

\$1.50*

JAZZ AUSTRALIA

NUMBER ONE



CONVENTION SPECIAL
AUSTRALIAN JAZZ — THE LAST 50 YEARS
PROFILES: BURROWS — GOLLA — BARNARD — NOLAN
DICK HUGHES, IAN NEIL, ERIC CHILD,
MIKE WILLIAMS AND JOHN CLARE TALK JAZZ

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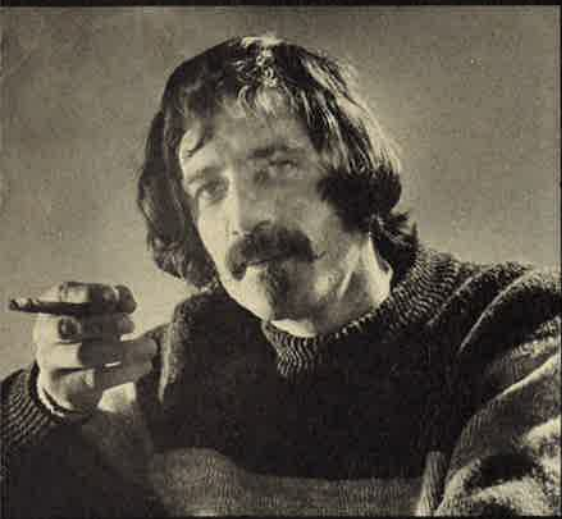
MOYA WOODS LOOKS AT AUSTRALIAN
CONTEMPORARY JAZZ.

COVER:

The Galapagos Duck at Sydney's Basement.
Photo Peter Carrette.

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John Clare



Jack Mitchell



The Duke with Dick Hughes



Louis, Lucille & Eric Childs

O PINIONS ON jazz are as varied as the styles of music the word embraces. During its three-quarter-century life fashions have changed with astonishing rapidity both in sounds and words. Here, under one cover, we have gathered some of the best-known commentators in Australia and, not unexpectedly, they present a wide range of views, of likes and dislikes.

And we think that's just the way it should be. After all, this isn't a text book, rather a series of extemporisations on a theme.

Until recently jazz was looked on as purely an American music. But that is no longer so. All over the world musicians of various nationalities are playing together. And Australia is taking its place among them. That's why this book is about Australian jazz and the people who make it and are involved in it.

One of the most familiar voices in Australia is ERIC CHILD'S. For many years his smooth tones have brought information on mayhem, murder and miracles as he has read the ABC news. But he has also brought music.

A couple of years ago the axemen at the ABC had the mistaken belief that they could lop off his Friday evening and Saturday morning jazz record shows unobtrusively. But soon they found themselves inundated with an avalanche of letters demanding: "Let Child alone." They were from all over Australia. A priest wrote. So did a lighthouse keeper. Lovers of New Orleans jazz wrote. So did those whose interest is avant garde music. For his programs cover a vast spectrum.

Part of Eric's charm is that he appeals to listeners' reason, not prejudices. Often his opinions are couched in the form of questions as he gently asks if you agree with him about the delights of this solo, or that ensemble passage. But make no mistake, he has very definite opinions. It's just that he allows other people to have theirs too.

Eric's ABC colleague, Ian Neil, had a hard act to follow when he took over the late program, Music to Midnight. For several years it had been the province of the well-loved Arch McKirdy who had no trouble persuading hundreds of thousands to "Relax With Me". Over the months Ian has wrought subtle changes but the excellence remains.

His tastes and knowledge are wide. And over the months he has made a particular point of airing the work of Australian musicians.

In recent months Ian has been hyper-active in another direction. In mid-1976 he took over as Chairman of the Jazz Action Society of NSW.

Another extremely familiar figure on the Australian scene is DICK HUGHES, pianist-vocalist-band-leader-word-juggler and jazz columnist for the Sydney Daily Mirror and Sunday Mirror.

The greatest struggle in Dick's life must have been whether to become a professional musician or journalist. He was just about born in a typewriter case. His father, who bears the same name, is a foreign correspondent of international fame who, apart from his writing, is known from Bangkok to Bloomsbury for his work with the Baker Street Irregulars, an organisation of devotees of Sherlock Holmes.

Dick was bitten by the jazz bug in his Melbourne childhood and developed precociously at university. But journalism won the day. A stint in London in the 1950s gave him the chance to meet and interview several international jazz personalities, including the great pianist Mary Lou Williams, from whom he took lessons.

Over the years, he has played in most of Sydney's jazz venues and at many Jazz Conventions. One of his most auspicious appearances was in 1973 in the first jazz concert in the Sydney Opera House. With magnificent sense of occasion he performed in white tie and tails — singing Jelly Roll Morton's Winin' Boy Blues,

JAZZ NOTES

an anthem of the New Orleans brothels. Perhaps his most extraordinary and disconcerting talent is his ability to recall dates. He is apt to buttonhole you at the bar and remind you that: "It was three years ago next Tuesday that Earl Hines recorded his seventeenth version of Blues In Thirds". He's hardly ever questioned.

The advent of FM radio has extended banjo-playing band leader GEOFF GILBERT'S contact with the public. Every week he introduces one of the Jazz Action record sessions on Sydney's 2MBS station. His choice of discs has proved an eye-opener to many who thought that because he leads a predominantly traditional band he restricts his interest to that idiom. In fact his appreciation stretches far and wide.

Nevertheless, it is obvious that one of his great loves is the music of New Orleans and his Harbor City Jazz Band plays many of the classics of the early days. It is one of the few trad bands to have performed at

The Basement, usually the home of more experimental music.

Australia's most ardent chronicler of the lives and hard times of the modern and avant garde musicians is JOHN CLARE, journalist-artist-poet and one-time trumpet player. A few years ago he was the editor of Music Maker, which eventually foundered under the weight of economic duress. But before it went down John had set a new standard of understanding for progressive jazz.

Over the years he has heard and admired just about every key figure in the evolution of Australian jazz. He has many close friends among musicians and has performed at several jazz and poetry sessions, notably with Serge Ermoll and Free Kata.

These days he is music editor for Australian Hi-Fi Review. And, to its credit, the National Times has printed several of his highly perceptive observations on the local jazz scene.

Like Dick Hughes, MIKE WILLIAMS is a professional journalist who came into contact with jazz in childhood. In the early 1960s he wrote about music for the new Chronicle and Daily Mail in London and broadcast for the BBC before returning to Australia.

After joining the editorial staff of The Australian in 1966, he started writing a jazz column for the paper and is still at it. For a brief period he also wrote for the Sydney Daily Telegraph before it decided that its readers' interests didn't stretch beyond the world of pop. In 1974 he became a member of the Music Board of the Australia Council and was instrumental in getting the Jazz Action Society movement started.

JACK MITCHELL, who wrote the piece on The Ghost of the Black Bottom, considers himself the number one Wild Bill Davison fan and says he works as a dentist to earn enough money to buy jazz records. He has been interested in jazz for more than 30 years and he published his first Australian Discography in 1950. A second edition was published in 1960 and the Australian Jazz Archives will soon publish a third edition. Jack's articles on Australian jazz history and discography appeared in numerous local and English magazines.

He has a large collection of records, tapes, photographs, magazines, books, cuttings and other jazz memorabilia and hopes to acquire more.

Jack visited the US last year to drop in on the Newport Jazz Festival and clubs such as Jimmy Smith's, Pete Fountain's and Earthquake McGoon's.

He is currently working, between cavities, on the story of the Port Jackson Jazz Band.

We have to make mention of Australian jazz archivist and walking jazz encyclopedia, NORM LINEHAN, who was an invaluable help in volunteering both photographs and information.

And we hope you enjoy JAZZ AUSTRALIA. □

JAZZ EXPLOSION

There's a new sense of purpose all around the jazz world. Musicians are showing determination to realise their full potential and they're going out to meet the people — their audience.
by MIKE WILLIAMS



A KIND OF INTELLECTUALISED
ROCKER IMAGE ... MANY OF
THE NEW AUDIENCE HAVE
COME TO JAZZ THROUGH ROCK

EVERY SO OFTEN the volcano that is jazz erupts and sweeps back into popularity in a new guise — or a nostalgic rebirth of an old one.

First there was the so-called Golden Age, from the raucous sound of World War I to the Prohibition days. Then the Swing Era of the late 1930s and Trad Boom of the 1950s.

And in between these eruptions Jazz lies dormant, gathering its energies for a new eruption. Now, in the latter half of the 1970s, we are experiencing a jazz explosion which seems as if it may surpass all that has gone before in intensity. The reasons are many and varied but probably the most important is the resolution of musicians to resume the role of communicators.

Several times in its history jazz has turned back on itself. The musicians have played only for each other, setting up cults and deeming the general public too unfeeling to appreciate the beauties of their music. This attitude hit a new low in the bebop revolution of the 1940s, which turned the jazz world into two warring camps — traditionalists and modernists.

Only now have the modernists accepted that they must be entertainers. And it is the rockers who have brought this home to them. Jazz musicians have seen untutored young men, often of little talent, garnering undreamed of riches. And they have seen them become sex symbols, the heroes of the new permissive society. Now the jazzmen are bidding for a piece of the action.

Their music itself has undergone changes. Jazz has always been associated with the dance. And its most successful eras have been closely linked with upsurges of interest in dancing. In the late '70s — often borrowing rhythms from the rockers — jazz has become body music once again. To a large extent this is what is drawing young people to the clubs. More often than not space is too restricted for formal

Above, left: "Clubs, too, have undergone changes — moving away from the old battered image, answering the demand for reasonable food with the music . . ."

Right: American clarinetist, Howie Smith, who came to Australia to teach at the jazz course at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. He founded the Jazz Co-op and recorded with the band before returning to the US this year.

DEC -76



dancing but the movement is there just the same.

Many of the new audience for jazz have come to the music through rock. Mostly they have outgrown the hollow simplicity of the chart busters and are looking for something more sophisticated.

A few years ago the world of jazz was a male chauvinist stronghold. Women were there under sufferance. Few played jazz and it was said that the rest couldn't understand it. Go into any jazz club today and evidence of the absurdity of this claim is obvious. Women are among the most enthusiastic and knowledgeable of the audience. The relaxation of social strictures that has followed the impact of women's lib has meant that they feel free to go to clubs without male escorts. Now these places are more popular than ever as meeting grounds.

The clubs, too, have undergone changes, gradually moving away from the old, battered image, answering the demand for reasonable food with the music. Australian musicians who have made trips to the United States have returned with favorable comparisons between clubs there and here. The pub scene is flourishing, too — providing increasingly sophisticated facilities for the increasingly sophisticated audience.

Over recent years there have been many attempts to take jazz out of the clubs and pubs and establish it in concert halls — many musicians say they prefer performing in concert, away from the hubbub of conversation and the clinking of glasses.

The Sydney Opera House has found a pragmatic compromise with its Green Carpet Jazz Concerts — a series of

informal programs in the reception hall where the audience sit on the stairs or carpet, smoke and drink but are attentive because they're there for the jazz: Not a quick beer after work. Jazz has also been introduced to the Sunset Staircase Concerts — until now a classical series. January's program includes Burrows, Margret Roadknight and Galapagos Duck. "I think it's marvellous that this jazz program has blossomed," says Concert Manager Barry Benson. "It's strongly orientated to getting younger people here, listening to things they enjoy."

In fact, Sydney will positively pulsate with jazz in January. After the Brisbane Convention the Festival of Sydney will be happening — five nights of music with 30 bands performing and around 300 musicians filling the summer air with the whole gamut of jazz sounds.

Along with its zooming popularity, jazz has found an increased respectability. Some fans are still holding on desperately and sentimentally to a kind of intellectualised ocker image but they are being forced aside by new generations who see more in jazz than merely goodtime music.

No longer do classical musicians regard jazzmen with contempt but with admiration for their ability to improvise — practically a lost art in "straight" music. In fact, a nucleus of the "straight" musicians had early jazz associations. The most significant of them are three men who were all at the Melbourne Conservatorium immediately post war: Don Banks, Rex Hobcroft and Keith Humble.

Banks, now an internationally renowned composer, was first chairman of the Music Board of the Australia Council and is in charge of several courses at the Canberra School of Music. Humble, composer and conductor, is professor of music at La Trobe University, Melbourne, where the course is jazz-oriented. And Rex Hobcroft is director of the NSW Conservatorium.

In 1973, not long after his appointment, Hobcroft made a decision which was to have a dynamic impact on Australian jazz; he introduced a jazz studies course at the Con. One of the prime movers behind the scenes was Don Burrows, Australia's best-known jazz musician, who had long been trying to gather support for such a move. Gary Burton, the great American vibes player

who teaches at Berklee — acknowledged as the world's foremost education institution for jazz — was asked for his advice while on a tour here. He recommended a young sax player who was making a reputation as a music educator in Illinois. So Howie Smith came to Australia to take charge of the course.

Immediately it was introduced it attracted more than 100 candidates, some elementary, some advanced, some leaning towards traditional jazz, some towards modern. Smith gathered some of the best of Sydney's musicians to teach: they included Burrows; guitarist George Golla; pianist Judy Bailey; trombonist Bill Motzing — formerly of the jazz-rock band Blood, Sweat and Tears — and Motzing's wife, Betty. Other musicians, such as Paul Furniss, whose previous associations had been mainly in the trad area, were signed on as junior tutors.

When Smith returned to America in mid-1976, Motzing took over the course. Behind him Smith has left a rich legacy of burgeoning young talents, many of them gathered together in the Conservatorium Big Band. And by the end of the year other States were moving towards establishing courses similar to the one at the NSW Con.

Recording is more important in jazz than in most other forms of music, for no two performances are the same. The improvisations are captured not on paper but on disc. Musicians in Australia have, until recently, found it difficult to interest the big recording companies — of which all but one, Festival, are owned by overseas interests. There have been sporadic forays into the jazz world but no deliberate policy. It has been left to Nevill Sherburn, of Melbourne, to fill the vacuum with his Swaggie label, almost exclusively concerned with trad styles.

But in 1975 Horst Liepolt, promoter and manager of several bands, persuaded the giant Philips company to introduce a label devoted to Australian jazz. So, in the first few months of its existence, Liepolt's 44 Records built up an impressive catalogue by bands such as Galapagos Duck, Judy Bailey Quartet, Brian Brown Quintet, Jazz Co-op, Power Point and The Last Straw.

All around the jazz world there is now a new sense of purpose — the musicians are showing their determination to realise their full potential and they are going out to meet the people; their audience. □

**A LONG WITH
ITS ZOOMING
POPULARITY,
JAZZ HAS FOUND
AN INCREASED
RESPECTABILITY.**



Left: Don Burrows and George Golla joined Howie Smith when they could to teach at the conservatorium's jazz studies course. Burrows was one of the prime movers behind the introduction of the course.

Below: The Old Push, Sydney, and the music is great.



Nola's Disgraceful Diary

ONE of the most disgraceful finds made by the police during the raid was the diary of Nola McKay. No document could have been a more sweeping denunciation of its writer.

It was a survey of the girl's life since she was 17 years of age, and was so filled with putrid detail and immoral ponderings that the bulk of it is unprintable. It traverses her numerous love affairs. It shows that the writer is utterly without any moral sense whatever, and was the consort of numerous men.

GHOST OF THE BLACK BOTTOM

Australian jazz — and racial feelings about colored musicians — was never quite the same after Sonny Clay's *Colored Idea* arrived here in 1928. They showed us some great jazz entertainment but were thrown out of the country on a wave of racialism, stirred up by some dubious newspaper ethics and union wrangles. JACK MITCHELL recounts the whole mess.

A SMALL - but interesting — episode in the history of jazz in Australia was the visit by Sonny Clay's group in 1928.

Clay brought with him, under the title *Sonny Clay's Colored Idea*, a full theatrical show. There were 41 musicians, dancers, singers and others in the troupe.

The exact personnel of the band is not known but Brian Rust gives Ernest Coycault, Archie Lancaster (trumpets), Luther Graven (trombone), Leonard Davidson (clarinet, alto sax), Louis Dodd (alto sax), William Griffin (tenor sax), Sonny Clay (piano), Rupert Jordan (banjo), Herman Hoy (bass), David Lewis (drums) as recording *Australian Stomp* in Los Angeles for Vocalion on January 12, 1928.

Presumably this was the band that sailed for Australia. However, if Brian obtained that date from company files, it must refer to something other than the actual recording date. The band arrived in Sydney on January 21 and nine is only about half the number of days required to cross the Pacific by boat.

Everyone's reported "... upon listening to the music emanating from the SS Sierra as it berthed at Circular Quay ... it was realised that jazz as played by A European and jazz as played by a Negro are entirely different." Panassie indeed!

The show opened at Sydney's Tivoli Theatre that very day and, next day, the newspaper, *Truth*, reviewed it under the heading *Negro Jazz*. "Sonny Clay's *Idea* burst like a ray of colored sunshine on the patrons of the Tivoli yesterday afternoon," Everyone's said. "The band is all your dreams of jazz come true. Each player subordinates his part to the general rhythm of the whole orchestra and the result is perfect co-ordination. Sonny Clay himself is at the piano and plays *Me And My Shadow* and *Rain* in a manner entirely new to Australian audiences.

"His own composition, *The Ghost Of The Black Bottom*, is followed by the real *Black Bottom*, accompanied by a dance by Dick Saunders who appears to be majordomo, guide, philosopher and friend to the rest of the company. The Four Harmonisers sing southern melodies the way they should be sung and their yodelling is one of the best things ever heard on the Tivoli stage — and indeed on any stage.

"The Covans do some very clever dancing, especially in their *Bolshevik* number. Ivy Anderson does not quite *get over* perhaps because of her decidedly scratchy voice. The last concerted number of the *Colored Idea* is *Blue Heavens*, very attractively played, sung, danced and harmonised."

Despite this appreciative review, the

show lasted only four weeks, transferring then to the Tivoli in Melbourne, where it opened on February 20.

Billy Moloney, in his book *Memoirs of an Abominable Showman* says: "The rhythm was years before its time, and the show flopped, although it had a flock of talent. The chocolate bandsmen submerged their disappointment in the thrills of craps and as the dice rolled on dressing room floors, tempers and bankrolls frayed and razors flashed (Ivy won the lot!).

"Things became so bad that the management hired police to stand in the wings during performances, just for moral effect. One lady of the colored chorus went off her kinky head, razoring her spouse into gory strips. He had more stitches than a load of wheat bags, but he recovered to look something like a waffle iron. She committed suicide on the boat home, after escaping from a strait-jacket. She looked odd as I took her on board.

"But the greatest nuisance of this season was the attention lavished on the colored musicians by demure debutantes of snooty social circles. Warned away from the stage door, they left their phone numbers with costly gifts."

Allowing for some journalistic licence on that account, it is still

"GREATER THAN SANTREY."

SATURDAY'S TIVOLI AUDIENCES PROCLAIMED SONNY CLAY'S BAND THE GREATEST ATTRACTION OF YEARS.

TIVOLI



24
NEGRO
STARS

100
WONDER
MINUTES

SOMETHING NEW IN ENTERTAINMENT

Including
SONNY CLAY'S PLANTATION BAND
Real Syncopation and Real Symphony.

The Four Covans
Whirlwind steppers.
Ivy Anderson
Colored Comedienne.

Dick Saunders
How dat Boy can dance.
The Harmony Emperors
Singing what 'am.

REPERCUSSIONS
LASTED LONG
AFTER THE NEGRO
JAZZMEN RE-
BOARDED THE
S.S. SIERRA



A BLACK-OUT FOR SONNY CLAY'S NOISOME NIGGERS



DID NOT FEAR THE CAMERA or the publicity.—
179 Day.

Outok!

WHEN Sonny Clay's Original idea troupe of niggers was singing at the Sydney Theatre, complaints concerning the conduct of the coons were made to "Truth," but before investigations into these allegations could be made, the niggers were warned to watch their step.

They did, but nevertheless "Truth" is so keen enough to know that their conduct was not fit for "White Australia," and when they went to Melbourne, and more complaints were registered, "Truth" set forth his inquiries about.

These inquiries proved in the full that the niggers were undesirable in every way, and the police were accordingly notified of facts which have hitherto escaped their notice. Followed then the sensational raid on Rowena Mansions.

HOW "TRUTH" ORGANISED RAID



617 N. Hoovey

Prompt Action On Part Of Theatrical Company And Federal Authorities



W. M. Hoopes

AUSTRALIA WANTS NOT ANOTHER COON

(FROM "TRUTH'S" MELBOURNE REPRESENTATIVE.)

EMPTY glasses, half-dressed girls, an atmosphere poisonous with cigarette smoke and fumes of liquor, and lounging about the flats six niggers. In this setting "Truth" discovered them last Saturday night—"Truth" and the police; for it was on account of information gleaned by "Truth" in Sydney and Melbourne, and several weeks of investigation, following on complaints made by the public, that enabled the facts to be placed before the police, which led to the raid on Rowena Mansions flats, in Evelyn-street.

AND now those noisome and noxious niggers are to be shipped home by the first available boat, by the steamer, which as the shipping advertisement declares, travels the "shortest route to America." Australia did not want them, and they should never have been added on to the theatre-going audiences of Melbourne and Sydney. BUT "Truth's" raid has had the effect of stirring public sentiment throughout the Commonwealth, and—this is the remarkable point—it has instilled into the mind of Bruce, Page and their supporters the necessity for making the "White Australia" policy something more than a farce.

NIGGERS, no matter whether they be theatricals or pug, must be kept out of Australia. We don't want 'em and we don't intend to have them, and it is up to the Federal authorities to see that in this regard public opinion is respected. Drastic action is called for and drastic action should be taken.

THE girls who were found with the coons were young Australians who, so far as outward appearances went, might have been drawn from an average gathering of shop-girls and clerks.

SOME months ago, when a similar state of affairs was disclosed in Sydney, where colored boxers had been living with white girls in Darlinghurst, "Truth's" revelations led to the nigger boxers in Australia being deported. The same procedure will be followed in this case.

Libel!

GIVEN orders to clear out of Melbourne within twenty-four hours, Sonny Clay and his nigger colleagues hit the trail for Sydney, and on arrival at the Central Station were greeted by a crowd of a couple of hundred.

Arrived in Melbourne, a mob of multi-headed beasts, and wearing Oxford bags and spats and having their eyes lighted from the inside, and shuddered for their very lives.

They made but the subject to assert that they had been "framed" and that revenge on the part of Australia for the U.S. Government's action in prohibiting Aussie bands in America had been the motive for the raid. No greater libel on Australian sportsmanship has ever been uttered.



ONE OF THE GIRLS WHO WERE DISCHARGED.—
Edna Langdon.

NO GREATER LIBEL ON AUSTRALIAN SPORTSMANSHIP HAS EVER BEEN UTTERED'

substantially correct. On the weekend of March 24-25, police raided a block of flats in Evelyn Street, Melbourne, where the Negro musicians had rented two flats. The raid was supposedly prompted by reports of *unseemly conduct* — the musicians had been evicted from several hotels for noisy behavior before renting the flats. When the police broke in during the early hours of the Sunday morning, they found six of the musicians and six girls in various stages of sobriety and undress. "A veritable orgy" was the description offered by one sensitive member of the gendarmerie in the subsequent court hearing.

One young lady eluded the police by escaping through a window but the other five were arrested and charged with vagrancy. Although a police witness stated that 20 cocaine tablets were found, no drug charges were laid and no charges at all were preferred against the musicians.

More than 700 people flocked to the City Court the following Tuesday when the case opened. Lurid details were described by the police of grog, beds and half-dressed people, but the defence counsel pointed out that this was evidence extraneous to the charge of vagrancy. The girls were shown to be all employed and the charges were dismissed.

That, you may think, would have been the end of the matter. But you would be well and truly wrong. There

was apparently a public uproar, and certainly a savage reaction from the misnamed Truth (whose reporters accompanied the police on the raid!). BLACKOUT ON SONNY CLAY'S NOISOME NIGGERS screamed their headline, "Australia wants not another coon".

The matter was raised in Federal Parliament and the prime minister assured his colleagues that Australia's womenfolk were now safe from these "black beasts". The six men concerned were deported by government order and the other five were forced to leave by "public opinion". No pressure was put on the other members of the troupe to leave. Obviously dancers and singers were not regarded as being as villainous as jazz musicians.

Sonny Clay said: "We are the victims of national revenge... why should they be nailed for something which goes on nightly in Darlinghurst and St Kilda — from the time the boys and I landed we were chased by women who popped up, no matter where we hid."

Truth righteously declaimed: "The leader had the audacity to say they had been framed and that revenge on the part of Australia for the US Government's action in prohibiting Australian bands in America had been the motive for the raid. No greater libel on Australian sportsmanship has ever been uttered."

Yet it seems that Clay's charge may have been close to the mark and that

union pressures — rather than racial prejudice — may have spurred the government to act with unaccustomed alacrity.

It was from 1923 onwards that American bands, such as those of Frank Ellis and Ray Tellier, brought live jazz to Australia. In November, 1923, a conference of the Musicians' Union had passed the following motion: "... to uphold and maintain the White Australia Policy, and prohibit the admission of colored races as members".

Senator Pearce, in 1924, rejected two applications to import Negro jazz bands. He emphasised his decision by saying "... colored men will never be allowed to come in".

In September, 1925, Cecil Trevelyan, secretary of the Musicians' Union, issued the following statement: "During the past two years over 50 musicians have been brought to Australia from America and their salaries average, at the lowest estimate, £12 per week — £20 would be nearer the correct amount. This shows that no less than £31,000 pa is going into the pockets of Americans, each of whom displaced an Australian citizen or took a post that could have been filled with equal proficiency by an Australian. Some of the bands, after being heard in Australia, found it necessary to strengthen their orchestra by engaging Australian players and, in one instance, after displacing a competent local combination, the American orchestra was found so inferior that they were shipped back to the States. At least one management recently tried to engage a band composed entirely of colored men, but could not obtain the necessary permission from the government. The MU of Australia is strongly opposed to the wholesale importation of jazz bands from America."

Despite the numbers of American musicians in Australia, the American Musicians' Union "closed shop" policy prevented Australian musicians working in the States. It was said that, for foreign musicians to play in the US they must first take out American citizenship!

This ban was not purely academic. Whilst Australian jazz musicians had much to learn from their American counterparts, there were other musical fields where Australians were as good as their overseas equivalents.

The Australian Commonwealth (Brass) Band made a successful tour of Canada in 1927 but was refused permission to tour the US (Other Australian brass bands had toured England previously, also with marked success.) This band was regarded rather sourly in Australia, with its emerging nationalism. When the Commonwealth Band returned to Sydney, the Lord Mayor made some caustic remarks on the American attitude and, in parliament, the prime minister was urged to introduce retaliatory legislation. He declined to do this, as the American action was at union, not government level.

As an aside, trombonist Larry Collins left the Commonwealth Band in Canada and formed a band of his own in Los Angeles, where he became established as a studio musician, presumably after taking up US citizenship. In 1929, when the Paul Whiteman Orchestra was in Hollywood, for the King of Jazz film, Boyce Cullen took ill. So, for the period of his illness, Australian Collins played lead 'bone to the section of Wilbur Hall, Bill Rank and Jack Fulton.

Back in Sydney, where Sonny Clay's Colored Idea arrived just after the local Press had reported that Australian Eunice Hurst had been prevented by the US immigration authorities from accepting an appointment as professor of violin on the staff of Wells College, New York.

Obviously racial prejudice was a factor in the affair, but it is also obvious that resentment at the American attitude was a big influence. Civil rights and free trade demonstrators would no doubt scoff at the Argus report that un-named "US bandleaders feel the deportation is due to misconduct and that the expulsion is wholly justified".

On the subject of racial prejudice, it is interesting to note the remark of one of the young ladies involved. Speaking of her gentleman friend, she said: "He is not a Negro, he is a Creole." She could only have gleaned that statement from the said friend — an indication that some prejudices existed even then within Sonny's band.

The repercussions of the sorry business lasted long after the Negro jazzmen reboarded the SS Sierra. (The personal repercussions in Los Angeles are unchronicled, but one musician's major worry was said to be his wife's

reaction when he reached home.)

A few months later, the Commonwealth Government passed legislation restricting American bands coming into Australia. Those bands which did come after that included about 50 percent locals, although there had been a trend towards this anyway.

In the '30s, the practice developed of bringing in only overseas leaders, to front Australian bands, but none were very successful, and some were outright flops. Australians were denied the chance to hear top-notch American outfits, but local musicians must have benefited from playing alongside the imported men. (Did the Australian legislation influence the British action taken a few years later?)

The most immediate effect of the hassle was that Melbourne lost the chance to dance to a leading Negro jazz band. At the Tivoli, Sonny Clay had been playing as part of a variety show. He had had a contract to play at the Green Mill Ballroom upon completion of the Tivoli engagement. The contract was torn up after the court case and the chance for a wider introduction to Negro jazz, for dancers and musicians alike, was torn up with it.

No racism (today's word for it) prevented Negro vaudeville artists from appearing in Australian theatres in the '30s but no colored bands played in Australia until 1954 when Louis Armstrong's All Stars captivated large concert audiences. Larger orchestras, such as Lionel Hampton's and Stan Kenton's, included about 50 percent locals when they played in Australia. Smaller combos, such as Eddie Condon's and Benny Goodman's, played the second half of the show after a first half by a local group. The union is strong enough to enforce such conditions today *without* government assistance.

Mind you, the American attitude is little different to that of 50 years ago. In 1964, Bob Crosby wanted to take Graeme Bell's All Stars (renamed the Australian Bobcats) to Las Vegas for a six-week stint, but work permits were refused and the deal lapsed.

So, whether it was racial prejudice or union retaliation — or a bit of each — Sonny Clay's stormy visit to Sydney and Melbourne in 1928 had results which far outlasted the unpleasant publicity, and the infamous Truth. □

ONE of the biggest misapprehensions concerning Australian contemporary jazz is that its practitioners moved from years of rigorous conservatory training, complete with knuckle raps, to the airless laboratories of the recording studios — with scarcely a glimpse of the workaday throng between. They went mad with boredom playing commercial arrangements. Wan and neurotically obsessed, they took to garages and deserted warehouses to devise a horrible cacophony which would outrage all the disciplinarians under whom they had suffered. Labels like *free jazz* and *avant garde* (which, since they have stuck, I will have to use myself) helped convince not only the disciplinarians but the population at large that they should avoid at all costs having this malice inflicted upon them.

This model breaks down on a number of counts. Here, as in America, the players of contemporary jazz are a mixture of self-taught and highly trained musicians (a situation which has contributed to the diversity of jazz approaches from at least as far back as the swing era). Almost all of them are united by a background of down to earth experience in traditional jazz, mainstream or even rock and roll bands.

Don Burrows could be said to be playing contemporary jazz for these reasons; his playing is a development from what it was 10 years ago and he presents a form of jazz which is obviously relevant here and now to a large number of people. At the same time, because he has such a close relationship with a consistent audience, he consciously relates everything he does to older forms, showing glimpses

of what is happening in more estoric areas.

Those areas are still largely inaccessible to many people. I cannot pretend that, given exposure, they would suddenly become popular with people who have neither time nor inclination to become involved but I do hope to show that they are not all aberrations of the jazz tradition and that the people playing in them are not coldly isolated from the jazz life.

To understand where jazz is now, we will have to look briefly at the half-truth that jazz abdicated its popular dance functions after the swing era, and that these were then assumed by rock and roll. The public simply dropped jazz — as they had dropped other popular forms before — stopped dancing (at least as a mass communal expression) and began listening to popular vocalists. Many jazz musicians continued to find employment backing the singers and this situation spawned the studio musician of today. The same thing happened when people turned from basic rock and roll and began listening to a different kind of rock singer/songwriter. A new breed of session musician emerged.

Through all the popular jazz crazes there had existed a more esoteric stream of jazz, intended at least as much for listening as dancing. It is my opinion that this stream simply continued developing. People like Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington and Benny Goodman had operated in both areas, playing dances and concerts, being appreciated on several levels. The dancers had largely gone by the time the modern jazz of Charlie Parker and Dizzy

Gillespie had fully developed. There was no opportunity to function on both levels, whether modern jazz musicians wanted to do so or not.

To try and compete with rock and roll on its own terms would have been as futile an exercise as trying to launch a full-scale revival of New Orleans jazz when the swing bands were at their most popular. The public was hearing that particular sound and feeling that particular rhythm at that particular time, full stop.

Dedicated jazz musicians continued to play for a listening audience; sometimes a small one but, sometimes quite a large one. We may now see it as an almost inevitable progression that a music which emerged from a lower than working class group should find one of its biggest audiences in the colleges. Prior to that it had been briefly adopted by the college drop-outs — and bohemians generally. It is true that one is more inclined to sit down with the music of Charlie Parker and be taken on a hectic flight than to stomp or sway to it but you can dance and it is very exhilarating to dance to. By the early '50s, however, the prospect of jazz being taken up again by dancers was so remote that a much cooler jazz had become prevalent — one in which subtlety and understatement were more highly regarded than heat and momentum. In the mid-'50s, Miles Davis — who had been partly responsible for this development — led a reaction against it. Ruggedness returned; bumpier, more aggressive rhythm patterns and hotter solos; but a large section of the jazz audience continued to listen to the cooler sounds, while the

AUSTRALIAN JAZZ TODAY

JOHN CLARE TAKES A LOOK — THROUGH WORDS AND HIS OWN INIMITABLE SKETCHES — AT SOME OF THE MAJOR FORCES IN CONTEMPORARY AUSTRALIAN JAZZ.

dancers had just discovered rock and roll.

In Sydney many people did dance through the '50s — often in a highly acrobatic way — to the modern jazz of Don Burrows at the Sky Lounge and traditional jazz dances were briefly popular in Melbourne but these were isolated pockets — and it was the same story all over the world.

I think jazz had become, for good and all, a listening music. Rock and roll is, after all, so efficient as dance music. Rock rhythms had been used in jazz long before the rock and roll craze but the philosophies of jazz and rhythm and blues, from which rock largely stems, have always been different — though many musicians played both. Jazz which uses rock rhythms today is still seen by the young audience as being biased towards listening.

A contemporary saxophonist like Bob Bertles, who played in the bands of both Johnny O'Keefe and Max Merrit, says that he enjoyed both experiences but eventually became bored through the lack of challenge. And that is it. A more *traditional* jazz musician playing in a rhythm and blues band would still have had to curb his imagination to some extent so as not to impair the efficiency of the music as a vehicle for dancing. Some black bands played either jazz or rhythm and blues, depending on whether they had a listening audience or one which just wanted to kick out the jams.

The beat is still there in most contemporary jazz. With infusions of African, Latin, Indian, Balinese and rock influences, some contemporary jazz is more rhythmic than anything

which preceded it. Some excursions into a rhythmic free interplay may seem, at first hearing, closer in spirit to the work of composers like Hans Werner Henze or Varese but these, too, yield joys which are unique to jazz, and no band in the world today plays like that all the time.

That contemporary jazz is uncommunicative hot house music is disproved by the activity in Melbourne and Sydney. One of the most dramatic indications that people had begun to hear contemporary jazz was provided by a festival organised by Horst Liepolt at Sydney's Basement in 1975. Every Monday and Tuesday night through the month of May at least two bands were presented, some falling into the far out category. A capacity audience responded generally with high enthusiasm and always with animation. Some of the performances were electrifying — some were, indeed, electronic — and a quite cathartic excitement prevailed.

Some of the bands gained a following which they previously lacked. Others still perform intermittently — a jazz hazard not confined to the avant garde.

Rather than try to explain in essay form what Australian contemporary jazz is all about, I have decided to present a panorama in the form of a series of sketches of important musicians and bands playing today — plus some sketches of important innovators who are not currently playing.

My hope is that some idea what the music is about will emerge in this form and that it might also serve as a catalogue for readers interested in following up some of this music. □



Don Burrows and George Golla (top) always have and probably always will influence modern jazz in Australia. Many people think of Australian jazz only in terms of Burrows and Golla. Graeme Bell (above) is still around and still playing remarkable music. The new Nolan-Bertles Quartet (left) represents a promising jazz union.



DON BURROWS AND GEORGE GOLLA



FOR MANY PEOPLE, AUSTRALIAN JAZZ IS BURROWS AND GOLLA . . .

DON BURROWS, through hard work, a pinch of shrewdness, and great natural talent, has reached the curious position where he is the link with jazz for many people — and the fixture beyond which they cannot see.

Don has kept jazz interest alive through the lean years. He has taught and encouraged countless young musicians. He has won for jazz an acceptance for many people who would hitherto take nothing outside the European tradition seriously.

In many ways, Don is Mister Jazz in Australia. This synonymity has meant that many people will ignore posters and other summonses to attend a jazz concert, because, for sure Don Burrows will be having another concert soon. And if you want to hear jazz you hear Burrows. Who else? George Golla. But he will be there with Don. They have been together since, as Don would say, the year dot.

All things taken into consideration, it is possible that nobody in jazz here is a

finer musician than these two. There are a number who are as good. Graeme Lyall, for instance, is at least as good a saxophonist as Don. There are a number whom I personally prefer in some ways. Most importantly, there are a number of good ones who are very different.

It is not their fault. What's to be done about it? Don has recently taken some positive steps. He has been presenting Australian jazz on an ABC FM program, and he has been appearing with other bands which have achieved a high standard. One hopes that his signals will be read.

Burrows began playing clarinet professionally at a very early age. On his own admission he is not much of a practiser. His formidable technique was acquired largely through just having to go out and play. During a wartime shortage of cane he fashioned reeds from toothbrush handles. His first influences were New Orleans clarinetists, and then people like Benny Goodman, whom he can still take off brilliantly. By the time I heard him in the '50s at Sydney's old Sky Lounge (with Dave Rutledge, Terry Wilkinson, Freddie Logan, Ron Webber and singer Norman Erskine) he had absorbed the influence of then-modern clarinetists such as Buddy De Franco

and Tony Scott.

That was the cool jazz era, and they played more or less in that idiom, but with no lack of exuberance or swing. Burrows was also playing alto and baritone saxes by that time. He had recently been to the States, where he was often mistaken for Buddy De Franco, and he had been offered a job with Count Basie. The story has it that his wife was dreadfully homesick, and he had returned. I left it until the last minute to confirm this with him, and found that he was in Thailand, South America or perhaps the New Hebrides. He is probably our most travelled musician.

A little later I heard Don at the El Rocco with Judy Bailey, Errol Buddle, John Sangster, Ed Gaston and, ah, George Golla, who had been playing with that very important pianist Bryce Rhode. Golla had, and has still, one of the most immaculate guitar styles ever heard here, and the most sly and subtle sense of musical understatement. He was the perfect foil for Burrows' direct lyrical fluency, and thus it has been ever since.

The two have had considerable success, with different bands, at both the Montreux and Newport Jazz Festivals. Both teach in the jazz course

at Sydney Conservatorium and attend clarinet and guitar seminars with distinguished classical musicians.

The main reason for their popularity is simply that they are exceedingly beautiful players. This is immediately apparent even to those who are hostile to jazz. Don's tone on clarinet and flutes is about as attractive as any you are likely to hear. He keeps his ear open to new developments, and particularly on flute, employs a lot of the exotic coloration introduced by players like Roland Kirk. He is always bringing back different kinds of flutes from his Asian travels. His alto is clear and nicely edgy; his baritone, which he plays with exceptional fluency, is robust and warm.

Sometimes I feel they can both be too perfect, their musical disposition too uniformly sunny. There are times when I would welcome a bit more aggression, a few nastier sounds to spice the proceedings. Sometimes it happens when they play in new contexts. I was bowled over by Don's playing with the current Judy Bailey band, whose rhythm team of John Sangster and Ron Philpott plays in a somewhat looser and bumpier manner than Don has his own rhythm sections play. His use of electrified clarinet on the Galapagos Duck album, *St James*, was terrifically exciting, and surprisingly reminiscent of Miles Davis' electrified trumpet — which he has not heard. Lately he has been guesting with Bob Barnard's band at the Brass Notes at Kings Cross.

When I last saw Don, he had just returned from a Korean tour. He was brown and glowing, and full of enthusiasm for the people he had met and the music he had heard. He wants to go back and learn more from Asian musicians. The results are bound to be a pleasure and a surprise.

I have often seen the album *Jazz For Beachniks* (Columbia), which presents the old Sky Lounge band, in second-hand shops and it is well worth picking up. You can hear Don and George as they play today on a number of both studio and live recordings on the Cherry Pie label. Particularly interesting is the one featuring George and Don in a series of duets. Don also plays on a number of Sangster's records, which are listed under Sangster's name.

Judy Bailey, whom I've inexcusably neglected, has an excellent album on the Eureka label, featuring her current band, and a previous one that's not so good on Phonogram. □

AUSTRALIAN JAZZ TODAY

BOB BARNARD



BOB LEADS A SUPERB BAND THAT CAN SWING ANY WAY — FROM NEW ORLEANS TO DUKE ELLINGTON.

WHEN the Bob Barnard Band appeared on stage to accompany visiting tenor star Bud Freeman at last year's Jazz Convention — clarinetist John McCarthy, Barnard, trombonist John Costello and bassist Wally Wickham (all in their forties and spreading a bit in the middle) — it was suddenly apparent that they had acquired charisma. Nothing to do with show biz. They walked on rather diffidently, peering out into the audience, and you knew immediately that this was a band of men who were going to rise to the occasion and then some.

All of them, including the younger members — drummer Laurie Thompson and pianist Chris Tapperel — have been around for quite a while. Barnard and McCarthy in particular have always had big reputations, at least amongst musicians. This band, which was

formed, like most others, quite casually for a traditional jazz gig at the Old Push, has somehow projected its collective talents in a way that has never quite happened before.

This January they head out for a tour of Asian countries under the auspices of *Musica Viva* (Col Nolan's band is taking a slightly different route at the same time). Suddenly they have all been able to give up the dreaded RSL and Leagues Club work and devote themselves full time to jazz. My only regret is that the fine drummer Allan Geddes left the band before it happened. He deserved something like this.

It is undoubtedly one of the best bands I have heard, here or overseas, and its repertoire extends from New Orleans to swing-era Duke Ellington. It is the first band Barnard



BOB BARNARD



has actually led.

Bob Barnard is one of those natural musicians who can make the most routine variation sound fresh. A natural trumpet player in a country that sadly lacks them, he has achieved that totally satisfying combination of full mellowness and bright brass edge. He does not have phenomenal power in the upper register, but his high notes shine and he is able to hit them with great effect from virtually any angle. His imagination is beautifully ordered yet daring, his technique agile. Although he has begun recently to play effectively in more modern idioms, even there he retains some of the influence of Louis Armstrong — notably the vibrato, which he alone can do properly in this country. That rapid flowering just above the fundamental of the note that lays a brief vapor trail an instant after the note proper has ended. Where appropriate, he can execute beautifully the modern slow vibrato.

Bob was born in Melbourne. His parents had a dance band, which his older brother — the talented drummer and pianist Len Barnard — joined some years before Bob himself. Bob remembers that he was attracted at an early age to the spectacular swing era playing of people like Charlie Shavers, who was actually on the hit parade with Ziggy Elman on that duo trumpet workout *We'll Git It*. Then Len brought home a recording of Muggsy Spanier and that set him on the trail of Louis Armstrong.

Says Bob: "I have never looked forward since. No, that's not true, but for a while there I tried to copy Louis,

and I learned a great deal just playing along with his solos on record. When I first heard Dizzy Gillespie I didn't like it at all. I tried to like it but gave up. Then someone put a record on one day. It was Diz. Suddenly it happened. I thought, 'that sounds great'. I like to play in different idioms, but it's quite hard playing both styles successfully.

I've been doing a modal thing with Dennis Sutherland, and, well, he keeps hiring me! We were talking about this, John. I said that too many modern trumpet players limit themselves to that broad, even way of playing quavers. I mean trumpet styles don't seem to have progressed the way the saxophone has. Then you said that when you first tried to play modern jazz you found it hard to do quavers like that. You kept playing them uneven, swinging them in the older way.

"It's in your frame of mind, and what you've been listening to. If you listen for long enough you can do it. One thing I would like to do is record an album with strings. I've been just listening to that old Bobby Hackett album, and Clifford Brown with strings. I know I said Clifford was largely responsible for everyone playing quavers that way, but he is beautiful. He must be the best trumpet player who ever lived. I've heard no one to top him."

Bob came to Sydney in 1957 to join the Ray Price band, returned after a year, and then came back in 1962 to play with Graeme Bell. Apart from tours to New Guinea and New Zealand and a brief stint in Surfers Paradise, he has been here since. His band recently took part in a Bix Beiderbecke festival

in Bix's home town Davenport. The Americans were bowled over. While in New York he heard an old favorite, Billy Butterfield, playing with Hank Jones and Milt Hinton, a knockout band led by Ray Bryant, and an outstanding young traditional trumpeter called Ray Vasche.

Many people have likened Bob to Bix Beiderbecke. This has been a puzzle to me, and it is to Bob too. "I can turn on a Bix thing if I'm getting the right feeling from my rhythm section, but the influence has not been a major one on me. If it's there it has come indirectly through Bobby Hackett."

Bob is a solid bloke, very powerful around the neck and shoulders. Bearded these days and broad-featured, he reminds me of the happy giant. He is the most easygoing fellow in the world. He plays like an angel, and while he is probably not that, a lot of his real self comes out in his work. That alone would make him a very important artist.

Johnny McCarthy is another musician who can play with validity in a number of idioms, including in his case some pretty avant garde areas. I have included Barnard's band in this contemporary section because their contemporary relevance is apparent to anyone with half an ear.

Bob can be heard in brilliant form in his brother's band on a record called *The Naked Dance* (Swaggie), which was re-released in 1971, on *Fidgety Feet* (A.T.A. L2587), and John Sangster's *Hobbit Suite* (Swaggie) and *Lord of the Rings* (EMI). Also, the Barnard band with Bud Freeman (Swaggie). □

COL NOLAN AND ERROL BUDDLE

THE NOLAN/BUDDLE
ERA ENDS.
NOLAN/BERTLES BEGINS.

COL NOLAN and Errol Buddle, whose Nolan/Buddle Syndicate had held forth at Sydney's Old Push for the last two years, were the best surviving practitioners of the hard, straight ahead jazz that stormed back in reaction to the cool school in the 50s. Smoky jazz club jazz. Funky soul jazz. Turgid soul, perhaps. Even guilty soul. Rent overdue, I hope that chick's not pregnant — to hell with it! Tonight we swing!

On a good night that thing was happening; the off beat was snapping and the music was loping in an awful hurry, like men going rhythmically along a rope across Pirana River.

Nolan is the king of this kind of piano. I remember one night when he was with the Daly-Wilson band and they set up one of those force nine gale tempos. The rhythm section started it, Col stabbing short phrases. Then he began to rumble in the bass, attack and hold bluesy treble figures. The band began shouting encouragement. His considerable bulk rocked and even bounced on the stool. He was simply thundering, harumphing through his moustache like a bull walrus. The band came in 15 ft off the ground.

Buddle has had considerable success in America, both with the Australian Jazz All Stars and in bands which included Yusef Lateef and Elvin Jones. He has an elegant, power-in-reserve quality on tenor sax. He never forces it, but unwinds immaculate lines that seem to build of their own accord, and by the time he has finished a good solo he can have the audience on its feet.

Nolan has not changed at all in the years I've known him; mellowed a little, perhaps. Buddle's appearance used to be somewhat severe and imposing, to suit his authoritative tenor sound. With his

strong nose, clipped moustache and slightly hooded eyes, he looked like a cross between impassive Buddha and chairman of the board. These days he looks a bit shaggier, more approachable, and as is often the case with people fortunate enough to be doing what they love, the weatherbeating of the years serves to make him look paradoxically younger.

They were perfect foils for each other. Mr Gentle and Mr — what shall we say? Nolan hammed up the announcements, wobbled his cheek with his tongue in time to Dieter Vogt's bass line, frowned and scrutinised the people sitting close to the stand, until they were forced to look away, laughing self-consciously. Buddle watched this cheekiness with amusement and apparent surprise — although he'd seen it all before.

The Syndicate can be heard on Soul Syndicate Live and Jason's (Avant Garde) and Nolan/Buddle Quintet (M7). Nolan can be heard on John Sangster's Hobbit Suite (Swaggie) and Lord of the Rings (EMI).

At the time of writing, Buddle has departed mysteriously for the Middle East. Multi-reed player and flautist Bob Bertles, back from three years with the English band, Nucleus, has taken his place. Dieter and drummer Laurie Bennett remain.

It is too early to say in what direction the new Col Nolan Quartet will move. At any rate the Nolan/Bertles collaboration begins promisingly with a Musica Viva tour of the Far East and possibly the US.

In town they can be heard at the Old Push and the Brass Notes Club at Kings Cross. □



Errol Buddle has had considerable success in the US with his "power-in-reserve" quality.



Col Nolan, the king of smoky club jazz, had a tour of the Far East, and possibly the US, for 1977.

FREE KATA

IT'S A WAY OF IMPROVISING AND MEDITATING IN THE MARTIAL ARTS. FREE KATA IS WELL NAMED.

SERGE ERMOLL has been a student of martial arts for more than 10 years. The hand-outs he had written for his band, Free Kata, were heavy with existentialism.

I went to his recording session prepared to battle certain prejudices. The musicians were standing away from their instruments when I arrived but I knew immediately which one was Serge. He was a ball of muscle, short but very broad. When the operator asked for a level, drummer Ross Rignold and bassist Graham Ruckley joined Serge in a short burst but my attention was held by the man himself. The blond moustache stretched with his grimace, the

formidable biceps tensed and the piano took a staccato attack which, metaphorically, set its teeth rattling.

Once the levels were set, the musicians played virtually nothing that was not used on the record. No retakes and only one quick run through a theme for tenor sax, which the player had never seen before. In fact, the tenor man, Eddie Bronson, had not long ago arrived from Russia — also Serge's birthplace.

I heard one track, without tenor, from the control room. It began with bowed bass and developed into such a maze of speed and energy, withal ecstatically lyrical, that I moved into the studio for the next one to be amongst it all.

Serge called: "Get your horn, man." Eddie seemed slightly nervous. Serge gave him the theme on a scrap of paper. He put it on a stand and blew it through, slightly bent so that the tenor hung like an elephant's trunk. He asked Serge something in Russian. Serge sang part of it with him and they were ready. Serge had devised this so that any one

part could be transposed over any other. Polytonality would certainly ensue in the improvisations. It was melodic but forceful, with a leap in the middle into some strong shouts above the stave.

Horst Liepolt came over to the piano with his stopwatch. "Okay, you got about 12 minutes on this one. When do you want a signal?" Serge: "Eddie will blow for four minutes. You got four minutes, man!" "When I lift my hands," said Horst, "you got a minute to go. When I drop them, that's the finish."

Eddie began blowing with a sharp, full tone, the trio punctuating and surging round him. He got stronger and stronger with short, hard phrases in free association. The higher overtones coming off his dark sound were making my hair prickle. By the time Horst flagged him out he was leaning right into it and the others were in full flight.

After Horst flagged it all to a stop, Serge lit a cigarette. From the control room: "Is that it? You don't want to do it again or anything?" Everyone laughed. "We couldn't do that again. It couldn't happen like that again."

I asked Serge about his involvement with martial arts. The usual thing: Why? "When you first go into it you have convinced yourself it's for self-defence



and spiritual development. As you develop you realise your motives are all bullshit. When you learn about the depth of your revulsion and fear of violence — for which you are probably over-compensating — and at the same time get an insight of the violence that is in you and everyone, then you go on for the spiritual reasons.”

Serge explained that performing a kata is a way of meditating. The kata is a mantra in the form of movements. You also draw out and develop responses you will use instinctively in action. “Free” Kata is just that. It develops the imagination and ensures that you will not be tied to orthodoxy.

Serge aims in his improvised playing for the state which Zen Buddhists call No Mind. This is not exactly the same thing as mindlessness. We may simply call it spontaneity.

“If you open up in this kind of music, all the things that are in you will come out. What you shouldn’t do is think: ‘Now I will be aggressive; now I will be tranquil.’ If everybody would just be themselves, music would be much more colorful.”

Serge began piano lessons as a small boy. But during a long period of moving in Europe, his father gave him a trumpet

instead and he studied that up until his late teens, performing for some time with his father as a club act.

“Suddenly, I looked at it and I thought, this isn’t me, this is my old man. I began on the piano again. I remember I was in Surfers Paradise and I could only play one tune but I went around asking for a gig. Then it occurred to me, what will I do if someone takes me up? One day there’s a knock on the door and it’s Stan Bourne, who was playing at the Southport Hotel.”

The late Stan Bourne, an unspeakably crude, fat, red-faced comedian and pianist, held forth at Surfers for many years. He was more or less in the George Wallace tradition. It is often said of artists that you either hate them or love them. It’s not always true, but it was of Stan.

“I didn’t know what to do. Finally I admitted I could only play one tune. He said that’s okay, you’ll soon learn. And I did. I’m still amazed at the number of tunes I learned in a few days. Stan taught me an awful lot.

“When I first appeared with the band, he introduced me as a Yank. One night a pregnant woman walked across the floor and he called out: ‘You had a

big breakfast this morning!’ Next thing her husband comes up on the stage and, bang!, down goes Stan. They carry him off. Ten minutes later he’s back again and he says: ‘Hands up all the ladies who are having a good time’. Then he looks around and says: ‘I see you haven’t shaved this morning, madame.’ He was appalling, but you couldn’t hold him down.”

Stan Bourne as zen master?

The next time I saw Free Kata was at the Basement’s May festival. If the recording session had been energetic it only hinted at the sustained cataclysm of their first performance. It provided the one element missing in a successful festival of contemporary jazz: Controversy.

I did readings of some of my poetry in concert with Serge and he soon coerced me into completely improvised performances with the band. Free Kata — with or without me — performs intermittently. The recording on the 44 label has sold quite well.

“We are not sure what the hell we are doing ourselves,” says Serge. “We are all sure we’re onto something but whether we are doing the right thing with it — how can we know yet? It’s like a new language.” □



Free Kata (left) with producer, Horst Liepolt (front row, centre). Serge is the one with the T-shirt. Eddie Bronson, Free Kata’s tenor man (above). The group plays improvised jazz, based on meditation and spontaneity.



CHARLIE MUNRO

WHEN HE DRAWS ON THE MOST INTENSE AREA OF HIS TALENTS, HE IS ONE OF OUR ONLY TRUE JAZZ COMPOSERS.'

I HAVE been surprised twice now to find Charlie Munro not so heavy as I had remembered him being. He is tall, but all his weight seems to be out at the end of his nose and in his fingertips. The feeling of weight soon returns, reinforced by memories of his playing. On soprano, alto, cello and tenor — particularly cello and tenor — he has the passion and stamina of a bull elephant. There is so much intensity in his work on *Eastern Horizons* and a much earlier recording, *Here's Bryce*, that it is difficult at first to equate that with this suburban family man who — for some reason — reminds me of the well-intentioned commander of the base in *Sergeant Bilko*. Recounting setbacks and hostile reactions to his music, he says: "Haw haw! Blow me down!" Unlike *Bilko's* commander, he is not often flustered or anguished.

Charlie used to rehearse an experimental jazz group consisting of Bob McIvor, trombone; Mark Bowden, drums, assorted percussion and vibes; Neville Whitehead, bass; and himself on flute, clarinet and piano, as well as the instruments mentioned above. They made two records, but managed to get only one or two concerts a year. In the meantime, Charlie played in the ABC Dance Band.

Charlie — originally from New Zealand — was one of the first Australian musicians, along with Wally Norman, Rutledge, Burrows, Brian Brown, Judy Bailey, Almeida, Buddle and a few others, to play modern jazz. Long before it became fashionable he made a study of Eastern music, and his soprano playing on *Eastern Horizons* has more eastern feeling than that of practically any other occidental I have heard. He was then one of the first here to explore modal and *free* jazz, in association with Bryce Rohde and the late Syd Powell.

Like Bryce, Charlie has a talent for



writing themes which are strong in themselves, but serve also as excellent vehicles for a very free type of improvisation. Like most Australian jazz composers, he sometimes shows a weakness for bland, middle of the road rock and classical pastiches. This probably rubs off from the commercial studio work which is bread and butter for a lot of them. Charlie, when he draws on the most intense area of his

talents — as in the *Islamic Suite* on *Eastern Horizons* — is, with Roger Frampton and Bernie McGann, one of our only true jazz composers. He might well be the most remarkable musician we have had.

After years of non-recognition, Charlie has virtually retired from jazz activity. *Eastern Horizons* has been re-released. It belongs in every library of Australian jazz. □

ROGER FRAMPTON AND JAZZ CO-OP

**EVERY
PERFORMANCE
IS AN EXPLORATION
SHARED WITH THE
AUDIENCE AND
FELLOW
MUSICIANS.'**

IN 1973 the first jazz course on a tertiary level was established at the Conservatorium of NSW, largely through the efforts of Don Burrows and Conservatorium director, Rex Hobcroft.

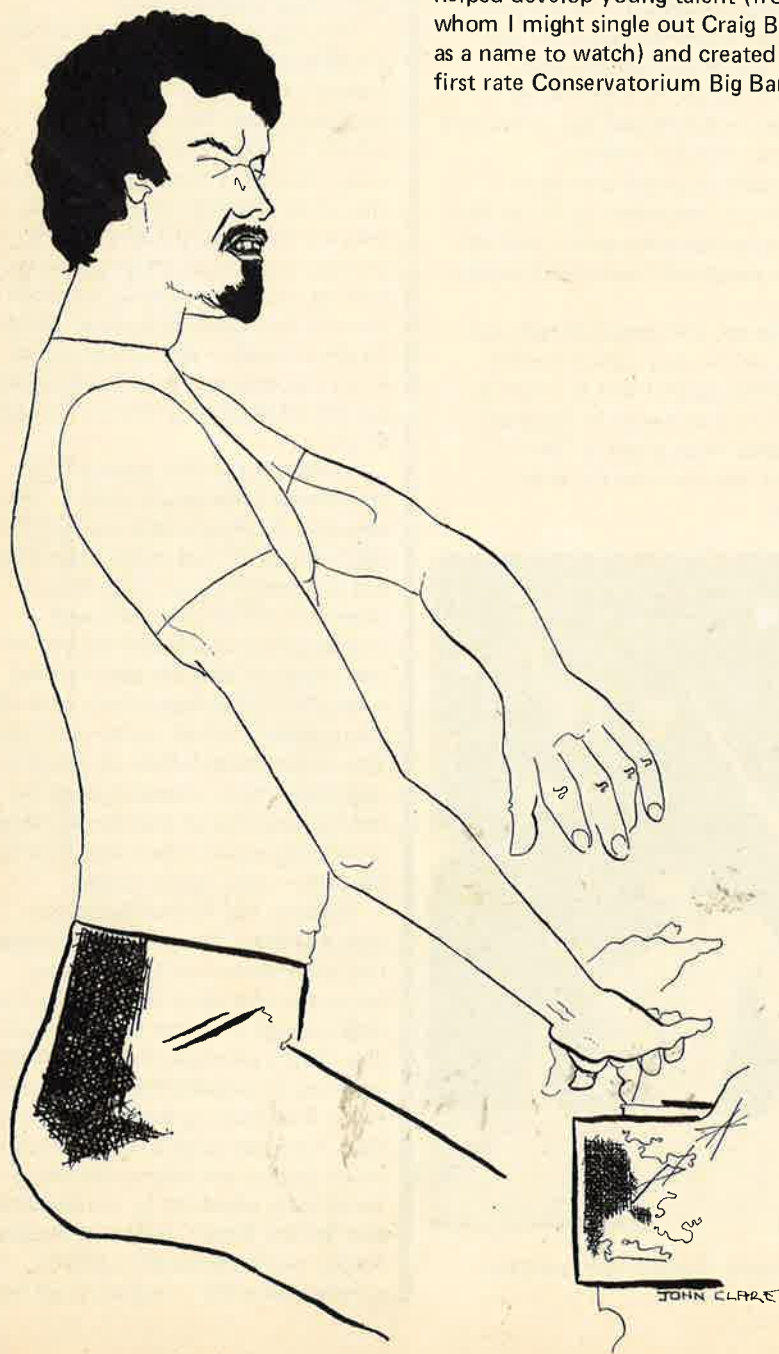
American reed player, teacher and composer Howie Smith headed the course up until the middle of this year. He is an inspired teacher and player who created enormous interest in jazz and helped develop young talent (from whom I might single out Craig Benjamin as a name to watch) and created the first rate Conservatorium Big Band.

Smith played regularly in a superb group called Jazz Co-op, which combined the exceptional talents of Roger Frampton, piano, alto and soprano; drummer Phil Treloar — now replaced by Allan Turnbull — and bassist Jack Thorncroft.

The Jazz Co-op plays on without Howie — who is back in America — and while its collective brilliance is really *the* thing, interest has inevitably focused on Frampton, who may be the most remarkable musician to have emerged since Charlie Munro. Roger came out from England in his late teens and taught himself to play the piano in daily sessions. But he was most often heard playing jazz on alto sax, which he had only recently taken up. It was apparent, immediately, that he had a highly individual approach. He and Bernie McGann are the most unmistakable stylists here. I first heard him on piano flawlessly executing difficult contemporary classical pieces — including the Steve Reich piano duets — in David Ahern's AZ Music Concerts.

A few years ago he began playing both piano and alto in his own trio with Phil Treloar, drums, and Darcy Wright, bass. On both instruments he combined fantastically complex musical concepts with a really weird idiosyncratic sense of humor. A kind of innocent seriousness of approach leads him unknowingly to strike postures that in themselves are bizarre and funny as he searches — sometimes under the lid of the piano — for the means to articulate his unique imagination. But his conscious humor takes the form of strange juxtapositions and parodies; bursts of berserk old-time stride piano which suddenly begin to stumble, stop, start, and dissolve in a fantasmagoria of dissonances, impressionistic ripples and chiming atonal figures; wailing Eastern lines on sax punctuated by honking rhythm and blues phrases — all inimitably Roger.

I use innocent advisedly. Frampton believes that every Jazz performance is an exploration shared with the audience and fellow musicians. He believes it in such an uncomplicated way that he is



ROGER FRAMPTON AND JAZZ CO-OP

able to do things which would make others appear pretentious. One night he developed so much momentum in an up-tempo solo with the Co-op that there was nowhere else to go. He stopped playing and drummed his feet, eyes screwed shut and mouth agape like Picasso's screaming horse of Guernica. To use an old cliché, the silence was louder than a thunderclap. When he moves to the microphone with his alto, bent forward and slowed by concentration, he has all the blithe saunter of a three toed sloth creeping from the jungle. It sometimes takes an audience a while to realise that it is okay to laugh at some of his grotesquely stretched bending notes and crazy burlbes.

In Jack Thorncroft and Allan Turnbull he has, firstly two of the very best on their instruments, and just as importantly, accomplices of wit and flexibility. Like most jazz musicians, they are gifted story tellers (drummers John Pochee and Laurie Bennet — who treat an anecdote like a jazz solo, with accelerations and diminuendos over a basic pulse — are perhaps the best of the lot), and the alert, sometimes humorously vainglorious, sometimes deliberately bewildered or self-mocking, viewpoints from which their stories are

told are often a great help in fully understanding the music.

Turnbull has more control and flexibility than any drummer in Australia. He is undoubtedly in world class. He snuffles and wrinkles his nose with concentration, sometimes looking back over one shoulder, sometimes scanning his kit in slow rotation while he spatters off cryptic figures which are placed with minute precision on the pinging or clashing spots of his cymbals, the ticking or thudding or crashing areas of his drum heads and rims, yet have all the looseness and freedom of a child's playing. Magic. Suffice it to say that Thorncroft makes the bass sing. His playing inspires love for this great instrument which, far from being redundant in the electric age, is reaching a new peak with the hitherto unimaginable pizzicato playing of contemporary musicians. Jack can play it like a huge flamenco guitar, and can sing with poignantly sustained bending notes.

The Co-op, with Howie Smith, can be heard on the Jazz Co-op Double Album (Phonogram) and Jazz Co-op Live At The Basement (44 Records). They appear most often at The Basement, but occasionally tour interstate.



Jazz Co-op's original line-up: Howie Smith, soprano; Phil Treloar, drums; Roger Frampton, piano and Jack Thorncroft, bass. Photo courtesy 44 Label.

SITTING CLOSE to them is often like being in the teeth of a tricky surf. The drummer develops more forward momentum than anyone playing in Australia, but he does it by running around the beat and pouncing back to scare it on. There is a sustained hissing, scary crashes, deep thuds of punctuation, waves of energy which veer and nearly topple.

When an overloading of cross-rhythms is unsnarled to reveal new transformations of speed, or when the alto player begins rocking crazily — spilling out bright demented trills and lightning bolt phrases placed unpredictably over his instrument's range — then their fans, who do like to sit very close to them, will yell giddily, with a high yipping sound.

This raging aspect of *The Last Straw* is complemented by an exotic and tranquil stream. Altoist Bernie McGann's tune "Mex" is a slow unfolding of radiant melody over a softly insistent Latin shuffle. It dissolves into a free interlude in which Jack Thorncroft's fine bass tone, both plucked and bowed, sings against a shifting web of percussion — drummer John Pochee moving chains of bells over his drum heads — and limpid piano. From this emerges the defiant galloping rhythm of McGann's theme "The Last Straw".

Perhaps it was this segue which bewildered a newspaper critic — one who had previously told me that she didn't know all that much about jazz — and prompted her to write, after a concert in which they were well received by an audience who had in the main come to hear the popular and entertaining *Galapagos Duck*, that their arrangements lacked clarity and focus. This unfortunate follow up to what might have been a breakthrough for the band is only one of a series of incidents which help explain the name they have adopted — only partly in jest.

McGann and Pochee have been near-legendary figures for many years in that underground of jazz and rock musicians who never seem to reach a large enough audience to allow them to play their own music regularly. McGann works as a postman. Pochee spends a lot of his time backing the award-winning Four Kinsman vocal group. Because he is self-taught, and despite his being specifically asked for by visiting artists like Shirley Bassey, he has in the past encountered resistance in getting commercial work — mainly from the

THE LAST STRAW

IT'S NAMED
ONLY PARTLY IN JEST . . .

figurehead type of popular bandleader.

The hectic quality of some of their work is, above all, authentic, for the music is both the obsession that has put them through desperate times, and the constantly evolving expression of those times . . . living, for instance, in places so blighted in spirit they were given names like Gloom Castle and Muttering Lodge: Driving all over Melbourne or Sydney in search of a rumored jam: Playing all night and collapsing on the floor only to be woken by Joe Laine with a new Charlie Parker record: Taking on weird jobs to pay the rent — playing exhausted music in places that were often empty . . .

"Well," says Pochee, "there *were* two people over in the far corner, and we seemed to have been playing this terrible arrangement for ever, staring straight ahead . . .

"Suddenly this drunk comes weaving in, spots the band, aha, starts running towards us. His feet fly out from under him. He's lying on the air, horizontal at head height, then he hits the ground; his money and keys roll everywhere. Then this mob bursts in, drags him out, knocking over chairs. It's empty again. We play on, staring ahead. I look at the bass player afterwards, and he says, 'It's okay, I saw it too!'"

Playing the crim haunts. In rock bands through the '60s crammed with talented musicians all playing stoned in their own universes, drowning each other out. Finding a jazz job, building up the crowds and being sacked because the owner's cousin came in boozed and couldn't dance to the music.

And now, The Last Straw, which is developing into the best band they ever had. Ken James, the youngest member, has come on so rapidly in this company that he is now one of the most satisfying tenor soloists in the country. Pianist Tony Esterman re-emerged recently from the obscurity of the Leagues clubs. His playing bulges with more ferocious energy at each outing. As he has been described as looking a bit like an axe murderer at the keyboard, we may be doubly fortunate that he gets it out this way.

McGann, who writes a lot of the band's material, is one of the country's most distinctive alto soloists. In contrast to Ken James' legato fluency, he often links speech-like exclamations in an angular progression whose logic is sometimes grasped just after he has completed it. Excited by this revelation, one finds him somewhere else. His tone can be tough, even lacerating, or full and mellow. He produces an extraordinary growling tone in the dark bottom reaches and a piercing brightness up high. You need to get on to what he is doing, but once you do, he is the man.

John Pochee is so relaxed that sticks have been known to fall in slow motion from his hand — replaced magically while you are still watching the graceful curve of the lost one through the air. He tightens and loosens totally with the fluctuating intensity of the music, his eyes blinking from the vibrating edge of his cymbal so that he sometimes looks as though he is about to cry. When another player solos, Pochee's eyes burn into his back. He yells and coaxes. Nobody puts quite so much into it, and very few get such inspiring results.

After four recent attempts to record The Last Straw for 44 Records — during an engagement at The Basement — were thwarted by the leaking roof of a recording van, rain the following week belting so hard on the cables as to cause interference, Ken James taking sick, and yet another technical hitch, Bernie McGann seemed just a little withdrawn. A jazz tour in Adelaide had also fallen through. His real feelings came out in his playing, but the rage was controlled. Pochee, too played with such force one felt he would soon physically move the band sideways a few feet.

Some of us felt it was as good as any night they had given us. The whole band played like heroes. I must confess — to many of us they are.

The Last Straw will eventually be recorded on 44. They are most often heard at Sydney's Basement. McGann and Pochee, with pianist Dave McCrae, are on the CBS recording Jazz Australia. □



AUSTRALIAN JAZZ TODAY

JOHN SANGSTER

'HE'S LIKE A GOOD-HUMOURED, BUT VILLAINOUS, BOY FORCED TO DON A SUIT FOR DANCING LESSONS, HOLDING BACK AN EVIL LEER AT HIS MATES.'

JOHN SANGSTER began in traditional jazz with the Graeme Bell band in Melbourne, playing trombone for a while, then cornet and trumpet, and finally drums — which he taught himself on board ship while the band was heading for their second English tour in 1947, minus their regular drummer. Later he played with Ray Price.

If you have seen Sangster playing traditional jazz, you will have noticed that he looks like the typical traddie; bearded, twinkling — at once dedicated and jolly.

The sound of the vibraphone — his next, and now his staple instrument — brought him into modern jazz. His next step was to teach himself composition.

"I wanted to write more, because I was never satisfied with playing the same old tunes all the time. If you are going to improvise, you may as well start out with a theme that is beautiful in itself. And many of the things jazz musicians use as vehicles for improvisation are not particularly beautiful."

Attracted by Latin rhythms, he explored a range of time feelings and began to master a formidable battery of percussion.

In his modern jazz period, Sangster lived in a rather chaotic "penthouse" atop a building off William Street, Kings Cross. In the basement was Sydney's only dark, funky, American-style jazz joint — the El Rocco. Here, if you were an aspiring musician or just an avid reader of *Downbeat* and record covers, you would sit until your eyes streamed from the writhing monster of cigarette smoke, forgetting for long stretches the poor girl you were currently force-feeding jazz, discomfort and coffee.

And there was Sangster, on top of it and amongst it at the same time, the archetypal modern jazz musician; bearded, cool, and always amused. He and Don Burrows excelled themselves in a late night program on ABC radio, where they would follow the reading of a poem with improvisations that were often beautiful and sympathetic. But if



Sangster, the way a lot of people remember him — at Melbourne's Downbeat Club, 1963. Photo: Norm Linehan.

you happened to turn on the TV at the wrong time, there would be Sangster in his dinner suit playing in *The Sound Of Music*. Only here did he have a faint air of being caught out. Yet here, I often felt, was Sangster reduced to his basic nature; a good humored, but villainous boy, forced to don a suit for dancing lessons, holding back an evil leer at his mates who are doubled up on the sidelines.

Yet if it is not difficult to imagine Sangster in a school cap, it is a surprise to stand beside him and find him not quite as big as you'd thought. He has the features — a full nose and high round forehead — of a large man. He is a medium sized man. His eyes seem a little smallish because of his imaginary bulk; soft, intelligent and full of humor. Like the amused eyes of an elephant in a Disney cartoon.

The time came when Sangster felt that "modern" jazz had fallen into stultifying conventions. He began exploring the world opened by new jazz

musicians in America, such as Sun Ra and Archie Shepp, but there was very little acceptance of it then in Australia. The energy and the audience had moved to rock music. Sangster moved that way too, bringing with him a lot of sounds of the new jazz. He appeared at underground concerts and at the El Rocco with some fine bands which included pianists Dave McRae, Bobby Gebert or Judy Bailey, tenor man Graeme Lyall and drummer Alan Turnbull.

When Hair opened in Sydney, Sangster was the obvious choice to handle the percussion and generally organise the band. He stayed two years with the production, interrupted by a trip to the Osaka Expo with Don Burrows, pop singer Judy Stone and a troupe of Aboriginal dancers and musicians. The group Tully, part of the Hair line-up, had developed (under the influence of Meher Baba via Adrian Rawlins) the habit of standing around giggling and cooing like demented doves. Love, peace, everybody smile unrelentingly. With his battered apparel, this thin on top, long back and sides haircut and grizzled beard, Sangster was a vaguely Allan Ginsberg-like figure.

About this time he began writing for underground films. Alby Thom's *Marinetti* was notable for brilliant camera work by David Perry, and for Sangster's music. I did not see Kim Guyatt's *The Phallie Forest*, but Bob Ellis gave it a good review and commended Sangster's music. Some of Sangster's first lucrative work was done for William Hanna of the Hanna-Barbera cartoon team. Both American and European musicians had begun to price themselves out of the business, and the accountants had started looking towards the antipodes. Again, Sangster swallowed or was swallowed whole by his new milieu. He spoke of his childhood enthrallment with the music of cartoons: All those Swanee whistles, bursts of frenetic Dixieland, flutes spilling drops of light into the dark theatre.

AUSTRALIAN JAZZ TODAY

DICK HUGHES

'HE'S COMMITTED TO JAZZ IN THE WAY RENEGADE CATHOLICS BECOME COMMITTED TO COMMUNISM.'

DICK HUGHES is a tall man with a low centre of gravity: A bit of weight around the seat. When he sits at the piano, much of that weight is soon transferred to the keyboard. Dick is no cocktail tinkler.

In fact, if Dick Hughes has a fault it is a tendency to hammer a bit when the music has reached its height, to pinch treble notes off the board with slightly less than controlled vehemence. In short, he allows emotion to bulge momentarily into grossness, like a man who has just had that one drink too many. Fortunately, it takes him quite a lot of drinks to reach that point and there is always a great deal of good jazz along the way.

Outside French's in Oxford Street, Sydney, there used to be a picture of Dick and Duke Ellington thoughtfully confronting each other over the top of a piano. Ellington, according to a bubble someone had painted in, was thinking: "If I tell this bloke I don't like Jelly Roll Morton he'll give me crook reviews in the Sunday Mirror." Small chance. That Ellington did not like Morton was just another indication to Dick that "if the ways of God are strange, the ways of men are stranger still" Jelly was Dick's first pianistic idol but his playing reveals more of his later influences — Fats Waller and Jess Stacey.

It was at French's that Dick and I first confronted each other, after a prolonged rubbishing of him and Mike Williams in Music Maker — which got nastier and nastier as I grew more frustrated by their refusal to reply. The point at issue was contemporary jazz and what seemed to me their implication that musicians who played in Revivalist or Traditionalist styles were more concerned about the basics and origins of jazz, while I had to agree with Whitney Bailliet's summary of jazz as "the sound of surprise" despite my distaste for the quasi-Zen phrase.

Film music is now Sangster's main source of income. He has moved from Kings Cross to a house by the Narrabeen lakes. He paddles about in a canoe while resting or thinking over an assignment and smiles the Sangster smile. There we leave him, skimming, drifting, slowly spinning, smiling the while, off into obscurity.

Not quite. Not long after Sangster retired from public life, the great Keith Barr died. Keith had been a tenor player of world class. He had beaten a drug habit only to fall from a window during a diabetic attack. Up against it through most of his last years, he had never relinquished the fire. Sangster was one of his few close friends.

A benefit was arranged at the Musicians Club for his daughter, and Sangster organised a band. What a band! Keith Stirling is on trumpet blowing fierce, jagged, hyper-intense bursts. He whips up the rhythm section — which includes the great drummer Jackie Dougan — until it hums like a dynamo, then he begins to sway and pour out streams of lyrical beauty. Sangster, eyes glittering, makes a strange bearish lurch towards his vibes and it's rolling. Sangster is laughing — dancing, shuffling and laughing. People who might be mystified by this music on record are overwhelmed.

Two members of that band — Dougan and Jackie Fairbrass — are now dead, and they were paying tribute to a dead man. The intensity and strangeness of certain occasions can be magnified in retrospect, but I wrote the preceding paragraph the next day.

Sangster's recorded music — the conservation film soundtrack *Australia And All That Jazz (Cherry Pie)*, for instance — is almost miniaturised compared to the more adventurous and extroverted live performances. Likewise, his *Hobbit Suite (Swaggie)* and *Lord Of The Rings (EMI)* often delve back into his traditional background. (Sangster would have to have done a Tolkien Suite, but I for one, believe him when he claims to re-read the abysmal stuff many times a year.) A hard-to-get CBS recording, *Jazz Australia*, has a sample of his more exotic approach and features the exceptional piano work of Bobby Gebert.

Sangster has been out and about a bit more lately, but his live jazz appearances are too infrequent. Such an important and charismatic figure should be in the thick of it again. □

Dick eyed me shrewdly. We fenced a bit and then quite suddenly we were talking, not about John Coltrane or Miles Davis but about Louis Armstrong. Everybody pays lip service (or should we say in this context, chops service) to Pops but I think we each felt that the other really knew. This has been our habit ever since. We have said what we had to say about a point of controversy and then moved into mutually more profitable areas. Who would want to waste time arguing with a man who can tell you about meetings with Louis and Duke and Sydney Bechet and Pee Wee Russell and whose knowledge of the music — at least up until the '50s — is as complete as anyone's in this country?

In any case, if a conversation is not to Dick's liking, you may turn around to see him gone. He will be staring down his nose, which runs in a straight line from his forehead without the usual bump or indentation, into his drink on the other side of the room. Then he will begin to look about with a strange inquisitiveness: alertly picking up only what he wants to hear. There is something very Irish about his smooth face, with the features set well within its perimeter and there is something — what I can't really say — faintly porcine about his nose; and about his hands, which are pale, very strong and can span tenths without any trouble, though they are not large.

Perhaps Dick reminds me at times of a greedy and stubborn boy. He's greedy for good jazz and you have got to have a bit of greed, lust, lewdness, to remain committed to jazz, or to any art form in this country. Certainly you've got to have a lot of stubbornness. Dick is committed to jazz in the way that renegade Catholics are supposed to become committed to communism. One is never sure whether Dick is a renegade Catholic or not. Nor if he is serious when he claims, deep in his cups, that

DICK HUGHES

Miles Davis has formed some pact with the Devil. Dick's dogma is a rather slippery one to grasp. The heretics and saints of his eclectic system would probably never have heard of each other even had they all lived contemporaneously. Occasionally their destinies intersect on the same day, decades apart. If Louis Armstrong was born on the same day 10 years after Sherlock Holmes met Dr Watson, Dick would know that. Of course, as we all know, Louis Armstrong was born on Independence Day and I have no idea when Holmes met Watson. I do know, however, that it was in the Criterion and that Dick's father — the well-known Hong Kong foreign correspondent Richard Hughes — had a plaque put there.

I used to drop in after work to sit by the piano in French's and hear Dick play, as he probably plays best, on his own. Sometimes he would be rolling out an exuberant blues with a strong, underlying boogie feeling (he has also lent an ear to blues men like Art Hodes), or that pumping left hand that never quite breaks into the formal

patterns of stride. You could sit on that beat and let it carry you like a conveyor-belt to the bar. It was also damn good to hear Dick play a blues, particularly if the Thelonious Monk influence was on him. This influence is felt exclusively in his approach to time. "I was doing those Monk silences then," he once told me, "to try and get a counterpoint going with that bloke's voice droning on at the bar."

Dick works full-time as a journalist, of course, and when the Mirror lets him stretch out, or when he's writing for Hi-fi Review (we always let him stretch out), he writes with the same authority and the same peculiar sense of humor — alternately ponderous and bewilderingly elusive — that he displays in conversation. His conversation can, at times, be very hard to follow except, perhaps, to someone like the late Fred May. Puns and allusions are pursued with an exhausting determination. Some of them are brilliant and some of them are not so hot. But you would miss the bad ones too if he stopped producing them. One of his better ones was

thrown over his shoulder as he hurried out of the Mirror on his way to a funeral. "You know, I've just realised that funeral is an anagram for real fun!" I once wrote something that pleased him quite a deal. I called him a free-form raconteur. If you like it Dick, it is yours.

When Dick sings, in the kind of neo Fats Waller that once used to turn me off Australian trad musicians, "I thought I heard Buddy Bolden say . . ." some of his audience at the Journalists Club — where he's playing now — don't know what the hell he's singing about. Though they damn well should. His singing of Winding Boy, incidentally, knocks me right over. When his piano starts to jump, everybody knows what that's about. —John Clare □

*Editor's footnote: To sample Hughes' humor and raconteuring at its inimitable best, read *The Night Visitors* (page 78) and *The Jazz Personality* (page 66).*



JAZZ CENTRE 44

**'DOWN AT JAZZ CENTRE 44,
IN ST KILDA, I FELT I WAS LOOKING
IN ON THE SECRET OF CREATION.'**

CONVENTION has it that jazz is played in smoky dives — and often it is. But jazz began as open air music.

Contemporary jazz is really a very rugged chamber music, but as such it can be delightful in the open air. The concert hall is often the most disappointing venue for jazz — with the exception of big bands. Close proximity to the musicians is an advantage. Apart from the range of subtler colorations — such as subtones produced in the throat and breathy limning of notes — which can be lost in vast spaces, the feeling of complicity in a musician's explorations is harder to achieve. Though concerts can be very successful if musicians are given time to establish an intimacy with their audience. Don Burrows, John Sangster and Brian Brown are very good at this.

The place I remember most pleasurably as a setting for modern jazz was a large and airy room upstairs in a circular building in St Kilda. This was the first place I heard modern jazz regularly, and by coincidence, it was an important venue for many of the musicians who have shaped Australian contemporary jazz.

The Jazz Centre 44 was about half way between Luna Park and St Moritz skating rink. Every Sunday afternoon I made a pilgrimage from Essendon by tram. It was five shillings to get in. I should mention that I was a rock and roll refugee. Not that I no longer liked the music, but that I had lost my place in juke box culture. Jazz had been mysterious sounds vaguely remembered from just after the war — which ended when I was five. My deepest musical experiences as a child — and ones I will never forget — were 78 rpm records of Dame Nellie Melba, played by my grandparents. They had known her well.

My father bought us a record player when I was 15. One of the strange 45 rpm records I picked up from a second hand shop was Louis Armstrong's old hit parade vehicle Kiss

To Build A Dream On. Rather lonely at that time (I'd been brought back with a good behavior bond from a running-away-from-home escapade which ended in a rolled car near Queanbeyan) I spent a lot of time lying on the floor listening. More and more I found the grandeur of Armstrong's solo sweeping me away. I bought a trumpet on terms and began taking lessons from Paddy Fitzallan, a powerhouse player who was crazy about Harry James, but who, because of his impetuous approach to solos, sometimes sounded a bit like Roy Eldridge, who was more my cup of tea.

Soon I discovered Duke Ellington, and then Dizzy Gillespie and Miles Davis. The music was enough in itself, but it also opened vistas of some other life. I began going out to St Kilda to get further inside the music, to hear a trumpet directly with all its thrilling overtones intact; and perhaps to make contact with that other world.

There were two trumpets in Brian Brown's band. The bright attack and percussive fluency of Keith Hounslow contrasted with the softer probings of a very young Keith Stirling. Hounslow had a crew cut and wore Stan Freberg glasses and ivy league clothes. He worked in advertising, but to me he was the epitome of the cool hipster. Stirling had a certain pale desperation, often struggling with his instrument (he is now one of our most remarkable virtuosi). To me he was the haunted, self destructive, and probably drug crazed young man with a horn. Brown was the very image of the artist. His quietness suggested inner richness and discipline. The windows looking out over St Kilda's khaki waters and bleached maritime paths and walls were reflected very artistically, I thought, in the lacquer of the tenor saxophone he still plays.

I never did get to know anyone there until years later, but I felt that I had looked in on the secret of creation. Drummer Chris Karan (now in England

with Dudley Moore) often sat in, relieving Stewie Speer (also in England with Max Merritt). Bob Bertles, on tour with Johnny O'Keefe, would always come in to play. Allan Lee played there with Len Barnard. Drummer Allan Turnbull, unknown to me, came in with his father to listen. Graham Lyell, with slicked back hair and cowboy boots, would sit in and destroy everybody after playing with the Thunderbirds at St Moritz. Bernie McGann, visiting from Sydney, where his tough, intense approach did not fit with the still prevalent cool sounds, had one of his first jazz blows there. Joe Lane told hip jokes and sang crazy scat. Adrian Rawlins organised jazz and poetry in the evenings.

The white struts of the big dipper stood deserted on Sundays, but bodgies in Presley Purple jumpers lairised round the hamburger joint downstairs and, as I approached one damp afternoon, a motor bike repeated gunta cha gunta cha and the juke box was dinning out Sweet Little Sixteen. These vibrations from my recent past heightened my excitement, but I hurried on upstairs. There, sealed off by curved glass from all that faded carnival, was the secret place — the inner sanctum.

Many lines could be drawn from 44 to Australian jazz of today. When it all finished, a migration of these musicians brought the harder sounds to Sydney's El Rocco. From elsewhere came the brilliant pianist Mike Noek to give it a different focus. When that closed down, there were other short-lived places. Many of the wilder jazzmen played in rock bands. Then the Rocks Push opened, and that transmuted into The Basement, with the Old Push — where the bands of Col Nolan and Bob Barnard reside — providing a complement across the way at Circular Quay.

Jazz Centre 44 — which was a wax museum last time I went there — lives as a record label. Behind many of these things has lurked the heavy German beer mug countenance of Horst Liepolt. Elsewhere in this book he will tell his own story. □

JAZZ ON A HIGH NOTE

Think about jazz in Australia and you have to think about The Basement. GEOFF GILBERT traces the beginnings of one of the country's premier jazz spots and looks at the highlights of its past three years.

THE BASEMENT was discovered in 1973. It was a sunny March day as Bruce Viles led his old mate, Horst Liepolt, down the dark dingy staircase to look through the door at a dark dingy cellar in a dark dingy street – or perhaps alley – just off Circular Quay.

The cellar had last been used as a printing workshop. All the machinery had been removed, leaving just the bare concrete walls and floor and a fair bit of old rubbish and dirt. To the untrained eye it would have looked pretty unpromising, but the eyes of the dynamic duo lit up: This was it – and they walked around with a growing sense of excitement as they made plans. Bruce secured the premises, and with the help of Chris and Willie Qua, Tom Hare, Marty Mooney and Doug Robson, began the job of rebuilding and conversion into a warm and friendly home for the creation of musical excitement.

The task was a big one and during the long months that the work took, Horst gradually started to let it be known that soon a jazz club was to open down near Circular Quay. His publicity was low key and unspecific and, as opening day grew closer, there was intense curiosity in the jazz world.

Groups of musicians and followers wandered around in those narrow streets trying to spot the actual doorway which would lead into this mysterious new place.

In August, 1973 The Basement opened its doors and was an instant success with crowds coming in every night to eat the fine food that Bruce provided, to drink at one of the best stocked bars in Sydney, and to listen to the magic music of Galapagos Duck. During those first three months the Duck played The Basement six nights a week and it was then decided to widen the scope a little and provide a chance for some of Sydney's other fine musicians to play to the large and receptive crowds that The Basement was attracting.

November saw such people as Kerrie Biddell, George Brodbeck, Tony Esterman, Don Reid, Darcy Wright and Allan Turnbull take the stage. In January the Judy Bailey group with John Pochee, Ken James and Ron Philpott, played a season, and brilliant musician/composer Dave Fennell formed a group to play some of his original and exciting music.

So, after only six months, The Basement was already becoming a major



AN ATMOSPHERE
CHARGED WITH
THE EXCITEMENT OF
CREATIVITY'

JAZZ ON A HIGH NOTE

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THE BASEMENT was discovered in 1973. It was a sunny March day as Bruce Viles led his old mate, Horst Liepolt, down the dark dingy staircase to look through the door at a dark dingy cellar in a dark dingy street — or perhaps alley — just off Circular Quay.

The cellar had last been used as a printing workshop. All the machinery had been removed, leaving just the bare concrete walls and floor and a fair bit of old rubbish and dirt. To the untrained eye it would have looked pretty unpromising, but the eyes of the dynamic duo lit up: This was it — and they walked around with a growing sense of excitement as they made plans. Bruce secured the premises, and with the help of Chris and Willie Qua, Tom Hare, Marty Mooney and Doug Robson, began the job of rebuilding and conversion into a warm and friendly home for the creation of musical excitement.

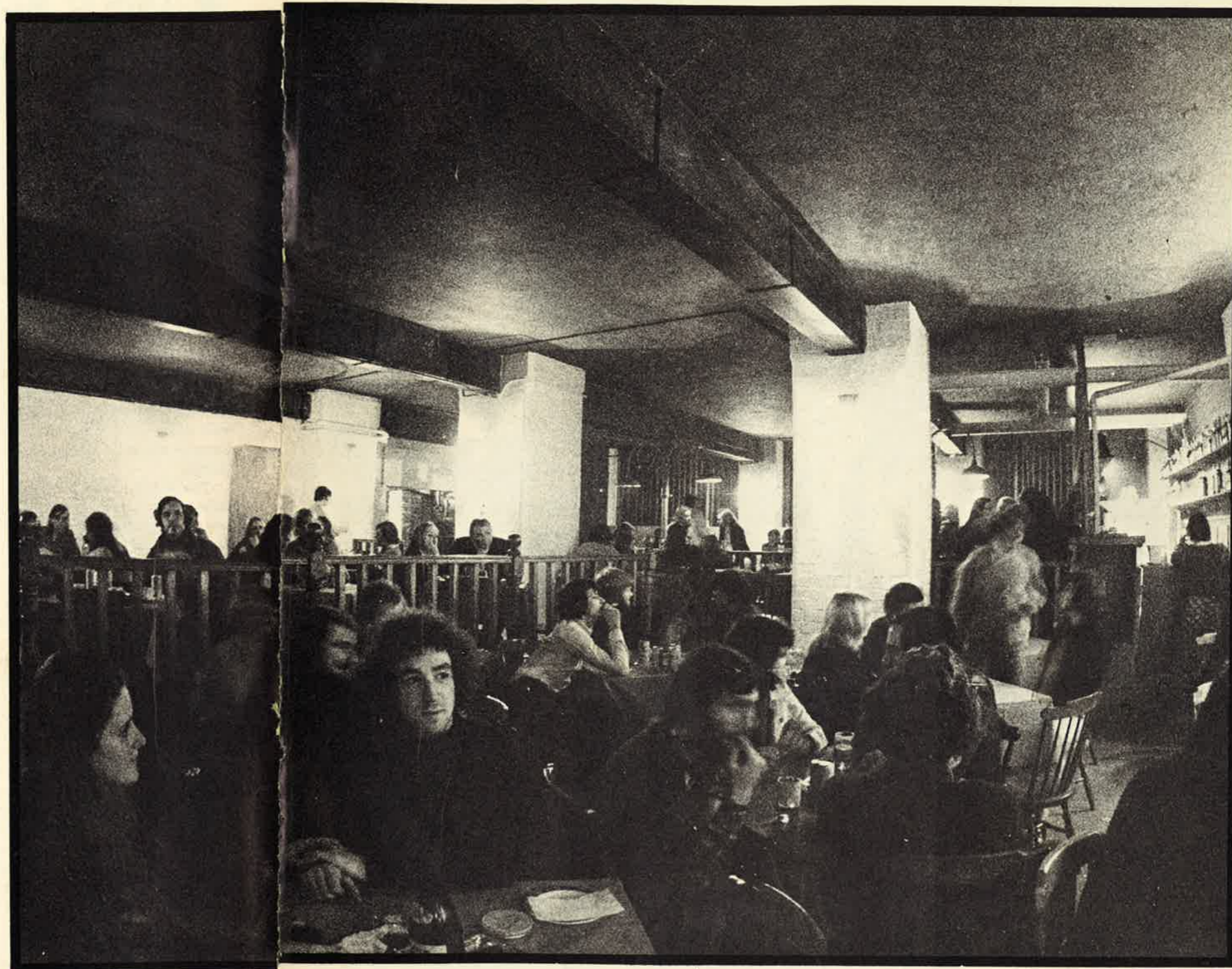
The task was a big one and during the long months that the work took, Horst gradually started to let it be known that soon a jazz club was to open down near Circular Quay. His publicity was low key and unspecific and, as opening day grew closer, there was intense curiosity in the jazz world.

Groups of musicians and followers wandered around in those narrow streets trying to spot the actual doorway which would lead into this mysterious new place.

In August, 1973 The Basement opened its doors and was an instant success with crowds coming in every night to eat the fine food that Bruce provided, to drink at one of the best stocked bars in Sydney, and to listen to the magic music of Galapagos Duck. During those first three months the Duck played The Basement six nights a week and it was then decided to widen the scope a little and provide a chance for some of Sydney's other fine musicians to play to the large and receptive crowds that The Basement was attracting.

November saw such people as Kerrie Biddell, George Brodbeck, Tony Esterman, Don Reid, Darcy Wright and Allan Turnbull take the stage. In January the Judy Bailey group with John Pochee, Ken James and Ron Philpott, played a season, and brilliant musician/composer Dave Fennell formed a group to play some of his original and exciting music.

So, after only six months, The Basement was already becoming a major



JAZZ THAT'S THE
SPIRIT OF YOUTH
AND JOYFUL CREATIVITY'



Jazz Co-op played some of its first gigs at The Basement and was so popular it stayed on as the regular Monday night band for some time. Here, it's Dave Tolley on bass, Brian Brown, tenor sax, Howie Smith on soprano sax, Roger Frampton, alto sax and Jack Thorncroft, bass.



force in Sydney jazz. Interest among musicians was intense and the first six months of 1974 saw the formation of two very major groups to play at The Basement, The Jazz Co-op and The Last Straw. Jazz Co-op featured Roger Frampton on piano and alto sax, Howie Smith on soprano and tenor sax, Jack Thorncraft on bass and Phil Treloar on percussions. The Last Straw featured such illustrious names as Bernie McGann, Ken James, John Pochee, Dave Levy and Jack Thorncraft. It is significant that these groups are still around today and playing better than ever, still playing The Basement, and making jazz records that are putting Australia on the world jazz map.

The first birthday celebration of The Basement saw another musical milestone with the first appearance of the Brian Brown Quintet from Melbourne. Their music was nothing less than sensational and started off the second year of jazz on a very high note. So successful was the Brian Brown group that Horst arranged for a second visit in November, 1974 and had a double — Brian Brown and the Jazz Co-op appearing on the same night. The Basement was completely packed and still more crowds were unable to get in. And the music was so good that the night is still talked about today. The very atmosphere of the room was charged with the excitement of creativity, and the audience were stunned with the power that was abroad that night. The ABC television program GTK filmed the performance and so The Basement got its first national television coverage, ensuring further packed houses and visits from interstate musicians and also visits from overseas artists of the stature of the Modern Jazz Quartet and Roland Kirk.

November also saw the first appearance of a traditional jazz group for a season; The Graeme Bell Band took over Monday nights and blew up a storm. Paul Furniss, in particular, revelled in The Basement atmosphere. Although The Basement has become

known for presenting more modern forms of jazz, Horst feels that it is important to remember the roots — with a backward glance now and again — so that, apart from Graeme Bell, the Harbour City Jazz Band and Tom Baker's San Francisco Band have had very successful seasons and the musicians in these bands have all given that little extra of themselves, with the assistance of that magic Basement environment.

The Galapagos Duck have grown and developed — and are continuing to do so. They have played almost continuously for the whole three years of The Basement's life and still draw big crowds. During their extended season they have produced three LPs, played with the Australian Ballet all over Australia, played and toured with Nina Simone and John Mayall, and generally become the most popular jazz group that Australia has produced. The Duck and The Basement are inseparable; they represent the spirit of youth, excitement and joyful creativity which is jazz, Basement-style.

May, 1975 saw The Basement present one of the most important events in Sydney's jazz history. Titled Music Is An Open Sky and sub-titled A Festival Of Today Music, the purpose was to give local talent the opportunity to perform their work before a sympathetic audience, with the emphasis on original compositions. The title was a quote that Horst picked up from Sonny Rollins which he later found had been used by Stockhausen.

The festival was, in part, a tribute to the wonderful work that Howie Smith had been doing at the Sydney Conservatorium; he had influenced and stimulated the contemporary music scene here to an unprecedented degree. The presentation of such a festival was a gigantic gamble, and it says much for the dedication of Bruce Viles to the propagation of contemporary music that he gave Horst a free hand in the selection of the music to be played. The music was stunningly uncommercial and

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'CROWDS CAME TO LISTEN TO THE MAGIC MUSIC OF GALAPAGOS DUCK'

yet each night The Basement was filled to overflowing with people who could hardly have been prepared for the intensity of the action that they were to be involved in. The musicians were given complete freedom and produced some of the most exciting and original music that had ever been heard in Sydney, and the wonderful Basement audience participated fully and gave the musicians the feedback that drove them to great heights of jazz expression. I shall just list the groups that participated in this unique happening: Time Machine, Trilogy, Last Straw, The Two, Out To Lunch, The Judy Bailey Quartette, Sun, Power Point, Jazz Co-op, Violent Indifference, The Brian Brown Quintet, Free Kata, Cross Fire, Bloodstone and Currents. Radio 2JJ and the television program GTK recorded much of the action and, again, The Basement made national news.

Music Is An Open Sky was a high point in the life of The Basement, and it alone would have justified its existence fully. But such is the strength of the scene that has been created, that I am sure there will be many such high points in the future.

Indeed, in October, just after the second birthday celebration, another of Horst's ideas drew huge crowds down those narrow stairs. This time it was Be Bop Revisited with some of Sydney's top musicians having a nostalgic look back at the thrills of the Be Bop era. So good were some of the virtually pick up groups that took part in the presentation that they were engaged again over the following months, and also played some concert dates.

In June, 1975, The Basement presented, for the first time outside the Conservatorium, The Conservatorium Big Band under the direction of Howie Smith. An ecstatic audience showed their approval of the great work that

Howie and his students had obviously put into their music. This band was to play at The Basement on a number of further occasions, and when Howie Smith gave his farewell concerts at The Basement in May, 1976, The Conservatorium Big Band played as well as any big band I have ever heard anywhere in the world. I am sure Howie will remember The Basement and its audiences with affection, and certainly all who heard him play will remember the skill and joy that he radiated. His presence will be felt in Australian music for many years to come.

Why is The Basement so popular? How can a place exclusively presenting jazz music work so successfully? Why do musicians love to play at The Basement and how is it that good musicians seem to play even better on this particular stage?

I think the answer can be expressed in one word, and that word is *freedom*. Musicians know that their work will not be censored in any way, they have complete freedom of musical expression, and they react to this remarkable situation by really giving of themselves to the audience. The audience react to this feeling free to express their appreciation, and a free flow of communication is then taking place.

As I write this piece, The Basement is celebrating its third birthday and three new groups are making their first public appearances: Fusions, Steps and Mother Night. Dave Fennell will be playing some of his new compositions with his group, and Dick Lowe's Big Band will play some of their exciting new arrangements. Of course Galapagos Duck will be celebrating joyfully as they always do.

In other words, it's business as usual at The Basement for another year with JAZZ BASEMENT-STYLE. □





Part of the crowd at The Basement, Circular Quay (left), in 1974. The place, and the crowds, has continued to grow. Roland Kirk (below, left) stopped into The Basement to play a set during his last concert tour. Horst Liepolt and Galapagos Duck celebrate the release of the Duck's first record at The Basement (below).



AUSTRALIAN JAZZ CONVENTIONS 1946-1976

The Australian Jazz Convention is unique for several reasons: The musicians have to pay to play; it moves venue each year; and, most remarkable of all, it was the first national jazz festival or convention in the world. DICK HUGHES looks back on the conventions since 1946 and previews Brisbane, 1976-77.

THE FIRST YEAR of America's Newport Jazz Festival (1954) was also the year in which the ninth Australian Jazz Convention was held. Write to the Guinness Book of Records *now* and tell them that Australia was the first country in the world to have an annual jazz festival . . . or convention. "Little people though we are, etc. . ."

Thirty years ago in Melbourne they were in the final stages preparing for the first convention. Today, in Brisbane they're tying up the odds and ends for the 31st — the first, incidentally, to be held in Brisbane.

The Australian Jazz Convention is unique, unprecedented and unparalleled. Certainly I know of no other jazz festival in which the musicians not only are not paid, but in which they have to pay to play. All musicians playing at Australian jazz conventions have to pay a delegate fee. Which is one reason — apart from a big public attendance — why last year's outgoing Sydney committee was able to pay the Brisbane committee \$1000 in the first week of January.

Over the years, the conventions have made enough money for overseas musicians to be paid to attend four of them. Ken Colyer from England in 1962 (Sydney); Alton Purnell from America in 1965 (Sydney); Clark Terry from America in 1974 (Melbourne); American citizen of the world Bud Freeman from Britain in 1975 (Sydney). This year, the Brisbane committee is bringing out Dick Cary, the pianist, trumpeter and alto horn man who was here in 1964 with Eddie Condon.

After the first jazz convention,

several people were saying it would be nice to bring out New Orleans musicians like George Lewis or Jim Robertson . . . not dreaming that it was ever likely that any convention would ever be able to pay the fees and fares of an overseas musician. They must have wondered why, 16 years later, it was thought necessary to bring out a British musician . . .

And there are dogged die-hards who insist that the convention should be exclusively Australian. After all, they say, it is an *Australian* jazz convention, and if there's any extra money kicking around, let's spend it on some of those musicians who played for nothing at the early conventions, who helped get the whole thing off the ground. And there are others who say it should have stayed in Melbourne instead of being shifted from city to city year after year. Because it was in Melbourne that it kicked off . . . way back in 1946. Why, it seems only yesterday that I read in that excellent Australian jazz publication that there were plans for a convention to be held in Melbourne after Christmas, 1946.

Harry Stein, who was running the Eureka Hot Jazz Society, suggested the convention to Graeme Bell, who was leading the band at the Eureka Youth League's North Melbourne premises on Saturday nights. Graeme Bell's Dixieland Band began playing at the Uptown Club in June, 1946, and got themselves some tolerable publicity the following weekend by presenting the first history-of-jazz concert in Australia. They had intermission piano and vocals from Willie "The Lion" McIntyre ("he's the biggest show on earth," said William

H. Miller, dean of Australian jazz critics) and in the band they had Graeme Bell, piano; Roger Bell, cornet; Ade Monsborough, trombone; Pixie Roberts, clarinet; Jack Varney, banjo and guitar; Lou Silbereisen, bass; and Russ Murphy or Sid Kallalea on drums.

There were other good jazz musicians in Melbourne at the time. Tony Newstead, trumpet; Geoff Kitchen, clarinet; Frank Johnson, trumpet; Charlie Blott, drums; Bud Baker, guitar and banjo; Don Reid, drums; George Tack, clarinet; Keith Atkins, clarinet and tenor sax; Geoff Bland, piano; Kelly Smith, clarinet; Cy Watts, trombone; Jim Buchan, tuba and bass . . .

There were enough fans and musicians in Melbourne to make a jazz convention feasible. And in Sydney there was the Port Jackson Jazz Band and an Adelaide the Southern Jazz Group. And in Hobart there was the Barrelhouse Four.

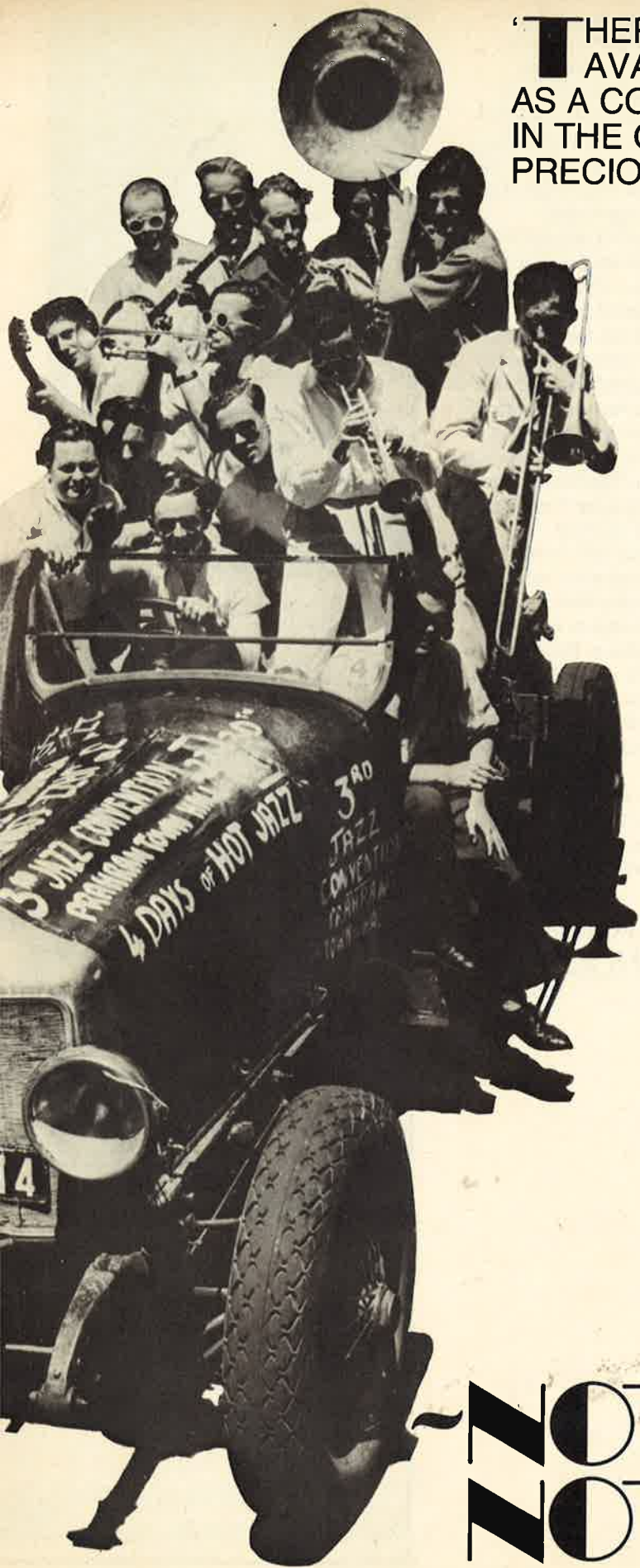
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The car at the head of the procession for the 1949 third Australian Jazz Convention, in Melbourne, could have made the Guinness Book of Records. The old car was piled high with up-and-coming jazz stars.



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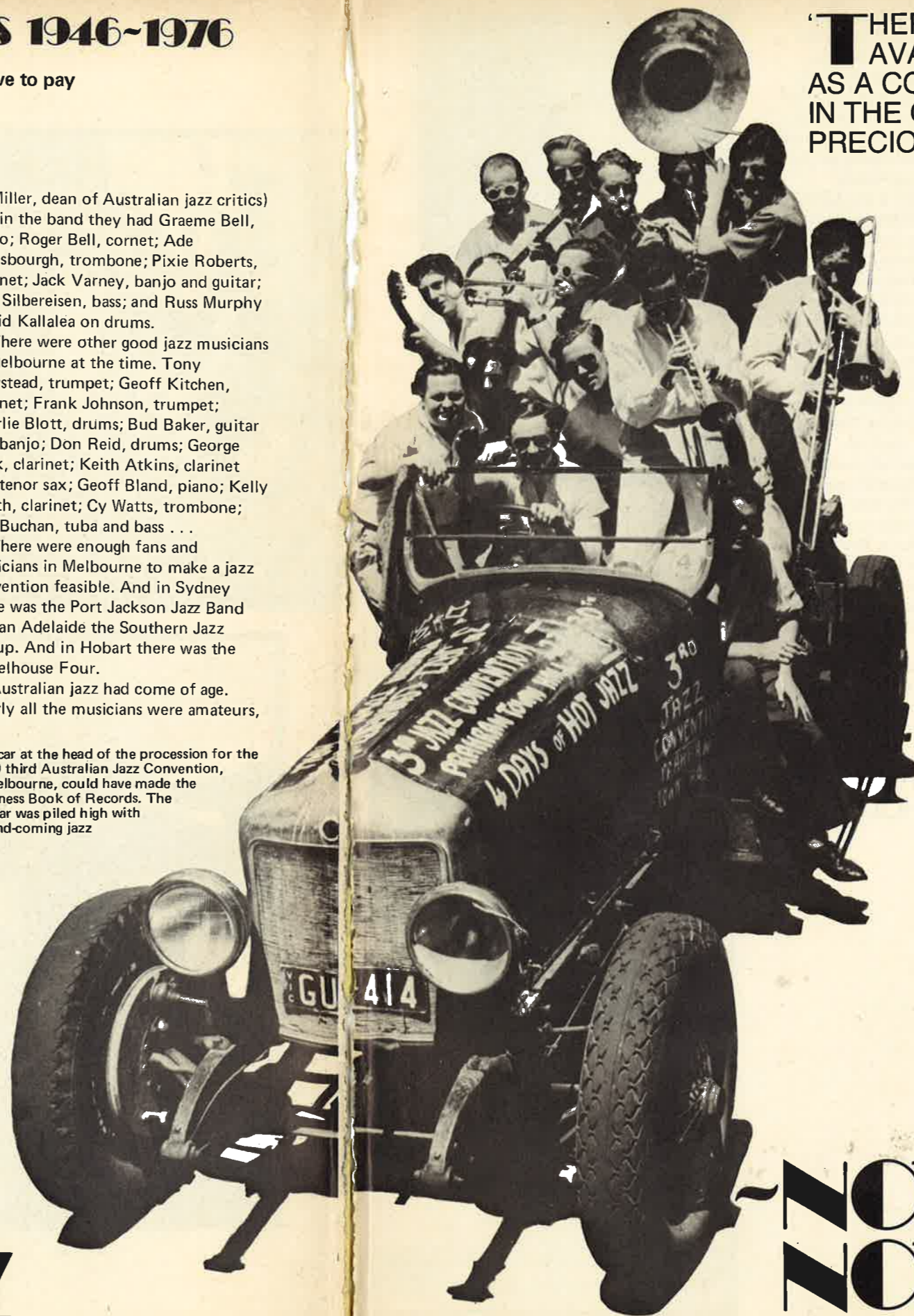
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Yes, Melbourne was ripe for a jazz convention. Jazz — not swing, not be-bop. How ridiculous those pigeon-holes were and are. But that's the way it had to be then. Lots of people objected to the presence of Rex Stewart at the fourth convention (Melbourne, 1949). Stewart was here on a four-month tour (most of it with Graeme Bell) and appeared at three or four concerts at the convention. The mouldy fygges disapproved strongly. Stewart, they said, was a run-of-the-mill swing player (maybe even a dirty be-bopper) and had played with Duke Ellington who, they said, was only the leader of "just another swing band". It wasn't long before they were saying that Graeme Bell didn't play jazz anyway.

In 1946 Graeme Bell was running a record program on 3UZ on Wednesday nights called Come In On The Beat. The contents of his record programs, and of the special record session he presented at the first convention, are as good an indication as any of the type of music

people wanted to hear at the first convention. His convention session included Gatemouth by the New Orleans Wanderers (Johnny Dodds, George Mitchell, Kid Ory), Jelly Roll Morton's solo piano-vocal Don't You Leave Me Here, Wooden Joe Nicholas' Eh La Bas and a few items from the strict New Orleans repertoire.

Bell himself wasn't a mouldy fygge and probably would have liked to play some Duke Ellington or Lester Young at his conventional record program. But some people would not have wanted to listen. And at later conventions they were even more bigoted and intolerant. At least the average Australian jazz fan then still appreciated the Chicagoans (Eddie Condon, Bud Freeman, Pee Wee Russell, etc) and Bix Beiderbecke, but after Rudi Blesh's Shining Trumpets came out (just after the first convention, coincidentally) even previously sane and tolerant record collectors began selling their Beiderbeckes and Condons and Billie Holidays and Ellingtons. They must have stirred uneasily when they heard Graeme say over the radio that he and Max Kaminsky in Brisbane spent hours listening to Art Tatum's Lullaby of the Leaves.

Record sessions and debates and meetings were fine, but it was the live music that counted. Can we, any of us, forget that magic moment when we first



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They played a blues and I remember seeming to be on the verge of tears. I certainly had the pins and needles in the face. Unfortunately, that was virtually the only live jazz I heard at the first convention. I was still at school and living with strict grandparents who hated jazz and everything to do with it.

But I heard enough later and read enough in *Jazz Notes* and *Tempo* and

listened to Ellis Blain's convention records made for the ABC to still have a very vivid impression of the sort of music played. There were records of the Bell Band with two trumpets (Monsborough joining Roger) and Dave Dallwitz joining them on trombone. I remember in particular a spirited Darktown Strutters Ball, which at that time was about the most popular number in the repertoires of all Australian jazz bands. And there was a lovely trio session by Kelly Smith on clarinet, Ade Monsborough on piano and Joe Tippett, from the Southern Jazz Group, on washboard.

It was at those early jazz conventions that I first saw youths who were to become some of Australia's jazzmen, who were to become known throughout the world.

The second convention was to have been held in Adelaide, largely because the Southern Jazz Group had made such an impression at the first. But in spite of the fact that the Bell Band had gone to Europe, there were still more jazz musicians in Melbourne, and between Christmas and New Year, the second Australian jazz convention was held at the New Theatre, Flinders Street, with the final concert at the Collingwood Town Hall.

I got back early after one of the lunch breaks at this convention and there, picking out a blues at the upright



4



5



7

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4. Another showstopping jazz band at the early conventions, the Southern Jazz Group. The band came from Adelaide and was considered one of the country's premier jazz bands.

5. Jamming at the 17th convention, Sydney 1962: (left to right) Pat Rose, John Sangster, Col Nolan and Ray Price.

6. The third convention, Prahran Town Hall, 1948: Dan Pearce (trombone), Tony Newstead (trumpet), Don Reid (drums), George Tack (clarinet), Bill Tope (guitar). The bass player is unidentified.

7. An after-hours session at the original Basement, Liverpool Street, Sydney, after the 17th Convention: (left to right) Bob Cruickshanks, Graham Spedding, John Sangster and John Costelloe.

6



heard and saw real jazz being improvised? I had first heard Will McIntyre gleefully tear a piano to shreds back in 1941, but it wasn't until Monday, December 30, 1946, that I first thrilled to the sound of collective improvisation in the flesh, as they say. There they were on the stage of the Eureka Youth League hall during a lunch break — Tony Newstead (still one of our best trumpeters and the only musician who has recorded with both Willie "The Lion" McIntyre and Willie "The Lion" Smith), Dave Dallwitz (then trombone-playing leader of the Southern Jazz Group, now a composer and arranger, a whole album of whose compositions has been recorded by Earl Hines), Geoff Kitchen (who became one of our most brilliant clarinetists and is now musical big-wig at a Melbourne television station), and Will McIntyre, still one of our top pianists and then, possibly, the very best, equalled only by Graeme Bell, Rex Green and Geoff Bland.

They played a blues and I remember seeming to be on the verge of tears. I certainly had the pins and needles in the face. Unfortunately, that was virtually the only live jazz I heard at the first convention. I was still at school and living with strict grandparents who hated jazz and everything to do with it.

But I heard enough later and read enough in Jazz Notes and Tempo and

listened to Ellis Blain's convention records made for the ABC to still have a very vivid impression of the sort of music played. There were records of the Bell Band with two trumpets (Monsborough joining Roger) and Dave Dallwitz joining them on trombone. I remember in particular a spirited Darktown Strutters Ball, which at that time was about the most popular number in the repertoires of all Australian jazz bands. And there was a lovely trio session by Kelly Smith on clarinet, Ade Monsborough on piano and Joe Tippett, from the Southern Jazz Group, on washboard.

It was at those early jazz conventions that I first saw youths who were to become some of Australia's jazzmen, who were to become known throughout the world.

The second convention was to have been held in Adelaide, largely because the Southern Jazz Group had made such an impression at the first. But in spite of the fact that the Bell Band had gone to Europe, there were still more jazz musicians in Melbourne, and between Christmas and New Year, the second Australian jazz convention was held at the New Theatre, Flinders Street, with the final concert at the Collingwood Town Hall.

I got back early after one of the lunch breaks at this convention and there, picking out a blues at the upright

WAS LIVING WITH STRICT GRANDPARENTS WHO HATED JAZZ'



4. Another showstopping jazz band at the early conventions, the Southern Jazz Group. The band came from Adelaide and was considered one of the country's premier jazz bands.

5. Jamming at the 17th convention, Sydney 1962: (left to right) Pat Rose, John Sangster, Col Nolan and Ray Price.

6. The third convention, Prahran Town Hall, 1948: Dan Pearce (trombone), Tony Newstead (trumpet), Don Reid (drums), George Tack (clarinet), Bill Tope (guitar). The bass player is unidentified.

7. An after-hours session at the original Basement, Liverpool Street, Sydney, after the 17th Convention: (left to right) Bob Cruickshanks, Graham Spedding, John Sangster and John Costelloe.



piano in the pit, was an intense-looking youth. That was the only time I can remember seeing him at the 1947 convention. The most impressive newcomer that year was a young Western Australian, Keith Hounslow.

Hounslow so impressed William H. Miller, dean of Australian jazz critics, that within a year he had voted him best trumpeter in Australia, above veterans like Roger Bell, Bill Munro and Ade Monsborough. And I can still hear Frank Johnson saying: "God, this Keith Hounslow sounds like Beiderbecke, especially bringing in final ensembles. Not that I'd ever dream of telling him . . ." Hounslow later leaned more heavily on Louis, went through an understandable Rex Stewart phase when Stewart was out here in 1949, and later established himself as one of our most authoritative and best-grounded modern stylists.

Hounslow was undoubtedly the new star at the second convention. The new star at the third convention (Melbourne again, this year, 1948, the Prahran Town Hall) was that intense-looking youth I had seen, all alone with the blues, at the 1947 convention. In memory's eye, I see him now at one of the afternoon sessions at Prahran Town Hall. He's playing cornet now and trumpeter Ken Owen, who Dave Dallwitz the year before had rashly predicted would become the best

trumpeter in Melbourne, is knocking himself out listening to the intense-looking youth. To some of us, he sounds a bit like Mutt Carey, but what is most impressive is his confident, buoyant, inspiring drive. Graeme Bell and his Band, only six months back from their triumphant tour, are most impressed. The Bell Band decided the lad needed special encouragement and all clubbed in to give him some money.

At the final concert of the third convention, Graeme called on stage the intense-looking youth, who this night is looking even more intense as Graeme presents him with a cheque. "I'm sure he's got a great a future as one of Australia's greatest jazz musicians," says Graeme — or words to that effect. Exeunt, pursued by echoes of applause, Graeme Bell and the youth who has been one of our greats ever since — John G. Sangster.

I used to see Sangster around the traps in 1949, like that coffee lounge in St Kilda (Katharina?) and the Maison de Luxe on Sunday afternoons, but I have no clear recollection of hearing him play again until the 1949 convention. Melbourne again. Prahran Town Hall again. Backroom session. Graeme Bell's guitarist-banjoist, Jack Varney, had just played piano with a pick-up group before I had to take over and foul up what could have been an acceptable rendition of How Long. I was eased out

I CAN STILL HEAR FRANK JOHNSON SAYING: "GOD, THIS KEITH HOUNSLOW SOUNDS LIKE BEIDERBECKE" . . .



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8. Well-known faces from the conventions, Syd Bromley, Ken Olsen and Ian McLachlan, at the 1960 Melbourne 15th convention.

9. Ken Collyer (right) at the 1962, 17th convention, Sydney.

10. Willie "The Lion" McIntyre.

11. George Woods gets into some hot guitar, backed by Col Nolan, piano and Terry Ray, drums, at the 17th convention.

12. Ade Monsborough, Alan Burton and Bob Cruickshanks at the 1958, 13th convention, Sydney.

13. The committee for the 5th convention, held in Sydney in 1950: Seated (left to right), Jack Parkes, Norm Linehan, Ron Wills, Bill Freestone, Frank Owen Baker (Hon Sec). Standing (left to right): Eric Dunn (President), Margo Baker, Jim Bell, Keith Davidson, Boyd Barton, Neville Anderson (Hon Treasurer), Alan Burton, Fred Starkey, Wal Durbin, Mervyn Wills, David McKay (Chairman of Committees), Ian Cuthbertson, Les Harvey and Bill Elliott.



of the piano chair (more politely than I am now) and the late Ian Burns, down from Sydney for his second Melbourne convention, got a real session going. And in came Sangster, with a big black stick in one hand and a non-matching stick in the other.

Seating himself on one chair and using another as the object of his percussion, he proceeded to belt merde (pardon my French!) out of the second chair, and bedazzled us with Baby Dodds rhythms and Zutty Singleton punctuations. Next year, he was off to Europe with Graeme Bell, as drummer and occasional cornettist and trumpeter . . . Sangster, ever moving outwards, onwards and upwards. The complete Australian jazz musician. One of the most complete musicians who never finished.

You may have heard those interviews Eric Child did with Sangster on his Friday night ABC program. On the first one, inter other fascinating alia, Sangster mentioned Kelly Smith; in the second he mentioned Johnny McCarthy. Kelly was one of the best of the clarinettists at the early conventions. George Tack, Kelly Smith, Don Roberts, Tom Pickering . . . they were my favorite clarinettists at the early conventions, but now I find it hard to hear past Johnny McCarthy, now playing with Bob Barnard for marmalade and leading the Paddington-

Woollahra RSL Club band for bread and butter.

Dame Memory is a fickle jade and I must confess I have no clear recollection of Johnny McCarthy at the 1949 convention. But he certainly stirred them up at the first Sydney convention in 1950.

The band on stage at the Ashfield Town Hall was Frank Johnson . . . the Melbourne Frank Johnson of Fabulous Dixielanders' fame. They were ripping it off with maximum energy and effect, and then someone got the bright idea of calling on Sydney's own John McCarthy. Johnson's clarinettist was Geoff Kitchen, considered by many the best clarinettist in that style at the time in Australia. It seemed a bit rough and tough — though it was certainly not intended that way — to put the relatively raw McCarthy against the seasoned veteran.

Maybe young McCarthy didn't carve Geoff Kitchen that night, but I'm prepared to concede that he did . . . and so, I am sure, would most people who were there. The band rocked off Just A Closer Walk With Thee and then those two clarinettists stepped out in front and, b'gosh, b'golly, b'gee, what a go they gave it! He may not have topped every chorus Kitchen played (when it came to chasing choruses), but McCarthy would not give in — he was in there every time with that tough, biting



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'ONE OF THE MOST IMPRESSIVE SOLOS, LAST YEAR, WAS OUTRAGEOUSLY AVANT GARDE'



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14. The versatile Ade Monsborough, this time with a plastic sax.

15. The 20th convention procession through Sydney's streets.

16. Keith Hounslow plays while Johnny McCarthy listens at the 1949 convention, Melbourne.

17. Jack Parkes, trombone, John Sangster on cornet, Dan Ennis, drums and Bob Cruickshanks, clarinet, at the 3rd convention, Melbourne, 1948.

18. During the 21st convention, in Melbourne, 1966, Peter Ubelhor on drums, John Pickering, trombone, Neville Stribling, alto sax and Greg Gibson on clarinet got together for an informal blow at the Prospect Hill Hotel, Kew.

19. The lineup on the convention riverboat, Mississippi was "Wocka" Dyer, trombone, Frank Johnson and Ken Evans, trumpets and Geoff Kitchen, clarinet.

20. One of the jam sessions at the first Australian Jazz Convention, 1946. Left to right: Dave Dallwitz, trombone, Bruce Gray, clarinet, Bob Wright, tuba and Roger Bell, trumpet.



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21. The processions get more colorful each year: The caravan and its bagpipe-playing occupant were part of the scene at last year's convention, held in the old Sydney inner-suburb of Balmain.

22. Johnny McCarthy solos at last year's convention.

23. The 30th convention, again, and the head of the procession.





clarinet that has been one of the hallmarks of his style ever since. And what he played that night is peanuts compared with what he's playing today.

Oddly enough — naturally enough, on second thoughts — I have few memories of Bob Barnard at the early conventions. I remember seeing this not-so-intense-looking youth outside Prahran Town Hall at the 1949 convention and he had a trumpet or cornet case on which was written Gate. But I remember hearing him play only at one of the evening concerts — Ory's Creole Trombone, with his brother's band; Len on piano, Doc Willis on trombone and Tich Bray on clarinet. Within a year, they had a spot on Friday nights on a Melbourne radio station. Short and short-lived, but it was a start.

Bob Barnard didn't make the 1950 (Sydney) convention or the 1951 (Adelaide) and I was in England in 1952-54. I didn't hear him in quantity until those merry nights down at Mentone Life Saving Club, 25 km out of Melbourne, in 1951 and then I heard all the quantity — and more — people had been raving about.

This year, Bob Barnard has been booked as a special attraction for the Brisbane convention, making it one of the few occasions when an Australian musician has been paid to play at a convention. The only previous exception I can think of was the hiring

of as many as possible of Graeme Bell's original band for the 1970 convention in Dubbo.

That 1970 convention saw another dubious innovation — the selling of liquor in the convention hall. For many people, jazz and grog go hand in hand. I'm no moralist about these matters — in fact I should be the last to cast a stone — but anybody who thinks that drink improves his or her playing of, or appreciation of, jazz is mistaken.

At the last Sydney convention, held in Balmain in the last week of last year, the selling and consumption of drink in the main auditorium of Balmain Town Hall certainly detracted from appreciation of the music. Beyond the back seats, there were often 100 or so people boozing and chatting constantly and utterly oblivious to the great music played on stage at times. One drunk had to be ejected while the American guest, Bud Freeman, was playing with a fine group which included Lockie Thompson, Alex Frame, and Neville Stribling. It was a long way from the final night of the 1948 convention when you could have heard a pin drop while Willie McIntyre played Don't You Leave Me Here.

Admittedly, familiarity breeds contempt as much as it does respect in Australian jazz circles. There is now so much live jazz available (in Sydney and Melbourne, anyway — and especially in

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24. Jamming at the 30th Australian Jazz Convention, held at Balmain last year, Doc Fowler, washboard, Des Bader, banjo.

25. A solo from Dirty Dave Rankin at the 30th convention.

26. Howie Smith leads the Jazz Co-op in a set at last year's convention.



24



26



Sydney) that people treat it as a commodity rather than the precious luxury it was in the old days.

The anomaly is that people were listening more intently at earlier conventions even to lesser Australian talent than they were at the 1975 convention to one of the greatest jazz musicians of all time. The demon grog

... The first overseas guest at a convention was Ken Colyer, the English revivalist trumpeter who had hopped ship in New Orleans in 1952 to meet and play with people like George Lewis, Jim Robinson and Alton Purnell. Colyer came to the 1962 Sydney convention. The invitation was at least a welcome breakdown of an ugly anti-Pom prejudice which had lurked in certain Australian jazz circles. Y'know the attitude: "No Pom can play jazz like an Aussie."

But as George Tack, the Quick Wicked Wit of Melbourne jazz said, getting Colyer out here, where we already had fine trumpeters like Barnard, Newstead, Ken Flannery (all of whom were at the convention), Roger Bell and Bill Munro, seemed like carrying coals to Newcastle — in a collier, of course.

Not all the best Australian bands were at this '62 convention, and Colyer returned to England seemingly more impressed with the spirit than the flesh, let us say, of the convention. "It

reminded me a lot of the early days in London," he said, a remark which must have had the anti-Pom camp up in arms.

It wasn't until 1965 (when the convention was again held in Sydney) that an overseas artist came out. This time it was a genuine black New Orleans musician) the pianist, Alton Purnell, who had played with George Lewis and with the band Bunk Johnson brought up from New Orleans in 1945. Purnell was a great hit and made several memorable solo appearances as well as with Geoff Bull Band. Bull, one of the most dedicated and one of the best New Orleans style trumpeters in the country, has been to the Crescent City so many times he is virtually an honorary citizen and it was he who was largely instrumental in getting Purnell out here.

But to many people, the importing of Colyer and Purnell seemed irresponsible. Better choices, they argued, would have been Muggsy Spanier, Max Kaminsky, Art Hodes, Willie "The Lion" Smith . . . or blues men like Roosevelt Sykes, Sleepy John Estes, Memphis Slim.

The overseas artist chosen for the 1974 Melbourne convention would have been unthinkable in the early years. His choice was one of the best things that has ever happened to the Australian jazz convention. He was Clark Terry, a trumpeter who had played with both Duke Ellington and Count Basie, whose names were anathema to the mouldy

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27. Part of the crowd outside the London Hotel, Balmain, for last year's convention.

28. Rod and Col Lawliss on clarinet and trumpet respectively, getting hot at the 30th convention.

29. A gutful of jazz at the 30th convention.

30. Special guest at last year's convention, Bud Freeman, jams with Johnny McCarthy, of the Bob Barnard Band.

31. Viv Carter goes to town.

32. Mike Hallam, trumpet and Paul Simpson, clarinet, at last year's convention.



27 28



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fygges of the dark ages. Terry was a great personal and musical success, sitting in with everybody, washboard bands, tubas and all. His choice is a perpetual credit to the wisdom of the convention committee responsible for bringing him out.

And Terry was full of praise for the organisation of the convention and for the meticulous timing of presentation of bands. "A change from those American festivals," he said, "where you can still be hanging around five hours after you were scheduled to go on."

The Australian jazz convention is a constant part of the Australian jazz scene. But, because it still favors the older styles, it cannot be said to be representative in any way of the entire Australian scene.

New ground was broken in Balmain last year when modern and avant-garde jazz musicians were invited to participate. The Judy Bailey Quartet were among the first musicians to register, but few other modernists bothered. And some were understandably deterred when they found they had to pay to register — that is, they had to pay to get in to play for nothing.

And, as I wrote before, that's one thing that makes the Australian jazz convention unique and is one reason why the Brisbane committee for this year's convention had \$1000 in its kick in the first week in January. There

seems to be somebody always working on the jazz convention, like they always seem to be painting the Sydney Harbor Bridge (or is the Firth of Forth?)

But, to bring in more variety, I do wish — quite selfishly — that the modern stylists would make their presence felt. A vain wish, doubtless. Even if we get the horses to the water, we can't make them drink. And yet the fact remains that, for me, one of the most impressive solos played at the last convention (the first at which modernists were encouraged to register) was by John Pochee on drums with Judy Bailey — a group which many would consider not only modern but outrageously avant-garde.

Still, things have come a long, long way since that 1957 Adelaide convention when a group of musicians were playing in a mildly adventurous mainstream style which could not have been confused with bop, cool, avant-garde, or call-it-what-you-did then. They were stopped in the middle of a number and ordered off for playing modern.

Which reminds me of the story when the Humphrey Lyttelton band was on tour in England just after Bruce Turner had been added on alto sax. If anything, Turner, a fine mid-period mainstream player, is anti-bop. But up went the sign at one hall where Turner played with Lyttelton: GO HOME DIRTY BOPPER! □

'COLYER WAS A WELCOME BREAKDOWN OF UGLY ANTI-POM PREJUDICE IN SOME CIRCLES'

51



DRAMA OF THE MUSIC

After two decades, Brian Brown and his band are now even more startling in the context of Australian jazz. Brown relates to his music in terms of shapes, textures and dramatic form and JOHN CLARE finds out how.

THE FIRST modern jazz band I heard in person was led by Brian Brown in Melbourne. They arrived like an assault team out of the night and without removing their overcoats, played a bracket at a dance. But Brown stayed on, in friendly fashion, and jammed with the regular traditional band, which included Allan Lee and Bob Barnard.

Being fascinated, but unmoved, by modern jazz on record, I was surprised by the feelings the music generated. They played things like Bags Groove and Blues By Five, and I found myself in the current of the blues; abstract blues, but with a strong feeling of chanting and incantation.

Brown's tenor sound prompted a juvenile metaphor: Dark coffee. But where was the vibrato? Reduced to an ominous waver, or just a sharpening or flattening at the end of a note, creating a web of cross-rhythmic tensions. Dave Martin's piano chorded in odd stabs across the beat. Keith Sterling's trumpet playing, though embryonic then, was

full of intrigue — held tones only subtly different from the unadorned notes a learner would produce, and sudden squirming or rattling yet blunted rapid flights. I found that the band was part of a larger one, with Keith Hounslow also on trumpet, and I began to hear them at Jazz Centre 44 in St Kilda.

Brown's quiet seriousness, and the stories I'd heard of him sleeping with his saxophone on park benches in England, hugely impressed me. Nearly two decades later, when his current band came up to play — with great dramatic impact — at Sydney's Basement, he seemed less remote. His way of signalling with raised eyebrows as he inhaled for an entry was as familiar as the habit of a close friend, but his own playing, and that of his band were, if anything, more startling in the context of Australian jazz than the band of yore.

The term Free Jazz has created a lot of confusion. When two musicians play together it can only be free insofar as

Left: Brian Brown on tenor at Sydney's Basement: The crowd was knocked out.

Below: Together with Sonny Rollins, Miles Davis made a big impression on Brian Brown's music. Brian says those two made him aware of a hotter contemporary approach.



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they are secure in their musical instincts and react to each other freely; it can only be "anything goes" that sounds right in relation to everything else. Further, to play "anything that comes into your head" is not possible without the ability to do so. Poor musicians play approximations of what comes into their heads. Given these terms, Brian Brown's band played with a lot of freedom.

Brown himself is very wary of meandering and formlessness, and claims that it took a long time to find musicians who could play what he calls, "The drama of the music rather than just the changes. We use the changes here and there of something like Eleanor Rigby — which we've exhausted now from our point of view — but we don't just follow them through horizontally."

Thus a performance of Eleanor Rigby may have stayed on the first chord for up to a minute, the first phrase being varied, inverted and hurled around in a tiny agitated fugue until the dramatic tension reached breaking point. Then Brown would move into a new area, perhaps intoning one of the song's more solemn cadences, secure in the lightning reflexes and what sometimes seem like telepathic powers of the other musicians. Many of their original themes are joyfully melodic, using long hypnotic ostinatos in unusual metres, and they play them with a rhythmic unity that is quite unique. The biggest trap in Australian written jazz is to sound like blithe travelogue or nature jaunt music. Brown avoids this 99 percent of the time.

Brown left school early, worked in factories and began to play saxophone in his late teens. He was keen on the music of Graeme Bell and began to play in a trad band after a few months of self-tuition. He went to England and *did* sleep there on park benches after missing trains and ferries, but says this was by no means uncommon for aspiring musicians. He swapped his Conn tenor saxophone for the Selmer that Johnny Dankworth's soloist was then using, and he still plays that horn — mostly without the electronic bugging, and wah wah pedal he often uses with his soprano. "A good old friend," he says ingenuously.

Back in Australia he had those important bands with Hounslow, Stirling, Dave Martin, Barry Buckley and Stewart Speer. Modernists in Melbourne in the mid-'50s, like Bruce

Clark, were playing cool sounds. Miles Davis and Sonny Rollins made Brown aware of a hotter contemporary approach. When this phase reached its peak, Brown wanted to move on. "I became frustrated by a horizontal, two dimensional approach; by the Western tonal system."

When no one would move with him, Brown at first followed some friends back into trad, then dropped out of jazz and put himself through an architecture degree.

"I think that architecture has influenced my musical thinking. I think in terms of the shape of music, not just correct musical form. I think in terms of textures and colors and of dramatic form rather than just a string of solos. We work towards an interaction where solos are contributed to move everything onto another level."

Brown returned to music with a jazz rock group. He admired Doug Parkinson's In Focus and often had Billy Green sit in. "I liked that power and saw how it could be a huge pad for some of the things I wanted to do. I was also very interested in the textures and colors of electric sound. We use two synthesizers now, but we are less rock oriented. There is a danger there in creating a sort of muzak."

He began seeking out musicians. The first band which came up to Sydney was Bob Sedergreen, piano; Ted Vining, drums; Dave Tolley, bass; and Dure Dara, percussion.

"I still spend a lot of time practising, but some of that time is spent preparing myself mentally. I discovered some time ago that there is a subconscious way of playing that unifies all your conscious efforts. When I have a good night, it is that inner man taking over."

In July this year Brian Brown's quartet, with Barry Buckley back on bass, came up to Sydney again and played about 12 hours of music over three days — one concert and two nights at The Basement. I suppose they gave us six or seven dull minutes in that time. It was a rare display of sustained intensity, particularly by Buckley and Ted Vining.

At The Basement it was a revelation to sit close and watch Brown and Sedergreen facing each other over two synthesizers and an electric piano, turning the knobs, sometimes slowly,

Right: Brown out front of his quintet, again at the Basement. Ted Vining is on drums. The band is currently playing at the Commune, in Fitzroy, Melbourne. Photos courtesy 44 Label.

sometimes in deft flurries, tuning in to each other with nods, raised eyebrows, smiles, whispers — playing those devices as musical instruments. Generally they would create a sort of electronic field before each piece. Buckley and Vining would play with, and against, the shifting oscillations. Brown, satisfied at last, would straighten up, nod his nod, and suddenly the rhythm would start. And it would just get stronger and stronger in ostinatos of careening momentum to rival the Rites Of Spring. One piece had a cycle of three bars of five and two of seven. I thought of a locomotive hurtling along and at every fourth pole doing a sort of rhythmic double take — going down a dip or something.

Brown would advance with his tenor or soprano and ride the whirlwind.

Sometimes he would play raunchy figures with, or across, the cycle. Sometimes he would release a holocaust of scrambling, bellowing, screaming, laughing notes, in apparently free juxtaposition to the rhythm. Far from slowing it down, this goaded the monster into new realms of roaring motion. When there was nowhere else to go but off the rails, Brown would belt a huge gong, Vining would play a rising sizzle on his cymbals, belt the living Christ out of each of his drum heads in turn, and . . . silence. Then the yells and whoops.

More delicate pieces, on which Brown played flute, were usually broken by sections of steaming four — straight ahead '50s jazz played in a magically different way — before returning to tranquility.

Brown's two recent recordings — Carlton Streets and Moomba Jazz (both 44 Records) — on which he augments his band with a brass section, and on the Moomba performance, a choir of Presbyterian College ladies, to boot — are essential to any library of Australian jazz. But the augmentations distract slightly from the focused intensity of the band; for me at least. The Rhine Maidens and Sirenes, blown hither and thither and up into the clouds by the spectre of Ligetti, and the loose but very exciting brass, must have been great fun in the flesh — they are wild enough on the record — but the solo lines do not emerge with the force of the live performance I heard by the basic quartet.

Brown is currently playing at the Commune in Fitzroy.





IN THE DUKE'S IMMORTAL WORDS . . .

"IT DON'T MEAN A THING IF IT AIN'T GOT THAT SWING"

Music to Midnight's Ian Neil looks
at the masters of swing and their
priceless gift to jazz music,
the big band.





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THE DALY-WILSON BIG BAND
IS A SUCCESSFUL
CULTURAL AMBASSADOR'



THE YEARS 1935 to 1945 — a decade we now call The Swing Era — produced the greatest musical conversion in history. It made jazz history. Economics and radio — in that order — were responsible.

Tottering after the paralysis of The Great Depression, people could not afford the price of the live music they found they needed. Radio — the burgeoning mass communicator — satisfied this need with hours of essential and therapeutic music. And it came free, or at little cost to the listener. Of this vast musical outpouring, some was jazz.

In the USA, this demand for broadcast music brought about the innovation of hour-long studio programs by name orchestras and bands, and a related boom in the recorded music industry. As a result, the jazz-loving public grew internationally through the overseas sales of records.

But how came this term Swing Era?

The '20s were called The Jazz Age. The Charleston, cocktails, flappers, Oxford Bags and all that madness. The jazz came in two varieties, sweet and hot. Guy Lombardo and his like were sweet; Armstrong and Ellington were hot. But for the jazz of the '30s, hot was somehow inadequate.

There is a story that the BBC, confronted by this onslaught of American jazz records, found the expression hot jazz distasteful and told its announcers to use the term swing music. True or false, I like the anecdote.

I believe that the identification of this variety of jazz as swing came about very simply and logically from the fact that the musicians who played it used the word in their professional conversation. "Does it swing?" "But he doesn't swing!" As early as 1932, Duke Ellington stated in a song, It Don't Mean A Thing If It Ain't Got That Swing. Profound words indeed.

Prior to the Swing Era, very few Australians had any real knowledge or experience of jazz, but now we were part of the vast, international jazz-loving public. We developed a liking for jazz — combo or big band, sweet or swing — and that liking is still with us in the mid

The founders of the band, Ed Wilson (standing, top) and Warren Daly. After the disappointment of the 1971 disbandment, Ed Wilson and Warren Daly were able to rebuild the band with financial backing to its present size (left).

'70s. In fact, jazz in its many styles has never been so popular in this country as it is at present, and never has the standard of performance — generally and consistently — been as high as that of today's players.

As with its genesis, the decline of the big band was directly attributable to economies and a new electric communications medium — television. And again, the time was one of social unease. Steadily, with widening acceptance and availability of TV and the constantly increasing costs of goods and services associated with the music industry (wages, travel, management and allied services, music and arrangement charges), the viability of big band operation declined and the number of bands decreased.

In Australia the circumstances were identical — on a greatly reduced scale. But our liking for big bands did not diminish then, and it has not weakened since.

What I have written so far is an introduction to a cursory examination of big band activity in Australia from the mid-'60s to the present.

Before the Swing Era, 10 players used to be considered the limit of a large dance band. The basic swing band required 13 musicians, and was usually in three sections; five brass (three trumpets and two trombones), four reeds and four rhythm. Today the term big band means a brass section of from 10 to 12 men, a five or six-man reed team, and a rhythm section of from four to eight. The maximum size of a modern big band appears to be limited only by one consideration — the point at which it becomes unwieldy and ceases to swing naturally. This maximum point is a matter of constant debate among musicians and critics.

Musicians themselves are among the keenest supporters of big band music, and for all the right reasons. The principal ones are the enjoyment and challenge of playing in a group of one's peers, new skills and disciplines learned (note and phrase evaluation and exploitation of dynamics) and exercised, the chance to play music that is new or experimental — frequently both — and in extreme contrast to the jazz played in the course of a regular gig, mastering precision and accurate pitch, the prime factors of big band playing. Benny Goodman put it this way: ". . . that's why I am such a bug on accuracy in performance, about

playing in tune, and with just the proper note values . . . on the written parts, I wanted it to sound as exact as the band could possibly make it."

The Daly-Wilson Big Band is the phenomenal success of this decade. Yet, again because of economic difficulty, this brilliant band was disbanded in late 1971. Phoenix-like, it was resurrected for our delight, and was to earn international acclaim. But more of that later.

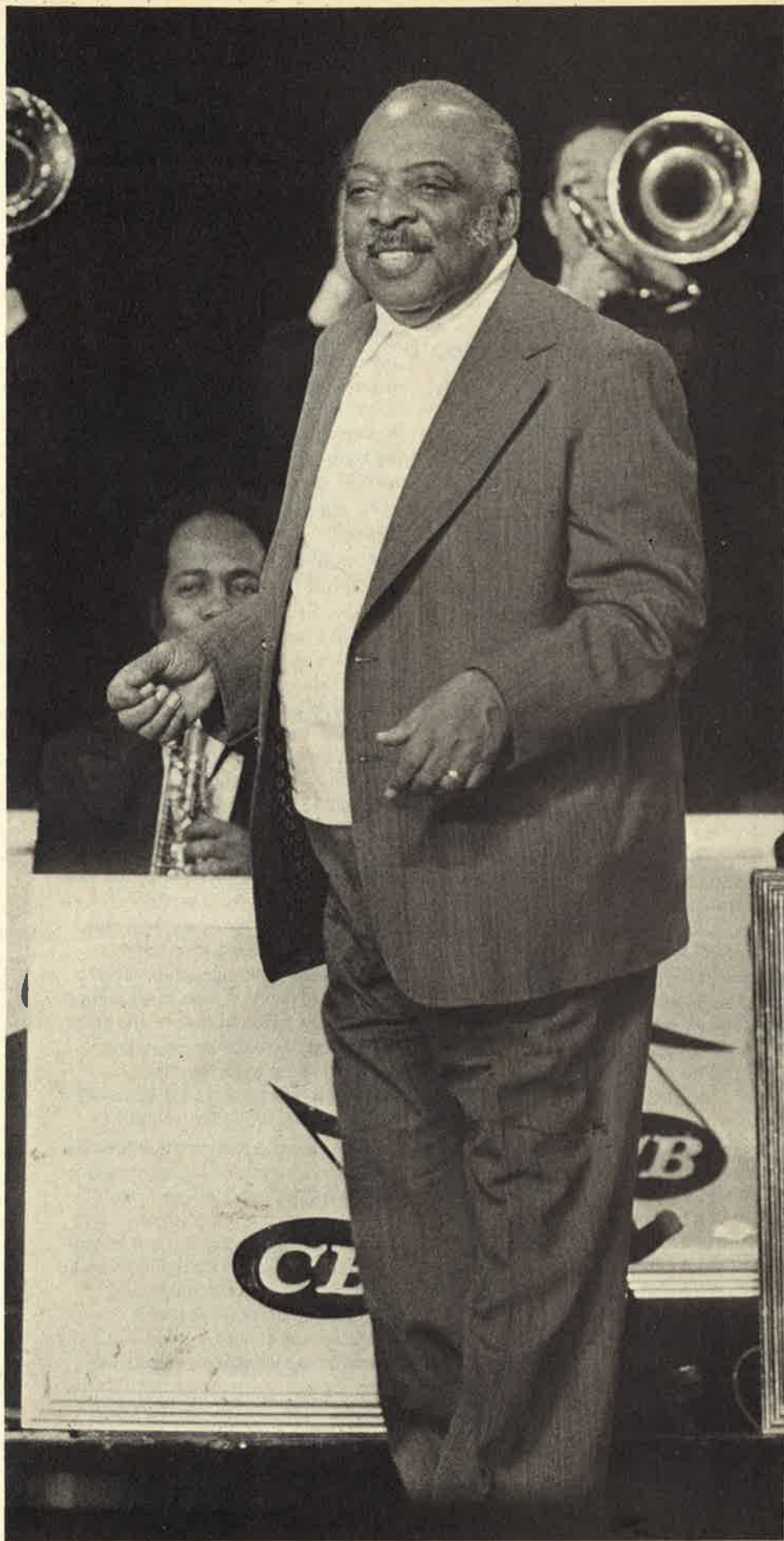
The Daly-Wilson Big Band has always been very big. Numerically the size of the band has ranged from a minimum of 16 to a maximum of 20 — occasionally more. Its sound has always been big — in both volume and depth of orchestral color. The band thinks big, presents big, features big soloists and plays a big range of material. No amount of praise can adequately honor Warren Daly and Ed Wilson, the co-leaders, for their concept, tenacity and dedication.

After the disappointment of the 1971 disbandment, how Daly and Wilson must have enjoyed the rebuilding of their band at the request of, and with the financial backing of W.D. & H.O. Wills (now Amatil). Under this sponsorship the Daly-Wilson Big Band has toured Australia and New Zealand with great success. Overseas it has had equal success as a goodwill and cultural ambassador.

Since its formation the Daly-Wilson Big Band has been home to a Who's-Who of our most talented musicians. Some of them are foundation members, like Doug Paskett, a gifted alto sax and flute player; trumpeter Don Raverty, and trombonist Knott. Others to serve brilliantly at various times are Col Nolan, a keyboard player of great talent, vitality and versatility; Tony Buchanan and Errol Buddle, excellent reed, flute and woodwind players; the trombonists Bob McIvor and George Brodbeck; John Helman, bass and Dave Donovan, guitar. The list is long and glorious.

Throughout this period, the ABC maintained two show bands — one in Sydney and the other in Melbourne. It is to be regretted that the National Broadcasting authority discharged the Sydney-based unit in early 1976. Among its many achievements were a series of tours to South-east Asia to entertain our servicemen and women. The calibre of the musicians in the Sydney Showband can be shown by naming just a few — Glenn Marks, a

GUY LOMBARDO
WAS SWEET:
ARMSTRONG AND
ELLINGTON
WERE HOT'



superb pianist and complete musician; Charlie Munroe, a rare fellow indeed — master reed, flute, woodwind and cello player and composer of great originality and skill; trumpeters Alan Nash, Boof Thomson and Jack Iverson, all top men; Ken Herron and Dave Rutledge, each wonderful on horn, trombone and tenor sax respectively. And that this band could, and did, swing was never in question.

It is ironic that the ABC Melbourne Showband should be the one to survive. Over the years its output has been far sweeter than that of its sister unit in Sydney. But that was its role. However, since the appointment in the '60s of Brian May as musical-director, the band has undergone a metamorphosis. The majority of the players in the reed, brass and rhythm sections are brilliant young musicians who are excellent section men, multi-instrumentalists, and

Left: Count Basie out front of his band.

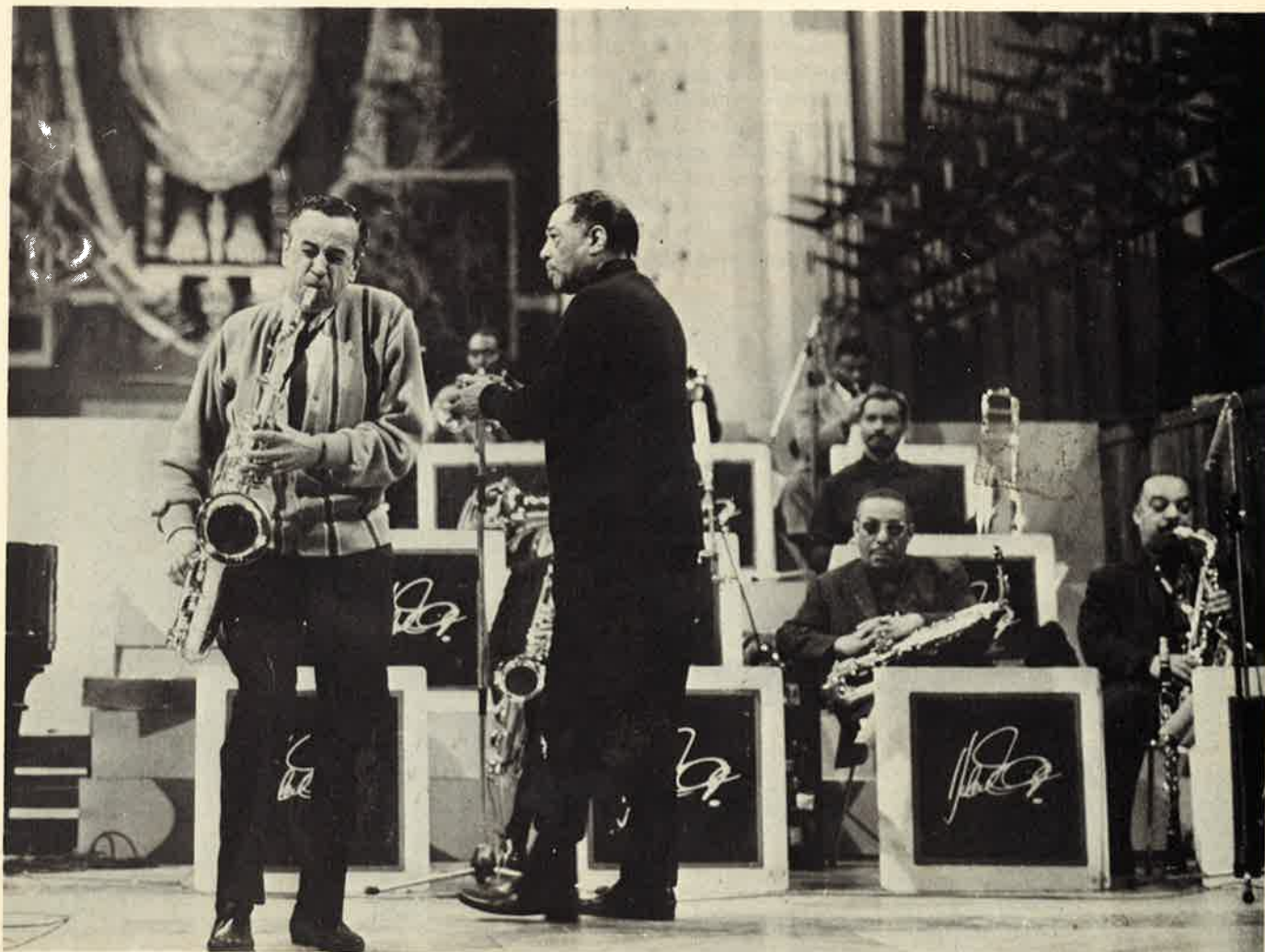
Below: Duke Ellington led his 15-man orchestra in the first European performance of his religious suite, *In The Beginning God*, in England, 1966.

inventive and exciting soloists. Graeme Lyall, for example, is a reed, flute and woodwind player of the highest world standard. Lyall solos are always gems of improvisation played with masterly technique and style — always an artist, never an exhibitionist. Peter Martin, also from the reed section, is an outstanding altoist and another player of world class. Both Lyall and Martin are very gifted writers too. Peter de Visser, a trombonist who has been a band member, is another talented composer-arranger who provides much of the band's material.

The famous American and ex-Ellington band trumpeter, Clark Terry, was most impressed by the ABC Melbourne Showband when he visited Australia for the 1974 Jazz Convention. He made a number of programs with this band and used many arrangements that had been written for his own various big bands to play at engagements like The Wichita Jazz Festival, or to record. It is interesting to compare the versions of, say, *Sheba*, one of Terry's own compositions, and Ferdi

Grofe's *On The Trail*. The ABC Melbourne does not suffer by the comparison, and the excellence of trumpeters Bob Venier and Peter Sale must have delighted the American jazzman. In recent times this fine band has played some concerts which have surely increased its audience. It is to be hoped that in the near future the ABC will regularly tour this band across the country.

The city of Melbourne has been very fortunate, during the years under review, in the amount of big band music it had available. John Hawker, a splendid trombonist and arranger, had a good unit for a couple of years. This band made music in the style of Henry Mancini, and the standard of musicianship was very high. The Barry Veith Big Band has been on the Melbourne music scene for some 12 years. Originally it was a rehearsal band — a combination of well experienced players and young, aspiring hopefuls, who wanted to make music in the big band format. Leader Veith's enthusiasm has attracted many wonderful musicians



MUSICIANS ARE AMONG THE KEENEST SUPPORTERS OF BIG BAND MUSIC'

to his band over the years, and inspired them to greater skills both as players and as composer-arrangers.

Of particular interest was the formation of the Will Upson Big Band in Perth in 1973. The birth of this band came about because of the belief of Upson and other professional musicians that Perth should have its own big band. Will Upson made some arrangements and rehearsed with his musicians at weekends and in all available spare time. This effort was rewarded when the ABC engaged the band for a series of successful shows. As a direct result of this, the 20-strong Will Upson Band was booked by Bob Maher for regular appearances at his night club, Pinocchio's. The Will Upson Big Band has also recorded commercially for Festival.

The story of the creation of the department of jazz studies in the NSW Conservatorium of Music, and the appointment of Howie Smith as its first director, is told in Mike Williams' introduction. The formation by Smith of the Conservatorium Big Band was one of that gifted man's best legacies to Australian jazz. The band was made up of students and rapidly attained a high standard of musicianship. It must be understood that many of these students are anything but beginners. Some are professional musicians of considerable experience who want to advance their knowledge and proficiency. Besides concerts at the Conservatorium itself, and other venues, the band was engaged

by Bruce Viles to play The Basement (see page 86), and these appearances in the famous Sydney jazz room greatly increased public awareness of the band and the real excellence of its music. When Howie Smith, who is a reed player of great ability, returned to the USA, his place as director of jazz studies was taken up by a fellow American, William Motzin. Under his control the Conservatorium Big Band will surely continue to make an important contribution to the local music scene. It would be good if the band could travel further afield in New South Wales — even interstate — to delight lovers of big band jazz in areas other than Sydney.

In such a brief examination as this, some areas of activity must be disregarded — the "little" big bands for example — and many very worthy musicians go unremarked. But they contribute to the whole scene and their contribution is a vital one.

It seems to me that during this period Australian big band jazz has flourished. It is no longer derivative, but has vigor and style of its own. The standard of musicianship of the players has never been higher, and the supply of local material that's truly creative and inventively arranged was never more plentiful.

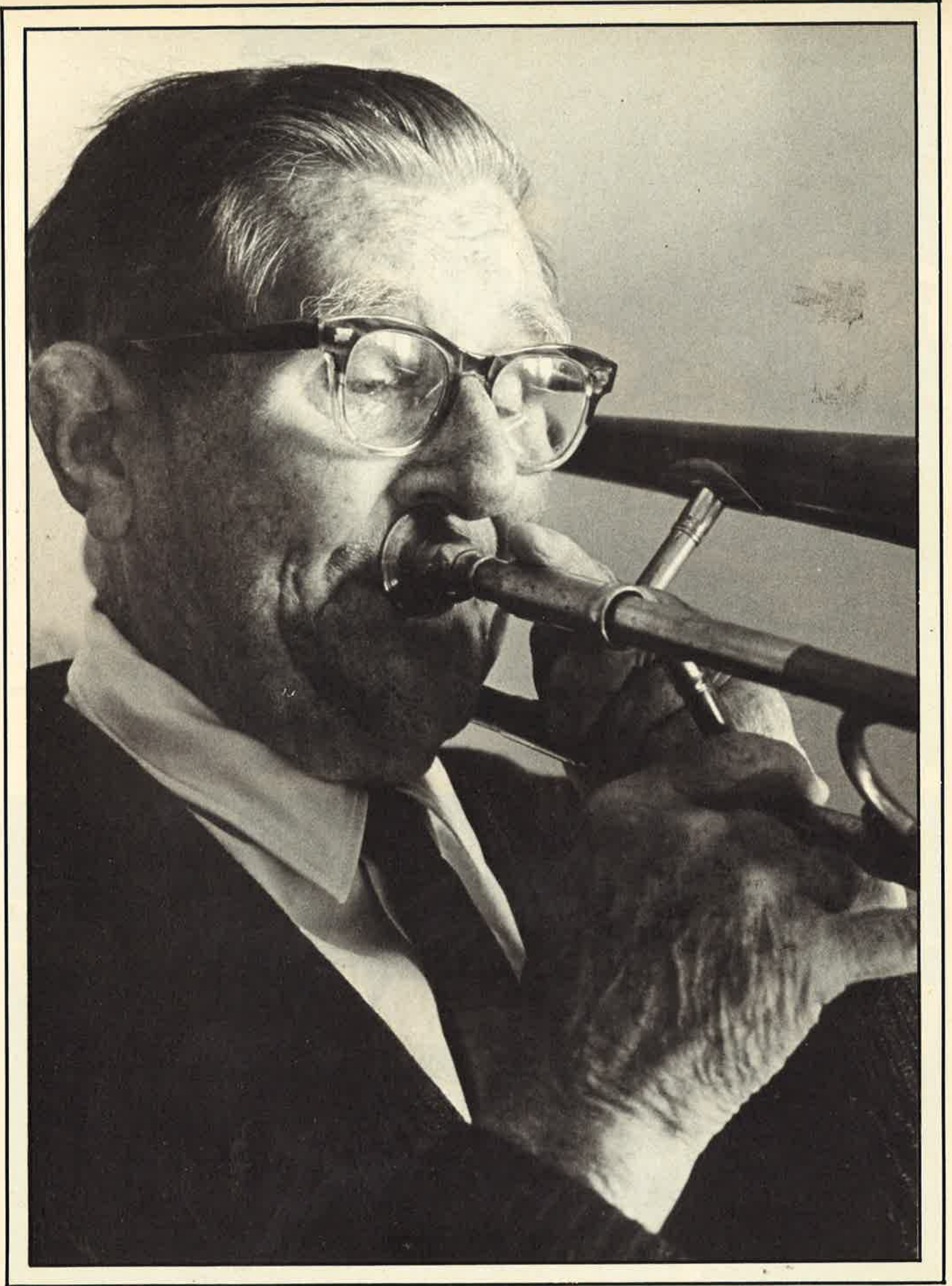
Despite many difficulties, it has been a memorable time; and while our musicians have a mind to make big band jazz — which I believe they always will — the future may prove to be even more exciting. □





Always the perfectionist, Benny Goodman practises by himself before a 1971 concert (left). The ABC Melbourne Show Band, conducted by Brian May (opposite). The recently-disbanded Sydney Showband (below).





TRIBUTE TO HARRY LARSEN

Australia's grand old man of the trombone, Harry Larsen, was one of the first local musicians to pick up the methods of American jazz men. He taught trombone and tuba at the Sydney Conservatorium until 1966 and told JOHN CLARE about his music in a recent interview. Harry died in June, this year, aged 88.

WHILE I was editor of Music Maker magazine, I enjoyed occasionally looking through bound copies going back to 1934. The impression I gained was that most Australian musicians outside of orchestral players were employed in jazz-influenced dance bands, which probably leaned rather more towards Guy Lombardo than Fletcher Henderson. There was mild controversy over the relative merits of smooth dance band musicians and the hot Negro virtuosos, such as Louis Armstrong and Coleman Hawkins.

In 1970 a trombonist, Ted Hutchison, took me out to meet his old teacher Harry Larsen, then in his seventies, whose playing experience went back beyond my old copies of Music Maker. Harry had been principal trombonist in the Sydney Symphony Orchestra for some years but had played in military and dance bands as far back as the '20s. He taught many of today's best trombonists, both in the orchestral and jazz idioms. He must have been one of the very first trombonists here to have picked up on the methods of American jazz musicians, some of whom visited Australia in variety acts. Here is

some of the interview I did at his home.

MUSIC MAKER: So you are virtually self-taught on trombone. Did you simply apply what you had learned about embouchure and breathing on euphonium?

HARRY: Yes, I started on euphonium when I was just a boy at St Augustine's in Geelong. I was champion of Australia when I was 15. I played in picture theatre bands for a while, then I came up to Sydney and went to New Zealand with the State Military Band. I was with Wirth's Circus for about nine months. I left because I got sick of playing the gallops all the time. I went to Cobar and did some underground work there in the copper mines. Soon after that I joined the Artillery band. I was only 19. That was when I switched to trombone.

MM: I am amazed that you were later able to play with the Sydney Symphony with no lessons in trombone method.

HARRY: Well, I made a real study of it, you know. I used to notice these pictures of the top players overseas, how they would handle the slide (demonstrates relaxed wrist action) and

people would say "that's not how you do it", but I noticed that was the way the top players did it.

MUSIC MAKER: Many people say you were responsible for a greater consciousness amongst trombonists here of sound quality as well as other aspects of technique. What set you thinking along these lines?

HARRY: Well, that's very nice. Listening to records had a lot to do with it. I used to listen to the American players. Jack Teagarden and Miff Mole. Miff was the one I set myself on. Of course, they used to extemporise a lot.

MM: That wouldn't have been very common here?

HARRY: No, we couldn't improvise. But it wasn't called for then. We used to have those dances like the Lancers and so on, all set down beforehand. But it was common amongst the Americans and I used to love it. We used to go and hear a trombone who came out here with The Californians, Monty Barton. They did a session down at the Haymarket Theatre. That's The Barclay now. He used to marvel at the way I could read everything, because it was all lug (ear) with him.

MM: Did you have trouble switching from dance work? I remember the dance style in those days used a very pronounced vibrato, for instance.

HARRY: Ah, no, it never gave me any trouble, because I made the vibrato with my hand. It was easy to play without it. I'm glad you came. You know, it's interesting to think back.

MM: Do you like more recent ways of playing? Do you like the way the Cleveland Orchestra plays, for example?

HARRY: Oh yes.

MM: What about jazz players like J. J. Johnson?

HARRY: Yes, and Urbie Green. I like the way they play. I've got some records here. I think you've got to be very broadminded if you want to be any good. Do you know what I mean?

Yeah, man. I do. I hope I do. □



"We used to go and hear a trombone who came out here with The Californians, Monty Barton."

THE MORALITY (AND MADNESS) OF JAZZ MUSICIANS

JUST WHAT IS
THIS THING
CALLED THE JAZZ
PERSONALITY?
DICK HUGHES
ECHOES U.S.
HUMORIST ARTEMUS
WARD WHEN HE
SAYS: 'THE MORE I
THINK ABOUT IT,
THE LESS I THINK
ABOUT IT!'

THERE'S BEEN so much bilge, balderdash and bunkum written about the so-called jazz personality, that I hesitate to write any more. But having got so far . . . the hell with it.

Jazz musicians for decades have been dismissed (or exalted) as drunkards, drug addicts, womanisers, impossible romantics, melancholy clowns, hilarious clowns, wits (sometimes half-wits) and practical jokers. How it all began, I don't know. Maybe it's a hangover from the days when musicians, in high society, were treated as below-stairs servants. But musicians in such circles were scarcely revered as wits or romantics.

That there are high-spirited jazz musicians, nobody will deny. But there are also in their ranks people with pedestrian minds, no wit, no humor. Somewhere in the anthology published as Eddie Condon's *Treasury of Jazz*, it is said — not by Eddie Condon — that jazz musicians and jazz collectors are the most frantic characters. Some of them, yes; a lot of them, maybe; all of them, decidedly not.

Take Condon himself. He was a hard drinker, yes. But he abhorred jive talk and the bizarre accoutrement which many people (including some jazz musicians) consider are part and parcel of the jazz personality. While the others went through the red berets and dark glasses and long hair and beards and Ivy League suits and charcoal (and why not if they wanted to?) he stuck to his bow tie and striped suit. And if his hair was a bit long in his last months, it was because his daughters insisted on it.

The American humorist, Artemus Ward, once asked his opinion on a subject, said: "The more I think about it, the less I think about it." And that's just about how I feel in writing about the jazz personality. In a sense, there's no such thing, any more than there's any such thing as a typical jazz musician.

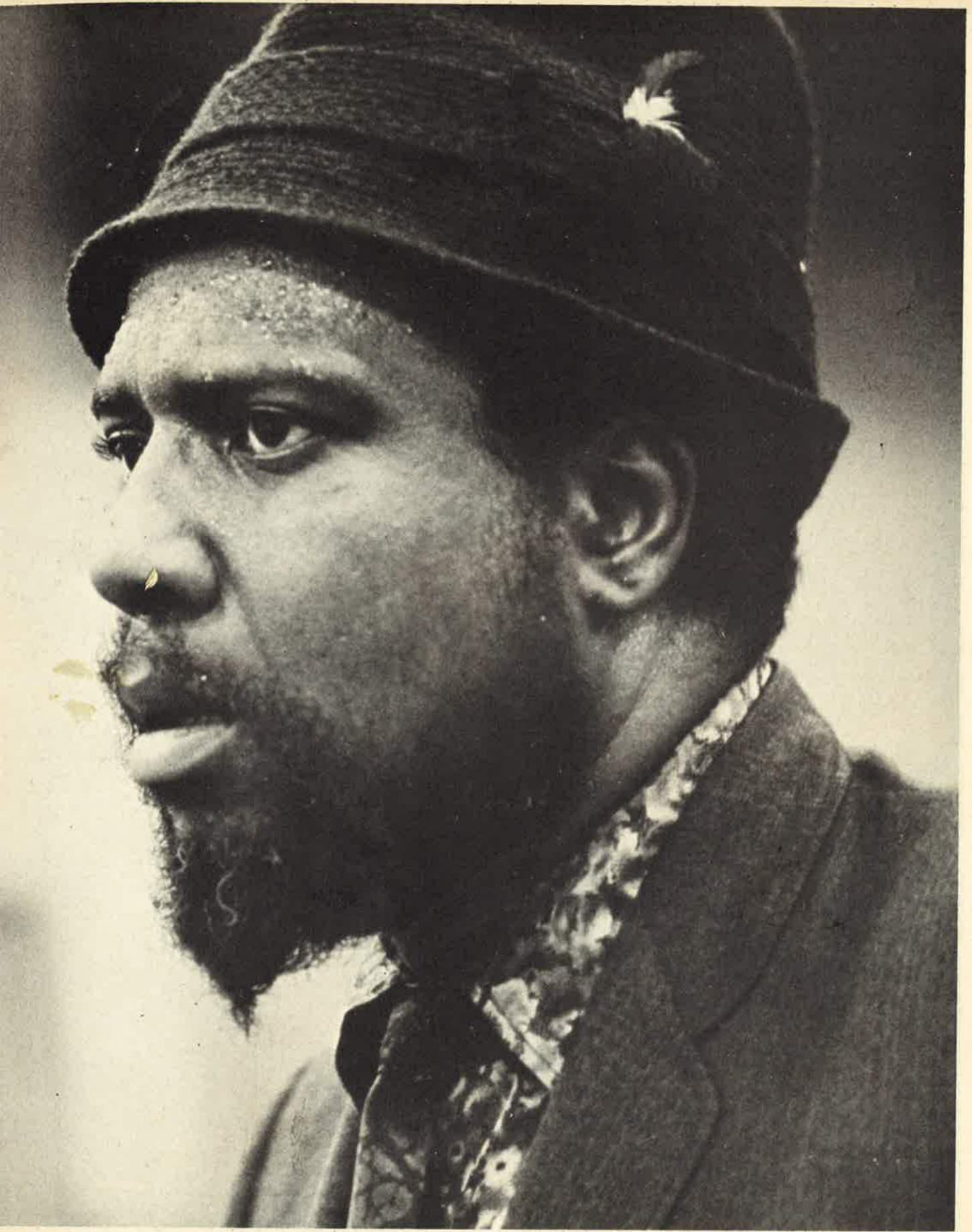
And take a jazzman like Gene Krupa, known, so it is said, to that other hypothetical figure the Man In The Street. He was the prototype of the sweating, grimacing, mad drummer, face awry, frenetic, way-out. But to Krupa, drumming meant real music, and it was allied to a philosophy for playing a solo.

"If they're to be musical, drums must produce sounds, not just noise," Krupa once told George T. Simon. "Drum solos must have substance and continuity. Before I begin one, I try to have a good idea of what I'm going to play."

And to a reporter from *Duke Magazine* in 1957 he said: "The modernists, who were not trained as jazz drummers, do almost anything that comes to mind and they get away with it because the people who follow it have stopped dancing; or never learned how. These young drummers — and there are some outstanding ones among them — try to do too much. They try to play everything in an eight-bar break. If I beat out my wildest solo and the people couldn't dance to it, I'd be really shocked, for I learned years ago that you just can't break time."

Serious earnest thought for a jazz musician? Well, yes, when compared with, say, Wild Bill Davison. Asked once what he was thinking of after he had played a typically searing-hot chorus, Davison just said: "I was thinking how fast I could get to the bar to get my next Scotch."

But take Thelonious Monk. He's a real jazz character, isn't he? The vaguest of the vague. But he was ready to co-operate in a mad publicity stunt, so Stanley Dance told me. There was some hare-brained announcement in a newspaper that Thelonious Sphere Monk would appear at some public building in New York — and go through the revolving door constantly for an hour, or 2000 times, or something. Monk did.



Thelonious Monk: An eccentric jazz master who wandered off in Sydney's streets.



Duke Ellington: His musicians cried when they first rehearsed his Black, Brown and Beige Suite.

But Monk's mad, isn't he? Is he? As Jack Lesberg said: "He's amazingly sane and sensible when it comes to getting paid." On the other hand, a chap who goes to bed wearing a hat, stays awake for days, then has a marathon sleep-in of two or three days, has to be considered some kind of eccentric.

Teddy Hill, the band-leader who came to know Monk in the late '30s, thanks largely to Dizzy Gillespie who was in Hill's trumpet section, had this to say of him in *Metronome* magazine.

"Monk definitely is a character. He's the type of fellow who thinks an awful lot but doesn't have much to say. Yeah, I've known a lot of musicians who were characters but none just like him. He just doesn't seem to be present unless he's actually talking to you and sometimes all of a sudden in the middle of a conversation his mind is somewhere else. He may still be talking to you, but he's thinking about something else. When I had him at Minton's, the band used to come to work at 10 pm. He'd come at nine, but at 10 you wouldn't find him. Maybe an hour later you'd find him sitting by himself in the kitchen somewhere writing, and the band playing didn't make any difference to him."

Lester Young, the man who revolutionised the concept of tenor sax playing when he was with Count Basie, was kind of vague too. A booking agent, quoted in Nat Hentoff's chapter on Young in *Jazz Makers*, reckoned Young was "an aloof goof."

"He's in a world all by himself," he said. "He's oblivious to people. I don't think he regards people as anything. I'd talk to him and all he'd say was 'Bells!' or 'Ding Dong!'. I finally decided I'd go to Bellevue if I wanted to talk to crazy people. So he's a talent! He's a nut!"

Which reminds about the chap who decided it was time for him to see the psychiatrist and after a dozen sessions he was as sweet as a nut . . .

Off-hand, I can think of only three jazz musicians who ended up in asylums — Buddy Bolden (whom we can safely call the first jazz trumpeter-cornettist), Leon Rappolo and Bobby Moore.

Bobby Moore was a trumpeter in Count Basie's first New York band, and now leads the band in the asylum on Welfare Island in New York.

Leon Rappolo was the clarinetist with the New Orleans Rhythm Kings in the '20s and also one of the first jazz musicians to enjoy (or abhor) a reputation for smoking marijuana. An

early influence on Benny Goodman, he insisted on wearing white socks with evening clothes (that doesn't seem outrageous these days and nights) and threw his clarinet into Lake Pontchartrain while in a disturbed frame of mind one night.

If he liked a number he was playing, he'd keep going, even if the band had stopped five minutes before. Waiters and manager would plead with him to stop, so that they could get people off the dance floor and spending money again, but Rappolo just went on and on (possibly like the great bop pianist, Bud Powell, in whose eyes they'd shine a torch to make him see the point it was time he stopped). He was put in a Louisiana asylum in 1928 and was visited by Pee Wee Russell. He died in 1943.

Buddy Bolden went to the East Louisiana State Hospital on June 5, 1907. It's unfortunate that the first name jazz musician had to go crazy. It seems to start the legend — as well as giving credence to it.

Women used to fight for the honor of carrying his cornet for him and he was a hard drinker. But, to strip the legend of dubious romance, I think Buddy Bolden went crazy because he worked so hard. Sometimes he played with as many as eight bands in one night. And not only was he a cornet player, but a barber and editor as well. He had a barber shop first in Franklin Street, then in St Andrews. And he edited and published a gossip rag called *The Cricket*, for which he got most of his hottest stories from a police informant.

I can't deny, though, that there's a basis for a romantic legend in Buddy Bolden's life. And jazz musicians are such romantics, aren't they?

Well consider Duke Ellington's reaction to the critic who wrote that listeners in future centuries would be able to recreate American civilisation by listening to Ellington records; would be able to hear the throb of long-stilled traffic, see the flash of neon signs, get some suggestion of the New York subway . . .

"I don't know," Ellington mused.

"There may be something in it. But it seems to me such talk stinks up the place."

And when talking of *Boy Meets Horn*, this beautiful feature for Rex Stewart, he just said it was something to have fun with. "It has nothing to do with conquering the world," he said.

IF LEON RAPPOLO LIKED A NUMBER HE WAS PLAYING, HE'D KEEP GOING, EVEN IF THE BAND HAD STOPPED FIVE MINUTES BEFORE'

'IT'S UNFORTUNATE THAT THE FIRST NAME JAZZ MUSICIANS HAD TO GO CRAZY'

"You write it tonight and play it tomorrow, and that's it."

When Stewart and Tricky Sam Nanton, Ellington's greatest trombonist, first rehearsed the Black, Brown and Beige Suite with Ellington, they were so overwhelmed by the beauty of it that they wept, like weak-kneed romantic schoolgirls. But all Ellington said of this monumental composition was: "We are not attempting to produce a magnificent affair. We desire to remain true to self."

To thine own self be true — and all that Shakespearean jazz.

Boyce Brown was a Chicagoan alto sax player and apparently didn't become true to himself until the early '50s, when he became a monk. He joined the Servite order of the Catholic Church. His playing so impressed the French critic, Hugues Pahassie, that he proclaimed him the best of the white also saxophonists. He was certainly one of the hottest. He also had an intelligence quota that put him in the near-genius class. Nothing odd about Boyce at all, except for the fact that in his playing days he called his saxophone Agnes and sometimes sat down and wrote Agnes serious letters and romantic poems.

Many of the white Chicago school had outside interests that made them different from What Man In The Street considers Average Jazzman. Jack Teagarden was crazy about mechanical gadgets and trains. (I remember Ade Monsborough, at the 1948 convention, telling us how Teagarden tried to explain to him — they met in France when and where both the Bell Band and the Louis Armstrong All Stars were touring — the principles of a new slide-and-valve trombone he was working on.) Pee Wee Russell and George Wettling both had their paintings exhibited. Dave Tough was addicted to cryptic crosswords, writing and French literature. Bud Freeman is still a Shakespearean buff and an unusual, if not eccentric, anglophile. Gene Krupa in his last years talked as much about the philosophical and religious writings of Thomas Merton as he did about drums.

Like professors and long-haired musicians (prototypes, of course), jazz musicians are supposed to be vague and inarticulate.

George Wein took a Newport All Stars contingent to Paris in 1962 or 1963. It included Pee Wee Russell on clarinet and what I think was his first

European tour. Bruce Turner, who I think was still with Humphrey Lyttleton, was in Paris at the time. There was amused speculation about the lines their conversation would follow if Russell and Turner met.

When Pee Wee is described as apparently vague, apparently is every bit as much the operative word as vague. But he did come up with some knock out statements in his time (which ended abruptly when he was on the road in February, 1969). When he was living in Chicago, Pee Wee travelled often on the Chicago elevated railway. Every time he went through the gate, he paid a quarter and collected the two tokens, using one in the slot to let him pass onto the platform. Gradually he built up an impressive collection of spare tokens. "What am I supposed to do with them all?" Pee anxiously asked a friend.

As for Bruce Turner, he has an innate suspicion of telephones and mechanical gadgets (I suspect he considers the radio a medium of the devil) and often seems (seems, I repeat) bewildered by where he is or where he is going. He reminded Humphrey Lyttleton of G. K. Chesterton, when Chesterton — trying to work out the itinerary he was undertaking — wired his wife this query: "Am in Market Harborough — where ought I to be?"

As for the conversation between Turner and Russell . . . nobody seems to remember whether they even met in Paris then.

As James Thurber once wrote: "Everybody's getting very serious. You can just sense that change — the beginning of a kind of chill." A kind of chill (not necessarily an unhealthy one), blew through the jazz world in the 1950s. A new breed of jazz musician had arrived, and in some sense he was the most popular jazzman on the scene in those years. I refer to the cool school, and particularly those members of it who lived on the west coast of America.

Many of them were very earnest young gentlemen and some may have seemed to have delusions that they had a divine mission in life. Lots of them were WASP. One writer about this time seriously suggested that it would help jazz musicians if they had a degree of Master or Bachelor of Arts. "Nothing so academic as a Ph.D would make sense for a jazz musician," he said. "But there is much to be said for the kind of MA work that musicians such as Lennie Tristano, Dave Brubeck and John La Porta have done."



Gene Krupa (left) in his last years talked as much about the writings of Thomas Merton as he did about drums. Eddie Condon (below, left) was a hard drinker but abhorred jive talk and beatnik clothes. Humphrey Lyttleton (below) said Bruce Turner reminded him of G. K. Chesterton.



I'm not attacking academic degrees, please understand. But I just fail to see how they can help a jazz musician, no matter what style of jazz he favors or plays. There's no reason, of course, why degrees should be a hindrance either. In this context, I am reminded of a broadcast over Melbourne commercial radio (3XY, I think) in early 1949 by the Tony Newstead band. The compere interviewed most of the musicians (Tony on trumpet; George Tack, clarinet; Ken Ingram, trombone; Will McIntyre, piano; Ray Simpson, guitar; Keith Cox, bass; Don Reid, drums plus, I think, Keith Hounslow on cornet). He seemed surprised that some of them had university degrees.

"Some of us have got two degrees," cracked Tack. "In fact, this entire band is thinking of getting together one day to make a thermometer." As Don Reid said in a later interview on the program: "Having brains doesn't disqualify you

'THE LADY WHO WAS JAZZ WAS DIPPED IN SEEMINGLY INDELIBLE SCARLET'

from playing jazz."

We could put it this way, without, I hope, being snobbish about it: There aren't too many Ockers in the land of jazz. (Admittedly, the behavior of some people at the last Australian jazz convention may make you doubt that.)

And, yes, there are jazz luses, and drug addicts, and lechers. But you'll find them in the minority. Everybody's ready to pounce on the most obscure musician who is a drug addict, while forgetting (or not even knowing, more likely) that a survey in Great Britain showed that doctors, of all professional people, had most drug addicts in their ranks.

Which reminds me that a doctor friend of mine came down to see me play years ago in a pub in a Sydney suburb. He was sighted there by one of his patients, to whom I had spoken on the phone several times as a journalist. My friend lost his patient, who was shocked to see his doctor in what he considered the low company of people whom he suspected of being drug addicts. Frankly, I wouldn't be surprised if some drug addicts did pass through the jazz bar from time to time, but most of them were interested in ear-bashing and preferred to stay in the pub's other bars.

But my friend's patient had a strange code of conduct. He used to beat up his wife regularly and I wouldn't be surprised if some of his business dealings then were known to the police. But he knew the right thing to do when he saw his doctor listening to jazz in a pub.

Barry Ulanov has pointed out that those who write about jazz musicians in the public Press have often been concerned with their morality. In *A Handbook of Jazz*, he wrote: "Certainly many in jazz have broken rules, dishonored themselves and others, created about themselves an atmosphere at best disorderly and at worst debauched. But to generalise from these cases that every time one sees or hears a jazzman one is in the presence of evil incarnate is to belie the facts and to do violence to that basic clarity without which human beings cannot live together — even in night-clubs."

Ulanov himself is an example of the complex character of some jazz musicians and listeners. He is a professor of English and has written a book on Saint Therese of the Little Flower, as well as books on jazz. He believes that it took people a long time to dissociate jazz from the people for whom it was so

often performed and that it was first played in an unsavory atmosphere in New Orleans. Pimps and prostitutes were well represented in the fans who followed jazz in the early days. By the time King George V had begun his Ellington collection, and after he had heard Sidney Bechet and Jimmy Yancey perform at Buckingham Palace, the damage had been done. The lady that was jazz had been dipped in seemingly indelible scarlet.

Ulanov put it this way: "Because the early performers were themselves untutored, the victims of a society which — behind pious protestations — led a licentious existence, there was inevitably disorganisation, disorder and debauchery in jazz in its early years. But as it became more and more clear that this was a music with its own kind of discipline, with rigorous playing and thinking demands, with something approaching an aesthetic of its own — it became equally clear that it would be impossible to lead the life of dissolution and dissipation that characterised the New Orleans beginnings.

"And, at the same time, because of the change in the nature of the music played by the second and third waves of jazzmen, a more serious, better-organised, better-educated, perhaps more sensitive sort of person began to make his way into jazz — often, it is true, to be corrupted, but at least as often to counteract the corruption of others. With new generations came new standards and an effective disjunction between those who had led the one kind of life — empty and self-controlled morally, no matter how distinguished musically — and those who insisted upon the other kind — disciplined in almost every way, morally as well as musically."

To which, all I can say is maybe, maybe not. Or, to resort to Artemus Ward again, the more I think of it, the less I think of it.

Obviously, just from some of the stories above, there are undeniable characters in the land of jazz. But there are many mansions in that land, and some of them — maybe most of them — are inhabited by pedestrian types. And if one could write a chapter or two about the eccentric characters in jazz, one could fill two volumes about those who aren't.

I think I'll thrash the matter out with some journalist friends of mine — you know the sort I mean: solid, dependable, sober-living types . . . □

Eric Child with Louis and Lucille Armstrong. He had most of the early Armstrong records.



ABC JAZZ

ERIC CHILD looks back on his years as a jazz broadcaster and the personalities who influenced his taste in jazz. "When I was asked to write an article on jazz and the ABC, or perhaps ABC Jazz, I said 'no' — I did not consider myself to be the right person," Eric said. We're glad he relented.

BECAUSE of my interest in jazz through collecting records and playing drums with small dance bands — and spending a lot of my time, when I should have been sleeping, in what passed for jazz clubs in pre-War London — I got to know the music pretty well.

It must be remembered that about the only literary reference in those days was *The Melody Maker* and reviews by Edgar Jackson. One was pretty much on one's own in deciding what *was* and what *was not* jazz.

The Number One Rhythm Club was

the forerunner of similar clubs all over Britain and it did a tremendous amount of good in bringing together collectors and those members of the jazz hierarchy who could be persuaded to attend meetings and talk about jazz, or play records which were hot off the American press.

I remember a nervous and slightly embarrassed Spike Hughes, at one meeting, talking about his recent and — as it turned out — last recordings made in New York with a Negro orchestra organised by Benny Carter, in 1933.

There was a fleeting visit by Louis Armstrong and his wife, Alpha. And Edgar Jackson pointing out the simple but impressive swing in the eighth bar of Cootie Williams' interjections in the third chorus of Ellington's *Drop Me Off At Harlem*.

John Hammond paid a visit to the club with his recent and exciting discovery, a pressing of *Honky Tonk Train Blues*, by Meade Lux Lewis and his explanation as to why some

American recordings were for European release only — lack of US support for jazz! We were stunned by this and found it hard to believe.

Reginald Foresythe brought along his *New Music* — an unusual instrumentation for jazz, illustrating some introspective and unusual Foresythe compositions — which we could not contemplate superseding, or complementing, our beloved swing.

Inevitably, our judgments and preferences were based on false premises and were proved, in later years, to be embarrassingly wrong. But we ploughed on, didactic, bigoted little jazz prigs. A small number of collectors at this time had seen the light and were pursuing a righteous and just cause, mostly ignored and derided by those who preferred to go along with the tide and could not be bothered to make waves.

At that time my record collection was in the 400-500 bracket and this was considered to be a good enough number to admit me to the club.

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'JAZZ IS SELDOM INCLUDED IN COMMERCIAL RADIO AND TV PLANNING'

Many Australians will, no doubt, remember a group which recorded for Parlophone in London, in 1935-6, called Joe Paradise and His Music. This was a band organised by a great friend of mine — and I think one of the first Australians I had met — a kind and gentle man called Stan Patchett. The featured vocalist was Marjorie Stedeford, with Stan singing Squareface. Stan was broadcasting a jazz program for the BBC at this time and at his suggestion I applied for an audition. I began as co-narrator with Stan and later graduated to several one-man programs at varying times.

For three or four years I had been haunting The Nest Club, near the London Palladium. It was one of, I think, two such places which provided black entertainers — the other Jigs being far more exclusive and almost entirely black. At the Nest I used to sit-in for the resident drummer — a slow-talking, lugubrious looking black who had one of the oldest systems of bass drum pedal I had seen, operated by a leather strap. It was on this unlikely contraption that I played with Garland Wilson, Gene Rogers (later on Hawkins' classic *Body & Soul*), Ike Hatch and other performers now long forgotten — although there is an article on Gene Rogers in a recent issue of the Canadian magazine, *Coda*. Wilson died some years ago. He had one of the fastest left hands in the business.

Then, of course, came Munich and what a lot of people thought might clear the air a little — World War II. Instead of clearing the air, it brought round-the-clock bombers and the hideous underground life for those left behind to face the blitz. My own record collection remained on the top floor of our house. This was occupied by myself and a housekeeper who dodged in and out rather rapidly during the daylight hours, while my father took refuge in the country.

Then I departed — and from the autumn of 1940 until Brisbane, in 1948, I only saw and heard my precious 78s during periods of leave, most nights of which were spent wondering whether I should stay in the pub and drink, or scuttle into some local air raid shelter. In nearly every case the pub won but I shall never hear the English Parlophones and Columbias of the Benny Goodman Sextet playing *The Sheik*, *Poor Butterfly*, *Soft Winds* and *Seven Come Eleven* without hearing the screams and thuds of the bombs and the

misleadingly assuring sound of the barrage.

The war years amputated over six years from my close association with jazz in general and records in particular. And because my life became comparatively nomadic before I eventually got married and settled down in Brisbane with the ABC in 1948, only a few local releases became the basis for my Australian collection.

But when it became obvious that Brisbane would be our home for a number of years, I set about getting my collection crated and shipped out. There were few breakages and I started again in earnest with parcels of select 78s from the UK and occasionally the USA.

Naturally, I listened avidly to the ABC's jazz program, Thursday Night Swing Club, which seemed — at this long distance — to rotate from State to State with the odd request session from Alan Saunders in Melbourne. So I let it be known that I had a long-term interest in jazz and had a respectable collection — although the absence of Jelly Roll Morton, Bechet, Hodes and some of the other more basic types of jazz caused some concern and eyebrow-raising on the part of the local aficionados, chiefly Sid Bromley, who had been waging war on the dearth of local jazz of all kinds. He was a great help in my re-education.

The trouble was, of course, that Morton-type jazz simply was not recognised in Britain before the war. The nearest one got to that kind of music was, perhaps, Bob Crosby and Eddie Condon and before trying to come to terms with bop the obvious thing to do was fill these gaps in my collection. I had most of the early Armstrongs, Ellingtons, Hendersons, Hines and so on, but the basic New Orleans and Chicago music was very thin on the ground in my area.

Thus, in the process of restoration, my collection became the foundation for my request for inclusion in the Thursday night jazz merry-go-round.

Perhaps one thing that was never understood by most listeners was that these broadcasts became part of my roster and were never paid for, except in terms of hours. Also, as it became known that there was a jazz fancier on the Brisbane staff, I was rostered for what rare studio broadcasts were made by local groups — particularly a good one called *The Canecutters*.

In the early days the talent was inclined to be uneven; in later years it



Benny Goodman
(left) and Bob
Crosby (below)
popped up plenty
of times in Eric Child's
extensive record collection.



'IN THOSE EARLY DAYS TALENT WAS INCLINED TO BE UNEVEN'

had a more uniform quality. In fact, I believe tapes of some of these early broadcasts are still in existence in private ownership and would make valuable comparisons with current trends in other States, as well as providing valid material for any nostalgia LPs to join the ranks of the overseas releases.

In 1952 several important things happened almost simultaneously. Eric Child was a relatively inexpensive commodity to handle jazz programs, the 10-inch jazz LP made its debut and Clem Semmler became associated with the Federal Program Department in Sydney. He immediately set about launching a jazz program on Saturday mornings, using the new LPs and a studio announcer who was either completely out of phase with jazz or was not being supplied with adequate notations on the music. Both, I think, were true.

So having heard one or two Thursday Night Swing Club sessions from Brisbane, Clem issued a memo setting out his plans for the Saturday program in greater detail and asking if I would be interested in running it on a permanent basis, using both 78s and LPs. It goes without saying that I agreed — though not without some misgivings. Here I would be, on relay to other States, listened to by other jazz lovers and inevitably criticised for playing — or not playing — the particular jazz that happened to interest any listener who cared to write in.

In the event — and through the years — it seems that Rhythm Unlimited was precisely what the public wanted. At least they reacted favorably.

Owing to changes in heads of departments, the duration of the program changed quite drastically from time to time. But the basic idea remained the same; a program of wide scope but excluding some of the more advanced ideas in jazz that were appearing about that time.

I have always felt that music of this kind has its rightful place at night. Just why this is so is difficult to rationalise but be it jazz — or any other kind of music which is thought to be constricted by its current form — there must be a quiet time without stress or strain to assess the alternatives (something which cannot be achieved under conditions which are not completely, or at least partially, conducive to rational thinking). In view of all these factors it has always seemed

reasonable to me to devote the hours of Saturday mornings — set aside for what is now known as *The World Of Jazz* — to largely familiar sounds; not necessarily familiar forms or compositions but records which come into the orbit of easily assimilated time signatures and instrumental sounds which have been accepted as belonging to the standard repertoire of the jazz instrumentalist.

The foregoing may sound a little ponderous, if not downright pompous, but it must serve as the guidelines to which I have worked over the 20-odd years that I have been responsible for a portion of ABC jazz record programs. And experience has shown that, so far as I am concerned, these guidelines have worked.

Sometime during the '60s (I regret my memory does not extend to exact dates and times), I was asked to prepare a program of modern jazz. Although this is not my strong point, I nevertheless sympathise with those who feel the boundaries of jazz should be widened and have always done my best to include examples in my programs.

This new program was called *Workshop For Jazz* and although I had access to a select range of current recordings it netted a very small listener response. It went to air on Thursday nights, I think, and replaced a sort of hotch-potch called *The Friday Night Show*. This was not jazz per se but a kind of variety program which welcomed anything from *The Goons* to *Grappelli*. I still feel that *Workshop For Jazz* was a mistake and that I should have been left with the Friday program which pleased a number of people who wrote in to say so.

When Jim Davidson re-organised the night programs on Radio One in the middle '60s, *Workshop For Jazz* bit the dust (with few regrets all round) and I moved to Monday nights and *Jazzography* — four hours from eight till midnight of jazz, fringe jazz and odd bits of news and comment. This marathon effort, assisted by a producer, Eric Miller and others was, I believe, a success. Arch McKirdy then made his appearance and the program was cut to end at 10 pm.

Room To Move, that block-busting success of jazz-rock and Blues, was put in on Mondays and I moved to Fridays where, at this writing, I remain.

During all these changes and re-plannings I was actively engaged in routine announcing, including many

series of recorded local jazz groups — mostly in the ABC's onetime church studio in Bourke Street, Sydney, known as 226. I spent many pleasant hours there compiling annotations to link the music.

As has always been the case, local groups would have been — and still are — badly off if left to commercial radio and TV channels. Jazz is seldom, if ever, included in their plans. No doubt the reason is sponsor persuasion. But I am convinced that properly presented, intelligent jazz on TV has every chance of proving successful. The operative words are "properly" and "intelligently", qualities notably absent from some productions of long ago.

The opportunity to broadcast to the greater part of Australia through the ABC city and country channels is a very responsible and frightening task. At least the people entrusted with this coverage should be aware of their obligations and what almost amounts to a sacred trust. This aspect of broadcasting is often laughed off as diehard and reactionary and in direct opposition to those who would use the medium to propagate their own theories and preferences.

Involvement of this kind must inevitably include subjective approaches, otherwise there would be little point in sponsoring them but, as we know, it can be carried to extremes without knowledgeable and responsible supervision (i.e. production). It is all too simple to acquire a program and then use it to brainwash a group of earnest and eager listeners or viewers into believing that what is being broadcast or televised is necessarily the only thing worth listening to or watching. The key point is to have someone who is sufficiently aware of the many facets of jazz to veto attempts to push the *jazz party line*. If, on the other hand, one has had reasonable experience of the music over a number of years and is willing and able to present an overall coverage, well and good. Researchers, specialists and theorists have their vital and important place and play a valuable part in making the whole thing work to everyone's advantage.

Tolerance is a word that has rapidly gone out of fashion in some quarters. But let us at least try to lead the way to a more broadminded and tolerant acceptance of one of the most fascinating and vital music forms to emerge in the 20th century. □

"The nearest one got to Morton-type jazz before the war was, perhaps, Bob Crosby and Eddie Condon." Eddie Condon (below).



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THE NIGHT VISITORS

That master raconteur of jazz, DICK HUGHES, puts some new light on the Australian tours of the jazz greats.

POSSIBLY AS A REWARD for paying to go to 15 or 17 Louis Armstrong concerts (including a trip from Sydney to Brisbane to catch two concerts there) when the All Stars were here in 1956, I have since then usually been able to get in free to concerts by American jazz musicians visiting Australia.

And I have also been able to get to know many of them — Duke Ellington and Count Basie and members of their orchestras, Louis and nearly all his sidemen on his 1956, 1963 and 1964 visits to Australia, Turk Murphy, Dave Brubeck, Wild Bill Davison, Bobby Hackett, Clark Terry, Earl Hines, Coleman Hawkins, Dizzy Gillespie, Thelonious Monk, the Modern Jazz Quartet . . . and Eddie Condon.

I mention Condon last because I'm going to deal with him first. Him and the men who came with him on his 1964 Australian tour for Kym Bonython: Buck Clayton, Vic Dickenson, Pee Wee Russell, Dick Cary, Jack Lesberg, Cliff Leeman and Jimmy

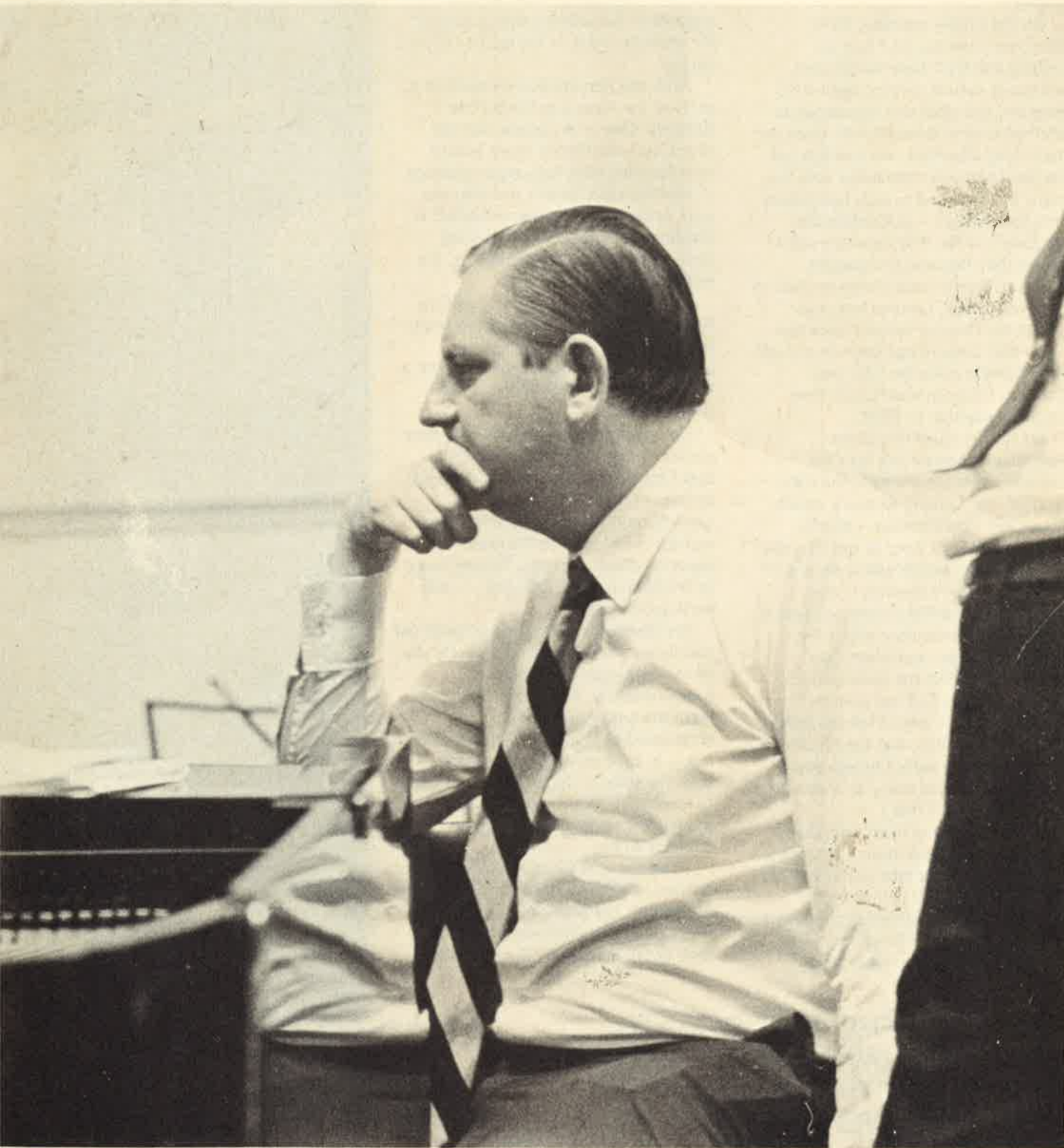
Rushing. For me it was a kind of dream come true, for these were some of my favorite jazzmen — solid, hard-core jazzmen whom I thought no Australian promoter would take a risk on. But I didn't know Kym Bonython so well then and could hardly believe it when he rang me in 1963 saying he was negotiating to bring out an Eddie Condon group for the 1964 Adelaide Arts Festival and then for a Sydney-Melbourne tour.

But that wasn't even half of it. He assured me, after I began pestering him, that Bud Freeman would be included, and then proposed that I make the tour with the band as a sort of band boy-road manager-rouseabout-factotum. It took a lot out of the band at times, but it took a lot more out of me — virtually all the time.

Eddie Condon's All Stars arrived at Sydney Airport on March 5, 1964, and left for Adelaide the same day. Freeman was interviewed on television that night and Jimmy Rushing sang Blue Skies,

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On the Friday morning, Kym Bonython interviewed Freeman, Lesberg and Dick Cary for his now unhappily defunct Friday night ABC program, and what was extravagantly referred to as a rehearsal took place on the Friday afternoon. All members of the band had been associated over the years, but the band as such had played only once before — at Earthquake McGoon's in San Francisco the night before they flew out to Australia. Rushing, Clayton and Dickenson had all been with Basie; Leeman had been on-call for Condon sessions since the early '50s; Lesberg had been on and off with Condon since the '40s; and Condon, Freeman and Russell first recorded together in 1928.

So all that happened at the Australian rehearsal was for Cliff Leeman to get his drums in the right position, for Lesberg to worry about sound and amplification — and for Condon and Dick Cary to run over the verse of Sugar, which was to be one of Pee Wee Russell's features — and possibly the highlight of every concert. Condon was meticulous about the chords for Sugar, and when Cary complained about the piano actions, remarked: "Has Sullivan been by?" (The reference — need I tell the buff — was to Joe Sullivan, that hard-hitting pianist from the early Chicago days, who had murdered many an instrument with his powerful fists.)

The concert that night was great — some of the greatest music I'd heard in the flesh — but the men weren't so sure. The following night neither Kym Bonython nor myself were so impressed as we had been on the opening night. The musicians, on the other hand,

assured us it had been much better, and I've often thought of their attitude that night when considering who should be the ultimate judge of the quality of jazz played.

After the first concert we went to a party at the American Consul's in Adelaide. One of the guests was Sid Nolan; he immediately made friends with Pee Wee, who had begun dabbling in painting years before and who was later to have his paintings exhibited in Washington by the then Australian Ambassador to the United States, the late Sir Patrick Shaw.

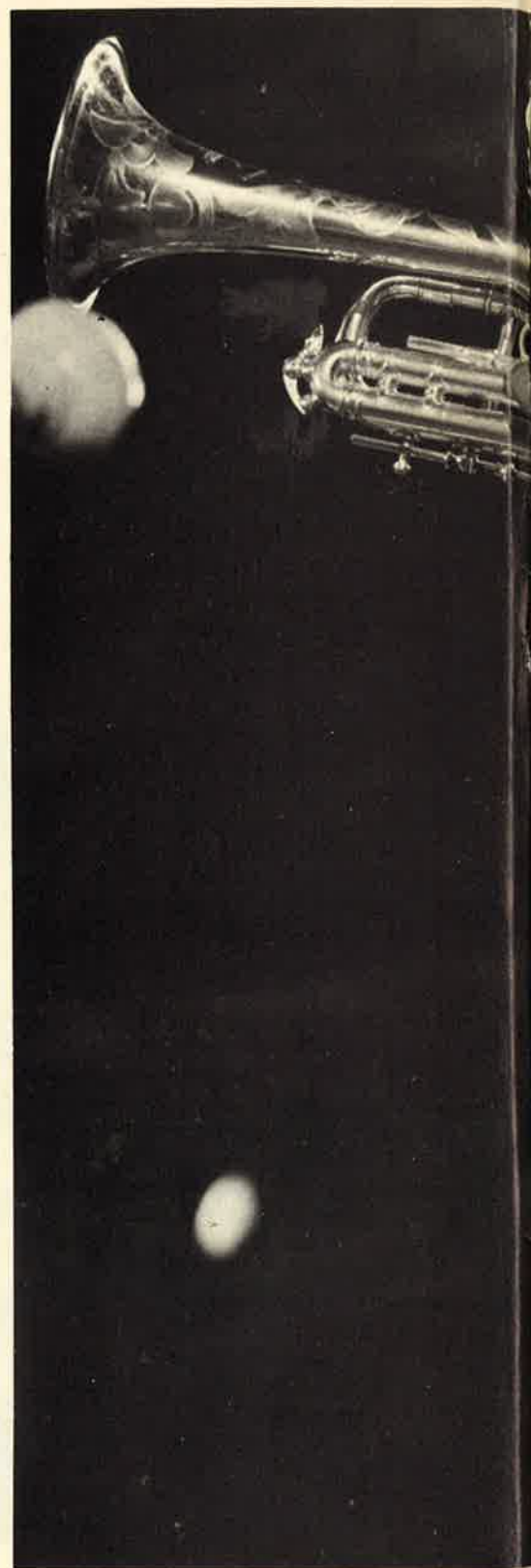
Pee Wee was proud of his painting. When told once by a prospective buyer that the price he was asking for a painting was a bit high, Pee Wee, with a hurt expression, said: "Why, it's all done by hand."

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Pee Wee was, I guess, the jazzman par excellence of the group, alternately shy, gruff, scolding and winking conspiratorially. He may at times have given the impression of being nonplussed or perplexed, but he never was — in spite of an upset stomach — until the stage at Sydney Stadium began to revolve. A revolving stage was a mechanical device he was totally unprepared for.

After the first Condon Sydney concert, which my band had the honor of opening, my wife and I joined Pee Wee and Jimmy Rushing for drinks at their hotel. Somebody bumped our

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Louis Armstrong

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He was proud of his music in a more matter of fact way. When I told him that I considered his Sugar (played just by himself, with Lesberg on bass, Leeman on drums and Cary on piano and alto horn), one of the most beautiful pieces of music I'd ever heard in the flesh, he said: "Oh yes . . . but we'll get it better."

Pee Wee was, I guess, the jazzman par excellence of the group, alternately shy, gruff, scolding and winking conspiratorially. He may at times have given the impression of being nonplussed or perplexed, but he never was — in spite of an upset stomach — until the stage at Sydney Stadium began to revolve. A revolving stage was a mechanical device he was totally unprepared for.

After the first Condon Sydney concert, which my band had the honor of opening, my wife and I joined Pee Wee and Jimmy Rushing for drinks at their hotel. Somebody bumped our

'OF ALL THE JAZZ GREATS WHO HAVE COME TO AUSTRALIA, THE TWO WITH THE GREATEST CHARISMA WERE ELLINGTON AND LOUIS'



Louis Armstrong

table, on which were set four full glasses of beer, one of which emptied itself neatly onto Pee Wee's lap. While I was jumping up and shouting for towels, etc, and so increasing the risk of another beer spill, Pee Wee just sat back calmly and said: "I knew somebody was going to spill that beer and I knew it was going to spill on me. I just couldn't be bothered moving."

Pee Wee had an upset stomach and Condon had an upset bladder. He left hospital in New York straight after a prostate gland operation (against doctor's orders) to make the Australian trip. He was never late for a job, he never begrudged an interview — and, because of his physical condition, couldn't drink and was stone-cold sober the entire tour. He didn't touch a drop of alcohol until the band arrived back in San Francisco after the tour of Japan and New Zealand, which they did after they left Australia.

Asked at a party at Kym Bonython's in Adelaide if he had found a substitute for alcohol, Eddie said with typical laconicism and untypical gloom: "Sure . . . misery."

The Condon lot were always supposed to be heavy drinkers, but I didn't notice any untoward heavy drinking on the tour.

The champion drinker, to skip a few years and a few tours, was Wild Bill Davison in the Salute to Louis Armstrong tour of 1972. When we arrived from Sydney in Melbourne, he had a bottle of scotch open in the taxi for me, although it was not yet 11 am. But it had no apparent effect on him — and certainly no effect on his playing.

The weirdest drinker of the overseas stars was Duke Ellington, who favored Coca-Cola with a heavy additive of sugar. It gave him more energy, he insisted. And he liked nothing better, he said, than to have a big bowl of ice cream before he went to sleep and then

just lie back in bed feeling it sink down his stomach. He long had a reputation as a gargantuan eater, but I never saw him live up to it. To my chagrin, when he was offered a fairly hefty salad at a TV commercial recording session in Sydney, he refused it and said he had had enough to eat at the hotel.

That was on his first visit (1970) when Johnny Hodges was still alive. Hodges died in May that year, three months after the tour. Hodges, who, apart from being the favorite jazz alto player of many people, would always ask for ice with his claret and in whose claret the ice was melting after his last call at Sydney Airport after the Ellington band flew out.

A highlight, in a sense, of Ellington's last tour (1972) was the party thrown for him by the then US Consul-General and his wife, Mr and Mrs Norman Hannah. About one o'clock in the morning, less than two hours after their final Sydney concert, Ellington sat down at the piano and played for the best part of an hour. Don Burrows was at the party, and like myself, was amazed at the way several of the guests went on chatting blithely while one of the great composers of the 20th century played things like Black Beauty, Dancers in Love and Never No Lament.

"Now you've got to play us your greatest hit," said one young man who had not even bothered to go to either of Ellington's Sydney concerts.

When Ellington asked him demurely, and with exquisitely feigned modesty, which one he meant, the man told him "the one with mood in the title". And without batting an eyelid, Ellington played Mood Indigo. And, again without batting an eyelid he played Twelfth Street Rag when asked — admittedly a lot more graciously. It was something like Beethoven being asked to play a piece by Franz Lehar.

As Don Burrows said: "I don't think



**TOURED WITH CONDON
AS A SORT OF
ROUSEABOUT FACTOTUM'**



Dakota Staton (top left), Jonah Jones (left) and Sarah Vaughan (above) were three of the stars at the Lee Gordon Jazz Festival, held at the Sydney Stadium in 1960.

some of the people would know if it were Haydn or Mozart themselves playing for them."

There are so many stories about jazz musicians being lushes and drug addicts that it's almost disappointing to report that the night visitors were the exception rather than the rule.

I remember Dizzy Gillespie drinking his fair share of my scotch in the dressing rooms of the Sydney Stadium at the Lee Gordon Jazz Festival of 1960. I was playing then with the Port Jackson Jazz Band, which opened the four concerts, featuring Coleman Hawkins, Teddy Wilson, Dizzy, Jonah Jones, Dakota Staton, Sarah Vaughan and two other Australian groups, Three Out and the Bryce Rhode Quartet.

"Love Miles Davis?" Dizzy repeated the question of an unfortunate commercial radio interviewer backstage. "Of course I do." (Generous swig from my bottle.)

"Why?" pursued the interviewer.

(Dizzy virtually finished the bottle in one mouthful.) "Because he's my son," he said.

Dizzy played some great stuff out there in 1960 with the Bryce Rhode Quartet, particularly *The Mooche* and *My Man*. But in 1971 he was even better. George Wein reckoned that the trumpet he played at the Capitol Theatre at the first Sydney concert of the Jazz Giants was as brilliant trumpet as he had ever heard Gillespie play.

The Jazz Giants were Dizzy, Kai Winding, Sonny Stitt, Thelonious Monk, Al McKibbon and Art Blakey. The Preservation Hall Band from New Orleans, with Kid Valentine Thomas, Louis Nelson and Alfred Burbank, opened the concert, and Jaki Byard played a solo piano bracket. It was one of Kym Bonython's most varied and most successful packages and, so far as the audiences went, he seemed to get the best and the most of both possible worlds.

Monk was ill, which accounted for his reticence during ensembles but didn't prevent him from playing exquisite solos on *Blue Monk* and *Don't Blame Me*. But he was so ill that George Wein, who accompanied them out here, was considering bringing out Mary Lou Williams to replace him for the rest of the Australian and world tour.

Monk went walkabout after the Giants' last Sydney concert. His wife Nellie reported him missing to George Wein about 4 am. Monk was eventually found — not by Wein, nor Dizzy — but by a cab driver. Monk, vague at the best of times, was going through one of his vaguer periods in Australia in 1971. But there — on the corner of Elizabeth and Park Streets — a cab driver saw him just as the sun was coming up.

Now how on earth would a Sydney taxi driver know who Thelonious Monk was? By a happy turn of *Dame Fortune's Wheel*, the driver was the same one who had driven Monk to the Capitol Theatre from his motel for the concert about 11 hours earlier. And back he drove him to the motel for a thorough scolding by Gillespie, which George Wein said was the best thing that could have happened to Monk. "Now he knows how much he's wanted," he said.

Monk first came to Australia in 1965 when, compared with his behavior here six years later, he was a paragon of sense and sensibility and lucid to a degree. He even talked music to me — over lunch, as showbiz writers say. The conversation had drifted desultorily to his style of piano playing on the private session records made at Minton's Playhouse in the early days of bop. Joe Guy was often on trumpet and Charlie Christian on guitar. On these sessions, Monk displayed more piano technique than he did in later years. Sometimes he sounded a bit like Teddy Wilson.

"Y'know why I was playing like Teddy Wilson?" he asked me, rhetorically. "I was playing like Wilson



THE CONCERT THAT NIGHT WAS GREAT —
BUT THE MEN WEREN'T SO SURE'



Louis Armstrong (top left). "Of all the jazz greats who have come to Australia, the two with the greatest charisma were Ellington and Louis." A young Thelonious Monk on the Jazz Giants tour (left). Louis and Lucille before their flight out of Australia (above). The photograph, by Norm Linehan, has never been reproduced before.

because Charlie Christian was playing so goddammed loud." As Wilson is far from being one of the loudest piano players in jazz, I found this explanation of baffling non sequitur. Maybe Monk meant that an incisive touch like Wilson's was necessary to penetrate through Christian chords. Something told me not to pursue the subject . . .

Some musicians will gladly talk about other musicians than themselves; some (definitely in the minority, I've found) prefer to talk about nothing and nobody but themselves.

Barrett Deems, who played drums with Louis Armstrong on his 1954 and 1956 visits, wasn't exactly in this latter category, but he wasn't generous with his praise for other drummers.

We talked about drummers at a Press reception organised by Festival Records for the Armstrong All Stars at a Kings Cross hotel in April, 1956. Deems seemed to nod and agree to and with everything I said about any drummer — Gene Krupa, Buddy Rich, Jo Jones, Sid Catlett, Cozy Cole, the lot . . . But he always expressed a reservation of his own. Then he finally let me have it: "Listen, I think there's something wrong with all of them. I don't like any of them all that much. I was just saying 'yes, yes' to keep you happy so we wouldn't get too involved."

Gene Krupa and Buddy Rich . . .

At one of the concerts he gave at the Hordern Pavilion in Sydney on his last Australian tour in 1973, Rich spoke slightly of Brisbane and of the Press. I wasn't in Brisbane with him, but maybe the Press gave him a rough time (about what, I can't possibly imagine). I was at his Press reception in Sydney and it seemed to go as smoothly as these strangely contrived functions ever can go. Rich told me he didn't like Ellington ("when I got to hear Ellington, I know I'm going to hear church music. If I want to hear that I go to a church") and

that he loved Basie, whose first drummer, Jo Jones, was — he said — still one of his favorites. Dorsey, he said, had the greatest band of them all.

"But Tommy Dorsey was a ridiculously strict disciplinarian," he said. "In all the years I was with him, I tried to keep away from him. Our conversations were usually strictly business."

And then a colleague from another paper asked a question which, as a journalist, I thought perfectly justified, but which, as a musician, I felt was going to get a lukewarm reception.

"What," asked my friend, "do you think of Gene Krupa?"

Rich: "Now you know the answer to that question as well as I do." Which begs the question: Well, if he did, why did he ask it? But when the question was asked and the non-answer proffered, I couldn't help but remember what Rich said, as reported in the *Melody Maker*, when asked that same question at a drum clinic he held in London about four years before.

His answer then was: "Gene Krupa was more important for the personality he projected from the drums than for his technique." I guess Rich has heard that question so many times that he can be excused for giving a terse reply.

Of all the formal interviews I've had with jazz musicians, the hardest was with Count Basie. The *Sydney Daily Mirror* flew me to Melbourne to interview him before his Melbourne and Sydney concerts in February, 1971. The band, flying west-east, arrived in Melbourne about 12.30 in the afternoon, and Basie and myself went into the hotel by hire car.

He immediately put me at my ease by sitting in the front while I was in the back seat, so that I had to lean forward all the time to talk to him and to hear his largely non-committal answers. While my worry was that I was getting



**'DEE WEE WAS NEVER PERPLEXED —
UNTIL THE STADIUM STAGE
BEGAN TO REVOLVE'**



Jimmy Rushing on the 1964 tour for Kym Bonython (top left). Tommy Dorsey (left) was a "strict disciplinarian", according to Jo Jones. Count Basie (above) didn't want to say too much, as he was keeping it for a book.

insufficient and irrelevant material for a newspaper story, Basie, as he told me afterwards, was afraid I was getting too much out of him and that it might duplicate what he said he intended to put in a book he was writing. As Basie was talking about writing a book as long ago as 1959, I don't think he had much to worry about.

And I do hope his book — if it ever does appear — will be better than that disappointing, aseptic mish-mash of Duke Ellington's: *Music My Mistress*.

But what a delight Ellington was! He granted me a two-hour interview after a Press conference that didn't actually go with a swing and after he had told Kym Bonython — who brought him here — that he didn't want to give more any interviews.

This was his first visit, in February, 1970. It was a broiling day in Melbourne and, as the Basie band was to do the next year, Ellington and his men flew into Melbourne after concerts in Perth and Adelaide. I still see them on the tarmac and hear somebody in the background ask: "Are these guys the Harlem Globetrotters?"

In spite of the weather, Ellington was wearing a blue sweater, but he seemed to be the only one who wasn't sweating in that sarcophagus that passed for a VIP room (the pomp of it!) at Melbourne Airport. It was unfortunate that he was asked whether black musicians were full of hate. And, when, half in despair, half in exasperation, he said: "Look, let's talk about my music," it was a pity that some people affected to see this as a manifestation of egocentricity rather than as a ploy to get the theme musical rather than sociological. And when Ellington sharply told one reporter: "Don't condescend to me, young man," I thought, bang go my chances of an interview.

But in his hotel room later he relaxed, although he understandably

refused to put a block of ice on his head for a photographer.

He talked after the photographer biffed off. Yes, it certainly was a pity that Bechet never recorded with his band. "I'll never forget that time he was with the band in the '20s," he said. "I wish they'd recorded some of those things Bechet did with us. Bubber Miley would take 10 choruses and then Sidney would take 10 choruses and we'd all have to go outside afterwards and let the steam out of our heads."

Of all the jazz greats who have come to Australia, the two with the greatest charisma were Ellington and Louis. At his Press reception at Melbourne Airport, Basie told someone: "First of all, we're not going to compare Duke and Louis. Both of them are up on pedestals of their own."

But they both had that indefinable Great Man quality.

I was still in England when Louis came to Australia for the first time (October-November, 1954) when he brought out with him Barney, Trummy Young, Billy Kyle, Arvell Shaw and Barrett Deems. The second time (April, '56), Jack Lesberg was on bass and Ed Hall on clarinet. That was the visit when I saw Louis in his dressing room at Sydney Stadium let about half a bottle of honey ooze down his throat before he went on to do a show. He sang a few bars of Buddy Bolden's Blues, the only time I've ever heard him sing it outside the film *New Orleans*, and insisted he'd first met Jelly Roll Morton in Chicago in 1936. As they had allegedly composed *Wild Man Blues* together back in the '20s, I thought he meant 1926 and checked with him.

"No, Pops," he muttered. "It was 1936 . . . in Chicago."

I was interested to read confirmation of this in that great book, *Louis*, by Max Jones and John Chilton, in which Louis is quoted as having said he never had a conversation with Jelly until 1936.



I DIDN'T NOTICE ANY UNTOWARD HEAVY DRINKING ON THE TOUR'



The Modern Jazz Quartet (above left), Dave Brubeck (left) and Dizzy Gillespie (above) were all well-received on their Australian tours.

I also asked him about his attitude to pieces like Blueberry Hill, which he turned out night after night and which the purist fans of Louis will assure isn't the real Louis Armstrong.

"Because, Pops," he told me, "I remember something Louis Prima told me in New Orleans years ago, and that was 'Y'gotta play it pretty for the people, Pops'."

Louis was back in 1963. Trummy, Kyle, Arvell Shaw, Danny Barcelona on drums, Joe Darensbourg on clarinet, and Jewel Brown singing instead of Velma Middleton, who had died on tour with Louis), worried because his dentist was in poor shape, worried, too, about his voice. "I'm still playin' the trumpet, man, but the old rooster don't crow like she used to." Yet it was in that tour, in Sydney that he sang one of his most memorable vocals — Blue Turning Grey.

In the best showbiz tradition, that 1963 tour was billed at Sydney Stadium as "Farewell Appearance". Which ensured, of course, that Louis was back for what — alas — was positively the last time in November, 1964.

For his last Australian tour he had Eddie Shu on clarinet, Big Chief Russell Moore on trombone, and the old rhythm team of Billy Kyle, Arvell Shaw and Danny Barcelona. On their last day in Sydney they put down a television show at the studios of ATN-7. Louis was pleased with it, the band was pleased with it — everybody was pleased with it. It's sobering to reflect that Louis would never have made that 1964 tour unless he'd made a hit of his record of Hello Dolly. And, of course, he had to play Hello Dolly and to "play it pretty for the people".

But on his last performance out at the TV studio, he added words at the end and instead of finishing by singing the words "Hello Dolly, hello Dolly, etc

etc, he sang "Hello Dippermouth, hello Gatemouth, hello Bojangles, hello Bill Robinson". He then came up to me and said: "Pops, I saw you out there and I knew you'd dig those words, so I lay it on you."

He then laid it on me to the extent of inviting me to dinner, over which he regaled me with salty tales of the old days. Richard M. Jones and his wooden leg; Bessie Smith, "the boss of the blues, man, the boss of the blues"; and an old-time musician who went to a certain European city "so that he could cat 'round with them white chicks".

It was all roaring stuff, but Louis was using language to match his rabelaisian mood. The heads of diners at other tables (we were at a tolerably toney Elizabeth Bay restaurant) began bobbing as Louis gave vent to his spleen, or cracked jokes or reminisced.

Finally, I had to tell him to go easy on his language, or we'd get chucked out. He looked at me like a hurt schoolboy.

To divert him, I told him of the old vaudeville blackboard act of Stiffy and Mo on the Australian stage in the '20s and '30s. Like me, you may not have seen it. It involved one of those spelling routines in which Stiffy (or Mo) affected to see the letter K every time his partner wrote F in chalk on the board. Like Memphis Slim, who employs a similar phrase in his act, you're probably onto the punchline already.

Which was either Stiffy, or Mo, saying: "Why is it that every time I see F, you see K."

Louis roared. And shouted gleefully to Doc Pugh or Russell Moore a couple of tables away: "Hey, Pops, did you hear about the man who couldn't spell FUCK?"

We left shortly afterwards . . . □



‘ AT THAT PARTY ELLINGTON SAT DOWN AND PLAYED FOR THE BEST PART OF AN HOUR . . . SEVERAL OF THE GUESTS WENT ON CHATTING BLITHELY’



Gene Krupa, mobbed by teenage girls on his arrival at Sydney Airport.

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Gene Krupa, mobbed by teenage girls on his arrival at Sydney Airport.

One of the founding fathers of the Jazz Action Society, Billy Weston (below), Judy Bailey and her Quartet (right). Judy was part of the interim committee which looked into setting up a society here. The Two Generations of Brubeck band on their tour of Australia (bottom). They sat in with local musicians and helped jazz workshops here.



THE ORGANISATION MEN

Taking jazz to the people means someone has to be prepared to make it happen. MIKE WILLIAMS looks at the people who have brought the world of Australian jazz closer together and helped encourage young people to play jazz.

JAZZ ORGANISATIONS in Australia – as in most other countries – have largely been oriented towards the more traditional styles.

Until recently there was virtually no such body catering for modern jazz. The audience was there but they lacked collective impact and their communication channels were weak. They were, in fact, an underground movement. Even the annual showcase for Australian jazz – the post-Christmas Convention – was restricted to traditional styles.

It was the establishment of the Australian Council For The Arts (now the Australia Council) in 1973 that changed things. The council had funds to distribute to encourage the arts, but often the members of the various boards – drawn from the more conservative areas – didn't know where the money would do the most good. Organisations such as the Australian Opera, Musica Viva and the Elizabethan Theatre Trust, were quite able to represent their particular interests but there was no focal point for the jazz community.

Luckily there was a powerful friend at court. Before he became the first chairman of the Music Board of the council, Don Banks had carved out a considerable reputation overseas as a classically-trained composer. His scope was wide. While many of his works placed him with the avant garde, he was equally at home creating soundtrack music for films and TV. And he was a jazzman from early days. He was the pianist on the historic disc that American trumpet player, Max Kaminsky, made with Australian musicians when he was here as a member of the Artie Shaw Navy Band in World War II. And he became leader

of one of the first groups in Australia to make anything of the modern jazz revolution, the Don Banks Bopset.

In the late 1940s Banks went to Britain, continued his studies and concentrated more and more on "straight" music. But he kept his interest in jazz very much alive. When the London Jazz Centre Society was formed some five years ago, he agreed to become patron along with John Dankworth, a man whose stature in British Jazz is largely similar to that of Don Burrows in Australia.

When Banks returned to Australia, and took his place on the fledgling Music Board, his delicate position as chairman precluded any direct involvement in setting up an organisation here similar to the JCS. But under his influence the wheels were set in motion.

In April, 1974, a group of musicians, media people and jazz lovers, gathered in the Sydney Professional Musicians' Club and an interim committee was appointed to examine the feasibility of getting a society under way here. In keeping with the policy of embracing all types of jazz, its members were drawn from a wide spectrum. They included avant garde pianist Judy Bailey, Billy Weston from the world of big bands; Graeme Bell, the most revered figure in Australian trad jazz; drummer Len Barnard, whose interest covered a variety of idioms; and Dick Hughes.

A couple of months later – after it was learned that the Music Board would cast a benevolent eye on the formation of their organisation – the Jazz Action Society was born. In the following weeks interstate contacts were made until there were JAS branches in Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania and

**MUSICIANS HAD
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PERSUADED THEY
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TO ALL-TOO-
FAMILIAR RIP-OFFS'**

John Dankworth (below) and Don Banks (right) became patrons of the London Jazz Centre Society. Banks helped set up the JAS here. Graeme Bell and his All Stars (bottom) became early members of the Jazz Action Society. Photo: Jack Mitchell.



Queensland as well as NSW. In Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory there were already flourishing organisations with broad policies — the Perth Jazz Club and Canberra Jazz Club — which gave their support to the foundation of Jazz Action. Since conditions in the various States differed considerably it was thought inadvisable to introduce a set of rules for all. Each branch would map out its own destiny but there was a common aim: to promote Australian jazz and jazz in Australia.

Almost immediately the JAS met opposition: The old-established clubs — whose interest is trad jazz — were suspicious of a takeover: Some commercial operators feared competition from a subsidised organisation — since the JAS has made it known that it intended to apply for grants from the Australian Council: And musicians generally had to be persuaded that they were not about to be subjected to all-too-familiar rip-offs.

But many of Australia's best-known musicians came to the party: in Melbourne men like Alan Lee, Bruce Clarke, Geoff Kitchen and Jack Varney; in Sydney, Col Nolan and John Pochee; in Adelaide, David Dallwitz, Bruce Gray and the fine sax player who goes by the name of Schmoe.

In most States regular monthly sessions got under way with the assistance of musicians' clubs, city councils and other bodies. In Sydney the then Lord Mayor, Alderman Nick Shehadie, and a group of his supporters put up the money for a series of park performances on the lines of the Harlem Jazzmobile project. Concerts featuring the best bands in Australia were staged. But here the JAS often ran into trouble. Like other organisations concerned with live performances, it found itself in a crippling cost spiral.

In late 1975 the NSW Society only just scraped through a three-night festival at the new Seymour Centre for the arts when the Don Burrows-George Golla Duo and an all-star jam session group drew a standing-room-only crowd to the last show. The Victorian branch staged a performance of John Sangster's Hobbit Suite. It was an artistic success, but costs were again oppressive. However, these concerts were only the tip of the iceberg.

The JAS was helping to look after the future of Australian jazz, organising workshops for young musicians. Visiting overseas jazzmen were recruited to hold

clinics whenever they could fit them into busy schedules. So Australia benefited from the advice of members of Dave Brubeck's group: Tony Oxley, the British avant garde percussionist and Royce Campbell, the brilliant young guitarist with the Henry Mancini orchestra.

Special JAS sessions also provided the chance to hear the remarkable British pianist Roy Budd — visiting Australia as music director for his wife, the singer Caterina Valente — and the trio, featuring pianist Marshall Otwell, who accompanied vocalist Carmen McRae on her tour.

And all the time the JAS movement was building up its pressure power.

Its committee members had seen how the Australian Opera had benefited from a superbly organised lobby, with friends in the most influential positions in the country — in newspapers, television, politics and on the boards of organisations controlling entertainment centres.

The JAS couldn't hope to match the opera propagandists, but it began to have conspicuous success in gaining more publicity and exposure for jazz. It seized the opportunity offered by the new radio stations, particularly the FM broadcasters, and organised record programs for them. Attempts to get jazz on commercial radio networks failed. But this was balanced by the assistance that came from the ABC with its influential group of jazz lovers — including deputy general manager Clem Semmler, Margaret Throsby, Eric Child, Arch McKirdy and Ian Neil.

The JAS was also forming links with other organisations and some officials of the more traditionally oriented clubs were joining the societies' committees. One of the JAS' more valuable achievements has been in establishing itself as a bridge between jazz musicians and other areas of the community. Among those instrumental in setting up the organisation was James Murdoch, then consultant to the Music Board. In 1975, Murdoch became founding national director of the Australia Music Centre.

The AMC, in the historic Rocks area of Sydney — branches are scheduled to open soon in other major cities — is an information centre which has links with similar setups in most western countries. Its interests embrace all types of music and a considerable collection of books on jazz and records of Australian jazz has been established there. And the JAS

has its Sydney office there. On the same floor, in the historic Metcalfe Bond building at 80 George Street North, are the offices of Music Rostrum, the contemporary music organisation founded by world-famous pianist Roger Woodward. Jazz Action has acted as consultant for the jazz concerts staged by Rostrum as part of its annual festival. Valuable contacts have been made through Musica Viva — the flourishing chamber music organisation — and the Music Board itself.

JAS membership has grown consistently since its inception. But the real strength of the organisation rests in its ability to act as a catalyst to press the case of all types of jazz in Australia. □

LIKE OTHER ORGANISATIONS CONCERNED WITH LIVE PERFORMANCES, THE JAS FOUND ITSELF IN A CRIPPLING COST SPIRAL'

HERE AND NOW

MOYA WOOD SURVEYS
AUSTRALIAN JAZZ
IN THE SEVENTIES.



Photo Warwick Kent

AUSTRALIAN JAZZ in the '70s creates its own space and projects into it the sights, smells and sounds of here and now. The absorption of the sounds of imported jazz, filtered through the experience of musicians and listeners here over the years, has inspired the freedom of originality.

As with other forms of creativity in Australia, it seems that musicians are gaining support for their desire to abandon imitation and aggressively develop their own concepts. The vitality and immediacy of jazz has always made it the most contemporary music and the best performances — on record and in concert — of great overseas artists excite and stimulate. But, unlike other, older, music forms, rigid duplication denies the meaning of jazz.

The apparently recent regeneration of jazz in Australia suggests a maturity in both listeners and performers. Originality and creativity is not a barely-tolerated novelty and indulgence any more. It's an expectation.

Jazz as a living force which derives from, and affects, our daily lives is reflecting a general change of attitude in this country. It's hardly a coincidence that, at a time when music here can be truly called Australian Jazz, another form of 20th century communication — film — is experiencing a revival. And on its own terms. This confidence to "talk back" makes musicians and film makers contributors to the world and not mere sponges, spectators and imitators.

But while it is possible to trace the history of Australian film-making — and the lack of it for many years — from cans of film prints and from publications, a history of jazz in Australia would be extremely difficult to compile. It is filed in the personal experiences of living players and fans.

Australian jazz recording has been very spasmodic and lacking in adventure or experiment in the past. A recent convert to the sound could easily explore the origins of jazz and its development in America, and its movement through Europe, right up to the present day. But a study of its progress in Australia might lead to the assumption that what is happening in Australia today was born yesterday without any gestation period. There aren't any radio programs or national publications, and few recordings, which could help a student in researching the work of bands, musicians and changing styles since the arrival of jazz here — or even to pinpoint when it arrived.

However, for future researchers, tracing the development of the sound in the '70s will require little effort. Since 1974 *Jazz Down Under* has been a forum for musicians, critics and fans, and a diary of the movement of players and bands. More important is the establishment in 1975 of the 44 label by Phonogram. Devoted exclusively to the recording of Australian jazz, 44 Records is the realisation of a dream of Horst Liepolt to capture for posterity the music as it is happening, and to promote a bigger demand for it.

In an interview with *Jazz Down Under*, producer Liepolt explained that throughout his 25 years involvement with Australian jazz he had "... always wanted to preserve Australian jazz on records, not to become some big-shot producer, but to preserve the music. I couldn't see an independent company making it — not on a non-commercial type of thing — and being able to give promotion to artists and the records, to pick up sales. So I never took the independent company thing any further. But by seeing how Phonogram worked, and having a lot of encouragement from the executives there, I approached them about having a specialised jazz label with the only material being from Australian talent and with Australian compositions."

Less than 12 months after the formation of the label it has released 12 albums by nine groups, plus a double album of the Moomba Jazz Festival with four groups. Australia's most popular jazz band, Galapagos Duck, has recorded three albums, the first of which, *Ebony Quill*, has almost reached gold record sales more than any local jazz record other than those of Don Burrows. Their second, *The Removalists*, contains music composed by them for the sound track of the Australian feature film of the same name; the third, *St James*, features Don Burrows.

Jazz Co-op's first album recalls the impact on Sydney audiences in 1974 of this highly creative group — which included Howie Smith. Jazz Co-op's next album, *Live at the Basement*, was the first recorded from a local jazz club. Free Kata's album is the first Australian recording of spontaneous improvisations.

Johnny Nicole, Peter Boothman, *Out To Lunch*, The Harbour City Jazz Band, The Sydney Stompers, and the Brian Brown Quintet have all recorded an album each. The double album,

Moomba Jazz '76 is the second live recording by the 44 label, and the first ever from an Australian jazz festival. It captures the enthusiasm for that extremely successful program featuring Galapagos Duck, the Ted Vining Trio, the Alan Lee Quintet with Bob Barnard — and the incomparable Brian Brown Quintet in a 21-minute track of Brown's Moomba Jazzbird Suite, written for the Festival. The Quintet was augmented by an 11-piece brass, string and percussion orchestra and 65-voice girl choir. Brian Brown's *Carlton Streets* on 44 was his first recorded album, and according to Horst Liepolt, 20 years overdue.

"He was a main force during the '50s at Jazz Centre 44," and, to a musician writing in *Jazz Down Under*, "... the most influential group of the decade".

A track on *Carlton Streets* called *The Fair* evokes the sounds of Melbourne's Luna Park and the big dipper ride which could be heard from Jazz Centre 44, just around the corner. The club, established in 1957 by Horst Liepolt, appears to have been a crucible for the creative jazz music of today. It was also obviously considered so by the musicians and jazz lovers who frequented the club.

The name for the new record label was a spontaneous suggestion at a party to musicians in Sydney in 1975. And 44 was the fiery year in Europe when Horst Liepolt was first exposed to jazz. Later he heard Americans in Europe, prior to 1951, like Charlie Parker, Miles Davis, Lester Young, Dizzy Gillespie, James Moody.

In attempting to retrace the course of modern jazz in Australia from the '70s back to the '50s post-war period, Melbourne constantly surfaces as the source to which bands and players gravitated to or from which they emerged.

In the '70s Sydney is the centre of activity, but as a removal — rather than an abandonment of — the influence of the past events in Melbourne. There is a continuity and an integration of past and present and from State to State, which gives cohesion to Australian jazz today.

To reinforce this, the 44 label is seeking out jazz recordings made here, which had little recognition but represent milestones in that development. Charlie Munro's album *Eastern Horizons* recorded in the mid-'60s is the first of the few such

adventurous Australian recordings which will be re-released by 44.

The steady program of releases by the 44 label since its establishment in 1975 is having some effect on the resistance of radio stations to playing Australian jazz. Ian Neil, in his *Music to Midnight* program on ABC, regularly plays local albums — with as much enthusiasm as he has for recent overseas releases. Commercial radio, which has rarely given exposure to any jazz — overseas or local — is still mostly indifferent. But there are signs of some tentative interest from one or two of the more progressive station managements.

Music which has maintained and increased its audience, without the benefit of air play on commercial radio, and in spite of the hundreds of weekly hours of programming given to other types of music, must eventually suggest a potential audience to commercial radio programmers. It's something of a paradox that, whilst the ABC — which tends to be closer to British radio in its programming — has regular jazz sessions, commercial stations — which pattern themselves on American radio — ignore that country's most original, influential, and most exported form of music.

But commercial radio's lack of jazz — a sound that's a serious musical interpretation of today's world — is no more difficult to understand than local film and television producers' indifference to it as sound tracks for their visual expression of today. The most creative film-maker will scour the country to personally choose writers, actors and cameramen, but will opt out of really exploring creative contemporary music and composers. They prefer to rely on "diddle-dum" experts, or dig into recorded library music, or employ "composers" who can launder someone else's music to make it appear new — if not fresh. The most uniquely Australian film from the most creative team has musty, imitative and quite often irrelevant, music. But it's unlikely that, as interpreters themselves, local film-makers won't eventually absorb and discover the creative relevance of new Australian jazz music.

With the increasing exposure and vitality of Australian jazz in clubs, in concerts, on record, on radio, and on film, it may be possible to reject it, but not to ignore it as an important element of cultural life in our country.

For dedicated jazz lovers it's all that — and fun too. □



