

DADDY'S PRACTISING AGAIN: AN AUSTRALIAN JAZZMAN LOOKS BACK AND AROUND, by Dick Hughes. Published by Hutchinson Group (Australia) Pty Ltd, Victoria, 1977. ISBN No 0 09 130441 5 Paperback, 205 pp.

Reviewed by Geoff Gilbert*

[The following review first appeared in the magazine Jazz Down Under in the late 1970s.]

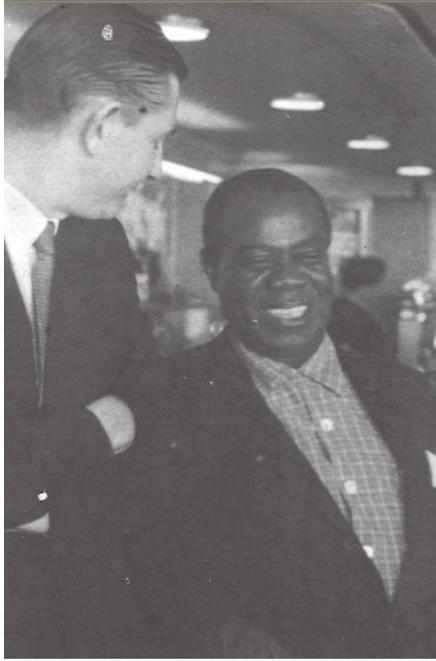
Subtitled "An Australian jazzman looks back and around", this book is an absolute must for all those who have ever had anything at all to do with Australian jazz or any sort of jazz for the past 50 years. I read it with the greatest joy and pleasure in one giant gulp and then started all over again just to bask in the pleasure of the reminiscences of musician, critic, raconteur and amazing character, Dick Hughes.



Dick Hughes (right) with Duke Ellington: Hughes has carefully arranged his journalistic career to allow him to get closer to his jazz idols than he would have ever been able to as just a musician...PHOTO COURTESY JAZZ AUSTRALIA

It's no good pretending that this will be an analytical and subjective review of this book. The fact is that I just loved it. Dick Hughes has had a love affair with jazz music all his life and this book is the story of that love put together with all the skill that his education, journalistic skill and incredible memory can muster.

**The banjo player Geoff Gilbert is best-known as the longtime leader of Sydney's Harbour City Jazz Band.*



Hughes (left) with Louis Armstrong in Sydney in 1956... PHOTO CREDIT NORM LINEHAN



Hughes (left) with Sidney Bechet in Paris in 1953... PHOTO COURTESY DADDY'S PRACTISING AGAIN

Economic circumstances have made it necessary for Dick to be a journalist as well as a jazz musician but he has carefully arranged his journalistic career to allow him to get closer to his jazz idols than he would have ever been able to as just a musician. In fact many of the highlights of the book are anecdotes gained from his meetings with great jazz musicians he has met during the course of his journalistic work. His meetings with Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Bud Freeman and Eddie Condon to name just a few are priceless to the jazz buff.



Hughes (right, on piano) with the Ray Price Quartet, L-R, Price (banjo), John McCarthy (clarinet) and John Sangster (trumpet)...

His own efforts as a jazz musician are no less entertaining in the recounting and there are no better descriptions of those early days of Australian jazz than as seen by one of its participants. This is a Dick Hughes eye-view of the struggle that any jazz musician in Australia has to fight in order to get an audience. Against all the odds of apathy Dick has never lost his enthusiasm and belief that jazz is the greatest form of musical communication in the world as well as being a most satisfying method of expression.



Dick Hughes's Famous Five which was resident at Soup Plus for many years, L-R, Hughes (piano), Alan Geddes (drums), Bruce Johnson (trumpet), Don Heap (bass), Chris Taperell (tenor saxophone)... PHOTO DADDY'S PRACTISING AGAIN

My advice to you all is to go buy the book and then go down to Soup Plus and listen to the real thing as Dick pounds out his jazz message.