often words which made perfect sense to someone with an intelligent interest in jazz would be changed, merely because a sub-editor was not aware of the idiom; occasionally the piece would be totally re-written; at other times, random cuts would be made to fit the text into the available space, thus turning the review into nonsense. In these ways, a sensible review that I'd be prepared to stand by, would sometimes be changed into an embarrassment. The longer I was at the *SMH*, the less this happened. But ambitious sub-editors, it seemed to me, always felt they could make their mark by amending the jazz reviews, because it was safe to do so - jazz being the lowest form of life on the arts page. I understood that such liberties were seldom taken with reviews written by the classical critic Roger Covell. In that case, heads would have rolled. But no-one, then, was prepared to defend the interests of jazz. Peter and John: good luck, and stay calm!

* “[**James Morrison**] has a rare gift. His glittering trumpet cadenza on *There Will Never Be Another You* that opened his set at the Brecon Jazz Festival in Wales last August left the audience open-mouthed with astonishment. That he also played superbly on flugelhorn, trombone and euphonium would not surprise anyone who has heard him in Sydney. It was a remarkable debut at one of Europe's three biggest festivals.” Unexceptionable. wouldn't you say? Just the sort of criticism that an



James Morrison: his performance in Brecon, Wales, praised by a critic who never left Australia...

admirer of James Morrison would write; I have written similarly myself. Except, that in the case of this quote, published in a local newspaper on December 18, 1993, the critic in question was not in Wales to hear the performance. He never left Australia,

and derived this scenario from secondary sources. It may be that I'm a pedant, but isn't there something of an ethical problem here? I'd be grateful for some guidance on this matter from readers of *JazzChord*.

*As a former critic, I'm now an armchair critic of the critics. And although I believe that critics are highly undervalued, I still enjoy what is often said to denigrate them. My current favourite is what the Irish writer **Brendan Behan** is alleged to have said about critics (quoted in the March, 1994, edition of *24 Hours*): that they are "like eunuchs in a harem: they know how it's done, they've seen it done every day, but they are unable to do it themselves."



Irish writer Brendan Behan: critics are like eunuchs in a harem...

*Occasionally one hears along the grapevine the idea that the **National Jazz Coordinator** position should be rotated each year to other states. Give someone else a go, the line goes. Well, this is a nice idea in theory, and sometimes I feel I would be jolly glad to give over the National position to someone else, who might be prepared to take on this thankless job, one day a week. I stress one day a week, because many people appear to have unreal expectations about what can be achieved in the National position. Let me outline what the national position now entails. Chiefly it involves information-collecting for the National Jazz Database - information which is distributed on request, and now has formed the basis of the *Australian Jazz Directory*. No-one else systematically collects this valuable information, which is the basic material all jazz artists and organisations need to work effectively in the jazz world. A high priority now is producing this newsletter *JazzChord* (which is done in house, on computer), and working out ways to fund it, and distribute it. So, a person

who wanted the National job as it is presently structured would need to have reasonably advanced computer skills - because there are not enough funds to hire someone else to do the work. But, let's face it, this country needs a full-time National Jazz Co-ordinator, a position which is not shared with a state co-ordination position. Only then will such objectives as the following be seriously pursued: the development of a national touring circuit; securing sponsorship for major jazz events; the initiation of jazz tours through Asia and South America; the development of the National Jazz Database; and the development of a fully-fledged national jazz magazine. Under the present system, with my having to spend four days a week as the NSW Jazz Co-ordinator, these objectives are as far away as ever.

*The trombonist **Adrian Mears**, now living in Munich, Germany, and recently awarded an International Study Grant of \$7,800 from the Performing Arts Board of the Australia Council, has faxed me with a summary of his current activities. Some of it was illegible, so I will check back with him and provide more information in the next edition of *JazzChord*. I can work out, however, that the PAB grant enabled him to study in New York with Steve Turré, Conrad Herwig, Robin Eubanks and "the great Slide Hampton", as Adrian describes him. While he was in New York, Steve Turré contacted Adrian and asked him to be his replacement in the McCoy Tyner Big Band for two European tour performances, in Portugal and Munich, Germany. But, more on Adrian later.



Trombonist Adrian Mears: he replaced Steve Turré in the McCoy Tyner Big Band for two European tour performances... PHOTO CREDIT JOE GLAYSHER
