

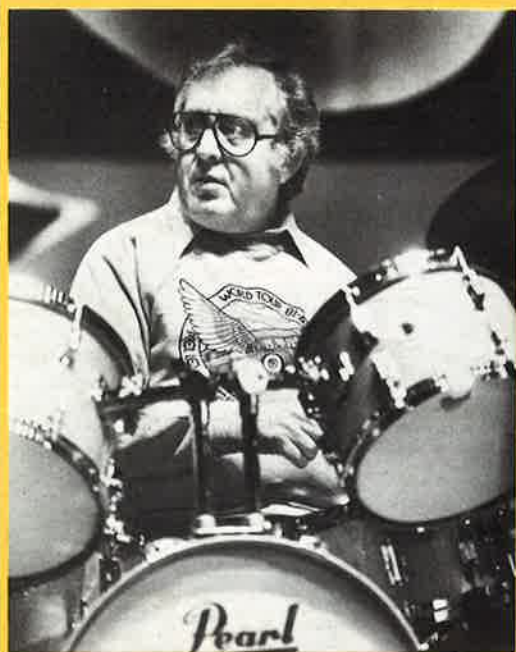
# JAZZ

The Australasian contemporary Music Magazine



January/  
February 1983

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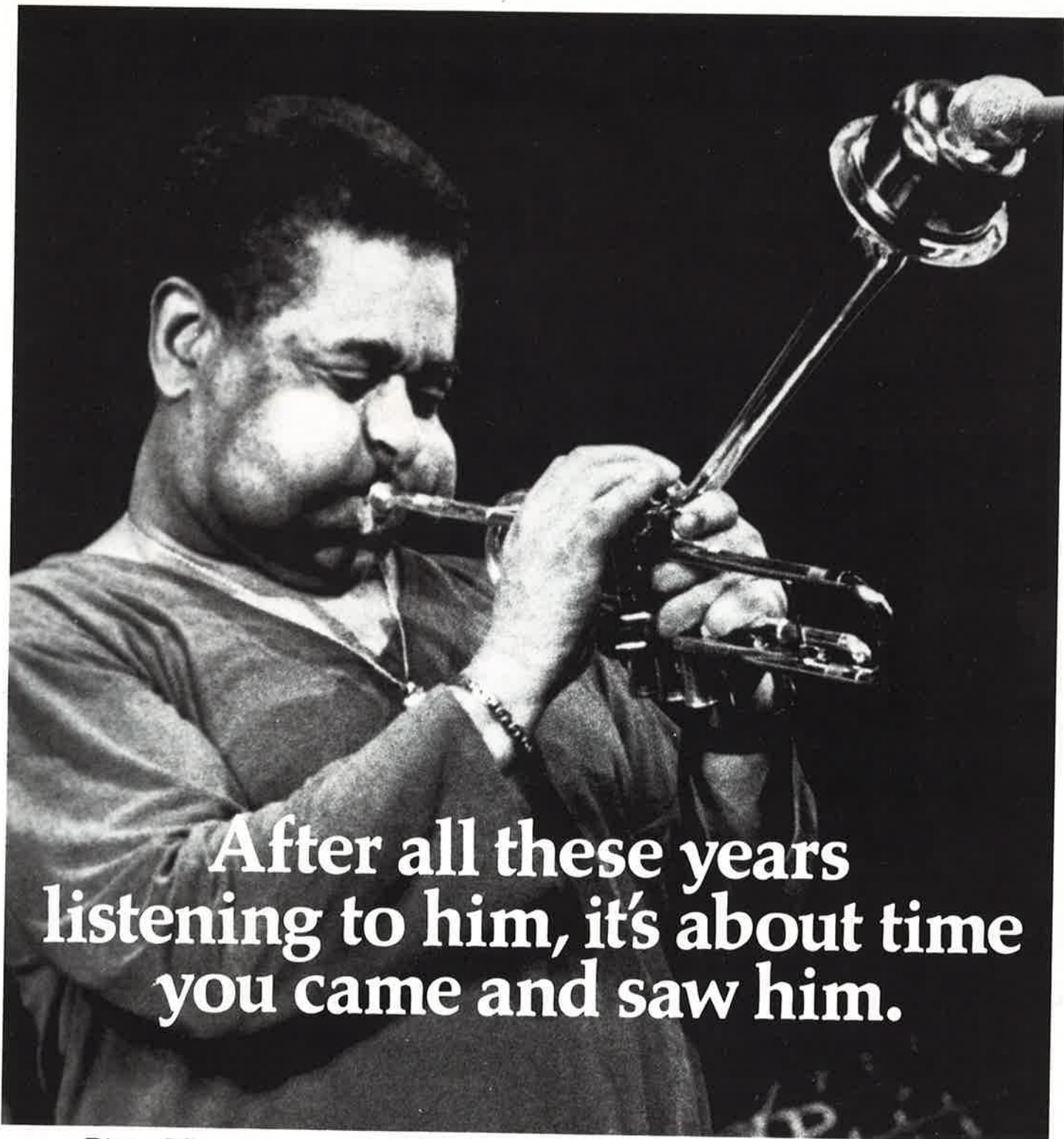
**Mel Lewis:  
not  
throwing in the  
towel**

**Modern  
Jazz Quartet  
Coming  
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# JAZZ

The Australasian contemporary Music Magazine

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*Mel Lewis: coming to Australia with his Jazz Orchestra. He promised Count Basie he'd never quit.*

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# Edit.

JAZZ Magazine gets its share of criticism from within the jazz world. That is inevitable, and we welcome criticism, especially if it is constructive. It gives us invaluable pointers towards improving the magazine.

However, the magazine is often berated by one or other of the various jazz factions. For instance we might be told, 'Your magazine is full of articles on trad jazz' (which is not true) or 'I hardly see anything on avant-garde or free jazz' (partly true).

On the other hand, I recently had a letter from a subscriber who complained that the magazine did not deal enough with traditional forms of jazz. He concluded that the magazine had '... too much dead matter for (his) weird tastes'. He chose not to renew his subscription (and therefore would have missed a number of relevant articles and record reviews in subsequent editions).

In response to this sort of criticism I would like to say this: we can't have a narrow magazine devoted merely to the interests of one jazz faction. If we wished to concentrate on modern jazz, we would have to bear in mind that Horst Liepolt's magazine *Jazz Down Under*, which was confined to the mainstream/modern/contemporary idioms, went out of business in 1978.

Nor do I believe that there are enough 'mouldy fygges' in Australia to warrant a magazine on traditional jazz alone. They are, anyway, to a large extent, well served by vigorous jazz societies which publish spirited newsletters. Also, at JAZZ Magazine, we have to consider what sort of magazine will attract advertisers.

Jazz is one art form, and I do not see why a magazine concerned to incorporate all the styles and idioms which fall under the umbrella of jazz, should not win wide acceptance outside the circles of bigotry.

In fact, JAZZ Magazine is doing well, at least at the time I write. Of course, our writers and skeleton staff work on this magazine for next to nothing, but that is our choice. What we would like to see, however, is more full-blooded support from those whom one would expect to be committed to the idea of a successful Australian jazz publication, particularly jazz musicians and members of jazz societies. The name of the game is mutual support. If this magazine fails (which it may do, without conscious and continuous support) it will be years before another foolhardy publisher attempts to put out a jazz magazine in this country.

There is a regrettable tendency in the jazz world — which is notorious for its apathy — for people to assume that 'someone else' is ensuring that this magazine survives and prospers. Remember that the art form of jazz is virtually ignored in the media in Australia, and that JAZZ Magazine is one of the few organs which publicise and promote the music. Encourage your friends to subscribe; we feel that \$10 for a year's subscription to this magazine is little to ask of a genuine jazz lover. Help us keep this magazine flourishing.

ERIC MYERS  
Editor

# Letters

Sir,

I am writing to you as I feel JAZZ magazine should be aware of the gradual whittling down of the hours of jazz broadcast by the ABC in South Australia.

Sometime last year regular listeners to Ian Neil's *Music to Midnight* programme were surprised and disappointed to learn that 5AN had suddenly "gone local" and was now broadcasting a programme called *Nice 'n' Easy* in its place. The publicity about this change was minimal. It just happened. Ironically, it wasn't an enormous change — still listenable music, sometimes even tracks that Ian Neil himself might have played. But the disappointing thing was that it was no longer an informed programme. The compere, for various reasons, was not privy to the wealth of information and resources that Ian Neil, Eric Child and Jim McLeod are.

The Adelaide office of the ABC justified the change by saying that listeners had more than enough jazz with Jim McLeod's *Jazztrack* on FM. I reluctantly accepted this point, although if forced to choose I think we would have preferred to retain Ian Neil. And even today it seems there are still many people who do not have an FM receiver or who do not live within the requisite distance of an FM transmitter. It seemed an uncalled for and arbitrary decision, particularly when Jim McLeod is now broadcasting on fewer and fewer evenings.

At about the same time that we lost *Music to Midnight*, Eric Child's *Jazz on Friday* and *World of Jazz* programmes were combined and moved to Sunday evening so that we got a continuous programme from 6.45 to 10.00 p.m. (Adelaide time). Not bad, in itself, but why bother? Because, we were told, jazz musicians were out performing on Friday night but on Sunday they could sit at home and catch the programme. Again I accepted the argument. But it was possibly too much jazz all at once, and it was almost a relief to turn off after 3¼ hours of Eric Child.

The latest development is that this programme now finishes at 9.30. This means we no longer get the 27½ odd minutes of the Saturday morning *World of Jazz* that we were getting (on Sunday evening). For the majority of Adelaide suburban listeners who have average radio sets and who do not have outside aerials (and who therefore cannot pick up the Third Network on 5CK) the Saturday *World of Jazz* has totally disappeared. Again without any announcement, explanation or apology.

I'm sure the ABC recalls the listener outcry in the mid-seventies when 2BL announced that it would be terminating *World of Jazz*. The reaction was so overwhelming that they had to bring the programme back. I'm certain Eric Child is every bit as popular today as he was then but there hasn't been the same outcry this time because of the devious way in which the programme has been taken off.

In general my complaint is as follows. By replacing specialist programmes like these, the ABC is abrogating its responsibility to provide a broad spectrum of music. By replacing them with 2CH-type music it is failing to fulfil its duty in the area of comprehensive programming. Middle of the road, "nice 'n' easy" music stations can be found all over the dial but ones that play jazz, opera and other minority forms of music are few and far



JANE MARCH

Eric Child: his Friday and Saturday ABC programs combined and moved to Sunday evening in South Australia...

between (and are usually on the FM band). I don't say the ABC should totally ignore 2CH-type music either, but it is spreading across the network like slime.

If the amount of live jazz performed in Australia is any indication then it would appear to be a reasonably popular music form. People like Arch McKirdy, Eric Child, Kim Bonython and, more recently, Jim McLeod, can justifiably claim a certain personal responsibility for that popularity. As a member of the Southern Jazz Club and the South Australian Jazz Action Society I meet a lot of jazz fans and some of the jazz musicians. They all feel angry and cheated over the way ABC jazz programmes are fast disappearing from the dial and the way in which the good work done by the abovementioned comperes and others is being so arbitrarily and high-handedly undone.

I have written to the ABC with the following requests, which I think are not unreasonable. Can Adelaide please receive Ian Neil's

*Music To Midnight*, if not every night as it has done in the past, then at least on the nights when *Jazz Track* does not go out on FM?

Secondly, can we have the Saturday morning *World of Jazz* in its entirety on the Adelaide metropolitan network (5AN)? If Saturday morning is not possible, then at a time to suit the programmers, but at a regular and advertised time.

That's all we ask, specifically, but if these programmes are not to go out at the same time as they do for the rest of Australia then to retain the credibility of the comperes and of the ABC can the programmes be at least competently edited to cut out "advance" notice of live venues which are already history by the time the programme is broadcast?

It is also not unreasonable to expect that in the event of programme changes and cancellations some explanation/apology of the fact be given rather than just going straight into an unadvertised substitute programme.

I will notify you of any reply I

may receive from the ABC.

KEITH ADAMS,  
Mylor, South Australia.

Sir,

The long sneer at failed modern jazz clubs which begins Norm Linehan's article *Two Years At The Early Opener* (JAZZ, November/December 1982) mentions the venue Jenny's. This is rather strange, since the old Jenny's closed due to the lease expiring (hardly "get-rich-quick") while the new Jenny's (mentioned in Dick Scott's column on the opposite page of the same issue) is currently presenting some of the most important modern jazz musicians in Australia five nights a week.

The hollow laugh raised in this correspondent was prompted by the smug tone in which an incorrect assertion was made by someone who, in the letters column of the same issue, took to task Andrew Bisset for factual errors in Bisset's book *Black Roots White Flowers*.

PETER RECHNIEWSKI  
Potts Point, NSW



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# MEL LEWIS: Not Throwing In The Towel

By Lee Jeske\*

"We found out Thad was really gone on the first Monday in January, 1979, when he didn't show up at the Vanguard. It was our first gig at the Vanguard after a European tour and on the following Monday he called me at ten a.m. and he said, 'I'm leaving today for Europe.'"

"I said, 'Man, I can't really understand why you didn't talk to me. 'Look, why don't you come over.'"

"He said, 'I need some scores that you got.'"

"I said, 'Fine, but I'm keeping the parts, because you can have them recopied over there. Come over today, man, let's have lunch, let's talk.'"

"At twelve o'clock I was downstairs in the basement, getting the scores out of a case and I hear his voice. He walked in with his coat on and I said, 'Were you upstairs? You should've waited for me; I'm coming right up and we'll have some lunch.'"

"He said, 'I'm double-parked, Mel, and I've got to go.'"

"So we went upstairs and we stood at the door and we looked at each other and we shook hands — we used to always hug each other and all that crap, but we didn't do it this time — we shook hands, we looked at each other, and he said, 'I'll be back in March with the band.'"

"And I said, 'I think this is *it*, isn't it?' He didn't have any intention of coming back in March; he didn't have any intention of coming back anytime. So that was it, I never saw him again."

With apologies to Humphrey Bogart, that was the end of a beautiful friendship.

There is still hurt in Mel's voice when he talks about Thad Jones, his partner for 13 years of musical — if not always financial — bliss. He is still bitter; still, I think, somewhat bewildered.

The way Mel tells of the weeks before the break-up is thus: He and Thad had the Jazz Orchestra on tour in Europe and were about to come home to the best-paying American tour in their history. As Mel puts it, "We were finally making it. It took a long time, but that year I made a living from the band for the first time."



Thad Jones (left) and Mel Lewis: 'We used to always hug each other and all that crap, but we didn't do it this time — we shook hands . . .'

CAROL FRIEDMAN

However, unbeknown to anybody, Thad had made plans to settle in Europe. He had an established romantic interest there (and his wife in New York was one of the reasons for the secrecy, according to Mel), and had already accepted a contract with the Danish Radio Orchestra. Before the tour ended two things happened — Thad got punched in the mouth, through a glass car window, and Thad quit the band. The first "accident" happened in Yugoslavia and to this day Thad has not been able to play the trumpet, settling momentarily on the valve trombone. The second incident happened in Germany, and the reason Mel didn't take it seriously is because, Mel says, "Thad quit the band many times. He'd get this thing going in his head about something he'd be mad about and never say anything, and then all of a sudden he'd build up this thing. I'd see something coming and think, 'Well we're going to have a big fight.' And the big fight always was, 'Fuck you, I quit and I'm going home.' He used to do it on the road all the time."

So when the tour finished, Mel Lewis had no reason not to expect Thad Jones to show up for their opening Monday night at the Vanguard for 1979 — the band's residency since 1965.

\* Lee Jeske, who lives in New York, is JAZZ Magazine's U.S. correspondent.

Thad didn't make that gig and a week later he and Mel shook hands for the last time. The week in between held a number of last minute negotiations, between Thad and the band's booking agent, Willard Alexander.

"What Willard had asked him to do," recalls Mel, "is to do this tour. And then, just before the tour ends, or even during the tour, or before it even *starts*, we'll have this press conference and announce that this is going to be the last tour of the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra, but that the Orchestra is going to continue. I told Willard, 'Willard, I'm not giving it up no matter what. But I don't know if I can handle it.'

"He said, 'I don't know if you can either.'"

Thad split for Europe, Mel hit the road with Buddy DeFranco along to help alleviate the disappointment over Thad's non-appearance, and the band gave back about four thousand bucks to promoters who didn't like the set-up.

"But I wouldn't give it up," says Mel. "I told my wife, 'Doris, I'm going to fight this out ... until I see defeat.'

If Max (Gordon, the legendary owner of the Village Vanguard) had fired us, that might've been it. But Max said, 'You've got this job as long as you've got the band.'

"I said, 'As long as I know that, I'm going to keep it going.'"

By the time Thad Jones departed, the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra had undergone radical changes. It was no longer a soloist's band, no longer a band of individual personalities. It was a much younger, hungrier band, a band ready for a new direction.

The Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra of the sixties and early-seventies is a band that will forever live in the musical hearts of anybody who ever got a chance to jam into the Village Vanguard to hear them. When things were *right*, when everybody was loose, but not too loose, the power of that band used to shake the whole of Seventh Avenue. Talk about soloists: Jimmy Knepper, 'Butter' Jackson, Pepper Adams, Eddie Daniels, Snooky Young, Jerry Dodgion, Roland Hanna, Jerome Richardson, Jimmy Nottingham, Jon Faddis, Lew Soloff, Richard Davis, Billy Harper, Cecil Bridgewater, Joe Farrell, Bob Brookmeyer, George Mraz, Garnett Brown, Virgil Jones, Eddie Bert, etcetera, etcetera. I mean, that band could *smoke*. And when Dee Dee Bridgewater was singing in front of the band ... *watch out!*

But those days were gone by the time the band started getting steady work. Thad and Mel were shaping a band of young, eager players into a tighter, more musically integrated band. And that's the base Mel Lewis had to work with. Was it easy?

"No," says Mel with typical candor, "everything fell apart."

Willard Alexander tried to talk Mel into hiring another co-leader. Mel considered a couple of possibilities, but what he wanted was not a pyrotechnical soloist who would front the band and basically use it as a vehicle, he wanted somebody who could bring a dimension to the band that was now missing — somebody who could write and arrange for the *band*, for *this* particular band. Mel offered co-leadership to Bob Brookmeyer.

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Brookmeyer turned it down. He was about to go on the road with Stan Getz and wasn't doing very much writing at the time.

"Finally," Mel says, "we finished that American tour and I made the *Naturally* album, which was Thad's charts, and I said, 'well, we've got to start hearing some guys write.' I said to Brookmeyer, 'Why don't you write something, man, what are you doing?' And one day he called me up and said, 'When's rehearsal? I've got something.' I told him, 'Next Thursday,' and he walked in with *Skylark*.

"After that, he was so happy with writing I said, 'Why don't you become musical director of the band?'"

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*Mel Lewis: 'I'm not quitting. Hell, I'm having a better time now than I ever was.'*

He said he'd like that and I told him, 'Look, you're not going to be my partner, it's my band and you have your own group.' So we worked it out where I would play with his band, he would work with me and he could write. The main thing is for him to write. And, occasionally, if a tour or something came up where I really needed him or he wanted to go, we'd ask for a little more money and he'd go."

Over the past four years, Mel Lewis has built himself quite a big band. Bob Brookmeyer's incisive, lyrical writing, added to such Thad Jones classics as *Cherry Juice* and *61st And Rich'id*, gives the band a rich and interesting book. And such players as Earl McIntyre, Jim McNeely and Gary Smulyan are turning into seasoned soloists. Most of the cats in the band are in-demand players around New York but are loyal to Mel Lewis. And to ensure that the band keeps going, Mel takes the odd well-paying sideman gig — on the day we speak in his West Side Manhattan apartment he is fresh from a week with Teddy Wilson and Lionel Hampton on the West Coast. It's only now — four years after the departure of Thad Jones — that the Mel Lewis Orchestra is beginning to get the recognition it deserves, something Mel attributes, in part, to his belief that a lot of people still aren't even aware that the big band is still around. Another reason the big band is getting the publicity now it has lacked in the recent past is due to the support of a trumpet player who fell by for a couple of nights in the summer of '81.

"One night I was on a break, in the kitchen of the Vanguard," remembers Mel Lewis, "and the guys come in and say, 'Miles Davis is here.' He was getting ready



for his debut and he was sitting at a table talking to Max. All the guys were buzzing, they had never even seen him this close. I came out and Miles said, 'Hey Mel.' And we hugged each other, gave each other kisses on the cheek French style and all that, and I stood back and said, 'Man, am I glad to see you.'

'He said, 'You too, I hear you've got a good band here.'

'I said, 'I sure do — look at 'em.' They were all standing around staring, and I became even bigger in their eyes because they saw me talking with Miles. That thrilled everybody. I introduced him to Earl Gardner, our lead trumpet player, and I said, 'He doesn't think he can play, but this is another Snooky Young, only more modern.'

'And Miles said, 'Oh yeah? I'll listen to ya, boy.' He stayed for a whole set and I went out and talked to him again and he said, 'The band is something else.' Then he came back again the following Monday, then again another night and then came Monday again and he's there again. And everytime he's there he's with somebody else from his band. He's sitting there and John Marshall says to him, 'C'mon man, you've been here a lot, why don't you come up and play with us?'

'And Miles said, 'As a matter of fact, I think I will.' So he hopped up on the stand. I said, 'Alright, number four', which is a blues. So he started playing with the rhythm section, but he couldn't find a horn and a mouthpiece that he liked. So he'd play a few notes — squeak, squawk — put it down. He kept trying each horn with different mouthpieces. He finally settled on a horn and mouthpiece and then he continued. And it was cooking. I kept yelling at the guys to play some riffs, but they were all sitting there looking at Miles and nobody was listening to me. Then we went into the piece and Miles stopped playing. Afterwards he stood up and said, 'You motherfuckers are the best brass section I've heard in years.'

'Then he got off the stand and I thanked him and said, 'Hey, man, you can imagine what an inspiration you were to these kids. The only problem is I wanted them to riff behind you, because they don't realize that you played with the rhythm section, but they didn't play with you.'

'Later when they said, 'Wow, Miles sat in with us,' I said, 'No, he sat in with the rhythm section. You jerks were sitting there listening and you didn't even pick up your horns. You blew it!'

Later, in a nationally syndicated interview with Leonard Feather, Miles publicly praised Mel and his band — the band that *didn't* play with Miles Davis.

Miles Davis isn't one to mince words, and he's right, this is still a powerhouse band. And Mel Lewis is going to keep it, by hook or by crook.

'My mind is made up,' he says. 'Thad and I made a promise to Count Basie that we'd never quit. Basie said, 'You can't do it; you know if you guys quit, if your band ever breaks up, that'll be the end of the big band era. If you fail, if you throw in the towel, nobody will start a band.'

'And now that Thad's gone, if I quit now and said that I can't make it, everybody else would be a fool to even start. And I'm not quitting. Hell, I'm having a better time now than I ever was.' □

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# ROGER FRAMPTON: A Black Sheep in Australian Jazz

By Tony Wellington\*

Roger Frampton is one of this country's more adventurous composer/musicians. He was born in Portsmouth, England in 1948 and emigrated to Australia in 1966. He is probably best known for his work in the 70s with the band Jazz Co-op, a powerful contemporary jazz ensemble which also featured Jack Thorncraft, Phil Treloar, and American Howie Smith. He has taught in the Jazz Studies Program at the NSW State Conservatorium of Music, and spent a year in 1979 as head of the program. He is a prolific composer, and has performed with numerous free jazz ensembles, most recently the Bruce Cale Quartet, Phil Treloar's Expansions, and his own band Intersection. He has also given various solo piano recitals ranging from contemporary classical works to free improvisation. He talks here about his recent study tour to New York and his current plans:



Roger Frampton

"When I was growing up I was very much like the black sheep of the family. And now I see that I'm very much musically a black sheep." Roger Frampton settles down into one of the two chairs that, with the stereo and records, all but fill his diminutive lounge room. The previous day he had moved into this new abode, tucked away in a quiet backstreet of the Sydney suburb of Glebe. A recent string of club gigs afforded the opportunity of renting a place on his own at long last.

He tucks his feet up under him and eyes the tape recorder apprehensively. "See, I'm not totally accepted by classical musicians, although they probably sometimes listen to me. But I'm not totally accepted in the jazz world either, because I'm sometimes a bit strange. A bit eccentric maybe. You know, a bit far out. And then I'm not accepted in the new music thing because I play jazz. I want to be accepted by everyone, I guess that's what it is. I

want to be able to move freely around from this scene to that scene and feel that there are no boundaries for me."

He sighs with resignation, then with characteristic honesty adds, "Ultimately though, I don't mind it because it means that you're a little bit unique, and I don't mind feeling that I'm doing things that not too many other people are doing. It's kind of a nice feeling to feel that you've discovered something for yourself that you can work with."

Roger has always been one to stick his neck out, to persevere with his own directions at the exclusion of fashionable trends. In 1970 he ceased playing jazz altogether to concentrate on his experimental group Teletopa. They devoted their efforts to playing 'avant-garde' contemporary music — John Cage, Steve Reich, Morton Feldman and 'free sound' improvisation.

There are times when Roger is just a little bitter about the lack of recognition he has received for his efforts over the years. "Sometimes I

think, 'what do I have to do to get people off their arses and excited about something?' You've got to watch yourself with your ego and so on. There are times when I think I'm probably one of the more interesting people here doing things and why the hell isn't it being recognised? When people that are getting recognition to me don't seem to be doing that much." Again the sigh of resignation. "But that's the way of the world."

Roger's piano playing demonstrates a rich diversity of styles and influences. A single performance can range from the delicate, melodic sensitivity of Paul Bley, to the full-on attack of Cecil Taylor. It is as a pianist that Roger is best known, but the piano was not his original instrument. "The saxophone was my first instrument. I only got involved with the piano because I wanted to learn about harmonies so that it would improve my saxophone playing. I just got sidetracked for about 18 years!"

In 1974, Roger recorded an excellent number featuring himself on alto called *Int-a*, released on the Jazz Co-op's double album on the Philips label. His performance is in every respect comparable to Howie Smith's saxophone playing on the same album. "I haven't exploited or used my ability to play the saxophone as much as I have the piano. Whenever I had a band I always got a saxophone player. Much as I like to play the sax with bass and drums, sometimes I like to have a chord instrument going too — and it's very hard for me to find another piano player who plays saxophone. Plus, I'm quite particular about what a piano does behind me since I play the piano behind other people."

The answer to this dilemma came during Roger's recent seven-week study tour to New York which was financed by a grant from the Music Board of the Australia Council. "I heard Arthur Blythe's band, and he solved it by having a guitar — also Ornette too, he's got two guitars. And I thought that if I could find a good guitarist, then I could play the

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saxophone and have a chord instrument going behind me, plus I could also be a chordal instrument and accompany the guitar who would be playing like a horn — like Scofield or someone like that. So my idea at the moment is to have a band which is potentially two bands.”

The new unit, playing under the name Intersection (“just a name for any band I happen to have at the time”) can be heard during January at Jenny’s Wine Bar in Sydney. The line-up will feature Phil Treloar (drums), Lloyd Swanton (bass), Steve Igoe (guitar), with Roger doubling piano with alto and soprano saxophones.

In order to further his current interest in the saxophone, Roger took lessons in New York with Joe Allard. “He taught, amongst others, Coltrane, Sonny Rollins, Dave Liebman, Michael Brecker, a lot of good saxophone players. He’s about 70 now, and he was just amazing. Col Loughnan and Tony Buchanan have also studied with him. Having these lessons and everything has got me so excited about playing the saxophone again. And so I want to play it more publicly.

“I also took a couple of lessons with Lee Konitz, who’s somebody that I’ve admired for a long time. My saxophone playing was sort of Paul Desmond, and then Art Pepper, and then Lee Konitz. They were like the first people I listened to. And when I was in New York I saw Lee Konitz was playing somewhere so I went to check him out. He was playing standard tunes, but so fresh. It’s like a new tune every time. Like he was playing standard tunes, but so fresh. It’s like a new tune every time. Like he was playing it for the first time every time he played it. It was very creative. So I talked to him and said, ‘Do you give lessons?’, and he said ‘Yeah, some.’ So I went around and saw him.

“I also had piano lessons while I was there. I went to Joanne Brackeen, Hal Galper, and Andy LaVerne who apparently came out here with Stan Getz. So they were like three jazz pianists that I went to, and I also went to a classical piano teacher, Lucy Greene. I got a lot out of all the teachers, but I think I got the most out of the classi-

cal teacher. She taught me a lot to do with my approach to the instrument — confirmation that I can play the piano okay. You see, when you’re a self-taught musician you do have these doubts, you know. When I went to New York that was the first thing that was completely cleared up in my mind. Because they all said, ‘Oh, you can obviously play the piano alright.’ They had confidence that I could do it so I felt more confident.

“When I was in New York I found they’d say ‘I’d never do that’, or ‘I’d never use the pedals like that’, or ‘Don’t play that interval, it sounds awful!’, or whatever. That touched me. But the classical teacher said, ‘Don’t listen to them.’ She said, ‘All they’re trying to do is get you playing in a specific style.’ And once she said that it made everything so clear. Then I could listen to what they had to say without getting troubled or bugged by it. I could be that much more objective. So what I’m saying is that there’s a New York style of playing jazz piano.”

Concurrent with his ongoing interest in free improvisation has been Roger’s unerring passion for composing. “I want to get back into writing. I want to write some more saxophone pieces. I went to Gil Evans while I was in New York and took him a tape of my saxophone pieces, and he liked them — took a copy of the tape and photocopied the scores. Said he’d play them to John Carisi.” Roger shares one of his rare smiles.

One could almost suggest that Roger has had something of a falling out with the music scene in the last couple of years. Certainly he hasn’t been in audible evidence very frequently, not like he was in the mid-70s. This may largely be due to his absolute refusal to compromise his own progress and pander to other people’s expectations.

“Once everybody starts getting excited about that particular thing that you do, you start getting attention. But immediately you’re getting the attention then you’re expected to come up with this particular musical product. And if you change, if you deviate from that . . . Say, for example, you were playing a certain way ten years ago, and you gradually keep that going for about

eight years or something. Then suddenly people started to take notice of you. But also at that point you’re undergoing artistic changes in direction. The audience is confused! They say, ‘We’ve just discovered you!’, or ‘Apparently you’ve been doing this for the last eight years and now you’re doing this! Why? We don’t know if we can handle this — we’re just getting to handle what you used to do!’ ”

Inevitably, Roger is somewhat bitter about the treatment he’s received at the hands of Sydney’s jazz venues. “I get maybe a night at the Paradise once every 6 or 7 months. The Basement . . . every 8 or 9 or maybe 12 months they might get me to play one night down there. The days when the Jazz Co-op used to play three or four Mondays a month are gone now. Their musical policy has become ‘safer’. It’s not so much a jazz club anymore. Galapagos Duck is not really that demanding to listen to. It’s just kind of good-time music. Kerrie Biddell’s band, it’s very good, but it’s real mainstream type of playing. I mean, in terms of people who are trying to forge ahead, push things along, how can they do it if they’re not given the opportunity to play? I look upon these gigs as token gigs. You can’t build your audience up on one night every six months. The Duck couldn’t do it!”

Yet again Roger lets out that familiar sigh of resignation. Forced to eke out an existence playing chasers for comedians and backing middle-of-the-road singers in clubs, Roger acknowledges that he is no worse off here than in New York, or anywhere else for that matter. With the essential optimism of a survivor, he says: “I think people like the Art Ensemble of Chicago and Cecil Taylor, who, for a long time were pushed to the periphery of attention — they’ve all eventually got to the stage where they now do get recognition and attention. Whereas probably in the early stages they had to supplement their music with other work. Cecil of course was a chef. But it seems to me that you’ve basically got to hang in there and not be broken down by the system, or disheartened, or whatever. You’ve just got to keep on doing whatever it is you’re doing.” □

# ODWALA: A Contemporary Approach

by Adrian Jackson\*

Over the last couple of years, Odwala has developed from a raw group of eager but inexperienced would-be jazz musicians into one of Melbourne's most rewarding contemporary jazz bands. Its repertoire is uncommonly interesting, and its performances are always approached with admirable enterprise and commitment. The band's personnel tends to fluctuate, but the two key members have always been saxophonist Martin Jackson and pianist Jamie Fielding.

Jackson was a late starter on saxophone, only picking up a soprano when he was 21 and tenor at 23; he had some basic lessons from Brian Brown in 1977, but describes himself as essentially self-taught. Outlining his development as a musician, Jackson recalls, "Hearing the Brian Brown Quartet in 1977 was the thing that really affected me. Hearing music live has a far greater impact on you than hearing it through any other medium; for a couple of years, I heard almost every performance that band played.

"The next most important thing that happened to me was at the end of 1978, I went to the USA for two months. I went to the Creative Music School at Woodstock, where the Art Ensemble of Chicago ran a ten-day course. Roscoe Mitchell teaching about free improvisation, Joseph Jarman discussing musical theatre and philosophy, Don Moye's percussion classes, they all gave me a lot to think about. But the real lesson came in New York. I wanted to go there to catch up on things, to diversify my awareness and my influences. Among a lot of others, I heard Sam Rivers, Sun Ra, Cecil Taylor, McCoy Tyner, Sonny Stitt, Jaki Byard, World Saxophone Quartet, George Adams and Air. There was tremendous intensity in their music, and hearing them in person, I was totally convinced, and

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felt I understood them so much more."

Back in Melbourne, Jackson continued lessons with pianist Bob Sedergreen — "a really good teacher, an unorthodox musical thinker who makes you think about things a bit differently" — who introduced him to one of his most gifted young students, pianist Jamie Fielding. The two practised together regularly, and before long had formed a rehearsal band, which became Odwala (the name taken from a Roscoe Mitchell composition).

Originally, the band featured a second tenor saxophonist, Martin West, with Barry Deenick on bass guitar and Allan Browne on drums. Currently, bassist Barry Buckley and drummer Keith Pereira complete the lineup with Jackson and Fielding.

The band plays contemporary jazz, that is, music that has been informed by the advances made by the '60s avant-garde; the repertoire consists mostly of pieces written by American contemporary jazz artists (most of them less well-known in this country than they

should be) that allow plenty of scope for improvisation initiative; and the band strives for a 'black' sound.

Jackson describes Odwala's repertoire as, "Mostly modal music, and mostly in 3/4 or 6/8. But, there is a wide variety of feels in the material. The music isn't so complex harmonically or rhythmically, but you have to understand what each piece is about before you can play it." A perusal of the band's repertoire supports this: Pharoah Sanders' exuberant *You've Got To Have Freedom* and his happy *Greetings To Idris*, Abdullah Ibrahim's hypnotic *Ishmael*, Mal Waldron's lovely *Soul Eyes*, Chico Freeman's bright *Illas*, McCoy Tyner's moody *Contemplation*, John Coltrane's intense *Dearly Beloved*, and so on. The band intends to investigate the legacy of such neglected composers as Booker Little and Cal Massey, and also use more compositions by Australian writers: at present, the book includes Bob Sedergreen's *Sweet Tooth*, Bernie McGann's *Spirit Song* and his *A Night At The*



Odwala: Keith Pereira (drums), Barry Buckley (bass), Jamie Fielding (piano), Martin Jackson (soprano sax).

Wizz.

Original music, Jackson says, "is something we'll come to in good time. We could easily write heads based on various models and pretend we're creative, but I'm very happy to be giving exposure to people like Clifford Jordan and Mal Waldron, they deserve it. And we don't want heads for blowing, we want to play substantial compositions. We need more experience before we can draw fully on the jazz language and set ourselves those writing challenges."

Of his own playing, Jackson says, "I'm perhaps different from guys who can play the instrument well when they're young. I knew how I wanted to play before I learned how to do it; I've never been too concerned about having chops. I dig people like Coltrane, Shepp and Cecil, but mostly I prefer sparser players like Monk, Steve Lacy and Mal Waldron. People like Lacy, John Surman and Evan Parker have shown me how a non-American approach can work. I try to put that together with the very emotional approach of the black tenor players. I used to 'scream' on the tenor a lot, but I've realised how more effective that is if you use it in the right context.

"Influences are necessary. It's when you concentrate on one influence that you stagnate and become imitative. I'm still listening and learning all the time."

Jackson has outgrown his chief early fault, when he lacked the ability to articulate his ideas. He could still use a little more expertise, but his playing is generally interesting and exciting enough to justify his claim that, "I'm not interested in playing set runs and licks that can impede the music, I want to play ideas and feelings, and interact with the other players in the band."

Jamie Fielding is the ideal foil for Jackson. He is a brilliantly busy pianist who articulates fresh ideas as quickly as he can think of them. Fielding was raised in Geelong, commencing classical piano lessons when he was 10. "Hearing Keith Jarrett made me rethink about piano and improvisation." He began listening to Miles and Coltrane LPs and practising with guitarist Michael Tinney (now in Sydney)

and other friends. When he was studying at Monash University, he heard the Brian Brown Quartet of the day, and "that really turned me around. I approached Bob Sedergreen for lessons, and he was a vital influence, a great teacher. He taught me a lot about the philosophy of improvising, and feel; the rules were to be filled in later, which I'm doing now.

"McCoy, Cecil and Don Pullen were the really big influences on me. I'm going back to people like Hampton Hawes now to fill in the gaps in my knowledge. In 1979, I spent a week studying with Serge Ermoll, and he gave me a lot of encouragement with the free thing, and helped me analyse the modern concepts.

"Since I met Martin, Odwala has been my main concern. I think it's a band with great potential. It has to mature yet, get a more individual sound like that Brian Brown Quartet had. We fill an important spot around Melbourne, giving this sort of more heavily emotional music a chance to be heard.

"We need a great commitment to get more from the music, and overcome problems like personnel changes and not having steady gigs, things that interfere with our learning process. We need to get used to working with this emotional release in front of people, and see how they respond to that."

Fielding's other chief concern is a trio that he leads at the Green Man coffee lounge in Malvern every Sunday night. The other members are Stephen Hadley, an exceptionally talented young bassist who has impressed all listeners when working with such musicians as John Sangster, Mark Murphy and Tony Gould; and Peter Jones, a talented young drummer who is now with the Vince Jones Quintet, and usually completes the Tony Gould Trio with Hadley. They play very stimulating versions of fairly standard numbers (*Autumn Leaves*, *Bags Groove*, etc.)

Fielding sees the Trio as "a lot of fun, and great experience. We don't want to be just another trio, but it is a gig where we have to play standards. We try to communicate with people, get their feet tapping, then slip in things they're not expecting to hear."

Jackson says of Fielding, "I think he's an ideal accompanist, and of course a very good soloist. One thing I like is, he's one of the very few pianists around who have picked up on Cecil Taylor, and worked out how to use that in a straighter context."

Barry Buckley's work with bands led by Brian Brown and Ted Vining over the last 17 years has established him as one of Australia's very best jazz musicians. He is a very able bassist with an impeccable sense of time, and a rare understanding of how best to drive and lift a band.

Jackson observes, "Barry's the pivot, the one who's made the real difference to the band. We're very lucky to have him with us. The comments Hal Galper made (about bands here failing to interact onstage) are too often true, but that can't happen with Barry, he's so supportive, reliable and creative. He improvises along with you, while providing that essential support."

Drummer Keith Pereira is a former Sri-Lankan whose main experiences have been with Odwala, and reggae band Afrijah. Jackson notes that, "At 19, he has a lot to learn yet, but he shows a lot of talent and potential."

Other musicians who have performed with Odwala include bassist Stephen Hadley, drummer Ted Vining, trombonist Steve Miller and vibist Craig Beard.

Over the last two years, Odwala has appeared at various concerts (they opened in Melbourne for David Liebman and Miroslav Vitous) and at various times have had weekly gigs at the Universal Theatre, the Flying Trapeze Cafe, The Spotted Dog coffee lounge, and monthly gigs at the Prince of Wales Hotel. Their longest residency has been 3 months.

Jackson feels that, "What is really holding us back is the lack of regular work. The main problem is with the people who run venues — if there isn't a lot of money there for them, they aren't interested. It's a common problem, but worse here than in Sydney or New York. Unless you want to wait for some ideal manager to come along and do it for you, you've got to work hard to

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# THE EL ROCCO: An Era In Sydney Jazz

## (Part 1)

By Bruce Johnson\*

At the top of William Street the last block on your left as you enter the Cross is an apartment building which, in the fifties, also had a room below street level, functioning somewhat listlessly as a plumber's workshop and boiler room. When the owners decided to turn it into a more profitable space, the combination of its situation (on the edge of Sydney's bohemian quarter), and the times (known retrospectively as the Beat Generation), made their decision relatively easy. Fashionable intellectual rebellion in the late fifties found its social forum in the Coffee Lounge. Cappucino, hinting at a weathered, cosmopolitan refinement, was *de rigeur*, frothing the moustaches of the duffel-coated non-conformists declaiming against the spiritless materialism of the ... and so on. And no coffee lounge worth its expresso was above ground level.

Thus, inevitably, was the space visualised. It needed to be enlarged, which entailed quarrying out several tons of sandstone, a back-breaking business which impressed itself so strongly upon those involved that it occupied their thoughts when the matter of a name came up. It seemed appropriate to call the new establishment The Rock. But, consciously or not, a sense of humour must have intervened, subverting the bohemian fondness for the exotic by caricaturing it. Instead of The Rock, the new coffee lounge became El Rocco. It opened in 1955, its entrance in Brougham Street, and maintained an unremarkable existence for a couple of years. It served food and coffee to the art students, writers, musicians and *flaneurs* who lived in or hung about the area. Perhaps occasionally guitars were strummed, as they were wont to be

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*The El Rocco: Cappucino, hinting at a weathered, cosmopolitan refinement, was de rigeur...*

at such times and in such places. Or bongoes struck. There was always somebody with a set of bongoes at parties in those days. But nothing remarkable.

Ironically, it was what later became a pre-eminent token of despised materialism that turned the El Rocco into an authentic incubator of creativity: a television set. TV was then, however, a novelty, and not a national opiate. The manager of the coffee lounge was Arthur James, a young student and son of the owner of the premises. He installed a TV at a time when very few households could afford this entertainment innovation, and custom swelled. But in those early days of the medium there was a dearth of material. At an hour which was disgustingly early for a bohemian set, the stations closed down. There, suddenly, at about 10 pm, was a mute and static test pattern. And nothing to do. At least one person spotted an opportunity in this. Drummer Ralph Stock had just returned from working in Noumea. He had no particular musical commitments and used to

drop into the El Rocco. It was he who suggested to Arthur James that a jazz group might be suitable on Sunday nights after the TV closed down. At that time there was nothing like the amount of live jazz available in Sydney as there is now: a few pubs, the Ironworkers, perhaps the occasional club or restaurant. Most of the music was in the traditional idiom. But there was no lack of musicians, as the El Rocco itself would demonstrate over the next twelve years.

With the agreement of James, Ralph Stock recruited musicians from a group working at the Arabian Coffee Lounge in the Cross, not far from the Taboo. Its leader was Ken Morrow, today a pianist, but in those days playing mainly accordion. He recalls the rest of the band as being Wally Ledwidge on guitar, Jack Craber bass, and Joe Lane drums. With Stock replacing Lane they began on Sunday nights at the El Rocco in October 1957 as the Ken Morrow Quartet. They were writing the first page of one of the most important chapters in the history of Australian jazz. After the first few

weeks the crowds began to pick up, and in time the turning off of the TV gradually came to be perceived by an increasing number of patrons as the beginning and not the end of the evening's entertainment. Musicians began to drop by for a sit in, Don Burrows among the earliest, as well as two visiting American trumpet players who were touring with a music/comedy routine. Although Ken remembers those first few months as a succession of "happy nights", when the Arabian made a new offer after about four months he took it, feeling that the kind of work his group was doing was more suited to its original venue. Ralph Stock remained for some time, surrounded by a changing personnel that included at various times Don Burrows, pianist Nigel Rolphe and perhaps bassist George Thompson, who in any case certainly played there in the sixties with John Sangster.

The success of the Sunday night sessions encouraged Arthur James to present jazz on other nights. An early, if not the first, band to come in on Saturdays was the Warren Leroy Trio. Basically self taught, Leroy had started out at Sydney High School with Dave Levy and Albert Lander, later a classical musician. They played boogie-woogie piano trio numbers to entertain classmates. Leroy became addicted to Errol Garner and developed into the closest thing to Garner that his bass player, Tony Buckley, remembers hearing up to that time. Buckley and Leroy expanded their sphere of operations from the Mocambo to include the El Rocco on Saturday nights. They used a drummer whose name may have been Laurie Watkins, but in any case, as was to become the pattern, personnel changes were common. Leroy liked to keep the band down to a trio in order to be free of the musical and visual distractions of a front line. He subsequently became an architect and moved to England where, by the account of Dave Levy who spoke to him there, he gave up playing. His popularity in the earliest days of the El Rocco, however, gave further impetus to the jazz policy which, at about the same time, was also extended to Friday nights.

When Dave Levy first began

frequenting the El Rocco it was still just one night a week of jazz — Ralph Stock on Sundays. Levy was at that time part of a younger up-and-coming generation of musicians that included men like Bernie McGann, Ray Warleigh and John Pochee. He had been hearing Dixieland in the occasional pubs and at the Ironworkers Hall, and was himself basically a boogie pianist. At about the same time he and his friends began jamming at the Mocambo in Newtown, they heard about the jazz night at the El Rocco. At this time Stock was using a variety of pianists, including Nigel Rolphe, Beatles Young and David May. The young musicians went along, to be staggered by Burrows who was often playing baritone in the wake of the famous Gerry Mulligan records, and by the legendary Frank Smith; "I've never heard anybody play better than him," recalls Levy. Smith was one of the 'older' generation — "We were nineteen, and they were all of twenty-six or twenty-eight", and slight though the gap might appear to be from a distance, it was palpable then in that particular musical climate. In fact the difference between the two generations of jazz musicians was to play a significant part in defining the musical history of the El Rocco, and of modern jazz in Sydney generally.



BRUCE JOHNSON

Arthur James, snapped in August 1982: he installed a TV at a time when very few households could afford this entertainment innovation...

The first time Dave Levy played in the El Rocco constituted a leap across that small generation gap, and the traumatic circumstances pre-figured certain aspects of his later association with the place. One night the pianist Nigel Rolphe became ill on the bandstand and disappeared upstairs to recover. A call went out for a piano player but no-one was game to join the gods on stage. In the meantime Rolphe had told whomever was ministering to him that there was a young bloke downstairs, David Levy, who could play the piano and could sub for him. Manhandled to the piano stool, Levy then spent a couple of agonising hours trying to cope with a situation for which he was scarcely prepared. His grounding was in the basic blues structures of boogie:

*And I'd learned about half of Tea for Two, without really knowing how the chords moved or what they did. I had a couple of sounds... I'd been in National Service at that time and I met up with Bobby Madden... And Bob showed me some modern chords, like he showed me my first major seventh. And he went: C major seventh, D minor seventh, E minor seventh, and then Eb minor seventh. And I nearly shit myself. At last I was on the road. I mean, I'd heard George Shearing play that!*

*I had no idea... I could do that in about three keys. And everything else I did was what I thought Dave Brubeck was doing. It was pretty raw.*

The humour that colours Dave's recollections of that first night tends to blunt the shock, which must have been considerable and complex. Whatever Rolphe was suffering upstairs, it couldn't have been much more painful than Levy's baptism with the Big Boys on the stand.

*I spent the most frightening and miserable couple of hours... There I had Don Burrows and whoever else was there shouting out chords at me all the way through tunes. And I didn't know what a chord was. You know... (singing) 'It's very clear... G SEVENTH!' And I'd think, er, what's that?*

But the ordeal was also a stimulant, a moment to come back to and overcome. He, John Pochee, Bernie McGann and bass player Dick Barnes worked at the music, jamming at the Mocambo and taking the occasional old time dance. In early or mid 1958 this quartet kicked off the Friday night sessions.

During the next few years Levy led or played with various groups on different nights at the El Rocco. His relationship with Arthur James was not always harmonious, although he

remembers that as being as much the result of a youthful aggressive tactlessness on his own part as anything else. Always alert to new possibilities in jazz, he appreciated and participated in some of the more avant-garde experiments in the music. His trio was one of the first to present poetry coloured by jazz accompaniment — pieces like *The Last Bomb* and *Requiem For A Lost World*. He was responsive to the early work in the free jazz idiom of people like Bob Gillett, a name that will reappear, and worked in that style with the Lyn Christie trio in the early sixties.

Generally the history of the El Rocco is, except for the music, relatively tranquil. But whenever trouble did strike, Levy seemed to be the lightning conductor. Apart from his first night substituting for Nigel Rolphe, his time there was punctuated with incidents. It was his group playing the night that some unimaginative practical joker lobbed a smoke bomb down the steps. The smoke seemed to confuse not only the patrons but also the air conditioning system which, unable to cope, recirculated it into the small coffee lounge. The musicians played on while the stampede of customers made its way up the stairs, and then made their own hasty departure. As Dave recalls it, it had always been a narrow stairway, but never quite so narrow as it appeared to be that night.

Perhaps more psychologically damaging, Levy was to become the most prominent victim of the only drug raid connected with the El Rocco. All his recollections were told with enormous and generally self-deprecating humour, no traces of self pity or self importance. But it doesn't need much imagination to understand that this must at that time have been a particularly painful experience. Marijuana today has gone through the chic stage, to become almost passe. It is necessary to remember that in the neurotically WASP mentality of 1962 it was perceived as anarchistic, subversive, an ultimate in bohemian depravity. Of course, for many, including some musicians, it has long been regarded as an occasional and less debilitating alternative to the legal drugs, tobacco and alcohol, and is



*The legendary Frank Smith: deserves a chapter, if not a book, in the history of Australian jazz...*

indulged in without any consciousness of seditiousness or evil. This innocence of spirit makes the retributive humourlessness of the Law that much more difficult to cope with. Dave had been having a taste during a rehearsal (not in the El Rocco, but on private premises), when the police had walked in and booked him. For this antisocial behaviour he was thrown into Long Bay and had his name on the front page of the Herald under the sinister character of Drug Addict and Musician. That was not the end of it. Presumably to ensure that this dangerous criminal had been rehabilitated, the police decided to follow

up a little later, and where better than in a hotbed of bohemianism like the El Rocco:

*We were playing a set, and I was just about to reach over the microphone to say thanks for the applause, because the room was dead silent, and to announce the next tune. And there was this tap on my shoulder. It was Detective Sgt. Abbott, as he was then ... and he said, "Now, you'll take a short break now David." And we looked around, and right round the entire walls of the El Rocco was like something out of one of those Bond movies — these D's lined up every three feet. And they got us in the back room and we virtually had to strip down. Nothing found of course.*

The fact was that, essentially, the El Rocco was straight. It didn't even have a license, and this prohibition was generally observed with the inevitable exception of the bottle in the instrument case. In any event, if you wanted a drink, the nearest pub was so close that, in John Edgecombe's words, you could spit into the saloon bar from the door of the El Rocco. It simply wasn't a place to which people went to get drunk or high. It was a place to hear music. The police raid was misplaced. Although Dave didn't use it, the word 'victimisation' seems appropriate. In any event, it was one of the incidents which helped to trigger his departure from the El Rocco, and something like a breakdown. But time and a larger perspective have meliorated the memory. Levy now recalls the years in the El Rocco as one of the most important periods in his life. As far as he is concerned, it is where he learned to play jazz.

The three nights a week jazz policy at the El Rocco, Friday, Saturday and Sunday, remained stable for a couple of years. But within that general format there was flux. The tendency was towards an increasingly modern idiom. The development of the Sunday night sessions makes the point. Following the return of Ken Morrow and his colleagues to the Arabian, various musicians joined Ralph Stock. Don Burrows came in early; Terry Wilkinson and Freddy Logan are two others whom Arthur James remembers from the Sunday nights of that period. Ralph Stock, to whom belongs the credit for introducing jazz to the El Rocco, moved on. He was replaced ultimately if not directly by Ron Webber. In turn, this band modulated into an-



other. Burrows became involved with the Sky Lounge which ran on Sunday nights, and on occasions, afternoons, for eight years. The music in the Sky Lounge was for dancing, and while this did not mean that the band was required to play anything less than jazz, it did create a demand for an insistent continuity and stability of rhythm that the more advanced forms would perhaps only wish to imply, if not dispense with altogether. At some point following Burrows' departure the Ron Falson Quartet took over. Arthur James's recollection of the personnel is: Falson, trumpet; David May, piano; Frank Smith, alto; and Cyril Bevan, drums. Bevan, an Englishman, had arrived in Australia with Winifred Atwell, and immediately established for himself a reputation as a highly developed and subtle technician. Frank Smith remains in memory as one of the first Titans of Australian modern jazz. A musician of exacting standards, highly aware of the directions in which jazz was moving, yet generous with advice to young players whose commitment was evidently sincere; he is remembered as possibly the most advanced of what in the context of the El Rocco was the 'older' generat-



Dave Levy, circa 1982: years in the El Rocco one of the most important periods in his life...

JANE MARCH

ion. He remained receptive to the kinds of innovation that alienated many of his contemporaries. Smith deserves a chapter, if not a book, in the history of Australian jazz. Readers are referred to Bisset's *Black Roots White Flowers* for a fuller treatment of his contribution to the music.

Such was his spirit and his influence that it is probably no accident that his association with the El Rocco seems to have more or less coincided with a period of bold musical experimentation. While it is absurd to suggest that Smith was directly responsible for the arrival of musicians like Mike Nock, it is probably true that his generous and open-minded musical attitude, together with the respect in which he was held, helped to create an atmosphere hospitable to the more advanced thinking of the younger musicians of the period. It also helped that Bryce Rohde had returned to Australia from the States in 1958. He brought with him the freshest kind of experience, wedded to a sharp and inquisitive musical intelligence. He was one of the pioneers in this country of the Lydian concept of improvisation made famous by George Russell's book, though George Golla remembers that Rohde's experimentation with the method preceded the appearance in Australia of Russell's work. In 1959 Rohde formed a quartet under his own name and began a highly successful association with the El Rocco, which developed a five-nights-a-week jazz policy to accommodate the group.

As far as the musical sociometric of the El Rocco was concerned however, an even more transforming influence was imminent. From New Zealand would shortly arrive a musician through whom the slightly uncomfortable, sometimes abrasive, relationship between the Old Guard and the Young Turks would enter a new phase that would in turn help to define the character and influence of the El Rocco as a jazz venue. □

**Next instalment: Bob Gillett and the early experiments with Free Form jazz; the arrival and impact of Mike Nock; the growing fame and popularity of the El Rocco and the consequences.**

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Gary Burton

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# ART PEPPER: Right Off The Top

By Neville Meyers\*

Put yourself, if you will, at a front-row table at San Francisco's Keystone Korner on a May, 1977 evening. Note the face, sallow and hollow-cheeked, eyes lead-heavy with fatigue, the bent figure shuffling towards the microphone and clutching, almost abstractedly, the two instruments, alto saxophone and clarinet. Ask yourself, how this man, Art Pepper — Jazz Legend — could possibly live up to your expectations.

My overall impression of Art Pepper in those initial, suspenseful moments on stage in San Francisco was of a tired, drained-out, man. Yet Pepper — miraculously — did not disappoint. He played, in fact, brilliantly. Played, according to his own yardstick of highly expressive musical achievement, "right off the top," blending flashes of brilliant technique, tone and originality into an instantly-recognisable sound, Pepper playing Pepper.

**Beginnings:** Arthur Edward Pepper was born in Gardena, California 9th January, 1925; he died 15th June, 1982 in Los Angeles. After almost twenty years of relative obscurity, Pepper's jazz status had been re-born by the mid to late 1970's; critical acclaim, has if anything, been on the increase since the musician's death six months ago. In his last few years Pepper seemed at last to be sure of his own place in jazz and to be coming to terms with the ambiguities and conflicting impulses of his earlier life.

Pepper's life, like his music, was a series of improvisations. The musician spent his formative years as the product of unstable parents and a generally loveless childhood. His later life was built around a variety of occupations and activities: musician par excellence, soldier, baker, accordion salesman, book-keeper, thief, prison inmate, parolee, music instructor. Pepper's life lacked stability in other areas: two failed marriages, generally transient relationships, and frequent doubts

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Art Pepper, snapped in Adelaide during his 1981 Australian tour. In the background is the pianist George Cables.

concerning his own musical worth. Drugs and alcohol were part of an endless search to shake off the deep and life-lasting personal anxieties which cast a long shadow on his every success. Because of these factors, Pepper stands out not only as one of the most gifted, but surely as one of the most tragic, figures in jazz.

Indispensable reading in all these areas is Pepper's autobiography *Straight Life* (published 1979). At

an early age Pepper was instinctively drawn to music — surely, in the striving for self-expression and excellence one of the most solitary, demanding, yet inwardly most soul-soothing, of the art forms. In any event, music was the major constant, the essential survival technique, of Pepper's life. As Pepper himself commented in April, 1980 to *Rolling Stone*: "I never considered myself a musician. I considered myself a person trying to survive."

MARK WOJT

**L.A. Wonder Boy:** Pepper's early musical training began with clarinet. A precocious nine-year-old, he copied and played note-for-note, Artie Shaw's *Concerto for Clarinet*. He could demonstrate similar competence by his fourteenth birthday on the alto saxophone. On that instrument Pepper was later to become, in the words of Don Burrows, "The top of a tough league of the fifties and sixties white horn players".

Pepper in his early teens was increasingly drawn to music. It had become then, as it would always be before, more than just a creative outlet. Through music the young Pepper could achieve the acceptance, as well as recognition, apparently so lacking elsewhere in his life. In the early forties, Pepper was known as the "boy wonder" of L.A.'s Central Avenue jazz club set. At this incredibly young age Pepper was playing 'right off the top' in frequent jam sessions with Louis Armstrong, Lester Young, Coleman Hawkins, Roy Eldridge, Johnny Hodges, Zoot Sims and others. This was fertile ground indeed for a young horn player's continuing musical growth.

**Big Band Pepper:** Pepper is of course chiefly remembered for his small-group work. His involvement however in big bands was also highly significant. It gave him initial national recognition, provided significant opportunities for further musical growth, and returned him with even greater vigour to small-group work.

At seventeen Pepper scored his first major job as second alto with the Benny Carter orchestra. The band included such future notables as J.J. Johnson and Gerald Wilson. Pepper could read music; he had, however, to allow his ear, natural instincts and talent compensate for his lack of formal knowledge about chord structure, harmony and composition. Still, Carter is on record in praising Art's talent, sound, and creative ideas, all evident at the time. On a more personal note, Carter remembers Pepper as "a handsome, clean-cut and most mannerly boy. A very affable disposition."

Pepper, still only seventeen, auditioned for — and got — the prestigious lead alto chair with Stan

Kenton. Kenton was himself enjoying huge success. Pepper played with Kenton during 1943-44, left it for military service, and after resuming his association with Kenton at the war's conclusion, continued off and on to play with the band between 1946-51. Again, Pepper's ability to play solos by ear was not sufficient for the wide, more highly technical Kenton repertoire. Building on his earlier experience with Carter, Pepper paid even more attention to chord structure and to musical theory as a whole. As did so many of the band's young musicians (Shorty Rogers, Bud Shank, Shelly Manne, Maynard Ferguson and other stars) Pepper found in Kenton a warm father figure as well as a tough disciplinarian.

Life with Kenton on the road was, in the words of another leader at another time, "not meant to be easy". Pepper as lead alto player may have basked in the national prestige bestowed upon the Kenton band and its featured players but like everyone else in the band, also experienced the loneliness and physical exhaustion brought about by perpetual one-nighters. Dave Van Kriedt, veteran ex-Kentonite and now resident of Newcastle, NSW, recalls: "When the band goes on stage, all is glamorous and positive, but otherwise it's sleazy hotels and an extremely lonely condition. All this goes on over 8-9 months, mostly living in a bus, lacking family contact and other firm and positive relationships."

*Straight Life* offers a vivid account of being on the road and of, for the first time, Pepper's experiments with hard drugs to assuage his loneliness and sense of separation from his wife Patti. Pepper also became bored with the predictability of the Kenton arrangements. There were too few opportunities for adequate solo space. Also, there was the constant strain, (given Kenton's predilection for brass instruments) for the reed players to be heard (or hear themselves) amongst the punching brass. Pepper, increasingly ill from drugs, decided to return to his family and to the freedom and greater creativity of small-group work. He left Kenton at the end of 1951 and returned to Los Angeles.

In 1968 however Pepper resumed

big band work in a significant way; he toured during 1968/69 with Buddy Rich (Rich's reputation as an iron taskmaster was even stronger than Kenton's). Similar experience followed in 1976 with Don Ellis. Typically, in each situation, Pepper experienced serious doubts with regard to his own musical adequacy. There is no evidence that Pepper failed to come up with the goods. This was despite new, and formidable, challenges. Both bands were for their time very modern; Ellis's fondness for arrangements in 5/4, 7/4 and 9/8 time posed particular demands. Predictably, Pepper gained considerable additional technical knowledge from these experiences. He also won the approbation of the new, much younger breed of musicians with whom he played. Like a migratory bird Pepper, for both economic and personal reasons, returned to small-group playing.

**Cool Pepper:** Pepper's natural musical habitat was undoubtedly the small group. In it, his natural creativity, constantly developing technique and above all his originality, all flourished. In a remarkably short time and amongst the stiffest competition, Pepper by the early 1950s had established his as the strongest, most original West Coast alto style. His playing combined the styles of his major influences: Lester Young, Charlie Parker, Lee Konitz and Zoot Sims. Arguably, there was less of Parker's playing (Pepper liked to think so) than any of the other influences in Pepper's style. Pepper, unlike the great majority of horn players bending over backwards to sound like a Bird, was determined not to lose his own musical identity.

The degree to which Pepper had established himself in such a short time as a unique talent — rival, in fact, to the legendary Charlie Parker — is reflected in the saxophone division of the 1951 *Down Beat* Readers Poll (Parker 957, Pepper 945). Pepper, however, fell from public favour after his 1952-53 drug bust, (in one year polling only 32 votes). But, in the 1957 Poll, he had again moved into second place behind Parker. Don Burrows gives a succinct explanation for Pepper's jazz eminence at this time: "Technically, he was playing then so fluently, beautifully and brilliantly - simply

equal to any of the period.”

Errol Buddle also recalls hearing Pepper in Los Angeles. “Pepper was right at the top then, deservedly. He was very inventive in his solos. I was playing myself with the Australian Jazz Quintet in June, 1956 in a club called Jazz City in Hollywood. In fact it was the night after Pepper’s release from one of his tragic gaol sentences. I sat and talked with him for a little while between sets. I remember his telling me that because of his problems, he didn’t even have a sax and would have to borrow a Martin alto to play a gig the next day”. *Art Pepper Plus Eleven*, given a five-star *Down Beat* rating in February, 1960 remains for Buddle one of the top jazz albums of all time. Marty Paich, leader and arranger of the *Plus Eleven Album* writes: “Art was the greatest saxophone player I had heard. I couldn’t believe how beautifully he played. Art to me was *the* sound of West Coast Jazz, that melodic style he played, rather than the hard, driving New York style of a lot of other players . . . Art was just a simple human being. Simple, artistically, and very easy to understand, for me. He just wanted to play. His personality was just beautiful at the time. Very soft-spoken, very laidback, never any problem.”

**Addiction and Contradiction:** A major contradiction in Pepper’s life is worth noting here: although blessed with a natural gift and in his early years with such great musical success, Pepper was frequently beset by doubts concerning his musical adequacy, and about his true place amongst his musical contemporaries. This does not of course explain Pepper’s growing dependence on drugs from 1960. Indeed the many contradictory aspects of Pepper’s life cannot be appreciated without reference to *Straight Life*. They are in any case outside the scope of this article. However Pepper’s concerns in the 1960s were for the most part less with playing “off the top” than with basic survival. Here, *Straight Life* could provide, if only Hollywood had a good track record in that department, a unique cinematic vehicle to portray the drugs wasteland and the 1960s jazz culture. Certainly little was heard of Pepper in those years.

Yet again contradiction emerges.

For, far from staying down and out with drugs, Pepper during such wasted years remote from the jazz scene, appears to have sorted out many of his earlier personal conflicts, benefited from the effects of his drug rehabilitation programme, and maintained at least some contact with music. In all these areas Pepper’s association with Laurie Miller, later to become his third wife, is a major stabilising factor. Certainly by the late sixties, Pepper had developed, in his own words, “a re-awakened interest in life and in music.”

**Pepper’s Return:** “I was afraid to get back into music. I didn’t know whether I could make it, after all this time, whether I could get back into a field which is very difficult and competitive, whether I was physically able. . . .” Pepper’s return to jazz began cautiously with the Buddy Rich 1968/69 tour. Still uncertain, Pepper during 1971/72 worked for room, food and ten dollars a week at a health food bakery in Venice, California, staying on the methadone programme, edging towards a full resumption of his career. Pepper’s real break however did not come until *Living Legend*, his excellent 1975 album with an ideal rhythm section: Hampton Hawes piano; Charlie Haden, bass; Shelly Manne, drums. A handful of fine albums resulted. They provided contemporary exposure, not only to Pepper’s fine alto playing, but also to his work on clarinet and tenor saxophone. To many devotees, however, Pepper’s style had become too much a departure from his 1950’s playing. Don Burrows: “The guy completely changed direction contrary to his



MARK WOJT

natural instincts as a player”. Certainly Pepper’s playing was on a number of these albums noticeably harsher, more strident. As Pepper himself admitted, his change of direction at this time reflected a four-year experiment with a John Coltrane sound. “Trane was so strong he’d almost destroyed me. It was a freeing experience. It enabled me to be more adventurous. But since the day I picked up the alto again I’ve realised that if you don’t play yourself, you’re nothing. Since then I’ve been playing what I felt, regardless of what those around me were playing or how they thought I should sound.”

Apart from his prodigious studio work Pepper resumed touring. His opportunity to tour with Don Ellis came hard on the heels of his *Living Legend* album. The Ellis tour presented a particular triumph for Pepper. “It was the hardest band anywhere. I was told I wouldn’t make more than a couple of rehearsals. All those unusual time signatures — you know, 9/8, 7/11. In addition I had to play flute and piccolo neither of which I had played before. So it was a challenge, a battle.” Pepper earned considerable acclaim for his work with Ellis, for his later appearances at the 1977 Newport Jazz Festival and for his Japan concerts. Further touring led Pepper to Australia in September, 1981.

**Last Chorus:** On the Australian tour there were mixed reactions to Pepper’s playing. At Brisbane’s Jazz Cellar for example, it was Pure Pepper — “right off the top”. To a great many listeners Pepper should have been recorded that evening. Elsewhere, Pepper himself was apologetic about his playing. Still, where technique may in some instances have faltered or been lacking, there was always strong knife-edge emotion (remember Pepper’s alto, harsh and crying, on *Patricia?*) Audiences were supportive. They were, after all, aware that they were watching and listening to a legend, a great musician looking, and intensely playing, like someone on borrowed time. . . . □

Neil Nielsen’s companion piece to this article, ‘The Recordings of Art Pepper’, will appear in the March/April 1983 edition of *JAZZ Magazine*.

# Ian Neil's GRACE NOTES



PETER SINCLAIR

Once upon a time — no, I'm not about to recount a fairytale — it was customary to make "good resolutions" with the coming of each New Year. If you happen to still observe the tradition, why not resolve to support, even more strongly, Australian jazz (live and recorded) and jazz musicians during 1983? □

John Coltrane talking about Thelonius Monk to *Downbeat* — in 1960 — said:

*Working with Monk brought me close to a musical architect of the highest order. I felt I learned from him in every way — through the senses, theoretically, technically. I would talk to Monk about musical problems and he would sit at the piano and show me the answers by playing them. I could watch him play and find out the things I wanted to know. Also I could see a lot of things I didn't know at all.* □

Poet W.H. Auden observed that music "can be made anywhere, is invisible, and does not smell". He must have been a very selective listener ... I've heard some that positively stinks. □

Melbourne drummer Mike Grabowsky, in a recent letter, told me that his brother Paul, one of our most brilliant young pianists, is home for a short time. It seems that his career, at least in the short term, can be best served by working in Germany, where he is well established and is very highly regarded. He plays with quite a number of bands — the Gunter Klatt Quartet and the Balkan Jazz Group, led by Yugoslav drummer Lala Kovacev, mainly.

Paul played at the 1982 North Sea Jazz Festival in Holland, and was

*\*Ian Neil's program Music To Midnight can be heard each night on the ABC. He is a past Chairman of the Jazz Action Society of NSW, of which he was a founder member, and a past member of the Music Board of the Australia Council.*

delighted to find Crossfire there; also Melbourne bassist Murray Wall who was with Jon Hendricks. Paul went to Europe privately to study, and while there received a grant from the Music Board of the Australia Council for further study, which included some time in New York where he attended the Julliard School of Music.

Besides Melbourne, Paul intends to visit Sydney, before he returns to Germany. □

By the way, Crossfire toured the United Kingdom and Europe as part of the Department of Foreign Affairs Cultural Relations Program in 1982. Of eight major tours, three were by jazz groups ... Crossfire to the UK and Europe, McJad to India, Sri Lanka and Singapore, and the Errol Buddle Band to the ASEAN countries and Burma. The tours are co-ordinated and managed by that splendid organisation Musica Viva Australia, which states in its latest bulletin:

*The continuing support of the Department of Foreign Affairs, the Music Board of the Australia Council and the Australian Information Service cannot pass without acknowledgement. In the current economic climate where funds for cultural activities are becoming increasingly limited, it is encouraging to note that these three organisations have the foresight to continue fighting for support of the cultural program and for artists touring overseas, as it is recognised that any curtailment of these activities will be to the long-term detriment of Australia.*

Regarding the Errol Buddle Band's tour, the bulletin had this to say:

*The Errol Buddle Band visited Burma during its cultural relations tour to the Asean region and gave two concerts in Rangoon. The band's visit has been described as "an unqualified success". According to Mr. Buddle, a jazz band has not visited Burma since a tour by Duke Ellington many years ago. The warmth and enthusiasm of the audience (3,000 people at the second concert) was most encouraging.*

Jazz artists touring under the aegis of Musica Viva Australia during 1983 include the Don

Burrows Duo/Trio, Pyramid and the Sydney Jazz Quintet. □



Phil Treloar: working to the stimulation overload threshold...

In a letter from New York City, dated 21st October 1980, Phil Treloar on the vitality, stimulation and inspiration of The Big Apple:

*Actually I'd forgotten just how vibrant and stimulating NYC could be, until I arrived here again. There is certainly as much inspiration here as any human being would be capable of handling. The thing I find one really must do here, is find out where the stimulation overload threshold is and then work to that. By working that way, it's possible to work to maximum capacity continuously.* □

From that musical giant Pablo Casals, a musician's credo:

*To be a musician is a great privilege, but also a very great responsibility. One must think that to be a musician is a gift — a gift from nature. There is no great merit in us except in loving this gift with respect and devotion and doing everything possible to do honour to that gift by work and more work. We must work with conviction and humility — searching for beauty, simplicity — not for effect, but for truth. And it is for us musicians to do all in our power for a better world. Music must carry the message of beauty, of love, and of peace.* □

# DAVE DALLWITZ: The Creation Of A Myth

By Norm Linehan\*

*This was written towards the end of 1981 when I was not aware that Bruce Johnson was working on the series of articles on traditional jazz in Adelaide which has since appeared in JAZZ magazine. (March/April, May/June and July/August 1982 editions). It is not a response to his articles, and if we seem to have reached different conclusions about similar questions, so be it.*

During 1980 there was some controversy in Melbourne about who should be awarded the title of "father" of Australian jazz — a ridiculous proposition, as was the Original Dixieland Jazz Band's publicising themselves in 1919 as "creators of jazz", and Jelly Roll Morton's claim in 1938 that "I, myself, happened to be the creator in the year 1902". Several names were mentioned but not that of Dave Dallwitz who was after all a bit of a newcomer.

Some months ago my attention was drawn to a book *Australian Popular Culture*, edited by Peter Spearritt and David Walker, published in 1979. It included a chapter by Bruce Clunies-Ross called "An Australian Sound." While not actually awarding the title to Dallwitz, Clunies-Ross did purport to establish that between 1945 and 1950, with some assistance from Ade Monsborough, Dallwitz created the definitive sound of Australian jazz. This chapter is a farrago of errors of fact, misconceptions and wrong conclusions and while I was inclined to denounce it publicly, it seemed that as in two years since publication it had not come to the attention of the jazz community, it would be better to ignore it and it might go away. Unfortunately it has not done so.

Recently I saw a pamphlet published by the Australia Music Centre in 1981 detailing the life and works of Dave Dallwitz. The author is not named so the responsibility lies with



*Dave Dallwitz: did he lay the basis for anything?*

the Music Centre. The pamphlet contains errors of fact and omission in the biography, the list of compositions and the discography, which need not concern us here and indeed are not surprising as one of the reference sources quoted is Clunies-Ross, along with some others of doubtful value. It is however worth comment that some of the detail is at variance with another Music Centre publication, their catalogue of *Australian Jazz Compositions* (1978). An example will suffice.

The pamphlet quotes the year of composition of *Tivoli Stomp* as 1954. The catalogue quotes 1977. They agree on the recording of this tune by Pearce-Pickering except that the pamphlet quotes the catalogue number incorrectly; both give the year of recording as 1977. The record cover, which I believe to be correct, quotes the recording date as 24th April, 1975.

The pamphlet, brief and essentially ephemeral as it may appear, assumes a degree of authority because of its origin, and it is for this reason that I take issue with the final paragraph of the biography, which reads, "Along with a handful of other Australian jazz musicians — Roger and Graeme Bell, Ade Monsborough and others who worked together in the 'forties — Dave Dallwitz can take credit for enabling

Australian jazz to develop its own unique idiom, laying the basis for the traditional jazz movement which still flourishes today."

It appears that in late 1945 or early 1946 Dave Dallwitz became a member of an Adelaide band called the Southern Jazz Group. By the end of 1946 he was the leader of this band which he took to the 1st Australian Jazz Convention. After the Convention Graeme Bell wrote enthusiastically of the style and playing of the SJG and praised Dallwitz for his unity of purpose. But neither he nor the other musicians who heard Dallwitz at that Convention made any attempt to model their styles on that of the SJG. The same is true of the next two Conventions when Dallwitz brought the same band, playing in the same style, to Melbourne.

There is an indication that the SJG had begun to split up in 1949 and at the Convention that year only some of the original members were present; Dallwitz filled the gaps with Melbourne musicians. The original group, with the addition of Ade Monsborough and a change of drummer, did record until June 1950, but by October 1950 it was known that there was dissension and at the Convention at Sydney that year the Southern Jazz Group, led by Dallwitz, appeared with a new personnel which appears to have been the one that recorded for the Australian Broadcasting Commission in June 1951. This was a short-lived band and by the end of 1951 the Southern Jazz Group had ceased to exist. Dallwitz appeared at the Convention that year with a group called the Southern Jazz Four which included three other musicians not previously associated with the SJG. Eight former members of the SJG appeared variously in two other bands at this Convention.

At the 1952 Convention at Melbourne, Dallwitz appeared with some Melbourne musicians, and won the original tunes competition which he had inaugurated in 1947 and won in 1948 and 1949. Two

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original members of the 1946 SJG appeared with another Adelaide band. This marked the end, at that time, of Dallwitz's involvement with jazz as a musician and leader and as the pamphlet puts it, he "left jazz for some twenty years". His activity as a composer during these six or seven years may be dealt with briefly. The pamphlet lists 16 tunes composed from 1946 to 1951. This may seem little enough but must be looked at in context and will be dealt with later.

I can now return to the Music Centre pamphlet's assertion that Dallwitz, among others, enabled Australian jazz to develop, and laid the basis for the traditional jazz movement which still flourishes today. I do not believe this can be supported. It is clear from listening to the records that the Southern Jazz Group had a distinctive sound. It is equally clear from listening to records by other Australian bands from the same period in Melbourne, Sydney and Hobart that none of them was trying to emulate the Dallwitz sound. Musicians and enthusiasts alike admired and respected the Southern Jazz Group, but there is no evidence that Dallwitz was laying the basis for anything, let alone enabling Australian jazz to develop its own unique idiom, that elusive phantom which Bruce Johnson is the latest to pursue.

Johnson's recent research has suggested that Dallwitz had considerable influence in Adelaide but the facts are against this too. In 1946 there were two bands in Adelaide, Malcolm Bills and Dave Dallwitz, perhaps three if you include Maurice le Doeuff but I think his was of a more modern persuasion. At the 1951 Convention at Adelaide five local bands were registered and it could be argued that this was the result of Dallwitz's influence but there is no way of knowing whether it might just as well have happened without him. Some of these musicians were playing jazz in Adelaide earlier than he was. Memory suggests, and there is a little contemporary evidence to support it, that these new bands were apostates rather than apostles, and Dallwitz's abrupt departure from the jazz scene after 1952 indicates that the leadership now ascribed to him may not be

warranted. With his broad background in art it seems unlikely that he would be "disheartened by lack of public support for trad jazz" as the pamphlet has it. It is much more likely that he left because the Adelaide musicians were unable or unwilling to accept his leadership.

The next Convention to be held at Adelaide was in 1957 when ten Adelaide bands were registered, and here is a clear indication of the growth of jazz in the absence of Dallwitz. Four of the bands, variously, included seven former members of the SJG; nine other former members were not there. The program listed thirty-nine Adelaide names who had not been in the 1951 program, including three completely new bands whose members had no previous connection with the SJG. Some of these are still with us, some are gone but not forgotten, and some remain only as names in a Convention program. They all stand as evidence that the jazz scene in Adelaide continued to grow without Dave Dallwitz.

It could be argued that the early influence of Dave Dallwitz carried through the years, but recordings of several Adelaide bands from the 1957 Convention show no sign of the earlier style of the Southern Jazz Group. It could also be argued that Dallwitz's contribution has been as a composer rather than as a musician or band-leader.

In case there are some who would see this as an attack on Dave Dallwitz, it is not. It is an attempt to strangle, if not at birth at least early in its life, the establishment of a myth which I believe to be as unfair to Dave Dallwitz as it is damaging to the history of Australian jazz. □

*Eric Myers writes: In our March/April 1983 edition we will publish in full the offending article, with the permission of the Australia Music Centre. At this stage, I should own up to the fact that I prepared the brochure on Dave Dallwitz when I was Research Consultant at the Australia Music Centre in 1979. When I resigned from the AMC in January 1980, the Dallwitz brochure (among a number of other brochures devoted to Australian composers) was partly completed. The Dallwitz brochure was published a year after*

*my resignation, in January 1981, with a number of amendments to my original manuscript. More on this in our next edition.*

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Professional writer Clem Gorman is interested in the story of the pioneer Australian jazz vocalist Des Tooley, with a view to writing her story for television or film. JAZZ Magazine readers who may be able to help Mr. Gorman are invited to write to him at 12 William Lane, Woolloomooloo NSW 2011, or phone (02) 357 2109.

# ERROL BUDDLE AND THE AJQ

By Eric Myers

In the last instalment of this series (JAZZ, September/October 1982) Errol Buddle was in the United States in 1954, leading his own quintet at Klein's jazz club, Detroit. The group included Barry Harris (piano), Pepper Adams (baritone sax), Major Holley (bass), and Elvin Jones (drums). On Saturday nights, Billy Mitchell (tenor sax) was booked for a three-way battle of the saxes. **NOW READ ON:**

"We used to get a lot of people sitting in at Klein's," Errol remembers, "Stan Getz used to come in sometimes. An unknown bass player, a young guy, used to come in and stand up in front of the bandstand, almost begging to sit in. His name was Paul Chambers [who later made historic recordings with Miles Davis.] I think he'd only been playing several months at that time."

Buddle remembers meeting Miles Davis himself when the trumpeter was at the Blue Bird Lounge, one of Detroit's jazz clubs. Miles invited Errol and Don Varella up to his room, where the two Australians were fascinated to see about 40 paperbacks — all Westerns — lining the mantelpiece. They asked Miles why he liked cowboy stories. He replied: "Man, I love horses", and explained that his father had bred horses on a ranch in the South.

This was shortly before Miles Davis, in a supreme act of self-will, kicked the heroin habit. "Miles told us how he was really hooked on drugs", says Errol, "that he

didn't dig heroin, and wanted to get off it."

One night Buddle had a choice between hearing the Stan Kenton band with Zoot Sims on tenor, or Charlie Parker, who was in Detroit for one night playing at a black dance. "I chose Charlie Parker and I've never regretted it", says Errol. "He played incredibly. It wasn't long before he died."

"I spoke to him and he was happy, smiling and laughing — quite bright. He seemed to be a really nice person. I heard him again two or three months later doing a matinee in another club, and he was really down. His playing was nowhere near that first night I heard him. He died not long after that."

Meanwhile, the gig at Klein's proceeded. Buddle remembers that the musicians seldom put deputies in, or took a night off for any reason. On one occasion Barry Harris asked for a night off to go and hear the pianist Teddy Wilson who was in town. Similarly, Pepper Adams would take a night off to hear Harry Carney whenever the Duke Ellington band came through Detroit.

Errol Buddle was struck by the fact that these brilliant, younger musicians held the older giants in such high esteem. "They not only respected the older players but would go out of their way to hear these guys," says Errol. He contrasts this with attitudes in Australia where, during the 1950s, many younger musicians were in the habit of putting down the older players. "Then when I went to Detroit, and found people like Pepper Adams idolising the older players, it was a real eye-opener to me. It was a much more mature outlook in the States".

Towards the end of 1954, Buddle's contract expired at Klein's. For a while, he stayed on at the club with a quintet led by the guitarist Kenny Burrell. By this time Buddle had developed a solid reputation in Detroit. Soon he got a call from Ed Sarkesian, who owned the Rouge Lounge, Detroit's plush, leading jazz club. Sarkesian had been told that Buddle had an all-Australian group, and asked them to come in for two weeks as the backing band for the singer Chris Connor.

In December 1954 Buddle went into the job with the Australians Bryce Rohde (piano) and Jack Brokensha (drums & vibes) plus the American bassist Dick Healey, who also doubled on flute and alto sax. They called themselves the Australian Jazz Quartet, partly because they liked the name of the Modern Jazz Quartet, which was then popular. Healey played mostly bass but when he played his horns, Brokensha moved onto vibes, giving the quartet the unusual sound of two woodwinds, piano and vibes.

From that initial engagement at the Rouge Lounge, the AJQ had what can only be described as a meteoric rise to the top echelon of American jazz. Ed Sarkesian liked the group, and recommended them to Joe Glaser, the owner of Association Booking Corporation, New



*The Australian Jazz Quartet, 1955. Bryce Rohde (at the piano) then, clockwise, Errol Buddle, Dick Healey, Jack Brokensha.*



York — the biggest jazz agency in the world at that time, which managed groups led by Louis Armstrong, Dave Brubeck, Gerry Mulligan, Miles Davis, Chico Hamilton and others. Glaser didn't even hear the AJQ. On the strength of Sarkesian's recommendation, he sent the contracts out to Detroit and signed the group for 12 months.

Following the engagement with Chris Connor, the AJQ was booked for two weeks at Campbell's Lounge in London, Ontario, then they came back to the Rouge Lounge. They quickly assembled an impressive repertoire. Soon Buddle hit on the idea of getting out the bassoon and using it in the group. "I had the instrument and thought I might as well use it",

says Errol. "With the flute and the bassoon together and the vibes, it was a really distinct sound. No other group in America had had that sound before."

Thus, Errol Buddle carved out a niche for himself in the history of jazz. As Leonard Feather wrote in his *Encyclopedia of Jazz*, "Buddle [was] the first musician in jazz to make extensive use of the bassoon in ad libbing".

While working at the Rouge Lounge, Buddle got a call from the manager of the trumpeter Conte Candoli, and was offered the tenor chair in Candoli's group. It was a tempting offer but, after two years of trying to get the Australian group started and working, he had to say no.

Early in 1955, Glaser booked the AJQ in Washington to back the singer Carmen McRae. On the same programme were the Dave Brubeck Quartet, and the Modern Jazz Quartet. Then they went on to four weeks at the Hickory House on 52nd Street in New York.

"It was quite amazing — we really had hit the big time quite suddenly," says Errol. "We didn't know at that time if it would last. It was a bit mind-boggling. For four or five nights at the Hickory House, Stan Getz came in to hear the group — he was working around the corner at Birdland. Stan Getz was my idol. I was petrified to have him in the audience, sitting down at the table, eating a steak and listening to us".

The Australians might have viewed themselves modestly, but the work was to come in non-stop for four heady years, until they left the US for Australia towards the end of 1958. With work provided by Joe Glaser's powerful agency, they were on the road continually. For the first six months they worked often



*The Australian Jazz Quintet, playing at the Continental Restaurant, Norfolk, Virginia in June, 1956. Visible are (from left) Buddle, Healey and the bassist Jack Lander. This photograph is a historic one, because the Clifford Brown/Max Roach Quintet with Richie Powell (piano) played this club the previous week. It was the last club engagement for Brown and Powell, who were killed on the Pennsylvania Turnpike on the way to Chicago on June 25, 1956.*

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with Carmen McRae, then increasingly went out in their own right. Normally they would have a six-nights engagement at a leading jazz club in one city, then move on to another city the following week. During their four-years career in the US, they played virtually every major jazz club in the country, and went out every year on package tours throughout the United States, in the company of leading groups.

The AJQ did a number of concerts at New York's Carnegie Hall. Their first, on November 12, 1955, was billed *New Jazz At Carnegie* and included, along with the AJQ, the Gerry Mulligan Sextet, Bob Brookmeyer, Zoot Sims and Jon Eardly, Carmen McRae, and the Dave Brubeck Quartet.

Reviewing that concert in the *New York Times*, the jazz critic John S. Wilson wrote: "The Australian Jazz Quartet, a versatile and entertaining foursome who double, triple and, in one case, quintuple on a variety of instruments, brought a change of pace to the program with selections highlighted by flute and bassoon duets and an amusingly melodramatic vibraphone solo."

Another of the AJQ's Carnegie Hall appearances took place on November 22, 1957, when they played to two separate audiences — at 8.30 pm then again after midnight. Entitled *Jazz For Moderns*, the program also included the George Shearing Sextet, the Gerry Mulligan Quintet, the Miles Davis Quintet, the Chico Hamilton Quintet and the singer Helen Merrill.

During the mid-1950s in the US, jazz was experiencing a surge in popularity. Dave Brubeck had appeared on the cover of *Time* magazine and the music had gathered an immense following in the colleges. The AJQ largely rode along on this wave of popularity.

By the same token, the jazz business was intensely competitive. The circuit was a tough one, and any group that was unsuccessful in an initial engagement was never re-booked. For instance, the saxophonist Lee Konitz

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*Various newspaper advertisements for the AJQ's club engagements in the United States, circa 1955. Note that the AJQ is billed above Hamp Hawes and Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers.*

had a group which dropped out; the Modern Jazz Quartet, even though it was winning jazz critics' polls, might be unemployed for months. The AJQ, however, worked consistently — for 49 weeks out of the year.

"We were pretty professionally run", says Errol. "We had different instrumentation, a different sound with the flute and bassoon together, also vibes. The Americans had heard vibes before, but not in that combination. The Americans do go for something different — they go for originality.

"Also, we were quite well-organised on the stand. We knew exactly what we were going to play before we went on, and in what order. We had memorised all the arrangements; we didn't need a note of music. We could play a concert without stopping for five or six hours.

"We did six or seven tunes a set; there was no delay between tunes. Also, we dressed well for those days — suits and ties. Jazz musicians looked like a bunch of businessmen then, Miles Davis included."

Early in the career of the AJQ, the members of the group considered hiring another musician. When Healey played alto or flute, naturally they had to soldier on without bass. And there was always the option of bringing over another horn player from Australia, so that Healey could stay on bass permanently.

Andrew Bisset, in *Black Roots White Flowers*, says that Buddle tried to get Don Burrows over to the US when the AJQ was initially formed. Buddle says this is incorrect, although he always liked the idea of having Burrows in the group. "I thought a lot of Don's playing, particularly his clarinet playing", says Errol. "At that time, so far as I knew, he didn't play the flute". Buddle had written to Burrows, suggesting generally that it would be a good idea for him to come over.

Meanwhile Jack Brokensha had written to the singer Edwin Duff, who had worked with the Brokensha Quartet in Melbourne, telling him of the success of the AJQ. Duff came over to Canada in February 1955, but was not able to work legally in the United States until November 1955. He was also signed up quickly by the Joe Glaser agency, and half expected to work with the



BILL TEAGUE

*Playboy Magazine Awards, 18 November, 1957. From left, DJ Bill Mertz, Playboy bunny Carolyn Delowese, Errol Buddle, singer Helen Merrill, Chico Hamilton. The AJQ received an award, along with George Shearing, Chico Hamilton, Helen Merrill, Miles Davis and Gerry Mulligan.*

group, but by that time the AJQ was well established as an instrumental combo, and couldn't use a vocalist.

As it turned out, the extra member was hired when the AJQ was about a year old. He was Jack Lander, an Australian bassist then living in Toronto. The AJQ became the Australian Jazz Quintet. When he left about a year later, his place was taken by Jimmy Gannon, who had played bass with the Chico Hamilton group. When Gannon decided to go off the road and settle down in LA, the AJQ was playing in St. Louis in June 1957. Into the club walked a young Ed Gaston.

"Somehow or other, Ed sat in with us," says Errol. "We really liked his playing and he was offered the job right there and then. He was a member the whole time until we started to disband".

Concomitant with its standing in jazz, the AJQ signed a recording contract in early 1955 with Bethlehem Records, at that time the biggest of the small, independent American record companies. The A & R man was Creed Taylor. Over four years, they recorded seven LPs which all sold well. Also they appeared on several other albums. On one they backed the singer Johnny Hartman; on another they participated in a jazz version of *Porgy & Bess*, with Mel Torme as Porgy and Frances Faye as Bess. (This was a three-record set, arranged by Russell Garcia, on which the Duke Ellington orchestra also appeared).

Their first LP, *The Australian Jazz Quartet*, was favourably received. "A thoroughly professional group with a jazz feeling, a sometimes Shearing-like quality

and a reflective and deliberative air, these four musicians who play a combination of eleven instruments on this record, produce very listenable music, certainly derivative, but distinctive for all that," wrote Bill Coss in *Metronome*, August 1955. "The focus is most kindly put on scoring, lovely combinations of flute and bassoon, clever use of the bassoon for the bass line, attractive combining of vibes, piano, clarinet and bassoon. Dick Healey's flute and tenor and Errol Buddle's bassoon are the most distinctive solo instruments. Jack Brokensha's vibes solo on Debussy's *Girl* is delicately done."

Some inkling of the AJQ's standing in American jazz can be gauged by the fact that the quartet soon began to appear in various polls. Just a year after their initial engagement, the AJQ was placed 20th (out of 29) in the Instrumental Combo section of *Down Beat's* 1955 Annual Music Poll (announced in the December 28, 1955 edition of the magazine). They were ahead of groups led by men such as Billy Taylor, Eddie Condon, Dizzy Gillespie and Terry Gibbs.

Buddle was the only individual member of the AJQ to feature in the polls. In this same *Down Beat* poll, he scraped into the Tenor Sax category (27th out of 27) and, as a bassoon player, was placed 17th out of 24 in the Miscellaneous Instrument category. In the latter he was ahead of Wild Bill Davis (organ), Ray Nance (violin), Count Basie (organ) and others.

In the *Metronome* All Star Poll (announced in the September 1956 edition of the magazine) the AJQ was placed 8th (out of 11) in the Small Group section, which

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was won by the Modern Jazz Quartet. They were immediately behind Shorty Rogers and just ahead of Kai Winding and Jay Johnson, Shelly Mann and Hamp Hawes.

In *Metronome's* All Star Poll of January 1957, Buddle (this time listed on oboe) was placed 6th (out of 10) in the Miscellaneous Instruments category. He was ahead of the flautists Buddy Collette and Frank Wess, and the accordionist Art Van Damme.

In the 1957 *Down Beat* Poll, Buddle again scraped into the Tenor Sax list (30th out of 30). As a bassoon



*The Australian Jazz Quintet, circa 1957-58. From left, Bryce Rohde, Ed Gaston, Errol Buddle, Dick Healey, Jack Brokensha.*

player, he was placed 21st out of 27 in the Miscellaneous Instrument category. Again, he was placed ahead of Ray Nance (violin), Cal Tjader (bongos), Count Basie (organ) and others. The Combo section was again won by the Modern Jazz Quartet, with the AJQ 13th out of 30 — just behind Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers, but in front of groups led by Horace Silver, Erroll Garner, Thelonius Monk, Stan Getz, and many other great American players.

In 1958, the Australian Jazz Quintet was into its fourth year on the road. By this time, the Australians were well and truly homesick; they had been away from home for five to six years. Buddle had met an American girl, married her, and his first son had arrived. The members of the AJQ were looking kindly on the idea of returning to Australia.

**NEXT INSTALMENT: The AJQ arrives in Australia for a series of concerts, then disbands. Errol Buddle drops out of jazz and into the recording studios.**

## STORYVILLE ALL-STARS FOR SYDNEY

By Norm Linehan\*

In 1968 Allan Leake conceived the idea of a band that would not play in any fixed style but would choose its material from any source that seemed appropriate, and play it in an appropriate style. His success may be measured by the fact that the band is still active, and by the difficulty in categorising its style, which might be described broadly as traditional/dixieland/mainstream except that adherents of any one of those styles would no doubt deny it. The band has survived numerous changes of personnel since 1968 which have not affected its basic approach to the music, although the coming and going of Kenn Jones (tenor & baritone saxes) has at times brought change to the sound of the front line.

The band was originally of eight pieces, and called the Storyville Jazzmen. Early in 1975 several retirements saw a radical change in personnel, a reduction to six pieces, and a change of name to the Storyville All-Stars. In the early years of the band's career singer Joan Watts was featured regularly with them, and more recently Beverley Sheehan has been the featured vocalist. Penny Eames and Dutch Tilders provided some vocals on a two-record set issued by World Record Club in 1975. Other recordings have been made by the band for W & G and Jazznote labels.

The band's home base is at the Manor House Hotel in Melbourne, where they appear on Friday night under the banner of the Storyville Jazz Club. They have been featured at the major concert venues in Melbourne including Dallas Brooks Hall, Melbourne Town Hall, Festival Hall, and Kew and Camberwell Civic Centres. They have appeared at several Australian Jazz Conventions. They have not yet been overseas but Allan Leake looks forward to this possibility. They have, however, played in four states of the Commonwealth and the ACT.

\*For Norm Linehan's credentials, see page 20



The Storyville All-Stars were last in Sydney in January 1981 and will be there again from 22nd to 31st January 1983, appearing at various licensed premises with the suggestion that we might drink Fosters Lager. I shall miss John Murray on trombone, who has recently retired, and who apart from Allan Leake was the only remaining original member of the band. At the same time I look forward to hearing his replacement, Michael Poore, as indeed I do the whole band. In spite of changes of personnel since its origin it has retained its vitality and sense of purpose, and above all its musicianship, individual and collective. It also has a degree of presentation not always found.

The present personnel is Derek Reynolds (tpt), Michael Poore (tbn), Ian Walkear (reeds), John Adams or Graham Coyle (depending on availability, pno), Maurie Dann (bjo & gtr), Joe McConechy (bs), Allan Leake (dms & ldr), Beverley Sheehan (vcl). □

### WHERE TO SEE THE STORYVILLE ALL-STARS IN SYDNEY

#### Sunday January 23:

12 noon - 1.30 pm, Coogee Bay Hotel, Coogee Bay Rd, Coogee. 4-5.30 pm, Golden Sheaf Hotel, New South Head Rd, Double Bay.

#### Wednesday January 26:

12.30 - 2 pm, Customs House Hotel, Bridge St, Sydney. 9-12 midnight, Airport Hilton Hotel, Levey St, Arncliffe.

#### Friday January 28:

12.30 - 2 pm, Paragon Hotel, Loftus Hotel, Sydney

#### Saturday January 22:

12 noon - 1.30 pm, Bondi Hotel, Curlewis St & Campbell Pde, Bondi. 4-5.30 pm, El Rancho Hotel, Epping Highway & Herring Rd, Eastwood.

#### Saturday January 29:

11 am - 12.30 pm, Manly Corso, Manly. 3.30-5 pm, Time & Tide Hotel, Campbell Pde. & Roseberry St, Dee Why. 9.30-11 pm, The Basement, Reiby Place, Sydney.

#### Monday January 31:

12 noon - 1.30 pm, James Craig Tavern, Roseberry Street, Birkenhead Point. 4-5.30 pm, Pier One, Walsh Bay, Sydney.

## THE MODERN JAZZ QUARTET TOURING AUSTRALIA

By Samantha Katt\*

Worldwide Productions, a newly formed subsidiary of Peter Korda's Worldwide Entertainments Pty Ltd, is bringing the re-formed Modern Jazz Quartet to Australia for concerts in February, 1983.

After 22 years together, the MJQ disbanded in 1974 following a swansong world tour which, incidentally, included Australia. The reasons for the breakup have never been clear. The vibraharpist Milt Jackson was reputed to have been dissatisfied with the relatively low fees that the MJQ could command after 22 years at the top, and winning unanimous critical acclaim. He went out as a soloist.

According to JAZZ Magazine's US correspondent, Lee Jeske, John Lewis (piano) has, since 1974, been teaching at New York's City College, and performing rarely; Percy Heath (bass) formed the Heath Brothers group with his flute/saxophone player brother Jimmy; and Connie Kay (drums) has been playing primarily in New York dixieland bars.

In late 1981 the MJQ got back together for a reunion tour which included concerts in the US and Japan. Lee Jeske attended their concert in New York's Avery Fisher Hall and wrote (JAZZ Magazine, January/February 1982): "...it took about six bars for all and sundry to realise exactly why we have missed them so much and why we loved them so much in the first place.

"The elegance, the perfect combination of Lewis' gap-toothed piano style with Jackson's mercurial, legato vibes, the rhythmic interplay, the stellar repertoire of brainy, third-stream pieces by Lewis and

\*Samantha Katt is an unemployed music writer.



JANE MARCH

Milt Jackson: mercurial, legato vibes. . .

swinging blues by Jackson. There was nothing new under the sun — we heard *Django* and *Bags' Groove*, *Travelin'* and *Cylinder*, *Billie's Bounce* and *Odds Against Tomorrow*, not to mention a dozen others. Perhaps they sounded a little looser than one remembers, a little jauntier, but the experience was like a warm bath — a soothing tonic to the world's cacophony."

Since that reunion tour, the MJQ has been solidly booked. They played at the 1982 Kool Jazz Festival in New York and were received well. With audiences now showing an appreciable nostalgia for the jazz of the past, the MJQ has re-assembled at a propitious time.

The MJQ will perform in Sydney on one night only — February 18 — at Her Majesty's Theatre (two performances). In Melbourne, there will be two performances at the Dallas Brooks Hall on February 19. □

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**MARK MURPHY, EBERHARD WEBER, TEACHING IN JANUARY**

By Samantha Katt

The promoters of the Conservatorium Jazz Clinics are anxious for it to be widely known that the singer Mark Murphy and the bassist Eberhard Weber — great performers, of course — will be in Australia in January not only to perform. They will also be here to fully participate in the Sydney clinics. In other words, they will be taking classes along with other jazz educators.

Murphy is well-equipped to tutor the local singers who will attend. In 1981 he was voted No. 1 male singer in the *Down Beat* Critics Poll. He is reputed to have perfect pitch, and the evidence of his vocal ability is on his LPs over 20 years for everyone to savour.

Following his opening performance at The Basement, Sydney, in November 1981, Eric Myers wrote in *The Sydney Morning Herald*: "This was an evening for the aficionados and Mark Murphy gave in abundance what they came to hear: standard songs and jazz tunes converted into stunning vehicles for vocal skill, brilliant articulation of lyrics set to jazz solos, impeccable scat singing, and moving versions of the great ballads."

The Ella Fitzgerald tribute, "I consider Mark Murphy to be my equal" has been quoted so often that it now seems a cliché. Still, there is no doubt that it is an accurate sentiment.

In his performances around Australia this time, Mark Murphy will be accompanied by the Tony Gould Trio.

The fact that Eberhard Weber too is part of the teaching faculty, gives local bass players a unique opportunity to study with one of the world's great contemporary bassists.

Weber was last in Australia in early 1981. He and his group Colours performed at the Sydney International Music Festival, after which Eric Myers wrote in *The Sydney Morning Herald*: "...Weber (bass) Rainer Bruninghaus (piano & synthesiser), Charlie Mariano (soprano saxophone & flutes) and John Marshall (drums) were able to give a superb rendition of the haunting and meditative music, saturated with German romanticism, that they are renowned for."

This time in Australia, Eberhard Weber will be performing with the Judy Bailey Trio.



Mark Murphy



Eberhard Weber

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GLENN MILNE

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BEN RIGBY

Ron Flack (clarinet) and Freddie Payne (trumpet) of the Unity Jazz Band.



# Reports From . . .

## . . . Brisbane

By Jim Barlow

The tyranny of time inevitably reduces the number of jazz musicians actively performing. Until recent years, there was no overweening concern regarding the continuity of the art form by future generations of jazz men. The Queensland High Schools stage bands program guided and coached by a number of dedicated music educators has highlighted the potential of talented local youngsters capable of being recruited into the jazz scene. The Australian Youth Jazz Big Band under John Callaghan has already achieved considerable success with the 17 to 23 age group. The band wagon syndrome has encouraged other jazz organisations to follow suit. The Brisbane Jazz Club and the Jazz Action Society have now initiated programs with the object of involving young players with performances at their monthly meetings. Drummer Ted Vining has included young trumpet player Peter Upman in his new forward looking quartet Muaiikki Oy and the public response has been very favourable. Both organisations are planning workshops and clinics on a regular basis in 1983 with many top jazzmen from Australia and overseas scheduled to appear. The very talented leader of the Conservatorium Big Band, Graeme Leake, has now departed Brisbane for the more exotic atmosphere of Canberra but first will tour USA with the contemporary music group Flederman.

Conservatorium director Dr. Roy Wales has released the good news that internationally famous trumpeter Ed D'Amico will be joining his staff and will assume responsibility for the Big Band. An interesting development is the possibility of a second band being formed from the ranks of part-time music students. Dr. Wales is determined to inaugurate an Associate Diploma Course in Jazz Studies to commence in 1984.

It is hoped that the influx and influence of these young musicians will help break down the barriers and dismantle the ghetto type situation which frequently prevails between the protagonists of the various jazz styles. Integration now! A consummation devoutly to be wished. □

## . . . Canberra

By Carl Witty

I've noted with interest a recent increase in membership of the Canberra Jazz Club. This could be due in part to the change of venue from an uninviting basement, flanked by squash courts and their amenities, to the commodious surroundings and aquatic aspect of the Canberra Yacht Club. The comparative splendour of the new venue aside, there are some obvious drawbacks, but these, I think, the jazzgoers can live with.

There have been three functions at the new spot. The Fortified Few and Loose Ends

entertained at an "end of committee" night. Featuring again at the next function were the ubiquitous Fortified Few, this time fronted by veteran reedman Ade Monsborough. Ex-Canberra pianist (and former Few member) Sterling Primmer, travelled from Sydney to augment the band; the outfit has never sounded tighter. By way of contrast Neil Steeper's Raucous Arousal Brass Band entertained at the most recent Yacht Club meeting. The band's buffoonery met with mixed reactions ranging from incredulity to blind admiration. It was an unusual evening.

The CJC's most impressive offering for some time was a visit by Tom Baker's Swing Street Orchestra. The band's appearance in Canberra was the launching of a three weeks tour of south-east Australia. The smallest crowd was captivated by a superlative performance from seven of the country's finest jazz musicians. The music was sophisticated and stylishly presented in the manner of dance orchestras of bygone days. Baker's affable stage presence complemented his well structured and controlled playing on reeds and trumpet. It was an enjoyable concert that deserved to be better attended. I hope Canberra will hear more of this fine band.

Followers of the fortunes of the Fortified Few will have noticed some personnel changes that warrant mention. Ian Hill, drummer with the band for many years has vacated the stool due to business commitments and his place is taken by Bob Everard. Vince Genova's departure for Sydney has left the band operating successfully sans piano. John Stear returns to bass playing after some years absence to replace Bill Murphy who has retired due to ill health. Bill was a long term member of the band and his many friends will be glad to hear that he has recently undergone successful surgery and is on the road to recovery. The unusual continuity of personnel has been broken but the spark still remains.

Another one bites the dust. . . . The most recent sometime jazz venue to fold was the regular Thursday night spot at the Flute and Fiddle, Canberry Fair. The venue featured most of the local working bands on a rotating basis with the puzzling result that nobody wanted to know. It's a credit to the management that they persisted for three months before folding it.

Some may have noticed that during 1982 three of Canberra's busiest pianists have departed for other pastures — Sterling Primmer, Vince Genova and Graham Coyle. The loss of three talented working musicians from our province represents a sizable diminution of the capacity of our small population of jazz players to deliver the goods. The concern is that these gaps are not being filled; Canberra doesn't breed jazz musicians.

A new face that made an all too brief appearance on the scene is guitarist Frank Gambale. In truth, "new face" is a misnomer as Frank has been playing for some years outside the jazz context. He is a dedicated, hard working young man who, as you read this is commencing a course of study at the Guitar Institute in Los Angeles.

Unfortunately for us he is probably lost to Canberra.

The Southern Cross Club's fortnightly jazz series is drawing to a close having once again featured the best of Australian jazz. In looking forward to the next series it occurs to me that the promoters could start to be a little more adventurous in their programming of bands. Don't get me wrong, the music is great, but with the full houses and waiting lists for every show maybe they could break out of the tried and true formula. I think that the series would continue to attract support if some of the "young lions" of the Sydney scene were booked. Most of the new stellar players are known to Canberrans only by reputation.

Canberra bassist John Twigden was recently successful in gaining some funding from the Department of Capital Territory to enable him to commence a series of jazz concerts featuring local artists. The first of these was presented at the Arts Council Theatre and was an encouraging start. Musicians featured were Sally King and Lol Dudley (vocals), Dave Kain (guitar), Mitchell Burns (reeds and flute), John Twigden (bass) and from Sydney, Andrew Gander (drums). □

## . . . Mildura

By Ian Horbury

Jazz Jamboree '82 moved into gear on Friday, 29th October, with jazz in the clubs — Lazy Ade and His Late Hour Boys together with Tom Baker's Swing Street Orchestra at the Wentworth Club, while the Coomealla Club featured Penny Eames and Blue Notoriety along with the Captain Sturt Old Colonial Jazz Band. I chose to go to the Wentworth as this was to be the only appearance of the Tom Baker group.

When we arrived Ade was just finishing a set. As Neville Stribling had not yet arrived Paul Furniss sat in on clarinet, while Dave Dallwitz filled the piano chair. The little we heard of them sounded impressive.

The Swing Street Orchestra was soon into action, the most obvious feature of their playing being the excellent arrangements. The opening to the Mulligan composition *Revelation*, for instance, echoed the piano-less Mulligan quartets of the fifties, with the interplay of alto (Baker) and tenor (Furniss) set against just the rhythm section. Baker provided a powerful lead, whether on trumpet or alto, Furniss played with the authority we remembered from the '79 Jamboree and Marty Mooney was reliable on tenor. The piano of George Herrman was excellent and Graham Conlon's rhythm guitar really fleshed out a most reliable rhythm section. I was particularly intrigued by the musical conversations between guitar and piano; often when Conlon soloed Herrman would pick up his phrases and reshape them, when they would be further developed by the guitar.

Later Ade reappeared, this time with Tom Baker sitting in on the trumpet, and proceeded to charm the big crowd with his playing, his rambling intros and muttered asides.

Very late in the night the Swing Street Orchestra played a second set, this time showing that they do not need charts to



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Ron Flack (clarinet) and Freddie Payne (trumpet) of the Unity Jazz Band.

contribution to the overall effect of a most sensitive group. (Once finished, Unity moved off to the Wentworth Club where Storyville and they provided the night's music.)

Lazy Ade and the Late Hour Boys were the star attraction for the evening, and they played right up to form, with some of the same tunes as played at the concert, but a number of new ones as well. The night was wound up by the Captain Sturt Old Colonial Jazz Band who had made such a hit at the Jamboree last year. Reports coming back from the Coomealla Club on Friday night had suggested that they had lost something over the preceding twelve months, but they soon put that theory to rest. Led by the biting trumpet of John van der Koogh they fairly smoked through a great selection of trad. tunes. Despite the fact that the crowd had dwindled appreciably after Ade finished, Sturt were given a thunderous ovation by those left, who insisted on two encores. A great way to wrap up the main part of the weekend!

On Monday five of the bands stayed on to take part in the school concerts. Altogether 11 concerts were given to students of 18 schools, both primary and secondary. Approximately 3000 students heard the music. Since its inception at our second Jamboree, this has been a steadily growing feature and one that the bands seem to enjoy doing.

The weekend wound up with another clubs session on the Monday evening — Cup Eve in Victoria. Lazy Ade and His Late Hour Boys performed at the Workingman's Club while Duck Mountain and a depleted Captain Sturt were at the Merbein Club. Although not well attended, this latter venue produced a most enjoyable night with various combinations of the two groups and culminating in a jam session in the early hours.

Now all that remains is to do our sums and see whether we can look our Bank Manager in the eye. It costs over \$14,000 to stage the event and this is only possible if we can obtain sponsorship. This year the Wentworth Club came to the party.

However, the small band of willing workers is optimistic that we can survive, and planning for Jazz Jamboree '83 is already under way — for the weekend prior to the Melbourne Cup. □

## ...Perth

By Steve Robertson

Here in the west, it's like the old joke that begins "Do you want to hear the good news or the bad news . . . . .?"

First the bad news: Perth won't be getting anything like last year's plethora of overseas talent visiting town for the Festival of Perth. The 1982 Festival saw such luminaries as Keith Jarrett, Freddie Hubbard and Johnny Griffin arrive in town, but nearly all the jazz offerings lost money, so this time, the Festival is scaling back dramatically on jazz content. Mark Murphy will be here, and that's welcome news to everyone who enjoyed his performance at the Perth Jazz Society in '82. So, too will Mel Lewis, but Perth audiences, unlike those in Sydney won't be hearing Mel at the forefront of a big

band. In the west, Lewis must be content leading a quartet. George Melly plays his second consecutive Festival, ably backed by John Chilton and the Feetwarmers, and that's just about it for Festival jazz.

Festival promoters aren't exactly trumpeting the news about what they do have. Their 20 minute media slide show fails to mention any jazz artist save Melly.

Now for the good news: The Mel Lewis night, Feb. 14th, and the Mark Murphy night, Feb. 15th, are shaping up as both artistic and financial successes. For the first time in years, the Festival is presenting two of its performers through the Perth Jazz Society, which is selling tickets and making available its popular listening venue, the Hyde Park Hotel.

Also the Society is having its tenth birthday in March, and to mark the event is putting on a mini-Festival of its own. For the best part of a week, bands will be playing free lunchtime concerts in the heart of the city. At week's end, all the participating groups get together with an as-yet unnamed Eastern States player (or two) for a major jazz bash that could last well into the night. It's shaping up as the most ambitious project the PJS has yet undertaken.

Finding the musicians for all this should not be too hard. A number of new faces and groups are appearing these days on the Perth scene, most in the mainstream-modern mold. Young saxophonist Peter Harper debuted with his quartet a few months ago as the warm-up to another group at the Hyde Park. Now he's graduated to headlining his own Monday night PJS gig. Guitarist Greg Culver and his four are also well established by now. Uwe Stengel, late of the group Manteca (featured on ABC-TV), now has a combo he intriguingly calls 4-Play, and there's even a group named Hangover Triangle. This infusion of new talent into the Perth scene is partly the result of a deliberate effort by the Jazz Society to encourage more younger musicians to form groups and be heard. And it couldn't have come at a better time. The PJS meets Monday nights, the same evenings many of Perth's best veteran musos are busy earning money in the pit band for Channel 7's variety show Turpie Tonight. □

## ...Melbourne

By Adrian Jackson

Over the last few months, a pleasing trend has been discernible: more interstate musicians are being given the chance to appear around Melbourne. Not just Bell, Barnard and Burrows either (of course, they are always welcome), but names who might be less well-known, but still deserving exposure. The more traffic there is between the various capitals, the better for the musicians involved, and the scene in general.

The Australians — one of the bands that went to Sacramento in May, it comprised Bob Barnard with Ade Monsborough, Neville Stribling and Lachie Thomson on reeds, with Maurie Dann, Tony Orr, Alan Stott and Cal Duffy in the rhythm section — appeared for the VJC, the Peninsula Jazz Club, the Geelong Jazz Club and at the Limerick Arms Hotel in September. They played plenty of spirited, hot jazz that was full of both



Maureen O'Keefe: managing a new venue in Melbourne, Jackson Square. . .

looseness and unity.

The Limerick Arms, now run by Mike Hancock and Peter Gaudion, is one of Melbourne's leading venues, with plenty of regular and occasional sessions. In October, they presented three nights of fine jazz by Johnny McCarthy and Clare Hansson, backed by Ross Anderson on bass and Bill Castle on drums.

The Beaconsfield Hotel presented Kerrie Biddell and Friends (Julian Lee in superb form), and The Old Ducks (the brothers Qua with Vince Genova on piano, Bob Bertles on saxes and James Morrison on everything) in September.

The VJC had a great night with Dick Hughes at the Museum in November. Hughes was at his ebullient best, either solo or when accompanied by an all-star line-up with Des Edwards in brilliant form on trumpet, George Tack and Jimmy Loughnan on reeds, John Murray on trombone, with Ross Anderson and Bill Castle in the rhythm section. Tack also played a brief reunion set with Bill Miller and Willie McIntyre. The VJC also presented a similar lineup, with Dave Eggleton on piano, with Doc Willis in December; he was a last-minute replacement for Merv Acheson, who will hopefully make it down here next year.

Tom Baker's Swing Street Orchestra won a lot of fans with their enjoyable brand of swing when they played a number of venues around town in November.

Clifford Hocking presented the Vince Jones Quintet with Crossfire at the Melbourne Concert Hall in November, and followed in December with the Burrows-Golla and Morrison-Pudney Duos.

A new venue is Jackson Square, in Rathdowne St, Carlton. Managed by Maureen O'Keefe, it has presented Pyramid most weeks since it opened in November, and promises to present some overseas acts next year.

The New Orleans Tavern is a stylish hotel in South Yarra. On Thursdays you can hear Kenn Jones' Powerhouse Band, with the leader on reeds and Fred Parkes on clarinet; on Saturday afternoons, Swingshift with Graham Coyle piano, Lachie Thomson reeds, Joe McConechy bass, Alan Leake drums and Bev Sheehan vocals; and on Mondays, vibist Alan Lee plays stimulating duets, mostly MJQ material, with pianist Jamie Fielding. □

# CONCERT REVIEWS

## Jon Rose, Toshinori Kondo, Yoshisaburo Toyozumi

October 16, 1982. *The Mandara, Tokyo.*

This concert was given by the trio consisting of the Australian Jon Rose (5 string violin, 7 string viola), the Japanese trumpeter Toshinori Kondo (trumpet, percussion, toys, voice) who is active all over the world, and the top free jazz drummer in Japan Yoshisaburo Toyozumi. The Mandara was almost full on this occasion, which was unusual in Japan, where free improvised music has not yet achieved general acceptance. There were about 50 in the audience.

In improvisation, it is obvious that there are two methodological ways of approaching

trumpeter, but also as an 'everything/anything-ist', changing everything into instruments. Toyo played without a trace of being a 'drummer'. Jon Rose's sound appeared to be overpowered at times. Kondo took most of the musical initiatives, and Jon played as the 'co-actor' to the last. He used the violin and viola, with special effect, as parts among the whole. Between the improvised conceptions of Jon and Kondo there appeared to be at least a small gap. If I had seen Jon Rose's solo concert earlier in the week, perhaps I might have seen more clearly the differences in conception. He does make interesting music with these strange instruments (the 19 string violin, the double violin etc.)

Tetsuya Tajira.



From left: Yoshisaburo Toyozumi, Toshinori Kondo, Jon Rose.

an instrument. The first is to play the instrument with its original construction and corresponding expressive form; the second is to enlarge the concept and expressive ability by altering the instrument itself. Along with the German guitarist Hans Reichel, Jon Rose appears to belong to the latter, limited expressiveness being common to string instruments. (The players have not changed their instruments just for the hell of it.) The innovations made to the instruments come about through a process of trial and error. Method, however, is not important; it's the fundamental concept and resultant sound that matters.

It seems to me that, despite similar methods, the basic musical considerations of Jon Rose and Hans Reichel indicate different directions. Reichel's aim is to transmit sensual shock waves to his audience by the physical effect of sound, as with Evan Parker. Rose, however, aims to transmit his improvised conception itself. He works out his ideas in the same dimension as the sound and indicates it simultaneously. As with Derek Bailey, it resembles a kind of 'language'. Therefore, to Jon Rose, the alteration of the instruments is just 'a way', and less essential than it is to Reichel.

In this concert Kondo played not just as a

## Harry Rivers & Co.

*The Basement, 29 Reiby Place, Circular Quay, Sydney. Fridays & Saturdays, 12 midnight — 3 am.*

So, you've got the blues? Then, may I suggest you wipe them completely away by going to hear the happy sounds of Harry Rivers & Co. Harry is the little chunky guy with the great big smile who comes on with his troupe after Galapagos Duck finish at 12 midnight at The Basement.

If you're lucky, you'll arrive during or just before the Duck's powerful final set to hear one of the biggest little bands around. Tom Hare on saxes would be one of the giants on any continent, if given the opportunity to play more esoteric jazz tunes, rather than the more accessible tunes he and the band must play to survive. He has complete control, an amazing range, and excellent ideas which beg to be stretched out. Tom is a sensitive and masterful woodwind artist. Galapagos Duck fills the two levels of The Basement with great sound, and the audience always seems to end up happily satisfied.

At midnight about half of the first crowd find their way out. They pass their way

through the crowd into the alley near Circular Quay, say good-bye to the moustachioed and bow-tied doorman Ray, and the next group comes in. Yes, that's you if you've got the blues as previously mentioned. Or, it may be me or any one of a half dozen or so professional jazz musicians who've come to hear Harry Rivers.

The guys quickly set up their equipment. There is Ray Alldridge (piano), Ned Sutherland (guitar), Roger Fairbrother (electric bass) and Laurie Bennett (drums). Harry comes on with his conga set and smile. Then, they begin with *Chicago*, or some other familiar anthem. Rivers is here the jazz vocalist, leader and host, rather than the percussionist or drummer he is in other contexts. As the music progresses, he embellishes the congas, but is mostly singing very well with good timing and phrasing, then leading our attention to each of his band members. Harry makes sure we all know exactly who played the particular solo that just transpired. All the while he has that great big genuine smile, making us all glad we've come together with the Rivers band. We're told that the establishment will serve any number of burgers until the very end of the entertainment, thanks to the night chef. Then it's on to the next number.

On this occasion it was Harry's interpretation of the Al Jarreau composition *Easy*, a multiphased vocal/instrumental — not the kind of song you take on without some study. Harry did a fine job on this exhausting tune.

As Harry wipes honestly earned sweat from his brow with his red towel, the soloists follow. Ray Alldridge plays a mixture of barrelhouse and gospel style piano, using a two-handed chordal approach in lieu of linear, single note interpretations. Ned Sutherland, from the start, cuts through the walls of the house. He is an extremely interesting and proficient musician who is able to sculpt his way through any piece with his biting guitar work, which has obvious



ERIC MYERS

Harry Rivers: just plain ol' good vibes...

blues/rock/country roots. We have here a combination of Les Paul in the form of B.B. King in the form of Eric Clapton, playing through anything given to him, whether jazz or not.

Next, Harry acknowledges all his group again, says something humorously off-beat, wipes the sweat away, and brings us Ned Sutherland again, who blows his talented brains out on *Sweet Nuts*, a country/jazz tune.

As the set continues, the group becomes more and more cohesive, having got the pace and feel of the evening, and the music begins to swell within the Basement's walls, drawing everyone in, as did Galapagos Duck's music previously. I become more impressed with Harry Rivers' professionalism and showmanship, not to mention his vocal abilities.

I reiterate that you can eradicate your blues by listening to Harry Rivers — even if he sings the blues. (You don't necessarily get the blues by listening to them). If you have the opportunity to speak with the leader between sets, by all means do so. Harry is an accessible, conversational individual who'll make you feel as if you've been friends for years. He's as happy as he looks and just has plain ol' good vibes.

You may be interested to know that The Basement also offers the Ray Alldridge Quartet featuring Ned Sutherland after Galapagos Duck finish on Thursday nights. Have a good time.

Robert A. Rouda

### Mark Isaacs

Sydney Opera House Recording Hall,  
December 19, 1982.

Mark Isaacs's solo improvisation concert showed yet again the promising brilliance of this young musician.

As the title for the concert suggested, most of the performance was improvisation. However, Isaacs did play a lyrical composition which he has not yet given a title to, and a charming encore — the Beatles' *Something*.

Despite a distinct Keith Jarrett influence,

Isaacs showed an individual freshness and inventiveness which resulted in some beautiful moments and music which was constantly interesting.

The Opera House venue, and the solo performance was not perhaps Isaacs's customary situation — his followers mainly see him playing the jazz clubs to more relaxed audiences. But the concert was well attended and the mixed audience was very receptive. Isaacs adapted to the formality of the situation and his vast experience as a performer allowed him to overcome the initial feeling of restriction I think he had.

Although his playing was restrained at the start, Isaacs was in no way hesitant about the quiet beginning. The structural simplicity of the music was the perfect tool to introduce his audience to his very pleasing melodic lines and the beautiful tone he gets from the piano.

Wisely Isaacs chose simplicity to allow the usual warming up period to set a very pleasing mood for the concert.

As Isaacs grew more adventurous and his brilliant technique surfaced, his tone still retained that pure presence so often lost by musicians who become too immersed in their "chops" to keep in touch with the sound they produce.

Isaacs kept his music moving, paced with timely changes in colour and mood. He became quite adventurous, particularly in the second half of the concert, exploring and developing not only the colours of the keyboard, but also textures found in the strings and the percussive sound of the wood of the piano, not to mention singing lines he was playing.

Fortunately, Isaacs did not fall into the trap of labouring particular effects. He changed the mood before the listeners could become complacent and he did not over-work some of the more outlandish textures which tend to alienate many listeners.

One remarkable feature of the performance was Isaacs's unassuming personality. It's as though he humbles himself to his music, allowing the music to convey his personality. It is this union that

creates the unique performer.

I am sure that Mark Isaacs's command of both the jazz and classical idioms, his diverse musical background together with his self-assuredness will support him as he continues to develop the art that is his own. Already he shows a musical maturity beyond his years, while playing with the freshness of youth. There is no doubt that this young man will be noticed. Bravo!

Eija Cox

### Sketches, The Ken James Reunion Band, the Bernie McGann Trio, the Danny Fine Ensemble.

Jenny's, 423 Pitt Street, Sydney, Tuesdays - Saturdays.

Modern jazz enthusiasts who have felt starved of good music recently, as the established clubs have moved even further into funk or fusion, ought to investigate Jenny's Wine Bar in Pitt Street, which is presenting an undiluted jazz policy Tuesdays to Saturdays. The programme at the moment is Sketches (Tuesdays), Ken James Reunion Band (Wednesdays), Bernie McGann Trio (Thursdays and Fridays), Danny Fine Ensemble (Saturdays).

Sketches are a quintet led by the young drummer Tony Buck, and are a very promising band indeed. They work in what might very loosely be called Coltrane territory, but not exclusively so, as they play bop pieces as well as some very interesting originals. What impressed me about the band when I heard them was that unlike many young groups playing jazz in Sydney, Sketches didn't see each number as a vehicle for assaulting the audience with power-playing. In fact in their second set, three of the four numbers were softly played slow tempo pieces. The other members of Sketches are Jason Morphett and Ricardo Mattos (saxes), Kevin Hunt (piano) and Hugh Fraser (bass). I hope we hear a lot more of them, as the group deserves to be better known.

The Ken James Reunion Band has John Pochée on the drums, Vince Genova on piano, and Col Brown on bass (on the first of my two visits Carlinhos Goncalves played percussion). Ken James gets better and better, and played a solo on Ellington's *Prelude To a Kiss* that would have been the envy of every tenor player in town — had they been there to hear it — for its construction, delicacy of phrasing and beauty of tone. Later that night on *Isobel the Liberator* and *Half-Nelson*, the fiery, aggressive side of his playing was in evidence. The American Vince Genova seems to be playing every venue in Sydney, but I doubt whether he can be heard in a more sympathetic context than that of the Reunion Band, where his driving style has found natural support in the dynamic drumming of John Pochée.

Pochée again co-stars with the great Bernie McGann's trio on Thursdays and Fridays. It's hard to believe that McGann has played only a handful of gigs in 1982. Still, he is back, and continues to amaze. Everything he does sounds fresh and alive, as there are no clichés in his playing. In some ways the trio format highlights McGann's playing more consistently than quartet and quintet line-ups



JANE MARCH

Mark Isaacs: an individual freshness and inventiveness which resulted in some beautiful moments...

— he knows he shoulders a heavier responsibility and invariably rises to the occasion. He is a must if you love music — there is little more to say. The bass players whose contributions to these musical celebrations must not be overlooked are Ray Martin (Thursdays) and Lloyd Swanton (Fridays).

On Saturdays Danny Fine leads a band which includes that exciting young pianist Chris Abrahams. They play with enthusiasm and wit and are worth catching, especially as Fine is one of the few practitioners of the baritone sax who can be heard playing regularly.

Plans for the near future at Jenny's include Roger Frampton's band Intersection, The Benders, some concerts by musicians involved in the free music scene as well as appearances by other top groups. The club deserves to succeed as Sydney desperately needs a venue committed to modern jazz.

Anthony Stanton



JANE MARCH

Ken James on tenor: construction, delicacy of phrasing and beauty of tone. . .

### The Benders

Second Birthday Schmozzle, The Paradise Jazz Cellar, Sydney, December 16.

To celebrate The Benders' second birthday, party hats with lucky numbers inside them were presented to all who came through the door. The stage was decorated with streamers and paper ornaments; the only things missing were fairy bread and sausage rolls! Champagne corks may not have been exactly flying, but the audience was definitely in a jubilant mood.

Many in the audience were dedicated Benders' fans and friends. In the small but informal confines of the Paradise, strangers sitting at the same tables introduced themselves, and old friends met again. The Cellar was buzzing with friendly, excited talk.

The Benders came on stage to resounding applause. Jason Morphett is the latest addition to the band, having replaced Mark Simmonds on saxophone, who left The Benders in October last to play with the Rocky Horror Show in Adelaide. For Morphett, this is his biggest break so far. He plays pleasant saxophone, and is really able to swing. He can be soft and mellow when the tune calls for it. In my view, The Benders are no longer a saxophonist with a backing band, but more a band that works together as a whole.

For their first number, they chose Mal Waldron's *Wheelin'*. Many of their numbers were originals written by members of the band. For instance *Branic Device* by Chris Abrahams (piano). It was given a creative Latin American feel by Andy Gander (drums). They played Dale Barlow's *Mean Scene*, which is a favourite, especially with an audience of loyal fans. One gentleman exclaimed, "Andrew always explodes". Abrahams gave an electrifying performance on the piano, building up for the saxophone solo. *Mean Scene* has long been identified with Dale Barlow, the original saxophonist with The Benders. Morphett, however, brought his own very definite style of energetic playing to the number.

A ballad by Chris Abrahams, *I'm The Kinda Guy (That Jumps Outa Windows)* was played. As this title might indicate, it is impossible to have a night of merely serious music with The Benders — especially as Abrahams and Lloyd Swanton agree that the aim of the group is "a serious attempt to fuse modern improvisation with slapstick comedy."

At one stage the music was forgotten while slapstick comedy was performed. A cake with a peppermint fish flavour arrived from the jazz critic Geoff Maddox. Maddox, who does not appear in jazz clubs in person, because of the new random breath testing legislation, gave a speech via tape, as he has done on several Benders' celebrations. He said that he was glad he told these "jazz kids" not "to throw in the towel" when he first heard them. The lucky number was drawn by King Thing, lead singer of The Things. He had to draw several numbers until a winner owned up. The lucky winner received a Pelaco T-shirt, staminade, health salts and other sporting goods, a la Rex Mossop's *World of Sport*.

Back to the music and a rendition of John Coltrane's *India*, with Lloyd Swanton's sound on the bass reminiscent of the Indian sitar. They also did Swanton's number *Go-Go Boys*, a funky, Latin-tinged tune.

The comedy continued with an appearance by the notorious jazz promoter Horst Liepolt, played with German hipness by the writer and jazz buff John Clare. He told the audience what he thought of them and The Benders.

The members of The Benders feel that they have accomplished some goals in their two years at the Paradise; they feel they are improving and refining what they do. "The music says it all; that's where it all comes out", says Lloyd Swanton.

For those who missed the fun and excitement of The Benders' Second Birthday Schmozzle, don't worry. There should be a third, and a fourth, and a fifth. . .

Allecia Wangmann

## OBITUARY



GEORGE HERRMAN, who was born on June 29, 1920, died on December 18, 1982. Suddenly it seems that so many are going — old friends, good musicians, good people. But for all that, you're never ready for the next one. And all the things people think and feel happen to you again, as though for the first time. So it's both old and yet icily new to say that George's death came as a shock to the jazz community in general and to me personally.

I had worked with George both casually and regularly since the mid seventies, and consider myself honoured to have been on what I think was his only recording. Many outstanding musicians are loathsome as individuals and many good people make pedestrian musicians. George was rare in being, in my experience of him, both a gentle man and a first rate jazz musician, one of those very few of whom I've never heard anything ill spoken. His name was always mentioned with affection for his idiosyncrasies — his everpresent transistor, his enjoyment of food, his lightning fast verbal humour — and respect for his musical prowess. Beyond the basic technical equipment, George possessed a magnificently developed ear, an elephantine memory (for people's voices as well as for music), and an effortless swing and delicate intelligence of phrasing.

He will probably be remembered musically by the general public for what is most recent: his work with Tom Baker's Swing Street Orchestra, a band which gave its farewell performance only four days before George gave his. But, unobtrusively and modestly, he has been paying his dues for many years. While others, often less talented and less generous of spirit, occupied the spotlight, he continued quietly to share his mighty gifts simply for the satisfaction of playing. Of his death this, at least, can be said, that it was sudden, and found him doing what he seemed to love most. He died of a heart attack while playing a gig at Bowral.

Well, the instrument is now cold and dark. But a record and some tapes remain as the most convincing of memorials to this man, of whom the very best thing that may be said of a person can be said — the world is poorer and sadder for having lost him.

Bruce Johnson

# Record Reviews



**CHARLIE CHRISTIAN**  
**"Solo Flight"**  
 (Avan-Guard VSLP 213)  
**DJANGO REINHARDT**  
**"The Legendary Django"**  
 (World Record Club R.03882)  
**DJANGO REINHARDT**  
**"Paris 1945; with American All Stars"** (Avan-Guard BVL 046)  
**CARL KRESS, DICK MC-DONOUGH, TONY MOTTOLA, GEORGE VAN EPS**  
**"Fun On The Frets: Early Jazz Guitar"** (Yazoo L-1061)

It is a well worn truism of jazz history that Charlie Christian transformed the role of the guitar in jazz. Such was his impact, however, that we do not often notice what he unwittingly took away from the music while he was giving so much to it. The guitar had already been a palpable rhythm pulse, and Christian perpetuated this function, as his work on this LP shows. It is a role that the instrument still

fulfils, its most venerable exponent in this way being Freddie Green. No, the thing which Christian transformed was the approach to the guitar as a solo voice. He exploited the sustained resonance of the electric guitar, allowing its sounds to float, horn-like, over the biggest of bands. Notes sounded on the acoustic guitars decayed quickly as well as lacked volume. They therefore were required to be more tightly packed and staccato in phrasing. The acoustic guitarist who also wished to be a soloist could only develop through speed of fingering and depth of theoretical knowledge. He had to fill the space with smaller and therefore more numerous units of sound. It was also useful to have a good ear for various chord inversions and substitutions to provide fills which would add interest to a solo. The electric guitar changed all this, for good and ill.

You can pick up one of today's instruments, turn up the volume, and fill an auditorium with sound at the expense of minimal knowledge and effort, producing a convincing approximation of pop music effects within a few minutes of beginning to fiddle around. I am not indulging in a condemnation of modern popular music, but simply referring to the fact that, with the enormous electronic component in the finished result, a player can get by with the most rudimentary of contributions. The more electronic intervention, the lower the bottom line (so that we now have sophisticated keyboard instruments which provide chords, bass, and percussion, if a player can simply pick out the melody with one finger). There is something to be said for this minimalising of the period of discipline required before a person can perform: it places within the hands of anyone who can get hold of, say, an electric guitar, the experience of making music. But it has also resulted in a loss, in that often the player discovers that he can get by with this and goes no further; the result is a deluge of musical farex. As novelist John Wain wrote recently in an article on jazz in *Encounter* (Aug. '82), it is now possible to make a fortune out of music without being a musician. None of these negative propositions applies to Christian himself, however. As this reissue reminds us, he was so advanced, so uncomplacent a musician, that even today he is still not dated or dull. You can still play like Christian in a jazz group and sound fresh and contemporary.

So startling was his influence that he has seemed to many to have sprung fully formed out of nothing. This is not entirely fair. Although he changed its direction, there was already a tradition of guitar soloing. In fact, listen to *Six Appeal* (1940) on this album and then to Teddy Bunn's solo on *Wild Man Blues* (1938) with Johnny Dodds and his Chicago Boys. Their solo approaches to the minor blues are strikingly similar (which is the more surprising when we remember that Bunn picked out his solos with his thumb — yet his attack on the acoustic instrument is no less sharp than Christian's with a plectrum on the electric). What Christian did was not to initiate the history of the guitar solo, but to alter its character so decisively that, in effect, he virtually blacked out much of what had gone before. The point could hardly be more clearly demonstrated than by this clutch of

reissues.

The material on *Solo Flight* is mostly familiar to us all, so much so in fact that we often forget how profoundly Christian's work must have astonished his colleagues. The other LPs help to restore our perspective. *The Legendary Django* is a redesigned but otherwise identical reissue (down to Alexis Korner's sleeve note) of one of the most stunning Reinhardt anthologies from HMV/EMI during the mid sixties, now available to a new generation. *Paris 1945* is actually misleading. Django is present on only 4 out of the 12 tracks. The rest of the music features personnel from the band of the then recently missing Glen Miller, recorded in immediate post-war Paris. It is interesting in reminding us of the jazz credentials of men like Peanuts Hucko, but watch out if you're expecting an album devoted to Reinhardt. *Fun On The Frets* offers a rare sample of guitarists Kress, McDonough, Mottola, and George Van Eps. What emerges from all these is an all but vanished tradition, a fully formed approach to instrumental improvisation which, in terms of subsequent jazz development, has been largely eclipsed by Christian and his inheritors.

The Reinhardt LP's remind us of what we already suspected, that Django was perhaps the greatest jazz musician born outside America. He was a master of every aspect of his instrument. A compelling rhythm player, he had an enormous repertoire of strumming patterns: the standard off-beat damping; the damping of all four beats (*Hallelujah*), a technique which Bud Scott has been credited with developing; a 'boom-chica-boom' pattern (*You Took Advantage*); the shuffle rhythm; the thick robust chorded interjections (*Sweet Georgia Brown*); the chordal tremolo which builds up such pressure, as behind Grappelli on *My Serenade*. His understanding of the harmonic possibilities of his idiom was as thorough as any musician's, and this knowledge enriches not only his cascading solos, but the voicings and inversions of his chords, as on *Naguine* (there may also have been something of the virtue of necessity in this — his crippled left hand doubtless forced him to explore unusual chord formations).

Reinhardt was as complete a jazz guitarist as had lived up to that time, and no matter how well you know his work, he still takes your breath away when you hear him again. And yet for all that, he contributed little to the main stream of development of jazz in the US. He has certainly not been seminal in the way Christian was. This is partly because of technology. Although Delaunay was rapturous over Django's performances on the electric guitar with a bop group in 1951, on record his work was never as riveting on electric as it was on acoustic guitar. The volubility of his style, so necessary to the latter, did not suit the former at that stage of its development. His solo style required that abrupt decay of the note which, at that time, was one of the obstacles to the further development of the guitar as a jazz instrument. But it was also a question of temperament which prevented him from having much effect on the future. The coming revolution in jazz was to involve, among other things, a defiant withdrawal from conventional western harmony. For all his outstanding virtuosity as a jazz musician, Django

remained essentially a European rather than an American in his thinking. Even playing the blues (*Stephen's Blues, Blues*), he sounds politely European, much as his idol Eddie Lang also did.

For all Django's gypsy passion, his sound was civilised, even genteel, in a way that someone like Robert Johnson, for example, with his voodoo darkness, was not. On *You Rascal You*, there is a sudden passionate chorded burst of *Begin the Beguine*, but it is the contained, stylized passion of the bullfight or the tango, or Valentino smouldering, but safely, at a distance, in black and white and in two dimensions only. One never draws back, frightened or disturbed by Django's work, as one does in the face of Robert Johnson's barbarously haunted blues. Reinhardt's music has a closed, European 'correctness' and finish which sealed it off against later and more exotic developments. The bravura performance of *Rhythme Futur* is therefore misnamed. It is not the sound of the future, but is in many ways an overblown (if impressive) relic of nineteenth century virtuosity, a jazz equivalent of *The Flight Of The Bumble Bee*, which consists of searching out and illuminating every corner of an older and well known harmonic tradition.

His own jazz pedigree is interesting in this connection. I said that he admired and started out emulating Eddie Lang, whose real name, Salvatore Massaro, recalls his own European origins. Like Django's, Lang's playing often manifested a mediterranean romanticism, and reminds us that there existed in pre-Christian (I resist the temptations ...) American jazz a European, or at the least, white jazz guitar style. *Fun on the Frets* (the album) embodies all its characteristics. Again, if we keep in mind someone like Robert Johnson, the point emerges by contrast. The playing of Tony Mottola and Clark Kent look-alike Carl Kress has a sun-lit archness that you could take home to your maiden aunt. A wise-cracking title like *Sarong Number* catches the atmosphere perfectly. The raciness is preened. The beauty, the artistic effect, is framed, showing that the man, not the music, is in charge (compare the driven sound of Robert Johnson. Look at the titles). The exoticism hinted at in some of the titles has, finally, the familiar tidiness of a Norman Rockwell painting, where even the specks of dirt are somehow clean. The Sarong in the title is worn by Dorothy Lamour. The animal in the title *Camel Walk* is a domesticated beast that looks funny. The *Blonde On The Loose* is a cleanly manicured Marilyn Monroe, carefully contained within a safe, if suggestive posture that won't really deprave our boys over there.

Perhaps the work of George Van Eps summarises the ambience, especially on his *Tea For Two*, a subdued, expressively shaded, yet always controlled reappraisal of Art Tatum's approach to the song. Van Eps may be using an electric guitar, and he is recording these songs in 1949. But he embodies a tradition that the main stream of jazz had diverged from. His work represents in many ways the culmination of the tradition which Christian interrupted. If I have seemed to stress what this style lacked in terms of later developments, it is not to say that it is in any way negligible. It is a beautiful tributary

in the history of the music, but, alas, rather disappeared underground with the advent of Charlie Christian. In fact, the extent to which the latter altered the shape of things has made the attempt to keep the older style alive seem to be a dedicated anachronism. Yet it is a style which is much more than a delicate museum piece. Work with Pat Wade, one of Sydney's most complete masters of Django's approach, and you'll find yourself buoyed up and propelled along with irresistible energy. Others who have kept this white acoustic style alive are Marty Grosz and Wayne Wright (*Let Your Fingers Do The Walking* Aviva 6000), and Richard Warner and John Webb (*Red Hot Guitars* VJM LC 15SO). It is a shame, even though inevitable, that their work is so often perceived as a form of antiquarian eccentricity, because they are seeking to retrieve a treasure of great formal beauty. Charlie Christian's achievement unintentionally buried nothing less than a defined school of jazz guitar playing. It was a school which grew out of the vocational dedication of a body of musicians who, in many cases, devoted their unique, irreplaceable lives to elaborating its conventions. In some cases, it was a dedication which indirectly shortened their lives — witness Dick McDonough.

Taken together, these albums represent fairly comprehensively the various possibilities of the acoustic jazz guitar, as well as the earth-shaking work of the man who attenuated those possibilities, and pointed the new way ahead.

Bruce Johnson



**CURTIS COUNCE GROUP  
"Councellation"  
(Contemporary Records S7539)**

Although Curtis Counce's name is rarely heard today, he was one of the most distinctive and exploratory of the West Coast musicians of the fifties. While many of his colleagues from that time and place were cultivating the fashionable mannerisms of Cool to the point of anonymous blandness, Counce, for a few brief years, assembled a band that had a more naked energy and a more individual, if unostentatious, voice. Counce himself was not a spectacular bass player, but solid, steady, thoughtful, with a gentle but accurate attack and a completely acoustic tone. Not a pyrotechnician, it is the

choice and pulse of his notes that count, not their abundance. As on his solo on *Big Foot*, he is never more garrulous than eighth notes, but he is always considered. His work as a composer is more evidently arresting, along with his arrangements. He showed imagination and a sense of structure. The songs are all embellished with something beyond a casual blowing through a few choruses. Introductions, interludes, codas, all reflect Counce's interested approach to a tune. The blues, *Complete*, shows just how spare and at the same time how interesting his work can be. The head is close to being a single note figure, floating and serene, but he introduces each soloist with four bars of a sort of busy chatter between the bass and the drums, that makes the performance unique. *Councellation* (the song) shows the effects of his studies with Lyle Murphy — sections of it are in what was then rather fatuously called the twelve tone system. Counce, however, assimilates the idea undemonstratively, never trying to hammer home his own precious cleverness. It emerges as tonally disembodied interpolations of whole tone work over augmented chords (not so thrillingly new, either; look at Coleman Hawkins's *Queer Notions* from 1933). But he uses the device as an element in a larger whole, so that he contains the unresolved episodes within an encompassing and resolved unity.

The band on this album consists of a collection of personalised, almost maverick talents. Harold Land is one of the most shamefully underrated tenor players. His work is always made interesting by its careful ear for variety of pace and an architectural sense. There is an edge, a bite, to his approach which, again, marks him out from many of the white West Coast players. 'Interesting' is also the word for Jack Sheldon's trumpet, always producing little surprises. He's much in the Clifford Brown mould, especially the Brownie of the LP *Warm* recorded in California in Aug.-Sept. 1954, where, interestingly, Clifford was working with Harold Land. Sheldon's playing on the up tempo *Mean To Me* could almost have come from that session. Sheldon has disappeared into the studios since, though a recent LP under his own name reaffirms his thoughtful sensitivity as a musician. Although also only intermittently visible over the years, drummer Frank Butler is somewhat better known, perhaps because of association with such public musicians as Miles Davis. It is his work which, above all, gives the rhythm section its distinctive character. He not only maintains a foundation, he also conducts discreetly witty conversations with the front line voice. Like Butler, and partly for the same reason, pianist Carl Perkins is a little better known. A stabbing, darting, always swinging player, his death in 1958 cut short a career that might have altered measurably the history of the music.

In the case of Counce, the suspicion is even stronger that, had he lived, he would at some time have become a significant innovator, especially as composer/arranger. The title of another of his LP's *Exploring the Future*, embodied a promise which his death in 1963 at the age of 37 left unfulfilled.

Bruce Johnson.



# Record Reviews



**MIKE NOCK**  
**"Ondas" (ECM 1220)**  
**JEREMY STEIG & EDDIE GOMEZ**  
**"Rain Forest" (CMP 12 ST)**

These two albums have three rather important things in common: Mike Nock, Eddie Gomez, and German record labels. Aside from these factors, they couldn't be more different.

*Ondas* is something of an instant classic, because of the long version of *Forgotten Love* which occupies most of side one. This piece was previously recorded by Nock on *In Out and Around*, with Mike Brecker, George Mraz, and Al Foster.

This new version — and the rest of the album — was recorded by a trio of Nock, piano; Gomez, bass; and Jon Christensen, drums. It is lighter, sparser, and even more evocative than its predecessor. Eicher's extensive use of reverb in production — the ECM 'sound' — suits this piece admirably. This simple, repetitive, and hauntingly beautiful composition must surely be one of Nock's strongest.

Stretched over sixteen minutes, never straying too far from the theme, the repetition is mesmerising rather than monotonous. Both Nock and Gomez solo twice, each a magnificently melodic impres-

sionistic flight. Christensen stays relatively unobtrusive, colouring, skirting around the other two, seldom stating the time, and often dropping right out. Nonetheless, his shadings are crucial in sustaining the length of the piece.

The title track, *Ondas*, is in a similar vein, though the mood is more troubled than the serene opener.

*Visionary*, once again based on a repetitive left hand figure, develops considerably more rhythmic momentum, though largely by implication rather than statement. This is followed by the childlike primitivism and innocence of *Land of the Long White Cloud*, a reference to Nock's homeland of New Zealand. On both pieces, Gomez uses his lean, lithe bass sound to create solos in the tradition of Scott La Faro: working more with mobility than fatness of sound.

*Doors* is the only piece with sufficient rhythmic drive to let Christensen stretch beyond his colouring role. He has no peer outside of Jack DeJohnette for these skippy, airy feels.

This music is in the — dare I say it — ECM mainstream, which is not meant to denigrate Nock as a composer. Those of you who are familiar with the late-seventies ECM output in any quantity will know what I mean.

Nock said in an interview on 2SER-FM's *Elbow Room* that there were takes from a previous session which he preferred, the released ones being Eicher's choice. If there was a better take of *Forgotten Love*, it must have been an awesome piece of music.

Throughout the other album, *Rain Forest*, Gomez does not play with nearly the conviction of *Ondas*. However, the album as a whole is also quite beautiful.

It opens with the light funk of *Dugnafied*. I know you might be sick of hearing it, but Steve Gadd's drumming is a marvel, particularly his intuitive sense of space, and the way he takes a unison phrase with the front line, and spreads it around the kit. The tune, by Steig, is a jostling, bouncy number, with his flute multi-tracked and very percussive.

A Gomez piece, *Rhomb Line*, follows. This one swings! Jack DeJohnette is on drums, Nock on Fender Rhodes, and Steig is straight ahead; no gadgets or multi-tracking.

*Sacrifice* is by Steig, with a Satie-like melody. It is a showcase for the five-piece rhythm section of Nock (who plays electric instruments throughout), Gomez, DeJohnette, Nana Vasconcelos on percussion, and Ray Baretto on congas.

*Rain Forest* is a rather humid piece, with Nock on Oberheim Synthesizer as well as Rhodes. Gadd is back at the drums, and Vasconcelos plays suitably sweaty percussion. I can't help feeling that the string synth makes it sound a bit like the soprier CTI stuff, but then maybe that overwhelming lushness is appropriate for a sound picture of a rain forest.

All of Steig's gadgets are used on his flute on *Amazon Express*: MXR Digital Delay, Mutron III, Bi-Phase, and Octave Divider. This one will have you unpacking the mosquito nets.

*Rosa* is welcome relief, in which Nock's Rhodes provides a lone backdrop for delicate flute/bass exchanges.

Gomez's solo on the closing *Carnival Sonata* confirms that if you are into his bass

playing, Nock's album is the better of the two, although this is the sort of album one would end up playing more frequently. Jazz flautists shouldn't miss it, and as with seemingly all German records, the production and pressing are immaculate.

John Shand



**THE VINTAGE JAZZ & BLUES BAND**

**"Eight To The Bar" (VJS3)**

For years the Vintage Jazz Band has been one of Brisbane's most popular bands. This, their third Vintage Jazz Society LP, shows a new relaxation and maturity without any loss of their former drive and hotness.

Their personnel has remained remarkably constant over the years, the main change being the replacement of Andy Jenner by Tich Bray's Melbourne-styled alto sax and clarinet, bringing a more "Australian" sound to the band. Mike Hawthorne is one of the few trombone players around who can play a harmonic tailgate line instead of the usual dixieland trumpet call and response. John Braben (trumpet) plays a punchy, sparse lead, leaving plenty of space for the others.

The rhythm section is rock solid (or should I say, jazz solid?), propelled along by Bob Watson's drumming. Peter Freeman (bass) brings a more modern sound to the band, which contrasts nicely with Jo Bloomfield's raggy piano. John Cox handles his banjo solo on *Black Bottom Stomp* very well indeed, and fills his banjo/guitar role with commendable fluidity.

Paula Cox (Cox the Vox) is an added bonus, singing, as Len Barnard says on the cover notes, with "a general air of authority", her material varying from Bessie Smith to Fats Domino. There are nice inventive approaches to the pieces, for instance the clarinet and bass on *Blue Blood Blues*.

Basically the band plays in the 1920s New Orleans/Chicago idiom, with a more modern approach, making me think of the Barber band at times (though less restrained). Is that the influence of cane toad juice in those cans with the crosses on them?

The Blues part of the band's name is amply borne out by the repertoire; half the tunes on the LP are blues or blues sounding. Production of the record and cover are well up to the standard, an immense improvement over VJS1.

Adrian Ford



**SPHERE**  
**"Four In One"**  
 (Elektra Musician E9 601661)

The back cover of this album shows the members of Sphere resplendent in tuxedos, recalling the elegant image of the Modern Jazz Quartet. Their approach to their music also recalls the MJQ: they play very substantial compositions, and they explore the music without overstatement, with thoughtful, subtle interplay.

Sphere has been described as a repertory band dedicated to the memory of Thelonious Sphere Monk; that is not quite the case. I had the good fortune to catch Sphere in New York, where Buster Williams explained to me that the band was a co-operative formed by four old friends, two of whose long association with the then-reclusive Monk led the band to include a number of Monk compositions in the book, along with standards and originals. Since Monk's death, the band's ability to keep alive the Monk legacy has assumed greater importance. Sphere's debut LP includes only Monk compositions — but, incredibly, it was recorded on the day that Monk died, before the players learned the sad news that made their tribute a memorial.

The two members of Sphere who worked with Monk for many years in the '60s are tenor saxophonist Charlie Rouse and drummer Ben Riley. Riley, bassist Buster Williams and pianist Kenny Barron have worked together frequently in the past decade, notably in the Ron Carter Quartet. Each is an extremely talented musician, underrated by anyone who thinks of them as merely a 'good player'.

There are two outstanding features on this album. They are the music played, and the players' musicianship.

The six pieces here are among Monk's best, but they are hardly jazz standards as *Round Midnight* and *Straight, No Chaser* are. There is abundant logic, wit and surprise inherent in the music, and the compositions are done justice by Sphere.

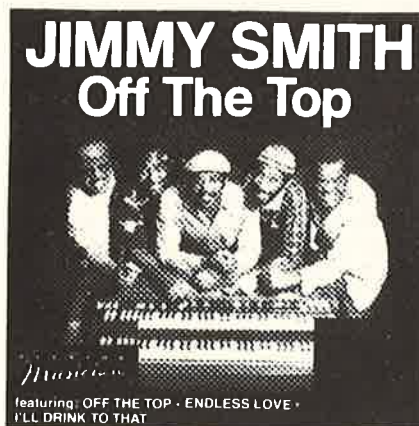
Charlie Rouse's tenor is airy, light and full-bodied, and his lines flow most eloquently. If Rouse brings the band toward reincarnating the Monk Quartet of the '60s, Kenny Barron avoids the situation — he is too busy a pianist to imitate Monk, and too complete a musician to consider it. Buster Williams is superb, a responsive accompanist and a strong soloist, while Ben Riley performs the

timekeeper's role to perfection.

The compositions are given freshness not only by the playing, but also by the arrangements. *Light Blue* is a melancholy theme for tenor and bass in unison, *Four In One* is lifted by some lively riffing, and so on.

On *Four In One*, Sphere plays the music of Thelonious Monk with great affection and respect, and no less individuality and verve. Highly recommended.

Adrian Jackson



**JIMMY SMITH**  
**"Off The Top"**  
 (Elektra Musician E9 60175-1)

Jimmy Smith is something of an institution in jazz: the man who pioneered the use of the organ as a modern jazz instrument in the '50s, defined the instrument's vocabulary, and has remained the premier performer on the instrument ever since. His early Blue Note LPs are the definitive jazz organ recordings, and it still holds true that anyone playing jazz organ, is playing at least some Jimmy Smith.

Given this, it seems cruelly ironic that Smith has been very much taken for granted in recent years, and reduced to serving the commercial funk market in his recordings. It is to be hoped that the all-star lineup of *Off The Top* will attract wide interest, for it marks a welcome return to real jazz on record for Jimmy Smith. On it we hear him stretching out and really blowing; he may be no innovator these days, but he is certainly a jazz stylist whose playing is full of vitality.

He is joined by some heavy friends on this date, in guitarist George Benson, saxophonist Stanley Turrentine, bassist Ron Carter and drummer Grady Tate (percussionist Crusher Bennett is added on two tracks). Turrentine and Benson have both tended to be smothered in 'production' on recent recordings, so it is pleasing to hear them, like Smith, blowing at length.

The opening track, *Off The Top*, is a strong groove with long, cooking solos from guitar, organ and tenor. *Endless Love* is improvised on attractively; I could have done without the string ensemble in the intro, but otherwise the three soloists provide a tasteful performance. *Mimosa* is a mellow, laid-back setting for some relaxed interplay between Benson and Smith.

The opener on side 2, *I'll Drink To That*, is the album's highlight, a long blues jam with Benson at his bluesiest best, Turrentine's tenor at its most soulful, and Smith at his

funkiest. Smith and Benson work together very well for a very bluesy jam on *Theme From M.A.S.H.*, Smith paying tribute to both Garner and Waller in passing. The final track is a rap from Smith, who tells us what fun it was for the musicians — tautological, but enjoyable.

I could quibble by wishing that the whole album really kicked like *I'll Drink To That* does, or by noting that a bit more Turrentine would not have gone astray; but, those points hardly detract from the album's success. It is a showcase for some big-name musicians who are all in top form (especially Smith and Benson), and provides a lot of very enjoyable listening.

Adrian Jackson



**WYNTON MARSALIS**  
**"Wynton Marsalis"**  
 (Columbia FC 37574)

In the two years he has been part of the jazz scene, trumpeter Wynton Marsalis has been important. He arrived as a 19-year old member of Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers; apart from his age, what set people talking was the stunning brilliance of his playing that invariably called to mind the late Clifford Brown and the young Freddie Hubbard.

Before setting things alight with Blakey's band, Marsalis had sound credentials. His father, Ellis, was a well-regarded jazz pianist in New Orleans, and Wynton had already revealed prodigious ability as a classical trumpeter, having performed with the New Orleans Symphony, the Mexico City Symphony and the Brooklyn Philharmonic. After a healthy stint with the Jazz Messengers, Marsalis toured with Herbie Hancock; Ron Carter and Tony Williams completed the band.

Marsalis's recordings with Blakey revealed him to be a dazzlingly brilliant trumpeter, capable of playing in the classic hard bop style with both flair and logic. To coin a cliché, the maturity of his playing belied his age.

If anything, Marsalis is even more impressive on the self-titled LP he recorded in late 1981. With Blakey, he was inevitably going to be cast in a role similar to the ones played by Lee Morgan, Clifford Brown, etc., when they were in that band. Here, Wynton calls the tunes, and we get a clearer idea of his own approach.

Marsalis himself is marvellous throughout. He swings with confidence and poise, his tone is superb, his ideas flow freely, and his

# Record Reviews

execution is flawless. He is a keenly intellectual player, but lacks little in feeling.

He is featured in two contexts on this record. The first is his working band, with Branford Marsalis on tenor and soprano, Kenny Kirkland on piano, Clarence Seay or Charles Fambrough on bass and Jeff Watts on drums. It is a fine unit that is strongly reminiscent in sound and feel of Miles Davis's classic '60s Quintet. The rhythm section seems to be striving for that band's rhythmic elasticity, while the two horns certainly achieve a similar air of freshness and spontaneity. Branford's soprano sound and phrasing are perhaps too similar to Wayne Shorter's, but his ideas are astute and well expressed.

Not surprisingly, the other band used is even more reminiscent of Miles's former Quintet, as it includes Herbie Hancock, Ron Carter and Tony Williams. They even do a version of Carter's *R.J.*, which was recorded on the Davis LP *E.S.P.*; the performance here is a delight, with Wynton's muted trumpet darting all around the groove and Branford's soprano dancing over it. It bears comparison with the original.

*Who Can I Turn To* is a feature for Wynton with the Hancock trio, a showcase for his lovely tone and tender turn of phrase. On most tracks, the key feature is the interplay between the two brothers, who share their ideas, not so much sparring as intertwining. This is best displayed on *Hesitation*, a piece that reminds me of the classic Ornette Coleman Quartet performances as the two horns trade ideas over a fast groove laid down by Carter and Williams.

On the evidence of *Wynton Marsalis*, the young trumpet master is an exceptionally gifted musician with a fertile and independent mind. He is clearly aware of the music that has preceded him, and thoroughly capable of making an important contribution to the on-going jazz tradition. The most impressive debut LP for a long, long time.

Adrian Jackson



## BOSTON NEW ORLEANS JAZZ BAND

"Vol. 1" (Star NB1)

Throughout the history of Australian jazz there has been a strong New Orleans revival movement, and also a strong 'anti-New Orleans' movement. So, whichever line I take in reviewing this disc (I believe that record reviewers should show no bias) I may cause conflict. I am not going to critically analyse the 'New Orleans sound' that the band has set out to achieve. But achieve it they have.

If you're in the pro-New Orleans camp you won't need to read further. If you've heard the band at their regular gigs, you'll know the sound, and will buy the record. Now, if you're on the fence, go to your record shop and listen to the LP. I think you also will buy it. Ask to listen to *King Porter Stomp*, *Good Old New York* and *Ostrich Walk*.

If you're anti-New Orleans anyway, (if so, you probably will not have read this far) you should tune into one of the specialist jazz shows on radio and judge the sound for yourself. I'd like to see your reaction to those tracks I've mentioned.

The other tracks on the LP include *Far Away Blues*, *Love Song Of The Nile*, *Indian Sagua*, and *The Waltz You Saved For Me*. In all there are 11 tracks (nine by the band and two duets between Nick Boston on trumpet and Adrian Ford on piano). Adrian Ford plays trombone on the band tracks. Also present are Paul Martin, Barry Wratten who provides three vocals (not my cup of tea, but he plays some very tasteful clarinet), Peter Gallen, Noel Foy and Lloyd Taylor.

The album has been financed by the band and a group of supporters. I think more writing about it would be irrelevant. You are going to either really like it or really hate it. But please give it a few hearings (I've already played it six times). I think that Bill Haesler's cover notes provide the key: "The Boston New Orleans Jazz Band featured on this album is an excellent example of the amalgamation of top quality Australian jazz with New Orleans music and the influence of vintage jazz recordings."

Roger Beilby



## GALAPAGOS DUCK

"This Time" (AIM Jazz 1000 A & B)

Personnel: Tom Hare (alto & tenor sax); Greg Foster (trombone & harmonica); Mick Jackman (piano, synthesiser, vibes, etc. and

vocals); Bob Egger (piano etc.); John Conley (bass & guitars); Mal Morgan (drums etc.)

This is the first album from the Duck in 2 years and, on the score of sheer musicianship, probably their most sophisticated and accomplished to date. More than that, as a piece of record production (engineered by Andrew Scott and David Nicholas under the aegis of Peter Noble) it's quite out of the box and a credit to Australian recording studios. On a good hi fi, the reverberation and echo effects are quite startling.

On side A, *Masquerade* is a showcase for Tom Hare's alto, against a slow, almost thudding tempo — but Hare's solo work is thrilling; so lovingly phrased and balanced that it seems to hang in the air like a spider's thread, until suddenly the world, in the form of the ensemble, catches up again.

On the flip side there's some haunting harmonica from Greg Foster on *Walk in Love* — matching in effortless fluid excellence his trombone choruses on *Round the Horn*. But the best track (also side B) is an unusual, ear-catching treatment of Billie Holiday's *God Bless the Child*, taken in walking rhythm, with some moody bass from John Conley and an unforced, un-gimmicked vocal from Mick Jackman, which gets to the very heart of this great composition.

An album not to be missed as a memorable example of polished Australian jazz musicianship.

Clement Semmler



## MOSE ALLISON

"Middle Class White Boy"  
(Elektra Musician A-138910)

Personnel: Mose Allison (acoustic & electronic piano); Joe Farrell (tenor sax, flute); Phil Upchurch (gtr); Putter Smith (bass) John Dentz (drums).

Mose Allison is one of the most refreshingly original of characters who hover on the periphery of jazz. Some years back, Ian Neil and Eric Child, in their ABC radio sessions, used to play Allison's *Parchman Farm* which I think remains the bench-mark of Allison's peculiar talents as pianist/singer.

Allison is a type of jazz satirist. There are overtones of Tom Lehrer in his laconically sung sagas of Southern mores. Most of his seemingly inconsequential lyrics carry thinly disguised messages of world weariness and

cynical pessimism.

Thus, in the title track on Side 1 (*Middle Class White Boy*) he sings:

*I'll never be a hero  
Unless it's in disguise,  
I just want to do everything wrong  
And still pick up first prize.*

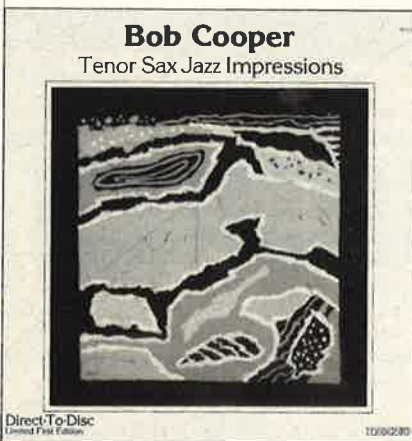
He's a master of the extended line and the pecking, one-finger, but wonderfully cohesive and rhythmic piano technique, in which jazz values are never far away.

The highlight of side 2 is a leisurely version of the Muddy Waters' ballad, *Rolling Stone*, where Upchurch's Pass-like guitar is to the fore. Farrell's tenor too, is unobtrusive but nicely turned out, here, and especially on the Ellington standard, *I'm Just a Lucky So-and-So*.

But it's Mose Allison's album. He's an acquired taste. And I prefer him at piano rather than (as on most of these tracks) at the electronic keyboard. Yet he deserves a wider audience, echoed in his plaintive comment on the sleeve notes:

*I hope that those of you who have supported me all these years will like this one, and I wouldn't even mind if some of the "Mose who?" crowd picked up on it.*

Clement Semmler



**BOB COOPER**  
"Tenor Sax Jazz Impressions"  
(Trend TR518)

Personnel: Bob Cooper (tenor); Carl Schroeder (piano); Bob Magnusson (bass); Jimmie Smith (drums).

In the diggings of new releases in recent months, this one really hits pay-dirt. Believe me, it's a tremendous jazz experience.

Bob Cooper has been around for a long time. He's a West Coast musician who grew up in the era of Getz and Zoot Sims and like them, nourished his talents on a diet of

**CORRECTION:** In Dick Montz's review of the Bob Florence Big Band LP *Westlake* (JAZZ, November/December 1982) the Los Angeles address for Trend Records was given. There is, however, a closer contact here in Australia. Avan-Guard Music is the licensee and exclusive distributor of all Discovery, Trend and Musicraft records. For their address and phone number, see advertisement this page.

Coleman Hawkins, Ben Webster, Don Byas and Chu Berry.

This is the first record he's made with a group of his own for 15 years. Back in the 1950s he made discs with Bud Shank, duets attracting the admiration of fellow-musicians, especially as the oboe and the English horn. (Max Roach was the drummer in those sessions).

Like Getz, Sims, Al Cohn, Buddy Collette, Richie Kamuca, Jimmy Giuffre and others of that vintage, Cooper was allied with the so-called "Brothers" group of tenor men (as opposed to the Charlie Parker inspired Sonny Rollins school).

These influences emerge in his playing. He is one of those rare musicians, so accomplished in his technique, that one imagines over-tones and influences of other players. For instance in perhaps the best track on side 1, *Juarez Saturday Night* — an intriguing Cooper original based on *Sweet Georgia Brown*, but in which the main theme becomes an endless musical loop — one thinks, ah, that's Getz, that's Bud Freeman, that's an alto line from Paul Desmond.

But the fact is, that in the crowded and highly competitive field of this jazz instrument, Cooper is *sui generis*, very much his own man, and a distinctive stylist in his own right.

On side 2 there's a 5 minute track called *True Grits* — a clever variation of a 12 bar blues theme, almost a jazz nocturne, where Cooper is by turns nostalgic and sentimental, but always lyrical.

Also on the flip side is the old Harold Arlen classic *World on a String*, a superb rendition at a slow-medium tempo. There isn't a forced note, no pyrotechnics, just a beautifully balanced performance in which, as on all the tracks in this album, the four musicians hang together in striking empathy. Carl Schroeder's piano, on this track especially (as in another Cooper original on this side, *Indy 500* — an intriguing version of *Indiana* where the key shifts every 16 bars) is elegantly persuasive but never over-obtrusive.

As I said — a rare jazz experience.

Clement Semmler

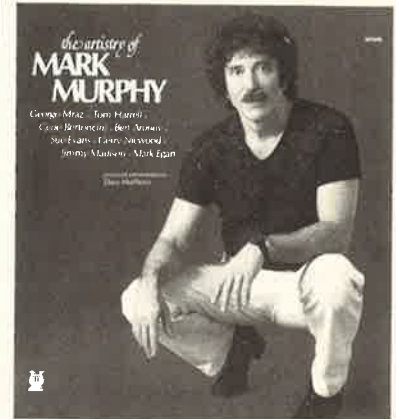


**FATS WALLER**  
"Piano Solos Vol. 1"  
(RCA VPLI 7330)

Fats Waller was a fun loving genius with hundreds of recordings, made between October, 1922 to July 1942, to prove it.

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# Record Reviews

Very few people do not recognise the Waller stride sound and the infectious good humour of his vocals.

Yet Fats had a serious side to his nature brought out occasionally on record when he played solo piano or organ. More than any jazz artist, with the possible exception of Louis Armstrong, Fats has had his recordings reissued over and over again on LP and each time collectors curse the compilation, for rare titles or alternate masters are intermingled with repeats, repeats, repeats!

I believe I have most of the titles recorded by Fats Waller in some form or other but know that if someone ever issued a genuine chronological series I would have only half the number of Fats LPs that I possess today.

Let's face it, not all Waller is pure jazz. Much of the middle and late period items were a tongue in cheek musical look at the popular songs of the time — some quite banal but most saved, if only briefly, by good solos from Fats or the accompanying musicians.

If the collector instinct is not too strong and you would like an excellent album of serious solo piano from Thomas Waller then you are well served by Australian RCA's latest offering — *Fats Waller Piano Solos, Volume 1*.

Between March 1929 and May 1941 Fats Waller made only 33 solo items for US Victor and here on one issue are 14 of them ranging from the familiar and perhaps over done *Honeysuckle Rose* to the obscure *Gladyse* made in February 1929.

Items such as *Handful of Keys*, *Ain't Misbehavin'*, *African Ripples*, *Alligator Crawl* and *Numb Fumbling* have been reissued at various times over the years but the 1937 and 1941 versions of *Keepin' out of Mischief*, *I Ain't Got Nobody* and *Honeysuckle Rose* are rare and *Valentine Stomp*, *Sweet Savannah Sue* and *I've Got a Feeling I'm Falling* will not be on everyone's record shelf.

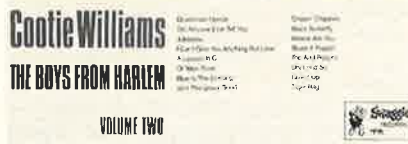
This is a neat little package taken from the original 2 record set issued in the US in 1977 unfortunately deleting several interesting items in the process but including the rare piano duets with Benny Payne. We can only hope that in the Fats saturated local record market that the discerning buyer will snap up this excellently remastered release and convince RCA to release Volume 2.

The original two volume set reissued the solos in chronological order. The Australian company have chosen to mix it about a bit and in doing so have omitted all dates apart from references in the notes. Shame!

Ron Wills, the man at RCA responsible for the Australian release has also contributed the notes which are a precise, but brief and informative study of each tune and Waller's contribution to the Harlem stride piano style.

This record features some of my favourite Fats Waller recordings. Not to be missed.

Bill Haesler



## COOTIE WILLIAMS "The Boys From Harlem" Volumes 1 and 2 (Swaggie S1333 and S1359)

Cootie Williams was born Charles Melvin Williams in Mobile, Alabama on 24 July 1910 and although over the years he played regularly with other bands, including Benny Goodman and led his own orchestra for a time, he is best known for his long residency with Duke Ellington during the 1930s and again from the early 1960s.

While with Ellington, Cootie Williams made a series of excellent small group sides with his own Rug Cutters and with the Gotham Stompers.

Swaggie have now released all four Gotham Stompers sides and twenty eight of the Rug Cutters titles, out of a total of thirty five, including the previously unissued *Tiger Rag* which features some great Ellington piano throughout.

The personnel for each session (nine in all, made between March 1937 and February 1940) is predictable and were drawn primarily from the Ellington band of the period and includes the great soloists Joe Nanton, Barney Bigard, Johnny Hodges, Duke Ellington, Billy Strayhorn, Harry Carney, Juan Tizol and Otto Hardwicke. Rhythm is provided variously by Hayes Alves, Sonny Greer, Billy Taylor, Jimmy Blanton and Freddy Guy.

Musically there are no bad tracks, as would be obvious considering the outstanding musicians featured and the fact that most of them played together professionally in one of the greatest orchestras of the swing era.

Both albums could be described as the Many Moods of Cootie for his work ranges from soft and beautiful to hot and swinging. The arrangements are loose but immaculate.

Highlights are hard to pinpoint when the standard is so high but tracks like *Black Beauty* with great Ellington piano and long restrained low register Cootie and *She's Gone* with its raw and blues vocal by Cootie, stand out.

Vocals are included on *Watchin'*, *Swingtime in Honolulu*, *Carnival in Caroline*, *A Lesson in C*, *Old Man River*, (Jerry Kruger obviously inspired by Billie Holiday); *Honey's Lovin' Arms*, *Did Anyone Ever Tell You*, *Where Are You*, (Ivie Anderson); *Sharpie*, *Blue Is The Evening*, (Scat Powell) and *She's Gone*, *Dry So Long*, *Ain't The Gravy Good* (Cootie Williams).

When the two volumes were compiled the sessions were fairly evenly spread so that either can be bought as an example of small band swing, although Roger Bell who wrote the notes for both issues prefers Volume 2.

Traditionalists could well benefit by listening to these fine issues. Ellington small group devotees will, however be pleased to find so many titles issued for the first time on LP in Australia.

Bill Haesler



## EBERHARD WEBER "Later That Evening" (ECM 1231)

*Personnel: Paul McCandless, soprano sax, oboe, English horn, bass clarinet; Bill Frisell, guitar; Lyle Mays, piano; Michael DiPasqua, drums, percussion; Eberhard Weber, bass.*

*Later That Evening* has elements of Weber's Colours albums tempered by the more pastoral vein he explored on *The Following Morning* and *Fluid Rustle*. As usual with Weber's work the improvising merges artfully with the structured playing so that the transition between the two states goes largely unnoticed.

Certainly there is an overt romanticism to Weber's music which causes some jazz purists to recoil in horror. But I find his blend of classical sensibility and jazz flexibility quite enjoyable. And of all the recent 'chamber jazz' albums to emerge on the ECM label I find this the most engaging. Generally it is more richly textured, not too prissy, and Weber's attention to detail is constantly rewarding.

*Maurizius* begins with a beautiful, gentle piano solo reminiscent of a Brahms lullaby. From there it gradually develops into a wistful, sensuous curtain of curiously familiar melodic lines. A carefully structured piece that never reverts to banality as it so easily could have.

*Death in the Carwash* is a curiously titled piece which opens with some ominous bowed bass and strange, muttering voices. Over an up-tempo rhythm tapped out on the cymbals are laid oddly reflective and sparse statements by the oboe, guitar, piano and bass. The general tone begins as suspenseful and mysterious, with a gradual accretion towards a more joyous melodic statement by the entire band.

*Often in the Open* sets forth with a lyrical discourse between piano and drums, under which Weber lays an ascending scale which

becomes the melody. The number proceeds with seemingly improvised and composed elements alternating throughout in a suspenseful and frequently subtle interplay.

*Later That Evening* is the fourth and final track. It is somewhat reminiscent of McCandless's *Palimpsest* from his *All the Morning Bring* album — a similarly haunting melody. This track is so beautiful it should only be played late at night with all the lights off, as the title suggests.

A must for fans of Oregon, Gallery, and of course Eberhard Weber.

Tony Wellington



### STEVE TIBBETTS "Northern Song" (ECM 1218)

Steve Tibbetts was born in Madison, Wisconsin in 1954. His father was a union organiser who played folk guitar at meetings and rallies. Steve learnt to play the ukelele at the age of 6, and when his hands grew big enough his father bought him a guitar.

He played in a rock band at high school and then went to art college for four years. During his final year, having finished his major art requirements, Tibbetts moved into the recently set-up 4 track studio in the music department. He had always wanted to make an album, so he did. Much to his surprise, it sold 3,000 copies. Tibbetts's efforts at promoting his own album had paid off, and he was able to assemble his own 8 track studio. Here he recorded and released his second independent album *Yr* which sold over 10,000 copies.

*Northern Song* is Tibbetts's third album, and has been produced by Manfred Eicher in Oslo for his ECM label. Tibbetts performs on guitars, kalimbas, and tape loops, and, as on *Yr*, he is joined by percussionist Marc Anderson.

Tibbetts's music is not easy to describe — it doesn't fall readily into any traditional category. The music is relaxed and unpretentious. It flows between sparse acoustic guitar solos

to intricately weaved crescendos of multi-tracked guitar choirs combined with tasteful and carefully considered percussion textures. The extraordinary thing about both Tibbetts's and Anderson's playing is that it never sounds clichéd but is continually fresh and individual.

By way of comparison, Tibbetts's music combines the deceptive simplicity of minimalists like Terry Riley and Steve Reich, with the studied beauty of the European chamber jazz of Egberto Gismonti, Eberhard Weber, Jan Garbarek et al, with a hint of the cross-cultural percussive feel of Oregon or Codona. If all that sounds a little confusing, perhaps Tibbetts's own words will explain why: "I am an untrained musician . . . More than any individual artists, sounds in general are my biggest influence. The sound of the guitar, just the noises get me excited about making music. The way a guitar feels when I play it . . ."

Tibbetts's music has been compared to Jade Warrior in its ability to utilise electronic devices whilst maintaining the pristine purity of acoustic folk music. It should thus also appeal to fans of guitarist Anthony Phillips. Generally speaking, however, if you're looking for an album with the potential to soothe and calm when played at any volume, then you could do a lot worse than *Northern Lights*.

Tony Wellington

# EBERHARD WEBER

## ON ECM



SILENT FEET  
ECM 1107



YELLOW FIELDS  
ECM 1066 ST



THE COLOURS OF CHLOE  
ECM 1042 ST



LATER THAT EVENING  
ECM 1231



FLUID RUSTLE  
ECM 1137



LITTLE MOVEMENTS  
ECM 1186

Distributed by Carinia Records



# SCRAPPLE FROM THE APPLE

By Lee Jeske

I am of the opinion that Sonny Rollins is our greatest living jazz soloist. He is the most resourceful, imaginative, unclipped improviser currently playing jazz. His solos are like carved totems: they are solid and basic and mystifying. He is the only — *only* — musician who I can listen to night after night after night. Nothing gets my blood running like an evening with Sonny Rollins.

Now here's the problem: as George Wein put it to me recently, "Of all the musicians I've ever known, Sonny is the truest enigma."

Well, without trying to figure out Rollins' inner workings, Sonny is, indeed, a confounding public figure.

For one thing, the man just doesn't record well — or, to put it another way, hasn't recorded well in the past fifteen years. From all accounts, Sonny freezes not only when he's in the studio, but when he's onstage with the knowledge that he's being taped. According to recent remarks of his, it is obvious that *he* is aware of the problem, but, doggone it, he doesn't know what to do about it. Hell, I don't know what to do about it, but a number of times when I've spoken to friends who haven't seen Rollins play recently and tell them of my deep admiration for the man, I am met with blank stares and comments like, "Oh, you must mean the old Rollins."

No, no, I insist, the new Rollins — the *current* Sonny Rollins.

That problem which is compounded by the next problem: Sonny likes young, fusion players. He *likes* them, mind you. I know that some people have said that it's his wife who wants him to be a big rock star — maybe so. But I am convinced that Sonny really enjoys the electric guitars and basses he's employed over the past decade. So when his albums contain gems — and there are gems on *every* album — some listeners are too put off by the setting which holds those gems. Sonny's truest admirers are not titillated by stickers announcing: Special Guest on this LP — Larry Coryell. They want to read Max Roach's name or Dizzy Gillespie's name or Tommy Flanagan's name in that space. But, truth be told, Sonny doesn't *want* to play with Max or Dizzy or Tommy. Sonny wants to play with Larry and Donald and Grover.

And that brings us to the third problem, which is just an adjunct of the other two: Sonny likes to perform on bills that feature the likes of Gato Barbieri. And, on top of that, Sonny insists on playing first. So, the fans who are put off by problem number one: Sonny's poor records; and/or by problem number two: Sonny's fusion aggregation; are certainly not going to plop down money to see Sonny share a bill with a tenor saxophonist who couldn't shine his black basketball sneakers. "It figures," they think as they sulk down the street to see Dexter Gordon.

Now, what brings all these thoughts to my mind again was a recent performance by Sonny Rollins at the Bottom Line. Sonny lives a short distance away from New York City, but for some reason he only plays the city about once a year. George Wein told me

that he would love to do a major concert with Sonny Rollins anytime he wants — you know, like a Sonny Rollins retrospective or some such thing. Sonny says no, no, no and plays once a year at the Bottom Line. The Bottom Line is a showcase club that features music other than jazz about 70 percent of the time. To Sonny's credit, he doesn't allow any other act on the bill, but comes out and does an hour and a half set each show. And, I must admit, the club is packed every time Sonny's in town (though not packed with his old fans, the ones who grumble about him "selling out").

Well, the bottom line to all of this is that the night I caught Sonny Rollins at the Bottom Line he was brilliant, magnificent, breathtaking, spellbinding . . . get the picture? I mean, the man marched out playing *I'll Be Seeing You* unaccompanied and ripped the ears and brains of everybody in the house to teeny-weeny bits. Before the long set was over, Sonny would bounce through a number of calypsos and tear ass through *Smoke Gets In Your Eyes* and *I'm Old Fashioned* and catchy little things that I didn't recognise. And, believe me, Sonny was smoking with absolute ferocity. On top of that I enjoyed his band, which featured two guitars — Masuo and Bobby Broom — and Tommy Campbell's funk/bop drumming. I mean, this man played more tenor saxophone than most other living purveyors of that instrument play in a year — a lifetime. And, naturally, I



Sonny Rollins: our greatest living jazz soloist. . .

wasn't surprised a bit.

After the concert I was standing and jawing in front of the Public Theatre — where I was about to hear a boring set by Charlie Haden's Liberation Music Orchestra — and talking about the brilliant Mr Rollins. Some young fellow overheard me and said, "Was Sonny really good? I was going to get tickets to see him, but I like the old Sonny Rollins."

"Have you ever seen him play?" I asked the guy, who must have been about four years old when Sonny was making the records from which he obviously knew the Rollins he thought he knew.

"Nah," the guy said, "But those new records suck."

Believe me, I tried to convince him.

The aforementioned Charlie Haden gig was one of the major disappointments of the fall. Imagine a band featuring Carla Bley, Don Cherry, Dewey Redman, Paul Motian, Mick Goodrick, Jack Jeffers, Sharon Freeman, Gary Valente, Steve Slagle, Jim Pepper and Mike Mantler being dull and listless. They were playing Carla Bley's arrangements and, effectively, the band was a combination of Bley's brilliant band and the brilliant Old and New Dreams and the music was the brilliant Spanish Civil War music that a similar band played on Charlie's brilliant Impulse album of a dozen years ago. So what went wrong? Beats me, but at one point I looked to my left and saw my wife fast asleep, the critic from the *New York Times* fast asleep, and the critic from *Guitar World* magazine asleep next to him. What kept me up? Must've been the coffee. . .

A lot of people around these parts are making a fuss about harmolodic music — the blend of rock and jazz and noise that Ornette Coleman pioneered and performed so beautifully on *Of Human Feelings*, one of the albums of the year for my money. Specifically, they are raving about James "Blood" Ulmer and Ronald Shannon Jackson. Recently I saw Ulmer at a place called Gildersleeves (the fastest jazz club on earth — they started a jazz policy on a Friday and ten days later they were closed) and I was unhappy about the whole thing. Ulmer's an interesting guitarist, but he's an awful singer and he did a lot of the latter and a little of the former and his band just funk'd away until I had to flee the room. The albums are better — there you can turn the singing down.

Shannon Jackson's Decoding Society played the Public, and they had more success. Jackson's a great drummer — he sounds like a percussion section — and he had a beautiful trumpeter named Henry Scott in tow, but the band seemed to be in short supply of spark that night. It was funky and fun, but it wasn't as juicy as it could've been. Again, the recent Antilles album is better.

Personally, I like this harmolodic thing — it appeals to the usually dormant funk side of my brain — but one noted jazz writer recently told me, "Lee," he said with a sigh, "It's the worst music I've ever heard in my life." □

## . . . and we've also heard

By Dick Scott\*



JANE MARCH

Well, it had to happen. Phil Haldeman has resigned from Radio 2KY and even the truncated, three hour version of his Weekend World is no more. Jazz lovers in the Sydney area will understand the loss but for those elsewhere perhaps a word of explanation. Phil's programme, which originally ran from 9 am to 3 pm every Sunday, started on December 17th 1982 and finished almost exactly four years later on December 26th last year. He played a terrific mixture of excellent music and, although not all of it was jazz, it was all in extremely good taste. He interspersed the music with comedy tracks and a great sense of fun. But, above all, he was a jazz lover who went out of his way to bring not only the latest but some of the more out-of-the-way recordings. His greatest loss to the local scene will be his unceasing support for Australian artists and their music. He took great pride in presenting first airings of new releases and indeed often played demo tapes of unrecorded musicians. Several times a year he put together a six hour program entirely from Australian talent, a feature that was always very well received. About eighteen months ago 2KY changed its format and went entirely over to country music. The uproar over the cancellation of Phil's daytime program probably influenced the station's management to keep it going, but at a reduced length, and in a notorious radio dead spot — Sunday evening up against the popular movies on TV. I hope the foregoing doesn't sound like an obituary because, of

course, Phil is still alive and more than kicking. For the time being he will concentrate on his voice-over and freelance work, then in March he heads for Vienna where he will be guest announcer on an English language radio station for three months. And not surprisingly he already has a suitcase packed with tapes of Australian artists. □

People keep asking me why we always have an influx of overseas artists early in the year. The quick answer is that they should try a winter in New York or Europe for that matter.

Be that as it may, the visitors' warmth is also our gain. Coming up in the next few months is a goodly array. As reported in our previous issue, Peter Brendle and Barry Ward are bringing out the entire Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra, singer Mark Murphy, guitarist Jack Wilkins and bassman Eberhard Weber for clinics at the NSW Conservatorium January 29 — February 2. (For further details, see advertisements this issue). There will be a further chance to hear the Lewis ensemble at the opening of the new Don Burrows Supper Club in the Sydney Regent Hotel on the corner of Circular Quay and George Street, Sydney on the nights of February 2, 3 and 4. Weber and Murphy will be performing in other States, so keep an eye on your local press. □

Georgie Fame will be here also in January at the Basement on 10, 11 and 12, at Jackson Square, Rathdowne Street, Carlton in Melbourne 13, 14 and 15, then back to The Basement 17, 18 and 19. He will be accompanied on all gigs by his Aussie Blue Flames Keith Stirling (tpt), Herb Cannon (t/bone), Col Loughnan (reeds), Dave Colton (guit) Greg Lyon (bass) and Willy Qua (drums). Also in January, Pan Am head and drummer John McGhee has challenged Bob Barnard and his boys to a battle of the bands with the New Reunion Band. Many will remember them

blowing great stuff at the Regent Theatre concerts early in 1981. As their name suggests they don't get together all that often but it's top music when they do with musos like Bob Kindred (ex Woody Herman) on tenor, Gray Sergent (he's played with Illinois Jacquet) on guitar, Tom Ervin on trombone, saxophonist Jeff Haskell who is head of the jazz department at the University of Arizona, freelance trumpeter Mike Canonico, and Albert Oehrle who is a piano-playing lawyer. The group is made up with locals McGhee on drums and Ed Gaston on bass. Their first battle with Bob will be at the Sydney Showground on January 17, then at a venue both bands know well — the Hilton's Marble Bar on January 18 and 20, and other gigs will be arranged. □

A return visitor in February will be English singer George Melly accompanied by John Chilton and his Footwarmers. And, yes, it is the same John Chilton who edits the *Who's Who of Jazz* that goes with the excellent Time/Life Giants of Jazz series. Melly is headed for the Perth Festival and will be in Sydney at a new venue Kinsela's at Taylor Square from February 11 to 19. □



Teddy Edwards

Later in the year, in April, Peter Noble will be bringing out tenor man Teddy Edwards who was here

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last about eighteen months ago. No firm dates as yet, but we'll keep you posted. In the meantime two albums by two artists that came here under the Noble banner are released very shortly. The first is *Jazzarama* with Sonny Stitt and Richie Cole. I'm not sure if it is the last recording Stitt made but it could well be since we lost Sonny late last year. The second album is *Battle of the Saxes*, a live session with Cole, Stitt and locals Errol Buddle, Dale Barlow, Bernie McGann and Barry Duggan plus Jack Wilson on piano and Alan Turnbull on drums. Look out for them! □

During the week from March 10-17, the Marie Wilson Band will be at Club Mediterranee in Noumea, New Caledonia. With vocalist Marie are Dick Montz, trumpet & flugelhorn; Mike Haughton, flute & saxophones; Mike Butcher, trombone; Eric Myers, piano & keyboard bass; Dean Kerr, guitar; and Phil Treloar, drums. The group, which rarely appears outside its regular gig at Sydney's Earlwood-Bardwell Park RSL, plays mainly a mixture of dixieland and swing standards from the Armstrong, Ellington and Billie Holiday repertoires. Also appearing during the same week (billed as Club Med's 1983 Jazz Festival — see advertisement this issue) will be the group Space Case, from Auckland, New Zealand. A quintet, it includes at least two outstanding musicians well known to Australian jazz fans: the saxophonist Brian Smith, and the leading NZ drummer Frank Gibson. □



Marie Wilson: at Club Med, Noumea, in March...



Yuri Andropov: new Russian leader is a Coltrane fan...

We don't go in much for political jottings in this magazine but two curious items arose just lately. New supremo of the USSR, and successor to Brezhnev, Yuri Andropov, is an avid jazz fan with, reportedly, quite a collection of records mainly concentrating on the '30s and '40s with John Coltrane a favourite artist. On the other hand, just across the border I quote from the *Bulletin*, "Peking is determined to protect all Chinese youth from the 'decadent' influence of Western culture." An official booklet *How To Distinguish Decadent Songs* explains the perils of succumbing to temptations of Western pop music. For instance, dancing to the tune of jazz music is said to be "like having nervous spasms" and thus "against the normal psychological needs of man". I know how the writer feels. After one Chinese tune I don't want another for two hours! □

Got your breath back after the 37th Convention at Toowoomba? Right, so there's no need to delay booking for the 38th in Forbes is there? As Ron Steane says in his preliminary letter, it's going to be a great year in the Golden West. Forbes's twin town, Parkes, has a Brass Band celebrating 100 years and the Central West Jazz Club promises another Triduum. Fund raising has already started for the Convention with Canberra's Fortified Few helping to raise \$800 and the committee will get down to cash matters very soon. Ron is concerned at rumours that all accommodation in Forbes is already booked out — not so, says Ron. In fact there are plans in hand for a new 33 unit motel ready for the Convention apart from any other rooms still available. The Forbes Jazz Club is trying to put together a band under the guidance of June Palmer and Brian Fitzgerald. They meet every Monday night at the Albion Hotel, so any muso within a couple of hundred miles or so of that pub who can give a hand, please feel free. Address for the Convention is PO Box 433, Forbes, 2871, NSW. □

News comes from Perth of a new pianist — John Gill who has spent some time in the south of France. And by all accounts he will be a top addition to the Perth scene. He plays Joplin, Waller, James P, Willie the Lion and Jelly Roll, then when you think he's in a groove throws in some Ellington and Garner. He has played a couple of gigs for the Perth Jazz Society and will be lined up for another before his return to Europe. Incidentally, the PJS has had the nerve to lift its door price a whole 50c to an incredible \$1.50 for members or \$2.50 guests. Must be the cheapest jazz on the continent and the same price as when the Society started in 1973, and they pay union scalé to the musicians. Sadder news from the west is the precarious condition of the PJS's radio programme New Radio Jazz — it may not start up for 1983 unless a sponsor is found. Sponsors are also needed for Society programmes on 6UVS. Top stuff like Graham Fisk's *The Best of Jazz* (midnight - 2 am Sats), and *Jazz on*

PETER SINCLAIR

Merv Acheson, legendary saxophonist and writer for this magazine, was mugged and robbed in Sydney recently. As a result of his injuries, which include a broken right wrist, he has been unable to complete Part 6 of 'The Merv Acheson Story'. We hope to bring you that instalment in our March/April edition.

*Broadway* every other Wednesday at 10 pm, Steve Robertson's *FM Jazz — The Swinging Years* with feature show in January that will include Venuti, MJQ, Harold Arlen tunes plus Drumming Greats and David Walton features contemporary jazz on Thursday nights at 9 pm. All far too good to lose — does anyone know any sponsors? Highlights to start the New Year off right are: January 24 — Mike Nelson Quintet, January 31 — Cornerhouse Jazz Band, February 7 — Mel Lewis Quartet, February 15 — Mark Murphy and February 21 — Roger Garrod Quintet.

You might be interested to know that all this information came to you second hand — if you want it any earlier get along to the Hyde Park Hotel, Perth any Monday night at 8.30 or write to the Perth Jazz Society at PO Box 6247, East Perth, 6000 WA. □

The Music Board of the Australia Council has now completed formalities for the appointment of six State

Jazz Co-ordinators for 1983. They are Ted Vining (Qld), Eric Myers (NSW), Paula Langlands (Vic), Gregory Properjohn (Tas), John Katow (S. Aust) and Adrian Kenyon (W. Aust). (For addresses and phone numbers of the Co-ordinators, see advertisement page 21). The positions are part-time, with each Co-ordinator expected to work at least two days a week. The suggested functions of the Co-ordinators are as follows: to act as a general information source by compiling a list of available groups and artists for circulation to other Co-ordinators and jazz organisations in metropolitan and regional areas; to generate increased jazz activity through approaches to local councils, schools, the business sector and industry; to encourage jazz composers to place scores and biographical data in the library of the Australia Music Centre. □

The winners of the NSW Jazz Action Society's 1982 Original Jazz Composition Competition have been announced. First prize (\$1000) goes to former Western Australian saxophonist Paul Millard, who now lives in Sydney, for his work *Spirit Of the Carnival*. Second prize (\$300) goes to the guitarist Peter O'Mara, for his work *Reunion*. Third prize goes to the Sydney evergreen pianist David Levy, for his work *Neither Is Yes*. The JAS is hoping to present a concert during 1983 at which these compositions can be performed. □

## ODWALA continued from page 11

provide your own opportunities."

Jackson has done that quite a bit, organising and publicising all the band's gigs and concerts. He got some experience by acting as Melbourne agent for the Australian Jazz Foundation in 1980-82. "Apart from getting to speak with guys like Liebman, Woody Shaw and Bobby Shew, and learning from them that way, the valuable part of that was the fact that I had to act on my own initiative a lot."

Last year, Jackson organised monthly concerts at The Met, each featuring a guest soloist with the band, and main acts, in turn, Mark Simmonds, Brian Brown and Tony Gould. The concerts were very successful, with crowds of up to 150, but the concept fell through when The Met was sold to become a pancake parlour.

The good news is that Jackson is reviving the scheme in 1983, thanks to a grant from the Music Board of the Australia Council. Concerts will be held in the afternoon of the last Sunday of each month, in a theatre at RMIT, at 350 Swanston St., city.

Jackson plans to feature top modern artists from Melbourne and interstate, such as Onaje, McJAD, Bernie McGann, Serge Ermoll, Ted Vining and Brian Brown. Odwala will present something different each time, with a particular program of new material and guest soloists; for example, Jackson intends to feature vocalist Anastasia Aspeling singing songs written by Max Roach and Abbey Lincoln.

Martin Jackson feels that the grant gives Odwala good reason to approach 1983 optimistically. "It gives us something to work for, and a chance to improve. It might even lead to more work for us; we'd love to play in Sydney or Brisbane, possibly with Ted Vining; we might even get to record something and put it out on tape or LP."

Odwala has improved immensely in the last two years. Given the chance, it could become one of Australia's very best contemporary jazz bands. For that reason, and for the chance to hear some of Australia's leading underexposed jazz masters, Melbourne fans should not miss any of Odwala's concerts at RMIT in 1983. □

MARGARET SULLIVAN



Paul Millard wins the JAS Original Jazz Composition Competition. Here he is on tenor with the saxophone section of Dick Montz's Conservatorium Big Band, at the 1982 Manly Jazz Carnival. Others in the section are Brent Stanton, Mike Houghton and Ricardo Mattos.



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**GALAPAGOS DUCK: THIS TIME (AIM JAZZ 1000).** The first LP for two years from one of Australia's most popular groups. Our reviewer Clement Semmler says: "An album not to be missed as a memorable example of polished Australian jazz musicianship." Available at all record stores, distributed through EMI.

**THE VINTAGE JAZZ AND BLUES BAND: EIGHT TO THE BAR (VJS3).** The third LP from one of Brisbane's most popular bands, playing in the 1920s New Orleans/Chicago idiom, with a more modern approach. Our reviewer Adrian Ford says that the LP "shows a new relaxation and maturity without any loss of their former drive and hotness."

**BOSTON NEW ORLEANS JAZZ BAND: VOL I (STAR NBI).** Our reviewer Roger Beilby says that this band has set out to achieve, and achieved, the 'New Orleans sound'. He agrees with cover notes writer Bill Haesler who says that the Boston New Orleans Jazz Band "is an excellent example of the amalgamation of top quality Australian jazz with New Orleans music and the influence of vintage jazz recordings."

**GOIN' TO TOWN WITH LUIS RUSSELL (Antipodisc AD 14449).** Re-issue of tracks recorded by Luis Russell and his orchestra. Says our reviewer Bruce Johnson: "We should ... applaud the enterprise of this new Australian label in making available the complete issued sequence of recordings from October 24, 1930, to August 18, 1934, plus Gingersnaps from 1929". If you have trouble locating this LP, contact Tony Baldwin of Antipodisc, PO Box 331, Neutral Bay, 2089.

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