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The Australasian contemporary Music Magazine



KEITH STIRLING: An Enigma

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The Australasian contemporary Music Magazine

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Keith Stirling:
an enigma in Australian
jazz, now in a new era

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Edit.

In this edition we take a look at two of the most fascinating and enigmatic musicians in Australian jazz: the trumpeter Keith Stirling and the alto saxophonist Bernie McGann.

Both are brilliant players who have striven over the years to perpetuate the jazz spirit and make an individual contribution to creative music in this country. But what makes them tick?

I hope that these articles will give our readers some insight into their history, influences, beliefs and social situations. As Keith Stirling says, "jazz is above all an act of communicating one's feelings directly and immediately, of making something fresh and new which is deeply and thrillingly personal."

Jazz is therefore as much about the man as the music. I trust these articles will enable more people to better understand Stirling and McGann — the human beings behind the music.

Lovers of traditional jazz will be interested, I hope, in our two reports, from Phil Tripp and Steve Robertson on the cradle of jazz, New Orleans. The Crescent City is still a great musical centre about 70 years after jazz, as we know it in the twentieth century, was first heard there.

In Australia, of course, the growth of our own jazz in earnest dates from the mid-1930s and 1940s. It amounts to an extraordinary cultural movement which has usually been devalued or ignored by students of the arts in Australia. Nigel Buesst's film *Jazz Scrapbook*, which was shown recently in Sydney, highlights what a vital era it was. We are grateful for Mr. Buesst for providing a selection of photographs which we publish on our centre pages.

When Andrew Bisset published his history of Australian jazz *Black Roots and White Flowers*, it was quite rightly applauded as a creditable first effort, and an important pioneering work. But, of course, the real histories and biographies are yet to be written. I believe that the early photographs which we publish hint at how interesting those books will be when they appear.

ERIC MYERS
Editor

Letters

Sir,

How aggravating it is to see Adrian Jackson once again displaying his ignorance and lack of understanding with regard to contemporary music (JAZZ, March/April 1983).

In his article *Brian Brown: Still a Force*, Jackson has the temerity to state that he has found Brown's band and music in the last few years lacking in "depth, maturity and power" when compared to previous Brian Brown bands, and that Brown's performances as a soloist have been "similarly inconsistent". Having got that off his chest Jackson then states that comparisons "are both unfair and pointless". That is precisely the heart of the matter.

In Brian Brown's case comparisons are quite pointless. As a creative artist Brown has continually striven for new concepts in sound and acknowledges to anyone willing to listen that he does not play "jazz" anymore. Jackson, who is neither a performer, not a composer, has never realised this fact and is still whinging for the Brian Brown Quartet of the '70s.

Adrian Jackson is a fine reviewer of music of the 1960s and 1970s, but for goodness sake, please engage the services of a more up-to-date critic for people who are playing '80s music.

ROSALIND McMILLAN
Hawthorn, Victoria

Sir,

I am disappointed with the Australian jazz programmes in *The Burrows Collection* on ABC TV. One expects the Yank ones to be dreary and little more than 'teaching films (how do you teach jazz?)'.



Brian Brown: music lacking in depth, maturity and power?

The Bob Barnard show was wildly over-produced. The sound was level — no highs and lows, no tension — just smarty-pants 'this-is-how-you-play-Dixie' with studious avoidance of the procession of solos or any bouncing off each other. Perhaps Bob is a bit tired these days. Small wonder, as he hasn't had much luck, or recognition. He's still tops and should have been on a looser leash. Too much arrangement, not enough virtuosity.

Vince Jones — too much singing. Jazz is horns and solos. Too many guitar solos. Wilbur didn't do a bad job of trying to be sensible, but why on earth didn't Russell Smith, a nice cornettist in the past, get a canter on his superbone? Even if he's not up to the slide yet, it would have been an interesting and emotional sound.

God has a girlfriend who sings. Why let Smacka's daughter loose on *Love For Sale*? If the words mean anything, it's not good for her image, or jazz's. She just wasn't in the same league, anyway.

I wait in horror of further wasted opportunities. James Morrison deserves a programme to himself.

R.K. BRADSTOCK
Ryde, NSW

Sir,

In general, I find JAZZ magazine full of interesting, informative reading. However, I do take exception to Eric Myers's comment (May/June 1983) that "the recorder is an extremely limited instrument (anyone can play it)." (p. 41 — review of Errol Buddle's record *Recorder Magic*).

Like any instrument, the recorder has limitations. But its compass (ignoring higher harmonics) is not markedly different from that of a saxophone. Surely no-one would sneer at the "limited" compass of a sax, in comparison with a clarinet or violin?

I suspect that Myers's comment reflects in part the common view of the recorder as a children's toy. In the hands of a child a recorder (particularly a descant) will sound shrill and harsh. It is only in the hands of experienced, sensitive musicians like Errol Buddle that the instrument can come into its own.

Eric Myers seems surprised that "most people believed that Buddle was playing flute." If he had thought about this reaction, he may not have made his ill-advised comment about the recorder's limitations. After all, the sound of an instrument depends on its inherent qualities, as well as the skill and sensitivity of the player.

As far as ease of playing is concerned, it is true that within a relatively short time a person could teach themselves to play a tune on a recorder. (There is no need, for example, to build up an embouchure.) However, by no stretch of the imagination could this be described as playing the instrument.

The recorder, like any other instrument, presents its own challenges which can only be solved by careful and patient application. There is the problem of overblowing, intonation and the difficulty of fingering an instrument without the aid of modern key systems.

I suggest that anyone who thinks the recorder is easy to play should try a slurred chromatic run over two octaves.

One final point. Eric Myers's comment is, by implication, dismissive of recorder virtuosos like Frans Bruggen, the late David Munrow and Michala Petri. I would urge all readers of JAZZ to visit the baroque section of their record shop and sample the work of some of these people. It represents years of dedication.

It is certainly true that the recorder is not as suited to jazz as the brass and reed instruments. But by the same token, I would not like to hear a saxophone attempt one of Telemann's virtuoso recorder pieces of the baroque era.

By the way, I have no axe to grind — I play (however inadequately) both tenor sax and tenor recorder.

PHIL GISSING
Chippendale, NSW

Sir,

Having just completed a tour of the lesser known but more musically rewarding jazz festivals of the USA, it is regrettable to return and find your magazine lacking support.

Jazz is also a minority group in America, but is kept viable by integrated partisans mainly of the middle-aged to elderly vintages. The tastes of these groups has, I feel, been somewhat neglected in Australian jazz promotions, although it was heartening to see them emerge from the shadows of the swing era and patronise the Glenn Miller music in their

thousands recently.

Perhaps the saddest note is the closing of Brisbane's Cellar and the temporary eclipse of Milcham Hayes, whose willingness to stake his reputation and finances on jazz of all dimensions became a cultural spur to a full city's musical emancipation.

Although a fractious and irreverent critic of the hierarchy, Hayes worked with zeal and fervour to establish jazz on a parity with other over-indulged musical enclaves, and to his credit he presented Queensland with an abundance of international and Australian stars so sorely needed to elevate the status of our music in Brisbane.

As a "visionary" (to borrow from your September/October 1982 edition) he accurately prophesied the abandonment of jazz by the press, the ABC, and entrepreneurial groups, and it is fair to suggest that all liberal societies need stimulation from their "rebels with causes".

I am not Hayes's biographer, but as a jazz follower for well over 50 years I am mindful that the Cellar infused into Brisbane a breath of life which could well be strangled by the same public apathy which beleaguers your magazine.

I trust that JAZZ Magazine will not disappear from the newstands and, as a true Phoenician, I pray that the future will see the Phoenix of the Cellar arise from the ashes.

RUSSELL LYONS
Southport, Queensland

Sir,

In the heat of the bargain it is so easy to get ripped away at record sales. Most readers will be aware of the tendency for some record shops to mark budget records at the budget price then shove them in the SALE bin. And no doubt the keen hunter will also have observed that cheap labels with a fair jazz content (e.g. Musidisc, Joker, Everest) which sell relatively slowly are being raised in price on the pretext that they are new stock. Okay, we say, *caveat a little more emptor*.

But I've just been gipped by another dodgy practice at a store in Pitt Street that specialises in sales (and, to be fair, has yielded bargains). This is the practice of marketing a 12" single as if it were a remaindered LP. The disc in question was Robyn Archer's *Extracts from A Star is Torn* (Cube Records BUG 1), marked down from \$10.99 to \$4.99.

I ought to have looked closer, but with the label marked 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ and about ten tunes each side, the mental cash register rattled VALUE. The first hint that all was not well was the un-Archer-like impression of Bessie and Billie. The proper speed should have been 45; then less than 3 point print revealed that I'd bought a single — and the *Extracts* were really fragments. If they're doing that to professional bargainers, what are they doing to the kids?

PETER J.F. NEWTON
Balmain, NSW



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KEITH STIRLING: An Enigma

By Eric Myers*

For some time Keith Stirling has been an enigma in Australian jazz.

Over many years he was regarded as an outstanding musician — perhaps the leading trumpeter in the country at his best, comparable to the great Keith Hounslow. But somehow there was an aura of unfulfilled promise about him.

Those who heard Stirling perform, but didn't know him off the stand, were genuinely puzzled by the erratic nature of his playing. There were times when he produced blistering solos of unmitigated brilliance. At those times he appeared to be unleashing a creative force that had no equal among this country's jazz players. At other times he appeared tentative and uninspired, playing aimless solos that limply expired.

When these things happen, jazz writers don't usually ask about it. Lip troubles? Unhappy home life? Who knows?

Then, about 18 months ago, something seemed to be happening to Keith Stirling. At the beginning of 1982 he was coming to a watershed in his development.

As part of Jim McLeod's simulcast series *Jazz in Stereo* on the ABC, the Keith Stirling Quintet was televised live from The Basement in Sydney. The harsh glare of the spotlight was placed on Stirling and the young players he had been grooming throughout 1981: Steve Brien (guitar), Jay Stewart (piano), Craig Scott (bass) and Ron Lemke (drums).

The rhythm section didn't actually play badly, but this was suddenly the big league, and their inexperience showed through. Stirling struggled to get the juices flowing with a rhythm section that was going in many directions at once but, in the process, produced some shining solos, particularly with the harmon mute. Clearly, here was a man with something new and valid to say, even under great pressure.

At that time the Americans, led by Freddie Hubbard and Johnny Griffin were in Australia for the education clinics and associated concerts around the country. They heard Keith Stirling play often; many of them sat in with him around Australia. They were impressed by his brilliance. Some of them were heard to remark that, of the Australian players they'd heard, Stirling was one of the few whose level of accomplishment approximated the state of the art in New York.

Since that time, Keith Stirling has reinforced his growing reputation: that of a man into a new creative era. In jam sessions at The Basement and for the Jazz Action Society, with the pianist Bob Gebert at the Paradise Jazz Cellar, and in performances elsewhere, he has been playing over the last 18 months with a consistent, concentrated energy. The erratic nature of his work, which used to handicap him and trouble his listeners, seems now to have receded into memory.

Well, what has caused the transformation? Why is Keith Stirling on this new level of creative energy? Answer: he's into Nichiren Shoshu, a form of Japanese Buddhism. But more of that later.

First, a few biographical details. Keith Stirling was born in Melbourne — one of that great army of musicians from down south who eventually found Sydney a far more congenial place for professional music and jazz. But it took him some time to get there.

He came from a musical family. His mother played piano; his father played a number of stringed instruments, sang, and loved opera. Both parents like jazz which meant that Fats Waller, Ellington, and Jelly Roll Morton records were heard in the home.



PETER SINCLAIR

Stirling: one of the few in Australia whose level of accomplishment approximated the state of the art in New York...

There were two brothers and the eldest, Alan, brought home a trumpet one day. Alan loved Charlie Parker, Miles and Howard McGhee, and bought their records.

Keith was about 7 or 8 years of age at the time. He was forbidden by his brother to touch the trumpet; if he did, there was a beating in the offing.

Still, the young Keith was fascinated by the instrument, and got it out whenever his brother wasn't home. He taught himself quickly to get a sound and play simple tunes. One night at a party his brother attempted to play *Blue Moon*, and played it badly. Keith took the horn from him and played the tune confidently and sweetly. "My brother belted the daylights out of me", says Keith.

During his early years, Keith was not serious about the trumpet. He never thought that there might be a career in music. As he grew up, he continued his interest in the horn; he was drawn to other musicians, enjoyed hanging around with them, and played a few gigs. In his early teens he took basic lessons from the fine Melbourne trumpeter Freddie Thomas (who also taught Boof Thomsen). Thomas played and conducted in the cinemas in Melbourne.

*Eric Myers is a freelance writer and occasional musician.

"I was just fooling around, playing jam sessions", says Keith, "having a lot of fun, going to dances hearing the bands play. I'd always be sitting listening to the bands. I'd just idolise them". Only now does he realise how much his background was preparing him for a musical career. "I was working for what I wanted to hear; my imagination was getting richer all the time.

"I came from that sort of family. My father was a supervisor on the railways, but he was an amateur sculptor, very creative. My mother was into jazz, a bit like Willie Qua's mum Pat. Every kid was playing football and cricket, but I'd rather be inside listening to music.

"My father worked with a lot of Italian immigrants on the railways. He'd hear them singing and bring them home. He was a frustrated tenor. These guys couldn't speak English, but they could sing and sing! We'd be having dinner and listening to these Italian guys, my father would be crying ... I'm very grateful to my parents for having all that music around."

After leaving school, Keith was a cadet photographer with the Melbourne *Argus* and later worked in advertising, intending to do commercial artwork. But music was always there, hovering in the background.

"I'd hang out with my friends, and we'd see guys like Frank Johnson's Dixielanders, and the late Ken Herron ... and Roger Bell knocked me out — a great trumpet player. The jazz was traditional and swing in Melbourne at that time. The music wasn't new to me; I'd recognise it from home."

With the growth of modern jazz in Melbourne in the 1950s Stirling got to know the promoter Horst Liepolt, who had opened Jazz Centre 44, and the growing circle of modernists. "Guys like Brian Brown, Stewie Speer, and Len Barnard were a great help to me. Len was a great player ... he'd be bridging Thelonius Monk into Bix Beiderbecke. It was great hanging around with those people. I used to sit in with Brian Brown and Keith Hounslow. If Hounslow couldn't make it, they'd hire me."

"Graham Lyall and I were about the same age, and there were a lot of great players around in Melbourne then: Roger Sellers, Chuck Yates, Ted Vining, Graham Morgan ... We were grow-

ing up with the music. We were the same age as Freddie Hubbard, Woody Shaw and those guys. It wasn't like now, where the kids have to dig back into the past a bit to hear Lee Morgan. We were growing up with the American players day by day, even if we were in another part of the world."

Soon, the realisation hit Stirling that it was time to take the music seriously; a musician had to work to survive. "I started to think: 'how do you play this animal of an instrument? It's not easy! I hear the music, I'm getting older, I wish I could play this or that'. I was just starting to mature."

From that time, in his early 20s, certain themes began to emerge, which have characterised Keith Stirling's later life: maturity through growth, a restless exploration of music, a search for enlightenment. He was to become one of the most travelled musicians in Australian jazz, living and working for long periods in Sydney, Adelaide and Perth, as well as Melbourne. Consequently, he is now one of the best-known jazz players around the country.

In the early 1960s he began hitchhiking to Sydney to play. These were the great days of the El Rocco, and Stirling met men like John Pochee, Dave Levy, Mike Nock, Rick Laird, and Bob Bertles. At that time, there was much commuting between Sydney and Melbourne, as jazz musicians found kindred spirits in both cities. Soon, Stirling was living and working in Sydney.

"I still had the umbilical cord attached to Melbourne, so if anything went wrong I could go back. At one stage I went to Melbourne, and it had changed — or I had changed. So I thought I'd go to Adelaide. I'd never been there. I knew a couple of musicians from there — Bob Gebert and Billy Ross. They'd been playing at The Embers in Melbourne."

"Bob Bertles and the late Keith Barr¹ — a great teacher and great friend — also turned up in Adelaide and we formed a sextet with Billy Ross on drums, Bob Gebert piano, and Ronnie Carson on bass. That was fantastic. I learnt a lot from that. We

1. Keith Barr died in tragic circumstances in Sydney in the early 1970s.



The Keith Stirling Quintet in action at the Sydney Jazz Festival, 1982. From left, Jay Stewart, Stirling, Craig Scott, Steve Brien. Drummer Ron Lemke is behind Brien.

JANE MARCH

were playing Bobby Timmons stuff like *Dat Dere*, Yusef Lateef's *Dizzy Atmosphere*, along the lines of the Cannonball Adderley Sextet."

"It was a great experience meeting Keith Barr. Whenever I hear Paul Gonsalves now on record, it reminds me of Keith—that spirit. We were young guys then, he was an old cat. He taught us so much, with his approach off the stand, everything about music . . ."

This group, called the Barr-Bertles Sextet, was resident at the famous Cellar in Adelaide, run by John Howell. "We'd start at midnight and do the milk-run until three," says Keith.

Stirling was in Adelaide for two or three years, and met his wife Marlene. Always restless, he was looking to go overseas, perhaps through Singapore. It seemed appropriate therefore, in the late 60s, to go on to Perth (which was, after all, closer to Singapore than to Sydney).

In Western Australia, Stirling played at the Hole In The Wall with Billy Gumbleton on piano, the fine English tenor player Tony Ashwood (who has now gone back to England), Billy Tattersall on drums, and the late Frank Smith on bass.

"I was still growing. I learnt a lot from those guys. I was a crazy guy in a lot of ways. I thought I had it covered, but I didn't. I was still growing up."

Soon he was hit with a desire to get back to Sydney. He came via the Moscow Circus in 1968, at the time of a new wave in jazz: Miles's *Bitches Brew* was in the air. In Sydney he quickly entered into the swing of professional music, working at the old Chequers' nightclub with many of the great cabaret artists: Lou Rawls, Carmen McRae, Stevie Wonder, Tony Bennett . . . an endless list.

"I learnt how to play in a section. I had to survive, so I took this sort of work", says Keith. "But it was good, I've never regretted it. I've been very fortunate. It taught me to play, it taught me discipline, light and shade, it gave me greater confidence. A lot of it I didn't enjoy. A high percentage of it annoyed me, but I had to survive."

"I did see a lot of that stupidity in other musicians: 'Oh no man, I'm a jazz player . . .' Well, I wanted to eat. I was a jazz player, but I don't have to say anything else. I don't have to play games when reality is hitting me in the face. I can do it, and do it well."

"But I learnt a lot at the same time. I sat in with Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers when they were here. There was a lot of bad music too, bad acts, and I was a painful guy too, I'm sure. But I was learning and growing."

Around 1970, Stirling went back to Melbourne, at about the same time as Graeme Lyall. He recorded an LP with Bruce Clarke, and worked in the studios. But eventually he was itching to get back to Sydney.

"Don Burrows came along and I said, 'Help me, get me outa here!' I just wanted to get back to Sydney. There wasn't the stimulation in Melbourne."

At that time, around 1975, the Jazz Studies programme was in full swing at the NSW Conservatorium of Music under the American saxophonist Howie Smith. Through the good offices of Burrows, Stirling landed a job teaching in the course, and taught there for four years.

"It was fantastic. I was learning all the time. I was having a crash course with Howie, saying 'What's the name of this scale? I've been playing it for years.' I knew the basics by ear, but I was starting to learn it all over again in an academic way. There's nothing wrong with knowledge; it won't hinder your progress."

Still, Keith found that a preoccupation with the academic approach began to inhibit him as a player. "I got to the point where I'd be playing at The Basement, feeling I had to play the absolute correct scale for everything. I became stereotyped—no-one else noticed it. I'm sure. I just wasn't happy, whereas before I was free-er and would take chances. I'm that kind of person anyway—I'll take a chance."

Stirling resolved this impasse by taking up his travel cycle

again. This time, it was off to New York on a study grant from the Music Board of the Australia Council in 1978. "A jazz menopause", as he describes it. "Going to New York verified that I was on the right track, and gave me more self-confidence and direction."

Before going to New York he studied at tertiary institutions in Louisville and Chicago. "I'd just left the Conservatorium and now I was being swamped with information. If I find the Holy Grail I'll share it. I'm that type of person. Because it's eluded me this long in my life, it's made me appreciate it more when I get it. I've had a lot of salt, so when sugar came along, I really knew how to taste it."

Stirling regarded himself as street-wise. Like most true jazz musicians, he was basically self-taught. He had come up from the street-level playing, then had gone to school later, but found he couldn't relate totally to the academic approach. He felt that knowledge and education were necessary, but he needed an extra dimension to justify his jazz beliefs.

"Jazz music is above all an act of creating, of communicating one's feelings directly and immediately, of making something fresh and new which is deeply and thrillingly personal, out of the materials of popular song", he later wrote in his report to the Music Board. "Jazz is a spontaneous music of the here and now, composed on the spot and instantaneously executed."

On his way to New York, Stirling felt that something was missing. "I could hear it, but I couldn't switch it on," he says. "That's why my pilgrimage to New York was so important."

"What did I learn? Well, Lee Konitz taught me how to play a song, how to play *a tune*. And what you learn with one tune, you learn for all tunes. It hasn't let me down yet."

"Lee Konitz comes from a distinguished line, a tree . . . Very much from Charlie Parker. If you listen to Lee, you'll hear a lot



NSA members Herbie Hancock, Wayne Shorter and Buster Williams participate in an NSA parade in October 1982: a form of Buddhism that has captured the imagination of a great number of jazz musicians...

of Bird. He told me himself that he was still lifting off Bird. A good player borrows from somebody else; a great player *steals* from somebody else. That's what Lee Konitz taught me. It's not as immoral as it sounds."

"I learnt the basics from all those people in New York. Not just Lee Konitz, but Tom Harrell, Chet Baker, Ron Matthews ... others.

"Also, one of the great things I learnt from the Americans is this: *concept before technique*. Not the other way around. In other words, your technique must come up to your concept. You can't allow technique to rule you. That's a tendency in a lot of players."

Brimful of energy following his return to Australia in 1980, Stirling applied practically the knowledge he had derived from his period in New York. "I learnt most from one-to-one relationships in New York," he says.

Accordingly, he grouped around him four of the most promising young musicians in Sydney jazz: Jay Stewart (piano), Craig Scott (bass), Steve Brien (guitar), and Ron Lemke (drums) later replaced by Matt Dilosa.

For two years, this quintet was one of the most exciting and capable modern groups playing in Sydney. "I taught those cats a lot of things, man," says Keith. "I applied those techniques I'd learnt to these young musicians, and I was very proud of their achievements over 18 months or two years. At the same time I was perfecting in myself these fundamental skills which are still growing in me today and still flowing."

Since that time, Keith Stirling has had some great moments in jazz. On the tour with the overseas artists in early 1982 he was invited by Miroslav Vitous to perform with him and Mike Nock in a series of concerts; he recorded an album in early 1982 with the American alto saxophonist Richie Cole for Peter Noble, which is yet to be released; for two years he played with the Toshiko Akiyoshi/Lew Tabackin big band at the Sydney International Music Festivals run by Peter Korda. These are only some of the memorable highlights of a busy career in jazz.

That brings us up to date, and to Keith Stirling's views on the music scene in Australia today. "If you want to know about a city listen to its popular music," says Keith. "If you listen to music on the radio in Australia, AM or FM, I don't believe it. It's like wheelchair city; it's not healthy, it's not good."

Still, Keith's attitude is a philosophical one: out of this a better and new era will emerge. "In my own life, I've learned that something good can come out of negativity. Things can be better in Australia. Take Japan — Hiroshima, Nagasaki ... Out of that devastation and ruin came the Japan of today, the economy that's the best in the world. West Germany too ... A lotus flower grows in the mud; it doesn't grow in a swimming pool. It may even get worse in Australia, but in the long-term eventually it will get better."

There is a basic strength and optimism about Keith Stirling which he has derived from Nichiren Shoshu Buddhism (in Australia known as NSA). It is a form of Buddhism that has captured the imagination of a great number of jazz musicians:



JANE MARCH

Stirling: You get incredible wisdom through this, and courage. . . that's what I'm playing on now.

Herbie Hancock, Wayne Shorter, Buster Williams, Ron Carter, Billy Hart, Tina Turner, Roberta Flack, Miroslav Vitous, Rufus Reid and many others. Stirling himself was turned on to it by the black American singer Ernestine Anderson when she was in Australia in 1981.

Ernestine Anderson had flown into Melbourne to a crisis. She was suffering from jet-lag, her luggage had gone on to India, and the rehearsal with the musicians in Melbourne hadn't gone well. She had only the clothes she was standing in, plus her make-up bag, and she was due to open that night. Yet she was serene. Stirling noticed that she was a strikingly attractive woman, looking years younger than her actual age. She was chanting, over and over: "Nam-myoho-renge-kyo ..."

Stirling was at that time at a low point himself, stranded in Melbourne, following the Georgie Fame tour. Maureen O'Keefe from the Barry Ward agency, had invited him to lunch to meet Ernestine. Soon the American singer had him chanting too.

That was a crucial meeting for Keith Stirling. Since then Nichiren Shoshu (NSA) has transformed his life and spirit. The chanting enables him to tune into the fundamental laws of vibration and feeling. "You just chant for what you want", says Keith, "and it really works. It gives me tremendous energy.

"Once I started, things started to happen; all these things started to work out, I was thinking 'how much is this going to cost? What do I have to do? Shave my head?' But I only had to chant. It's that simple. Ernestine told me 'in 12 months you won't know yourself; you'll be driving your own bus'. And that's how it's worked out.

"You get incredible wisdom through this, and courage. The knowledge that comes to you is unreal. That's what I'm playing on now. My life condition is in a much higher state, and that's why I'm playing and feeling better." □

THE SYDNEY JAZZ CLUB: 30 Years On

By Bruce Johnson*

The following article is the first of two written on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the Sydney Jazz Club, probably the oldest surviving jazz club in Australia. The pieces are too brief to be called a history. Rather they review some of the nodes and antinodes of the Club's history, in conjunction with the special pictorial issue in July of the Club's magazine, **Quarterly Rag** and with a special programme on 2MBS-FM, Monday September 5 at 3.00 pm, featuring musicians who have been associated with the SJC over its 30 years.

The Australian Jazz Conventions have been crucial in the development of our traditional jazz. It is amply documented that they provided both a musical forum and an inspirational sense of community for the early Melbourne, Adelaide, and Hobart musicians. The proposition also holds good, a little later, for Sydney. For many formative years, the nucleus of traditional jazz in that city was the Sydney Jazz Club. Its beginning was coeval with the foundation of the Paramount Jazz Band, and both owe their existence to lessons absorbed at Australian Jazz Conventions. In 1949 at the Melbourne Convention, young tuba player Harry Harman took a strong interest in the way trombonist Wocka Dyer organised various groups of musicians and was able to improve their collective sound. Conversation with Dyer reinforced Harry's sense of the importance of rehearsal and presentation, convictions which surfaced later as the Paramount J.B. began to take shape. At the Melbourne Convention of 1952, Harry had long and productive discussions with trombonist Frank Traynor. Surveying the dearth of work and venues for traditional bands, the latter made the point that the only solution seemed to be for a band to have its own place, and to attend to publicity and promotion itself with the help of people who knew something about the business.

The observation brought to a focus a number of ideas which Harry Harman had been toying with during

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NORM LINEHAN

At the Real Estate Institute, May 15 1954. From left: Jim Roach (p), Don Hardie (bjo), Peter Hawkins (dms), Bob Learmonth (tbn), Ian Cuthbertson (cnt), John McCarthy (clt), Harry Harman (tba), Dan Hardie (clt). Seated behind the group is Fred Starkey, at that time President of the SJC, and Merv Acheson is peeking through the back curtain.

the previous year. He had been involved with a rehearsal band which included members of The Westside Stompers and The Bridgeview Jazz Band: Trevor Pepper (tpt), Bob Cowle (p), Bob Learmonth (tbn), Bob Leggett (dms), with, on occasions, Bill Boldiston (clt) and Willie Gilder (bjo). He returned to Sydney after the Convention determined to stabilise the group and to establish its own venue. Rehearsals became regular and systematic, with the various sections sometimes practising on their own. The sessions were kept private. In Harry's words, "In those days if anybody had a blow, every dag in town would turn up and it'd turn into a piss-up" (a prophetic instinct, as it turned out on a large scale in 1967). At the same time he and others began canvassing the idea of a jazz club. Some of the more celebrated jazz publicists were unenthusiastic and sceptical, but Fred Starkey of Ashwoods Records, and Frank Coughlan were among those who were receptive: Coughlan organised a special performance by the new band at the Trocadero. Starkey, who became the Club's first President, attended the inaugural informal committee meeting, along with Keith Davidson, Ian Cuthbertson, Bob Learmonth, and Ian McLachlan at Harry's house in Campsie. In the meantime the name "Paramount" was attached to the band, inspired either by the brand name on a toilet bowl (QR October '76 No. 3) or by the old record label (QR January '77 No. 4). Apart from performing at the very occasional private party at the house

of Joan and Ulick King where the band often rehearsed, Harry kept them under wraps until the formal opening of the new club.

This took place on August 8 1953 at the Real Estate Institute, 30A Martin Place. The band members had floated the Club with a contribution of £2 each, and out of that £14, £6 went to hire the premises for that first night. There had been some personnel changes, and the band on that evening consisted of Pepper, Leggett, Harman, Dan Hardie (clt), and brother Don on banjo, Tony Howarth replacing a temporarily absent Learmonth, and Peter Towson replacing Bob Cowle. The careful preparation paid off, and the hall was packed out with around 200 people, now all Club members since, for legal reasons, this was made a condition of entry. With the band on a percentage of the door the Club opened every fortnight. Although subsequent nights were not often up to the attendance figure of the opening (on one occasion the band members received only 8 shillings each), those involved persisted and overall it was evident that the Club was going to be a success. During its period at the R.E.I. there were several highlights. The New Year's Eve Revel at the end of that first year included an informal street parade by the band, which returned leading hundreds of revellers who tried to cram into the small premises. It was also the venue where a young Dick Hughes first performed regularly for Sydney jazz audiences, and where the Len Barnard Band played a night after the conclusion of

its ill-fated tour. For many, this was their first direct exposure to the compelling work of Bob Barnard. Towards the middle of 1955 however, friction was developing between the owners of the hall and the SJC. The fact that empty liquor bottles often littered the unlicensed venue on the morning after was a legitimate enough complaint, but it was felt that claims about damage to property were, if not exaggerated, then misdirected. In any event, the association between the Real Estate Institute and the SJC was terminated.

The Club spent about a month searching for new premises (during which time, according to Harry Harman's recollections, it briefly operated at an Oxford Street address). Finally they went into one of the halls at the Ironworkers Building in George Street, opening on 3rd September 1955. Except for the period between September 1961 and January 1962 (when they moved to the YWCA while the Ironworkers was being renovated in accordance with fire regulations), this was to be the home of the SJC until March 1967. This period saw many developments. The personnel of the Paramount J.B. became rather fluid and Harry himself left around 1958 to join the Port Jackson J.B. He returned briefly in the early 60s, then departed for good in about 1962 to join Graeme Bell. At the same time there was turnover on the SJC Committee, so that the two entities, the Paramount J.B. and the SJC, tended to develop separate lives, though still remaining associated at the Ironworkers venue. The Club started a Jazz School and from here as well as other sources new bands were emerging. One of these was the Black Opal J.B. which,

in 1958, was given the alternate Saturday, making the SJC functions weekly. Other house bands during this period were the Quayside J.B., the Harbour City Jazzmakers, and, from November '63 to April '64, the band led by the Club's future Patron, Graeme Bell. The Club also began organising other functions on an occasional basis — Riverboat Cruises, Picnics, and various social evenings. It became the backbone of the Australian Jazz Conventions held in Sydney during these years ('58, '62, and '65). They also began running evenings at the Abraham Mott Memorial Hall in Argyle Place, not knowing of course, that, after the Picnics, these would become the most durable institution in the Club calendar.

In the meantime the Ironworkers had become enormously popular, but its success was double-edged. By opening a second hall on the third floor, both the Paramount and the Black Opals were able to perform every Saturday night for a crowd that averaged 800 (the record attendance was estimated by Eric Richards at 1200). Inevitably, a regular social function of that magnitude began to attract groups whose interest was other than in jazz. Jazz Club members were now a minority, lost among a pick-up set and determined trouble-makers. The latter, in particular a notorious group from a suburban sporting club, became a serious problem which required first, bouncers, then in addition, armed security guards. Committee members who remembered that the Club had been started so that they could hear live traditional jazz found, to their bewilderment and irritation, that they had to spend so much time simply

running the show — manning the door, selling tickets, policing the halls — that they weren't hearing any music. And it seemed a queer thing that the Club was paying more money on bouncers and guards than on musicians. Fights would break out and spread like shock waves through the hall, leaving patrons injured and bleeding on the floor. There are various accounts as to which particular incidents brought things to a head. Geoff Gilbert recalls the night the Committee members had to lock themselves in the kitchen for safety. Another member was tipped off that a security guard whom he had reprimanded for letting friends in for nothing, was waiting with friends to kick him to death when he left that night. Whatever the particular incident, it was the problem of violence in general which led to the calling of a Committee meeting on Thursday 16 March 1967 (not 1966 as I mistakenly implied in *QR* July '83), which in turn led to the then Secretary, clarinet player Peter Neubauer, writing a letter dated the 20th, cancelling all future bookings by the SJC of the Ironworkers Building. The Club, in public terms, closed down. Not, however, for long. □



At the Ironworkers Hall, 1958. From left: Harry Harman (sousaphone), Frank Traynor (trb), Ian Cuthbertson (cnt), Laurie Gooding (clt), pianist unidentified.

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THE GREAT AUSTRALIAN BASSISTS

An Australia-Wide Survey (Part 1)



ADRIAN JACKSON

Melbourne's Barry Buckley

Barry Buckley has been one of my favourite bass players for several years now. I have heard him on countless occasions with the Brian Brown Quartet, the Ted Vining Trio, and Odwala, and on every occasion he has impressed me as the quintessential bass player. He is the linchpin of the rhythm section, working with unflagging energy and selflessness to drive the music along and lift it higher. He draws a thick, muscular sound from the bass, knows when to be assertive and when to be supportive, and although not a great virtuoso, can construct solos of remarkable fluency and power.

Barry was aware of jazz early in life thanks to his father's musical tastes. He recalls, "Dad used to play drums a bit, and that helped me choose the bass." At 16, Barry began five years of classical bass lessons. Not long after that, he was playing in a trio with pianist David Martin, and both were soon recruited by Brian Brown for the celebrated Quintet of the late '50s that also included Keith Hounslow and Stewart Speer. Barry recalls his chief influences from those days as Paul Chambers, Ray Brown and Oscar Pettiford.

Barry spent 1961-62 in the USA on a dental scholarship. On his return, he began playing with such musicians as Ted Vining, Tony Gould and Alan Lee, and eventually found himself in

Brian Brown's Quartet with Gould and Vining, which he recalls as, "a great band. Brian had a lot of original concepts that he wanted us to play, and he made us play very creatively. And, there was a lot of energy in the music."

Buckley left that band about 1969 to devote more time to his family and his dental laboratory. In the early '70s, the Ted Vining Trio with Bob Sedergreen and Barry Buckley came together, and Barry developed a rare rapport with those two musicians, which was further cemented when Barry joined them in the Brian Brown Quartet of 1976-79. His bass playing was a vital element in that band's power and creativity.

When that quartet disbanded, Barry retired from playing, only coming out for the occasional reunion of the Trio or Quartet. He still relishes such events, stating, "When you play together with people for so many years, that music and the way you play with each other becomes ingrained in your soul."

Over the last year or so, Barry has played with the contemporary quartet Odwala. Modestly, he says, "I'm appreciative that these really talented young guys want an old guy like me to play with them. I very much like the songs we play, and really enjoy playing once a month with those guys. It's the same as in any band, I try to contribute as much fire as I can, keep the pulse established, but

still have something to say when I can."

For a musician's appraisal of Barry's playing, I consulted Bob Sedergreen, who said, "Barry is unorthodox, he's not afraid to use the extreme high and low registers of the instrument, and he does that with great accuracy. He constructs bass lines with VERY strong intervals, never gets bored with an ostinato line, and places his notes so that the bass note becomes the pulse. Nobody else plays like Barry."

Ted Vining enthused, "Barry is a drummer's delight. He has an incredible sense of time, he never gives in, he gives his whole for the music and the group's sound. If there were more bass players like him, there'd be a lot of better bands in Australia."

Barry nominates his favourite bass player as Red Mitchell. "He's a very melodic, very musical bass player, he plays the instrument the way it should be played." His other favourites include Richard Davis, Art Davis, Sam Jones and Buster Williams: "I love the sound he gets, and of course the way he plays."

Barry says, "I wish I had more time to devote to playing, but my business controls my life at the moment. As soon as that situation changes, I'll be playing as much jazz as I possibly can, and I hope that won't be too far away."

Adrian Jackson

Hampton's Bruce Cale

Bruce Cale has probably had more experience in the top echelons of jazz overseas than any other bassist now working in this country.

For 13 years, from 1965 to 1978, he carved out a distinguished career on both sides of the Atlantic. He worked in England with people like Kenny Wheeler, Tubby Hayes, Ian Carr and Dudley Moore. In the US, he worked regular gigs with Toshiko Akiyoshi, Zoot Sims and Phil Woods. In Los Angeles, where he was based for some time, he worked with John Klemmer for over a year, Ernie Watts, Conte Candoli and Teddy Edwards, and with Mike Nock in the John Handy Concert Ensemble.

With this sort of experience behind him, Bruce Cale has a great deal to offer local jazz. Yet, he rarely performs and has only a handful of



JANE MARCH

students in Sydney. He spends most of his time living quietly in his small farmhouse near Hampton in the Blue Mountains, devoting his energies to composition.

If Bruce Cale is primarily a composer these days, he has lost none of his stunning brilliance as a bassist, as is evident whenever he performs. And he is as concerned as ever about the role of the bass in today's jazz, particularly what has happened to the traditional acoustic bass sound under the onslaught of amplification.

Bruce feels that even the best of Australian bass players have allowed the pristine sound of the bass to suffer. He recites the example of a programme he heard recently on Jim McLeod's ABC-FM programme *Jazztrack*, featuring the Adelaide saxophonist Schmoe, Alan Turnbull (drums), Ted Nettlebeck (piano), Ed Gaston (bass) and either Steve Erquiaga or John Scofield on guitar. Gaston's bass, according to Cale, was going straight onto the tape, rather than through a pick-up and amplifier.

"It was the first time for a while that I'd heard Ed play with a beautiful tone, using the real sound of the instrument," says Bruce. "It was in time, so highly musical. I felt that I was hearing the real Ed Gaston."

"These days you often can't hear the tuning on the bass because of amplification; you can't hear the core of the note. It's a pity so many good players have been obliterated by their equipment."

Before the advent of the pick-up, according to Bruce Cale, the main issue in bass playing was the question of how close the strings should be set to the fret-board. The higher the action, the more difficult the instrument was to play technically, but the player gained in sound projection.

"Bassists like Scott La Faro lowered the action at the expense of projection power in order to improve their facility on the instrument, but they needed a good PA to pick up the quieter sound. In those days, bass players were criticised for not having a big sound.

"Now they have that big sound through electronic means", says Bruce. "but most young players these days don't realise how hard we had to work for that real bass sound, the acoustic sound that comes from the wood.

"Those who like the electronic sound are not aware that really it's just the fashion, but the old-fashioned sound is coming back."

Eric Myers



Sydney's Ed Gaston

For many years bassist Ed Gaston has been one of Australia's busiest and most revered jazz musicians. Listen to his measured authority as he drives a band through a heady swinging piece or delicately colours a ballad. His antecedents speak for themselves. He has been the chosen bassist for touring artists of the calibre of Sarah Vaughan, Milt Jackson, Dizzy Gillespie, Barney Kessel, Stephane Grappelli, Clark Terry, Mark Murphy and a host of other greats. Throughout a career spanning over thirty years he has had the pleasure and privilege of sharing the bandstand with the likes of Joe Venuti, Zoot Sims, Shelly Manne, Jimmy Rushing, Victor Feldman ... was a member of the Teddy Edwards Quartet with drummer Billy Higgins and pianist Jack Wilson, has worked with the Terry Gibbs Sextet, the Ed Shaughnessy Quartet, the Bill Holman Big Band ... the credits go on.

Gaston's first instrument was clarinet but he was soon lured to the rhythm section. Ray Brown, he recalls, was a major and lasting influence on his style. His formal study of the instrument was limited. Instead, he headed for the road and "learnt to play by playing."

Gaston's role in the legendary Australian Jazz Quintet of the 1950s is a well documented part of Australian jazz history. In the early 60s, when the AJQ had disbanded, he

returned to his native United States, touring with Bryce Rohde, Colin Bailey and Frank Thornton. After working for two years in Los Angeles he was back and settled in Australia. The next ten years saw him part of the Don Burrows Quartet alongside the guitar of George Golla and a succession of drummers that included John Sangster, Warren Daly, Alan Turnbull, Laurie Bennett, Laurie Thompson and the late Jackie Dougan. The quartet was resident at the Wentworth Hotel for six years. In 1972 the band guested at the Montreux and Newport Jazz Festivals — the first Australian band to appear at Montreux. Fifteen years earlier Gaston had appeared with the AJQ at another first for an Australian outfit — Carnegie Hall. The Montreux performance was preserved and released on record.

In a career marked by many moments of elation it is difficult for Gaston to recall one specific high point. He does, however, recount with particular fondness, memories of his work with Sarah Vaughan, Dizzy Gillespie and Stephane Grappelli.

In 1977 he returned with his family to Los Angeles. "I was sick of what I was doing here ... in a rut ... needed a shot in the arm," Gaston recalls. "The competition in LA keeps you on your toes. It elevates your standard ... you've got to be playing at your best all the time ... you don't get any second chances." After two and a half years and with a refreshed attitude towards his music he returned to Sydney.

Ed observes that the amount of jazz being presented in Sydney compares more than favourably with that in LA. At last count Sydney boasted nine venues presenting jazz six nights a week and around eighty once a week. "Jazz in Sydney is healthy ... better than it's ever been, and it's getting better," he adds. He sees many talented young players emerging and has no doubt that jazz in this country is safe.

Aside from his playing commitments, Gaston maintains a light teaching schedule, which he enjoys. He suspects he may do more as a teacher in the future. On two occasions he has conducted clinics in Hobart in conjunction with the Tasmanian Contemporary Jazz Society and a similar clinic is to be held this year. Ed has a brief and poignant message to students of all instruments: "play good time!"

He is currently appearing regularly at the Regent Hotel and the Texas Tavern.

Carl Witty



Brisbane's Lach Easton

Brisbane's undisputed king of the acoustic bass is Lach Easton.

A truly gifted as well as highly original player, Easton has always incorporated his own ideas, fused his own harmonic concepts, into his solo work and playing.

The end result, according to drummer Ted Vining is "Beautiful singing lines. Lach's worked hard at his art. He's an accomplished bass player who's never failed to produce a fine sound."

Easton has been a Brisbane resident since 1978. Since then the musician on a full-time basis has played an incredible variety of gigs, including most recently, his regular stint with Vining's free-form players Musiikki Oy.

Easton's musical career began at age nine as fledgling pianist. He took up guitar, played in the pop idiom, and at 17 bought his first double-bass. Through workshop groups he developed an interest in jazz.

"At the same time I studied double-bass classically with the late Arthur Dixson, principal bassist with the Queensland Symphony Orchestra, a great teacher."

In his twenties Easton was appointed principal bass with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, played five years with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and then as principal bass with the Queensland Theatre Orchestra.

Easton's present musical concerns, apart from free-lancing and the Queensland Theatre Orchestra, are

teaching bass guitar and studying arranging.

How does Easton see the bass in modern jazz? It's primary function, as in other kinds of music, he says "is to provide a foundation to the chords being played by the group or ensemble. It's other two important functions are rhythmic — rhythmic interplay with the drums or percussion, and supplying the right note at the right time."

Easton's concern with the production of a good tone has also enhanced his standing as Brisbane's leading bassist.

Easton: "The role of the bass has changed a great deal since the 1930s, when it was considered an ensemble instrument only. Even in the forties the bass player would simply 'walk' the bass for a chorus. Now in the eighties the bass has become increasingly recognized as soloistic as any other instrument in the group or ensemble. Players like Eddie Gomez and Niels Pedersen illustrate this concept beautifully."

Easton considers the major reason for the bass's current more exalted status is the technical proficiency of the younger generation of bass players whose playing has been enhanced, in turn, by factors such as lower string action on the basses as well as sophisticated amplification of the instrument.

The musician derives most of his ideas however not from bassists but horn-players and pianists; John Coltrane and Milt Jackson are top of the Easton rating scale.

Easton remains, finally, a highly supportive as well as highly individualistic player.

"In ensemble work it's obviously important to listen to the soloists at all times as well as to the chordal instrument. In addition you need to have one ear on what the drummer is doing and to complement that rhythmically. Playing good bass can, I guess, be reduced to one single concept — playing the right note at the right time."

Neville Meyers

Perth's Murray Wilkins

When you find yourself in a trio with one of the world's greatest jazz pianists, and he won't tell you what tune he's about to play, or even what key it's in, that's when you wonder if being a jazz bassist is really worth the trouble.

In the case of Western Australia's Murray Wilkins, it was, despite the musical insecurity it must have caused.

It was August, 1980, and Wilkins was playing bass with Teddy Wilson in Perth.

"It was an amazing experience," Wilkins recalls. "All he said was 'just try to come in behind me.' It certainly did make me concentrate on what I was doing."

Wilkins, acknowledged as one of Perth's finest bassists, has had far less anxious moments playing alongside other visiting stars. He's performed equally well with Mike Hallam, Doc Willis and Ruby Braff as he has with Keith Stirling, Allan Zavod and Tony Gould.

"Playing modern jazz isn't everything. I do Dixieland, Latin, just about any style. Really, there are only two types of jazz, good and bad."

Wilkins has been the model of versatility ever since he picked up a bass as a member of a teenage

quartet 21 years ago. "We already had a pianist, a drummer and a trumpeter, so I ended up on bass," Wilkins remembers. "I already played a little guitar, so bass was the logical choice."

After a few months, the quartet became a dance band, then came a Dixie outfit called The Traditionals. After that, folk groups and a soul-oriented rock and roll band in the mid-60s, when Murray made the switch to electric bass. He returned to the double bass in 1975 and renewed his interest in jazz.

"Jazz, though, is still basically my hobby. I only play jazz maybe once or twice a week. Five nights a week I play in a small show band. It's like an office job, but the acts change often enough, so I still enjoy it."

His favourites are Rufus Reid and Niels Henning-Orsted-Pedersen, especially the Dane.

"I like the way he has escaped from



the shackles of the standard bass lines. He's able to create so many wonderful melodic things, taking any instrument's approach, a sax, guitar, trumpet, anything. He's the master."

Wilkins is a firm supporter of the notion that the bass should assume an equal role with all the other instruments in a combo. He also insists the bassist should still be competent in his fundamental role in rhythm. But for Murray, the greatest satisfaction comes not in working with pianists or horn players, but in

backing up singers.

"I worked with Mark Murphy and enjoyed that enormously. You can become a bit more emotionally involved when you play behind a singer, and besides, I always had a better idea of what he was going to do, more so than if he'd been a horn player."

And certainly a better idea than trying to second-guess the talented but secretive Mr Wilson.

Steve Robertson

Melbourne's Geoff Kluke

Before he moved to Melbourne in April, I had never heard Geoff Kluke play, but heard plenty about his playing — all of it to the effect that he was a truly exciting talent.

Over the last few months, I have heard Geoff with Brian Brown, One Step Ahead, the Nichaud Fitzgibbon Quintet and with Bernie McGann, and on each occasion his playing has been nothing short of excellent. He gets a good, thick tone on the bass, his sense of time is impeccable, he knows how to drive a rhythm section, and how to respond to a soloist; and his solos are full of virtuosity, taste and daring.

Ted Vining said of Geoff, "He has the same attitude as Barry Buckley, they're almost like brothers. He plays great time, he gives his all to the music. And he is a fantastic player of the instrument."

Bob Sedergreen explained, "Geoff is a bass player's bass player. He really thinks about his sound, and gets very upset with himself if he ever plays a note with slightly suspect intonation. He's a very agile soloist, but he plays bass player's lines rather than horn player's lines. His lines are very buoyant, and he's a really driving bass player."

Geoff recalls his career in jazz: "I started playing in the late '60s, in Adelaide. At first I was into soul, and played electric bass; James Jameson was a big influence on me then. Then I started listening to the great jazz bassists like Ray Brown, Ron Carter and Sam Jones. By the early '70s I was playing with Schmoe and Ted Nettlebeck, mainly in a '50s and '60s Miles Davis kind of bag. As time goes by, tastes change, you become more mature, different sounds become more important: by about 1974, I was playing acoustic bass rather than electric as much as possible.

"So, I was playing with Ted and



Schmoe, and a trumpeter Freddy Payne, drummer Billy Ross, and a couple of good guitarists, Grahame Conlon and Dave Colton.

"The Creole Room opened about six years ago, and for some time I was playing jazz there four nights a week, having a great time, and doing session work to keep alive. There were a lot of sit-ins there, and I got to play with Herb Ellis and Barney Kessel, Paul McNamara, Peter Cross, and Don Burrows when he was there for a few months in 1979.

"That year, I toured with Blossom Dearie and Louis Stewart, and I became very ill at the end of that tour. I was in hospital for two months with various problems, and didn't play at all for five months. When I got back into it, I was playing with Glen Henrich, and I got to play with Phil Woods and again with Herb and Barney.

"At the end of 1980, I left Adelaide because the jazz scene there was very quiet then, and I was offered a steady commercial job on the Gold Coast."

In his two years in Queensland, Kluke enhanced his reputation by playing with visitors Ernestine Anderson, Richie Cole, Mark Murphy and The New York Jazz Giants, and local players including Clare Hansson, Dave Bentley and Ted Vining.

But, he says, "I was very frustrated up there, because while I was getting some very good jazz jobs, there was not much happening in between them. And I was feeling stifled by the commercial gigs, I felt like they were turning me into just another RSL Club bass player.

"So when Brian Brown offered me a job teaching on the Jazz Studies course at the Victorian College of the Arts, and I could see the prospect of more jazz playing in Melbourne, I jumped at the chance.

"I'm especially enjoying playing with One Step Ahead, it's a good open sort of band, and it's the sort of material you can really dig into. And it's really good to be playing with Brian. I think he's moving away from the fusion thing — he asked me to bring the electric bass for a few numbers the first week, but I just leave it at home now — and getting back to 'time' playing. He's written some very interesting compositions, and of course he likes odd time patterns, and a bit of free improvisation."

At the VCA, Geoff is instructing some individuals, but concentrating on teaching ensembles. He says, "I just try to direct them. The hardest thing, and the most important thing, is getting the rhythm sections to really swing. Jazz needs to get that blues feel in it, that's essential, and I guess that's something the guys have just got to learn."

Asked about his own favourite bass players, Geoff thought, "I've been listening a lot recently to two very different bassists. Buster Williams is a superb feel player, a real no-holds-barred man with a raw quality that I like. On the other hand, Gary Peacock is a very florid player. I think a lot of people missed the point with him and Scott La Faro: they could really play bass and set up a time feel, as well as all the other melodic stuff. I like Charlie Haden's great emotionalism, Niels Pedersen's a real virtuoso, Leroy Vinnegar could swing beautifully. There are just so many really great bass players around."

Geoff Kluke is one of them.

Adrian Jackson

Next issue: Stephen Hadley, Derek Capewell, Lloyd Swanton, Darcy Wright, Craig Scott, Jack Thorncraft ... and others.

BERNIE MCGANN: interview

By Adrian Jackson*

Sydney's Bernie McGann has long been regarded by jazz musicians, fans and critics as one of the most important jazz artists Australia has produced. He hasn't exerted a great influence on other players, nor has he attracted an exceptional public following; he is important for the fact that he is a singularly original and exciting improviser. Australia has seen plenty of good jazz musicians, quite a few very good ones, and a few excellent ones. Bernie McGann belongs in the last category.

I first heard Bernie in 1977 with The Last Straw, and in the intervening years have heard him on several occasions in a variety of situations. On each occasion his playing has impressed me tremendously. The last was in April, when he spent a weekend in Melbourne. On the Saturday night, he played with pianist Jamie Fielding, bassist Barry Buckley and drummer Ted Vining at The Raglan Room, and delighted fans with his hot bebop blowing. On the Sunday night, he did the same, accompanied by Vining, pianist Jex Saarelaht and bassist Geoff Kluge. And on the Sunday afternoon at RMIT, he played an unforgettable concert with Vining, Buckley and pianist Bob Sedergreen.

The rhythm section was magnificent: the drumming was crisp and powerful, the bass lines muscular and unerring, the piano accompaniments urgent and constructive, and the piano solos were full of drama and invention, Sedergreen at his marvellous best. McGann was no less magnificent. With that unique alto saxophone sound — harsh yet attractively guttural, heavy with fervour — he attacked his improvisations fiercely, leaping, flurrying and running through a stream of ideas, all the time swinging with great intensity. He played with tender feeling on *God Bless The Child*, gracefully on his own *Spirit Song*, and at blistering intensity on *Now's The Time*, *Cleo* and *A Night in Tunisia*. The performance was recorded, and given that the only recording of Bernie's music is on the long-unavailable CBS set *Jazz Australia*, it would be criminal if it were not released on LP; but don't hold your breath waiting for it. Meanwhile, grab any chance you get to hear Bernie McGann play in person.

AJ: You were born in Sydney?

BM: Yeah, we moved to the western suburbs about two years after I was born, and lived there for the next twenty years until I left home. I had to leave home 'cause of the practising.

When did you get into jazz?

Well, I had the sounds around my house. My father was a drummer, and he had a lot of records; he used to have record sessions with his mates on a Sunday, one was a pianist and another was a saxophone player. He had a lot of Fats Waller records, Duke Ellington things, some Mary Lou Williams, Errol Garner, Benny Goodman, and some Teddy Wilson, along with some English pseudo-jazz stuff. I used to love Fats Waller, so I got into the music then.

I started to play drums, and did some deputy jobs for Dad. I was all set to buy a set of drums but when I was 18, I can't recall who it was, it might have been Boots Mussulli on a Charlie Ventura record, I listened to the saxophone and I thought, 'Yeah I like that sound,' and I finished up buying an alto saxophone. One of Dad's mates took me down to the store, and I got a cheap Boosey and Hawkes student model, and I was away.

*Adrian Jackson has been a freelance writer for several years, and jazz critic with the Melbourne Age since 1978.



ADRIAN JACKSON

Alto saxophonist Bernie McGann, performing in Melbourne recently.

Prior to that, I'd heard Charlie Parker and those people, and I was really intrigued by that music. I didn't know what to make out of it as such, but it interested me. So I discovered the true shit.

How did you go on from there?

I hooked up with a teacher, a chap by the name of Kevin O'Connell. He wasn't a jazz player, but he was a good reader, a good technician, he knew the horn. So I studied with him maybe two years. So I had the groundwork, and after that it was up to myself, same as with anyone else. I was playing by ear, I had no idea about harmony. I didn't know what substitutions were, but the piano player would tell me, 'You're playing them man!' So I went to a piano player by the name of John Newton for harmony lessons. We always had a piano at home, so that was handy. John Pochee and Dave Levy used to play at a coffee lounge in Newtown called The Mocambo, just two-out, and I got to know them and play there sometimes. That was the late '50s. I played a few Paul Desmond licks and impressed everybody. Then I got into playing all sorts of jobs, weddings, surf clubs and so on.

Did you have a different sound back then?

Yeah. I was told I was different. I was really into Paul Desmond — I still think he's a great player, beautiful — so I patterned myself after him. But I found I couldn't be cool like that. I'd start out being cool but then something else would come out, a wilder sound I used to get bugged by that, 'cause I couldn't sound like the guy I thought I should sound like. Then I realised it was just me coming out, so I had to develop that, otherwise I wouldn't get any satisfaction out of what I was doing.

What sort of jazz were you playing then?

Well, I got into Lee Konitz and people like that. Finally I really discovered Parker, and Miles Davis's **Round Midnight** record with Coltrane really knocked me out. I used to hear all the new sounds on the *Voice of America* radio programme.

Did Ornette Coleman have much impact on you?

Oh yeah, like a breath of fresh air. I thought his songs were beautiful, and I loved his playing. We used to do a bit of that sometimes ourselves. I'd still like to get back to that, but you've really got to work at that music to do justice to it. You've got to have the right players, who are sympathetic to it.

I remember a band you had with Jack Thorncraft and Phil Treloar a few years back used to do some material by people like Ornette and Albert Ayler.

Yeah, we used to play some of those songs. I'd like to get back to that sometime, broaden the repertoire a little. It was great playing the bebop standards with the guys down here — some beautiful players — but next time I come down, I'd like to bring a working band, and do some work on the repertoire, maybe do some more original songs.

You first played in Melbourne about 1964?

That's right, I came to Melbourne with Dave McRae, to play with a jazz ballet for about six weeks. Barry McKimm and Barry Woods were in that band too. Then it was back to Sydney, and scuffle. I think it was about '66 when I came down to Melbourne again. Barry Woods had a job at the *Fat Black Pussycat* in Toorak, and he asked me to come down. Chuck Yates was on piano, and later Andy Brown and John Pochee were in the band. I think the job lasted about six months. We were playing some originals, and a lot of Bird and Dizzy tunes, got right into the bebop. When we went back to Sydney, we did some jobs here and there, and it was about time we did the record. After that, I played in a few pseudo-rock bands.

Were you making a living from music?

I'd mostly been supported by my wife. I didn't get much money from playing, I'd take a few part-time jobs here and there, labouring or washing dishes, whatever.

Were you involved in the El Rocco scene?

I never got any work there when Arthur James was around, he used to hate my playing. He used to hate musicians full stop. I did get a job there with Lyn Christie; he was a musician, but he was also a doctor, so Arthur went along with what he said. I think I deputised one night for Don Burrows, and after that I got a regular Sunday night job with Sangster and George Golla and Stewie Speer and Lyn. I worked there maybe half a dozen times with my own band or with Dave Levy. The only time I got a good run there was when Arthur was out of town, I think his brother-in-law was running the place, so we got three nights a week there until Arthur came back.

What were you doing in the early '70s?

Well, we used to do a lot of daytime playing. I had a soundproof room, so we were always having a blow. At one time, I got a job four nights a week at a place near Wollongong, and the rent went up at our place in Newtown so we wanted to get out of there, and my wife found a great place to live in Bundeena, which is sort of half way between Sydney and Wollongong, so we moved there. I got a job with the Post Office delivering mail about '72, so I dropped out of the scene for a while. I worked days, and just practised by myself outdoors, and just sorted myself out a bit.

The Last Straw brought you back to Sydney?

Yeah. Dave Levy and Ken James had a rehearsal band with a few guys, and I had a blow one day, hadn't had one for ages. It developed from there into *The Last Straw*, and we got some jobs, a few of Horst Liepolt's gigs.

And a recording contract with 44 Records.

Yeah, for the record that never happened. It was

unbelievable man, there were some strange circumstances. The outside recording van got swamped the first night we tried to record at *The Basement*, it rained too heavily the second night, Ken James was sick the next week, and finally we taped a good night, and they lost the piano track. A sad tale. *The Straw* reformed for a month at *Jenny's Wine Bar* in March. We hadn't played together for a long time, we were a bit rusty, but that was good, maybe it will happen again.

You got a job at The Pinball Wizz about 1977?

Yeah, well I started playing there with Wendy Saddington, did that for quite a while. We also did a few concerts at the *Kirk Gallery* around that time, with the *Kindred Spirit* band. I got a job at the *Wizz*, Sundays with a trio with Jack and Phil, and Thursday nights with the *Straw*. We used to get good crowds, but the place closed for some reason or other. After that, a guy called Ray Sutton asked me if I'd like to do three nights a week at a restaurant in Glebe. I said sure, we checked it out, the owner was a nice bloke and the place had a good feel. I played at *Morgan's* with a trio, and after a while that became a quartet, with Bob Gebert on piano. I quit the post office and moved to the city for a while. Not long after we opened the concert for the *Art Ensemble of Chicago*. *Morgan's* closed in 1980.

After that, I went away to live in the bush for a while, a place up north in a log cabin, just playing by myself all the time. Then I got a call from Peter Noble via John Pochee, saying this guy wants you to open for Art Pepper. That finally happened in August, so I did a couple of gigs with Bob and Ray Martin and Phil, and Peter Noble paid us good money. I hustled around a bit, which is strange for me, and got a few nights at *The Basement*. We got good crowds and good reviews, but never any more work. We did the *Capitol* before Lester Bowie in '81 and opened for Freddie Hubbard in '82, but between those, we didn't get much at all. '82 was a very

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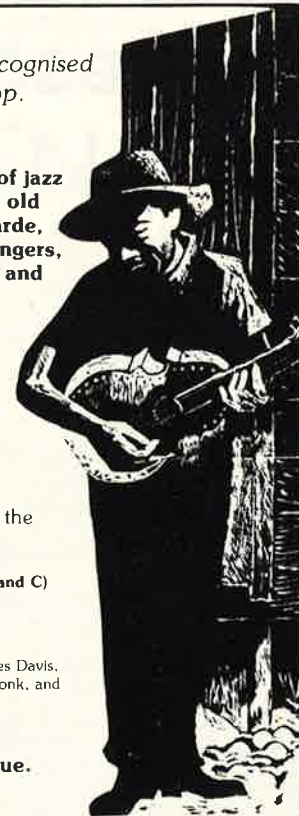
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quiet year.

You got to record with Sonny Stitt.

Yeah, well Peter Noble booked us to open for those guys. The recording was set up without any advance notice, Peter just gave me a call, said the recording's on, it's an extra \$40, is that OK, I said, fine. So we just went along and met Sonny and Richie Cole and Jack Wilson, they were really nice people. They played the first set, we all got up and had a solo in the second set, then we split up: Dale [Barlow] and Barry [Duggan] did a song, Erroll [Buddle] and I did a song, then we all came back together for a few numbers. Sonny gave us all a wrap in front of everyone, which was nice. He told me he dug what I was doing, and keep doin' it, which meant something to me to hear that from him. I expected Sonny to be a bit spiky, but he turned out to be a really warm sort of guy. I'd really like to hear the record, I hope it will come out one day.

When did you start working at Jenny's?

Last December. I only had about four gigs for all of last year, I'd got roped into the job at the post office in Bundeena again. Then I got a call from Peter Rechniewski who'd just come back from Europe and wanted to promote jazz at Jenny's, so I did two nights a week there with John Pochee and Ray Martin or Lloyd Swanton. We're mostly doing standards, we're only doing two originals, **Spring Song** and **Salaam**. I've got a whole lot of new songs I haven't done with anyone yet. I think they need a piano, so I might keep them up my sleeve for a while. We're doing quite a few Monk songs, too.

Tell me about the Music Board grant.

That all happened through my lady, Dawn Hicks, I've got to give her a wrap here. People have been onto me for a while to apply for a grant, but I must admit, if it wasn't for her, I'd still be thinking about it. I phoned Don Burrows for some advice, and he was very helpful. Charlie Munro, Bruce Cale and Brian Brown gave me references, and the grant came through

for me to study in the USA. Dewey Redman was really helpful to me too, and I don't even know the guy.

So what will you actually do over there?

Well I'm certainly going to get together with Dewey. Barry Harris is another guy I'd really like to meet, have a chat with him. Chuck Yates spent a lot of time with him and learned a



JANE MARCHE

McGann: I don't know man, I just go out there and play ...

great deal. I just want to go there and observe the people. I'll go to a few places, but mostly I'll be in New York. Visit the source. There's so many people I'd like to have a really good listen to. I can learn off everybody if I just keep my ears open. I don't know what I'll be thinking about when I come back. I don't know it'll make a whole lot of difference to the way I play. I'm fairly set in my ways on the horn. But you can always learn.

How could you describe your approach to playing?

I dunno, I'm not much of a talker. I don't know, man, I guess it's old hat, but if music hasn't got some sort of pulse or swing to it, it hasn't got much to do with jazz ... I don't know man. I just go out there and play, hope it all hangs together, hope there's some logic and musical thought and feeling to it.

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WEST AUSTRALIAN YOUTH JAZZ ORCHESTRA

By Adrian Kenyon*

One of the most exciting developments on the Perth jazz scene for many a year has been the formation of a West Australian Youth Jazz Orchestra.

The band came together in February and made its public debut at the Perth Jazz Society on June 13.

It was an event that surprised many people in the audience. The normal pattern at the society's Monday meetings is that people drift away well before the end. This time they were still firmly fixed to their seats right up to the closing number.

Before the debut performance some cynics in the Perth jazz community had expressed doubts that the state could produce a band of this standard. The feeling was that it would probably turn out to be a glorified concert band playing warmed-over Glen Miller or easy-to-play Henry Mancini arrangements.

In fact, this band had set out from the beginning to tackle and perfect charts by some of the world's top arrangers and composers.

They included things like Donald Bird's *Fancy Free*, *It's That Time* by Louie Bellson and *The Crunch* by Ken Gibson, which was first recorded by the Johnny Dankworth Orchestra.

From the comments expressed afterwards, it was clear that the band had achieved its aims. Moreover, those who had believed all along that real talent existed in WA and it only needed to be nurtured were well and truly vindicated.

Much of the credit for this must go to the musical director Pat Crichton, who will be well known to Sydney jazz fans as the principal trumpet soloist with the Daly-Wilson Big Band some years back. Pat's work can be heard on several of the band's albums. He was also an arranger of the Mike Walsh Show, a studio musician and one of the busiest jazzmen on the Sydney scene in the seventies.

In Perth Crichton is known for his work with the Will Upson Big Band and his frequent appearances at the Perth Jazz Society with various groups.

*Adrian Kenyon is West Australian Jazz Co-ordinator, jazz columnist for the WA Saturday paper *The Weekend News*, and editor/publisher of *Western Australia's Music Maker*, a general interest music magazine.

Under Crichton's leadership WAYJO has spent four months rehearsing at the music auditorium of the WA Academy of Performing Arts and polishing up its repertoire which now numbers 14 charts, all of them being performed at the PJS debut.

Ages of the musicians range from 16 to 25. Most are either students or teachers. And just to prove that the band is not a male chauvinist stronghold, there are two girls in the trumpet section — Rochelle Fleming and Betty Green.

The other trumpet chairs are occupied by Lindsay Timms, Guy Hooper and Graham Constantine. Trombones — Bill McAllister, Brian Lizotte, Jim Palmer and Bruce Herriman.

Saxes — Grant Rickman, Brett Fitzsimmons, Tim Neil, Lee Buddle, Phillip Croot and Ian Dunn.

Piano — Tony Celiberti. Guitar — Alan Lim. Bass — Robin Dunn and drums — Robert Corvaia.

If you think there is a familiar ring to one of the names in that list ... yes, you're right, Lee Buddle IS the son of the great Errol. He and his brother Perry, who also plays tenor,

made their home in WA some five or six years ago.

Such is the enthusiasm generated by the band and what it can achieve in terms of musicianship and prestige for the state that a second training band has now been formed. The new boys will cut their teeth in this band, they will also act as deputies for the main band and graduate to it on a permanent basis if the occasion arises.

The idea behind the band goes back to the visit to WA in 1980 for the Festival of Perth by Britain's National Youth Jazz Orchestra, which — despite its youth — is rated as one of the best big bands in the world.

After leaving Perth the British band toured Australia finishing up in New Zealand where they made an album — *NYJO Downunder*. One of the tracks was entitled *Blenkinsop's Blues* after the Festival of Perth director, David Blenkinsop. This chart is now in the band's library.

In his sleeve notes NYJO director Bill Ashton said the LP was a

continued on page 23



The West Australian Youth Jazz Orchestra, under the baton of Pat Crichton.

NEW ORLEANS REVISITED: Two Views

(1) By Phil Tripp*

New Orleans — The City That Care Forgot — is a rich mixture of widely divergent cultures crammed together on a narrow crescent of reclaimed mud surrounded by swamps, water, and humidity. It is oppressively hot in the summer, depressingly cold in the winter, and there is a tension that pervades the atmosphere at all times, kind of like a storm waiting to happen. Yet it is the very atmosphere and melding of cultures — white, black, French, Spanish, and a wide range of others — that gives 'Nawlines', as the locals call it, a very unique character that is reflected both in the music and the way people enjoy life.

"Where y'at?" is the standard greeting with "What it is?" as the obligatory response. What it's been in the Crescent City for the past hundred years or so is the cradle of civilised jazz. And every year the city celebrates itself and its musical, cultural and culinary origins in an orgy of activity known as the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival.

As certain a ritual as Mardi Gras, it is held in late April and has remained an indigenous fixture for locals and overseas visitors as well for the past 14 years. It's addictive, it's decadent, it's indescribable at times, but it is the largest ongoing jazz festival in the US and a magnet for musicians and jazz mavens from all over the world.

Imagine a crowd of 60,000 swaying bodies, continually satiating

themselves with over 79 varieties of native cuisine, forming into streams of multi-hued humanity to surge towards ten stages featuring continuous music from 11 am until the sun goes down. Over 3000 musicians appear in over 300 separate performances in the course of five days stretched out over two weekends playing every genre of jazz playable. Traditional, fusion, funk, mainstream, avant-garde, Dixieland, and a representation of reggae, cajun, country, Caribbean calypso, blues, and rhythm and blues — in short, all forms of music that inhabit the city.

It was best summarized by John Murphy, former Festival Director when he said, "That a Festival composed of ten stages of continuous extravagantly different styles and kinds of local music, of more than seventy different varieties of native food of over one hundred craftspeople, can run for seven hours a day, over two weekends and still not exhaust its possibilities or its audience, is awesome testimony to the cultural forces that drive the music, swirl through the Gumbo and burn through the dancing."

It's more than Ironing Board Sam playing keyboards in an underwater tank or on a tightrope stretched across the audience; more than the Meters hypnotizing an audience with their infectious rhythms; much more than a blind bluesman moaning, accompanied by the shivering tones of his battered guitar. It's the people

— swarms of 'em — outrageously attired, fully stocked with consumables and imbibables pulled behind them in little wagons, swaying with an inbuilt lazy rhythm that permeates the air.

Revelations are inevitable. They come in electrifying Gospel chorales, through a traditionalist's well worn clarinet and its dark mellow tones, and in the fais-do-do lilt of a coon-ass, cajun fiddler. One irrevocably drifts into a involuntary syncopated nodding and can't suppress the smiles.

It takes so many words to even inadequately attempt to describe the magic that infests the Fest's attendees. The description is just a taste. Kind of like LSD — to those who have tried it, no explanation of its effects are necessary; to those who haven't, none are possible. And the comparison of the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival to an esoteric drug is apt.

A group of Australian tourists who went to this year's spectacle were at first stunned, then initiated into the rituals of restructuring their consciousness and adapted quite well to the culture shock. First, there were the blacks. Aussies have no conception of relating to a culture that is predominately Negro and a certain foreboding set in which was quickly dispelled by the fascination of the idiosyncrasies of street jive culture.

Plus, they wasted no time getting into the music. An array of college jazz bands, overseas traditionalists, gospel choirs, funk/fusion groups and bayou country singers paraded before them as they wandered from stage to stage. Names like Clarence 'Gatemouth' Brown, Clifton Chenier, Doug Kershaw, Dirty Dozen Brass Band, Al Hirt, Dr. John, Ellis Marsalis, Roosevelt Sykes, and the Zion Harmonizers, became sought after experiences. The Aussies braved the local beer — Dixie — and munched with glee into bowls of Gumbo, Jambalaya, Crawfish Etouffé and with some trepidation, the Alligator Picanté.

But it was the music they were there for and the festival grounds with the native crafts from pornographic walking-sticks to corn-husk dolls they had stocked up on,

**Phil Tripp is an American refugee, currently resident in Australia. He visited New Orleans recently for the Jazz and Heritage Festival.*



MICHAEL P. SMITH

Traditional New Orleans jazz parade at the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival.

soon faded behind them in a cloud of dust as they prepared for the *other* half of the festival — the night shows!

Yes, it is possible to overdose on music, food and crafts, but these Aussies hit the street running after a shower and a few cold tinnies of Coors beer. It is always a mad rush to the streetcar to get into the French Quarter in time to make the riverboat. But you always leave just enough time to demolish a dozen fist-sized oysters or pick up a box of Popeye's red-hot fried chicken with dirty rice to smuggle on-board along with a bottle of Southern Comfort or Jack Daniels. The daytime activities, exhausting as they are, seem only a prelude to the nighttime raging that happens aboard the riverboat 'President'.

Imagine an old art-deco, 4-level riverboat that packs in 2000 patrons a night to see the likes of Allen Toussaint, Tina Turner, Junior Walker, Elvin Jones, Chico Freeman, Toots and the Maytals, Willie Dixon, Taj Mahal, and a host of other luminaries from jazz, blues, reggae, and be-bop persuasions. For four hours the boat rocks and steams upriver and downstream as the masses dance, whirl, drink, eat, perv, shout, parade, and explore every corner of the massive ship. There is a huge balconied inner arena where the performance is cooking while on other levels, speakers blare out the proceedings as patrons waddle around under the load of their ingestion. The top of the ship is an open deck where masses of folk cakewalk, do a li'l dancin', and huddle in mysterious clumps where clouds of pungent smoke and giggles emerge. As the boat slowly docks 'round midnight, and disgorges its load of happy revelers, another group is already lined up for the second show that goes on until four in the morning.

But the Aussies are undeterred by the late hour. They are still operating on Sydney time and the night is still young. Some elect to tear through the streets of the French Quarter, sampling the dance halls, burlesque shows, and other-worldly delights that are hawked from every doorway on Bourbon Street. A clot of other hipsters, reel toward the Café du Monde right on the river for some jet-fuel café-au-lait and a mound of beignets (fried triangular doughnuts covered in caster sugar) before zipping down Tchoupitoulas Avenue to Tipitina's nightclub for another dosage of rhythm-and-blues or up to Le Bon Temps Roulet for a taste of Cajun stompin'. Each night has its new discovery — Ella at the Fairmont



An aerial view of the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival, with crowds flowing through the Fair Grounds Race Track.

Hotel's plush Blue Room, Ray Charles across the river in Fat City, the obligatory pilgrimage to Preservation Hall, a sortie into the Maple Leaf Bar to see James Booker's spidery fingers attack the piano whilst one does the laundry in another part of the bar. Yes, laundry! Some bars have a laundromat attached so you can sip, shuffle, and slither around while your wash soaks and sudses. Very few festival-goers opt for sleep — that would be too much of a distraction while such a varied and vibrant musical happening is going on. Some stragglers find themselves confronted by dawn before they know it; a few of them retreat back into the bar to dampen their reality yet again.

Sleep usually comes in waves and washes over one only long enough to prepare for the lunch hour. And what better diversions than red beans and rice with sausage or ribs at Buster's, or maybe some Delta soul food at Chex Helene's, or a muffletta sandwich or a po' boy from a street vendor. It's just a preparation for the coming evening when another tour of nightspots, subterranean dives and

street scenes begins.

What little money is left over from the night raids is lost in the amazing array of record stores that cater to every taste in music. Computing customs duty, the tourists carefully pore through stacks of disks and end up buying too much anyway. Enough change is always saved for the dé-rigueur T-shirt, Fest umbrella for second line dancing, or the collectors' posters. The American Express cards threaten to melt from constant use as the festivities come to a close on the second weekend. More music, more food, oh, let's see if we can get a deal at that wax fantasy crafts booth ... and sooner than is wished the music fades, the crowds stagger homeward, and the time comes to pack up the overstuffed suitcases and start to detoxify before the plane leaves on Monday morning.

Monday is always the worst day. You know it is over and it's a 10,000 miles trip home. But you have caught a bug ... some call it a mild disease ... we call it Festival Fever ... and you know you won't be happy unless you come back next year. □

(2) By Steve Robertson*

Bourbon Street, New Orleans.

Strip shows, expensive restaurants, souvenir shops, Al Hirt. Not much of a place to hear good jazz anymore, right?

Surprisingly, that's not entirely true. Hirt and the nudie places are still flourishing, of course, but these days jazz is beginning to make a modest

comeback on the street where it flourished sixty years ago.

This latest New Orleans revival (what is it now, the third?) is spearheaded by two trumpeters, one young and white, the other older and black. One's a Crescent City native, the other an import from Chicago, reversing the time-honoured tradition of jazz moving UP the river. Both players though are studiously avoiding the trait of previous revivalists, carbon-copying the music

**Steve Robertson, who is JAZZ Magazine's Perth correspondent, visited New Orleans recently.*

of Oliver and Bunk and Keppard. Their ears have been open over the last twenty years. Ricky-ticky is not in their repertoire.

The older man is Wallace Davenport. Tall, well-dressed, with greying hair and a poker-face expression, Davenport appears to be in his late 50s. He was playing before a small but polite audience in a ramshackle bar called Crazy Shirley's on Bourbon Street.

"I wasn't supposed to be playing tonight, but Tommy Yett who regularly leads this band was sick and they needed someone to fill in on trumpet, so here I am."

Besides Yett, the band is also lacking a clarinet. The trombonist is capable but unexciting and the pianist should return to the nearest cocktail lounge. But Davenport is swinging. The rhythm section is good and Wallace is effortlessly working his way through the Dixieland repertoire. Much of his playing recalls Charlie Shavers, especially the "Mexican trumpet" attack on some of the notes.

"Yes, I've always admired Charlie. But you know, I like so many people. Sweets Edison and Lips Page, you know, they're such favourites of mine. And I consider Dizzy and Miles to be just as influential on me as Armstrong.

"I'm putting together my own band to play here very soon. I can't really say who'll be in it, but there are a lot of good people around town. We'll be fine."

This night though, things become less than fine. The crowd picks up and when an R&B version of "Caldonia" gets a good response, Davenport and the band get stuck in that groove. R&B vocals come one after another and even Wallace's playing becomes predictable. Then comes "Saints" and it's time to go. But Davenport has shown what he's capable of playing. His ideas are fresh, his lip is strong and the Dixie warhorses have been a joy. With his new band, Davenport should not be missed.

Up Bourbon about five blocks is a venerable restaurant and bar called The Blue Angel. For eleven years the trumpet player and bandleader here has been George Finola, a still-boyish looking Chicagoan with musical credentials that belie his youthfulness.

"Before I moved to New Orleans permanently, I was playing on the road with George Brunis. Bobby Hackett and Vic Dickenson were also part of that tour and frequently the four of us would all be up on stage at the same time. It was an incredible

experience."

Like Bob Wilber, Warren Vache and a few others, Finola is very thoughtful and articulate about his music. He also will not compromise over what he plays and how he plays it.

"I play exactly what I want to play here. The owner told me when I first came here, 'you're the musician, I'm the businessman, so you do what you know best and I'll do what I know best.' The band plays a lot of Dixieland standards but they're tunes we like. And if we want to throw in things like *Linger Awhile* and *My Old Flame*, we do it and there aren't any problems."

The styles displayed by each band member are equally eclectic. Tenor saxophonist Clarence Ford (who also plays clarinet since this is a Bourbon Street band) is a marvel. Clearly in the Paul Gonsalves—Cole Hawkins mold, Ford has been with Finola the longest, 8 years. He possesses unflinching drive, but can also caress a ballad with breathy, oblique torrents of notes that are in themselves a definition of jazz sensuality. His early background, though, gives no hint of what Ford is today.

"Clarence used to work with Fats Domino and a lot of R&B groups years ago," Finola explains. "In fact a lot of the tenor work on tunes in the *Happy Days* TV show is his. He enjoys those residuals."

Bassist Curtis Mitchell has been with Finola for 6 years. He and drummer Ken Allen keep excellent time and contribute brief but effective solos. Finola's pianist is something of a miracle. He is Edward Frank, who could easily pass for Bud Powell playing at Jimmy Ryan's.

"Did you notice anything unusual about his playing?", Finola asks. "His left arm is paralysed, but he's still able to get a little use out of it. He plays better with one hand than many pianists do with two."

It's true. Frank creates lovely, lyrical solos that give no hint of his handicap. He gives fresh life to the chord progressions of the oldest of oldies, tunes like *Memphis Blues* and *Milburg Joys*. The structure of his solos is impeccably logical. "Tell a story in your solo" Bechet used to say. Edward Frank does.

Finola himself is an original, with very much his own style. There's a bit of Bix, some Red Allen (a Finola favourite), and a dash of Hackett as well. It isn't hyperbole to put him in the lineage of fine white New Orleans trumpets that begins with Nick LaRocca and continues through Mike Lala and Sterling Bose (who was so drunk one night, Finola says, that he tried to play his trumpet by blowing through the bell). The young Chicagoan clearly loves the traditions of his adopted city, but is not a prisoner of them. In the opening of each tune, the ensemble work is in the classic New Orleans mold (minus the trombone, of course). But by the time the solos are over, Finola and the band are off into head arrangements that no other band now playing in the city would ever think to try. Finola and Ford anticipate each other brilliantly and the result is an exciting brand of jazz that defies categorising. So long as Finola, (and Wallace Davenport a few blocks away) continue playing on Bourbon Street, the place is still worth a visit. Reports of the death of jazz in New Orleans are, we're delighted to report, very premature. □



Trumpeter Wallace Davenport playing in the Gospel Tent of the Jazz & Heritage Festival.

D. SHIGLEY

THE SYDNEY BRASSERIE JAZZ VENUE

By Eric Myers

With Kerrie Biddell now resident every Tuesday night (and Wednesday nights from the beginning of August), the Sydney Brasserie is involved in a strong push which could well turn it into Sydney's leading jazz venue.

It will depend a lot on the drawing power of Kerrie Biddell. She is the most virtuosic singer in Australian jazz, with stunning technique, highly musical phrasing, and intonation close to flawless. She has every major area of contemporary singing covered, whether it be reading a perennial standard, rocketing through a complex wordless vocal in unison with the saxophone, handling a gentle ballad with piano accompaniment only, or getting it on in the funk tunes.

At the Brasserie she is now teamed with Vince Genova (piano), Darcy Wright (bass) and Willie Qua (drums) which suggests that she will be concentrating on swinging tunes and great ballads from the standard jazz repertoire.

On reflection, it is a blessing that the singer whom many people consider to be the best in Australia can now be heard on the first three nights of the Sydney jazz week. (She is, of course, still at The Basement on Monday nights with her group Compared To What.) For people visiting Sydney, from overseas or interstate, she is one of our performers on the 'not-to-be-missed' list, and this engagement will give many of her fans more opportunities to hear her work.

Su Cruickshank and Her Gentlemen of Jazz (usually Ray Martin, bass; Ray Alldridge, piano; and Harry Rivers, drums) hold forth on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights from 8-12 pm.

Su is one of the great 'red hot mommas' in Sydney entertainment. Her great skills are her ability to transform uneasy vibes in a cabaret room; to break up any suggestion of pretension; and to bring people together through laughter. She is an entertaining and witty woman who may go to madcap lengths to send up the musicians, the audience and, of course, herself. She fraternises warmly with the diners; if you're a regular at the Sydney Brasserie, chances are that Su will get to know you and make you feel welcome when you're in.

As a singer her approach is casual and spontaneous. When she sings,



Kerrie Biddell: heading a strong stable of jazz artists . . .



Su Cruickshank performing at The Sydney Brasserie Jazz Venue. To the left is bassist Ray Martin.

she draws you into her orbit, where nothing matters much as long as you're having a good time. Between numbers she is likely to go into improvised soliloquies about life, sex, politics, weight — anything. In short, she is a very funny woman — not only a singer, but a talented stand-up comic as well, with a devastating ad lib in reserve for a heckler or a conspicuous patron.

Now that the Brasserie has a late licence, the Vince Genova Trio is performing also on Friday nights from 12 midnight to 3 am. Vince, an American, is a rarity in jazz: a player who is also an academic. He came to Australia some years ago to study the music of the Torres Strait Islanders for his Ph.D in musicology, and later lived in Canberra. Since moving to Sydney he has cornered a lot of the

jazz piano work in town, and built a considerable following. He is a sparkling, prolific pianist who plays with an easy brilliance.

The Brasserie team, now led by Kerrie Biddell, Su Cruickshank and Vince Genova is a very impressive one indeed. The kind of jazz being offered is modern and contemporary, but it is accessible, mainstream jazz which will appeal to the great majority of middle-of-the-road people who like good music. □

JAZZ Magazine's food writer reports: Although some would argue that jazz hangs best with lukewarm black coffee, dull lights and cigarette smoke, the Sydney Brasserie offers a viable alternative context for jazz lovers: a pleasant setting, gracious service, and inspired food at reasonable prices.

The Brasserie's food reflects the uncluttered and relaxed ambience of the restaurant itself. The menu suggests that the chef enjoys his work; he offers an array of imaginative indulgences, while still relying on classic French ingredients such as lamb, kidneys, pork and veal. Traditional French themes are treated with some interesting twists, such as pine nuts and thyme, dijon mustard and mint, spinach and ginger. Each dish is subtly garnished with vegetables al dente.

A range of starters, including crab bisque, terrines, veal, kidney or brain sautes, and scallop timbale will tempt most palates. Even the ill-fated vegetarian diner can eat heartily at this restaurant, with several vegetable courses that are not as puritanical as the meals one might find at many vegetarian restaurants.

For those with a 'sweet' disposition the poached oranges with praline cream and dates dish is scrumptious.

Of course, one doesn't necessarily have to eat at The Brasserie; you can drink and enjoy music at its long bar, which is well-placed with an excellent view of the performers.

Perhaps because of the food and location, and what some might consider a sophisticated atmosphere, the Brasserie tends to attract possibly a wider range of clientele than the normal jazz venue in the city. It now taps a good proportion of the city's business people; if it can maximise a hold on the jazz market through its excellent team of singers and performers, it is on the way to a prosperous future. Drop down and say hello to the manager Phillip Fletcher; he'll make you feel at home. □

JANE MARCH

JON ROSE: Tales Of The Unexpected

By John Shand*

JON ROSE, violinist and cellist, is a mainstay of Australian free improvisation. Last year he was invited to perform at the prestigious Moers Music Festival, which became part of a three-months world tour, taking in Europe, England, North America and Japan. In October, he will perform at the Paris L'Autumn Exhibition, again by invitation. Recently he spoke with JOHN SHAND:

"I really hate what jazz players do to jazz tunes. They're fantastic tunes, beautiful tunes, like *Misty* or *Green Dolphin Street*. But they play the tune, then they start doing all this 'scoobly-dobly' over it, which seems ridiculous to me when the tune is perfectly nice."

Heretical words to appear in a jazz magazine, and more likely the mouthings of an unhip classical type, than a statement by a musician who is one hundred per cent dedicated to the idea of improvisation. Maybe if we give him enough rope...

"The standard band structure of play the tune, play something else, and play the tune again at the end, to me is bananas. It's so corny as to be absolutely ridiculous. It's like saying there are only three colours in the world. It's as naive as that, and yet everybody goes onto a bandstand, and expects it to happen."

Jon Rose was born thirty-two years ago in England, where he received formal violin training as a child. He gained experience in jazz, rock, country, and orchestral settings, before settling on his chosen path of free improvisation. But he was improvising for his own pleasure before he even knew what to call it.

"When I was about eleven I broke my arm, and began playing the piano with a plaster cast! I've always done things like that, but thought, 'Ah, well, it was good fun, but not real music. For a start, I'm enjoying it too much.'

It was not until six or seven years ago — coincidentally, the period when Jon moved to Australia — that he came to accept free improvisation as fully legitimate music, as opposed to something one doodled away at in private.

*John Shand is a freelance writer and drummer who has a day gig with the Australian Opera.



Jon Rose: hates what jazz players do to jazz tunes...

The number of conventional gigs he plays has dwindled to practically nothing, and the bars and theatres of that sort of music have been replaced by venues such as lofts, cellars, and art galleries, not forgetting that "once a year gig at the Basement." Free improvisation is generally considered too radical or on the fringe for normal venues, with the notable exception of the Alexander von Schlippenbach Trio playing at the NSW Conservatorium last year. Arguably, the music suits smaller, more intimate spaces, anyway. Jon can claim to have played the Sydney Opera House, but it was in the orchestra backing John Denver!

A gig of that nature would be virtually out of the question, nowadays, for the same reasons that he finds concerts of anything from Haydn to the 1950s Miles repertoire a little weird.

"I can't take a serious idiomatic concert seriously, because it doesn't make any sense today, not when you can go into a record shop and buy *anything* within six foot. It's like pretending nothing else exists." However, he still enjoys "any music that's played well."

"To me, a musical process must be like the nature of music itself, which is very fleeting in existence. It should be a very natural process. The thing I like about improvisation is that you're not trying to make a finished

product, with no weaknesses or grey areas. The point of it is the process — actually doing it, and finding out and seeing things.

"At a concert of good improvisation, there's that feeling in the room that anything could happen. Whether it does or not is not irrelevant, but becomes almost of secondary importance."

That 'feeling in the room' was certainly in evidence at the Watters Gallery in Darlinghurst, one Friday evening in June. In conjunction with his artist wife, Kristine Rose, and a dancer, Caroline Lung, Jon turned in a performance of some forty minutes length, that was by turns soporific, when the ideas were thin and the interaction sluggish, but more often absolutely riveting, as ideas and emotional inscapes were presented, explored, and discarded at a devastating rate.

The three-way interaction manifested itself in several ways. For instance, Jon would play ideas based on the rhythmical scratching of Kristine's charcoal, or his cello would become meditative, even tender, as Caroline moved with Tai Chi-like gracefulness. A sudden trebly squawk from his violin had Kristine leaping in the air to dash off a brush stroke about seven feet up the wall!

Jon had one of his fiddles mounted on a long stick, to the bottom of which was attached a metal cylinder,

KALEY MAEVALI

which served as a laughably primitive wheel. However, the extraordinary sounds this 'wheel' produced, scraping over the gallery's concrete floor, became the catalyst for a highly entertaining segment of the improvisation. This culminated in a slide projector almost being bowled, and Caroline being bailed up against the wall by a slightly out-of-control fiddle.

All too often, critics and listeners alike feel free improvisation is purely intellectual, or, if at all emotional, is almost exclusively about anguish. The emotional content this night was full and ripe, from the above mentioned segment, which had me laughing, to a hauntingly sad arco piece on the cello.

For some reason, amongst the press coverage Jon has attracted, I have never seen a mention of the sheer beauty of sound he often projects: from the exquisite upper register of his violin, to the lavish bass end of his cello.

Of course, many of his techniques, like the instruments themselves, are unconventional, but they make available a greater variety of sounds. However bizarre (from attacking the strings with a stick, to rubbing the sound box with a wet finger), each technique has been thoroughly developed and practised alongside conventional string instrument techniques.

The music itself is conceptually different from other forms. Let's take a quick theory lesson.

Most music heard is linear in its language and intention. Improvised music tries to put into practice post-Einsteinian ideas on the unfixed, multi-dimensional characteristics of Time and our perception of it. Once you start to put some of these ideas into your music, certain assumptions get shattered. The concept of musicians playing 'together' except by some contrivance (score, chart, conductor, rehearsal, etc) becomes ridiculous. The differences between musicians suddenly seem much more interesting than a group of people trying to do the same thing in the same fictitious time spot.¹

In an interview with Mauro Cavallero on 2 MBS-FM in October, 1981, Jon elaborated further: "This music I try to play is multi-directional in character. The developments can take place in any time relationship... You don't have to connect things in a line. You can connect them backwards, upside down, sideways, any way, in a multiplicity of events."

There is ample evidence of the

theories being put into practice. The Relative Band, with Jon as the only constant, has been active for some years now. Both in this context, and solo, Jon's playing has been prolifically documented on his own label, Fringe Benefit Records.

The most recent offering is by Slawterhaus 3, consisting of Jon (violins, keyboards); Michael Tinney (guitars); and John Gillies (drums), with a look-in from Jim Denley on saxes. Loosely referred to by Jon as a 'rock outfit', this unit played several gigs, including a tenure at Jenny's, after the album was recorded.

A captivating sense of humour pervades the whole, as fragments of standards, or entire tunes, are interwoven with improvisations and tape inserts, while jarring funk feels throb spasmodically. It is immensely approachable and enjoyable, like very early Zappa, and serves as a happy introduction to Jon for the uninitiated, though it is far from representative. The Doubting Thomases in the jazz fraternity should hear the chillingly soulful reading of *Round Midnight*.

Call it naivety, but I can't help but be a little saddened by the thought that with some commercial push, this could and should be a very popular record. Instead, popularity and Jon Rose are currently mutually exclusive concepts. The reasons run us into the bog of market malleability, radio airplay, and so on; gripes not unfamiliar to the regular jazz lover.

At the performance by Jon, Kristine and Caroline, there were hardly more than fifteen people present — and it was free! The situation for improvisation appears to be essentially the same in culturally healthier Europe, and is possibly worse in the United States.

Jon's experiences are first hand in this regard: his international reputation allows him to move freely among the heavyweights in the idiom, including Japanese trumpeter Toshinori Kondo, and English drummer John Stevens.

Finally, some brotherly advice. Don't create the aural barrier of a preconception that this music is somehow 'hard' to listen to. Experience it live, rather than on tape or record: the latter are simply documents of an event rather than 'products', as in the conventional music industry. Live, there is the intrinsic theatre of player and instrument, the unique interactions between the improvisations, the venue, and the audience, and, above all, there's that 'feeling in the room that anything could happen.'

dedication to Blenkinsop for his enormous act of faith in bringing the British band to Australia.

It was Ashton who suggested to Blenkinsop that WA might one day form its own youth jazz orchestra. But it wasn't until late last year that the idea began to take shape when Blenkinsop discussed the concept with former Musicians Union (WA branch) secretary Harry Bluck and the superintendent of music for the WA Education Department's Music Branch, Roy Rimmer.

Rimmer's number two, Neil Boon — senior education officer (instrumental) with the Music Branch — did some of the early work in finding players, then Pat Crichton was brought in as musical director. A small committee was then formed to run the band headed by the writer of this article as administrator/secretary.

The band was recently awarded a grant of \$6125 by the Instant Lotteries Distribution Advisory Committee (a body linked with the WA Arts Council), which will put it on a sound financial footing for the future.

As I have pointed out in several talks I have given about this band: "Most of the people in it had never played jazz phrasing before. Yet in the short time they have been together they have learned so much that will be of immense value to them for the rest of their lives.

"They were all thrown in at the deep end and from this a strong feeling of dedication has emerged. They are also having a tremendous amount of fun as is evident at rehearsals.

"The orchestra is potentially the most exciting band WA has produced. It will give a lift to the whole jazz scene in WA, as there has never been an outlet for young people to learn about jazz. It is especially gratifying that the Education Department is right behind the band, as it shows that the authorities there are now taking jazz seriously and have stopped associating it with drink, drugs, loose women and smoky dim-lit cellars.

"They are recognising that jazz education is an essential part of music education and there are long-term plans to introduce it into schools. In the meantime, what better way to start the ball rolling than a youth jazz orchestra where young people can learn to play and improvise together and gain a knowledge of other instruments?" □

¹Letter from Jon Rose to Art Network Magazine, 29/5/1980.

EARLY AUSTRALIAN JAZZ PICTURE BOOK

In the course of his research for the film *Jazz Scrapbook*, filmmaker NIGEL BUESST collected some fascinating and important photographs taken during the first golden era of Australian jazz, circa 1935-1955. JAZZ Magazine is grateful to him for providing them, and we publish them with much pleasure, even if some of the details of personnel and dates are hazy.



▲ Benny Featherstone's first band at the Rex Cabaret, Swanston Street, Melbourne, in the 1930s. Featherstone was one of the fathers, if not the father, of Australian jazz.



◀ The Third Australian Jazz Convention, December 1948. From left, Keith Atkins (lt), John Sangster and Keith Hounslow (cornets) and John McCarthy (alto sax).



▲ Alan Watson (left) and Billy Banks.



Keith Hounslow ▶



▲ Ade Monsb- ough (left) and Len Barnard at the Melbourne Zoo (1953 or 1954).



◀ From left, Ian Pearce, Frank Johnson, and George Tack.



▲ An early shot of John Sangster at the drums.



◀ Len Barnard (left) gets his point across to his young brother Bob.



▲ Graham Coyle, pictured in front of Bob Barnard's Oldsmobile. Ill-fated tour, 1955.



▶ Prahra Town Hall, 1949. Rex Stewart, backed by Johnny Rich (trombone), Roger Bell (trumpet), Ade Monsborough (clarinet) and Don 'Pixie' Roberts (tenor sax).

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▲ Graham Coyle, pictured
in front of Bob Barnard's
Oldsmobile. Ill-fated tour,
1955.

Barnard (left) gets
cross to his young
job.



JAZZ JOTTINGS

By Eric Myers

When you read this, Robert Parker's superb series on ABC-FM radio *Jazz Classics In Stereo* will be into its second half. It is now being broadcast at 11.30 am every Sunday morning (11 am for South Australia) and will be on until August 28. Parker's work in re-mastering some of the earliest jazz recordings is truly a revolutionary advance. Those scratchy old 78s, given the Parker treatment, come across with extraordinary breadth of sound, musical detail and emotional power. Parker, a director of Molinare Ltd, one of Britain's largest audio and video facilities companies, produced his programmes in London using the new Sony PCMF1 Digital Audio Recording System. The programmes represent the fruits of 20 years research into methods for reducing surface noise on disc reproduction. It involves the use of a Packburn dynamic noise suppressor, which helps eliminate surface crackle and annoying clicks; reducing the high frequency noise content of the reproduced sound by a combination of high and low pass filter circuits; and adjusting the tonal balance with a graphic equaliser. Then the sound is enhanced for stereo through the use of an Orban Parasound, which splits the sound into five overlapping spectra, and echo is added. Getting the picture? Even if you are not interested in Robert Parker's technology, have a listen to the music he has re-mastered. This surely is as close as we can get to hearing the music of the great classic jazz players, circa 1917-1945, as they must have sounded live on stage and in the clubs. □

Judy Bailey (piano) and Ron Philpott (electric bass) provide one of the most interesting and unpredictable nights in the Sydney jazz week, with their residency every Tuesday night at Soup Plus. There is a different guest vocalist or instrumentalist every week (including recently Bobby Scott, Joe Lane, Norm Erskine, Tom Baker, Marie Wilson and others) and anyone is liable to sit in. The news is now out that Judy and Ron will be representing Australia at the 1983 Singapore International Jazz Festival in September, during a visit funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs. They will play two concerts at the festival on September 23 and 24. They



Robert Parker recording his ABC programme Jazz Classics In Stereo: a revolutionary advance ..

also expect to conduct a workshop, and play a chancery concert for the Australian High Commission during their next three days in Singapore. □

Sydney has a new jazz specialist record store: Jazz Plus, at 132 Victoria Road, Rozelle. The man in charge is no stranger to jazz record buyers — the ubiquitous Peter Cane, late of



Judy Bailey in action at Soup Plus, with Ron Philpott in the background: off to the Singapore International Jazz Festival ...

Jazz 338 and Palings Music Centre (and former writer for this magazine). Peter is a rarity in record retailing in that he knows the meaning of some values which now seem old-fashioned: service and assistance to the customer. He began in the Sydney suburb of Marrickville and later managed the Jazz and Shows section for Thomas' in Melbourne. "I learnt how to really bust my butt to get what the customer wanted", he says. On his return to Sydney he spent 15 years in record retailing, noticing the demise of the larger record stores, with their enormous selections, but also growing wages and price increases. He now feels that the specialist record store is the way of the future. "The opportunity came along to be part of Jazz Plus", he says, "which was going to handle the kind of music I have enjoyed and specialised in for years, namely stage and screen, nostalgia and, of course, jazz. The 'plus' side of our name also stands for jazz and movie books, TV specials, tape and record accessories, a relaxed atmosphere with free coffee while you browse and — most importantly — service and knowledge". Give Peter Cane a call on (02) 818 4501. Jazz Plus is only ten minutes from the city and there is ample parking in the side streets. JAZZ Magazine wishes Jazz Plus good luck and good business. □

JANE MARCH

Ken Wlaschin, programme director of the London Film Festival, was in Sydney recently to view Australian films, and to attend the Sydney Film Festival. He saw Nigel Buesst's film on early Australian jazz *Jazz Scrapbook* at the Chauvel Cinema in Paddington, and was much impressed. In a recent letter to JAZZ Magazine he writes: "We plan to show *Jazz Scrapbook* in the London Film Festival in November, and I think it will be of enormous interest to British enthusiasts." □

The 1983 Pan Pacific Jazz Camp, held in Sydney in May, was a considerable success, attended by 64 students from NSW public and private schools. Many students came from the country, as far afield as Wagga Wagga and Broken Hill, Administered by Ken Laing, the camp had as its musical director James Morrison, with John Morrison assistant m.d. The staff included Steve Elphick (bass), Kevin Hunt (piano), Jason Morphett and Mark Dennison (reeds), Steve Brien and Paul Baker (guitars), Alan Gilbert (drums), Dick Montz and Ralph Pyl (trumpets) and Nina Solomon (vocals). Activities included big band playing, small combo rehearsals, improvisation classes, instrumental tutorials, ear training, musicianship and choral classes. A highlight of the event was the visit by Don Burrows who played a concert with the Morrison brothers and David Pudney on bass and vibes. I attended the concert given by the students on the final evening of the camp, and it was a heartwarming experience. Many of the students were relative beginners on their instruments, and most had never improvised before coming to the camp. Yet, they played spirited

jazz. The level of playing achieved by the big band under James Morrison was a credit to the enthusiasm of the students and the skill of the various teachers. Support for this creditable event came from the Music Board of the Australia Council, the Division of Cultural Activities of the NSW Government, and the NSW Conservatorium of Music. Hopefully, it will be on again in 1984. □

Speaking of James Morrison, he certainly is a young man in a hurry. Still only 20, he has established himself as a major figure in Australian jazz. He and his older brother John have now formed the 12-piece Morrison Brothers Big Bad Band. It's a hand-picked selection of Sydney jazz players distinguished not only by their musical excellence but also by their ability to have a good time. They include Peter Cross and Warwick Alder (trumpets), Bob Johnson and Peter Trotter (trombones), Paul Andrews, Jason Morphett and Tom Baker (saxophones), Steve Brien (guitar), Steve Elphick (bass), and David Pudney (vibes) plus, of course, John Morrison on drums with James playing everything that moves. "The idea behind the band is music as entertainment", says James. "You've got to have a bit of humour; we like to play jazz in an atmosphere of having a good time". He is quick to point out, however, that this does not mean the music will be sloppy — it will still be first-rate jazz by some of the most exciting players around. The Morrison Brothers, promoting the venture themselves, have booked the band into the Seymour Centre in Sydney for Thursday October 7, the Dallas Brooks Hall in Melbourne on November 18, and expect to perform

at the Sydney Opera House on March 31 next year, with Don Burrows as a special guest. □



PETER SINCLAIR

Trude Aspeling: some South African Zonk...

A new group has been formed featuring the vocalist Trude Aspeling, and it will be performing at the Rozelle Hotel, 118 Victoria Road every Sunday from 3.30-6.30 pm. It includes Chris Abrahams (keyboards) and Andrew Gander (drums) both from the exciting group The Benders. Steve Hunter (bass) from the group Nebula, plus Casey Greene from the Bruce Cale Orchestra on saxophones and flute. Trude Aspeling returned from Europe recently where she was performing with the Dollar Brand Liberation Orchestra, and has been seen in various Sydney jazz venues. Her recent stint at Kinsela's drew rave reviews in *The Australian*. At the Rozelle Hotel Trude and the group will perform jazz, plus material from Steely Dan, Stevie Wonder and some up-tempo South African 'Zonk'. □

The Young Sydney Jazz Orchestra (formerly the Warringah Stage Band) under the direction of John Speight, played at the recent Parkes Jazz Tridium on June 11 with some success. They were invited back to perform at the Parkes League Club on Saturday July 23. School-age children will be bussed in from Orange and surrounding districts to hear the Saturday afternoon performance, and the band will play a concert during the evening for the Leagues Club patrons. On the following Sunday morning John Speight will be conducting improvisation classes for young music students at the Parkes Leagues Club. □



The 1983 Pan Pacific Jazz Camp: a group of students under the direction of John Morrison...

...and we've also heard By Dick Scott*

Cleo Laine is on her way back to Australia, a country for which she has quite some affection. It was her first visit here in 1972 that took her away from the European circuit and her success here inspired her first trip to the States and the rest, as they say, is history. She is undoubtedly Britain's first lady of jazz and looks set to take over one of the mantles left by such as Ella and Sassy when the time comes. Naturally enough John Dankworth is mentioned in the same breath as Cleo and the association is now into its fourth decade with the pair first coming together in 1952. Both vehemently deny that Dankworth sacrificed his career for hers — they are very much a partnership — a partnership that is reflected in the great work they do with young musicians at their home, Wavendon, outside London. They have gone so far as to convert the stables into an auditorium in which *Side by Side by Sondheim* had its world premiere apart from concerts held to raise money for their activities. We saw one of the products of Wavendon when Cleo was last here — the multi-instrumentalist Paul Hart. This time round there is a departure from her usual support that includes Hart, Kenny Clare and son Andrew. She is bringing a quartet of American musos with whom she will be doing big things in New York later this year. On electric guitar is Jon Ward who started his musical training on piano moving through trumpet, euphonium and finally to bass. He played and toured with the last Stan Kenton big band. Ward works as an electronics technician and built the equaliser/amplifier he



Cleo Laine and John Dankworth: very much a partnership ...

uses on stage. He has appeared on albums with jazz fusion group Solar Plexus. Jim Zimmerman's early inspiration was the Dixieland bands in New Orleans where his family lived for a time. He began playing professionally while at school, later joining the army and playing in army bands and jazz clubs in Germany where he was stationed. He finished studies at the San Francisco Conservatory playing vibes as well as drums. He has played with Tony Bennett, Andy Williams, Tom Jones, Frank Sinatra as well as jazz work on the West Coast where he is based. Pianist Larry Dunlar comes from a musical family which ran a music

store and jazz-oriented coffee lounge in Portland, Oregon. He began playing professionally at college and has backed the likes of Airto Moreira, Flora Purim, Mark Murphy, Andy Narell, Country Joe MacDonald among others. He is MD for the Pointer Sisters and in the jazz world his compositions have been performed by Stan Getz. He has also written longer works including a suite for jazz quartet and chamber orchestra (*Immersion: An Oregon Water Suite*) and a work for a 12-piece jazz band which premiered at the annual Oregon arts festival. Reedman Ray Loeckle was a member of the highly acclaimed One O'Clock Lab Band at North Texas State University. The group toured extensively throughout the States and Mexico and played at the White House with guest soloists Duke Ellington and Stan Getz. Loeckle has played tenor, soprano, flute and bass clarinet with the Dankworth Quartet and has also played with the San Francisco Symphony, Oakland Symphony and the Joffrey Ballet. He has backed Ella Sarah, Diana Ross, Mel Torme and recorded with Boz Scaggs, Patti Labelle and Jesse Colin Young among others. □

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CLEO LAINE

JOHN DANKWORTH and the new DANKWORTH QUARTET of American musicians.

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Adelaide	Festival Theatre	Wed 17
Melbourne	Concert Hall	Fri - Sat, 19 - 20
Sydney	Opera House	Fri - Sat, 26 - 27
Perth	Concert Hall	Tue - Wed, 30 - 31



"Cleo Laine, still the best singer in the world." London Sunday Times

**Dick Scott is a professional journalist with News Limited in Sydney. He writes on jazz for The Australian.*

The ABC's *Don Burrows Collection* is fast building an audience outside the jazz-minded and the good news is that producer/director Barry Crook and Don Burrows are into the planning stages of the third series. As well, Crook has plans for other programmes as one-offs or mini-series. Dear old Auntie, unfettered by the ludicrous ratings system, is guided by an appreciation rating — in other words, of those who watched, how many enjoyed it? The results have been terrific with an unprecedented 80% liking what they saw. So we can look forward to more from Crook and Burrows. Programmes to come are: July 25: Multi-reedman Errol Buddle surrounded by his great band of youngsters, and singer Doug Williams. August 1: Salute to Billie Holiday from the Hollywood Bowl with Maxine Weldon, Morgana King, Nina Simone and Esther Phillips paying tribute to Lady Day. August 8: Chick Corea and Gary Burton in Tokyo — a programme that had Burrows raving. August 15: Ms, Mothers and Others which was picked up from Sydney's Women in Arts Festival earlier this year and features Nancy Stuart, Kerrie Biddell and Judy Bailey among others in a wealth of talent. August 22: Art Blakey and Wynton Marsalis at the Smithsonian. August 29: The finale with the Australian Jazz Ensemble led by Brian Brown. □

Sydney promoter Barry Ward is up and about, and back in business after his recent mishap. As Barry tells the story, he was walking along the pavement, minding his own business, when a car, out of control, ran him down. He suffered a broken leg, a broken arm and concussion, and was unconscious for six days. He woke up in (where else?) 'B' Ward at Prince Henry Hospital, and remembers nothing of the accident. □

Plans for the 1983 Manly Jazz Carnival are in full swing, and it is expected to be bigger and better than ever. It is scheduled for the long weekend of October 1, 2 and 3. The Carnival director John Speight would like to hear from any groups interested in appearing (phone 93 4070). This year the Carnival will encourage jazz busking, and local clubs and hotels will be encouraged to put on jazz over the long weekend.



Pyramid: From left, David Hirschfelder, David Jones, Bob Venier, and Roger McLachlan...now performing in Europe.

Like the song says there'll be some changes made. The changes this time are to the country's leading jazz club — The Basement. For some time now The Basement has had to make a door charge — no-one is happy with the arrangement but simple economics dictate the money to keep the place going has to be raised. In any case, as has been said before in these pages, this country enjoys the cheapest music in the world. In London, Ronnie Scott's charges the equivalent of \$20 on the door and in New York the common charge is around \$8 for the first set and \$5 for the second. The Basement has kept its charges down to a couple of bucks on all but nights when there is a visiting artist. The NSW Entertainment Halls Act requires a club with a door charge have two separate entrances or exits and that's where the changes come in. In the meantime, bear with the management while alterations go ahead and get yourself ready for the

tenth anniversary bash. □

The Melbourne group Pyramid, fresh from their impressive performance on the *Burrows Collection* series, are now performing in Europe. Pyramid includes David Hirschfelder (keyboards), Bob Venier (trumpet), Roger McLachlan (bass) and David Jones (drums). They did the North Sea Festival in Holland on July 8; went on to various gigs in Poland, Germany and Austria; and performed at the Montreux Jazz Festival on July 18. At Montreux they were listed to appear on an evening called *All That Jazz*, along with the Martin High School Band of Arlington (USA), the Southern University Jazz Ensemble (USA) with Alvin Batiste, the Tolvan Big Band (Sweden) and the Swiss Drums Orchestra with Ursula Dudziak and Michael Urbaniak. We expect to publish a review of the group's Montreux performance in our September/October edition. □



JAZZ ACTION SOCIETY (N.S.W.)

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Around The Jazz Clubs . . .

. . . Perth Jazz Society

President Graham Fisk has returned from an overseas trip, and in the July *PJS News*, points out how expensive it is to hear jazz in London and New York. At Ronnie Scott's in London, admission to see the Dizzy Gillespie Quartet was \$14.40, with the beer at \$2.52 a pint. At New York's Village Vanguard, admission to hear Mel Lewis and the Jazz Orchestra was \$7.50, with patrons required to buy at least one drink (\$2 minimum) per set. Graham points out that, under these circumstances the PJS is doing well to enable its members to hear overseas artists for under \$10 a ticket. On July 25, Kerrie Biddell and Compared To What will appear for the PJS at the Hyde Park Hotel. The group includes two former West Australians Mike Bartolomei (keyboards) and Paul Pooley (bass) plus Graham Jesse (saxophones) and Alan Turnbull (drums). Tickets \$6 for members, \$8 for non-members. Following his recent visit to Sydney WA Jazz Co-ordinator Adrian Kenyon reports that the Jazz Action Society of NSW is keen to hear Sandgroper musos. The plan is to have WA jazz artists appearing on the same bill as a well-known Sydney group. Local jazz artists interested should contact Adrian on 325 4042, 325 7686 or 444 6281 (home). □

. . . Southern Jazz Club

A number of club members have just returned from the second annual Annual Jazz Cruise on the steam boat *Murray River Queen*. They spent a delightful week crossing Lake Alexandrina and passing by pasture land, striking cliffs, beautiful aquatic playgrounds, drooping willows, listening to the jazz of Captain Sturt's Old Colonial Jazz Band. Those who wish to book early for next year's cruise should contact secretary Pat Boyle on (08) 298 5885 after 6 pm. The SJC's Annual Event will be held at the Ponderosa, Seaview Road, McLaren Vale, on July 31. Two popular traditional jazz groups will be playing — Dick Frankel's Jazz Disciples and Ken Way's Highway Robbery. Jonathon the Hot Roast Beef King will be there with his food caravan. Admission \$4 members, \$6 non-members. This will be the last jazz function at the Ponderosa, as the property is for sale. Following recent elections the new SJC committee is as follows: Les Haines (Pres), Tony Bretherick (Vice-Pres), Rob Brook (Treas), Pat Boyle (Sec), Fred Beck (Asst Sec), Julie Pleydell (Soc Sec), Ken Way (Band Liaison) plus a five-member social committee. □

. . . Canberra Jazz Club

The CJC has been running fund-raising functions at the Canberra Yacht Club. The

'Around The Jazz Clubs' is a regular feature in every issue. *JAZZ Magazine* wishes to highlight the major activities of all energetic jazz clubs in Australia. Publicity officers who wish to have their society included in the September/October edition should send material to the editor by August 20. Also, photographs are welcome — they will be kept safe, and returned.

one on May 22 was a great afternoon. Another was held on June 26. On Sunday July 10, a special afternoon called "The Answer To All Your Questions About Jazz" was held at the Albert Hall, with traditional and modern musicians, jazz photography, jazz art, sculpture, records for sale, instrument displays, etc. On Tuesday July 12 the club's AGM was held; new office-bearers will be announced in the next edition of *JAZZ*. CJC members are looking forward to the meeting with the Sydney Jazz Club at the Berrima pub (see Sydney Jazz Club notes). Those interested in the Berrima day should contact Phil O'Rourke on 41 1945. □

. . . Victorian Jazz Club

Judi Anderson has resigned from the Committee. A great loss, as she was the editor of the club's magazine *Jazzline* and the monthly newsletter. A replacement will be elected at the AGM on August 1, at the Musicians' Club, 65 Wellington Street, St. Kilda. A recent appearance by Adelaide's Penny Eames, ably supported by Kenn Jones Jazz Powerhouse, was most successful. The VJC, in its annual weekend away, held over the Queen's Birthday weekend, took over the Continental Hotel at Sorrento. Jazz was supplied by Maple Leaf on the Friday night. Colonel Duffy's



An early photograph of Tom Pickering...

Privates on the Saturday, and La Vida N.O. Jazz Band on the Sunday. The Club's 15th birthday celebrations were held on Friday July 15, with special guest Len Barnard, plus Graham Coyle (pno), Freddie Parkes (clt), Harry Price (trb), Ron Williamson (bass), Ian Smith (trt), Ade Monsbrough (reeds). Len played also at the Museum Hotel on July 16 supported by Neville Stribling (reeds), Ade Monsbrough (reeds), Maurie Dann (bjo), Graham Coyle (pno), Alan Stott (sousa), and Ian Smith (tpt). On August 13 the VJC's special guest will be one of Tasmania's jazz kings, the saxophonist/clarinetist Tom Pickering. Tom is best known for this Barrelhouse Four recordings back in the 1930s and later was a member of the Pearce-Pickering Ragtime Five. The VJC is open every Saturday from 7.30 pm (music starts 8.30) at 293 La Trobe Street, City. Club enquiries 240 9032, 211 9613 or 299 1210. □

. . . Sydney Jazz Club

The SJC celebrated Louis Armstrong's birthday (July 4) with a concert by the American trumpeter Bill Dillard and his Blue Serenaders, featuring Mona Richardson. Held at the Graphic Arts Club, Regent Street, City, this was one of the club's most successful events for some time. The club is celebrating its 30th anniversary (see special article this edition by Bruce Johnson) on August 8. The day before (Sunday August 7) celebrations will be under way in earnest, with the club's annual bus trip to Berrima, where they will meet up with the Canberra Jazz Club at the historic Surveyor-General Hotel. Buses leave the Queen Victoria Building in Sydney at 9.30 am. \$10 for SJC members, \$12 for non-members. Bill Haesler's Washboard Band will be playing. Further enquiries to Patti Graham (660 7580) or Vivien Bowman (797 9367). Life member Kate Dunbar celebrated her 60th birthday recently. Vice-President Peter Newton reports that his book *Jazz Over Australia 1918-1983* is progressing well. However, he would be delighted to receive more ephemeral material (eg. articles in college newspapers, local newspapers and counter-cultural sources from all States). Clippings or a reference (author, title, journal, volume, issue, date, pages etc) would be welcomed. □

. . . Jazz Action Society, Sunshine Coast

The club's AGM was held on Sunday June 19 and the following members were elected to form the executive body: Doug Lloyd (Pres), Bruce Ash (Vice-Pres), Dawn

BOOK REVIEWS

Mingus: A Critical Biography

By Brian Priestley, *Quarter Books* (1982), 308 pp. \$40.50.

To attempt to write a biography of Charles Mingus is to embark on a potentially dangerous course. Not only was Mingus a complex individual whose passions, beliefs and frustrations often collided to produce those infamous explosions of temper, but Mingus had also written a strange autobiography *Beneath the Underdog* which would have to be a touchstone for anyone attempting to document and understand his life. Just as his music was for a long time misunderstood, so too was *Beneath the Underdog*. Many dismissed it as a thick suit of lies hanging on a very thin skeleton of facts. Others took every word as the gospel truth revealing themselves ignorant of Mingus's penchant for exaggeration and embellishment. It is to Brian Priestley's credit that he has faced the problem head-on and produced a work which largely does justice to one of his aims: "to provide a context and a counterweight for Mingus's book... [and] render it more tangible."

The research is admirable and the documentation clear for Priestley has attempted a book which has all the marks of scholarly erudition as well as literary expressiveness. Musicians especially will welcome the transcriptions, printed in the back of such things as the quintet orchestration of *Pithecanthropus Erectus*, the bass solo from *Haitian Fight Song*, the introduction to *Tijuana Table Dance* and other Mingus pieces. There is also a complete discography. In short it is a thorough effort.

Yet somehow at the end of 226 pages Mingus remains a mystery. We understand more about him, the pressures which impinged on him, the sheer size and complexity of the musical tasks that he tackled, but the sought-after essence of the

man remains hidden. Perhaps that is as it should be; perhaps Mingus's essence resides in the music which he fought for with such determination and which he always refused to compromise.

Mingus perceived his own greatness and though his music was never ignored he certainly never received the recognition due to him. This is why Mingus resented those jazz critics who overlooked his innovations in the 50s when they championed the cause of the avant-garde in the early sixties. Record companies also contributed to this by-passing of Mingus as an innovator. For example, *All Blues* from Miles Davis's *Kind of Blue* has been reckoned as the first successful use of 6/4 yet fourteen months earlier Mingus had recorded *Wednesday Night Prayer Meeting*, a piece in 6/4, on the *Blues and Roots* album. Miles received the kudos because Atlantic had held over the release of the Mingus album.

Though Mingus had reason to feel bitter, his outbursts, often under pressure, often resulting in physical and verbal assaults on his own musicians, made me feel sad that this intensely human man found it so difficult to understand the human frailty of others. The incident where he punched Jimmy Knepper in the mouth, knocking out a tooth and ruining the trombonist's embouchure (Knepper brought a criminal action) was a particularly unsavoury incident.

There is much in this book to inspire local musicians especially those trying to play creative music as distinct from merely entertaining, for Mingus's musical triumphs were many and will survive those who frustrated his efforts to be heard. Perhaps those who direct the 1983 Sydney Jazz Festival will have the commitment to jazz to dispense with safe groups and will bring out the Mingus Dynasty, now led by Dannie Richmond. Mingus's music deserves to be heard live.

Peter Rehniewski

Ash (Sec), Margaret Lloyd (Treas), Nola Francis (Promotions Officer). Committee members elected were Paul van Gool, Bev Davidson and Kay Robinson. In his President's report Doug Lloyd reports that the society has grant money for performances by the Don Burrows and George Golla Duo, and the Bob Barnard Jazz Band later this year. Applications have been made for grants for concerts by the Judy Bailey Sextet and Galapagos Duck in 1984. Doug pays tribute to Dawn and Bruce Ash: "The Society is indebted to them for their unswerving loyalty and their unstinting hard work." Clare Hansson has described the JAS Sunshine Coast as "the most active and innovative in this country and totally supportive of jazz and its musicians". The Club's second birthday Jazz Band Ball was held on Saturday July 2 at the Polynesian Room, Sunshine Plantation, featuring the Vintage Jazz & Blues Band and Leo Farthing & Friends. □

... Jazz Action Society of NSW

The monthly concert was held on July 5 at the Musicians Club in Sydney, featuring the three works which took out the 1982 JAS Composition Competition: *Espirito de Carnaval* by Paul Millard, *Reunion* by Peter O'Mara, and *Neither Is Yes*, by David Levy. Entries for the 1983 competition are now being called for. It is open to all residents of NSW. The winner receives \$1000, the runner-up \$300, and there is an encouragement award of \$200. All jazz compositions submitted must be written within 12 months of the entry date; capable of performance by a professional solo or instrumental jazz group; of not less than 32 bars; of not more than eight minutes duration; and a tape recording of the work must accompany the score. The closing date is November 1, 1983, and the winners will be announced in January 1984. □

... River City Jazz Club

Visiting bands: the Maple Leaf Jazz Band at the Wentworth Club in January; more recently Frank Traynor and the Jazz Preachers at the Coomealla Club; and the highlight of the year so far, Bill Dillard and the Blues Serenaders. Australian clarinetist Paul Furniss, who was with Dillard, is a great favourite of the locals and he didn't disappoint them. Planning for the Annual Jazz Jamboree is well under way. It will be held, as usual, over the weekend immediately prior to the Melbourne Cup, October 28-31. Bands committed so far are: (from Melbourne) Lazy Ade and His Late Hour Boys and the Yarra Yarra New Orleans Band; and (from Adelaide) Unity Jazz Band and the Bruce Gray group. Dave Dallwitz, who hasn't missed a jamboree, will appear with the Monsborough group. Negotiations are under way to bring Paul Furniss back from Sydney. For further details, contact the River City Jazz Club, C/- McWilliams Electronics, 110a Langtree Avenue, Mildura 3500. □



Mingus in the film of the same name, preparing for his eviction: November 21, 1966.

Reports From . . .

. . . Brisbane

By Jim Barlow

The devotees of jazz have never allowed a little rain to deter them from a good jazz carnival so it was that the Brisbane Jazz Club's Mayday carnival played to capacity audiences at the Adventurers Club Kangaroo Point on 1st and 2nd of May despite the worst May rain for 25 years. A great variety of styles was heard; the trad of Big River Jazzmen, Pacific Jazzmen and the Sugar Daddies, the big band stylists roared and sighed through their charts, the Conservatorium Big Band under its new M.D. Eddie d'Amico; The Australian Youth Jazz Big Band, The Jazz Club Big Band, the various high school and student show bands all playing to a high standard which five years ago would have been unthinkable. All entirely due to the enthusiasm and dedication of their teachers. A special big band festival will be held later in the year. Carnival guests from Sydney were Julian Lee, Jack Grimsley, Brent Stanton and Edwin Duff, all in great form and given a very warm reception from the audience. The Monday morning workshop was very successful with a memorable moment with Julian on flugel surrounded by a brass choir of eighteen students, special thanks to the House rhythm men, Les Stil on bass and Tony Hopkins on drums. On Monday afternoon some of the more progressive jazz groups were giving the figs a jolt, and Eddie Duff was being discovered again for the umpteenth time. I must pay tribute to the good humour and professionalism of all the musicians who coped with sudden changes of program and venue without a single complaint.

News in brief: The Jazz Cellar has gone through harsh economic necessity with Mileham Hayes being forced into closing a venue which was unique in Australia. Trumpet player Frank Johnson has taken over the club presidency and transferred activities to Lennons Circus Bar on Thursdays through Sunday nights. Support is steadily growing at the Community Arts Centre in Edward Street on Friday nights for modern and avant-garde jazz performed by the Greg Quigley Quintet and Ted Vining's Mussiiki Oy, closing at 2.00 am. At Jabbo's in George Street the Vintage Jazz & Blues Band celebrated their 10th birthday and are constantly increasing the scope of their very wide repertoire. All of the local jazz clubs continue their various activities in promoting the joy of jazz but one is conscious of the fact that despite the very high level of jazz activities and performances rarely is an Australian composition heard — 99.9% are US standards; but, last Sunday 19th at the monthly Sunshine Coast JAS concert, a Brisbane group Infinity Plus played almost all local compositions and had the

packed audience shouting for more. Mike Lynch on keyboards is the leader, composer, arranger for the quintet of Brian Douglas (fl/horn), Mike Causebrook (tmb), Terri Lynch (bass), Clemen Tyson (drums). Will those supporters of Australian content please note.

Queensland's first lady of jazz piano, Clare Hansson, is off overseas for several months to Europe and USA. We could not wish for a better ambassador to let those foreigners know that jazz is alive and well in Australia. □

. . . Perth

By Steve Robertson

There's cautious optimism in Perth that the Red Parrot experiment will be a success.

No, it's not some mad scientist performing macabre operations on our local West Australian birdlife, it's the experiment of having the nationally-known jazz-fusion group Manteca performing at Perth's newest trendy disco, and on a Tuesday night to boot.

Ever since late May, Manteca (which broke up a year ago and reformed for this gig) has been playing to audiences of around 250-300 at the Red Parrot, a spacious former ice cream factory. Estimates are that 300-400 people would have to show up each Tuesday to make the Manteca appearances profitable, a figure that is close at hand. Manteca's promoters are doing the right thing for the city's hard-core jazz buffs. One Tuesday in June they waived the usual \$4 admission



Teresa Ridley

charge to card-carrying members of the Perth Jazz Society, and the turnout was good.

Manteca developed its national following last year with an acclaimed but short-lived show on the ABC. Led by reedman Uwe Stengel, Manteca also includes sax player Jim Cook (a frequent PJS performer), flugelhornist Rolly Santos, singer Teresa Ridley, percussionist Glen Walsh (who backed Milt Jackson and Mark Murphy during their Perth visits), trombonist Andy Ross, guitarist Freddie Greyson, bassist Eddie Podgorny (no relation, we assume, to the Soviet Politburo's Nikolai), and pianist Keith Van Geysel. Keith and Uwe share arranging duties, that is, when the band isn't using charts specially done for it by Gil Evans and Dave Liebman. Only a few of the current members were with Manteca for the TV series, but the sound is reasonably similar, contemporary and rock-influenced, though band members say there's more jazz content in this edition than in last year's.

The band was hoping for a guest appearance by US drummer Billy Cobham this winter, but a change in Cobham's world tour forced that appearance to be set back at least four months. But even without Cobham, Manteca remains a collection of virtuoso talent, backed by some of the best arrangements the world has to offer. If the people continue to flock into the Red Parrot on Tuesday nights, Manteca's nest will be well and truly feathered.

In a June Perth Jazz Society attraction, the West Australian Youth Jazz Orchestra put on a memorable and energetic show at the Hyde Park. The group sprang from the visit to Perth three years ago of Britain's National Youth Jazz Orchestra. The Perth version was to have debuted at the Festival of Perth in February, but the group wasn't ready, so the debut had to come last month during West Australia week. The PJS appearance followed the next night. Using charts by everyone from Louis Bellson to Don Sebesky, the band has a nice ensemble sound and several of the soloists are showing vast promise. □

SCRAPPLE FROM THE APPLE

by Lee Jeske*

In my Wynton Marsalis piece of last issue, I mentioned that young Marsalis was to be a special guest at a Sonny Rollins concert "in two weeks" and that I'd report this issue. I wasn't planning on writing at length about all this, since I've recently expressed my views on both Rollins and Marsalis in these pages, but I'm sure you'll bear with me as I recount the strange tale of Rollins meets Marsalis.

The concert was scheduled for two weeks from the day I wrote the piece on Wynton Marsalis. The concert took place two weeks after the magazine hit the stands. Either way, I was correct. The first evening with the tenor genius scheduled to meet the young trumpet firebrand was to consist of two concerts at Town Hall, a cozy, if slightly sleazy, auditorium with a lot of history. I attended the first show. What happened was this: Sonny and his current band (two guitars, electric bass, and drums) came on stage and plunged into *I'm Old Fashioned*. Sonny, uncharacteristically dressed in a three-piece suit and minus his customary floppy purple hat, sounded a mite tentative. Through three numbers he was holding back, before introducing Wynton and revving up Charlie Parker's *Big Foot*. All of a sudden, sparks started to fly. Rollins realized that Wynton was a companion to reckon with, and the two men immediately started a thrilling chase section. Then Sonny stepped aside to allow Wynton to solo. A couple of notes into the trumpet solo and Rollins tossed up his hands and went crashing to the floor on his back. Amazingly, the band continued playing — thinking, I assume, that Rollins was just joshing. After about a chorus it was determined that Sonny Rollins was unconscious and the frightening cry of, "Is there a doctor in the house?" went up. I must say, the sight of Sonny Rollins lying with his sneakers pointing to the sky scared the hell out of me (not an easy thing to do). About a half hour later we were told to go home — the shows were cancelled and Sonny was being tended to by some paramedics backstage. After some snooping around (my journalistic tendencies do surface every now and again) I was assured that Rollins was not dead or dying, and I went home.

Anyway, word came that Rollins just has a touch of high blood pressure which he never knew about (heck of a way to find out, if you ask me) and the concert was rescheduled as a single show at the much larger Beacon Theatre some six weeks later (Wynton, you see, is in the middle of a humongous world tour with VSOP II and his schedule held things up). Six weeks later I witnessed one of the best concerts I have ever seen — one of those performances that becomes legendary before it's even over. I won't go into the details. The basics are these: Jack De

DEBORAH FEINGOLD



Wynton Marsalis: truly outclassed for the first time . . .

Johnette was the drummer and oh-did-he-burn; Wynton was truly outclassed for the first time; the two guitarists and showboat electric bassist were given only one solo each; and the greatest living jazz improviser played with more power and authority than one can describe. There were three numbers played per set — Rollins would just take his solo space and romp with it: twenty choruses, thirty choruses, interpolating little bits of a hundred different tunes, *roaring*. When I say that Wynton was outclassed, it is not a reflection on his playing — he was up to snuff, if a little tentative — it is just that he was in the ring with a player completely without peer at this stage of the game. Rollins was *massive*, there's no other way to describe it. Evenings like those come rarely in a lifetime. □

There's a new club in town called Swing Plaza (actually a leased-on-weekends Polish dance hall) and I've been hanging out there a lot lately. Recently they had a rare booking — the enigmatic, unreliable Nina Simone — and, as usual, I was there. I've never been a *big* fan of La Simone and I'm not a convert now. Basically, the performance was bullshit — crummy singing, a lot of singalongs, junky piano playing. What amazed me, though, was the audience. They were lined up outside the

club for hours, they cheered and screamed and ranted and raved, they treated Nina Simone like she was Elvis Presley or Judy Garland back from the grave. A cult figure is a cult figure, I guess, and it was her first New York appearance in five years, but still . . . □

If that audience wanted to see some *singing* — some real, spine-tingling jazz singing — they should have made their way to Carnegie Recital Hall a few weeks earlier for a beautiful concert by Sheila Jordan. She is an acquired taste, but I have always found her trumpet tones and rabbinical chanting delightful. At the performance she offered a microcosm of her entire career — singing bebop, standards, autobiographical originals, etc. Accompanied, through most of the evening, only by Harvie Swartz's strong bass, Sheila shone. Betty Carter has recently been elevated to star status here; I'm not sure why Sheila's fame is still elusive. □

Speaking of elusive fame, how many of you know about a wickedly talented inside/outside tenor man named Frank Lowe? Well Frank is one of those people who is usually excellent and always just to the left or right of whatever trend is making waves. On this occasion he was doing a concert in, of all places, the American Museum of Natural History. Somewhere amid the stuffed mooses and bison there's a concert hall, and there Frank led what should have been a hot band (Amina Myers, Billy Bang, the terrific Butch Morris, et al) through a tribute to W.C. Handy. I don't know if it was underrehearsed or overrehearsed or what, but the concert was stiff and boring — something of a stuffed moose itself. □

Speaking of stuffed — the Brooklyn Philharmonic recently made an effort to bring jazz into their realm, by inviting a number of composers to do something for their "Meet The Moderns" series. The composers included Anthony Davis, Leroy Jenkins, Ron Carter, and Oliver Lake, and the pieces were dull, short and solid, muzaky, and disjointed, respectively. When jazz puts on the white gloves, look out. □

I have, mind you, seen some terrific bands of late and, in no special order, they include David Murray's Octet (*the* band of the moment), James Newton's Septet (both of those at Sweet Basil), Jack De Johnette's Special Edition (at Swing Plaza), Codona (ditto), Mal Waldron's Quintet, and Panama Francis' good-time Savoy Sultans (the United Nations and Swing Plaza, in those last two cases). I also saw a terrific, muscle pianist named Borah Bergman tear up a piano at a recital in a dance theatre. Good stuff!! □

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

CONCERT REVIEWS

Crossfire and the John Hoffman Big Band

The Basement, Sydney, May 5

The amalgamation of these two outfits for a series of eight concerts at The Basement was one of the most adventurous events in Sydney music for a long time.

I have to admit that, when I heard that Crossfire and the Hoffman band were rehearsing together, I had my doubts that it would work. Somehow I was expecting an uneasy mixture of idioms. My mind was cluttered with categories. Would the music be dominated by Crossfire's powerful electric approach? What would happen to the subtle, acoustic flavour of the Hoffman band?

I should not have worried. After all, Crossfire is this country's most accomplished fusion band, and Hoffman's group is the most polished and brilliant big band we've seen for a long time. One should never underestimate that amount of musical talent. The music they played together was always balanced, and full of light and shade. Certainly there was a mixture of idioms, but it worked easily and beautifully.

The big band line-up included Hoffman, Dick Montz, Paul Panichi, Steve Williams (trpts), Bob McIvor, Bob Johnson and George Brodbeck (trbs), Bob Bertles, Brent Stanton, Lee Hutchings and Col Loughnan (saxes).

Crossfire opened the evening on their own. As always, their music was full of subtleties and knowledge. They exemplified the maturity that comes from years of commitment. The old firm of Mick Kenny (keyboards), Jim Kelly (guitar) and Ian Blossom (percussion) has been together for nearly ten years. Tony Buchanan (woodwinds) has been there nearly as long. Mark Riley (drums) did the group's

1982 overseas tour. Only Paul Pooley (bass) a former West Australian, was a new boy, but he played as if he had been with the group for years.

Throughout the evening I was struck by the overflowing brilliance of Mick Kenny on electric and acoustic pianos. Always an underrated pianist, he has brought his playing to such a level of achievement that only the most virtuosic of keyboardists from either the rock or jazz fields could now top him.

I remember well his lovely rubato solo in the middle of *First Love Song*, a gentle ballad written by Phil Woods and arranged by Bob Brookmeyer. It showed an easy familiarity with the harmonic ideas of the post-Bill Evans era.

When I heard this performance, the two groups were into the second half of their eight-nights season at The Basement. Of course, this was a night which is difficult to explain to those who didn't hear the music. It was a memorable experience, with a great atmosphere, in which many splendid solos were played by a host of our leading players. Let's hope that more special events like these come along in the future.

Eric Myers

The Vince Jones Sextet

The Basement, Sydney, May 23

The 3-nights season in Sydney by Melbourne's Vince Jones was packed with interest. Jones is reputed to be doing standing-room-only business at Jackson's Square in Melbourne. Sydney people have been wondering what the fuss is all about.

On balance, Vince Jones did enough on his opening night to show that he has extraordinary appeal, particularly to the middle-of-the-road audience.

Unquestionably, he has charisma. He is



JANE MARCH

Vince Jones: extraordinary appeal to the middle-of-the-road audience...

not exactly good-looking, but there is a boyish vulnerability about him which, I gather, is particularly appealing to women. He seldom loses his somewhat hurt, worried look and shows no hint of arrogance.

As a singer he is subtle, a little adventurous, always in control, never putting a foot wrong. He is able to ride easily over a swinging rhythm in four, and can convert a ballad (usually taken at a dead-slow tempo) into an impressive vehicle for his own individual interpretation.

Other than Jones himself (who also played trumpet and flugelhorn) the sextet included Doug de Vries (guitar), Mark Fitzgibbon (piano), Hermann Schaiger (bass), Peter Whitford (drums) and Russell Smith (valve trombone).

On the night, they all seemed a little tight and nervous. They were mostly young men — a new generation of Melbourne jazz musicians — with an aura of sophistication. They all wore ties, and some had coats, unusual for Australian performers at The Basement.

As players, they were all competent without producing any special brilliance. I felt that the performance needed a little more freewheeling, spontaneous expression. Where was the maverick spirit, the perversity, the unexpected turns of someone like Bob Sedergreen? That's the sort of Melbourne influence I was hoping to hear in this group.

Still, perhaps that sort of jolt might not have been appropriate. One had to admire the compactness of the Vince Jones performance. It was a jazz package, rather than a jazz experience. The audience response was overwhelmingly enthusiastic, and people became more curious and fascinated with the Jones enigma as the night wore on. Whatever Vince Jones is into, he looks as if he's on the right track.

Eric Myers



JANE MARCH

Crossfire at The Basement with the John Hoffman Big Band: a memorable experience, a great atmosphere...

Phil Treloar

Australian Museum, Sydney, June 5

This two hour concert presented two distinct areas of drummer/composer Phil Treloar's recent endeavours: his participation as a member of Roger Frampton's Intersection quartet, and his collaborations with Martin Wesley-Smith in the area of audio-visuals.

Intersection currently consists of Treloar on drums, Peter Boothman on guitar. Lloyd Swanton on bass, and Roger Frampton on alto, soprano, and piano (though on this occasion Frampton played sax only). The quartet performed well without ever really extending themselves. In all, five compositions were performed: Frampton's *For the Return* and *The Body Blues*, Boothman's *Tears of the Dragon* and *Northern Connections*, and Treloar's *Solstice*. *Tears of the Dragon* and *Solstice* stood out for me. The first because the composition itself demands a stirring energy level with its fast, somewhat funky rhythm and repeated climaxes, and the second piece because of its mellow charm and delicacy.

Possibly because of the formal nature of the concert and the short sets in which they had to perform the band never reached the dizzying heights which I witnessed them attain at Jenny's Wine Bar. But each member of the band played adequately, with Treloar putting in a little more than the others.

The first of the two audio-visual presentations was entitled *Double Drummer*. Those entomologically-included readers will immediately realise that the title refers not to a percussive duet, but rather to the sound of the Australian summer as performed by cicadas of the masculine gender.

The basis of the piece is a recording of cicadas thrumming away madly in Kangaroo Valley. This is played in conjunction with various taped percussive sounds and some spontaneous drum improvisations performed "live". The visual aspect is provided by a series of

magnificent colour transparencies of cicadas taken in Australia and Borneo by Sydney naturalist Densey Clyne.

On the whole *Double Drummer* proved to be a lucid, unified work, as entertaining visually as aurally. As the initial and most obvious inspiration was the *sound* of the cicadas, the lovely images proved more of an addendum or accompaniment to the music.

From the outset the cicadas established a pulsating rhythm that was echoed by Treloar's clean, uncluttered percussion work. Midway through the piece Treloar's live drumming took over from the tape as accompaniment to the slides, an interlude that was all too brief. I confess that I had expected more live spontaneous improvising during the presentation. The notion of witnessing a performance of improvised music whilst sharing the immediate inspirational source with the performer is quite appealing. Certainly the concept was only cursorily explored on this particular occasion.

Kdadalak, the second audio-visual presentation, was less successful. Dedicated to the children of East Timor, the work presents visual images of the conflict in East Timor in conjunction with a tape of music and effects composed and realised by Martin Wesley-Smith.

The audio track presents a kind of collage in which the basic instrumentation is the synthesizer combined with some percussion, traditional music and chanting, plus fragments of radio broadcasts and speeches. The colour transparencies provided by Penny Tweedie consisted of various images of soldiers and civilians involved in the conflict. Many of these photographs had been reduced to more abstract, flat planes of colour through some sort of solarization process.

Where I felt the work failed was in presenting an emotive, complex, and very topical issue with insufficient information. The images were repetitive and, thanks to media coverage of every global conflict since the Vietnam War, oh so familiar.

The audio track, which is the obvious vehicle for making some sort of statement, failed to fully coalesce with the images.

By itself the tape would have been reasonably interesting. But combined with the visuals the whole presentation promised so much more than it delivered. I got no impression even of an accretion of emotion from beginning to end. To take an issue as important yet neglected as this obscene war at Australia's doorstep and make no further attachment than "war is hell" serves to trivialise the matter somewhat.

But beyond my largely thematic criticism, there were some enjoyable moments. At one point the tape offered a lovely gamelan-like keyboard and percussion piece, some of the voice treatments were very interesting, and Treloar's all-too-short addition on the kit injected a welcome burst of energy. Once again, had Treloar provided more than just a couple of minutes of live improvisation to accompany the slide show, the whole thing would have been a great deal more interesting.

Phil Treloar and Martin Wesley-Smith are two of the very few musicians in this country willing to genuinely experiment with music and related fields. For this they are to be congratulated. David Martin, the producer and promoter of the Sunday Concerts at the Museum, is also to be applauded for his successful strategy of providing live contemporary music at this most cosmopolitan venue for children as well as adults.

Perhaps some of the problems contemporary jazz performers have faced in finding an audience relate to the types of venues they have been relegated to. The association of modern jazz with late-night, smoke-hazed, booze-swilling dives is something of an American (read United States) anachronism. A great many contemporary music enthusiasts are regular folk like your humble reviewer who have children and full-time "day jobs", and thus find it difficult to attend most jazz performances.

For too long in this country has "jazz" been the sole province of the mature-aged. Kids dig jazz too, and the need for more such concerts as this one is obvious. The full house for Phil Treloar attests to this fact.

Tony Wellington

Vince Genova, Indra Lesmana, Sandie White, Nebula

Recording Hall, Sydney Opera House, June 25

Like many ventures in jazz, it was a noble effort. The goal was to fill the 350 seat venue and stage a live recording of Indra Lesmana and Vince Genova on twin Steinways, Sandie White backed by a trio of Genova, Ed Gaston on bass and Willie Qua on drums, as well as a fusion session for later release from the group Nebula consisting of Genova, Lesmana, Willie Qua (sax and flute), Steve Hunter (bass), Andy Evans (drums), with Carlinhos Goncalves (percussion).

The result was rather disconcerting. The Recording Hall does not lend itself to jazz.



Intersection at the Australian Museum: From left, Phil Treloar (obscured), Roger Frampton (soprano saxophone), Lloyd Swanton (bass).

JANE MARCH

being rather clinical in appearance, much like a laboratory for music. Add to that a meagre crowd of 150 or so and the ambience was sterile from jump street.

The overwhelming problem was the recording process itself. Mistakes, nervousness, and dissatisfaction on the part of the musicians led to fitful starts, abrupt stops in mid-tune, and a wearing impatience on the part of the audience. Plus, the room's cavernous acoustics caused a boominess in Nebula's set, though it added a certain airiness during the Genova-Lesmana duet.

That duet was the high point of the evening — both players have a unique rapport that came across in their facial expressions as well as in their musical interfacing. Genova appeared to be the cool master in contrast to Lesmana's youth and casual sneakers and denim attire. But the similarity ended there as Lesmana exhibited his digital genius on the keyboard that easily outpaced Genova. Indra could play faster than Vince with ease which led to a few embarrassing halts as the duo got back into time with each other.

But both turned in stunning performances and the crowd was wildly enthusiastic in response. Genova's style is more in the Oscar Peterson stride form while Lesmana complimented him in a more regimented yet dazzling style that defied definition of influence. That set was worthy of recording and is planned as a release soon on Jazmin Records, brainchild of Bob Conviser, a Sydney waterbed manufacturer.

The rest of the evening was downhill. Sandie White, although technically proficient and a joy to watch, seemed out of her element. Better suited as a cabaret singer in an intimate room, she seemed somewhat like a lab specimen in the Recording Hall. She has an incredible voice — spot-on scat singing, a breathy low range, excellent microphone technique matched with power and projection — but her performance was not suitable for a recording and it lacked a flow, a cohesive feel. What ruined the recording of her set was the constant reference to players before or after their solos (Genova, 5 times and Gaston twice) which works fine in a club but kills the dynamics of a recorded performance.

By the time Nebula assembled for their set, the magic that had occurred during the "duelling pianos" portion of the program was lost. Consisting mostly of Lesmana's compositions, the music was out of sync and frustrating in the stop and start action that occurred through their set. Where Indra's playing early in the evening was unrestrained and vibrant, the toll was taken on his nerves and the rest of the players and the performance reflected it.

But the concert wasn't a *bad* experience, merely badly paced and too contrasting in the music presented. The musos did their best, but were obviously inhibited by being under the gun of the recording process. Some sessions are better left to the studio, not before a live audience.

Phil Tripp

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ONAJE
"Onaje's Rage"
 (East Records EAS 080)
"Straight As A Briefcase"
 (East Records EAS 082)

Led by Allan Browne, Onaje is a more experimental offshoot of Peter Gaudion's Blues Express. It includes musicians whose careers constitute a recreation of the history of jazz. Browne (drums) and Richard Miller (reeds) are veterans of the Red Onions, whose repertoire went back to the earliest jazz performances. Similarly, Peter Gaudion, who is to be heard on several tracks on *Rage*, began as a traditional player. When, as here, they occasionally enter post-Coltrane territory, they have not just parachuted in from a Conservatorium course; they have trekked the distance step by step, and know the whole country. Some have found the journey easier than others. Browne and, even more, Miller, seem to the new manner born, while Gaudion as yet lacks the same effortless poise. This is often the case, that saxophonists can make the transition from traditional to modern more convincingly than trumpeters. Perhaps it's because it represents a

movement from a trumpet-dominated to a saxophone-dominated idiom. The most interesting of Peter's work is on *Safety Beach*. He demonstrates the tonal qualities of his traditional roots, including a plaintively gentle vibrato that brings out the mood of vulnerability in the song. But he combines this with a feel for a conservatively modern harmonic sense. We hear in this the beginnings of a personal voice.

The general feel of the two LPs is much the same, though I hear a marginal increase in assurance in the second one, made around a year later. The only change in personnel is that Gary Costello replaces Deryk Capewell on bass. Whether for this reason or because of the mix, Costello's work has a deeper presence. The later album is more percussively aggressive. On both albums Richard Miller's work is especially arresting. Most of the time he plays soprano or tenor. On the former his tone is sometimes rather thin (as on title track of the first LP), in accordance with a fashion which I personally don't enjoy. His absorption of the technical developments in the soprano tradition however, seems to my ear to be all but total. On *Onajeing*, *Con Fusion*, and *Straight as a Briefcase* you can hear the instrument pushed to what are currently its limits of expressiveness. For all that, I find his tenor work more appealing. It is partly a matter of substance. On *Shiraz* there seemed to be little internal logic in the parade of fast soprano licks, less character than mannerism at certain points, although the blistering unaccompanied excursion towards the end of *Briefcase* had great strength and emotional drive. For me, however, his tenor showed greater depth. On *You Don't Know What Love Is* the moody tone, with its wide torchy vibrato, brought out the bitterness disclosed by the title; and on *Quondum* (written *quon amore?*) there was a personal signature as well as technical ease.

As usual Bob Sedergreen's playing is constantly inventive and powerful though not as torrential as on the Ted Vining LP I reviewed in the last issue of this magazine. The closest he came to that overwhelming architecture is on *On Dit*, beginning with a turgid swell which suddenly resolves, like sugar dissolving, into a clear, edited simplicity. On *All Blues* the solo work is utterly personal, and his comping behind Miller on *You Don't Know*... is beautifully complementary, creating spaces for the sax to step into, providing commentary. Bob Sedergreen's work is so uniformly excellent that there is a danger of our beginning to take him for granted, of forgetting just how great he is and how lucky we are to be able to hear him. That he is here a member of a more or less regular band is made obvious by the overall tightness of the rhythm sections. Browne's drumming is sensitively appropriate without ever becoming distractingly exhibitionistic. Capewell's work is solid and unselfish, indeed, on *Oregani* his entry positively steams. On the later LP Costello's work is more prominent. On his own *Out to the Car* he takes an extended intro which, against the

drone of his D string, has an Indian feel. When he follows up with a swinging solo passage he confirms that he is among our best.

The albums are at least as important in showing off the compositional skills of the musicians. Miller's contribution of 6 (plus one collaboration) is the largest. His writing has gratifying definition — he avoids the amorphous two chord fad which so often leads to undirected self indulgence by the soloist. He also shows variety. *On Dit* is a blues based head. The quirky but melodic *Onageing*, with its 5 to the bar theme, begins and ends with a circling stand-off between Miller and Sedergreen, like two cats watchfully waiting for an opening. All his work is melodic and structured, but without being repetitive or evidently derivative. Miller is still young in terms of a creative lifetime, and could become one of the country's most significant jazz composers, in a style which generously draws on all aspects of the tradition. Sedergreen's contributions are equally authoritative. *Safety Beach* opens with a single note bass line against which piano and tenor steal in, describing a descending arc, followed by the trumpet, sketching simple and effective lines against the sombre background. On his *Con Fusion*, as on so much of the original material here, there are chirpy echoes of Eric Dolphy, and in fact when the same spirit surfaced on Costello's original, I began to wonder how conscious he was of Dolphy's *Out To Lunch* session when he called it *Out to the Car*. Allan Browne's titles on the other hand are more characterised by atmosphere than form. The title track to the first album opens with a simple 2 bar minor vamp, followed by the free blowing of Miller on soprano. The piano intervenes with an out of tempo passage gradually evolving into time, then, slowing, the harmon muted trumpet. Like his other composition *Blossoms*, this is more a succession of moods than a series of defined musical units. On the two LPs, out of 15 tracks, 13 are Australian compositions, 12 by members of the band (the other, *Shiraz*, is Brian Brown's).

The presentation in general is muted and discreet — grainy, informal photographs with cover notes that are simple and to the point, though on *Rage* ominously shading off into the jargon of advertising copy. A phrase like "... where Gary Costello is at" is a fishbone to the throat of this authentically creative music. But this is a group to attend to. They draw on a sense of genuine creative purpose. Miller, Gaudion, and Browne, for example, could easily have stayed with the habits they mastered in the 60s and 70s. To advance in the way they have chosen to requires enormous dedication. Musicians who stay on this or that side of the stylistic fences have as little idea of how much lonely energy goes into this, as non-musicians have of what's required to achieve basic musical facility. It demands a numbing perseverance, and often the capacity to withstand the aggrieved charge by former colleagues of having committed an act of betrayal. To unlearn old reflexes and to force both mind and body to

execute brand new manoeuvres when they had become perfectly comfortable with the old ones, is harder than learning the latest in a vacuum. I think at the end that the steel is harder for the tempering. These two albums represent a significant moment in the history of Australian jazz.

Bruce Johnson



VINCE JONES
"Spell"
(YPRX through EMI)

The boy can play ... and singing is another talent that comes naturally ... and *Spell* is a proper name for the mood created on this second release from trumpeter and vocalist Vince Jones. From the first strains of *Tenderly* through to the last bars of Ellington's *Do Nothing 'till You Hear From Me*, Vince Jones weaves a musical tapestry of tone and texture that is truly ... well ... spellbinding. And the talent that was promised and only partially delivered in his first album has been brought out in this effort in many ways.

First, there's the production. The sound is full, rich, and not lacking in either character or content. The studio production and instrumentation is a winning combination that gives a firm foundation to the singing and selection of tunes.

The second most notable aspect of this album as opposed to the first is the ease that characterizes Vince's performance. There seems to be a bit more freedom in expression and more daring scat singing, which is one of his unique attributes.

Thirdly, there is a sense of tension and release that makes for many magical moments, especially on the cut *I Put a Spell on You*. Plus the tunes are arranged in such a fashion that they compliment and contrast each other in an unpredictable fashion. After lulling the listener with *Tenderly*, tender harmonies preface the second tune, an original, before bustin' loose with a shuffling, swaying beat that is punctuated with the scat breaks. Aptly titled *Better Than the Average Man*.

Another facet of the album is that there aren't any tunes that one can point to and say, "That's a throwaway." Each one is a showcase for Vince's talents and each is different in the way that the talents are

displayed. Case in point — *I Put a Spell on You* — exudes the blues. No compromise or taking it easy, its sax solo and vocal pyrotechnics leave no room for doubt as to the musical sincerity of the players and the abilities to take the tune to the limits of interpretation.

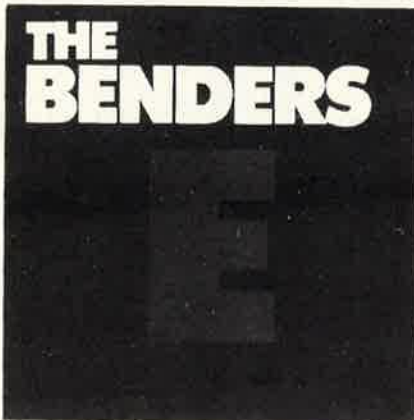
This album is fireplace music, released at the right time of the year for cuddling, and it has a warmth of its own that invades you much like a snifter of great cognac. There's that smoothness, then a bite, then that glow and a noticeable rich aftertaste.

But there is a rough edge to it. Vince's voice has yet to mature — it's still a little ragged on the high notes and there is room for more power in delivery. But that can easily be forgiven considering the depth of feeling that he emotes in singing. Take Satchmo as a perfect comparison. Played trumpet and sort of sang. But oooh ... he could *squeeze* those notes out of his pipes and the emotion was what grabbed you.

The telling tune on this album that convinced me of the man's tremendous potential was his other composition, the instrumental *Fish Farm*. Samba-ish beat, mellow blowing on the horn and excellent interplaying of piano and bass lines make this one a standout. And what's more, it displays perhaps a hidden talent which hasn't been explored on either record to the necessary limits, his songsmithing. Maybe they were playing it safe by having so many standards, but there is a definite feel for writing a song that this tune captures.

And this album is certain to capture more than the ears of appreciative jazz audiences. Most likely, it will capture an overseas contract to boot. Nuff said ... let the spell capture you.

Phil Tripp



THE BENDERS
"E" (Hot Records 1002)

The Benders' sheer virtuosity works for them as well as against them. Take Chris Abrahams' unsurpassed ability to hammer out thickly clustered chords with both hands at a speed which must approach that of reflex action. I have heard him do it before, and I admire it every time. Yet, it

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doesn't always fit into the musical context of the moment, and may cause technique to draw attention to itself, may cause one to listen with the kind of admiration one has for the skills of a juggler or an acrobat.

The Benders' *E* ('E' for 'Energy?'), their recently released album, has moments of musical acrobatics as well as moments of very enjoyable, sometimes even great music, where the skills subordinate themselves to the musical vehicle, or, another possibility, where the musical vehicle itself encourages such acrobatics.

In Dale Barlow's tune *Nervous Spasm*, for example, pianist Chris Abrahams' chops are downright dazzling, yet the tension set up by the tune, with its alternation between short, tense phrases (the 'spasms' of the title, no doubt) and long, pregnant pauses, disappears during his solo. Lloyd Swanton's tune *Go Go Boys*, on the other hand, is the perfect vehicle for the kind of musical bravura that characterizes the Benders — characterizes them too much, perhaps, at the expense of a somewhat wider range of feelings and moods, but works when it works, and here it does: the distinct individual contributions of each player come together in a unique, edgy kind of frenzy, and the piece as a whole convincingly communicates the sheer pleasure of 'going for it'. Equally successful is Abrahams' *Under Water*, where the richly textured cascade of sounds of Abrahams' piano solo floats firmly on the driving Latin feel set up, and sustained throughout the piece, by Lloyd Swanton's bass.

The tone of Dale Barlow's tenor is a joy to listen to throughout — something more than technique, this, a sound which approaches the richness of the human voice, particularly when Barlow lays back a little, as when he plays the head of his own tune *Mean Scene*, or in the splendid solo he plays on Abrahams' *Sealing*, the most lyrical piece of the album. His shouting and screaming and groaning, in Abrahams' *Under Water* for example, does not quite have the impact it should, considering how well he does it, perhaps because the solo did not build up to it enough, or did not develop it enough from the feel Abrahams' solo had established in the first part of the piece.

Lloyd Swanton, surprisingly (disappointingly), does not take a solo on this album, but his formidable bass playing should nevertheless be mentioned. In a time when the electric bass has introduced too much 'lazy' bass playing, Swanton restores to bass playing the sheer physicality of the acoustic bass, the richness and vibrancy of its tone, and the momentum of its drive. A great player, Andrew Gander's driving drums could perhaps afford to lay back a little and make more use of the space Swanton's bass provides.

Impressive players, an impressive record — but it is to be hoped that, in future albums, the Benders will also begin to explore musical avenues other than 'going for it.'

Theo van Leeuwen



BILLIE HOLIDAY
"Billie's Blues"

Billie Holiday was the finest female jazz singer that ever lived, but she was without doubt also a remarkable jazz musician. When she claimed she used her voice as if "I was playing a horn, I try to improvise like Lester Young or Louis Armstrong or someone else I admire", she summed up her talents neatly.

She was brilliant... She could freeze an audience to their seats with her emotional and sincere vocals, chilling the blood with her electrifying performances. And Billie does all of this on an excellent reissue from importer Avan-Guard Music of Sydney: *Billie's Blues*, which originally was on the CBS label.

Billie's Blues is hardly an apt title as she, as we all know, seldom sang the blues. But on the title track she is joined by Bunny Berigan (trumpet), Artie Shaw (clarinet), Joe Bushkin (piano), Dick McDonough (guitar) Pete Petersen (bass) and Cozy Cole (drums). This is the same group that she recorded *Summertime* with in July 1936.

It is good to note Shaw playing with Billie. He was the first white bandleader to break the rules by bucking the colour bar. He took Billie on tour with his band but sadly they later quarrelled and split after about a year.

She opens this album with *I'm A Fool To Want You* backed by the full treatment of Ray Ellis and his Orchestra, featuring Urbie Green on trombone and a bank of strings. J.J. Johnson replaces Green on *Glad To Be Unhappy* but she uses her own orchestra on *A Sailboat In The Moonlight* and *When A Woman Loves A Man*.

Other tracks include *I'll Never Be The Same*, *Let's Call The Whole Thing Off*, *I Cover The Waterfront* and *Am I Blue?* All are magnificent performances.

Many famous giants of jazz back her on these songs: Lester Young, Buck Clayton, Teddy Wilson, Roy Eldridge, J.C. Heard, Jo Jones, Jimmy Hamilton, Benny Morton... The list is endless.

All but two of the songs were recorded

in the late 1930s when Billie was in her prime, but *I'm A Fool To Want You* and *Glad To Be Unhappy* were cut in 1958, a year before her tragic and lonely death. By that time she was struggling to perform, a sad and very ill figure, beaten by the system.

But, while record companies continue to release Billie Holiday discs, her memory will always live. So, sit back... Listen to *Billie's Blues* and let your emotions run the full gamut. There wasn't and there never will be a singer that can tug the heartstrings so effectively as the great Lady Day. Here's the proof.

Bunny Brittan



THELONIUS MONK
"Thelonius Monk Plays Duke Ellington"

(Original Jazz Classics OJC-124)

BILL EVANS

"New Jazz Conceptions"

(Original Jazz Classics OJC-025)

More from the Original Jazz Classics reissue programme. Here, two albums featuring men who became giants of the piano, but recorded before their full acceptance. The two LPs have many other things in common: both from the early Riverside modern jazz catalogue (RLP-201 and -223 respectively), and both firsts in a number of ways. The Monk was recorded in July 1955 and was the first 12" record devoted to what it called 'contemporary' jazz by that label. This uses the first reissue cover with the Rousseau painting. It was a bold way to start a new policy, considering that Monk was still relatively

obscure and tagged as a primitive technician. He was asked to present a programme of Ellington compositions, partly as a way of making his work more accessible to the ears of those days. The pairing of the two musical minds was, perhaps surprisingly, beautifully compatible. Certainly this was one of the albums that helped to broaden Monk's popularity, and it did so partly by dispelling some of the fallacies surrounding his music.

One of these was the idea that, while he was interesting as a composer, he possessed the technique of a beginner. There are no Bud Powell pyrotechnics on these sessions, but the material is often inherently demanding enough to require audibly something more than the facility of a two-finger-blues picker. *Sophisticated Lady* runs a mighty sophisticated set of changes, and when Monk suddenly swirls into tempo he does so with a burst of florid dexterity that puts the rumour of his keyboard ineptitude well and truly to rest. His image as outrageously and irrationally dissonant also takes a deserved beating. This is especially so today now that our ears have become habituated to newer musical conventions. The idea that Monk's apparent divagations were the result of either musical perversity or illiteracy is now manifestly preposterous. His sense of harmonic logic was simply more advanced, and perhaps further obscured by the fact that he was so elliptical. But logic it certainly was. This, incidentally, is another way in which the coupling of Monk and Duke (two estates!) was less curious than one might expect. Together you come to hear how much they actually shared. Ellington's compositions have become such well known standards that we fail to notice just how angular some of his lines are — even the 3rd and 4th bars of the old war horse 'A' Train are, when you think about them, pure Monk. That sideways lurching bridge on *Sophisticated Lady* could almost have been written for the latter's arachnid style. So too, the second refrain of *Black and Tan Fantasy*, and even the too much requested *Caravan*, have the same jagged quality that made so many people think that Monk was an unapproachable eccentric. The convergence of these two reminds us that Monk was not so outrageous, nor Ellington so inrageous (you know what I mean) as the popular myths have suggested. Ellington's work was really very advanced, as was that of his band. It would disturb many a one-eyed fanatic to have it pointed out that that solo of Bubber's they love on the 26/10/27 version of *Black and Tan Fantasy* includes at the beginning of the second chorus a repeated flattened fifth which is pivotal in setting up the anguish of the rest of the solo. That Ellington's work, even from the twenties, is so susceptible to Monk's treatment, makes nonsense of much historical and stylistic prejudice that harms jazz. This is an album that could heal divisiveness, reaching across unnecessary chasms. It reminds us of how often 'categories' are prisons we build for ourselves, forgetting we have the key. An LP like this is

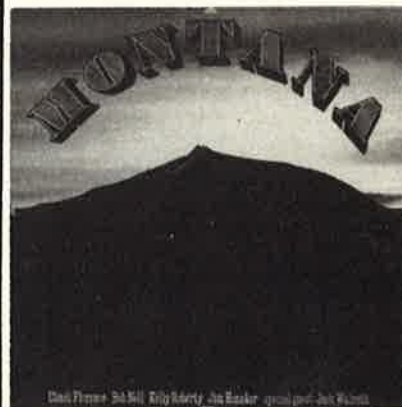
perhaps the way they smuggle people, blindfolded, back and forth across the borders they have erected, until at last they discover that the two countries do not after all speak such different languages. Considering that one of the aims in producing this record was to make Monk more accessible, I have to say that it was admirably conceived. For the record, the rhythm section, providing perfect support, consists of Oscar Pettiford and Kenny Clarke.

Among those who never subscribed to the belief that Monk's playing was naive was Bill Evans, who wrote, "Make no mistake about it. This man knows exactly what he is doing in a theoretical way — organised, more than likely in a personal terminology, but strongly organised nevertheless". Evans went on to praise Monk's individuality in an age of strong conformist pressures, and in concentrating on that he unwittingly foreshadowed one of his own great contributions: that of an individual and almost instantly identifiable personality. This reissue of his *New Jazz Conceptions* shows us Evans leading his own recording trio for the first time. It was back in 1956 when he was just 27, five years before the great sides with Motian and La Faro. Motian is the drummer here, and magnificent, with Teddy Kotick on bass, on all except three brief unaccompanied piano solos. Nearly thirty years later, how does it sound, especially compared with the Monk material? The answer is, surprisingly, sometimes more Monkish than Monk himself. The point is made on Evans' own composition *Five* in which the distortions of phrasing, the wrenchings out of time, are more extreme than, for example, *Straight No Chaser*. But while this is perhaps somewhat mannered, overall the session still sounds fresh. Listening to this reminds us of how much his work influenced the format of the piano trio. One reason it's so fresh, so persistently valid, is that Evans did so much to draw up the rule book by which so many still find it stimulating to operate. It's impossible to avoid meeting him as you pass back and forth along the corridor of jazz history. And even at 27 the essentials of his style were there. His chordal adventurousness on *I Got It Bad* gives the song a far more disembodied, floating feel than Monk's rather jaunty treatment. From the right hand, his fully developed and articulated horn-like lines already have total assurance: listen particularly to the compulsive inevitability of his work on Dameron's *Our Delight*. Spinning out his line from the low-to-middle register, the pattern is supple and sinuous, swinging with minimum fuss. His right hand lines are so irresistibly right that they make you smile and laugh with satisfaction at such instinct. Evans always trimmed away the superfluous. It's apparent not only in the leanness of his solos, but in his reluctance to continue when the point has been made. *I Got It Bad* and *Waltz For Debby* each consist, for example, of one sweet undeclamatory chorus.

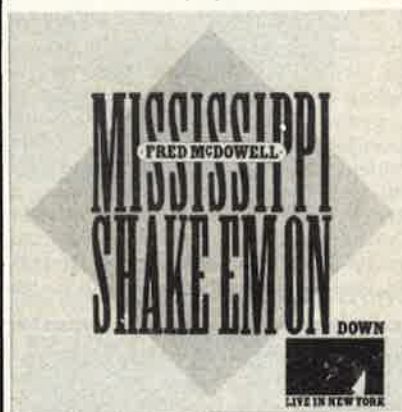
As in the case of Monk, Evans' economy has occasionally been misread as a dearth

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of technique. The ending of *I Love You*, however, set the record straight with a brief and even casual demonstration of technical precocity. The point is, rather, that he avoided bombast. His virtuosity was never strident, never the reason behind what he played. The reason, the determinant of his choice of notes lay with other considerations — the pursuit of swing, of musical interest, the loving and intelligent examination of the harmonic possibilities inherent in a melody, while the left hand worried gently at the rhythmic and chordal foundations like a dog at a bone. His sense of tension and release was as fine and delicate as bone china — listen to the balance in the 10th bar of his first chorus of *No Cover*. *No Minimum*: his phrase almost overbalances back across the bar line, then, gently toppling forward, sets up a new cycle of momentum. Evans' refusal to declaim extravagantly ensures that he can always maintain interest. He doesn't nag loudly until we cease to listen. Every direction taken by those fleet and astringent right hand lines catches the attention. As horn players often transcribe sax or trumpet solos, so here, as he prises open the

chords, Evans' work is consistently instructive. A further gain from his preference for understatement is the subtlety of his shadings and the possibilities for emotional complexity. Ambiguity is the first victim of melodrama, and with it dies a sense of the mysteriousness of feeling. Evans' subtlety enables him to reveal the ambivalence in a state of mind. In his treatment of *Easy Living* for example, although the words are not sung, he somehow communicates the imperilled languor of the lyric in a way that would be swamped in a more sentimental reading. Evans' work is always disciplined by form, and this prevents it from becoming soggy. He loves prettiness but never lets it become fulsome. These two sides of his personality — the lyrical and the disciplined — are reflected in the choice of material. Apart from his own compositions there are songs by Cole Porter and Rodgers and Hart: all masters of formal elegance in popular composition. Evans is original, always interesting, but never 'free' in the sense of dispensing with shape. 'Free form' admits of no checks, or if it does, it coyly conceals them from the listener. For this reason it deprives us of any satisfactory basis of evaluation. Like a sonnet writer, Evans reveals the form within which he is working and that becomes the measure of his audacity and originality. His work is seen to be greater for providing a standard by which it can be measured. And thirty years later he can still teach us something because fundamentally his music was honest, and honesty is always instructive.

Bruce Johnson



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RED NORVO "Giants of Jazz" (Time-Life Records STL J14)

The *Giants of Jazz* collection on Time-Life Records is, I think, the greatest jazz series ever issued on record. It has given us definitive sets and superbly reproduced sets of the work of such obvious giants as Louis Armstrong, Billie Holiday, Lester Young and Duke Ellington. I'm loath to be hypercritical, but there has been a fault — there has been virtually no, what we

still doggedly call, "modern" jazz.

That fault has been remedied to an extent by the latest in the series: the three-volume set on Red Norvo. This set also contains the most varied music in the series: from the 1933 track of *Knockin' on Wood* with Jimmy Dorsey and Dick McDonough, to the last item: *Just A Mood*, by a sextet including Harry Edison on trumpet and Ben Webster on tenor saxophone.

Even back in the days of 78rpm records, there was regrettably little of Norvo's music available in the local catalogue. The most famous example of his work on 78 here was *Blues In E Flat*, by Red Norvo and His Swing Octet: Bunny Berigan, Jack Jenney, Chu Berry, Johnny Mince, Teddy Wilson, George Van Eps, Artie Bernstein and Gene Krupa. This was for years the theme record of the ABC's midweek swing records session, when Alan Saunders was compere. Berigan dominates the ensemble after Norvo's opening chorus and Krupa swings out with a perfect cymbal off-beat in the closing ensemble.

Red Norvo is a master of swing — by which I mean the rhythmic essence of jazz, not just the big-band style of the thirties — and he and his wife, the late Mildred Bailey (who sings on two tracks: Porter's *Love Song To A Chambermaid* and *St Louis Blues*), were known as Mr and Mrs Swing.

In *The Big Bands*, his authoritative book on the swing era, George T. Simon goes out on a limb and says that Norvo is his "favourite of all jazz musicians." I'm surprised this is not mentioned in the foreword nor in the typically first-rate Time-Life annotation by Don DeMichael.

I'm surprised too that the collection does not include Benny Goodman's *Gotta Be This Or That*, in which Norvo got out his special slap-hammers and at one stage seemed to balance the whole Goodman orchestra on his shoulders. But there are two Goodman gems on this set: *After You've Gone* and *Slipped Disc*, both by a sextet with Teddy Wilson and Slam Stewart on bass.

The next tracks, to give you an indication of the varied nature of the jazz in the set, feature Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker. Dizzy plays a typically powerful, sizzling solo on *Get Happy*, on which Flip Phillip's tenor saxophone is as benign as Ben Webster's. Parker plays an impassioned solo on *Slim Slam Blues* and Gillespie opens his solo with a masterly dissonance. And both masters of "modern" jazz surpass themselves on *Congo Blues*.

Norvo, who had made the xylophone a unique voice in jazz — possibly in all music — switched to vibraphone in the early forties. I think we can safely say that the master jazz vibraphone players are Lionel Hampton, Milt Jackson and Norvo. Norvo had played vibraphone on isolated occasions before, and we have an example here: *Ain't Misbehavin'*, by the Teddy Wilson Quartet, with Harry James on trumpet and John Simmons on bass. This is from a previously unissued master and on the following track for the same tune, Norvo returns to his beloved xylophone.

This is followed by the sublime *Just A*

Mood, or *Blue Mood*, which was released in Australia on 78rpm in 1947 and which contains some of the noblest trumpet Harry James ever recorded. The *Just A Mood* which finishes the record (with Harry Edison and Ben Webster) is a 1957 remake of this classic and is just as good. Webster is especially impressive.

We also have two novelties, if you will pardon such a frivolous word in such an almighty context. These are Bix Beiderbecke's unforgettable *In A Mist* and Norvo's own charming and witty *Dance Of The Octopus*, both of which were recorded at a secret midnight session in 1933 with Benny Goodman on bass clarinet, Dick McDonough on guitar and Artie Bernstein on bass. Jimmy Dorsey's trumpet on *Moon Country* is a rarity, if not a novelty.

One of the most moving tracks is *Remember*, by Red Norvo's big band of 1937. Stew Pletcher, who was one of Norvo's favourite trumpeters, takes a solo of breathtaking melancholy. This record is an exquisite lament and one of the highlights of this magnificent set.

Let me also refer you to the nimble, powerful bass of Charlie Mingus on *Move*, the exotic horns and woodwinds on *Ghost Of A Chance*, Bunny Berigan's ecstatic lead-in to the ride-out on *Bughouse*, Chu Berry's big-toned, rhapsodic tenor saxophone on *Blues In E Flat*, Benny Goodman's breaks on *After You've Gone* and Woody Herman's clarinet solo on *I Surrender Dear*.

Here's to Red Norvo — a man for all seasons.

Dick Hughes



CROSSFIRE
"Live At Montreux;;
(WEA 250115 1)

Personnel: Jim Kelly (guitar), Michael J. Kenny (keyboards), Tony Buchanan (saxophones/shakers), Greg Lyon (bass), Ian Blossom (percussion/mallets), Mark Riley (drums).

I suppose there is still something of the old 'cultural cringe' in most of us. Even the most self-confident Australian feels that surge of pride when our artists go overseas and perform well in international company, confirming what we should know: that we produce world-class artists, if only we realised it. Still, there is always



The Storyville Band was formed in 1968. The fact that it's still blowing strong 15 years on proves they must have done something right!

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that element of unease. Are our boys really good enough?

What this record shows beyond doubt is that Crossfire, playing original music that is an outgrowth of our own culture, can take their place on the international stage with the best of them. Not only do they play their music with unmitigated brilliance (anyone who listens to them here knows their capabilities), but on this LP they are in front of an audience at one of the world's great festivals — the Montreux Jazz Festival — and the audience gives them more than a mere warm reception. Obviously captivated by the music, the crowd cheers and stomps for more. We can have every confidence that, in their overseas performances, Crossfire represents a high level of achievement in Australian music.

The LP consists of five compositions recorded at Montreux on July 16, 1982: *Clown Raga* (Kenny), *Off Balance* (Kelly) and *This Way Out* (Kenny), plus the two Kenny compositions *Hysterical Rochords* and *A Youth In Asia*, which appeared on Crossfire's last LP (also entitled *Hysterical Rochords*).

Those who already have the last LP should not find the re-recording of these tunes superfluous. The music played by this group is always evolving rather than static, and the subtleties which have been added are worth noting. Mick Kenny's lovely solo piano statement which opens the live version of *Hysterical Rochords* is a case in point. It is absent from the original

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version and its inclusion here immeasurably enhances the new one.

Note also that, in place of Phil Scorgie (bass) and Steve Hopes (drums), Crossfire includes Greg Lyon and Mark Riley. With the two latter men, it is something of a different band: there is less power and more finesse, I think, in the rhythm section as a result.

What is impressive about the music on this LP, even if it is a warts-and-all live performance, is its finished quality — its sureness, the absence of any roughness around the edges. The band plays together with extraordinary rhythmic integration. The percussionist Ian Bloxson, as always, is incapable of playing anything unmusical, and the dovetailing of his work with the drummer Mark Riley is a joy to hear. This is the first Crossfire LP on which Riley has appeared, and he shows what a capable and brilliant drummer he is.

The traditional Crossfire strengths are all here: the band's willingness (unusual in fusion groups) to alter the dynamic level of the music to create light and shade; the comping of Mick Kenny and his newly-found solo virtuosity on piano; a sensitive dialogue between Kenny and Kelly in *A Youth In Asia* (there is always at least one such duet on a Crossfire LP, and this one is a gem); the melodic beauty of Jim Kelly's guitar; the strong, muscular sound of Tony Buchanan's tenor; the understatement of Greg Lyon's bass lines.

In short, this is a superb LP. The sound is not bad, considering the circumstances under which it must have been recorded, by engineers who would not have been familiar with Crossfire's music. *Live At Montreux* captures for the listener at home what was obviously an electric atmosphere at Montreux in 1982. It represents a great moment for Crossfire and also a high point for Australian music.

Eric Myers



**GEORGE MELLY & JOHN CHILTON'S FEETWARMERS
"Makin' Whoopee"
(PRT Records N147)**

Personnel: Melly, vocals; Chilton, trumpet; Bruce Boardman, piano; Barry Dillon, bass; Chuck Smith, drums. Recorded November, 1982.

Back in 1947, Roger Bell reviewed Bunk Johnson's record of *I Wish I Could Shimmy Like My Sister Kate*. The Johnson band, he noted astutely, did not play the verse. Come to think of it, he wrote, the only band he had ever heard play the verse was Muggsy Spanier's Ragtimers; and he implied that maybe Muggsy had made up the verse himself.

He hadn't, of course, but it was an understandable suspicion, and I never heard another verse on record until I got a version by, I think, the Original Memphis Five in 1973. But I have never heard the verse sung until this record by George Melly. And for good measure, he sings it twice.

He refers to the verse of both *Sister Kate* and *Everybody Loves My Baby* in the sleeve notes. *Everybody* gets its verse served up twice too, first as an opener to the track with a Spanish tinge in the rhythm. Bruce Boardman, who was pianist on Melly's first Australian tour in February, 1982, shares the chorus after the first vocal with Chilton's trumpet, and Chilton's sole accompaniment is Barry Dillon's bass.

It's Dillon's bass alone again as accompaniment to George's vocal on the opening eight bars of *Someday You'll Be Sorry* and again from bars 17 to 24 in the first chorus. This beautiful composition by Louis Armstrong contains what is possibly the best solo John Chilton has recorded. He shines again on *Shake Your Can*, which George sang on his tours this year and last year.

By the way, this *Shake Your Can* isn't the one that Johnny Dodds made with his Chicago Boys on his second-last recording session (in 1938), but a piece attributed to Razaf, Denniker and Chilton. The ascription to Chilton is explained in the sleeve notes. He added a new theme.

Bruce Boardman plays two roaring choruses on *Sporting Life* and plays a south-side boogie line on *Yellow Dog Blues*. Chuck Smith's brushes bounce on *Goody Goody* and he plays New Orleans marching drums on *Sister Kate*.

Only *Baby Doll* and *Yellow Dog* are from the repertoire of one of George's first inspirations, Bessie Smith. Thanks to John Chilton, Melly emancipated himself from the classic blues and jazz standards. Happily, they still flow into the mainstream of his presentation.

Dick Hughes



**CLEO LAINE & DUDLEY MOORE
"Smilin' Through"
(Festival L 37790)**

Personnel: Cleo Laine (vocals), Dudley Moore (piano), Ray Brown (bass), Nick Ceroli (drums), John Dankworth (soprano sax) appears on one track.

This album was made with the general public rather than just jazz enthusiasts in mind, for despite the fact that much is made in the anonymously written sleeve notes of the pairing of Cleo Laine and Dudley Moore, there is little musical evidence that one inspired the other to any great degree. This is not to say that it is not an enjoyable album. In fact I am sure that Cleo's fans will enjoy it very much, while the bass playing of Ray Brown will be of interest to jazz fans.

The main problem is that all the songs are taken at slow or medium tempo, giving the album an 'easy-listening' feel from which Cleo Laine's lovely voice cannot rescue it. For me the highlight is *I Can't Give You Anything But Love*, where momentum and swing are built up to a degree not achieved elsewhere. The light-hearted Dudley Moore composition *Strictly For The Birds* with the vocal sung as a duet by Cleo and Dudley, is reminiscent of his big hit a few years ago, *Song for Susie*. A pleasant album which would have been better had more time and thought been given to the choice of material and the arrangements.

Anthony Stanton



**KEYS MUSIC ASSOCIATION
"March of the Five Limbs"
(KMALP 8301-2)**

This album acts as sampler or document of what members of the Keys Music Association were doing around the end of last year. For those not in the know, the KMA was formed in 1979 to help create performance opportunities for players and composers who were battling for exposure, playing contemporary jazz. The release of this double album is a culmination for all the effort so far.

It comprises sixteen tracks by no less than thirteen different combinations of a total of thirty-one players. These com-

Record Reviews

binations range from the seventeen piece KMA Orchestra, to a variety of duo combinations.

All the pieces were recorded by 2MBS-FM, mostly from live performances, and the quality varies from excellent to patchy. The latter category is caused by flaws in the live recording, and is no reflection on Danny Fine's craftsmanlike production.

The bands involved are Plan B, the Benders, the Freeboppers, Sketches, the KMA Sax Quartet, Great White Noise, the KMA Percussion Ensemble, Keys, and the KMA Orchestra. In addition, there are four duos: Mike Tinney (guitars) and John Gillies (drums); Lloyd Swanton (bass) and Dale Barlow (tenor); Sandy Evans (tenor, flute) and Dianne Spence (alto); Mark Simmonds (tenor) and Greg Sheehan (drums).

Every cut has something to recommend it, but space prevents me from covering all sixteen tracks. On first impressions, three pieces particularly bowled me over. Two of them are by the KMA Sax Quartet: Danny Fine's *Fragrant Clouds* and Mark Simmond's *Blue Veins*. The group consists of Sandy Evans on soprano, Dianne Spence on alto, Mark Simmonds on tenor, and Danny Fine on baritone. The tone of the horns, the orchestrations, and the improvising all meld magnificently, in a framework of two very different compositions. *Fragrant Clouds* is impressionistic, with a rich, floating head, and quirky, angular improvisation, while *Blue Veins* is gutbucket blues lifted out of the blues form.

The third piece is a Robin Gador composition entitled *The Creeps*, performed by Keys; Danny Fine, baritone; Mark Simmonds, Tenor; Robin Gador, bass; and Greg Sheehan, Drums, with all members playing percussion. Despite this being one of the muddier mixes on the album, from the moment the chugging bass and descending horn pattern of the head starts up, there's a touch of magic in the air. A spiralling baritone solo, underpinned by the rampaging locomotion of the rhythm section, is followed by a funky, bubbling, humorous bass solo from Rob Gador.

Greg Sheehan leads a lovely short percussion break, featuring steel drums, which turns out to be a lull before the storm. 'Storm' might be an understatement, as Mark Simmonds tears through an extended tenor solo. Always sure-footed, always in motion, the solo has more substance to it than just pure energy, but the energy level is devastating. None of the devices are cosmetic: this music was *felt* by the players. Furthermore, in between the extremes in register, you can hear one of the most beautiful tenor sounds (outside of

Merv Acheson) in the country.

If there is any unifying element, the whole album is characterized by an urgency, that on occasion can become over-bearing, and seem one-dimensional, like a lot of the music that came out of New York in the late sixties. The relative youth of most of the players probably has a bearing on this. The speed and fury can sound hollow and unsubstantial without a more heartfelt energy — a quality certainly in evidence from Keys on *The Creeps*.

Don't get me wrong. It's not all fast and furious, and even when it is, large slabs of it are great. Have a listen: there's some excellent writing and playing, and these people need all the exposure they can get.

John Shand



STORYVILLE ALLSTARS "Everything Old Is New Again" (ABCL 8208)

Perhaps I'm the wrong person to be reviewing this LP, as I find myself particularly unmoved by the music of the Storyville Allstars. Still, I asked a number of potential writers in Sydney to review this LP, and most of them declined, saying that they were not keen on the band, and felt they might not do it justice.

So, what's the problem? Why do the Storyville Allstars generate this sort of opposition? Is it just Sydney jealousy of a good Melbourne trad band?

On the face of it, the Storyville Allstars have a lot going for them. All the front-line players — Derek Reynolds (trumpet), John Murray (trombone) and Ian Walkear (saxophones and clarinet) play with excellent sound, and they are all capable soloists. John Murray, in particular, is in splendid form on this record, playing some lovely solos and also singing with a pleasant, gravel voice.

The rhythm section — John Adams (piano), Tony Orr (banjo and guitar), Ross Anderson (bass) and Allan Leake (drums) — lopes along with the relaxed, swinging mainstream feel that characterises the modern approach to Dixieland music. The rhythmic approach is very tidy indeed.

The whole band plays well together (a legacy of its 15 years experience), paces itself

beautifully, and gets hot at the right moment in the last few choruses. And there is Beverley Sheehan to add vocal colour to the instrumental arrangements.

So, what is the problem? I think that critics of the band would point to one factor which is generally regarded as one of the band's strengths. On the cover notes, the broadcaster Ralph Rickman puts it this way: "I can tell you that Storyville is always rehearsed, the programme carefully selected; in a word 'organized.' This is perhaps it in a nutshell. The Storyville Allstars are perhaps *too* organised, the arrangements too settled, so that the music often emerges as bland and predictable.

There is no-one in the band who blows with real passion, with an urgent conviction. Everyone seems happy with a bright, carefree approach which rarely sees any real emotion injected into the music. Perhaps this is inevitable in a band which is designed to be light and entertaining. If that's the case, then the Storyville Allstars are involved, not in jazz, but in light entertainment. In my view there is a difference between the two.

The singer Beverley Sheehan performs *Rose Of Washington Square*, *Georgia On My Mind*, and *I Double Dare You* on this LP. She has a strong, confident and individual style characterised by a shrill vibrato and a stilted, rather stiff attack. It's as if she is singing without any real awareness of the beat. Her approach to the lyric is almost the direct antithesis of the conventions laid down by the great black singers. Billie, Sarah and Ella take a lyric and tell you something important about life. I get very little impression of a life-force in Beverley Sheehan's singing. Still, in the context of the Storyville band, her approach is not out of place.

Certainly the best singer on the record, to my taste, is the bassist Ross Anderson. His one song *Lonesome Me* is a gem. Now there's an unpretentious singer with jazz feeling. He should sing more.

I think *Everything Old Is New Again* will appeal most to those who like pleasant, inoffensive Dixieland music playing quietly in the background, or good time music in a party atmosphere. Come to think of it, that's a pretty big market, so this LP should sell well.

Eric Myers

NOTE: Copies of Norm Linehan's booklet *Bob Barnard, Graeme Bell, Bill Haesler and John Sangster on the Australian Jazz Convention*, which was reviewed in the March/April 1982 edition and the subject of an article in the July/August 1982 edition, are still available from the author, 55 O'Donnell Street, North Bondi 2026 at \$2 including postage.

NEW RECORD RELEASES

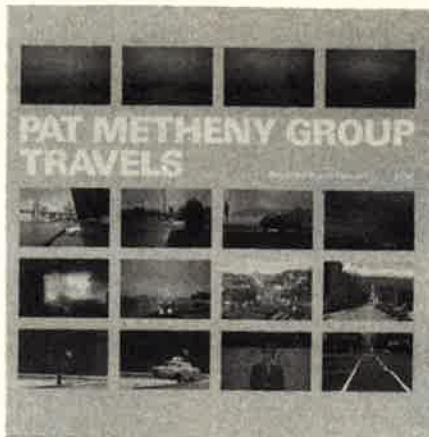
By Roger Beilby*

When one starts a new column in a magazine, you like to start with a bang but then surpass the first effort in your second column. The May/June *New Record Releases* had lots of news and listed many exciting new issues but since then, due to the recession hitting luxury items, imports and new releases have been few and far between.

Another Record Distributor in Hobart has available again Wynton Marsalis's *First Album* on Japanese CBS Sony. Ellis Marsalis (Wynton's father) has a new release, *Solo Reflections*, a solo piano LP with tracks including *Sweet Georgia Brown*, *Django* and *Willow Weep For Me*. Also available on Japanese CBS Sony are *Herbie Hancock Quartet* (recorded in Japan, 1982), Mose Allison, *I Love The Life I Live*; Dave Brubeck, *Brubeck Time*; Weather Report, *Procession*; Ray Charles, *Wish You Were Here Tonight*; David Liebman, *What Is It*.

Festival Records have over a dozen of the *Original Jazz Classics* series available locally. Fantasy Records in America have had such a big response to the 40 issues they produced early this year that another 30 titles have been released in America (early July). They include albums first issued on Debut, Jazz Workshop, Prestige, Fantasy, New Jazz and the Riverside labels. Artists include Charlie Parker, Brew Moore, Art Farmer, Sonny Rollins and Abbey Lincoln. Let's hope Festival make the whole 70 titles available to our local record market.

Larrikin and Avan-Guard don't have any new jazz releases listed on their June/July release sheets, although Larrikin are now distributors for Jazmin and Antipodisc records. (Jazmin should not be confused with Jasmine, an English company that has just reissued many Coral records from the 60s. English Jasmine has had very limited distribution in Australia.)



Carinia have some new ECMS available. Jack De Johnette's Special Edition, *Inflation Blues*; Pat Metheny Group, *Travels*; Codona 3, Miroslav Vitous, *Journey's End*. Also available through Carinia is Swaggie's latest issue, S 1400, *Django Reinhardt*, an issue of more of Django's excellent music from the 30s.

John Bye Productions (available through EMI) have released Vince Jones' second LP, *Spell*. Tunes include *Tenderly*, *Put A Spell On You*, *Funny Valentine* and *Crazy She Calls Me*. (Coincidentally, as I write this, Ralph Rickman is playing a track from the LP.) It has been predicted by John Bye that this record will make the top 30 album charts in Melbourne and may even do the same nationally. It is a very nice album and will appeal to a very wide audience, but could not be classed as a pure jazz album.

Finally, small companies and bands with cassette releases dominate releases on the local scene. From Perth, the Original Cornerhouse Euphonic Jazz and Ragtime Ensemble has a cassette available titled *Cornerhouse 1*. Amongst the band's personnel is Murray Kent who will be remembered by many as one of the driving forces behind Melbourne's Toad's Krazy Kats of some years back. The band's style is based on the classic sounds of the twenties and they romp their way through *Sidewalk Blues*, *Cushion Foot Stomp*, *Steamboat Stomp* and *South*. The band is hoping to attend the Australian Jazz Convention in Forbes at Christmas so if you can wait till then, they will have supplies of the cassette for sale there.

Melbourne's Yarra Yarra Jazz Band has a new cassette available as well as two LPs of their music just issued in America. Firstly, the cassette, recorded in April of this year and on their own label Yarra Yarra, is excellent, capturing the sound that has evaded the Yarras on their previous few releases. *Careless Love* is one of the nicest jazz tracks I have heard recorded locally. Other tunes include *Precious Lord*, *Gettysburg March*, *In The Groove*, *Sweet Heart Of All My Dreams*. The American label GHB has just released two LPs of the Yarras recorded in America

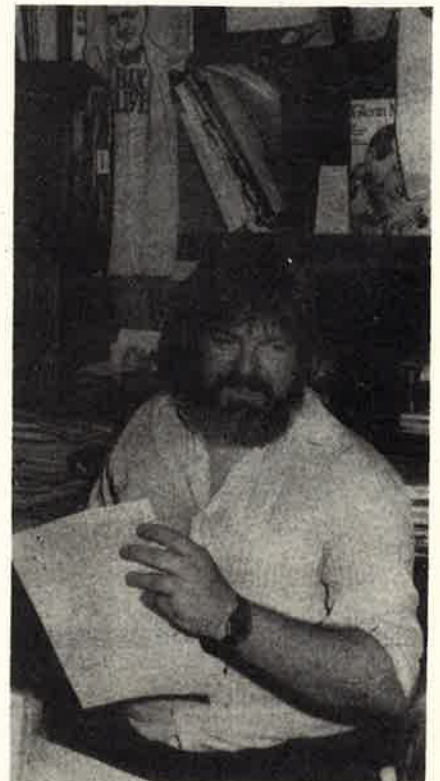
during their world tour of the early 70s. So far only a couple of copies of the albums have reached Australia but Maurie Garbutt, leader of the Yarras, will have a large stock of their LPs by the end of August. The tracks that I heard last week featured some very nice trombone playing by Roger Janes.

Anteater Records have three new cassettes now available, with another six in preparation. Graham Coyle, solo piano (Anteater 005), Adrian Ford's Orchestra (Anteater 006) — this is a reissue of the 1976 LP issued on 44 Records, *Swing That Music*, and features some fine big band jazz in the classic style. The third Anteater issue (007), *The Real Thing*, is a fine cassette by Canberra band The Fortified Few, recorded in Melbourne in April of this year during their annual trip south. The cassette captures the band at its relaxed best. Tunes include *Curse Of An Aching Heart*, *All By Myself*, *Yellow Dog Blues*, *Until The Real Thing Comes Along* and *Whosit?* This cassette is available from the band who are still playing every Saturday at the Dickson Hotel, Canberra, where they have been for over 15 years. □

Any wholesalers with issues that they would like listed in this column in the September/October JAZZ Magazine, should write to Roger Beilby before August 15, 1983. His address is PO Box 342, Elsternwick Vic 3195.



*Roger Beilby is one of the proprietors of Melbourne's specialist jazz shop *Mostly Jazz*, 94 St. Kilda Road, St. Kilda.



Roger Beilby in amongst it at *Mostly Jazz*.

The Merv Acheson Story

(Part 8)

In Part 7 of this series (JAZZ, May/June 1983) Merv Acheson described his experiences at the Stork Club and the Golden Key — Sydney nightclubs which were frequented by underworld figures in the post-war years. Going into theatre work, he had joined George Trevare's orchestra at the Tivoli. NOW READ ON:



Byrel Holland, pictured in 1945.

During this time of constantly playing both theatres and nightclubs my home life was tempestuous to say the least — my lady friend Byrel had left her job as a Tivoli Theatre show girl after a disagreement with the boss and was again getting angry and bored with nothing to do while I was out working.

On one occasion I decided to go out to my mother's place to have a rest away from the continuous arguments. I was dozing on a bed in the back room when Byrel stormed in, brandishing a Webley .455 revolver and let fly. Six bullets smashed into the wall behind me and only that I was half asleep and did not sit up quickly they would have perforated me like a postage stamp.

Naturally she had been drinking and when the gun was empty all the steam seemed to go out of her and she crumpled up. The Webley .455, by the way, was nicknamed the "man stopper" when it was standard issue to the British Army, and was known as the only certain way to bring down

with one shot an eastern fanatic full of hashish. If even one slug had hit me it would have been highly detrimental to my career.

I decided to make a move to Melbourne where I had been offered a nightclub job by a prominent piano playing band leader. This proved to be a disastrous move.

In those days, 1948, nightclub jobs were full time, six nights a week, and musicians were thrown completely out of work if the club closed for any reason — not like today, for example, when I work three different venues a week and if one closes there are still

the other two.

I copped the full closure bit with the Melbourne nightclub before I even got on the bandstand. On arriving I had gone to see the leader and he told me to start the following night. That very night the club was raided and closed down for violations of the Liquor Act. There I was out of work in a strange city.

To add to my woes I received a telegram from my mother saying that my violent lady friend was on her way down to join me. I took a huge double room for the two of us at a St. Kilda guest house where, believe it or not, we got three meals a day each, all inclusive for £6 (\$12) a week. Then I went to the Musicians' Club in Little Collins Street looking for work. There I ran into an old friend, mouth organ virtuoso Horrie Dargie, who also played alto and clarinet.

He proved to be my guardian angel that day; he told me he was leaving the Empress coffee lounge, which had been the old Dugout, and wanted a replacement alto for the Laurie Wilson band which held sway there. So in I went playing an alto borrowed from theatre bandleader Hal Moschetti, an old friend of my father, and doubling clarinet and tenor. The highlight of that band was the drumming of the late and great Billy Hyde senior, but we got very little chance to play jazz.

This type of coffee lounge was peculiar to Melbourne during the days of 6pm hotel closing. People would pay 2/6d (25 cents) to enter a coffee lounge for which they received a ticket entitling them to coffee and sandwiches and a musical show running anything from an hour to an hour and a half. There were two shows a night and patrons had to pay again to see the second one.

Bands were usually six pieces with the musos doubling or singing, backing the resident comic and girl vocalist and visiting acts, wearing funny hats and generally cutting capers. I hated all this garbage but had to sit it out until something better turned up. Things started to improve when firstly Byrel got a job as an usherette and then I had a strange visit during the late show at the Empress.

A little, foreign looking man in a big hat and overcoat, accompanied by three large men, also in big hats and overcoats, came up to the stand and said abruptly, "You Merv?" I said I was and he said "I wanna see you after, wait around!" This sounded ominous but I hadn't been in town long enough to upset anyone and I might as well do as he asked or he'd be back the next night.

After the show he reappeared with his followers and said "Harvey tells me you play good and can get a band together — I gotta new club and I wantcha to see it — we go now." We all piled into a large black Buick, went around some corners and through a few lanes, and ended up outside what appeared to be a dingy warehouse.

Surprise! Upstairs I stepped out of the lift into one of the most palatial nightclubs I have ever seen. I looked around and said to the little man "I'll take the job if the conditions are right — what hours and how much?" He shook me with his answer "midnight to 5 a.m. and I'll pay you £10 (\$20) a man *every night*." Now this was fabulous money in that day and age when we were getting about £12 (\$24) a week each for seven nights encompassing 14 shows at the coffee lounge.

I asked him what sort of music he wanted and he said "I hate music — play anything just so its loud — Harvey says in Sydney you had some of the loudest bands around." With that he pressed something in the wall and a huge panel opened disclosing a gambling room with baccarat, chemin de fer, cage dice, blackjack tables, craps — the whole works.

When that room was full of customers there was quite a lot of noise which even the padded walls couldn't contain, he explained. So if the place was raided the band had to play good and loud to smother the gambling.

I stayed in that job three months with a band I picked from local musicians and in which the personnel varied greatly from night to night as most had day jobs and couldn't stand the hours. The pay was regular, we played what we liked, and the drinks were free for the musos. Then one day the little man sent for me and told me he was closing down for a while. He gave no reason and to this day I do not know whether he had advance knowledge of coming police raids or feared a take-over bid from another organisation.

Then I did the St. Kilda coffee lounge circuit playing the Galleon, and other spots whose names escape me, with Stan

Bourne's band. Stan was a rotund little man who played piano and accordion, sang, told blue jokes and did a routine where he played every instrument in sight. Nobody in the audience knew that on most instruments he had learned to play only eight bars of one tune. Strangely he employed mostly jazz musicians, could play good jazz piano himself when he wanted to and did not expect his musicians to be comedians as he did all the routines himself, sometimes picking a particularly oafish member of the audience as a straight man to be the butt of his jokes, custard pies etc.

Then Harvey Bruce, the same man who had recommended me for the nightclub cum gambling club job, came to see me. I had known him very well in Sydney for years and had played dances and jazz clubs he organised. This time he wanted something different. He was a big time gambler and had been losing heavily in the early hours of the morning after drinking heavily. In a nutshell what he wanted was a "minder" to look after his money when he was on a winning streak and to take it home and lock it up before he could get drunk and lose it all.

The going pay rate for this was £10 (\$20) a night starting at midnight so I could still do the coffee lounge shows.

Naturally I took the job. My instructions were that no matter how much he ranted, raved and threatened I was not to give him any money back until he sobered up. Many were the early morning calls I had from Harvey demanding his money, running the gamut from threats to pleas, but on his own orders he got nothing. There were the bright days however when he would phone crestfallen and say "Well I've done it again — I woke up broke today," and I would say "You're not broke I've got 500 quid of yours here."

Then he would be overjoyed and would come around with a couple of bottles of good scotch to collect. He had several men in his employ, including a chauffeur and a bodyguard, who could have minded his cash but he didn't trust them with it because they were gamblers. He knew that I had never gambled as I do not to this day.



Merv Acheson, pictured recently in performance for the Victorian Jazz Club...

This arrangement went very well for some weeks until things started going wrong at my home again. Violent arguments followed by tearful confusion were being staged regularly by Byrel — mainly for the same old reason — that I was never home between 6 pm and 6 am.

This came to a head one morning when I asked Harvey in for a drink just before dawn. As we entered the courtyard of the apartment block where I had a flat on the second floor I tripped over a heap of junk. Harvey snapped on his lighter and the junk turned out to be my prized collection of rare 78 records, Ellington, Callaway, Beiderbecke, Lunceford, Hawkins, Chu Berry, Condon and the rest. All had been smashed to pieces and thrown out the window.

Harvey and I hurried upstairs to find the window wide open and the girl in a drunken stupor on the bed clutching an empty brandy bottle. I grabbed her by the neck but Harvey stopped me with a sentence. He said "Leave her. They hang you for killing down here."

I gathered my things and left and never lived with her again. Strangely enough more than 30 years later in 1980 before she died in the Royal Price Alfred Hospital, Sydney, from natural causes, she made a request that I attend her funeral. This I did.

After the record smashing incident I returned to Sydney gigging around the nightclubs and again working for big band leader George Trevare. But the shadow of the record smashing girl was still over me. She had taken up with notorious Melbourne gangster Freddy Harrison, who was to be blasted to death with a shotgun on a Melbourne wharf in 1957, but who was then very much alive.

In 1949 Trevare asked me to go to Melbourne with him to discuss some recording business. On arriving there we put up at the Hunt Club Hotel in Little Collins Street, handy to the Musicians' Club. On the second day another of the men in overcoats and big hats turned up in the bar where I was drinking alone, sidled up and said in an undertone from the side of his mouth "Freddie says you should go back to Sydney; he don't want you here."

I was surprised — I could not remember anyone called Freddy that I had upset. At that stage I did not know that my ex-girl was having an affair with Harrison and indeed I had only vaguely heard of him.

With a few whiskies in me and angry at being ordered about by a stranger I rapidly told the messenger what he and his Freddy could do and where they could go.

After a couple more drinks I decided to find out what the strange message was all about and made some phone calls. Everyone I contacted started spluttering in obvious alarm and fear as soon as I told them what had happened and gradually I learned the situation. All the people I had phoned had asked me politely not to visit them until the matter was cleared up, as they did not want blood on their doorsteps.

After that I started to laugh thinking of these big strong fellows going to pieces when they heard a name over a telephone. I did not laugh so much late that night when I was walking down a quiet side street — there were two loud cracks and two bullets ploughed into the building beside me.

Trevare and I finished our business with the recording company the next day and returned to Sydney. I was not sorry to get back. In Melbourne I was a sitting duck — unarmed, with my so-called friends too scared to be of any assistance or even to sell me a gun, in case Freddy found out about the transaction.

I sent a message to Freddy telling him why I had been in Melbourne and that he was wrong in thinking that I had come down to get her back. In fact she given me a hell of a time for three years and I would not have her back if he paid me.

Months later I met Freddy and we drank together and laughed about the incident. He insisted that he had not fired the shots but that they had been fired by a friend trying to get in his good books and without his knowledge. Anyway, he said, they had only been meant to scare me out of town and had been deliberately aimed to miss.

But now, 34 years later, I still have my doubts: Freddy or his probably mythical friend, could just have been a lousy shot.

NEXT ISSUE: I become Editor of Tempo Magazine, ten o'clock closing comes to the pubs and jazz takes off; the great jazz hotels — The Port Jackson, The Criterion, Adams and all the rest.



JANE MARCH

TOM BAKER

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NEW AUSTRALIAN RELEASES

ONAJE: ONAJE'S RAGE (EAST RECORDS EAS 080); STRAIGHT AS A BRIEFCASE (EAST RECORDS EAS 082). Two LPs from the leading modern Melbourne group Onaje. Reviewer Bruce Johnson writes: "These two albums represent a significant moment in the history of Australian jazz."

VINCE JONES: SPELL (YPRX THROUGH EMI). The second album from Melbourne's in-demand singer (and trumpeter) Vince Jones. Reviewer Phil Tripp writes: "The talent that was promised and only partially delivered in his first album has been brought out in this effort . . . This album is certain to capture more than the ears of appreciative jazz audiences. Most likely, it will capture an overseas contract to boot."

THE BENDERS: E (HOT RECORDS 1002). The first LP from the brilliant Sydney group, recorded before saxophonist Dale Barlow left for overseas. Reviewer Theo van Leeuwen writes: "Impressive players, an impressive record — but it is to be hoped that, in future albums, the Benders will also begin to explore musical avenues other than 'going for it'."

KEYS MUSIC ASSOCIATION: MARCH OF THE FIVE LIMBS (KMALP 8301-2). Sixteen tracks by thirteen different combinations of players, or a total of thirty-one different players. Reviewer John Shand writes: "All the pieces were recorded by 2MBS-FM, mostly from live performances, and the quality varies from excellent to patchy. There's some excellent writing and playing, and these people need all the exposure they can get."

CROSSFIRE: LIVE AT MONTREUX (WEA 250115 1). An impressive LP recorded by this top fusion group at the Montreux Jazz Festival, Switzerland, on July 16, 1982. Reviewer Eric Myers writes: "What this record shows

beyond doubt is that Crossfire, playing original music that is an outgrowth of our own culture, can take their place on the international stage with the best of them . . . Crossfire represents a high level of achievement in Australian music."

STORYVILLE ALLSTARS: EVERYTHING OLD IS NEW AGAIN (ABCL 8208). A new LP from the popular Melbourne traditional/mainstream group which is now celebrating 15 years together. Reviewer Eric Myers writes: "This LP will appeal most to those who like pleasant, inoffensive Dixieland music playing quietly in the background, or good time music in a party atmosphere . . . This LP should sell well."

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TAPES

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 LARKM305 HARMONICA BLUES *Charlie Musselwhite*
 LRJ130 HARBOUR CROSSING *David Fennell with Kerrie Biddell & Wendy Grose*
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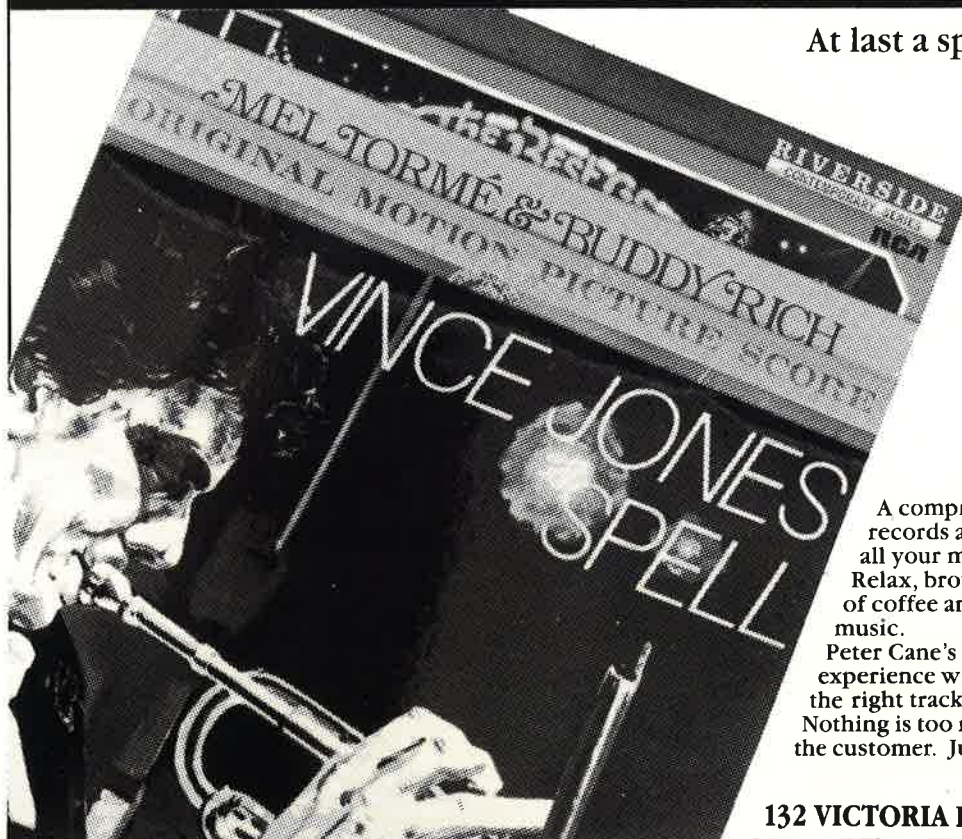
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