JAZZ

The Australasian contemporary Music Magazine

A New Era For
ERROL BUDDLE

Melbourne's
PYRAMID

Sydney's
CROSSFIRE

Brisbane's
CLARE HANSSON

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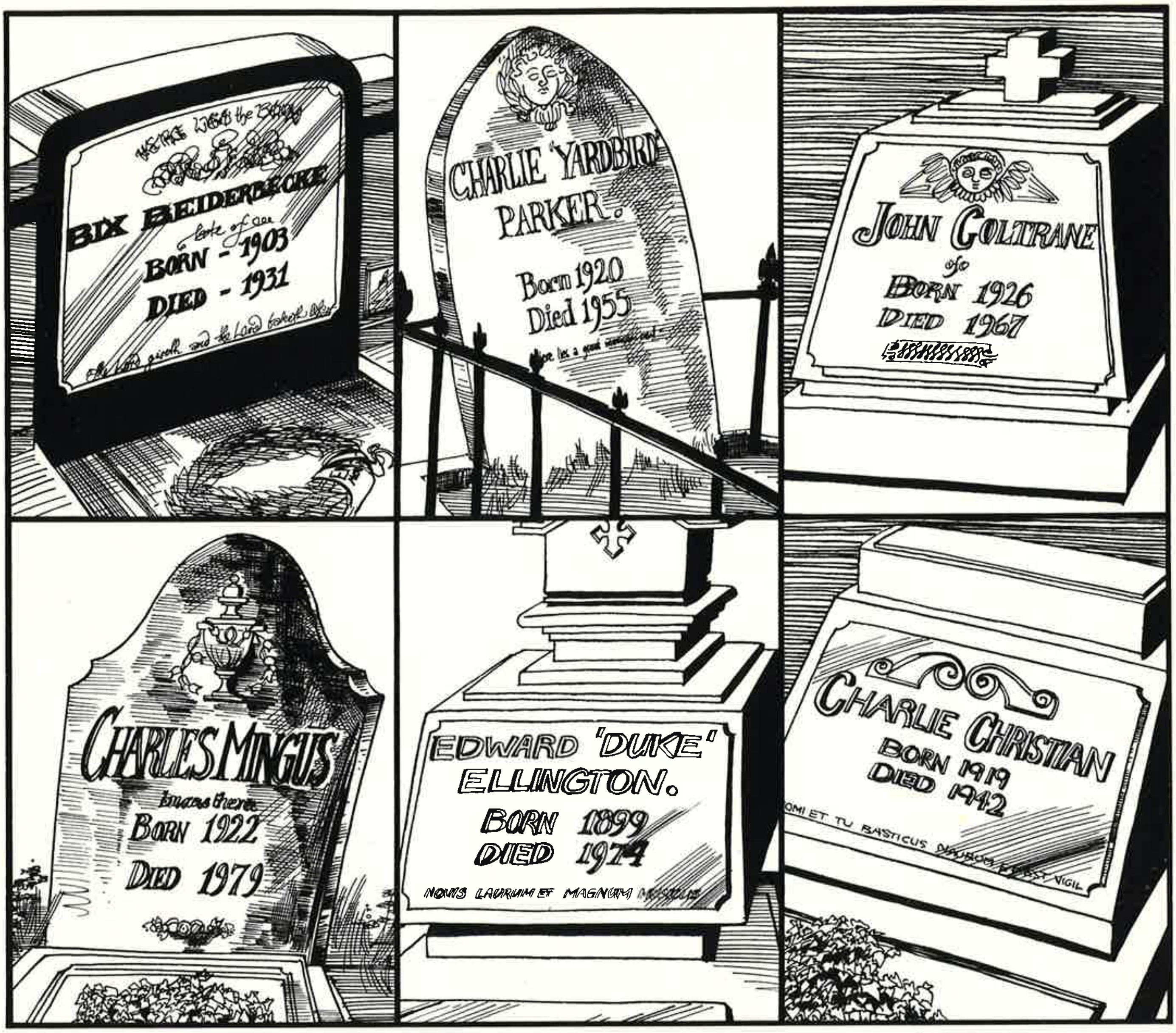
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CONTENTS

JULY/AUGUST 1982 Vol. 2, No. 10

Page 2 Editorial and Letters
Page 4-8 A New Era for Errol Buddle by Eric Myers
Page 9 Ian Neil's Grace Notes
Page 10-13 Dave Dallwitz and Traditional Jazz in Adelaide (Part 3) by Bruce Johnson
Page 14-17 Mick Kenny and Jim Kelly: Backbone of Crossfire by Eric Myers
Page 18-20 Clare Hansson: Brisbane's First Lady of Jazz, by Neville Meyers
Page 20-21 Geoff Maddox writes on Jazz Education
Page 22-23 Pyramid: a Fusion of Energy and Innovation by Mike Daly
Page 24-25 Bill Dillard interviewed by Adrian Jackson
Page 26-27 Jazz Education Supplement No. 2 – Listening to Jazz by Jerry Coker
Page 28 Traditional Jazz and the Australian Jazz Convention by Norm Linehan
Page 29 Concert Reviews
Page 30-32 Book Reviews
Page 33 Scrapple From The Apple by Lee Jeske
Page 34-36 Reports from Brisbane, Canberra, Melbourne, Parkes and Sydney
Page 37-47 Record Reviews
Page 48-49 And We've Also Heard . . .
Page 50-51 The Merv Acheson Story (Part 3)
Page 52 Jazz Classifieds

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Edit.

Although JAZZ is a Sydney-based magazine, and most of our advertising support is derived from this city, we are vitally interested in the jazz sub-cultures of other Australian centres.

It is with some pleasure therefore that, in this edition, we publish Neville Meyers's article on Brisbane's first lady of jazz Clare Hansson, and Mike Daly's piece on the outstanding Melbourne fusion group Pyramid.

Both Clare Hansson and Pyramid have performed in Sydney during the last two years, courtesy of the Jazz Action Society of NSW, and we hope that articles like these in JAZZ Magazine can contribute to the sort of interest and enthusiasm which will enable top jazz musicians to travel interstate much more and be heard by new audiences.

In this edition we highlight, to some extent, what we can call, for want of a better term, 'jazz/rock fusion', through the articles on Pyramid and Sydney's Crossfire veterans Mick Kenny and Jim Kelly. There are still deep divisions in the jazz world as to whether 'fusion' is a legitimate form of jazz, and the players in these two extraordinary groups are given ample opportunity to express their musical values. We hope that the opponents of 'fusion' will read these articles with interest.

There is an extra dimension to this dialogue in that the distinguished Australian saxophonist Errol Buddle, who appears on our cover this month, has recently announced his conversion to 'jazz/rock fusion' or 'funk' as he prefers to call it. In this edition he states his belief that, through this new music, jazz is recapturing some of the qualities it lost after the demise of the swing era.

I am delighted to announce that Ian Neil, whom most of you will know, will be writing in each edition of JAZZ Magazine. I think you will agree that his new column 'Ian Neil's Grace Notes' is every bit as elegant and informative as his ABC programs.

ERIC MYERS
Editor

Letters

Sir,

Your correspondent Lee Jeske has succeeded in putting into print a most disgraceful piece of journalism. Mr Jeske opens his article on Australian jazz (JAZZ, May/June, 1982) with two paragraphs which he later describes as a "disclaimer". Cunning journalism this — presumably he feels that such a term absolves him from responsibility for what is said in the body of the article. In this "disclaimer" he cheerfully admits that his knowledge of Australian jazz is scant; that he is in no position to comment upon the scene; and that his opinions are "oft-times less than weighty".

Undaunted by his own inadequacy, Mr Jeske moves on to damn one of our local players in an appalling fashion. The player I refer to is the drummer Ron Lemke, who is listed along with several other players as having copped the "thumbs down" from Mr Jeske. Ron is singled out from the others for a unique grilling — unique because he is an up-and-coming player, while all the others have quite considerable professional notoriety (and probably incomes) to absorb the damage of such criticism; and unique because of the severity of the criticism that he receives.

Ron is described by Jeske as being "everything that is bad about Australian drumming". Think over that phrase and allow the totality of its indictment to sink in. What he is saying is that Ron is the worst drummer in Australia — as if Jeske would know. Not only is the statement quite untrue, but it appears to me to be such a bullying and invective abuse of the powers of the journalist that I was quite shaken when I read it. (Probably nothing compared to how Ron feels.) I even wonder if Jeske was really aware of the severity of the terms he used.

I can think of no better way of crippling a young player's ambitions and self-respect than a few jabs of the sort dished out here. Jeske's inspirational precedent could only be King Herod and his baby-slaughtering spree circa AD I!

Jeske then has the nerve to suggest that we're not going to grow up musically until we "shed our reluctance to learn from the source" — his American buddies. If he had spent more time listening to his compatriots here rather than bullying the natives, he would have noticed that while (as in other years) we've seen some excellent players visiting us from the States, we've also had (as in other years) a considerable percentage of Yanks who sound either: boring, bland, incompetent, slick, pompous, irrelevant, or pretentious.

Perhaps if Mr Jeske spends a little less time hunting for game in foreign fields and looked more at his own problems we would see a more consistent development of world jazz music.

LLOYD SWANTON,
Wahroonga NSW

Editor's Note: Lloyd Swanton is bassist with the Dale Barlow Quartet and the David Martin Quintet.

Sir,

After watching all the *Jazz In Stereo* simulcasts recently presented by the ABC, I applaud the organisers for their efforts, and make some observations and suggestions.

If we hope to gain the respect of a wider audience for jazz than we already have, we must present only the best performances on TV. This series included some very mediocre performances along with the excellent. Classical or pop programs on television, however, usually show only the best available.

Our traditional jazz, for which Australia is held in high regard, was not included in this series. Bands like Bob Barnard's would, I think, be more deserving of TV exposure than several we saw in the series.

I feel also that those performances which were filmed in 'live' situations, like Sydney's Basement, seemed to 'come off' best. The 'dining-room'-type setting used for much of the series seemed to me to be unsuited to the type of music jazz is. Don Burrows, George Golla and Julian Lee were the only ones, to my mind, who seemed at home in this setting. Perhaps a cellar-type studio set, with a live audience, would have helped.

However, it was good to be able to see jazz on TV, and it was well-presented by Jim McLeod. Let's hope we get more of it.

JOHN SPEIGHT,
North Manly NSW

Editor's Note: I agree that some of the Australian groups should never have been included. It appears that the series did not have anyone behind the scenes who might have sifted out the good jazz from the mediocre. However, the series was absolutely stunning visually and it was beautifully directed by Henry Prokop. We have invited Mr Prokop to write something on the series for a future edition of JAZZ Magazine.

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ERROL BUDDLE: A New Era

By Eric Myers*

When I first came to Sydney from the country in 1962, the jazz scene was relatively dormant, compared to the lively activity we have today in the art form. The El Rocco, in King's Cross, was in full swing. But other than that rather gloomy cellar, where you were served coffee, sandwiches, but no alcohol, there were only one or two other places where you could hear live jazz.

The three most prominent names in jazz at that time were, I suppose, Don Burrows, Errol Buddle and John Sangster. All played modern jazz regularly at the El Rocco in various groups, as leaders themselves, and as sidemen. They also were highly visible as studio musicians in the various television orchestras, which tended to reinforce their status – the top jazz players had a mortgage on the most lucrative studio work.

I am not necessarily saying that these three men were the best players in Australian jazz. They may or may not have been. But certainly they were central figures, and there was a delightful symmetry about them: Burrows was from Sydney, Sangster from Melbourne, and Buddle from Adelaide. It seemed to me in accord with an Australian egalitarian spirit that our three major State capitals all had at least one great musician in the top echelon of Australian jazz. Of course, Buddle and Sangster ended up in Sydney, where there was a wide range of employment opportunities in music from the early 1950s, but it should not be forgotten that each man was the product of a virile jazz sub-culture in his home city.

These three men also had something else in common – their careers stretched back to the 1940s, covering most of the significant years of the growth of jazz in this country. If a writer wanted to do a biography of a leading Australian jazz musician and, at the same time, take a good look at the history of Australian jazz from the mid-1940s, Burrows, Sangster or Buddle would all be excellent subjects. They have been around for most of it.

In 1982 all three men are pretty much at their peak. Don Burrows has become probably the most popular and widely-known jazz musician this country has seen and, as Chairman of the Jazz Studies Department at the NSW Conservatorium of Music, he is passing on his knowledge to younger generations of jazz musicians. John Sangster has, of course, blossomed profoundly as a composer and when he departs the scene, he will have left a massive body of original works on record.

In this piece we take a look at the third member of the triumvirate, Errol Buddle. He was born in Adelaide in 1928, and shares his birthday, April 29, with none other than Duke Ellington. His long career can be divided into six distinct eras: his beginnings in jazz in Adelaide from 1945; his period as an up-and-coming saxophonist in Melbourne and Sydney; his experience in the United States circa 1952-58, and the enormous success of the Australian Jazz Quintet in American jazz; his career in Sydney throughout the 1960s; his re-emergence in jazz during the 1970s; and the present era, in which he is one of our busiest musicians, playing at his peak.

Pic: Peter Sinclair

Errol Buddle: described by John Sangster as the 'boss tenor' in Australian jazz.

To take the last era first, Errol Buddle remains one of our most in-demand session musicians. He plays with Geoff Harvey's band on the Mike Walsh daytime television show, with Mike Perjanik's orchestra on the Parkinson show, and with Tommy Tycho's orchestra. He works extensively for Ken Laing's Media Music Co-ordination, which provided musicians for the *You're A Star* television show, and backing for overseas artists such as Sammy Davis. He is an essential member of John Sangster's 'family' of jazz musicians, and appears on most of Sangster's monumental records throughout the last decade. Sangster describes Buddle as the 'boss tenor' in Australian jazz.

On Wednesdays and Saturdays he can be heard with his quartet at Sydney's Soup Plus restaurant. His 6-piece group, the Errol Buddle Band, works regularly at the Basement and other venues, and has done many concerts in and around Sydney, and as far afield as Gladstone, Queensland. This larger group is sometimes augmented by the singers Doug Williams or Keren Minshull.

On September 25, the Errol Buddle Quartet, including Mark Isaacs (piano and synthesiser), Phil Scorgie (bass guitar) and Len Barnard (drums) leaves for a concert tour through South-East Asia, taking in Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand and Burma. This tour is part of the Department of Foreign Affairs' Cultural Relations Program, and will be administered by Musica Viva.

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* *Eric Myers is a freelance writer and occasional musician.*

Errol Buddle is, therefore, as busy as ever in terms of work. But there is another aspect to his present career. In musical terms, this is certainly a new era for him. He is a recent convert to the sort of jazz that incorporates rock music. Call it what you like – it has been described as 'jazz/rock', 'funk', 'fusion', or 'crossover' – but this is the music which Errol Buddle is now excited about, and which he sees as an important new direction in jazz.

Jazz has, of course, been strongly influenced by rock music for about 15 years. Like many other musicians, Errol resisted it for some time. About a year ago, however, he bought some new, advanced-technology hi-fi equipment. In a record-buying spree, restricting himself to records no more than 12 months old, in order to gain a comprehensive knowledge of what is happening in music today, he bought a large cross-section of recent recordings. He found that, to his ears, the LPs offering the most interesting music were in the 'fusion' idiom, particularly Grover Washington's LP *Winelight.* Others who interested him were musicians such as Tom Scott and groups like Spyro Gyra.

He found that the sound on these LPs was excellent, and also was attracted to the rhythms and melodic lines used in this music. He now feels that so-called 'rock' music has evolved to the point where serious musicians can utilise it in a jazz context, and finds it a more than adequate vehicle for improvisation.

So, some months ago he formed a six-piece band which could play music in this idiom, and recruited some of the younger, more brilliant musicians playing in Sydney: Mark Isaacs (keyboards), Dean Kerr (guitar), Phil Scorgie (bass guitar), Sunil De Silva (percussion), and Rodney Ford (drums).

"The thing I like about jazz/rock is that it is melodic and rhythmically exciting," says Errol. "There are so many rhythms you can use – South American feels, for instance. Then again, there are the percussion instruments, which I find very colourful. It adds to the music, I think. The bass lines are much more involved than they used to be. I find this tremendously interesting. There is virtually no limit to the number of patterns that can be used in the rhythm section, rather than just the straight four in the bar."

Errol resists the argument that the music "is not jazz". He points out that, even when he was a teenager, he heard the argument often that bebop was not jazz. At various times he has heard it said that Benny Goodman, Stan Kenton, and even Charlie Parker did not play jazz. Jazz has always been in the process of change, and when the changes come into the music, there are always people who feel it is not the real thing.

"I was like that myself when I first heard Stan Getz on record around 1950. I preferred people like Ben Webster, that more robust school of tenor playing, and when I first heard Getz I thought he was effeminate – that 'cool' sort of playing. I suppose it took me a good year to get to like him, and after that I thought he was the greatest.

"The new stuff is definitely jazz – there's no doubt about it. I don't really like the term 'jazz/rock'. To tell you the truth, I didn't care for rock for many years. I don't really

continued overleaf

MARK ISAACS (piano & synthesiser)

ERROL BUDDLE (saxes, piccolo, flute, alto flute, bass flute, cor anglais, oboe, bassoon, recorder)

DEAN KERR (guitar)

RODNEY FORD (drums)

PHIL SCORGIE (bass guitar)

SUNIL DE SILVA (percussion)

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Pic: Frank Lindner

The Errol Buddle Quartet, touring South-East Asia in September and October. From left, Phil Scorgie, Buddle, Mark Isaacs, Len Barnard.

like jazz being connected with rock. Rock music turns me off anyway. What we play is a cross between 'motown' and South American rhythms. 'Funk' is what they call it now. To me, it's a very musical and tasteful type of music."

Errol Buddle sees a parallel between the funk jazz of today and the music of the pre-bop swing era. In the great days of Basie and Ellington, jazz was popular, melodic and exciting; people danced to it, and there was sometimes a singer as an additional feature to the instrumental music. With the incorporation of funk styles, Errol feels that jazz is recapturing some of its lost verities.

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In this and future editions of JAZZ magazine, we take a detailed look at the Errol Buddle story. In particular we will examine his years in the United States between 1952 and 1958. This episode in Buddle's career has been touched upon in Andrew Bisset's *Black Roots White Flowers.* We believe the story should be told in full. It is, in fact, one of the most extraordinary episodes in the history of Australian jazz. Buddle arrived in Windsor, Canada, as a young man of 24. Within a short time, he had moved over the United States border to Detroit and was playing six nights a week at Klein's, a local jazz club in the black district, leading a band which included Tommy Flanagan (piano), Frank Gant (drums), Milt Jackson's brother Alvin (bass) and Frank DiVita (trumpet). After three months, the manager of the club brought in four new musicians to serve under Buddle's leadership for another three months – Elvin Jones (drums), Barry Harris (piano), Major Holley (bass) and Pepper Adams (baritone saxophone). All were brilliant young Detroiters who were to become major figures in American jazz. On Saturday nights Billy Mitchell (tenor saxophone) was booked for a regular battle of the saxophones with Buddle and Adams.

Meanwhile the Australians Jack Brokensha (vibes and drums) and Bryce Rohde (piano) had arrived in the United States, and the Australian Jazz Quartet was formed in late 1954 with the American Dick Healey (alto, flute and bass). They worked at Detroit's leading jazz club the Rouge Lounge, which was managed by a man called Ed Sarkesian, who became the AJQ's personal manager. Through Sarkesian they were signed up to the biggest jazz agency in the world, Associated Booking Corporation, run by Louis Armstrong's manager Joe Glaser.

Glaser also managed the groups led by such luminaries as Dave Brubeck, Gerry Mulligan, Miles Davis, Stan Getz, Chico

Hamilton and George Shearing. The AJQ, now a quintet, found themselves amongst the top half-a-dozen groups in American jazz and, for four heady years, worked non-stop in virtually every major jazz club in the US, made seven best-selling LPs, played at Carnegie Hall and other major concert halls, backed singers like Billie Holiday and Carmen MacRae, and enjoyed life at the top.

During this incredible period, Errol Buddle became the first musician in jazz to use the bassoon extensively, and is so credited in Leonard Feather's *Encyclopaedia of Jazz.* An interesting footnote is that the American bassist Ed Gaston joined the AJQ in June 1957, and came to Australia when the group toured this country in 1958 for the ABC. Gaston met an Australian girl two days after he arrived, married her, and is still here. Stand up, Di Gaston!

It is a measure of the extraordinary devaluation of jazz in our culture that Buddle's achievements in the United States, plus those of the other Australians in the Australian Jazz Quintet, are hardly known to the Australian public. Similarly who, outside of a few jazz buffs, are aware of the exploits of Graeme Bell and his Australian Jazz Band, who took Europe and England by storm in the late 1940s?

In this country we make a huge fuss when our classical musicians become prominent overseas. Who has not heard of Roger Woodward and Dame Joan Sutherland? Yet, when our jazz musicians reach the top in England or the United States, the news hardly filters through to the public consciousness.

****

As a child Errol Buddle began in music as a banjo/mandolin player. He was among several young banjo players having lessons at the Adelaide College of Music in the mid-1930s. John Ellerton Becker, who ran the College, was an audacious entrepreneur. In 1936 he imported a number of saxophones from the United States and, despite the fact that these were Depression years, convinced the parents of several banjo students that their children should take up the saxophone. Errol was one of them, getting his soprano saxophone at the age of eight.

In this remarkably casual way, careers in music were set in motion. Other than Buddle, Syd Beckwith and Bill McKinnon – prominent Adelaide saxophonists in later years – also got their first instruments in the batch imported by Becker. Becker was an extraordinary man. He became a pioneer researcher into sheep and cattle farming, and soil improvement, and was later knighted for services to the pastoral industry. Now a millionaire, he lives on the island of Bermuda.

Three months after the arrival of the saxophones, Becker arranged for the eleven young recipients to perform for three weeks at the Prince Edward Theatre in Sydney, playing the popular music of the day. In this auspicious way, Errol Buddle began a life in music.

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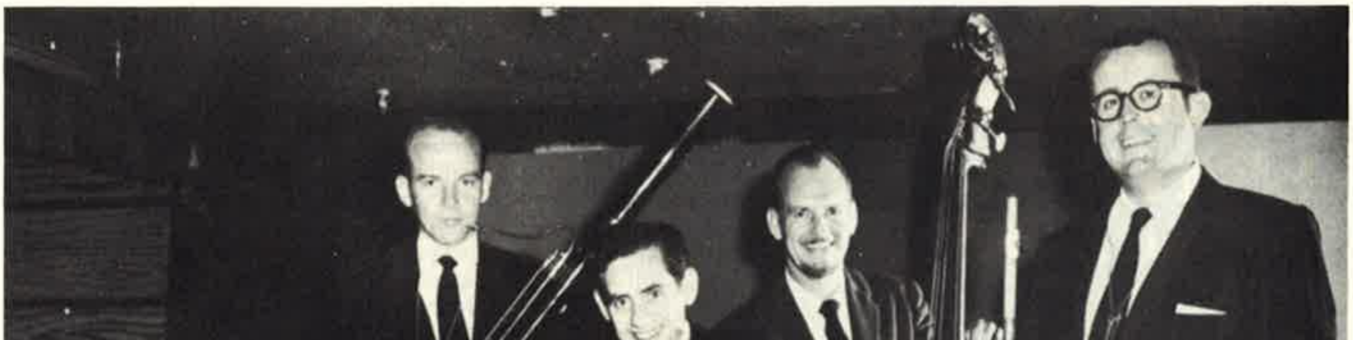

The Australian Jazz Quintet, snapped at New York's Basin Street club, 1956. From left, Bryce Rohde (piano), Errol Buddle (holding the bassoon), Jack Brokensha (vibes), Jack Lander (bass) Dick Healey (holding the flute).

Errol Buddle, aged 8, with his soprano saxophone.

Throughout his childhood, Buddle was not over-keen on music. He took lessons and played in various bands, mostly because of pressure from his parents. His father was a car dealer in Adelaide, who later went into vintage cars and spare parts. During high school, Errol even gave up music for a time, to concentrate on school work.

It was during his high school years however, that some friends of the Buddle family, knowing that the young Errol played the saxophone, invited him to join their trio which played every Saturday night at a country dance – piano, saxophone and banjo/mandolin. Errol took the job at 15 shillings a night. He enjoyed it so much though, he would have done it for nothing. At this stage, he played only written melodies, and was totally unaware of jazz.

He was still 16 years old in 1944 when he answered a newspaper advertisement for a saxophonist at the King's Ballroom, Adelaide, and got the job. Shortly after, he saw that a jazz concert was being held at the Astoria Ballroom, starring two musicians he was well aware of: Syd Beckwith (alto sax and clarinet) and Bobby Limb (tenor saxophone) – then a leading Adelaide professional musician and later to become one of Australia's top television stars.

"I just went along out of curiosity," says Buddle now. "They started to play and I was just mesmerised by the music. It was the first time I had actually really heard some live jazz. The person who impressed me more than any of them was Bobby Limb on tenor sax. His solos were so well-constructed.

"Even today, Bobby Limb is still one of the better tenor sax players in Australia, I would say. I did a recording with him only a few years ago which he played tenor on – one of his own records – and he played it very well. Good tone, good execution, good style – it knocked me out."

Buddle left the concert dazed. "I went home that night on the bus, I remember, and the first thing I did was turn the radio on, and try and find some jazz. I was absolutely wrapped. Then, of course, came looking for records. I used to go to record shops at 9 o'clock in the morning as soon as they opened, to try and get records. In those days records were still a little bit scarce after the war. If you missed out, you had to wait until the next month to get the next issue."

So, Errol Buddle became hooked on jazz. He bought anything and everything if it was jazz – Artie Shaw's Gramercy Five, Ellington, whatever. "If a record had a tenor solo on it, even eight bars, I'd buy it," says Errol. He was then still playing only the alto saxophone. "Up to that time I was so wrapped in tenor, all the solos I did, I used to do in the bottom register of the alto, because it had a slightly deeper sound." In 1946 this dilemma was rectified. Errol came to Sydney for a short holiday and bought his first tenor.

At that time Bobby Limb was Adelaide's most prominent saxophonist. In 1946 he left to join Bob Gibson's big band in Melbourne, then the leading orchestra in the country. Errol Buddle was good enough to step into Limb's shoes. This included three radio shows and a number of dance band gigs. At the age of 18, Buddle had broken into the top echelon of Adelaide music. Not only was he a budding jazz player; he had also developed enough to handle the best studio work – a capability that would stand him in good stead throughout the rest of his career.

NEXT EDITION: Errol Buddle hits Melbourne, and later Sydney. In 1952 he leaves for Canada and begins his career in American jazz, playing in Detroit. In 1954 the Australian Jazz Quartet is formed, and is to become one of the top jazz groups in the United States.

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Ian Neil's
GRACE NOTES

So, the redoubtable Merv Acheson has made it at last . . . he has an album out. Welcome Merv, to the distinguished and impecunious world of the Australian jazz recording artist. Thanks to Bruce Johnson's notes I now know the details of the disaster (natural and otherwise) dogged trail that this living legend has trudged to attain this status. It has taken only forty-five years of professional playing to achieve this end and at that rate – since Merv is sixty and I know he won't mind my saying this – the odds would seem to be against rather than for the appearance of another album. Sincere thanks to the Jazz Action Society of NSW and 2MBS-FM for the reality of this fine and historically important record. Readers, you must all get a copy; just look for, or ask for, the album with MERV ACHESON, 45 and a handgun, all in bold, black print on the cover.

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Among several things to which I'm addicted, besides music, is *The New Yorker.* My devotion to this distinguished magazine is very simply explained – it pleases me! There are many reasons why it does and I want to mention a few – Whitney Balliett on jazz, of course; the brilliant articles like Jervis Anderson's three part history of Harlem, and in the personal history series The Bernstein Family by Burton Bernstein; the wonderful drawings of William Steig; head of a remarkably talented family of artists which includes the jazz flautist Jeremy; and, the reason for this note, cartoonist George Booth. Now, *The New Yorker* publishes the work of the world's best cartoonists, so, I can hear you asking, "what's so special about George Booth?" And that is *not* very simply explained . . . and I do not intend to try. But please beg, borrow, buy, do anything, to get the magazine and make the acquaintance of Booth. He has a go, like all good cartoonists, at a wide variety of things, and is particularly inspired by music. If he doesn't get to you . . . jeez!

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Gil Evans, on his first visit to New York recalls: "I was walking down 52nd Street and I saw Bud Powell. I thought he was the greatest and, being very naive at the time, I just went up to him and told him so. He looked straight at me and said 'Give me a job.' "

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When Thelonious Monk – that marvellous innovator and bebop giant from Rocky Mount, North Carolina – died, I was reminded, while reading through my T.S. Monk file, that he had strongly influenced Randy Weston. And then I remembered that Weston was on record somewhere, acknowledging his influences and expressing his opinions of these great talents. A note in the Randolph E. (Randy) Weston file led me to it . . . a piece by Peter Keepnews for Weston's album *Zulu:*

> *He has always been acutely aware of his pianistic heritage, and he is quick to list, with obvious gratitude, his prime influences – Count Basie ("I love his use of space. I used to play just like him"), Nat Cole ("He never missed a note"), Art Tatum ("The greatest pianist ever, and for all he played, he made it sound so simple"), Ellington (for "his tremendous scope in music, his sense of colours and textures and drive – my God, what drive!"), and, of course, Monk ("He's certainly got to be the most original pianist I've ever heard anywhere. And such beauty, and rhythm, and humour and that kind of simplicity that distinguishes the great artists").*

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A letter in June from Ted Vining conveyed the good news that he has a new album out. Entitled *The Ted Vining Trio Live at 3PBS-FM,* the album, which "cooks like buggery", to quote Ted, was recorded in Melbourne last December. This is the trio, Ted with Bob Sedergreen and Barry Buckley, which was the power unit of the Brian Brown Quartet for years. You can enjoy their great work on the 1977 LPs *Upward* by the quartet, and *Number 1* by the trio, both on the now defunct 44 label. With Ted in Brisbane these days, the group can only get together six times a year at most; but the meetings are always "magic" happenings. The material for the new record was taped during one of these happenings. Just now – time of writing – I don't have a copy of the new "live" album, but I'm more than keen to lay hands on one. Well, after all, it features a band that's "gotta be the best trio in the world mate", to quote friend Vining again. Now Ted's not boasting, no way, he's just expressing love and pride – and in my book, that's great.

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I hope the brotherhood of bassists has been advised of all the excellent Red Mitchell that's available these days. Always a top bassist, he was once appraised by John S. Wilson as, "a tremendously strong guiding force in the rhythm section". Red, who also plays piano, cello and bass guitar, uses a 200-year-old German bass which he tunes like a cello in 5ths from C, but an octave lower. Listen to his beautiful playing on these albums: *Three For All* with Phil Woods and Tommy Flanagan on ENJA 3081; with Jim Hall, this one untitled, on Artists House AH9405; and *Scairport Blues* with Donald Bailey and three Japanese players on piano, alto and guitar, on Yupiteru YJ25-7003.

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Vale Art Pepper. His life spanned a mere fifty-six years. At sixteen he began in the Gus Arnheim band, and his professional life spanned forty years. From that forty years must be deducted, give or take a year or two, say fifteen years when he was imprisoned or ill, and the remainder is the span of his working/creative life. Little enough (but many had less) for such a gifted artist. It is fortunate that the Pepper discography is extensive and thereby his great artistry will be permanently available to delight us. Another giant – disciple of Parker, then of Coltrane – has left town.

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* *Ian Neil broadcasts every night on ABC radio in his programme Music To Midnight. His column will be a regular feature in JAZZ Magazine.*

Traditional Jazz In Adelaide:

DAVE DALLWITZ AND THE SOUTHERN JAZZ GROUP

(Part 3)

By Bruce Johnson*

Correction: In the first of these three articles the phrase "cousins of Bill Munro and Bob Wright" should have read: "cousins, Bill Munro and Bob Wright".

Although the Southern Jazz Group ceased to exist in 1951, it has continued to influence the character of South Australian jazz up to the present. I mentioned in the previous instalment that it became an archetype for followers of the style. The band also fertilised the music through the later careers of those of its members who remained active on the scene. I wrote previously of the subsequent and uninterrupted contributions of Bob Wright and John Malpas. Lew Fisher continued to grow as a musician until his early death. Ex-Adelaide pianist Roger Hudson, now resident in Melbourne, spoke of the respect with which Fisher was regarded by younger pianists, and recalls the trio he led at Ernest's Restaurant. By this time the development of Fisher's style had virtually reproduced the history of jazz piano, with Bud Powell as an audible influence at this stage of his career. Bruce Gray and Bill Munro have continued to be active musically, not simply playing, but developing the range of their expressive powers. These two men are representative of a kind of musician without whom Australian jazz would simply stagnate: dedicated to their music with a fixity of purpose that survives the absence of either general recognition or significant financial reward. In comparative terms Gray and Munro are probably less 'famous' now than they were back in the forties, yet they are better musicians now than they have ever been. Joe Tippet more or less drifted away from the traditional jazz scene, though not from music. He has continued to play clarinet with various chamber groups, sometimes in company with Dave Dallwitz, who has also worked in a symphonic context.

It is Dallwitz who, since returning visibly to jazz in the early seventies, has probably achieved the greatest celebrity. From the beginning of his career up to the present he has signified in a number of roles: as musician, as bandleader and arranger, and as a composer. He regards the first of these, in particular his work as a trombonist with the SJG, as the least impressive of his enterprises. Yet on recorded evidence he is perhaps harsher on himself than he deserves. From the early SJG recordings like *Adelaide Blues* (1946, DC12021**), he is heard as a competent trombonist in the percussive tail-gate style exemplified by Kid Ory. If he sounds less impressive on later recordings like *The Saints* (1948, DC12021) and *Get Out Of Here* (1949, DC12022), it is not because the level of his adequacy has dropped but that the rest of the front line has improved so much that Dallwitz sounds increasingly primitive by comparison. He himself regards his *forte* to be accompianist on piano. Since this is more relevant to his recent career, I'll touch on it a little later. He has been much more influential in jazz as a band-leader and arranger, and his work in these capacities falls into two periods: with the SJG from about 1946 to 1951, and with various aggregations since about 1972. Although he would probably not agree, I want to suggest that the first of these periods saw his most significant work *as a bandleader.*

Pic: Norm Linehan

Members of the Southern Jazz Group, re-assembled in Adelaide 1978. From left, Bill Munro, Bruce Gray, Dave Dallwitz, Bob Wright, John Malpas.

The most dramatic way of perceiving Dallwitz's influence on the sound of the SJG is to listen to what they sounded like before he took over leadership. Since they issued no recordings during that time, the opportunities of doing so are limited. I have an old inside-start acetate of an air-shot, however, which was made by the band in 1944 or '45, when the personnel seems to have consisted of Dave Jenkins (tpt); Bruce Gray (clt); Errol Buddle (sax); Dave Dallwitz (tbn); John Malpas (gtr); George Browne (bs); Claude Whitehouse (dms), and an unidentified piano player, probably Lew Fisher. To play these two sides, *Riverboat Shuffle* and *Come Back Sweet Papa*, and then follow them immediately with *Adelaide Blues* and *S.O.L. Blues* (1946, DC12021), recorded under Dallwitz's leadership, in a disorienting experience. We pass forward in time but backward in terms of jazz history. The 1945 band had a looser, even ragged, sound (and presumably, playing for a broadcast, they were playing as close to an arranged or at least worked over routine as they had). The ensemble work is rhythmically freer and the attitude to breaks is much more casual. In these respects Dallwitz's leadership brought a much tighter sound to the band. But it also changed the idiom. Part of this was to do with the way in which he changed the instrumentation. The string bass, playing a supple four to the bar, gave way to the more rigid two to the bar of the tuba.

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*** The 'DC' catalogue numbers refer to the reissues on the Dawn Club label; the 'S' catalogue numbers refer to the Swaggie label.*

The effect of this is intensified by Malpas switching from guitar to banjo. Buddle's saxophone also gave a more fluid, legato feel to the ensembles of the earlier band. And the style of drumming changes. Whitehouse belongs to the same school as Dave Tough, and in fact the whole band sound is of the so-called "Chicago" style associated with Condon, Freeman, Kaminsky, et al. To this extent the SJG of 1944/5 was, for its time, playing what amounted to a modern dixieland, even mainstream, style. To pass from this band to the 1946 version is to regress historically from New York traditional of the forties to Chicago in the twenties. Or (and this takes us to the significance of Dallwitz the bandleader), we jump forward to Adelaide in the fifties and onwards. That is, although in terms of the history of American jazz up to that time Dallwitz was looking backwards, in terms of the history of South Australian traditional jazz he was establishing a style for the future. Speaking from my own limited but direct experience, that "Chicagoan" sound of the 1944/45 SJG was scarcely heard in Adelaide again. The modernists either moved on as they became aware of new developments in the States, or they literally moved out, often taking up residence in Sydney. Errol Buddle, Clare Bail and Bob Limb are just a few of the better known emigres. The traditionalists for the most part followed the lead of Dallwitz. Let me stress that this is not entirely true. Bruce Gray and Bill Munro have always tended more toward a mainstream style. But it was a style not conceived of by Adelaide 'Mouldy Fygges' as being strictly traditional jazz. It seems that like it or not Dave Dallwitz as leader of the SJG set a standard for purity or narrow-mindedness, depending upon where you stood, when it came to thinking about and putting together a traditional jazz band. The profoundly altered style of the SJG, of which Dallwitz was the chief architect, set the pattern in general for subsequent traditional jazz in Adelaide.

Let us look more closely at its musical characteristics. The following observations are based on a close listening to around 80 tracks, issued and unissued, made by the band between 1946 and 1951. And they indicate that, as I have said, it was basically a two beat band. In instrumental terms this was primarily a condition of the work of Bob Wright and Joe Tippet. The physical demands made by a tuba generally preclude sounding all four beats to the bar, so the emphasis falls on 1 and 3. At the same time Joe Tippet's fundamental pattern as a percussionist is off-beat, his stresses falling on 2 and 4. Put these together and you have what is sometimes called an 'Oomp-Pa' sound. It is not clear how far Malpas and Fisher collaborated in this, but the recordings suggest that generally they tend to give equal emphasis to every beat, playing a full 4/4. The impression that Malpas strikes the off-beat harder is I think an illusion created by the fact that he is simply more audible during the tuba's silences on 2 and 4. As can be heard on *Darktown Strutters Ball* (1947, DC12021), Fisher tends to break up the strict 2 to the bar feel with syncopated punctuation, unless the tuba is absent – *Junkshop Stomp* (1947, DC12021), also without Dallwitz, and with Tom Pickering – when he seems intent on compensating for Wright's absence with a more emphatic rhythmic symmetry. As the years passed Wright and Tipped displayed an increased musical vocabulary. By the time of the "Dusty Rhodes" tracks (1950, DC12024), the tuba player has developed a deft lightness and such breath control as to be bordering on a 4 to the bar pattern. And when Joe Tippet begins to make use of a greater range of percussive possibilities such as the woodblocks – *Get Out Of Here* (1949, DC12022) – this also meliorates the off-beat feel. Nonetheless, it was these two musicians who did most to establish the two beat style of the band. Tippet's importance here is dramatically demonstrated by his first absence on the sides recorded with Kym Bonython in February 1949. The different feel is striking. Bonython's work is less anchored to the off-beat and is more embellished – we are moving to drummers in the same tradition as Vic Berton. Behind the piano solo Bonython plays a loose 4/4 on the high hat, something Tippet never did up to that time, at least on record. It is a rhythmic approach which brings out more clearly Bill Munro's affinities with the white school of Bix and Red Nichols, and in fact there is a distinct echo of Bix's *Since My Best Girl Turned Me Down* as the ensemble takes over at the end of the piano solo on *Sweet Georgia Brown* (DC12022), an effect enhanced by the chordal similarities of the two songs. The point about the difference between Bonython and Tippet is underscored on *Original Stump Jump Blues* (DC12022). For the first two choruses Bob Wright lays out. Bonython's four feel with stress, if anywhere, on the on-beat, simply emphasises how much the SJG's more characteristic off-beat rhythm owed to Tippet and Wright. The band did change rhythmically, particularly with the arrival of Bob Foreman on percussion in 1950. By now the rhythm section has become more supple. But not, one feels, because of any radical change in the leader's musical policy. Four factors contribute to the change: Bob Wright's developing flexibility, a new drummer with different rhythmic emphases, Malpas's more frequent use of guitar, and, perhaps for technological reasons, the increased audibility of the piano. The change, however, is evolutionary rather than revolutionary. Fundamentally the band remained in the two-beat idiom, even if less insistently so by 1950. If, as so many assert, the band's style was the creature of Dave Dallwitz, then it may be that it was through this aspect of it that he exercised the most ubiquitous influence as a bandleader, since so much subsequent Adelaide traditional jazz has followed the pattern.

Dallwitz's own assessment of his work focuses upon another period however; the output dating from his return

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to the scene in the early seventies. If we turn to this we are dealing more with a composer, and indeed it is as a composer that he sees himself. The concept of the composer in jazz is profoundly ambiguous, which makes it difficult to talk about this aspect of his work. In an obvious sense it can be said that every jazz musician is a composer, so that, as Louis, Billie, and Miles showed, it is the singer not the song which determines the significance of a performance. I think that to form an assessment of Dallwitz as a composer we have to begin with a few descriptive observations. I would suggest that essentially he is a 'programme' composer. Like his painting, his music is so to speak figurative, draped over concrete forms, whether these are a place, a mood, or a particular person, as in his celebrated instruction on the alto part in *Crocodile Creep:* "Ade advances menacingly toward the footlights" (S1343). For this reason, the burden of his compositional originality is often borne by a lyric, a 'storyline', rather than the music itself. So too, his work often sounds like incidental music for a play or film. *Butterfly* (S1342) and *Clarinet Shimozzle* (S1354) both could be taken as the background for a quirky TV play like *The Norman Conquests. Jack O'Lantern* (S1321) suggests a whimsical Chaplinesque film sequence, and the changes in the minor sequence of *Mootwingie* (S1343) irresistibly suggest the music for a Sergio Leone spaghetti western. Dallwitz's fondness for minor keys in general points to a love of atmosphere. He belongs to that side of the jazz tradition that rubs shoulders with vaudeville. During his 'rustication' from the jazz scene he was still writing for revues, and his *Ern Malley Suite* has at times the same kind of theatrical expressionism as is found in *Cabaret* or even Schonberg's *Pierrot Lunaire.*

This leads us to the question of what kind of atmosphere he likes to evoke, and the answer is, emphatically regional. The titles point to the inspiration: *Willochra Haze, Eucla Nymph, Coorong* — particular places with a particular ambience. Dallwitz's music not only evokes places, but a time as well; usually the past. He likes the music of tramcars and wrought iron balconies, innocent and earnest faces staring out at future generations from a sepia oval framed in ormolu. A stately, unhurried Adelaide, whose furies are harmlessly refracted through the jerky silence of old movie footage. It is a self-contained world, a form of pastoral. His music refers outside itself, but to a landscape suspended in elegant amber. He is a traditionalist, and this extends from the content of his vision to its musical forms. He admits happily to having no interest in post-Swing jazz, and this genial conservatism saturates his work as a composer. Apart from what is generally an innocence and freedom from neurosis (a significant exception will be noted), he is also formally prelapsarian. He operates firmly within the traditional idiom, and there are inevitably limits to originality in that field. He will often open with a striking melody, but then give his soloists a simple blues sequence to work with. Elsewhere he stitches together a new chord sequence from bits of old ones. I am well aware that people like Parker endlessly reworked the blues, but in doing so they were not setting themselves up specifically as composers. In assessing Dallwitz's estimate of himself *as a composer*, we must first recognise that an enormous number of his 'compositions' are instinctively based on the traditional chord sequences with which he is saturated. Apart from obvious reworkings of the blues (including a minor treatment in *Nullarbor*, S1303), the following examples make the point by accumulation: *Three's a Crowd* (S1354), an 8 bar sequence based on *Shimmy Like My Sister Kate; What's the Use of Reading Books About Love* (44 Label, 6357 716), based on *Coney Island Washboard; Downtown Man* (S1354), a sort of stretched out *St. James Infirmary; Peach Pie* (S1345), is *Ja Da* with a modified bridge and, in the key of F, A7 in the second half bar; *Brandy Cruster* (S1303), is a riff on *My Blue Heaven; Stompology* (S1321), an acknowledged appropriation of *Tiger Rag* with a standard bridge built into the third 8 bar sequence; *Swanston Street Shuffle* (S1342), with its solos on one of the refrains from *That's A Plenty* with a bridge running through the cycle of 4ths; *Southern March* (DC 12021), recalling a combination of *Dippermouth Blues* and *Goodnight Sweetheart;* and *Emu Strut* (DC12024), using both sections of *Memphis Shake* with the slightest of modifications in the second.

Pic: courtesy R.J. Pederick

Members of the Southern Jazz Group, at the Tivoli Theatre, Adelaide circa 1947-48. From left, Lew Fisher (piano), Dave Dallwitz (trombone), Bill Munro (trumpet), Bruce Gray (clarinet), Bob Wright (sousaphone).

I repeat, that to have made these observations is not the whole story when it comes to assessing a jazz composer; frequently for example, he provides a lyric which imparts wit to the source and thereby sets the new work apart — this could be argued in respect of *Downtown Man* and *Peach Pie.* But the derivative harmonic structure of much of his work does undeniably qualify the claim to originality. A sustained exposure to his compositions can induce an awareness of predictability. The LP *Illawarra Flame* (S1354) suffers in this way. There is the feeling that Dallwitz's muse is fitfully dozing for most of this album. *Saltbush Rag*, for example, is simply dull, its title an arbitrary tag. The song could equally have been called *Ragtime Test Sample.* At such times the music needs to be propped up by rhetoric and various forms of special pleading, as in the note about *Brancusi Bird* (S1343), which just 'happens to mention in passing' as it were, that the song took only fifteen minutes to write. Since it is a slight variation on a fragment of *Mack the Knife*, with the oldest bridge in the world, the 4ths cycle, thrown in, this is hardly astounding. It is on the notes to this album that John Sangster refers to Dallwitz as a 'headmaster' which I think may be apt in more ways than the writer knew or wished to be known. There are times when Dallwitz seems to be going through a dictatorial and dully bureaucratic musical routine. When his players submit to this regimentation, the result is a colourless academic correctness, bloodless, conscious, brittle. To my ear his latest album, *Ragtime* (S1393) suffers from this. The performers disappear behind the arrangements like children in school uniform. Dallwitz obviously has a forceful personality and in his zeal to avoid flashiness or flamboyance he has succeeded in producing, not subtlety, but a mannered uneventfulness. For three reasons however, it is not entirely fair to place too much weight upon this LP. First, in having only a minimal improvisational element, it is arguably not a jazz work; second, it spotlights Dallwitz the arranger rather than the composer; third, he spoke of it as representing something like the beginning of a new 'period' in his creative career, and as such it must be regarded as a tentative assay. It is necessary to see what direction this new movement will take before any substantial assessment can be made. It is not for the critic to tell the artist which way to go.

But the critic, the alert listener, has every right to refuse to follow him. To me, Dallwitz's talents as a jazz composer are, at this stage of his career, summarised elsewhere. Although he has chosen to work within a clearly circumscribed jazz tradition, at his most fertile he produces a surprising expressive and harmonic range and subtlety within that compass. He is also capable of the same kind of architectural unity as Duke Ellington, bringing together a number of themes to create a total mood. Specific examples of these various strenghts are scattered throughout his work: particular songs like *Nimrod* (S1342), *Rameses II* (S1321), *Marrakesh* (S1343). More occasionally, a complete LP, which becomes a 'Suite' in more than simply fashionable name. For me, the masterpiece is the *Ern Malley Jazz Suite* (S1360). This is a work of enormous character and conviction. Perhaps one of the reasons lies in the composer's provincialism. Anchored in time and place, he is immune from certain kinds of faddism. The Suite is a musical setting of the Ern Malley poems (behind which, by the way, lies an aesthetic complexity which brings enormously fertile ironies to the music). The expected response of a jazz composer to this kind of challenge would almost certainly be a pretentious exercise in the 'Poetry and Jazz' vein. Dallwitz, saturated with his chosen idiom, has found ways for it to accommodate an unexpected range of poetic and psychological subtleties. His primary technique is a form of reversal. There are two kinds of reversal which exercise a kind of mythic compulsion: the hideous beast that is full of love, as in Quasimodo; or the benign, even comic figure that is suddenly found to be full of a neurotic complexity, like a homicidal clown. As Alfred Hitchcock well knew, there is nothing more disturbing than the harmless and familiar when we suddenly realise that it is no longer doing something harmless and familiar. So, in the *Ern Malley Suite*, where we have what is usually thought of as the jocular, good-time idiom of traditional jazz, but bristling with ambiguities and complex emotional states. In this work Dallwitz achieves a scarifying expressionism which like the work of Sidney Nolan, unexpectedly reveals the skeleton beneath the bland and genial flesh. He does this, not by exploiting a revolutionary vocabulary, but by a subtle yet palpable distortion of a traditional style. His later music has often been written on the interface of jazz and Edwardian gentility, taking its expressiveness from the former and its formal elegance from the latter. *Ern Malley* is a unique and surreal deformation of this, a Dallwitz world haunted by Freudian nightmares, its musical imagery desperately trying to retain its respectability against the demands of the poetry of the subconscious. Unlike the later *Ragtime* LP, there is here a relaxation of prosaic rationality and a surrender to demonic impulse. *Portrait of Sid Nolan* is a blurred, dissonant, almost drunken work, Dallwitz's piano playing disjointed and impressionistic. In *Chiaroscuro* the uncertainty, the occasional rodomontades, the baroque filigree, are charged with a nervous torment. The nickelodeom tremolo of the piano, normally used in the service of sentimentality, here underpins an extraordinarily intense and new emotion. *I Shall Be Raised Up* is a masterfully distorted blues, sometimes hesitating its way to a 15 bar refrain. Overtones in all this of another master of ingrown musical regionalism, Randy Newman.

The *Ern Malley Suite* pushes at the perimeters of its musical tradition, teetering over the edge, not of the subsequent history of jazz, but of a void. If Dave Dallwitz's jazz world is still flat, then it is his balancing on the edge of the abyss surrounding it which gives this work its intensity. Usually this kind of neurotic psychological pressure is associated with the most avant-garde music. Dallwitz is, on the face of it, an anachronism, drifting alone in a pre-Copernican musical universe. I think that for this reason he can never be influential as a composer, in the sense of inspiring a school of copyists. His disciples could only produce caricature. At his most striking he is already so distinctive that his essence is his individuality. That is something that a neophyte cannot take over, so that he is left only with mannerism. Dallwitz's distance from the evident flow of mainstream jazz has led to a kind of wayward uniqueness, like animals cut off from the flow of evolution. It may in principle be impossible for him to be influential in the way I have described, but at the same time, in something like the *Ern Malley Suite* he is possibly the most original composer we have working exclusively within his chosen idiom.

NOTE: Bruce Johnson will present two programmes, on Sydney's 2MBS-FM in September, specifically produced to supplement these articles. He will illustrate the arguments by playing many of the records cited, many of which have never been commercially issued. One of these has the double distinction of being probably the only copy in existence, as well as being the first recording of the work of Errol Buddle. Details of the dates and times of these broadcasts will be given in the 2MBS-FM Guide for September.

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JIM KELLY & MICK KENNY: *Backbone of CROSSFIRE*

By Eric Myers

The group Crossfire has left Australia on its second overseas tour administered by Musica Viva, and assisted by the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Music Board of the Australia Council. They play in Bombay on July 13, and at the Montreux Jazz Festival, Switzerland, on July 16; they give two concerts at the North Sea Festival, The Hague, on July 17. On July 19, 20 and 21, they support the American trumpeter Wynton Marsalis at Ronnie Scott's club in London. On July 30 and August 1 they play in Hungary, and then go on to New York and Los Angeles for dates at various jazz clubs. Crossfire play only their own original music, written by their keyboards player MICK KENNY and guitarist JIM KELLY. Recently, these two men spoke with ERIC MYERS:

Crossfire is not just another Australian group. Formed in 1974, the band now has a longevity which makes it part of the establishment in Australian music. Over eight years, its personnel has been surprisingly stable. Mick Kenny (keyboards), Jim Kelly (guitar) and Ian Bloxsom (percussion) have been there since the beginning. Greg Lyon, the original bassist, is now back with the group after a two-year break, when the bass chair was filled by Phil Scorgie. Tony (Spoons) Buchanan is only the second saxophonist Crossfire has had (the first was Don Reid). The drum chair has seen the most changes but, in eight years, there have been only four drummers: John Proud, Doug Gallacher, Steve Hopes and now Mark Reilly.

The group has five LPs to its credit: *Crossfire, Crossfire Direct To Disc, East Of Where, Michael Franks Live With Crossfire* and their new release *Hysterical Rochords.* In 1978 they did their first tour of Asia for the Department of Foreign Affairs; in 1980 they accompanied the American singer/composer Michael Franks on his Australian and New Zealand tour; in 1981 they made up the group which toured Australia with the American musicians Lee Ritenour and Don Grusin. Just last month they backed the American singer/pianist Ben Sidran.

'Jazz/rock fusion' is an inadequate term, which no-one is happy with, yet it is probably the best we can do to describe the mixture of idioms in Crossfire's music. Certainly they find themselves between 'jazz' on the one hand, and 'rock' on the other. They have in common with jazz harmonic complexity and challenging chord structures in their instrumental songs, plus group and solo improvisation; they have in common with rock sophisticated rhythmic patterns derived from funk and soul music, and electric instruments. There are other influences — for example, the music of several classical composers which comes into Crossfire via Mick Kenny.

Original: From talking to Jim Kelly and Mick Kenny, one finds that the group has always had two basic aims: to have fun; and to play original music. For many years they have played only compositions by Kenny and Kelly. Both men feel that they have something to say, and that their music is important. Also they are concerned with how their music is played. They don't copy records — which is still done so much in Australian music — or ape the styles of overseas musicians. Says Jim Kelly:

> *Playing in Crossfire saps our energies. Almost every other band you play in, without fail, will play a couple of originals, and the rest are songs you've got on a record at home. So you've got your reference point. Every time Crossfire plays there is no reference point for any of the songs, other than your own imagination. That's what drains your energy; that's why a lot of guys have found it a bit tough being in Crossfire. No reference points. And Mick and I don't want to hear them in our songs — we don't want to hear what Steve Gadd played . . .*

The group has always tried to get that spontaneous interaction in their music which comes from sympathetic listening and reacting flexibly to the playing of the others. Mick Kenny likes the idea, devised by a European composer whose name he doesn't recall, of every musician having the written score in front of him at a rehearsal, minus his own part. "That sort of idea really appeals to me with a band like Crossfire, because once you have all the information, you have to forget it," he says.

"One thing I think about a lot is getting the guys to stop playing their *instruments,*" says Jim Kelly. "Don't play the drums in this song — don't play the bass — play the song! That's an important part of making music to me. I've no interest in technique per se, in chops, speed and that. But just play the music, not the instrument."

Roots: Mick Kenny was born in 1951 and grew up in St. Mary's, on the outer reaches of Sydney's working class Western Suburbs. He came from a musical family. His father Tom Kenny played (and still plays) trumpet in various big bands, mainstream groups, brass bands and com-

Pic: Peter Sinclair

Mick Kenny: a day doesn't go past without playing some Bach . . .

munity orchestras, so there was plenty of music in the home. Mick's older brother Peter is a brilliant keyboard player who is best known for his work as musical director and arranger for the entertainer Reg Livermore.

Mick attended the Conservatorium High School in Sydney, where he studied trumpet, pipe organ and piano:

> *I studied classical music for a long time, and I love a lot of composers . . . like Bach. A day doesn't go past without playing some Bach. For a long time, Erik Satie; a lot of the French composers of that period, Debussy and Ravel. I've been listening to a lot of Stravinsky lately. Messiaen is another composer I like . . . Beethoven . . . everyone.*

Mick Kenny might have had a career in classical music had it not been for other musics around in the mid-1960s, which captured his attention: soul and funk, for instance, and the jazz of Miles Davis and others. "So what happened?" says Jim. "Mick came from the classical thing, and the backbeat grabbed him by the throat. It's that rhythmic thing . . ." By the age of 16, Mick Kenny was playing trumpet with various club bands and rock groups around the city.

Jim Kelly: playing in Crossfire saps our energies . . .

Pic: Peter Sinclair

Jim Kelly was born in 1950 in Sydney and spent most of his childhood in the beach suburbs north of Sydney – Narrabeen, Dee Why. He took up the guitar fairly late, at 15, and has no illusions as to his earliest musical influence. "Right from the beginning", he says, "That's easy – the Shadows. I mean every song." He was a rhythm guitarist in high school bands and, ironically, for a man who is now one of the most

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QUOTE OF THE MONTH: "But, come on Michael, you're a good pianist but we want to see more than just your skill on the keys. Front up a bit. Show yourself and don't be shy. The absence of a band filling out the sound can sometimes be felt, no criticism intended for the actual musicianship. However the act could appear much more a SHOW if you turned a bit and became part of the music instead of just playing it."

— Jazz critic David Lin, writing in the Sydney Morning Herald, June 22, 1982. Mr. Lin was referring to Michael Tyack, the pianist accompanying the singer Alison MacCallum at the Upstage Theatre Restaurant.

splendid lead guitarists in Australian music, was not interested in playing improvised solos for many years. He liked the Rolling Stones, the Kinks and the Beatles. He was a member of the group, The Affair, which entered one of those Hoadley's 'Battle of the Sounds' contests, and won a trip to the UK in 1969. The group also included a young Kerrie Biddell:

> *I can always remember it was Kerrie who played me a record of Shelley Manne, Ray Brown, Andre Previn and Herb Ellis, and they played a tune I had heard as a kid, Bye Bye Blackbird. When I heard them play that in a jazz style and take solos on it, I couldn't believe it — it turned my head around. I was about 17 at the time. I've had a nice interest in jazz since then.*

Other influences have been Wes Montgomery, Jimi Hendrix and, more recently, Larry Carlton and Lenny Breau ("the greatest player I've ever heard on the guitar").

Crossfire's birth: Jim Kelly and Mick Kenny first met about 12 years ago when they played together in a band, Levi Smith's Clefs, at Chequers, shortly after that hallowed Sydney nightclub was transformed into a rock venue. Mick remembers the band as "one of Barry McKaskill's benefit societies for out-of-work musicians". Shortly after, they were together in SCRA — Peter Martin's group the Southern Contemporary Rock Assembly, which made two LPs and was, for a time, the most exciting large rock outfit in Sydney music. From that time, their playing careers have intertwined. They worked together for some time in Hong Kong, where they first met the bassist Greg Lyon, who had come from Japan.

After Hong Kong, Jim came back to Sydney, while Mick and Greg went on to England for a year. It was when they were all back in Australia in 1973 that they began thinking about forming a band which might explore the 'fusion' idiom. At that time, the music of the Crusaders and Tom Scott's LA Express was in the air.

The group that Jim Kelly was working with at the Lifesaver in Bondi, needed a horn player. Kelly suggested that they hire Mick Kenny on electric flugelhorn:

Crossfire, 1982 line-up. From left: Greg Lyon (bass), Jim Kelly (guitar), Mark Reilly (drums), Tony Buchanan (saxophones), Ian Bloxsom (percussion), Michael J. Kenny (keyboards).

Pic: Peter Sinclair

Tony (Spoons) Buchanan: only Crossfire's second saxophonist in eight years . . .

> *Mick joined the band and soon after we started getting ideas. That sound [of the amplified flugelhorn] unleashed a particular thing in us, that we had to stop playing this R & B music, and do something else. The Tom Scott LA Express album, the one with the belt buckle on the cover, really kicked us off. We played some tunes that the people at the Lifesaver wouldn't have to stop jumping up and down to — they could keep going. Crossfire was born out of that, in a way.*

The seminal influences were clear. It was Greg Lyon in Hong Kong who had introduced Kenny to the music of the Crusaders — former jazz players in the US who had dropped the 'jazz' from their original name, the Jazz Crusaders, and were now in the forefront of the funk and soul movement. On the very night Greg and Mick arrived in London they had gone straight to a concert hall and heard Joni Mitchell, backed by Tom Scott and the LA Express. The music grabbed them. "That was it, I reckon", says Mick.

The name Crossfire is, in fact, a tune from the Crusaders LP *Unsung Heroes*. Still, it is interesting that, although the Crusaders and Tom Scott are crucial influences, Mick Kenny and Jim Kelly have, over the years, outgrown the music of their heroes. Now they're not excited by the music put out by such groups, including other groups that have become associated with the fusion idiom, like Spyro Gyra. Says Jim Kelly:

> *When people talk about fusion music, and they say this particular electronic marriage to jazz is no longer happening — and they lump us into that thing — I get irate, because for me it's a real idiom. When I hear Spyro Gyra, guys like that, I reckon they're giving me a bad name. I really must say that because, to my ears, their music is nonsense . . . it might be a lot of fun to record, but to go and play it night after night . . . I'd go and dig a hole first.*

A unique spirit: Since the beginning of Crossfire, there has been a unique spirit in the group. It is not easy to define, although it is obvious to anyone who has seen them perform. It has something to do with good vibrations within the group, and perhaps a quiet conviction that their music is important. The more perceptive writers have tried to come to grips with it. John Clare, writing in *Nation Review*, September 3, 1978, put it this way:

> *Crossfire rehearses at their manager's place, a house of windchimes and gentle chaos. They are soft people mostly, but not dreamy. They are well-organised and down to earth. Relaxed is what they are, and their music is relaxed and cleanly exhilerating, and they leave you, as the Beach Boys do, with an impression of blondness and brown skin, though there is no blond member of the band and none of them is very tanned.*

When you observe Mick Kenny, Jim Kelly and Ian Bloxsom together, you realise what they have always wanted for Crossfire: to be a band of brothers. "That's why it's gone on so long," says Jim. "With a minimum of jumping up and down as well. Even when the guys have left; whatever's happened, there's never been any animosity. You have your little things, sure, but by and large, Crossfire's been a happy band, absolutely. It's important to the music. You must feel nice towards each other."

When the band has been doing a major concert on a recording session, Mick and Jim have always tried to inculcate a certain procedure: rehearsal and sound-check, then a meal and wine together before the actual performance.

> *Kelly: Then when you get back, you're buzzing.*
>
> *Kenny: Communication . . . You're all in the same spot. Even making the albums, that's when we get the best takes. You spend all day getting the sound, you fuck around all day, and it's not quite there. Everyone is playing okay but it just needs everyone to relax. The dinner thing, the communal meal, a few bottles of wine . . . You go and play, and sure enough it's there. You get the take within one or two afterwards.*

Blocko: If Crossfire is a band of brothers, then the big brother is the evergreen percussionist Ian (Blocko) Bloxsom. Bloxsom is probably somewhere in his early or mid-forties, but he is ageless. It seems somehow irrelevant to ask how old he is. He plays percussion with another good local group – the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. He therefore brings a wealth of musical experience to Crossfire.

> *Kelly: Blocko is one of the most extraordinary musicians and understanders of idioms and moods of music that I've met . . .*
>
> *Kenny: Yeah . . . improviser. His silence is as important as his playing. He's one of the few percussion players I've heard who understands that one. Most of them, it's like playing with the panelbeater. He knows how to utilise the silence and react to things going on around him. His instruments are so varied, his musical experience is huge.*
>
> *Kelly: Unbelievable. He's a morale booster. I feel sorry for every band that hasn't got Blocko in it. Most bands need Blocko.*

Pic: Peter Sinclair

Ian (Blocko) Bloxsom: one of the most extraordinary understanders of idioms and moods of music . . .

Mick and Jim relate the story of how, a couple of years ago, they heard Ian Bloxsom play the drums in a jam session in Brisbane with the trumpeter Bob Barnard and the American stride pianist Ralph Sutton. Bloxsom revealed a musical side that even his closest musical friends had never heard:

> *Kelly: For me, that piano player was just magnificent. And Blocko . . . you should have heard what he played for those guys! I just stood there – I could not believe what he played.*
>
> *Kenny: There was no bass player, just Ralph Sutton, Bob Barnard and Blocko. It was insane – just playing brushes.*
>
> *Kelly: He even showed a side that, in all the years, I'd never even seen that one. I knew it was there, but I hadn't heard him do it. I heard him do it with those guys . . . so heartfelt. Maybe Blocko's a bit wider than all of us. He knows it from the Who to Zappa, and back to the trad bands. He can tell you the names of all the people, and he loves it.*
>
> *Kenny: Coltrane's Ascension and all that stuff, he knows it. It's all gone in.*

Hysterical Rochords: Mick Kenny and Jim Kelly are particularly proud of their new LP*. It is the first of their many albums that they are happy with. A great deal of thought went into the arrangements of their pieces, the length of the solos and so on, and with engineer Martin Benge, they put much work into getting the best sound possible out of their instruments in the recording studio.

"Crossfire has come to terms much more with record-making," says Kelly. "We used to carry our Basement gig into the recording studio – which isn't a bad thing – but when you think of the competition, what's going on in the real world of recording, and the sort of area we're in, you can't do that. You have to compete on a record level, editing a lot of stuff out, just getting down to the nitty-gritty, to the essence of the pieces. We had to change a lot of our thinking in regard to how to make a record – a bit more layering this time, and thinking ahead . . . It's different to playing live."

"The mix that Mick and I make on the record is the mix that we would like you to hear sitting out the front as an audience."

Unsuitable: Crossfire has existed for eight years now. It hasn't been easy. The major problem, of course, has been finding enough work to justify the band's continued existence. Even in a town like Sydney, where music has been booming, the venue bookers have always preferred bands playing safe, familiar, commercial stuff rather than original music.

The band has often found itself in a no-man's land between jazz and rock, regarded as unsuitable for both types of audience. The promoter Horst Liepolt, when he controlled The Basement and other venues, boasted for some years that there were two groups he would never employ: Crossfire and Kerrie Biddell's Compared To What. He believed that neither played jazz. In recent times, however, both groups

continued on page 27

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* *For a review of Hysterical Rochords, turn to page 37.*

CLARE HANSSON: Brisbane's First Lady of Jazz

By Neville Meyers*

Clare Hansson (electric piano) playing in Toowoomba earlier this year. Others are local musicians Neil Carn (drums) and Jon Rotteveel (bass).

Bonaparte's, on a beery Brisbane Friday evening, is crowded: the big pre-weekend unwind. On stage, Clare Hansson's quintet French Connection is about to launch its first musical rocket for the evening, one typical of the band's mid-60's hard-blowing mainstream style, Horace Silver's *The Preacher*. As always Hansson will become, as both the number and the evening groove on, the group's musical centre. True, everyone in the group – Hansson herself on piano, Rick Price (trumpet, flugelhorn), Frank Tyne (alto saxophone, clarinet), Jim Howard (drums) and David Croft (bass) – will pay their musical dues. Still, it's Hansson who'll play that much harder, generate those extra sparks, and capture before the evening's end, another dozen-or-so dedicated future Hansson watchers-listeners, the stay-with-you "people with ears" as Ellington once remarked, so essential to any jazz artist's future.

And a jazz future Clare Hansson certainly has. The reasons aren't hard to identify: a growing local and national reputation; much-acclaimed support for such artists as Jimmy Witherspoon, Ernestine Anderson and others; a growing self-assurance joyously and competently to jam with anyone who comes over the hill – Richie Cole to Brisbane busker; in her playing a keenly, instantly recognisable technical mix of her major influences – Peterson, Nat King Cole and, above all, Evans; lastly the emergence – slowly and painfully – of a true Hansson style.

Beginnings: To understand anything at all about Clare Hansson is to understand, first of all, her complete and utter dedication to music. It began at an early age, and was the result of many influences: an irrepressible tendency for chubby two-year old fingers to create musical shapes at the family piano, the influence for such experimentation being traceable to a grandmother of prodigious talent; the parental guidance to accept responsibility for, and to discipline oneself in, the development of a musical talent. Not least of all was the influence of solid technical grounding in all aspects of music, professionally qualifying her musically by the age of 15.

Despite intensive classical training and leanings towards the pursuit of a traditional musical career, Clare in her teens was not removed from other musical influences: ragtime, boogie, Broadway show tunes, Sinatra (favourite album *Songs for Swinging Lovers*) and jazz standards. She recalls: "Music was in the air at the time, breaking even the isolation of the sheep station where we lived for many years. I breathed it in with great gulps". There was also the discovery that she was blessed with perfect pitch, could hear harmonies and changes as colours, as well as improvise to a certain extent. At sixteen Clare played her first gig and hid behind a potted palm rather than, at the gig's end, take money for what she enjoyed so much. The inclination to play jazz was however becoming more persistent: "At eighteen I completely wore out a Nat King Cole disc – my first major recorded influence."

Circumstances were initially to lead her, because of certain self-imposed limits, to secondary school teaching, and not to music, as a major career. She continued to play a variety of gigs, middle-of-the-road music she now describes as "entertainment". But in many ways her true jazz spirit was repressed.

"I suppose it was all experience, but I have a poster which proclaims that 'Experience is the name most people give to their mistakes'. Then, my biggest mistakes were timidity and my belief that, as a woman, certain doors would remain closed to me. So my development was hindered and, since I lacked confidence, playing music remained only a sideline."

Listening to music was, however, something else. Someone loaned her a series of Art Tatum transcriptions which she laboriously copied out by hand, diligently – and privately – practised. At this time she wore out another disc: Oscar Peterson's *We Get Requests*. "I couldn't believe the rapport, and balance between tension and release, the rhythmic feel of this trio. Ray

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** Neville Meyers is a librarian, jazz collector, part-time jazz programmer/announcer on Brisbane's 4MBS-FM, and veteran habitue of jazz clubs in Australia and the United States.*

Brown knocked me out to such an extent that the bass is still my favourite instrument." Some fifteen years later, it's the record she still always plays late at night, to relax after a gig. And at this point during the interview I couldn't resist testing her reaction to my own favourite track from the album. Hers too? Right on: *Have You Met Miss Jones?* It seemed appropriate at this time also to ask her choice of the best track exemplifying the rhythmic pulse between piano and bass in its purest union. Again, amazingly it was my own: Bill Evans and Scott La Faro's *My Romance.*

Maturing: The real catalyst to the emergence of Clare Hansson as a jazz pianist, was her marriage to — and, tragically, the death of Bernie Hansson. To Hansson, recognised as a bass player of tremendous talent and experience, Clare attributes her greatest single source of inspiration "both in my life and in my musical development". They played a restaurant gig together six nights a week for six years. "Ideas and progressions just flowed from his lines, and I found myself exploring new harmonies I could never have dreamed of before. Sometimes we cried together at the beauty of the music." It was Bernie who persuaded Clare to attempt some adventurous trio jazz, as she so successfully did, at the 1976 Brisbane Jazz Convention.

Bernie Hansson's premature death in 1979 however brought Clare's musical progress to a halt, creating a mental and emotional block; the sadness was overwhelming. "It almost prevented me from ever playing again. It was months before I could learn how to speak the music language again. But slowly, music began to heal my soul."

The real test — the opportunity to play with Bob Barnard — came several months after Bernie's death. It was, as she now recalls, a "make or break" situation, the true test of whether or not she could adapt herself to the demands of a major public performance. Barnard however offered her tolerance, assistance and inspiration, as well as the restoration of self-confidence, all of which she had been lacking since Bernie's death.

The opportunity to play in the Bob Barnard group offered moreover another important stage of professional growth. "Every note he played was a lesson to me. None of his advice fell on deaf ears, nor the music he so freely shared."

To keep the sadness and pain under control, there followed a period of intense involvement with several different groups and styles, either supporting or jamming with, top Australian and American musicians. Sitting in with Richie Cole was a memorable experience. "He was technically excellent, completely involved with his music and with his audience — a real entertainer." Jimmy Witherspoon offered in 1980 similar excitement — and challenge. "He had," she recalls, "an incredibly laid-back tempo. His choice of keys . . . well, they were like colours to me. Just to keep up with him I had to draw on all my knowledge of the blues in every key."

At this point I reminded Clare of an incredible jazz evening at Brisbne's Jazz Cellar in December 1981, when, to a standing-room only crowd, she had provided such exciting accompaniment to blues singer Ernestine Anderson, playing — hard and driving — as I had never heard her play before. "Everything was batting for me that night. I had an incredible rapport with the lady herself, and at the beginning, a feeling of awe, yet knowing I could only be myself and play as best I could to support her." Appropriately that evening, Clare's biggest fan was Anderson who allowed her pianist plenty of space to stretch out, often leading the applause on her behalf. Teddy Wilson also left a lasting impression: "Truly, a piano-player's player, a gentle and beautiful person". The secret in enjoying such experiences, she claims, is to seize and make the most of every musical opportunity, with every encounter a re-discovery of the music itself.

The Constant Search: The quest for musical re-discovery is a dominant aspect of the Hansson musical psyche: the drive to hear more, and learn more. She is forever taking things directly off records; to play the phrases and changes herself is part of the technique to discover deeper and richer harmonic colours. She is also firmly of the belief that to be a successful jazz musician, you must not only play but listen — and listen well — in order to understand the whole texture and tapestry of the jazz idiom. She still listens to Peterson who remains a major influence; so too — most of all — to Bill Evans. But she has listened to, and translated almost instinctively into her playing, the styles of several other major influences: Red Garland, Tommy Flanagan, Hank Jones, Hampton Hawes, Cedar Walton, McCoy Tyner, and others. And apart from piano-players, there are a host of many other influences, too many to catalogue here. However, Miles Davis, she will tell you, still overwhelms her — "A sheer gut reaction", especially to her favourite Davis/Coltrane track, *Someday My Prince Will Come.* She is moreover committed to the notion that technical mastery is of secondary value to the achievement of a level of performance that can be shared emotionally with an audience. "I suppose in more recent years I've learned you don't play the piano — you let the piano play itself, and care

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Pic: Norm Linehan

Clare Hansson with Sydney clarinetist Paul Furniss at the Australian Jazz Convention, Forbes 1980.

about each note. . ."

Style: Clare Hansson has always regarded herself as a ballads and blues person. The feeling inherent in the blues, and the beautiful lyrics of many of the ballads, have been the objects of almost a life-long fascination and musical dedication. Too many musicians, she feels, embellish the melody line with over-intricate clusters of notes to the detriment, at times, of both the original composition and to emotional communication with the audience.

"Many musicians – and people generally I guess – are afraid of silence, so they don't leave the lovely spaces implicit in the lyrics of a song. I like to feel I can sing with the piano, leaving silences and heightening a few chosen notes and phrases. The melodic language should at times be allowed to speak for itself." Like Bill Evans and Red Garland, she believes that style – true style – is often a matter of what you leave out.

On what constitutes tone, she has equally definite ideas. "To me, it is a natural energy, a spiritual energy, a matter of push or 'digging in' rather than attack, caressing rather than pounding. Again, let the keyboard speak."

Technically she is conscious of two areas of difficulty – the walking tenths and fast tempos. "Having tiny hands, I can't walk the tenths in a pulsating, legato fashion like Teddy Wilson, so I have to create the illusion of a walking line. I'm currently enjoying a solo piano situation at the Jazz Cellar so I can practice the feel of that fluid line."

Acknowledging that jazz is essentially a rhythmic thing, a persistent pulse, Clare responds well – as do most other talented two-handed piano players – to the surging pulse of bass and drums, especially (a la Evans and La Faro) when all three musicians feel that pulse in exactly the same place. She believes that the Nat Cole, Oscar Peterson and Bill Evans trios demonstrate this to perfection as, more recently, did the Jazz Cellar's guests Ray Brown, Monty Alexander, and Herb Ellis.

The problem of fast tempos Clare believes she is also coming to grips with, having gained much of her new sense of direction from the January 1982 Sydney jazz clinic led by pianist/tutors Hal Galper, Mike Nock and Art Resnick. "Thanks to the clinic I dropped so many of my previous illusions. The experience was riveting, both the formal teaching and late-night jams at The Basement. I came away – back to Brisbane – feeling like a born-again musician!" Clare believes now that she has a greater appreciation of improvisation as a sense process, and not an intellectual process, and that you can train yourself to hear ahead, to compensate. Clare emphatically digs the Hal Galper theory that musicians tend to hear the music from the inside out. "While the brain may be too slow to use on the bandstand, you can train your intuition, your ear and your memory to work for you, and with some refinement of technique, at least create the illusion of playing long lines at fast tempos."

Present gigs, future goals: Clare Hansson now lives the music she has always longed to play; and she has become, in three short years, Brisbane's most renowned – perhaps first lady – of jazz. She has captured in equally short time, for a jazz musician, a remarkably popular and regular following. She has led various groups and played solo piano, at Brisbane's major jazz spots – the Jazz Cellar, Bonaparte's, and the Jazz Action Society, and others. She is in fact playing a remarkable amount of jazz, as a full-time professional, each week. But it is her current group French Connection (alias on other occasions the Rick Price Be-Bop Revival Band) with which she feels most at home as well as most-stimulated. Price himself, Brisbane's leading trumpet and flugelhorn player, has set extremely high standards with his own playing and demands similarly high standards from everyone else in Be-Bop Revival. Clare believes that Price's choice of material is excellent, never compromising, and is continuing to push the band in new directions.

"Rick's playing is a complete challenge to me. As for the bebop style, I can only embrace, and musically continue to grow with, it."

And continuing musical growth is, finally, what Clare Hansson is all about. Her primary goals are now to continue the musically fruitful associations she has found in Brisbane, to explore new horizons, and to continue to strive for a true Hansson style embodying delicacy, sparkle and freshness, and above all, emotion. Finally, music remains for Clare Hansson a universal thing – something karmic – involving collective and spontaneous creativity, and communication with a responsive audience.

"In another sense, music has also supported me in the great highs and lows of my life. Now when I play, it's a process of giving back . . ." And giving, giving, giving.

GEOFF

Welcome readers of all ages to this, my inaugural article for JAZZ Magazine. To many of you my name, Geoff Maddox, will mean nothing, but then most of your names will mean nothing to me. Then again, none of you have had the powerful medium of the press behind you to catapult your identity in front of the public eye as I have, but, rest assured, ladies and gentlemen, this was not a chance occurrence. I admit, however, that it is with great fortune that I find myself on the staff of a champagne publication such as the one in front of your eyes, but, nonetheless, I have worked hard and honestly over the years to ensure the factualisation of my ambitions and the credit for my employment here at JAZZ Magazine can only rest on the shoulders of one man. In short, me.

You're probably thinking – "not another one article wonder!" – and, in a sense, your doubts are well qualified. It is my task to remove these doubts from your minds and, I feel, the best way of carrying this out is by illustrating my impressive credentials in a modest and honest way. I don't want to sing my praises but I have been an active jazz writer for many years, both behind the mike and behind the biro. My long standing position as editor of the KMA journal is just one of the many high-powered, responsible positions that I have had to hold down over the years. A brief stint as jazz writer for the cerebral and controversial *Blase* magazine has earned me a not too meagre reputation amongst the artists and intellectuals of the inner-city area and, of course, my now legendary program on one of Syd-

Jamey Aebersold: we can now go home, our work here is done . . .

MADDOX* WRITES ON JAZZ EDUCATION

ney's larger community-run FM radio stations puts the icing on the cake, and renders me more than able to cope with the rigorous job of getting JAZZ magazine back on an even keel.

Readability, I feel, is of tantamount importance to a successful column and, I hope, in the time that I shall be spending with you each issue, that aspect of my unique talent will be showcased admirably. You can lead a biro to paper, but you can't make it write – and I believe that in the field of stringing syllables together to form polymers of meaning for all to enjoy, I'm a "journo" with a capital "J". Anyway, I won't dwell any longer on my ability as a thoughtful and creative jazz writer for, I feel, the time is nigh for me to get this column off and running. I have decided to open my account with a discussion of a particularly touchy subject.

Over recent times the controversial debate over the pros and cons of jazz education has brewed violently in a collage of wrought emotions and stretched tempers. I have decided to add fuel to the fire.

To begin this argument in a sensible, well-ordered fashion, I believe that it is good form to include a brief definition, of the very words around which the fuss has grown. Namely, "jazz education". What does the term "jazz education" mean? I won't bore you with defining the word "jazz"; I really don't think that the meaning of this word is that much obscured from you readers. (Indeed, you probably wouldn't have purchased this publication if that were the case.) The word "education", on the other hand, deserves a short explanation. To "educate" is to pass on knowledge to someone who is not in possession of that said knowledge. The acquisition of knowledge is extremely important in the education event as far as the student is concerned. Therefore, it follows, that "jazz education" is the passing on of raw jazz knowledge to those people who find themselves in a state of jazz ignorance – such as Australians. Now don't go and get all hot under the collar with nationalistic pride; there's nothing wrong with being an ignoramus with regards to the delicate pleasures of the blue note. Heck! Einstein was dyslectic! Man!

Rome wasn't built in a day. We need the professional and patient guidance of our overseas friends in order to obtain the jazz consciousness needed to pull our weight in the international jazz market. Clinics, workshops, lectures, barbecues, child care centres – I'll not wane until I see these events assume a regular frequency in the local jazz calendar. Men like David Baker, with his modern concepts on tuning and intonation, and his avant-garde coupling of string quartet and rhythm section, can only aid in the plight of young Australians to achieve international levels of jazzmanship. Similarly, we need good, strong men with the foresight to bring these men out here and with the keen business sense to do so on shoestring budgets. With men such as Greg Quigley and Barry Veith, I believe we are well and truly on the way. I can see the day when young Australians, like evening trout to a dry fly, will rise to be equal with their overseas counterparts and I can just imagine a proud Jamey Aebersold turning to an equally proud David Baker and saying, "We can now go home, our work here is done."

Pic: Peter Sinclair

David Baker: modern concepts on tuning and intonation . . .

Of course jazz education from overseas is only one aspect of the total swing teaching event. Much of the work can be done here. One of the main points about jazz education, I feel, is that it needs to begin at the earliest possible age. I am of course referring to the student's age not the teacher's – the good jazz educator needs to be as old and wise as is possible (like good wine). With my two kids I decided that there was no such thing as starting too soon, and those of you who have listened to my radio program will no doubt be aware of my invention and use of the Foetal Phone. This device is a harness-like affair when, when strapped around a pregnant woman's waist, enables tapes to be played pre-natally to the growing embryo. I used this machine with my son Tod and the results were spectacular. At the age of two he crawled up to my wife and I and said, quite coherently, "Louis Armstrong is the greatest!" He is now a fine cocktail pianist. I say, get 'em while they're young. High schools, primary schools, even kindergartens are the breeding grounds for our future jazz greats. Who knows, if we adopt a more positive approach to the education exercise, we could be turning out our own John Coltranes within a decade.

I'm all for jazz education and I don't mind saying so. Anyway, that just about wraps up this month's article – the first of many, I hope. Over the next few issues, I'll be talking about some of the more tangential aspects of the jazz world. Such topics as jazz and alcohol, jazz and money, and jazz and child abuse are just a smattering of the subjects which I will broach in the future. Please refer all your kind letters of praise to myself care of this publication – perhaps a few along the lines of "Geoff Maddox for editor" or the like – I'll leave it up to you. Anyway, I hope to be talking to you very soon but until then, this is Geoff Maddox signing off.

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* *Geoff Maddox is editor of the Keys Music Association journal and former jazz writer for Blase magazine.*

PYRAMID: A Fusion

Pyramid: From left, David Hirschfelder, Bob Venier, Roger McLachlan, David Jones.

A FRESH, exciting quartet has swept to the creative forefront of jazz in Melbourne and, while the rest of Australia is slowly waking up to Pyramid, Europe and Japan beckon.

It is highly likely that Pyramid will appear at next year's Montreux Jazz Festival; Japan also has invited the group to play there.

Yet this innovative fusion group is still ignored by promoters when overseas stars need Australian acts to open for them here. And, through a strange mix-up in communications, the ABC's *Jazz In Stereo* national simulcast series on TV and FM radio omitted Pyramid, although producer Henry Prokop says the band was considered for the shows.

Last year the ABC used a Pyramid album track, *Orchestral Excerpts* from the *Symphony of Life*, as the theme music to the TV drama series *Sporting Chance.*

Individually, the group's members are in demand as session players for recording and TV work, advertising jingles, clinics and other bands. This has limited Pyramid's appearances in public – at one stage last year an unfounded rumour got out that the band had broken up.

This year a higher profile is being adopted, where possible, with regular monthly performances to packed houses at St Kilda's Prince of Wales Hotel. Last February the band drew a record crowd of 430. Two weeks earlier, at the Melbourne Jazz Festival, US trumpet star Freddie Hubbard drew 300.

The music that Melbourne people keep coming back for is what one seeks, but rarely finds, in contemporary jazz fusion. There are clearcut melodies, including ballads, spanning modern, mainstream, bebop and blues, as well as classically-influenced arrangements. It is never bogged down in a bland, funky groove and is always energetic and fun. Unpredictability and improvisation, whether on charts or spontaneous themes, is always a highlight.

Older jazz enthusiasts and younger, rock-weaned fans rub shoulders at a Pyramid concert, along with a sprinkling of familiar faces from other jazz groups. The average age of the band is 27, about the same as its audience.

Each performance is as much an event for the band as it is for the audience. "We never know what to expect ourselves," says the quartet's keyboard player, David Hirschfelder.

Hirschfelder is 23, blonde, bearded and quietly-spoken. He is Pyramid's leader in all but name. He composes the material – the band plays only originals in a repertoire of about 20 charts – and his colleagues adapt their own parts for playing comfort.

His excellent keyboard technique was honed by a year's study of classical piano at the Melbourne Conservatorium. He also played in a teenage rock band in Ballarat. But his major influences are to be found in contemporary jazz: people like Joe Zawinul, Chick Corea and Herbie Hancock. He is a key member of the Peter Cupples Band.

With Pyramid, he uses two electric pianos (including the acoustic-sounding Yamaha Grand), Prophet 5 and Korg synthesisers, which enable him to provide a strong melodic lead and/or orchestral colouration. He avoids the synthesiser player's trap of letting the technology dictate the musical direction.

"All that button-pushing and programming seems a very impersonal operation to most people. But for me it's just like changing gears in a car, like an extension of yourself so that your thoughts and feelings are projected subconsciously through your fingertips," he says.

Hirschfelder's still developing but already impressive skills, both as a composer and player, will make him a major name in contemporary music within this decade.

David Jones, 23, is a drummer of deceptively slight build. He has a personal intensity that finds expression through his playing, and it has made him a sought-after musician, both in rock and jazz. Bespectacled, with a wispy beard, Jones is self-taught and has become a busy teacher of others.

His round of recording and TV work, clinics and bands makes a busy schedule. He first became known in Melbourne with the Steve Ball Trio at the Little Reata restaurant but since those days he has played with many jazz and rock groups, including a tour with John Farnham's former band.

"We've all paid our dues and are still paying them, having to earn bucks doing tours you don't want to do. I did 14 months with the Farnham band and some of it was pure hell . . . I went through low levels of frustration, thinking 'Where am I headed?', doing the rock circuit – a dead end. But with Pyramid we're playing a new music – it's creative and it gets through to people. It can't be ignored," Jones says.

Jones and Hirschfelder formed Pyramid in 1978, with Jeremy Alsop on bass guitar. They chose the name Pyramid for its visual properties, and its idea of mystical energy. It gave them a more positive group identity

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* *Mike Daly writes for The Age, Melbourne.*

# of Energy and Innovation

By Mike Daly*

than "The David Hirschfelder (or Jones) Band".

When Bob Venier joined in 1979, the trio became a quartet. His ability on trumpet and flugelhorn, as well as hand percussion, has been a highlight of Melbourne music for a decade. He was a featured soloist with the late-lamented ABC Showband, and is a current member of the Channel Nine orchestra on the *Don Lane Show*, and Channel 10's band on *Young Talent Time.* Venier and Jones are also members of Brian Brown's Australian Jazz Ensemble.

Venier is 35, of stocky build, and wears glasses. His Italian parentage influenced his catholic taste in music, including classical composers and mainstream jazz. This seems to have enriched his playing; his flugelhorn is one of the most distinctive, melodic sounds in Australian music. Of course, he has featured on numerous jazz and pop albums.

Venier's flugelhorn inspired David Hirschfelder to write the gently rhythmic ballad *Song For Bobby.*

"He rang me up one afternoon and said 'I've written a song for you'. He said 'I can hear you playing it' . . . if I'd written it myself it couldn't have been more appropriate," says Venier.

Bob Venier remembers his first public performance with Pyramid, at Ballarat's Canopy Club in 1979. "It was almost like a rebirth . . . it was so different to what I'd been used to. It felt great, the crowd loved it, we all got great vibes from it and we just knew there was something in this band."

Roger McLachlan, 28, like most bass guitarists, started out as a lead guitarist. He comes from a musical family in New Zealand; his father used to play in a dance band and Roger was leading his own trio at 13, playing pop standards. Since arriving in Melbourne in the early 1970s, he has played bass with the Little River Band, Stars, Southern Wind and Streetlife.

The bearded bassist has a fluent style influenced by modern players like Eberhard Weber and Jaco Pastorius, with an emphasis on the instrument's up-front role.

McLachlan joined Pyramid in winter, 1980, after sitting in for the late Mike Clarke (who had taken over from Alsop on bass). Within weeks McLachlan was in the studio with the band, recording its debut album, *Pyramid* (East EAS 081). That album has since gone into its third pressing and a new LP is due for release later this year.

Like his colleagues, Roger McLachlan is busy with studio sessions, teaching and band work (he played with Brian Cadd last year). And he is happy to say there's a shortage of good bass players in Melbourne.

Although he admits to being a rock and roller at heart, he adds: "I love the spontaneity of Pyramid. I feel I give it more energy now because of my rock background. It really is an honour to play with these guys; each of us seems to know what the other is going to do, instinctively. I've never played with a group like it before."

Pyramid's new album will probably include tracks like *Everyday Festival*, the complex *Four Plains of Giza*, the bright Latin piece *Sunshower* and the cleverly-named *Blue Seas*, all of which are part of their concert repertoire. Although Hirschfelder idly talks of rearranging John Lennon's *Imagine*, just for a change of style, the band is likely to stick to originals.

"The first album all happened one night in the studio. The next one will have a bit more confidence and maturity. We've agreed on the selection of numbers and made room for a couple of improvisations. There will be a concept to this one in the order of tracks, and we'll select the best, even if we have a couple left over," Hirschfelder says.

He seems to have an endless source of melodies. They come easily to him. "The hardest thing about composing is arranging it and packaging it. Creating melodies and chord structures is easy . . . and it's natural to all talented musicians.

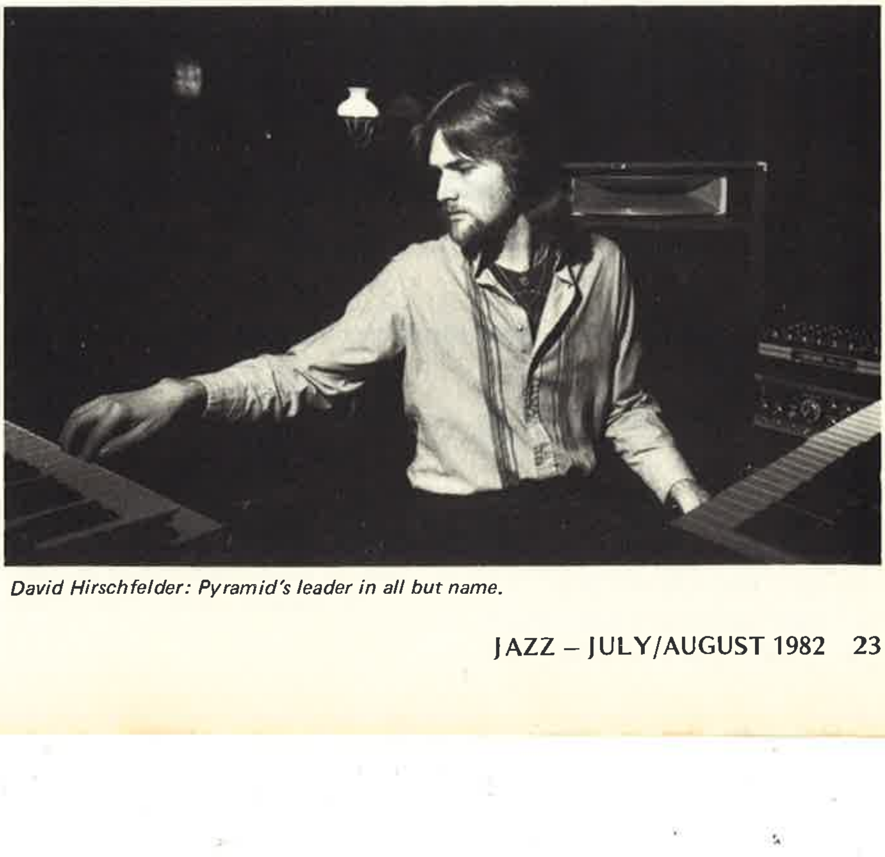
"The music industry talks about 'hooks' . . . from the word go we always wanted to have melodies, our own tunes which people could latch onto fairly quickly, even though there were lots of things in between that went over their heads – and ours sometimes."

Next year will be busy and crucial for Pyramid, with interstate tours being discussed by the band, plus Montreux, Japan and the new album in the shops. By then promoters and the media will no longer need convincing.

Let David Jones, who has no time for jazz snobbery, have the last word:

"There's definitely a 1960s bebop attitude to jazz by certain sections of the media and anything beyond that in modern music is considered too slick. I really object to that. Whatever we play – you can call it jazz or anything you like – we're actually giving jazz a good name because we aren't playing safe, we are looking at each other and we play for the audience.

"We don't just repeat what we've heard on 50s and 60s American recordings. This is an Australian band with its own sound, in the 1980s."



David Hirschfelder: Pyramid's leader in all but name.

BILL DILLARD

By Adrian Jackson*

One Mo' Time, which opened at The Comedy Theatre in Melbourne on May 5, is a jazz musical that has enjoyed great success in the USA and England, where several other productions are still running. It is set in a black vaudeville theatre of the 1920s (The Lyric, in New Orleans), and has a thin plot that really only serves as an excuse to have the four leads go through some effective comedy routines, and some convincing jazz and blues singing, accompanied by a lively five-piece jazz band.

It is a most enjoyable show, that should have wide appeal, but will certainly be of special interest to jazz fans, who should enjoy the music both on its own merits, and also for the taste it gives us of the sort of jazz that would have been played on the black theatre circuit back then.

The stage band is called The New Orleans Blue Serenaders, and the publicity describes their music as authentic New Orleans jazz; it isn't, but strikes me as an apparently authentic mixture of the New Orleans style and the more ragtime-derived approach that I believe was more prevalent in the northern states in the 20s. Pianist Rufus Hill and drummer Herlin Riley are young black Americans; clarinetist Paul Furniss and tuba player Kipper Kearsley are well known Sydney jazzmen. Each performs his role in the band admirably, with Furniss often excelling; but the real star, unquestionably, is 71-year-old trumpeter Bill Dillard.

Dillard gets to sing two numbers, *Sugar Blues* and *Shake It And Break It*, in a smooth, deep voice; his tumpet leads the band strongly throughout; and he takes plenty of excellent solos – the growling, rousing effects he gets from a variety of mutes including a glass and a derby hat, are simply marvellous.

Bill Dillard would hardly have been widely known here, were it not for *One Mo' Time*, but he has worked with many of the greats in jazz: Louis Armstrong, King Oliver, Jelly Roll Morton, Django Reinhardt, Billie Holiday, Leadbelly, and many of the best big bands of the 1930s.

Dillard was born in Philadelphia in 1911. He recalls his start in music: "A neighbour of ours, a Mr Hardy, played bugle, he was a follower of Marcus Garvey. When Marcus Garvey was put in jail, Mr Hardy was coming home, I guess he'd had a few drinks, he just gave me his bugle. I couldn't get a sound out of it, til eventually I realised it came from vibrating my lips. My father promised me a cornet for my twelfth birthday: when we bought it at the store, the man had to tell me to wait for the mouthpiece – I didn't know what a mouthpiece was, Mr Hardy hadn't given me one!

"I played with local bands through high school and so forth, dance music, a little jazz. I was playing in a band with Barney Alexander, who played banjo with Jelly Roll Morton. He told Jelly Roll about me when he was in Philadelphia, but I had already decided to go to New York. Jelly Roll caught up with me there, so I played with him for a while, did a few records. He upset a lot of musicians because they thought he thought he was better than most of them; I guess he was, at that. He had definite ideas about how we should play some of his music a certain way, we couldn't just use head arrangements."

After leaving Morton, Dillard played on King Oliver's last recordings; thereafter, he worked in New York, and on the theatre circuit, with many of the finest big bands of the swing era. He enthuses, "New York was wonderful at that time. Louis Armstrong, of course, was a great influence on all trumpeters, and there was also Rex Stewart and Russell Smith who were great musicians. These were wonderful days. We would have a ball playing for all those dancers. We would have battles of music, with, say, four big bands competing to see who could play the more exciting set, get the better response.

"I got to play some solos", he explains, "but I wasn't a star soloist. I was a first trumpeter, my job was to lead the section. My main concern was efficiency – good tone, accuracy, maintaining the beat."

Some of the bands Dillard worked with were Benny Carter's ("Billie Holiday did her first theatre date with us"), Luis Russell's, Louis Armstrong's, Teddy Wilson's, the Mills Blue Rhythm Band, Teddy Hill's (it was while on tour in Europe with Hill that he did a record date with Dickie Wells and Django Reinhardt) and Coleman Hawkins.

"My career turned to the stage by accident. When they were casting for *Carmen Jones* (the all-black adaptation of Bizet's *Carmen*), they needed a strongly built fellow who looked like a boxer." (Even today, Dillard's health belies his age.) "John Hammond recommended me to them, and I got the part. It was a non-speaking role, but I quickly got to think I could enjoy life making my living as an actor. So I studied acting, voice projection, singing and movement. And I got roles in quite a few shows, but mostly when they wanted someone to sing or play the trumpet."

Dillard drifted away from jazz after the mid-40s, earning his living

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

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from stage or TV acting, as a carpenter, or as an entertainer at weddings and parties.

He says, "I used to get calls asking me to play jazz every now and then; mostly I would say no, but a couple of years ago, I started saying yes more often. Jazz activity was starting to look a little healthier.

"I was playing in a little club when Orange Kellin saw me, and asked me if I would care to go to London with the show he was Musical Director of, *One Mo' Time.* I went to hear the show at the Village Gate (starring the legendary 20s jazzman Jabbo Smith), and I was just thrilled by what I heard. It was a recreation of the shows that were spreading music around the country when I was a youngster. The singing, the dancing, the comedy, the music were just the way I remembered. So I went with the show to London. We were warned the audiences would be more reserved there, but we sure got through to them with that feeling, they were all laughing, and clapping their hands, and cheering.

"And now I'm out here, having a ball. It could be for around five months, or more. They're some fine musicians in the band, which is just as well, 'cause you've got to work hard in a five piece band, and make all the solos exciting. I'm having a ball, playing with the derby and the plunger, like we used to back then. It's the most satisfying way I could think of to come back to playing jazz."

Bill Dillard's career credits suggest he knows just how hot, swinging jazz was played in the 20s and 30s, and his playing in *One Mo' Time* confirms it. The show is very enjoyable, but, for jazz fans, Bill Dillard makes it compulsory.

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LISTENING TO JAZZ By Jerry Coker*

Music is an art form that combines pitches with rhythms (vibrational frequencies of sound, or simply what we call "notes" in music). Although it can be prepared on paper in a notated fashion, a musical composition does not become music until the moment of performance, when it becomes *sound*. Music is an *aural* art. After the performance, when the sounds have ceased, the music ends, even though the written score, the instruments of performance, and the performers still exist. Only in the *memory* does the music continue to exist in the minds of the musicians and their audience.

The aural memory, however, is not to be dismissed lightly. In fact, it may be the most powerful agent contributing to the success of the phenomenon we call music. It is the memory which enables us to hear music *inwardly*, replaying endlessly the sound sensations heard in prior listening experiences. Only a repeat of the aural experience itself can improve upon the impression made by the version that is replayed in the memory. Hence it is largely the memory that enables us, by transforming repetition into familiarity, to develop a longing to repeat and enlarge the aural experience through recordings and live performance).

Dr Joseph Murphy in his book *The Power of Your Subconscious Mind*, states that "Man is what he thinks all day." Concurrently, religious and philosophical disciplines and goals are often achieved through repetitive affirmations. And so it is in music: We are what we hear all day, including live or recorded performances as well as what we hear inwardly through memory. There will be significant differences among individuals exposed to the same diet of listening, in that their attitudes, understanding, and personal involvement with music will vary. Their memory replays will vary with respect to selectivity, according to personal tastes and reactions. Our musical personalities can best be understood in terms of what we have heard in performance and what our memory chooses to replay inwardly.

There are many musical *styles* to hear, each having given rise to great performances and each possessing stylistic validity. Stylistic snobbery in music is entirely unnecessary. It may, in some cases, be necessary for a musician to focus on a particular style for a lifetime, in order to achieve mastery or success in that style. But he must not, in the process, become negative toward other styles. A great performer in any style will have certain standards in common with others of his kind: 1. *Craftsmanship* (understanding of musical fundamentals; instrumental/vocal techniques; well-developed ear). 2. *Awareness* (from listening to others in the field). 3. *Creativity*. 4. *Spirit* (emotional drive, appropriateness).

Frequently the listener is confronted with a reputedly great performance he cannot understand or evaluate, usually because his memory bank of aural experiences does not encompass what he is now hearing. Perhaps the style is unfamiliar or the techniques too complex or too different from what he's heard previously. Chances are that if the listener had gathered, stored, and replayed the aural experiences that were in the minds of the performers, awareness and familiarity would have urged him onto a path of patient acceptance, understanding, and perhaps even approval and enjoyment. The gulf sometimes created between the performer and his audience is often directly related to the differences in their listening habits and choices. A performer tires of being held back, and his audience tires of feeling ignorant. The solution lies in the performer's desire to communicate and the audience's desire to understand.

What Is Jazz? Up to now we have been discussing music in general, the importance of listening, memory replay, and standards of performance, as these points relate to *all* styles of music. But we are concerned about jazz music in particular, so a definition is now in order. Jazz is

> *A musical style that evolved in the United States around 1900, chiefly played by Afro-Americans, though the music has since been produced and consumed interracially and internationally. Jazz was, in the earliest stages, a brewing of many stylistic influences — African rhythms and "blue tones", European instruments and harmonies, marches, dance music, church music, and ragtime — all played with an exaggerated, emotional pulse (or beat). The twelve-bar blues form originated in jazz and has always been prevalent in jazz performance. The most important characteristic of jazz, however, is improvisation. Virtually every jazz selection will focus on improvisation, even when many other characteristics remain optional. Jazz continues to develop, absorb new styles and techniques, and change with great rapidity, but improvisation, the blues, and the vigorous pulse remain reasonably constant throughout its history of development from folk music to art music.*

Jazz historians have frequently mentioned the lifestyles of famous jazz personalities, especially their racial problems, commercial success, poverty, drugs, marital problems, and associations with prostitution and the underworld. Unquestionably such material may be of interest to the general reader. On the other hand, much of it is beside the point, some of it is subject to distortion, and most of it is no one's business but the performer's. The performer's private life may have influenced his music in some significant way, but most of the time such notions are pure conjecture. Usually we learn more about the artist from being told of his musical influences and training, or to what records he listened often, or of the statements he made about his craft.

The real history of jazz is in the

Pic: Jane March

Freddie Hubbard: his Mr. Clean has eleven and a half minutes of improvisation . . .

**From the book Listening To Jazz, by Jerry Coker (Spectrum Books, 1978). JAZZ Magazine thanks Greg Quigley of the Australian Jazz Foundation for permission to reprint this excerpt.*

music itself, especially in the solos of such great improvisers as Louis Armstrong, Coleman Hawkins, Lester Young, Charles Parker, Miles Davis and John Coltrane. Ironically, it is the long improvised solos, with all their complexities, that have widened the gulf between the jazz performer and his audience in recent years. When single records were still recorded at 78 rpm, whole selections were only three to four minutes long. If it required one minute to play the melody at the beginning and another minute to play the melody at the end, then the listener faced only one or two minutes of improvisation between the more understandable melodic segments. But an average selection today might be more like Freddie Hubbard's *Mr Clean,* which is thirteen and one half minutes long. With one minute of melody at the beginning and one again at the end, we are given eleven and one half minutes of improvisation to enjoy, decipher, or endure, as the case may be. From a purely musical point of view, the longer selections made possible by the long-playing record (LP) did much to further jazz as an art form, by providing more time for the natural unfolding of solo material. From the audience's point of view, longer selections posed greater challenges, causing some to give up trying to understand, remember, and enjoy the music. We can't turn back the clock or hold back the progress of music and recording technology, but we can make an effort to reach a deeper understanding of what transpires in a jazz performance, in particular in the creative core of jazz, the improvised solo.

Suggested Listening. In the definition of the word *jazz,* many elements and influences were mentioned that especially pertain to early jazz; these should be aurally experienced by the reader. The same definition mentioned the "development from folk music to art music," which should also be experienced. Therefore, it is suggested that the reader could benefit from a very abbreviated history of jazz in sound. The Smithsonian Collection of Jazz (referred to in listings as SC) will be used whenever possible.

Included in this list are the six great improvising soloists who were mentioned earlier in our discussion. Listening to those selections should help confirm their greatness in the reader's mind. Two further selections, from Freddie Hubbard and Miles Davis, are suggested because they relate to the comparison between the long-playing record (*Mr. Clean*) and its predecessor, the 78 RPM single.

ERA/STYLE	TITLE	ARTIST/GROUP	RECORDING DATA
Ragtime	*Maple Leaf Rag*	Scott Joplin	SC, side 1, track 1
Blues	*Lost Your Head Blues*	Bessie Smith	SC, side 1, track 5
Dixieland	*Black Bottom Stomp*	Jelly Roll Morton	SC, side 2, track 1
Swing	*Lunceford Special*	Jimmy Lunceford	SC, side 5, track 3
Be-Bop	*Shaw 'Nuff*	Dizzy Gillespie	SC, side 7, track 6
Modern	*D.B.B.*	Brecker Brothers	Arista AL 4037

IMPROVISER	TITLE	RECORDING DATA
Louis Armstrong	*S.O.L. Blues*	SC, side 2, track 6
Coleman Hawkins	*Body and Soul*	SC, side 4, track 4
Lester Young	*Lester Leaps In*	SC, side 6, track 1
Charles Parker	*Koko*	SC, side 7, track 7
Miles Davis	*So What*	SC, side 11, track 3
John Coltrane	*Pursuance*	Impulse A-77

GROUP	TITLE	RECORDING DATA
Freddie Hubbard	*Mr. Clean*	CTI 6007
Miles Davis	*Boplicity*	SC, side 9, track 1

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KENNY & KELLY

continued from page 17

have appeared regularly at The Basement.

Also, despite being probably the most outstanding group in Australia in their chosen idiom, Crossfire are largely ignored by many leading musicians in related fields. I asked if, say, the established jazz musicians dropped by to their gigs to say hello and listen to their music. Answer: definitely not. "There are two different camps," says Mick, "we're in between". "I reckon we're the enemy for a lot of those people", says Jim. "I have to say it. It's a bit of a worry."

"What saddens me is that when those guys come to me – and I find it a lot with bebop and mainstream players – and have some derogatory term for the word 'fusion', man, all I can say to them is, 'But I love your music'. I love the bebop, I love Barney Kessel's jazz, and Miles Davis's jazz. I like all that, and I like fusion as well. I like all of it, but this is the one I choose to play. Whereas I feel they worship one idiom, and have no time at all for the others. That upsets me.

"Man, the bebop thing is gone. People must come to terms with this. You can play it as good as Charlie Parker, maybe even a quarter of an inch better, but it still doesn't matter a fuck these days. It's finished. Listen to it, and love it, but don't worry about trying to play it. There's something else to be played; it's not really necessary. I feel really strongly about that. There's nothing wrong with roots, but trying to re-create what happened in 1957, or 1942, is bizarre."

It has taken a great amount of idealism and persistence on the part of Mick Kenny and Jim Kelly to enable Crossfire to survive and become an important force in Australian contemporary music. I actually began the interview with these two men by asking why they had put so much into it for so long. Jim Kelly's retort was firm:

> *You ask 'why?' I'd like to say 'why not?' I think it's a little bit of an Aussie attitude, 'hey man, there's nothin' happening around here', but most people don't check out themselves to see why it isn't. There are certain things you must do to have a band like Crossfire, or any good band that plays original music, and that takes time and energy, and everybody pulling with the one thing in mind. I find that a lot of the guys want to talk about it, but when it comes down to the nitty-gritty of putting in the energy and finding the time, then it's a different matter. I say 'why not?'*

TRADITIONAL JAZZ & THE AUSTRALIAN JAZZ CONVENTION

By Norm Linehan

In his review of the booklet on the Convention (JAZZ, March/April 1982) Eric Myers referred to "conservatives and purists who were, at one time or another, opposed to any form of modern or progressive jazz". This could be taken to mean that in its formative years the Convention was dominated by traditional bigots, and was responsible for creating musical divisions. Neither of these assumptions would be correct. The Convention only reflected musical attitudes that already existed and the musical content of the Convention was decided by all who attended. At the first four Conventions discussion groups were devoted to various aspects of jazz and much time spent in deciding what music should be represented. Far from there being opposition to other forms, it was freely acknowledged that these existed. But people had musical preferences and as the Convention had been brought into existence by traditional musicians and enthusiasts for those who preferred that form, it was agreed that it should stay that way.

These musical attitudes were not confined to Australia. In America *Esquire's 1947 Jazz Book* paid no attention to bop even though the panel of judges for their All-American Jazz Band included Barry Ulanov, Dave Dexter and Leonard Feather, and I think it was Feather who about this time coined the term "mouldie fygge" as a derisive reference to those who preferred the traditional form. (It backfired on him however and is still used by mouldie fygges as a definitive term.) Humphrey Lyttelton has related how in Birmingham, England, I think in 1952, when Bruce Turner came forward to play his alto saxophone at a concert, an entire row of the audience raised a large banner reading "Go home dirty bopper".

In 1949 the short-lived Sydney magazine *The Beat* published a deliberately provocative article written by the editor and his assistant (neither of them having been to a Convention) suggesting that the Convention should include other musical forms, in which they showed more than anything else a total lack of understanding of what the Convention was about, as others had done before and would do after them. They were adequately answered by Don Reid, president of the 4th Convention, who wrote "If the protagonists of other types of modern music wish to hold an annual Convention, they are obviously at liberty to do so". Reid went on to say, and it needs to be emphasised, that the only point at issue was what kind of music should be played at the Convention, and there was no question of musical prejudice or bigotry, or of personal animosity. It was my own experience that cordial relationships existed among musicians and enthusiasts of whatever musical persuasion.

In 1950 at Sydney Les Welch had a band that played music containing many of the elements that were later apparent in rock and roll, and rhythm and blues, and was a star attraction at Sydney concerts. During the year he gave his services freely to Convention fund-raising shows, but there and at the Convention played and sang the blues and traditional jazz tunes because he understood what the Convention was about. Merv Acheson, mainstream then as now, came along and played with Terry McCardell's traditional band, and afterwards devoted two pages of *Tempo* to this traditionally dominated Convention, in which he wrote critically of the standards of musicianship but not of the kind of music played because he too understood. Also in *Tempo* Ron Wills wrote "I would like to see a Convention of modern musicians organised along the same lines as the Australian Jazz Convention. But I doubt if I ever will. I don't think the same inner feeling for the music exists." Time has proved him right.

What happened to Graeme Bell and Charlie Blott at Melbourne in 1952 could have been anticipated. The objection was not to what they were playing but to the fact that they were playing it at the Convention. Following that Convention I wrote ". . . Graeme Bell's Big Twelve . . . was merely a big swing band playing loud brassy arrangements, music which no doubt has its place, but certainly does not belong at an Australian Jazz Convention". William H. Miller wrote "The fact that this music was played by men who had participated in previous Conventions, or even the same Convention, as dixielanders is quite beside the point. If they want to play other types of music, good luck to them – but let them do it elsewhere than at Jazz Conventions. Let them organise their own."

Pic: Norm Linehan.

Graeme Bell and Bill Haesler, Forbes 1980. Graeme: "What are you booking me for?" Bill: "Bringing a big band to the 1952 Convention."

Just what happened to John Sangster in 1958 I do not know as I was not involved in the incident, but I think he has embellished it a little. Jim Somerville's version is rather different.

Musical attitudes at the Convention have tempered over the years, largely because it has become the practice to program two or three halls simultaneously so that if a non-traditional group is playing in one of them the traditional followers, who after all are the backbone of the Convention, will have an alternative to listen to. Even so, it seems that comparatively few modern groups turn up, and then only when the Convention is in their home town. They will not take the trouble to travel when it is elsewhere. Their main interest seems to be (and it is fair to say that this applies to some of the traditional bands as well) in getting a spot on the stage and their names in the program for the sake of exposure.

At the 31st Convention at Brisbane in 1976 a large number of modern stylists did appear, I think because it was the first time the Convention had been held in Brisbane and everyone wanted to get in the act. Following this I wrote, "In the name of that non-specific word 'jazz' a wide range of musical styles was presented, from traditional to modern, avant-garde and jazz-rock, and while I welcome this on musical grounds, it seemed that as the Convention is so traditionally dominated, the others simply came and did their spot and went away again, which is hardly what the Convention is about."

These days it is not so much that forms, other than the traditional, parading under the name of jazz are not wanted at the Australian Jazz Convention. It is just that the modernists do not understand what the Convention is about any more than they did thirty years ago.

CONCERT REVIEWS

Bruce Cale Quartet

May 12, The Basement, Sydney.

This evening must have been one of the most extraordinary that The Basement has seen in its history. The Bruce Cale Quartet, in a passionate and committed performance that swept often into unbridled ferocity, sorted out the middle-class sheep in the audience from the jazz goats.

The uncompromising tone of the evening was set with the first tune, the normally inoffensive standard *There Is No Greater Love.* After a dancing, surrealist statement of the melody Dale Barlow (tenor saxophone) took a long, fiery solo which effectively transformed the wine-and-dine atmosphere. Barlow gave notice from the beginning that this was not going to be a quiet night at The Basement.

He was followed by Roger Frampton (piano), Cale himself on bass, and Alan Turnbull (drums), each making major statements, whistling through the changes with an unprecedented sense of urgency. On the night these men felt they had something to say, and they said it determinedly, with scant regard for the niceties. Such was the expenditure of energy that the climactic end of the first number might have been the end of the night.

It says something for the increasing sophistication of jazz appreciation in Sydney that a stunned and open-mouthed audience stayed with the music. Some people left, of course, but the great majority who remained were, in turn, dismayed, overwhelmed and finally fascinated by the intensity of the music they heard.

Why was it so extraordinary? Unlike many local groups, the Bruce Cale Quartet is composed of four brilliant modern jazz musicians, each of whom is usually into an intense and valid line of thought. Therefore there are very few lame stretches in their music, where the group might be searching for a direction.

With this capacity in the quartet, there is unlimited potential for inspired musical dialogue, with each player listening intently, anticipating and catching the ideas of the others. The music produced has its own character — bristling with ideas, and mesmerising in its ability to reshape and re-present those ideas.

Bruce Cale would probably prefer his unusual compositions, which provide the group's basic repertoire, to be played more gently, as on his now classic LP *Live At The Opera House* where, instead of Barlow and Frampton, he had Bob Bertles and Paul McNamara. Still, Cale is not the sort of leader who would want to limit the expression of his players. Instead, at this performance, he stayed firmly with them, as the band swept everything before it in an irresistible tide.

There are few other Australian modern groups which enable the free expression of so many ideas, yet bring together that turbulent four-way expression into a cohesive group statement. The musical dialogue on this evening was at a level of unmitigated brilliance, showing how well-equipped these four men are to explore and extend many of the interesting ideas in contemporary jazz.

It is rare in Sydney jazz to hear such urgency and passion; I have never heard the Bruce Cale Quartet in such a triumphant mood.

Eric Myers

Tony Gould & Friends

June 1, Prince of Wales Hotel, St. Kilda, Melbourne

June 1 witnessed another performance in a budding series of modern jazz concerts at that comfortable venue, the Prince of Wales Hotel, where top ranking players have themselves organised a showcase for their playing every Tuesday night. On this night the pianist Tony Gould presented other musical friends, combining both old and new talents.

The programming was good. Gould's piano style covers a broad range of sounds in a trio setting, as evidenced by his opening 15 minute romp with that old tune *The Gypsy.* A contemplative opening led into a two-fisted, between-the-cracks development, kicked along by percussive pedal points, vividly exhibiting his refined harmonic ear. The rhythm was handled by two young Gould proteges. Steve Haddeley is an acoustic bass player to watch, on this impressive hearing, and there is love in the way Peter Jones handles drums with either delicacy or drama.

Pic: Jane March

Tony Gould: refined harmonic ear . . .

An introspective treatment of the Bill Evans composition *Lonely Child* was followed by the standard *Falling In Love With Love* when the trio was joined by Tony's McJad crony Keith Hounslow on flugelhorn — a man who knows how to use space as well as taste and shading in his solos.

In Gould's admiring introduction of the two young electric guitarists Shane O'Mara and Lee Pendliss, he described their sound as "almost acoustic". They played as a duo, performing three of their own tunes and one by Ralph Towner. These boys do not belong to the duelling banjo brigade. Their relaxed set was magic — best heard with eyes closed, if you could afford to miss the glances of empathy and the agile fingering tossed between the two players. Although the harmonic boundaries were close, there was an openness and an appealing freshness to their music. Mutual gifts were exchanged for sheer pleasure.

Hounslow and Gould were accompanied next by Steve Haddeley on a blues excursion followed by an exploration of *Someday My Prince Will Come.* This tune featured some interesting interplay between Haddeley's bass and Hounslow blowing manfully, but delicately, through the constricted plumbing of his pocket trumpet, tightly plugged with a harmon mute. And not a microphone in view — truly a sight for sore ears! The acoustic format favoured by Gould was to prevail all night. The music penetrated and filled this large room without difficulty.

Two more youthful visiting firemen were brought on for the final long blow. They were Rob Bourke (soprano and tenor saxes) and Tony Norris (flugelhorn). The composition was a well-structured primal line by Bourke. The guests acquitted themselves ably, with confident solos that were never bland, yet never angry. Gould prodded them delightfully with vamps. His face lit up more and more as Haddeley took an arco solo and Hounslow blew strong, open trumpet backed by Peter Jones's implicit drum pulse.

The six young guest musicians are all members of the Jazz Studies Course at the Victorian College of the Arts. Tony Gould is their mentor and musical father. Their sounds are the sounds a father hears around the house of jazz before his sons fly the coop. And there will be other sons. With this thought, I went home smiling.

Ron Wilson*

* *Ron Wilson is a Melbourne jazz buff.*

BOOK REVIEWS

MILES DAVIS: A CRITICAL BIOGRAPHY

By Ian Carr. Quartet Books (1982), 310 pp, $27.50.

Miles Davis is unquestionably one of the greatest jazz artists of all time; almost certainly, he is the greatest living jazzman. His achievements are multiple. First, he has been a great trumpet improviser and stylist, who has both given new meaning to the principle that consiseness can outweigh verbosity, and who has expanded the role of his instrument; he has been a profound musical architect, unique in the number of times he has been an influential innovator; ad he has been an exceptional catalyst, able to bring the creative strengths out of an array of sidemen that reads like a Who's Who of modern jazz, from Adderley to Zawinul. In short, he has been an exceptionally creative and influential jazz artist.

It would be unreasonable to expect him to pioneer, yet again, any important new direction in improvised music, but his return to the stage last year, after seven years' retirement, has given many cause to retain that hope. But even if his comeback were to ultimately prove a mistake, it could not detract from the greatness of his achievements since the 1940s. It is those achievements that are examined in Ian Carr's biography.

Ian Carr is himself a respected jazz trumpeter, leader of the English jazz-rock group Nucleus; his music has been obviously influenced by Davis's, even by his so widely-misunderstood jazz-rock music of the 70s, so it should be no surprise that Carr demonstrates a firm understanding of Davis's music.

He traces Davis's career, from his early days in St. Louis, through the 40s when he first made his mark on the jazz scene, with Charlie Parker's quintet, and with his own *Birth Of The Cool* nonet; his crisis with heroin addiction in the early 50s, and the classic small group and orchestral recordings he made in that decade, and his acceptance as an eminent bandleader; the consolidations and developments of the 60s; the 'jazz-rock' experiments of the early 70s, and his subsequent retirement.

The music is examined shrewdly, discussing both its emotional impact and its musical quality and significance. Carr puts Davis's musical achievements in perspective.

In the process, we get some insight into the man's character, and through the fences put up by a fiercely private man, we can glimpse Davis as a sensitive person who has suffered despite his success, and a proud man whose determination to realise his creative potential, and to say something important in his music, has seen him attain both musical immortality and some degree of commercial success.

Carr's book is especially valuable when compared with the previous biography, Bill Cole's *Miles Davis — A Musical Biography* (William Morrow, 1974), which, like Cole's later Coltrane biography, fails due to the author's determination to mould the subject around his own prejudices and theories. He obviously made no effort to understand what Miles's music from the mid-60s on was all about; Carr, on the other hand, shows he realises what Davis was doing, and just how successful he was at various stages.

A good example of the two authors' credibility comes with the issue of an increasing rock influence on Davis's music after 1968 or so. Cole fits it in with his ideas about corporate exploitation of black artists by confidently asserting that Clive Davis, Columbia's president at the time, had forced the trumpeter to change his music to fit in with the company's idea of what would be more commercially successful.

Carr, on the other hand, states, "Clive Davis, of course, had no musical influence on Miles whatsoever . . . at the centre (of Miles' motives) there was always a basic logic which was essentially to do with music." Teo Macero also argues against Clive Davis's having persuaded Miles to compromise his music, yet the idea that he did is crucial to Cole's approach. I feel safe in dismissing his book as being of no real importance.

In this instance, Carr bothers to put the question in the context of Davis's musical progression, and what can be ascertained of his personal motives and aspirations. He sees at least some good in Davis's 70s music, because he has made the effort to understand it. This phase being the most widely maligned of Davis's career, Carr's explanation of it is especially valuable.

On the whole, Carr's biography provides informative and stimulating reading for any jazz fan. The inclusion of several transcribed solos, a bibliography and a comprehensive discography enhance its value. Strongly recommended.

Adrian Jackson

At the Paris Jazz Fair, 1949. From left, Sidney Bechet, Big Chief Russell Moore, Baroness Pannonica de Koenigswarter, Miles Davis.

THE AUSTRALIAN JAZZ EXPLOSION

By Mike Williams. Photographs by Jane March. Angus and Robertson (1981), 176 pp, $15.95.

This book has actually been available for nearly a year now, and the moment at which it appeared was, for me, particularly well chosen. At about the same time I had received an invitation to attend a jazz conference. The letter was sent on behalf of 'the future of jazz'. Evidently jazz in this country is so infirm that it is likely to expire but for such things as a day of seminars. Indeed, in the manner of a teacher explaining to a class why it has been kept in, the invitation solemnly informed me that this was the fault *'of jazz itself'*. With Teutonic exactitude and certainty it announced, 'There will be seven sessions, with seven moderators and panels, each of forty minutes'. Strangely, the news of this revivifying enterprise succeeded only in depressing me.

I was much cheered by the appearance of Mike Williams' book. It reminded me that, in the face of bureaucrats and institutions, jazz and its musicians remain fundamentally unimpressed and resilient, even when appearing to collaborate. Mike's book has copped some flak. It's a collection of interviews with jazzmen and -women, and some readers insist that he's included the wrong people. Do me a favour. His Preface makes it perfectly clear that he intends no sort of history or definitive gathering of the " 'best', most popular, or most influential". He calls it "variations on a theme". It's his book. Let those who feel that his choice of subjects is wrong go and write their own book. The promotional material that came with it was less honest and accurate than Mike. It did speak of the musicians interviewed as being the "best". At most, this is arguably so. But it is misleading in effect, making it sound like a monolithic manifesto by the undeniably top muso's. It's not that, and we may be grateful for the fact. In jazz there comes a point in a musician's life when words like 'better than' give way to 'different to'. He has matured in terms of temperament and instrumental competence to the point that the man is the music, and to talk about him as being a better jazz musician than another is as fraught with philosophical difficulties as to speak of one person as being better than another. The light thrown by official histories and press publicity on 'significant' figures also casts shadows that conceal others. Mike has done two things here for which musicians and people really interested in what makes jazz should be grateful. First, he has allowed the musicians to speak for themselves without using what they say to pigeon-hole them. Second, more audacious and just as respectful, he has in large measure ignored the conventional assessments of who should or should not be in such a book. In this he has performed a great service for the historiography of jazz: he has cleansed it. History must constantly be rewritten in recognition of its inadequacies. He has done this, simply by not trying to write a history. His book does include monologues by people who could be argued to be at the top of their profession (if we could agree as to what that means). But it also includes many who are simply honest, dedicated, capable, and absolutely essential to the fertility of the music. Jazz is a folk art, which means that it retains its vitality not just by virtue of the advances made by the virtuoso, but perhaps even more by its being lived out at a level accessible to everyday life. The worst thing that could happen to jazz is that it be taken out of the corner pub and confined to the concert halls, that gut enthusiasm for it be considered less important than the ponderous pronouncements of conference delegates. A stomping, whistling, half pissed crowd on a Saturday arvo does more to keep jazz alive (the word is 'alive'), than all the po-faced politicking of the musical bureaucrats.

Although Mike has omitted his own leading questions, leaving just the words of his subjects, a pattern emerges which, I think, reveals his approach. Each section consists of opinions and biographical fact in varying proportions. The chronicles give us interesting historical information. Did you know that the Melbourne Musicians' Union would possibly have refused Rex Stewart permission to tour had it known he was black? Incredible ignorance of both the music and a basic human right. And did you know that in Athens a jazz band led by Greg Gibson was silenced by the police on the grounds that it affronted national pride?

The musicians' opinions on their music are absolutely refreshing. One thing made gratifyingly clear is that, beyond the description 'jazz musician', these men and women remain unclassifiable, utterly individual. Nothing can be deduced from their backgrounds — postmen, diplomats, truck drivers, solicitors, journalists, teachers: a grab-bag of our society, and yet curiously detached from some of the more deeply entrenched middle class imperatives. In a culture obsessed with job security, the work ethic, ambition, it is remarkable how the lives of so many of these musicians reflect the improvisational aspect of their art. Their anecdotes, especially of the older ones, reveal a casual and spontaneous volatility, a refusal to be defeated by the victory of chance over desire: Len Barnard and his cronies going straight from an all night carouse to the Homebush recording studio; Bob Barnard in Melbourne learning that the gig that drew him to Sydney had folded — 'Too late. I'm coming anyway. What the hell'; Keith Hounslow, drifting from place to place, subconsciously absorbing his environment; Judy Bailey on her way to England from New Zealand, picking up a gig in Sydney. She's still here. In all this there's a responsiveness to circumstances, a flexible opportunism that never hesitates before an open door. We see less of it now, I think. Len Barnard attributes the change to age, but it may also be related to the watershed of television, which seems to have deprived a generation of the capacity to shape its own leisure. Judy Bailey's account of the Newbury family's makeshift musicals and theatricals is a picture of a cottage industry that has been long superseded by discos and video games. Am I just getting old when I lament that television seems to have eroded personalities? It is the multiplicity and sharp

THE AUSTRALIAN
JAZZ
EXPLOSION
MIKE WILLIAMS
Photographs by Jane March

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definition of the personalities in this book which puts to scorn the stereotypers and classifiers. Frank Johnson's justifiably resentful and vigorous iconoclasm, Keith Hounslow's reluctance to believe in his own talent, Judy Bailey's wide-eyed and delighted wonder at what she considers to be her luck, Hounslow and Don Burrows reminding us of what the college courses seem often to forget: music is a form of joyful celebration. Dick Hughes, who hates an inattentive audience, and Ian Pearce who, in a way, rather likes it. Pluralism. The infinite variety of jazz musicians. A few pages of John Sangster's meditation says more about the creative process than a volume of seminar proceedings. Sangster is a clearing house, a stop-over for sounds on their way to being tunes. He reminds us that composing is less the imposition of form than the receptive discovery of it. He represents a principle happily opposed to the inflexible systems-makers and timetablers. The creative opportunist, his ear on everything that doesn't fit, the detail missed by the drab administrators.

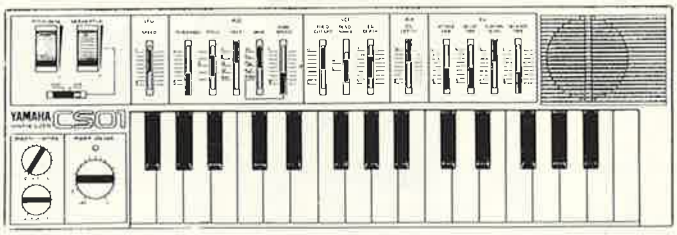
Perhaps it's all to do with the fringe existence of the jazz musicians, their mentally and physically nomadic style, seeing new landscapes or old ones freshly. The border dividing their various backgrounds from the conventional idea of jazz makes them alert wetbacks, spotting items in their surroundings that are missed by those who have become habituated to their territory. Here we are able to read the personal, unmediated accounts of the jazz musicians themselves. And they remind us of the silliness of trying to tidy the music up to conform to a set of acceptable expectations. Take out the sweat, the mistakes, the bad smells, the personalities of the people who make the music, and you dehumanise it.

In general, the contribution of jazz to the character of Australian life is barely recognised. Mike's book makes the point. Don Banks is only one of many musicians with international credentials. Who outside the profession has heard of him? If that doesn't seem odd, remember the celebrity of our sportsmen. Mike Williams makes the point that a musician of the calibre of Bob Barnard has to battle for minimum union rates in a city that turns not a hair at paying Joan Sutherland (no longer resident here), $10,000 for one performance. She has helped perpetuate a European tradition. Barnard has helped to create an Australian one. Jazz has become the vehicle of a distinctively Australian white culture to a greater extent than most other art forms. Reading this book, you realise that one of the reasons is that jazz has bypassed the received notions of artistic respectability, has remained illegitimate in terms of the nineteenth century cultural tradition so artificially transplanted to this basically twentieth century country. It is the fact of being on the periphery of this tradition that has given such authenticity to the words and works of these musicians. It is likely that here a genuine folk culture for dispossessed Europeans will appear. The inspiration is the music of another excluded, detribalised, exiled group, music of a secular twentieth century with the memory of and the need for transcendence; finding its form as a spontaneous approximation to the substance of life, not as a preciously assumed, mechanically reproduced gesture.

Congratulations to Mike Williams, and to Jane March, the photographer, another silent and indispensable witness to this virile but underground pulse. Would that the publishers had used with more sensitivity and fundamental competence the material with which she provided them.

Bruce Johnson

(Reprinted by kind permission from the Sydney Jazz Club's *Quarterly Rag*, October 1981, No. 21.)



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Scrapple from the Apple

By Lee Jeske*

Jazz, as we well know, is a living music. Classical audiences, for the most part, go to hear pieces played more or less as composed; in fact, it raises a lot of people's hackles whenever a conductor or soloist adds a little pizazz that old Brahms didn't put there himself. They don't want to hear Andre Watts stretch out.

Similarly, rock audiences are just as priggish. They want to hear the songs they know and they want those songs to sound *exactly* the way they do on "the record". Once, while listening to a rock group, I was struck by how hard they tried to recreate the slick sound of the recording studio in a live performance. It seemed to me as just the opposite intention of jazz players — who go out of their way to capture a "live" feeling in the studio. If Dexter Gordon played every song *exactly* as he recorded it, his popularity would dissipate with the morning dew.

What leads me to this line of thinking is the sudden realisation that we have living, breathing jazz repertory groups just crawling out of the woodwork these days. Although people have tried, mostly in vain, to start ensembles in the past that would be dedicated to presenting some form of jazz repertory, suddenly we have people who are, independently, doing just that. And the reason why they are succeeding is that they are presenting what they are presenting in a fresh, open format, rather than tiresomely trotting out transcriptions and annotated solos.

Cases in point: Old And New Dreams, Dameronia, the Bechet Legacy, the Mingus Dynasty, the Vibration Society and Sphere. There is a very important trend taking place here: all the above bands keep alive the past work of one specific jazz innovator while allowing their members the opportunity to put as much of themselves into the performance as they like. Let's take them one at a time:

Old And New Dreams is one of the finest jazz units currently working, and if I had any doubts from previous performances or their exceptionally strong LPs, which just keep getting better and better, I was damned sure of it after listening to them at Lush Life. Lush Life is one of New York's newest clubs and one of its best — it is small and comfortable, the sound system sparkles, the audience is respectful, and (dare I say it) the food is delicious. Hearing a quartet of such awesome power as Old And New Dreams in such a setting was a powerful experience. And, as usual, the band played a canny mix of originals and Ornette Coleman chestnuts. Now here's the point — Ornette has moved on to other things and if Charlie Haden, Don Cherry, Dewey Redman and Ed Blackwell don't play these magnificent pieces, nobody will. Because all four players have this music in their blood and all four are strong enough *not* to get lost in it. The distinctions are clear, and it is clear from the playing how Ornette is the root source for every guy up there. But it is also clear how well each player plays and how well these four players play together. If Dewey Redman, in mid-solo, plays the complete melody line from *Tomorrow* ('The sun will come up . . .') it fits. He wouldn't have played it if it was a band that was strictly adhering to Ornette's music and philosophy, but that's the point. Old And New Dreams — perfect title, terrific band, and one that's doing Ornette Coleman extremely proud.

Dameronia is a different can of beans. Tadd Dameron was not an important soloist, he was an important arranger/composer. But he was such a good arranger and composer that most people ignore his works — they're too hard to play, etc. So when Philly Joe Jones got the idea of putting together a tentet to work on — really work on — Dameron's compositions, he hit upon an inspired brainstorm. He dug up players like Johnny Coles, who could work out in Dameron's boppish framework, and he reintroduced one of the neglected geniuses into the realm of working jazz groups. Currently, Philly Joe is having a hard time getting gigs — ten guys are, after all, ten guys — but it's an idea whose time has come.

The Bechet Legacy has a different problem. Sidney Bechet was a great soloist and an underrated composer, so what do you emphasise? Bob Wilber is probably the only man who could very easily emphasize both without getting lost in the sauce. They play the great Bechet's compositions — mainly mossy blues-type structures — and Wilber can reinvestigate his mentor's soprano sound without feeling like he *has* to play Bechet's solo or even employ Bechet's empty warehouse of a vibrato. Bechet lives in the process, and Wilber's identity stands out, too.

The Mingus Dynasty was formed by Mingus' widow, Susan, to keep *that* body of music alive. A smashing idea — although everybody is quick to pay lip-service to the great Charles, when was the last time you dropped into a club and heard somebody working out on *Tiz Nazi USA* or *Pithecanthropus Erectus?* Right, never. The problem with the Dynasty has been the constant flow of people through it — the volatile Mr. Mingus never even went through musicians that quickly. The result has been that every time somebody new joins on, he has to learn the book. Generally, the patience of some of the members not being the greatest, they end up resorting to the half-dozen standards that the band has been playing since its inception — *Porkpie Hat*, etc. Also, the band took a nose-dive in authenticity and *Mingusian* spirit (so very, very important) when Dannie Richmond and Jimmy Knepper (who refers to the Dynasty as a "necrophilia band") departed. I'm happy to report that Knepper is back, the band has just waxed its third LP and they are learning new tunes. A Mingus band can't be the same without Mingus — there was too much of him in every performance — but the Dynasty is the next best thing because, apparently, it's that or nothing.

Don Cherry

Pic: Jane March

I will admit that I haven't heard the Vibration Society, who are attempting to do for Rahsaan Roland Kirk what the Dynasty does for Mingus. They are run by Rahsaan's widow, Dorthaan and I think they are going to run into problems. First of all, Rahsaan was a brilliant soloist and a forceful personality, *not* a composer. By putting together his former sidemen to play his tunes, you're not going to capture his spirit, *guaranteed.* Second of all, if you attempt to have a tenor player in Kirk's place, there is no way that he is going to live up to the three-horn playing antics of Rahsaan, who was a genius but a very, very unique genius. I'll catch the Vibration Society at the Kool Jazz Festival and I'll make sure to report.

Lastly, Sphere. Ben Riley, Charlie Rouse, Buster Williams, Kenny Barron and the music of, you guessed it, Thelonious *Sphere* Monk. Riley and Rouse put in many, many years with Monk and they are the right guys for the post. Buster Williams is a strong, resourceful bass player and he is just right, too.

The weakness here, as evidenced by their premier engagement, also at Lush Life, was pianist Barron, who never really wrapped Monk around his own playing. He didn't comp with sharp witty Monkisms and he seemed most comfortable when the band was playing originals and standards (which they mix in to the Monk oeuvres). It caused the band to lack the authority it should have (Barry Harris would be perfect). But the thought that they will be out there playing all those Monk tunes that I love so much, is exciting and important. I wonder if Barron and Williams, however, won't start to feel stunted in Monk's very personal world. Stay tuned.

I'm sure that by the time you read this, another living repertory ensemble or two will surface. I think it's great — it also helps take a number of musicians who might be floundering in the freelance sea and gives them a direction. Of course, once this starts the ideas are endless — people and genres who could use rediscovery with the valuable hindsight of time. Send any thoughts to your favourite musicians.

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* *Lee Jeske is JAZZ magazine's US correspondent, based in New York.*

Reports From . . .

. . . Brisbane

By Jim Barlow

Salubrious weather, a successful jazz carnival and superlative performances from local and interstate musicians transformed May Day and the advent of winter in Brisbane into a pageant of memorable happenings. The momentum of jazz activity here increases weekly and is sustained with special events and increasing public support and acceptance. The FREEPS Jazz Concert held in Botanical Gardens on Sunday May 2 under the aegis of the Brisbane Jazz Club (John Morris Pres.) and Brisbane City Council (John Aitken Co-ordinator and Compere) attracted an audience of over 4000 people. The actual commencement of the jazz carnival was Saturday May 1 at the riverside setting of the Adventurer's Club, Kangaroo Point, with a non-stop program of bands from 1 pm onwards; every style was represented from Neanderthal Man to Bionic Electronics.

During the weekend, i.e. to 6 pm Monday, no less than 40 bands or groups participated. Marshalling this galaxy of talent to the stage was Neil Strand (a numbers man, he) and your humble scribe, and happily it was achieved with only minor drama and almost no dented egos. One cannot praise too highly the talent and dedication of local musicians as set followed set with superb jazz being played but why do the guys under-rate themselves? When the audience is applauding like made, face them and take a bow for God's sake!

A Saturday night concert by the Carnival's guest stars Don Burrows and George Golla was well patronised by a rapt and perceptive audience. The backing rhythm section on some numbers was Clare Hansson (piano), Dave Croft (bs), and Tony Hopkins (drs), who excelled themselves. Sunday was the big day with the FREEPS concert in the Botanical Gardens just across the river from the club. Glorious sunshine, free hamburgers, bubbly under the trees and great jazz had some of the crowd of 4000 thinking Nirvana was at hand. Brisbane Jazz Club Big Band (M.D. John Morris) kicked off in great style followed by US expatriate Al Leonard with Trombones 5; he borrowed four from the Big Band! The Pacific Jazzmen (M.D. Perc Cramb), with Al Leonard sitting in, set 8,000 feet tapping. Their *Washington Lee Swing* was a show stopper! Then the official opening by the Deputy Mayor Ald. Len Ardill performed very correctly and knowledgeably and welcomed the carnival's special guests Don Burrows and George Golla.

A short set from Don and George gave way to yet another change of style, a 16-voice jazz choir Scat (M.D. Harley Axford). Scat will travel to the US in January for concerts in San Francisco and Los Angeles. They sang standards stylishly with good control of dynamics and attack, spiced with a little off-beat humour. Grand finale produced a further Big Band session featuring dynamic vocalist Ian Frazer, overcoming a severe handicap with tenacity and zest. It's the first time I've seen a wheelchair swing a band! The jazz parade continued at the Adventurers Club with a serendipitous display of local players. No better situation could be devised to focus public attention on the usually unsung, underestimated and underpaid talent of indigenous musicians. Sunday evening saw the final concert by Don Burrows and George Golla with the duo being introduced to the super capacity audience by the ABC's long time jazz presenter Bruce Short. And surprise surprise, "Shorty" produced a photo of Don at his first gig, aged 16!

On Monday afternoon, youth had its fling with some outstanding large and small groups; Kerri Harvey's Quintet was a very fine jazz-rock band. The Wavell State High Jazz Ensemble (M.D. Roy Theoharris) demonstrated the style which has won them acclaim in both Brisbane and Sydney — "meticulous" describes their versions of the modern big band charts. Later we heard from the Ipswich based Adonis showband (M.D. Arthur Gilbert) who swung like crazy with Basie-style numbers. This band made a US tour last year playing at Toronto and Disneyland. Ages range from 11 to 18 years, with a tiny 11 year old trombone player and an even smaller 11 year old drummer, almost invisible behind his traps, and who was *so* shy when I brought him down to centre stage. A shy drummer yet? The B.J.C. Big Band brought the carnival to a close at 6 pm leaving many thousands of Brisbanites with joyous memories of a super swinging jazz event and the promise of even bigger and better next year. Congratulations to Johnny Morris and the Brisbane Jazz Club for this very successful show. Any interstate jazzmen who would like to enjoy sunshine and carnival next year contact John or this writer.

The Queensland Jazz Action Society's reputation for new initiatives was further enhanced by workshops and concerts arranged for the weekend May 8th to 9th. Inaugural sessions featured McJad (Tony Gould and Keith Hounslow) whose free jazz improvisations sparkled like vintage champagne at the Gardens Point Campus Club. The workshops provided musicians with brilliant insights into McJad's philosophy on improvisation, and the Sunday afternoon concert had a rhythmic section backing of two world class players now resident in Brisbane: Lach Easton (bass violin) and Edward Vining (drums). Extended versions of *Dearly Beloved, Just Blues* and *Someday My Prince Will Come* brought wave after wave of applause from an audience who related to every harmonic shift, dynamic subtlety and improvisational interplay within the quartet. This was not dance music but classical chamber jazz in every sense. The QJAS forthcoming newsletter will expound in greater detail the glories of that Sunday afternoon — not forgetting the locals Eric Hall Quintet and the Tandem Tenors of Roy Theoharris and Alan Arthy. May their shadows never grow dim. My next JAZZ Magazine report will tour the many Brisbane jazz venues and talk to both jazz personalities and management. Those of us who are involved in recorded jazz on radio know one thing for sure: people who claim to love jazz have to get out and support with their dollars and cents those *live* jazz performances at clubs and concerts, otherwise the present high popularity of the art form will wither and fade.

. . . Canberra

By Carl Witty

Canberrans would have noted with interest but not surprise the piece in the last issue of JAZZ Magazine relating to the recent exploits of long-time Canberra resident and reed player, Greg Gibson. Greg has spent much of the past twenty years in and out of Australia on postings to far-flung embassies. His current sojourn is in London where he has been blowing with a number of expatriate Aussies. Notable among these are Don Harper (violin) who recently spent some time back in Australia and Chris Karan who is best known on this side of the world for his work as drummer with Dudley Moore. Greg's contribution to Australian jazz is well-known and it will be good to see him back on these shores again.

The early part of the year saw visits by a plethora of jazz luminaries brought about in the main by the Southern Cross Club's program of good music. The Cross's current series is featuring country and western. No doubt there will be more jazz to come.

Seen recently in town: brilliantly professional performances by George Benson, Cleo Laine and Roberta Flack. Whilst purists might not regard these artists as "jazz" one should not overlook the fact that often the backing bands for the star attractions contain musicians who are top-line jazz artists in their own right.

The Canberra Jazz Club recently staged a concert in celebration of Benny Goodman's 73rd birthday. Guest musicians for the event were Graham Coyle from Melbourne (Graham recently returned to the southern capital after spending some years in Canberra) and Mick Jackman from Sydney's Galapagos Duck. Along with these gentlemen on piano and vibes respectively, appeared Terry Wynn (reeds), John Stear (bass) and Ian Hill (drums). The concert was well attended by an enthusiastic crowd who lent great support to a spirited if under rehearsed performance of many Goodman classics. The function was held in the main auditorium of the Southern Cross Club. Canberra readers will be aware of the inherent problems involved in pre-

Pic: Gordon Benjamin

Marilyn Mendez

senting bands in this unfortunately shaped room.

The Pot Belly Tavern has commenced its regular winter Sunday afternoon sessions with the Marilyn Mendez Band. The season usually extends to mid-September and horn players at a loose end on a Sunday are most welcome to sit in; it happens in the 'big smoke' — so why not here? The Mendez band's pianist Vince Genova made a predictably favourable impression when he recently sat in for a couple of sets with Johnny Nicol's band at Arthur's Court in North Sydney.

Also on Sunday afternoons, the Canberra Yacht Club features J.B. and the Jazzmen and the Old Canberra Inn is offering the Jerrabomberra Jazz Band. Add to this the occasional jazz at the Texas Tavern and the Canberra Jazz Club and one could be spread pretty thin on a Sunday.

The town of Merimbula on the south coast of New South Wales recently played host to many jazz musicians during the Queen's Birthday long weekend. The occasion was the second Merimbula Jazz Festival. The four-day event was typical of the community spirited provincial jazz festivals that are regular events around the state. It's pleasing to see the local councils getting behind these ventures. During the same weekend the Parkes community had their own jazz event and the Wagga folks staged a reception to mark the birthday of veteran pianist John Ansell. Canberra was bereft of traditional musicians for the duration of the weekend to the extent that haunts normally "trad" were forced to hire bands in the bucolic style or in one case "jazz moderne".

The brevity of this report reflects the paucity of jazz activity in recent weeks.

What's on in Canberra . . .

Saturday afternoon. Hotel Dickson, the Fortified Few; ANU Bar, Gerry Paterson Trio.
Saturday night. Bogart's, Charlie Russell Trio; Satay Hut, Marilyn Mendez Band.
Sunday afternoon. Old Canberra Inn, Jerrabomberra J.B.; Canberra Yacht Club, J.B. and the Jazzmen; The Pot Belly, Marilyn Mendez Band; The Texas Tavern, occasional jazz (check).
Sunday night. The Canberra Jazz Club at the Southern Cross, occasional jazz (check).
Thursday. The Contented Soul, Jerrabomberra J.B. or Pierre's Hot 4.
Friday. Contented Soul, Jerrabomberra J.B. or Pierre's Hot 4; Bogart's, Charlie Russell Trio; Satay Hut, Marilyn Mendez Band; Hotel Ainslie, Fortified Few; Boot and Flogger, J.B. and the Jazzmen.

. . .Melbourne

By Adrian Jackson

Just a brief report from early May, as I'm off to the USA for a month.

The Victorian Jazz Club has moved base from the Manor House to the Museum Hotel (LaTrobe St, city), which it is agreed, is a much better venue. Attendances have been good, giving the VJC a real shot in the arm. Vibist Alan Lee and pianist Graham Coyle are now playing duets every Monday night at the New Orleans Tavern (Chapel St, South Yarra); the repertoire includes a lot of Jelly Roll Morton, and John Lewis. Singer Suzie Dickinson is now working every Saturday afternoon at the Argo Inn (Argo St, South Yarra) with a quartet including Ron Anderson on reeds. Odwalla's April concert at The Met was a success, with guest Steve Miller on trombone giving the band a real boost. Brian Brown and Bob Sedergreen completed the concert with some very musical duets. Peter Gaudion's Blues Express is now playing Thursdays at the Anchor and Hope in Richmond, with Judy Jacques on vocals and the excellent Fred Parkes on clarinet — a straighter dixie bag than what they do at the Beaconsfield, but certainly well worth hearing. Expatriate pianist Allan Zavod, who is by now in the States to rejoin Jean-Luc Ponty's band, drew good crowds to a series of trio performances at Blues Alley, with Jeremy Alsop on bass guitar and David Jones on drums. The first four 'Jazz on Tuesday' concerts at the Prince of Wales in St Kilda, with Pyramid, Tony Gould, Jeff Pressing's World Rhythm Band, and Australian Jazz Ensemble, were all successful. Sammy Price appeared at the Beaconsfield with Geoff Bull, John Scurry, Derek Capewell and Allan Browne — a very enjoyable night, and not only for Sammy's piano playing: he was full of wisecracks, such as when he was requested by play *Everthing is Peaches in South Georgia.* He growled, "Well, bully for South Georgia! You sound like the guy who asked me to play *Stars Fell On Alabama*, I told him it shoulda been bricks!" Unfortunately, he looks like being the last artist to tour here for the foreseeable future.

. . .Parkes

By Gillian Alm

The Central West Jazz Club held their first Jazz Triduum over the Queen's Birthday Weekend. Bernie Crowe, Secretary and Co-ordinator, and Barry Nash, President and general slave, should give themselves, plus those who supported and assisted, a resounding pat on the back.

Parkes Leagues Club and the RSL Club were the two venues and one wonders if either of these hallowed halls will ever be the same again!

Thirteen bands registered and musicians arrived from Wollongong, Campbelltown, Cowra, Sydney, Bathurst, Orange, Narromine, Dubbo and local groups from Forbes and Parkes.

Noel Crow's Jazzmen, from Sydney, just back from Sacramento, gave a brilliant concert on the Saturday night to a large auditorium, so packed with writhing bodies they were hanging on to the patterns in the wallpaper for support.

I have heard Noel's lads get a crowd jumping (oh sweet memories of the Minghua jazz cruise, September '81) but there was sheer magic this night. The crowd wanted more — they got an extra hour! Great stuff! I wouldn't mind a pup from their shiny new vests.

An extra special mention for the beautiful sounds which emanated from the Dubbo Jazz Band. Ron Allen's trumpet playing was inspired and all his boys hung in there with him. Dick Andrews travelled once again from Gosford to join the gang. Dick and Ron gave us a few flute duets which were spontaneous and polished. The Sweet Sherry Stompers from the Parkes area always got the dance crowd going. I'm one who drove back to Dubbo in bare feet.

I saw quite a number of familiar Sydney faces in the crowds and the Sydney Jazz Club was represented by their Vice-President Terry Phillips. Di and Ed Gaston were guests of Bernie and Dawn Crowe and apart from holding two instrument clinics Ed — that marvellous bassist — threw his lot in with the Dubbo J.B. and jammed away with them. He even surprised us all with a clarinet solo!

All the music was toe-tapping fun. Most musicians travelled a fair way, but I'm sure they felt rewarded by the reception they got.

The jam sessions during the dinner break, which happened at the Commercial Hotel, were an eye-opener for the patrons, and a delight for the genial publican. It never ceases to amaze me how so many musicians, with instruments, plus glasses filled, can fit into one small corner, make such great sounds and not spill a drop. Is it artistry, dexterity, dedication, determination or desperation?

Bernie Crowe's deliverance — one could hardly call it a speech — to the masses on Sunday night at the RSL was a gem. I hope someone has it on tape. They could make a fortune (blackmailing Bernie for starters). Di Gaston contributed to the madness of it all.

All in all it was a highly successful festival. New jazz ground has been broken. Let's hope it will be bigger and even better still next year.

PARKES JAZZ
TRIDUUM

The parade during Parkes Jazz Triduum. On banner: Derek Fellows & Merv Hetherington. On drum: Secretary Bernie Crowe. On trombones: Marshall McMahon and Terry Phillips.

. . . Sydney

By Eric Myers

Remember the 'beatnik' era of the 1950s? There are some of us — and I have to say I'm one — who are too young to have known it first-hand. We therefore must have recourse to the dictionary, where the 'beatnik' is defined as a 'defiantly unconventional young person affecting strange modes of dress, and holding ultra-modern opinions'. Hmmmm . . .

Whether this definition applies to the members of Dale Barlow's group, the Benders, is a matter for speculation. Still, the members of this quartet — Barlow (tenor saxophone), Chris Abrahams (piano), Lloyd Swanton (bass) and Andrew Gander (drums) — have revived something of the spirit of the beatnik era every Thursday night at their Paradise Jazz Club gig. They wear horn-rimmed dark glasses, berets, and goatee-style beards — all of which were originally symbols of the bebop movement in the 1940s and were widely adopted later by the 'hipsters' of the 1950s. Visually, therefore, they are somewhat startling, especially when Andrew Gander appears on stage in motor-cycle crash helmet and goggles.

Despite this harmless gimmickry, which might be diverting for some of their fans, it is their music which makes the Benders one of the more interesting groups playing in Sydney today. They are playing fierce, full-blooded hard-bop every Thursday night, drawing an attentive audience which comes primarily to hear the music. (It is also a good night for other musicians to drop by and sit in.)

Their repertoire includes seminal jazz standards by black composers such as Thelonius Monk, Ornette Coleman and Mal Waldron, plus a sprinkling of excellent originals by Chris Abrahams. It is refreshing to see a group really *playing* — featuring long solos, with each soloist stretching out over a rhythm section which is always trying something on, and attempting interesting rhythmic ideas. This is one of the more adventurous rhythm sections in Sydney jazz.

Pic: Peter Sinclair

Dale Barlow: horn-rimmed dark glasses, berets, and goatee-style beards . . . In the background is bassist Lloyd Swanton.

Local fans have only until the end of July to hear Dale Barlow in this context. On August 1 he leaves for a three-weeks tour of Indonesia with Indra Lesmana's group Children of Fantasy, then goes on immediately to New York for a period of study at the source.

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It is probably well-known in the jazz world by now that the Sydney Morning Herald has had a change in jazz critic (see '. . . And We've Also Heard' p. 46). There is one saving grace about the change — at least the Herald still has a writer doing jazz reviews. Not so long ago Bruce Johnson, who was writing a weekly column concerned with jazz on radio in the Herald's Monday radio/television supplement was dropped (and not replaced) when that paper introduced its new supplement called The Guide. Johnson's was the only such column in the Sydney press, and was highly valued by jazz buffs.

In addition, The Guide re-introduced record reviews to the Herald under three headings: Classical, Pop and Rock. No mention of Jazz, however.

It is not long since Dick Scott's regular 'Jazzaround' column in Friday's Daily Mirror was dropped. Reason: lack of space, we're told.

At a time when jazz is struggling to get a good press in Sydney, these can only be regarded as retrograde steps, and must be of concern to those who wish to see jazz given a fair go in relation to the other art forms.

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Record Reviews

The Dick Hughes' Famous Five with
MERV
ACHESON
45
Merv Acheson 60th Birthday Concert

MERV ACHESON WITH DICK HUGHES FAMOUS FIVE
"Merv Acheson's 60th Birthday Concert" (2MBS-FM Jazz 1)

This was recorded at a Jazz Action Society Concert at the Musicians' Club on March 2, to mark tenor sax player Merv Acheson's 60th birthday, and is the first release on the jazz label of radio station 2MBS-FM.

Trumpet player Bruce Johnson was so enamoured of the resulting recording that he decided to ignore the occasional fluffs and issue it. And how right he was. The atmosphere, with a knowledgeable audience, was ideal, and the Famous Five — a jam band of the type found along 52nd Street in the late '30s and early '40s — lived up to the occasion.

The three melody instrumentalists — Acheson, Johnson and Hughes on piano — have many things in common: a sense of drama, an ability to make their statements in one or two choruses, to color them with smears, slurs, tremoloes, half-valving, growls, flares. In other words they speak the true language of jazz.

The band was in top form that night, which belonged to Acheson. Johnson points out in the sleeve notes that "Merv tends to be thought of as a rip-em-up, lay-em-down tenor player, a tenor full of bombast and braggadocio". And there is plenty of evidence on this disc to support the theory. But behind the rather tough exterior Acheson, though he would be embarrassed to admit it, is a gentle, kindly person. And this aspect of his character is captured on two remarkable tracks.

The first is *Mood Indigo* where he switches to clarinet and, barely above a whisper, captures the delicate, sad intimacy of the tune. It is a performance full of noble gentleness, wonderfully poised and highly disciplined.

Then there is the old Count Basie tune *Blue And Sentimental*, which Acheson has played countless times in his long career. Here he is reflective as he rhapsodises gently to the poignant piano punctuations of Hughes. This can rank with Herschel Evans's classic version of the tune on the original Basie recording.

If these two tracks are the highlights, the rest of the disc isn't far behind in quality.

True, most of the vehicles are tried old warhorses — *Love Is Just Around The Corner, Shimmy Like My Sister Kate, Lonesome Road, Georgia* — but the solo voices are so individual that they take on a fresh aspect.

Acheson lays out on *Georgia*, a fine, melodic feature for Johnson's rich-toned trumpet, but on the only original on the set — *One For The Count* boots in dark and brooding, full of menace.

Hughes's sparse piano work is ideal for the group and on more than one track he bows in homage to one of his idols, Jess Stacy.

The rhythm duo of Alan Geddes (drums) and John Edgecombe (bass guitar) play exactly as they should, unobtrusively. But they are there increasing the tension when the pressure goes on.

And if it is the swaggering, big-shouldered tenor sax of Merv Acheson you are looking for, it is there on the final number — a rollicking, shouting outing on Mary Lou Williams's *Morning Glory*.

Mike Williams

Readers who have trouble obtaining the Merv Acheson LP locally should write to Bruce Johnson, 2 Young Street, Croydon NSW 2132, indicating how many copies they want. Include a cheque for $9 per copy, adding a total of $1.50 for postage and packing.

CROSSFIRE
Hysterical Rochords

CROSSFIRE
"Hysterical Rochords" (WEA 600112)

This is certainly the best fusion LP so far produced in this country. If there is a more impressive one in the jazz/rock area, I am yet to hear it. Crossfire have made a number of excellent albums during their 8-year history, but this one sees Mick Kenny (keyboards) and Jim Kelly (guitar) on a new level of maturity as composers. Their earlier compositions have always been good — there is no doubt about that — but they have been developing steadily as writers, and *Hysterical Rochords* is a zenith for them — an achievement worthy of the noble work they have put into their original music for nearly a decade.

Why is it such a good LP? Firstly, the playing is uniformly immaculate. Other than Kenny and Kelly, the group includes Ian Bloxsom (percussion), Tony Buchanan (soprano and tenor saxophones), Phil Scorgie (bass guitar), and Steve Hopes (drums). These recording sessions took place towards the end of 1981, and were an epilogue for this particular Crossfire line-up, which had been together two years, and had done two earlier LPs plus the celebrated tours with Michael Franks and Lee Ritenour. As one might expect, the group is exceedingly tight and well-integrated, with each player in familiar territory, entirely at home, and obviously playing with a warm knowledge of the styles of the others. One would be hard put to find an unsure moment on the whole album.

Sound-wise too, this LP is a triumph, and here much of the credit must go to the ubiquitous sound engineer Martin Benge who has been responsible for so many outstanding jazz albums. I know of no other Australian LP (or for that matter American) which has on it a warmer saxophone sound than Tony Buchanan's, or a more beautiful electric guitar than Jim Kelly's. The powerful bass and drums combination of Phil Scorgie and Steve Hopes (which often used to be a little over-powerful in their live performances) is here balanced superbly in relation to the other instruments, so that one can enjoy the solos up-front, and appreciate the inner dimensions of the rhythmic feels that the group so brilliantly employs.

There are six tracks, which take the listener through a comprehensive range of sounds and influences. The opening track *No Hands Jive* (Kelly) is a straight-ahead jazz/rock workout, with a blistering theme articulated in unison. After a half-tempo section, the rhythm doubles and there is some inspired writing by Mick Kenny for a 6-piece horn section. The piece then settles into a relaxed Latin/rock feel for the solos. This piece moves rapidly from section to section as if the band is preparing the listener for a wide

Record Reviews

range of moods. There is a snatch of ironic Latin percussion madness before Jim Kelly takes off on a soaring, singing solo. Kelly too is giving notice that this is ging to be an inspired session.

The title track *Hysterical Rochords* (another ingenious title from the master punster Mick Kenny) has a slow-moving, gospel-flavoured theme. I find this a profoundly moving and beautiful piece. There are many lovely moments on this LP, but none more exquisite than on this track. Listen to Ian Bloxsom's percussion work behind Kenny's acoustic piano solo and, after the tenor sax solo, the articulation of the melody briefly by Kenny, accompanied by Bloxsom on glockenspiel. Bloxsom has an uncanny ability to sympathetically enhance Kenny's piano sounds. The end of the piece sees Kelly soaring majestically over a repeated four-bar melodic riff.

A Youth In Asia (Kenny) is the album's *tour de force*. It is an extraordinary collection of musical fragments, presumably inspired by Mick Kenny's experiences on the Crossfire tour of Asia in 1978. The listener needs to give this piece serious attention, as one might approach a difficult piece of classical music. A passionate composition, it is dissonant and dark in places, and the mood changes regularly as Crossfire moves through the sections which make up this inspired work. Notice the sophistication of the rhythmic feels which the band uses in the rock sections — here are musicians who have an intimate understanding of rock and funk feels; they are totally familiar with the idiom.

The dark intensity of the Kenny compositions are admirably balanced by the lighter, breezier Kelly compositions. *Miles Away* (Kelly) is one which restores the balance. It has some of the theme stated by Kenny on electric piano and Bloxsom on marimba — an unusual sound — and features, among other things, an excellent, funky piano solo by Kenny.

Trinity (Kenny) is a reflective, slow-moving piece with dark, rich chord changes that shimmer with beauty. Tony Buchanan's saxophone solo is a highlight — playing with understatement, always within himself, yet full of passion, warmth and depth. The last, extended chord is something of a mystery.

Let It Slide Down Easy (Kelly) concludes the LP with a taste of pure rock-and-roll. The rhythmic feel is amended after the statement of the theme to capture that laid-back half-tempo style with a huge back beat, that is so much part of today's rock music. Note the band's use of dynamics, and the establishment of a relaxed feel at the beginning of Kelly's guitar solo. This is a model of how a sensitive band plays sympathetically with the soloist, letting the energy emerge naturally. Following the doubling of the time by the rhythm section, the solo is built to a roaring climax, with Jim Kelly giving the heavy metal idiom a solid workout.

Hysterical Rochords is a major achievement. If there is any justice in music (there isn't, of course) this LP should win Crossfire a wider audience than the mere cult following they have enjoyed for many years. It may bring them attention in the USA and European countries, where they are now doing a series of concerts. What I like about Crossfire is that their music is, above all, positive and life-affirming, reflecting a youthful exuberance in the exploration of sound, and a spirit that comes through forcefully — it has, I think, something to do with genuine love of the music.

Eric Myers

THE
Thad Jones
Mel Lewis
QUARTET

THAD JONES & MEL LEWIS "The Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Quartet" (Artists House AH 9403)

The 1950s were one of those not so odd times in jazz when things were either over-rated — some examples of 'West Coast' jazz, for instance — or compared remorselessly and always unfavourably with the very best jazz of the past.

By the late fifties, Count Basie and Duke Ellington were each leading one of their best bands ever, but many critics begrudged them the mildest praise. Those bands of the thirties and forties were evoked monotonously.

Louis Armstrong was, admittedly, presenting a safe concert formula, but nobody seemed ready to concede that the *Satch Plays Fats* and *Louis Armstrong Plays W.C. Handy* albums were latter day masterpieces. Nor would anybody admit that *Mack The Knife* was a great pop record — as good as almost any of his pop efforts of the past.

There was a lot going on in the fifties. Cool jazz, hard bop and the emminently successful experiments of Charles Mingus and Miles Davis (plus a range of other endeavours that were at the least interesting) could be heard at the same time as the work of older masters, such as Coleman Hawkins, at the height of their expressive powers, if not in the first flush of creativity. I daresay the critics were confused. I was very confused by the critics. So many things sounded so good to me, and so many of the Herman J. Pipesuckers were leery about them. When, recently, I heard the venerable Eric Child agreeing to some degree with my point of view, I knew that vindication had come at last.

In a healthier critical climate, Thad Jones would have been recognised as one of the very best of a range of excellent trumpet players emerging at the time. Perhaps as important a voice as was Buck Clayton in the swing era. Not a startling innovator, but a subtly original stylist firmly rooted in the bop tradition. He was never quite so violently resisted as Clark Terry — whose style was more obviously quirky — nor was he so lavishly praised as Terry was in later years. While Jones's individuality is less 'on display' than Terry's; in a deeper musical sense he is a little more original. Less flashy, he is every bit as technically accomplished.

Jones came to some prominence in the Basie band, where his compact, complex yet forceful solos were used as a foil for the more brav-

NOTES ON OUR RECORD REVIEWERS

JOHN CLARE writes on jazz fortnightly for the Financial Review, and general articles, including some jazz, for the National Times.

BILL HAESLER is one of Australia's leading authorities on traditional jazz.

DR. BRUCE JOHNSON is a jazz musician, a broadcaster on 2MBS-FM, and the editor of the Sydney Jazz Club's Quarterly Rag.

NIELS NIELSEN broadcasts on jazz for Brisbane's 4MBS-FM, and leads a jazz appreciation class for the Queensland Education Department.

DR. CLEMENT SEMMLER, former Deputy-Chairman of the ABC, writes on jazz and other subjects for The Bulletin.

MIKE WILLIAMS is the jazz columnist with Sydney's Daily Telegraph.

ura declamations of Joe Newman — who has always kept one foot in the swing era. They were as interesting together in their way as Clayton and Harry Edison in the first great Basie band, but the critics were sceptical.

Thelonious Monk then gave Jones the opportunity to prove his ability over longer solo distances, in both a big band and a quintet. His fluency and fertility were outstanding, and in many ways he was the ideal trumpet player for Monk. Above all, Jones is a master of construction. His are some of the best-made solos in jazz. His tone and inflections are entirely his own, his articulation exemplary. Yet he has never seized the imagination of most jazz critics. He is subtle without making a laboured point of understatement. He has the inner fire.

This album presents Jones in perhaps the loosest improvising situation in which we have heard him. Not that it is in any way avant-garde. It is in fact fairly typical contemporary hard bop, wherein the original chord sequences are usually adhered to for one or two choruses, and then the substitutions proliferate. The drums are constantly boiling and dropping to a simmer; driving straight ahead and then emphasising cross rhythms. Jones judiciously allows the drums to do the work at times; coming in with showers of sparks a moment after a drum barrage, or at other times following such barrage with a sudden drop to the lower register. He leaves spaces, but his compact sense of construction does not desert him. Nor does he ignore the opportunities presented to spring harmonic and dynamic surprises.

A very satisfying and often exciting album, it repays repeated hearings. Harold Danko's piano solo on *Autumn Leaves* is outstanding, with echoes of Billy Taylor. Need I say aything about the bassist Rufus Reid? Bass players will buy this album on the strength of his presence. While Mel Lewis is not in the class of Thad Jones's brother Elvin, he is nevertheless a top small-group drummer.

John Clare

CHET BAKER
"Once Upon a Summertime" (Artists House AH 9411)

Chet Baker is a very different kettle of fish to Thad Jones. If anything, he got too much praise too soon. Yet it cannot be denied that he had something there. A trumpet sound that was intimate, soft, yet bright at times as fresh yellow paint. A poignant lyrical gift and a pleasing sense of construction, in the tradition of Bix Beiderbecke and Lester Young.

He had neither the drive nor the technique to take a rhythm section by the throat and hurl it into greatness — as, for instance Clifford Brown, who was reputed to have been slightly bitter about the attention given Baker.

Chet Baker needed a completely sympathetic setting, which would sustain his fragile inventions with care. The man himself was fragile: baby faced and pretty as the young Truman Capote, he was pulled down easily by drugs, and has emerged recently from hopeless addiction, a leather-faced, gaunt derelict. At least that is how he looks, but it is obvious from his playing that he has at last got himself under control.

I heard a track from this album on

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Record Reviews

the radio before I got my copy, and it took me three guesses before I decided it was Baker playing. One of those guesses — quickly discarded — was Blue Mitchell. That's how much firmer his sound has become. He still doesn't seem to have any high register to speak of, but there is plenty of strength and projection in his sound, and his technique is sure.

Of course, increased facility does not always mean increased expressiveness, or even increased musical interest. Miles Davis is more expressive, and more interesting on a purely musical level than Al Hirt. To be specific: has Chet Baker lost something in becoming more robust?

Of course he has. In the early days Baker could play notes above the stave that were so pure that they took on some of the quality of a clarinet, and some of the disembodied sound of a zinc or wooden cornetto. Notes that were also so weakly projected that it is doubtful that you would have heard him unamplified over any but the softest rhythm section. A lot of the little boy lost quality has gone (Baker playing *Little Man You've Had a Busy Day* was a most extraordinary thing to hear).

And of course something has been gained. Baker is now a bebop player. As opposed to what? He was never really cool, for what that term is worth. Let us just say, he is now a tougher player. Perhaps his current work would be a lot less interesting if we did not have the contrast of his earlier recordings. I found it interesting and satisfying, however, before I realised it was he. Anyone who has been intrigued by Baker will want this recording, and will no doubt play it many times before making firm judgements. I leave it open.

Front line partner Gregory Herbert (tenor sax) displays an interesting juxtaposition of old and new sources. The rhythm section is the same as that for Thad Jones — Harold Danko (piano) and Mel Lewis (drums) — except that Ron Carter (bass) replaces Rufus Reid. Needless to say, it drives powerfully. And so does Baker, albeit with relatively spare lines.

John Clare

DON BURROWS
"Sara Dane" (Cherry Pie Records LD37856)

This is basically an album for an orchestra of flutes — bass flute, alto flute, concert flute, B flat school flute, bamboo flutes — plus rhythm section. The distinctive thing about it

DIGITALLY RECORDED
Don Burrows
Sara Dane
Inspired by the T.V. series

is that the flute orchestra is merely one man — Don Burrows — who multi-tracks between 6 and 15 flutes on each track. It is, in my view, an astonishing accomplishment, showing once again that for pure musicianship in the recording studio, Burrows has few peers in Australian music.

The music, devised for the Australian television production *Sara Dane,* is beautifully arranged by Julian Lee. In addition to Burrows, the rhythm section features top Sydney session musicians, most of whom are veterans of the fusion group Crossfire: Mark Reilly (drums), Jim Kelly (acoustic and electric guitars) and Ian Bloxsom (percussion) are, of course, with Crossfire now. Phil Scorgie (electric bass) was with them for two years. The other two players are the

A GREAT NEW ALBUM

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Sara Dane 37856

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RECUERDOS
DRINK TO ME ONLY WITH THINE EYES
ANNIE LAURIE
GOLDEN SLUMBER

LONDONDERRY AIR
LAST ROSE OF SUMMER
MULL OF KINTYRE
ALL THROUGH THE NIGHT
SARA'S THEME
(Original Sara Dane Series Theme)

Don Burrows
Sara Dane
Inspired by the T.V. series
A CHERRY PIE RELEASE

MUSIC INSPIRED BY THE T.V. SERIES 'SARA DANE'
Digitally Mastered. An Audiophile album on records & tapes

arranger Julian Lee himself (electric and acoustic pianos, synthesiser) and Sam McNally (synthesisers).

The purists will maintain that this is not a jazz record. What I would prefer to say is that it shows what beautiful music can be produced by players who understand intimately the jazz and/or fusion idioms. The music is lush and lyrical and, in my view, could only have been produced by jazz-oriented musicians. Played by, say, straight classical musicians, it would have had, no doubt, a completely different (and probably lifeless) character.

Still, the jazz listener will not expect too much. Certainly the LP has more to do with commercial values than with jazz as an art form. There are some spirited solos, but generally the LP provides what one would expect from backing for a drama: film music — reflective, atmospheric, evocative. The melodies are traditional and romantic: *All Through The Night*, *Annie Laurie*, *Londonderry Air* (or *Danny Boy*, as it is much better known), *In The Gloaming*, *Drink To Me Only With Thine Eyes* and so on — given beautiful settings through the pen of Julian Lee. Paul McCartney's *Mull Of Kintyre* is a new song, but takes to this treatment like a duck to water.

There are two aspects of Don Burrows's playing on *Sara Dane* which I am drawn to. Firstly, the beautiful sound of his flute playing, which is captured on this digitally recorded LP. There has always been discussion in the jazz world as to the nature of Burrows's world-class musicianship. Some maintain that it is the clarinet (Burrows's own favourite instrument) which is his forte. It might be interesting for some to know that John Sangster is on record as saying that he puts Burrows, along with James Galway, among the three top flautists in the world. After hearing this LP, it is hard not to disagree. It is interesting to compare Burrows's work with James Galway's playing on the LP *Sometimes When We Touch* (RCA VRL 17332) which Galway recorded recently with Cleo Laine. I think that Burrows is the superior flautist, chiefly because of his flexibility and improvisational ability. Galway, on the other hand, plays only written lines that are stolid and stodgy.

The second distinctive aspect of Burrows's playing is his rhythmic drive, which is magnified through multi-tracking. The listener is buffeted by gentle waves of flute section work, making this a most reassuring and relaxing LP.

Sara Dane will no doubt find itself primarily on the middle-of-the-road radio playlists. However, I daresay that some of the tracks would not be out of place on Ian Neil's ABC program *Music To Midnight*.

Eric Myers

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Record Reviews

sonny criss
crisscraft

SONNY CRISS

"Crisscraft" (Muse 5068); "Saturday Morning" (Xanadu 105); "Out of Nowhere" (Muse MR 5089)

The irony of the black jazz musician's situation in his own country is by now a weathered cliche: ignored in the US, feted everywhere else; forced to endure the shabbiest of working conditions in his homeland, yet idolised in Europe. It is a situation which at one time or another has made exiles, temporary or permanent, of many of America's best jazz musicians. In the case of Sonny Criss the cliche must be brought out and polished up again. It must have seemed to him that irony was a condition of life and not simply an occasional tap on the funnybone. In 1968 he won the Talent Deserving of Wider Recognition section of the *Down Beat* International Critics Poll. He could not have missed the irony of this: 1968 was, in terms of recognition and promise, the best year of his life. Following standing ovations at Newport, there were extravagant offers of contracts for recording and concert performances. Most of them came to nothing, and if he failed to win the award again it was for the very reason he should have won it every year of his career: lack of recognition.

There are two kinds of artistic greatness. One summarises the past and present, everything that has led up to him. The other points the way towards the future. A man like Coltrane inhabits the latter category. Sonny Criss fell into the former. No other alto player embodied so completely the history of the instrument as a jazz voice. The obvious affinities with Charlie Parker cannot drown out the echoes of earlier stylistic trailblazers. Above all, perhaps, the liquid warmth, the "cry" of Johnny Hodges (listen to *The Dreamer*, MR 5089), but also the buoyancy and bubble of Benny Carter and Willie Smith. On the one occasion he recorded on soprano (*Sonny's Dream*, Prestige 7576) there are overtones of Coltrane. Although he specified Gene Ammons as his favourite sax player, Criss's own work shows the most catholic receptivity to inspiration. And always drenched in the blues. He was a 'state of the art' altoist, with all the technique required to fill such a role in a post-Bird era: Ornette Coleman called him "the fastest man alive". He absorbed the history of his instrument and out of the meditation produced music which came as close as possible to being all things to all men. That is, Criss's work is accessible to almost any jazz enthusiast, no matter where his preferences lie. He impressed critics as diverse in their tastes as Ira Gitler and Hugues Panassie.

Why, with all this, his comparative obscurity? He has no entry in the *Illustrated Encyclopedia of Jazz* (he appears in its index as 'Sonny Cress'), a mere couple of inches in Feather. Even the people who write his sleeve notes get their facts wrong. It seems impossible to assemble a comprehensive discography of his work. Perhaps the trouble lies in his living in LA at a time when jazz interest focused on New York. Perhaps it was that he steadfastly remained a one horn man (with the exception noted), thus limiting his own access to studio work. Perhaps it was his uncompromising jazz commitment: "You don't play bullshit music under your own name". For whatever reason, it all came to this, that irony was his element, and he knew it. He once wrote, "Life in America is unbelievable. Nothing is real except ugliness". In the summer of 1965 he lived in the Watts district. He recounted to Hampton Hawes the night the riots broke out: "I took a fifth of whiskey out to my lawn, sat down and started drinking and laughing. Felt like Nero, wanted to get out my horn and blow. When I finished the bottle it was dawn, everything was down to the ground and smoking like when you were a kid watching the mist come off a lake".

His music was one way of responding to the contradictions of his existence. I said that his work summarised the history of the jazz alto. But it was more than that, or perhaps more correctly, that history included Criss himself. Like all great stylists, his playing is instantly recognisable. No other altoist sounds like Criss, and the thing that sets him apart is the way in which an enormous emotional pressure surfaces as a disciplined musical performance.

Without ever lapsing into a flaccid sentimentality, Criss nonetheless generates a scarcely bearable pathos. The way he plays the melody of Benny Carter's *Blues in My Heart* (Muse 5068), is irreducibly spare, having the same sound of a man at the end of his tether as Parker's legendary recordings of *Lover Man* and *The Gypsy*. It's not that Criss's work is unrelievedly lugubrious. *El Tiante* Muse MR 5089) is downright cheeky, and *Wee* (Muse MR 5089) a laughing triumph of technique. But always his work is given substance by what seems to be a sense of the painful complexity of the conditions of life, the difference between what is and what can be imagined. It is not surprising that he spent many years working in welfare with alcoholics, playing concerts to schools in depressed neighbourhoods, and, it seems to be hinted, recovering from some sort of breakdown of his own.

Perhaps for this reason his later work has even greater depth, the sound of knowledge, the music of a man who has explored his own limitations. *Brother, Can You Spare A Dime* (Muse MR 5089), is played like one who has asked the question. He made three albums in 1975, all of them magnificent in their control of form and feeling. They seem to have been his last musical statement on the ironies of his civilisation. He had one more statement to make, and it was his most dramatic. He suicided in November of 1977, at the age of fifty.

Bruce Johnson

VINTAGE·JAZZ·ARCHIVES
Thomas Morris
A PAST JAZZ MASTER

THOMAS MORRIS

"A Past Jazz Master" (Swaggie 805)

Few, other than avid record collectors will know of Thomas Morris, the cornet player whose 1920s recordings are now considered collector's items.

Swaggie have now rectified all this by reissuing 18 classic sides featuring Morris in company with well known jazz musicians, Sidney Bechet, Bubber Miley, Charlie Irvis and Clarence Williams.

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Record Reviews

Side 1 contains the complete eight titles recorded by Thomas Morris Past Jazz Masters in April, May and August 1923 and apart from *Those Blues* by Bubber Miley all are Morris compositions and include *E Flat Blues No 2, Original Charleston Strut, Lonesome Journey Blues* and *Bull Blues (E Flat Blues No 1).*

Side 2 and one track on side 1 present all nine titles from Clarence Williams Blue Five, recorded in 1923 before Louis Armstrong became the star of this elite recording group. Most of the titles have become well known jazz classics — *Wild Cat Blues, Kansas City Man Blues, Tain't Nobody's Business If I Do, Oh Daddy Blues, Shreveport Blues* and *Old Fashioned Love.*

Thomas Morris was born in New York about 1898, his recording career spanned a brief four years and he gave up music altogether in the 1930s and joined the religious sect of Father Divine. Chilton's *Who's Who of Jazz* can only contribute four lines to the Morris biography, Leonard Feather's encyclopaedia ignores him altogether and no new information is provided on the Swaggie sleeve. *A History of the New York Scene* by Charters and Kunstadt quotes a newspaper advertisement for Sara Martin's *Yodelling Blues* which states in part, "Yodelling cornet — oh boy! Thomas Morris of New York sure has got it. That man can make his cornet do wonders. It weeps, it moans, it laughs, it groans. No one has ever heard a cornet perform the feats that Thomas Morris can make his cornet perform."

The copywriter's blurb of course must be considered in the context of the 1920s race record market. Sales figures for Thomas Morris were not that good. The recordings featured in this album are however excellent examples of classic jazz.

Thomas Morris kept excellent musical company, as these recordings illustrate, and in spite of the acoustic recording, sound transfers and remastering by John R.T. Davies have made the sides extremely listenable to the unitiated. Over the past two decades dedicated musicians steeped in the 1920s tradition have strived to emulate recordings such as this and failed.

This Swaggie release is not a jazz record for every taste. The traditionalists will rush to add this important record to their collection. The modernist will let it pass. But if your taste is liberal it is certainly worth a close listen.

Bill Haesler

VINTAGE·JAZZ·ARCHIVES
Muggsy Spanier
RICHMOND & CHICAGO DAYS

MUGGSY SPANIER
"Richmond and Chicago Days" (Swaggie 806)

The first recordings made by Muggsy Spanier have been reissued once again, but this time superbly remastered and presented in chronological order.

Muggsy Spanier needs little introduction to jazz enthusiasts of all persuasions and I freely admit that his 1939 Ragtime Band sides first drew me to jazz in 1946.

The Richmond and Chicago of the album title refer to the Gennett recording studios in Richmond, Indiana and the Paramount studios in Chicago, both scenes of many a great classic jazz session during the 1920s.

This Swaggie release, the sixth in a special reissue series, features the Bucktown Five (all seven titles apart from known alternative takes), The Stomp Six (their only two titles), Charles Pierce and his Orchestra (all five sides including the rare remake session) and The Jungle Kings (their only two titles). The recordings span the period February 1925 to April 1928 and apart from the Pierce titles no one has yet established who arranged or led these purely studio groups.

Many of the musicians featured with Muggsy Spanier on this release are equally well known including Frank Teschemacher, Mel Stitzel, Ben Pollack and the Austin High School Gang — Mezz Mezzrow, Joe Sullivan, Eddie Condon, Jim Lanigan and Gene Krupa.

The music itself is quite remarkable, particularly the Bucktown Five sides which show the emerging greatness of an 18-year-old Spanier. This little white band exhibits a full black sound at times, particularly the star Muggsy Spanier whose musical influences at the time quite obviously included Louis Armstrong and King Oliver.

Another surprise for the new jazz collector will be the clarinet playing of Volly de Faut, a white musician who recorded with Jelly Roll Marton in 1925 yet made only a handful of titles in his 70 year life. de Faut is outstanding on both the Bucktown Five and Stomp Six titles.

The Charlie Pierce sides, the subject of a controversy over the years regarding the personnel, which includes the Spanier-style playing of Charlie Altier and the clarinet playing of Maurie Bercor long thought to be Frank Teschemacher, actually turn out some good music particularly the two versions each of *Sister Kate* and *Jazz Me Blues.*

Friars Point Shuffle by the Jungle Kings is the first version of this title later to become a classic when recorded by Eddie Condon in 1939, yet it suffers little by comparison in spite of the youthfulness of the celebrated white Chicagoans.

As the sleeve writer Bert Whyatt observes in his notes on this satisfactory Swaggie release "The sides are not without their flaws", but then we can hardly expect more from any musician in his teens or early 20s. This music is the real thing, made by pioneers and fortunately preserved for posterity by the medium of the gramophone record. Thank you Mr Edison.

Bill Haesler

ATLAS BLUES "BLOW!" & BALLADE
SONNY STITT & HIS WEST COAST FRIENDS

GROOVIN' HIGH
SONNY STITT & HIS WEST COAST FRIENDS

SONNY STITT & HIS WEST COAST FRIENDS
"Groovin' High" (Atlas LA27-1004; "Atlas Blues — Blow! & Ballade" (Atlas LA27-1007).
RICHIE COLE WITH PHIL WOODS
"Side By Side" (Muse MR 5237; World Record Club R10440)

Most "two tenors plus rhythm" sessions, brotherly affairs like Al Cohn-Zoot Sims excepted, are billed as "battles of the saxes". Alto summit meetings are rarer, and judging from these 1980 albums, are directed more to friendship and cooperation than to point-proving and combat.

The second alto saxophonist on the two Stitt albums is the best West Coast friend any alto man could have, Art Pepper, continuing his triumphant return and the groups were recorded over two successive two day periods. The two albums together make a fine set. *Groovin' High* contains four bebop standards, with the other two cuts redolent of the superficial 1950's West Coast *(Bernie's Tune)* and East Coast *(Walkin')* split in the jazz mainstream. The standout is Art Pepper's marvellously constructed solo on the title cut, perhaps the best workout ever given to this old *Whispering* variant. In the Lou Levy/Chuck Domanico/Carl Burnett rhythm section Levy stands out with rumbling mid-register solos. *Atlas Blues* has veteran pianist Russ Freeman replacing veteran pianist Levy, with John Heard doing bass chores. There are two long fast swingers, on one of them *(Lester Leaps In)* Stitt and Pepper being both on tenors. The other side has four glorious ballads, two each. Sonny Stitt caught my ear with his *Lover Man*, on which he is very Parkerish. He must have meant it as a tribute, as the opening section finds him using Parker's tone exactly — it really does sound like Bird for a minute or so — and that is not typical of Sonny Stitt.

Both altos have very different sounds and methods, and the records offer no blindfold test problems at all. In this time of record glut they rank as essential purchases for followers of Stitt, who is often not the most inspired soloist on record, and appears to need the right setting, which he certainly gets here. Pepper fans will want them to season the cheaper Galaxy and Contemporary quartet releases.

The LP *Side by Side*, featuring a second and a third generation bebop alto saxophonist, is looser and more raunchy. Recorded live with another top rhythm section: John Hicks, Walter Booker and Jimmy Cobb, the album is something of a stylistic celebration. Overseas reviews have been spotty, the writers perhaps having expected war, with real blood, but when he was in Brisbane on his first trip a year or two ago Richie Cole remembered the date as a happy one, and joyous it is! Cole and Woods are much more alike than Stitt and Pepper, and the excitement comes from their interplay rather than from contrast as on the Atlas albums. Tenor saxophonist Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis is added on one track to no particular effect. Another top buy!

Collectors who catch altoitis from these might keep their eyes open for two similar-format 1957 albums: *Alto Madness* by Jackie McLean and John Jenkins (Prestige MPP-2512) and *Phil Talks With Quill* by Woods and Gene Quill (Columbia Jazz Odyssey PC 36806).

Niels Nielsen

GIANTS OF JAZZ
Bix Beiderbecke

BIX BEIDERBECKE "Giants of Jazz" (Time-Life Records)

The Time-Life *Giants of Jazz* series is superb and is all that critics and Time-Life itself maintain — or so it seems, based on the evidence of the Bix Beiderbecke set.

I am one of the lucky ones who, in almost 36 years of collecting jazz of the classic, traditional and New Orleans styles, has managed to obtain the complete recorded output of King Oliver, Johnny Dodds, Louis Armstrong (up to 1947) and Bessie Smith to mention a few, and of course Bix Beiderbecke.

As a result I have resisted the urge to rush in and subscribe to the Time-Life Jazz Series, notwithstanding the excellent packaging, informative booklets and rare photographs. The temptation of 3 discs for about $30 is not easily ignored nowadays, particularly in view of the quality.

Up until now I have not had an opportunity to compare this quality against original 78s and earlier reissues. However, I can now pass on my views regarding Time-Life's ambitious project based on the Bix set.

Nobody who has a feeling for jazz can deny Beiderbecke's role in the history of the music. He was THE white master, rivalled only by Jack Teagarden as the greatest of his era. I was therefore interested to hear what Time-Life had included in their package.

Give or take a few rare sides, some disputed items and alternate masters, there is enough Bix on record to fill 14 or 15 LP albums, so in compiling a set of three, careful consideration is necessary not only to provide a representative selection but also to pick the best sides from a musical point of view.

What then did they do and would I have done the same thing? *Copenhagen* and *Big Boy* by the Wolverines, *My Pretty Girl* by Gene Goldkette, *Clarinet Marmalade* and *Singin' the Blues* by Trumbauer, the Bix piano solo *In a Mist*, another Goldkette *Clementine*, more Trumbauer, then surprise — *Aint No Land Like Dixieland to Me* by the Broadway Bell-Hops, a Sam Lanin group.

The Bix and His Gang sides had to be represented and *Jazz Band Ball*, *Royal Garden*, *Jazz Me Blues*, *Goose Pimples* and *Sorry* are the best of these. The Chicago Loopers' *Three Blind Mice* — rare and good, then into the Whiteman era including the famous *Mississippi Mud* plus *Lonely Melody*, *Dardanella*, *From Monday On*, *Taint So* and *That's My Weakness Now*. More Trumbauer, another Bix and His Gang, another Whiteman and the three album set finishes with *Bessie Couldn't Help It* by Hoagy Carmichael's Orchestra, which was Bix's last session.

OK, how would I have done it? Not much better I think. A little less Trumbauer and his Orchestra and perhaps more miscellaneous items such as The Rhythm Jugglers' *Davenport Blues* — a Bix composition, *Blue River* by Goldkette, *Changes* by Whiteman, *Strut Miss Lizzie* by the Hotsy Totsy Gang, and another Carmichael from the last session on 15 September 1930, *Georgia on My Mind*.

The transfers ARE excellent and enough to make John R.T. Davies approve I am sure. I made some random comparisons and could not fault the quality, faithfullness of reproduction and lack of surface noise. If only some of our major companies would pay as much attention to their classic jazz reissues.

The booklet is full of good photos, some rare, and the notes are excellent. The authors, Curtis Prendergast and musician Richard Sudhalter have covered Bix's life very well and the musical comment for each title, presumably by Sudhalter, is precise, informative and to the point.

The Time-Life series in Australia is now well advanced with issues already devoted to Armstrong, Coleman Hawkins, Billie Holiday, Duke Ellington, James P. Johnson, Jelly Roll Morton and Fats Waller. From all accounts they are of equal standard to the Bix release. For the average collector this is a great way to build up a good jazz collection; support Time-Life in their efforts.

Bill Haesler

Record Reviews

THE COMMODORE CLASSICS

Reviewed by Clement Semmler

Released on the London label but recorded by the Teldec-Telefunken-Decca organisation in Hamburg, West Germany from the Milt Gabler production for the American Commodore Record Co. in 1979, this collection of 11 albums is surely one of the most remarkable and welcome issues in years. It's not only a must for every jazz lover, but will, in future years, inevitably become a collector's item. This is because many of the tracks are landmarks in jazz history.

The span of the albums is from 1938 to 1946 and I will deal with them chronologically.

The Bud Freeman Trio: **Three's a Crowd**: Rec. New York 1938: (6. 24061 AG). Personnel: Freeman (tenor), Jess Stacy (piano), George Wettling (drums).

Freeman here plays some of his favourite tunes like *Keep Smiling at Trouble*, *Three Little Words* and *My Honey's Lovin' Arms*. In the latter, at a medium tempo, Bud is at his best and one hears overtones of *The Eel* — of which the former tune was clearly the genesis. There is also a Freeman original, *I Don't Believe It*, where his elegant phrasing is clearly reminiscent of another of his tunes, *After Awhile*, which he did so admirably with his Summa Cum Laude group.

There are also some splendid vehicles for Stacy's best piano — at fast tempo in *I Got Rhythm*, but most notably of all in *Swinging With Mezz* (a Milt Gabler original) where Stacy plays some of the most relaxed choruses I've ever heard from him.

COMMODORE CLASSICS
KANSAS CITY SIX AND FIVE
—1938—
LESTER YOUNG
BUCK CLAYTON
EDDIE DURHAM
FREDDIE GREEN
WALTER PAGE
JOE JONES

Kansas City Six and Five: Rec. New York 1938: (6. 24057 AG). Personnel: Buck Clayton (tpt), Lester Young (clt and tenor), Eddie Durham (elec. gtr), Freddie Green (gtr), Joe Jones (drums), Walter Page (bass).

This is low-keyed jazz, most of it at a sprightly K.C. tempo, and for lovers of mainstream one of the best albums in the set. Invariably there is that swinging combination of Buck's soft muted trumpet and Young's smooth tenor which, with a superb rhythm section, will keep you playing these tracks over and over again.

Best of them is possibly Gabler's *Countless Blues* — a riffed blues theme with the bonus of one of Lester's rare clarinet solos and also a delightfully modulated guitar solo from Durham. There's an Ellington sound in the Walter Page original, *Pagin' the Devil.* Clayton is to the fore in Basie's *Good Morning Blues* and there's a further showcase for the Young clarinet, at a relaxed tempo, in the two takes of *I Want a Little Girl.*

Certainly one of the most satisfying albums in this collection.

Eddie Condon: **Windy City Seven and Jam Sessions at Commodore**: Rec. New York 1938 (6. 24054 AG). Personnel: Side 1: Bobby Hackett (ct), George Brunis (trom), Bud Freeman (tenor), Pee Wee Russell (clt), Stacy (piano), Art Shapiro (bass), Wettling (drums). Side 2: Jack Teagarden replaces Brunis.

These are performances especially famous in jazz history — I guess as long as I've been interested in jazz the Condon Commodores have been part of the crown jewels of the music. This is part of the impression made when some American servicemen played a few of them for us at meetings of the Adelaide Jazz Lovers' Society in the early 1940s. The ones we miss out on this album include *Katharina* and *A Good Man is Hard to Find* (originally issued on those famous Commodore 12" sides).

Anyhow, who's complaining? There are two takes of *Love is Just Around the Corner* — always my favourite of these sessions with that lyrical Chicago touch and Bud and Pee Wee riding along. Then *Beat to the Socks* (that ad hoc composition in blues style of Freeman, Condon and Stacy) — a medium for solos from everyone. Pee Wee especially will send shivers up your back — as he does too in *Serenade to a Shylock* which was from one of the first Commodore jam sessions.

Bobby Hackett is at his lyrical best on *Ja-Da*, always one of his favourite tunes. On *Diane* there is one of the best Teagarden solos I've ever heard (which is saying something). As a tour de force it ranks with Lawrence Brown's playing in Ellington's *Rose of the Rio Grande* and one or two of Tommy Dorsey's best jazz efforts. It steals all the thunder on the track; not even Bud or Pee Wee seem to recover from it.

Eddie Condon and His Band: **The Liederkranz Sessions:** Rec. New York 1939 and 1940 (6. 24295 AG). Personnel: Side 1 (1939): Max Kaminsky (ct), Pee Wee Russell (clt), Brad Gowans (trom), Condon (gtr), Joe Bushkin (pno), Shapiro (bass), Wettling (drums). Side 2 (1940): Marty Marsala (tpt), Pee Wee (clt), Brunis (trom), Condon (gtr), Fats Waller (pno), Shapiro (bass) Wettling (drums).

The session took its title from Columbia's Liederkranz Hall Studio in East 58th Street New York. Condon again, and everything to write home to mum about. But side 2 is rather more exciting simply because of the lift that Fats gives to the proceedings. Not only as a soloist, in *Oh Sister Ain't That Hot* especially, but also because he's just about the perfect accompaniment for Pee Wee, for instance, on *Georgia Grind* and *You're Some Pretty Doll.* And if you've not heard much of Marty Marsala, an underrated trumpet player if ever there was one, you can hear one of his best recorded solos on *Dancing Fool* (two takes).

All this, of course, isn't to underestimate Side 1. There's some thrilling Kaminsky on *Ballin' the Jack* and Brad Gowans on *Strut Miss Lizzie.* In fact the whole album is just great.

COMMODORE CLASSICS
JELLY ROLL MORTON
NEW ORLEANS MEMORIES
plus two
—1939—

Jellyroll Morton: **New Orleans Memories Plus Two**: Rec. New York 1939 (6. 24062). Piano and vocal.

I work it out that Morton was 54 when these tracks were made, yet if he ever played better I'd be surprised.

It's all there — including *The Crave*, *Buddy Bolden's Blues* and *King Porter Stomp*. There's also a previously unissued version of his *Naked Dance*. It's a quite amazing performance I've never heard before — obviously rag-inspired but with all the inventiveness that Jellyroll brought to his playing. This particular album is worth its weight in gold as an archive of jazz anyhow.

Billie Holiday: **Fine and Mellow**: Side 1 Rec. New York 1939, Side 2 New York 1944 (6. 24055). Personnel: Side 1 largely Frank Newton (tpt), Tab Smith (alto), Kenneth Hollon and Stan Payne (tenor), Sonny White (pno), Jimmy McLin (gtr), John Williams (bass), Eddie Dougherty (drums). Side 2: Doc Cheatham (tpt), Vic Dickenson (trom), Lem Davis (alto), Eddie Heywood (pno), Teddy Walters (gtr), John Simmons (bass), Sid Catlett (drums).

Here again one is lost for words. If you believe, as I do, that Billie had no peer as a jazz singer, this one is especially for you. As Frederick Ramsey Jr. once wrote, she reached the apex of her career with these Commodore recordings, and her individual and unique style, a combination of splendid timing, breathy intimacy and a stylized even ruthless slurring, is perfectly revealed in these tracks.

Fine and Mellow has always been my favourite Holiday song ("Love will make you do the things that you know is wrong" . . . how she lived and died by that precept!), and there's some fabulous Newton trumpet behind her on this version. And Tab Smith's backing alto in *I Gotta Right to Sing the Blues* is no less memorable. Still, I think side 2 has the better backing; it's rather more sympathetic and co-ordinated, especially on *My Old Flame* (she sings that gloriously) and *I'll Get By* where Heywood's piano is absolutely perfect for her.

Coleman Hawkins: **The Chocolate Dandies and Leonard Feather's All Stars**: Side 1: Rec. New York 1940. Side 2: Rec. New York 1943 (6. 24056).

These tracks are all showcases for Hawkins and he's supported by two of the most attacking trumpet players in jazz — Roy Eldridge and Cootie Williams. Hawkins excels in the slow and medium tempo stuff as in *Dedication* and *Esquire Blues* (both Feather originals). In the latter, Edmond Hall sounds remarkably like Pee Wee.

On a track called *Boff Bobb (Mop Mop)*, with bop overtones, Hawkins just isn't comfortable; on all the others he's way out in front. Most of his showpieces are here, like *I Surrender Dear* and *I Can't Believe That You're in Love with Me.*

Wild Bill Davison and His Commodores: **That's a Plenty**: Rec. New York 1943: (6. 24059 AG). Personnel: Davison (tot), Brunis (trom), Pee Wee (clt), Schroeder (pno), Condon (gtr), Bob Casey (bass), Wettling (drums).

This of course is largely the Condon gang under another name. Wild Bill is one of the most genuine and loveable jazzmen I've ever had the good fortune to meet, of the same ilk as Jack Lesberg. But I have to say that his trumpet style has never done much to me. It's a sort of hit or miss, straight up and down approach, its chief characteristic being its dominance in ensembles. At his best he's in the Kaminsky, Spanier bracket. The best tracks he ever made were with his Chicago friends Mel Henke (piano) and Boyce Brown (alto) and one or two others as his Chicago Rhythm Kings early in the 1940s — where especially Henke gave the ideal shuffle rhythm to Bill's strong, hot plunger solos.

In this album Bill plays in the style suited to the Chicago-Dixieland repertoire of *That's a Plenty, Panama, Muskrat Ramble, Original Dixieland One Step* and so on. Davison kicks like a horse and interspersed are some rare Gene Schroeder solos — usually he didn't get many guernseys.

Good stuff for the late hours of a jazz party.

Jack Teagarden, Max Kaminsky: **Big T and Mighty Max**: Rec. New York 1944 (6. 24060). Personnel: Side 1: Teagarden (pno), Pops Foster (bass), Wettling (drums). Side 2: Kaminsky (tpt), Rod Cless (clt), Frank Orchard (trom), Condon (gtr), James P. Johnson (pno), Bob Casey (bass), Wettling (drms).

Teagarden, as always, hardly puts a foot wrong, (side 1), but the ensemble barely does him justice. Norma Teagarden is a pedestrian sort of pianist and this doesn't help much. Best tracks are *Big T Blues* and *Pitchin' a Bit Short*, a fast blues I've not heard before.

Rod Cless is the star of the flip side. He too sounds very much like Pee Wee in places, especially in *Everybody Loves My Baby* and *Eccentric*. Frank Orchard, whom I haven't heard much, is an interesting trombonist in the Brunis style, and James P. plays some wonderful piano on *Guess Who's in Town* (his own composition).

COMMODORE CLASSICS
BEN WEBSTER
DON BYAS
TWO KINGS OF THE TENOR SAX
1944 and 1945

Ben Webster, Don Byas: **Two Kings of the Tenor Sax**: Rec. New York 1944-45 (6.24058). Personnel: Side 1: Webster (tenor) with Sid Cattlet Quartet (Webster, Cattlet — drums, Marlowe Morris — piano, John Simmons — bass). Side 2: Indiana and I Got Rhythm — Byas — tenor, Slam Stewart — bass: Candy; Byas (tenor), Teddy Wilson (pno), Stewart (bass). Rest of track, Byas with Hot Lips Page orchestra.

Again, showcases for two of the best tenor men in jazz. No matter how you rate Webster, Byas isn't far short of him. Best track on side 1 is *Just a Riff* (Sid Catlett original) where after some delightful piano from the little known Marlowe Morris, Webster booms in with a tremendous solo.

That lovely Earl Lebieg tune, *Sleep*, is also featured, as is *Linger Awhile*, both ideally suited to Webster's improvisations.

Byas' best work is on *These Foolish Things* — a smooth and elegant arrangement where the tempo is right up his alley. On another fine track, *You Need Coachin'*, he's dead set between Hawkins and Webster, sounding like one or the other. On both of these tracks, by the way, the Hot Lips Page band is terrific as backing, and Page himself has a couple of devastating trumpet solos.

Mel Powell, Joe Bushkin: **The World is Waiting**: Rec. New York 1942-44-46 (6. 24063). Personnel: Side 1: Mel Powell and Orchestra — various — incl. Butterfield (tpt), Goodman (clt), Lou McGarity (trom), George Berg (tenor) etc. Side 2: Bushkin (pno), Bill Harris (trom), Ernie Figueroa (tpt), Zoot Sims (tenor), Sid Weiss (bass), Specs Powell (drums).

There's a tremendous line-up behind Powell and among standards like *Blue Skies, Avalon, Lover Man*, etc., his own loveliest of jazz tunes, *Mood at Twilight*, is the pick of the bunch. Butterfield and Goodman are at their lyrical best on it and Powell's delicately patterned solo reflects his involvement in the tune. It's a striking realisation of this man's talent that he was only 19 when this track was put down.

Bushkin's piano talent gets one of its rare airings on the flip side, backed by the stylish rhythm of Sid Weiss and Specs Powell, on *Lady Be Good* and *Fade Out* (a Bill Harris original) especially. On the latter track too there is a striking Zoot Sims solo. Bushkin offers an interesting comparison with Powell. I don't think he yields in technique, but there are moments of positive inspiration in Powell's playing that gives him the edge.

If you can't rake up the money to buy this set, I suggest you mortgage your wife's, girl-friend's (boy-friend's) or rich aunt's Christmas present to you. You won't be sorry, and you'll have five or six months of wonderful jazz in the meantime.

...and we've also heard

Compiled with the assistance of our contributors. Dick Scott is overseas and will be back in the next edition.

The 37th Australian Jazz Convention will be held next December in Toowoomba, the biggest inland city in Queensland. Toowoomba is in the midst of a population boom. It has excellent restaurants and accommodation, a great climate, and is already famous throughout Australia for its annual Carnival of Flowers. The Toowoomba Convention Committee recently held the city's first jazz picnic, which was attended by more than 2,000 people. Toowoomba provided a 14-piece big band for the occasion, plus the 8-piece dixieland band Westside Jazz, and the 6-piece Windy City group which has played at the last two Conventions. They were supported by Brisbane's Sugar Daddies, the Rick Price group and individual musicians from Brisbane including Clare Hansson. The jazz word is spreading rapidly in the city and the Convention committee expects that Toowoomba will be fully jazz orientated by the time the Convention is held. Anyone requiring information on the 1982 Convention should write to the 37th Australian Jazz Convention, PO Box 509, Toowoomba, Q. 4350.

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John Speight has once again been appointed producer of the Manly Jazz Carnival, to be held over the October long weekend — October 2, 3 and 4. Interested jazz performers may contact him on (02) 93-4070. Last year's Carnival drew immense crowds, estimated by Manly Tourist Promotions to be in the vicinity of 100,000 over the three days. The Carnival will again feature young jazz buskers, the jazz stall, the street parade, and ferry bands, as well as some of Australia's top performing jazz groups.

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Committeemen for the Australian Jazz Convention to be held in Toowoomba this year present a prize to the winner of a contest during the recent jazz picnic. Eean Thorne is on the left, John Rotteveel is second from right, and Bill Klaassen is on the right.

After two and a half years as jazz critic with the Sydney Morning Herald, Eric Myers has been sacked by the new person in charge of the daily Herald Arts page Susan Molloy. Miss Molloy succeeded the former arts editor Richard Coleman, who is now editing the Herald radio and television supplement called The Guide. According to Eric Myers, Miss Molloy gave two reasons for her decision. She felt that the paper should have a jazz writer who is "more independent of the jazz world" and she referred to "a spate of letters" — implying that people had been writing in to complain about Myers's reviews. Miss Molloy was not willing to discuss these matters further and told Eric Myers that she would be writing to him. However, four weeks later Myers had not received anything in writing from Miss Molloy and is disappointed at such off-hand treatment after what he describes as "two and a half years of loyal service to the Herald". While most other jazz writers these days confine themselves to the "what's on" style of column, Eric Myers has been the only jazz writer in the Sydney press since the days of Mike Williams at The Australian, to offer regular analysis and criticism of jazz performances, and it is to the credit of the Sydney Morning Herald that the paper afforded him this opportunity. Before Myers there was no regular jazz writer with the Herald other than the dance critic Jill Sykes, whose occasional reviews caused great resentment in the jazz world. However, Susan Molloy has now succeeded in finding a jazz reviewer who is "independent of the jazz world". He is David Lin — so independent, in fact, that so far as we know, no-one in the jazz world has heard of him.

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Melbourne audiences will very soon have an opportunity to hear a new group that has recently been formed, called Cajj.

Pronunciation of the name depends on which school you went to, but the letters that form the name are the first letters in the surnames of the members of the group.

Drummer David Jones and singer Linda Cable, together with bass player Jeremy Alsop and Peter Jones (no relation to David) — keyboards, have formed this group with a great sense of anticipation and excitement. It's rare that a group of performers of such high calibre get together with the aim of producing live, innovative music.

When format and direction were considered, the style of music wasn't categorised under one heading. They want to present material with a good feel — a haunting melody perhaps, or simply something that is interesting and different. Their repertoire includes an individual approach to recognised material by artists such as Al Jarreau and Mark Murphy, but it doesn't stop there — the band recognises the need to bring warmth and enjoyment to listeners and they cover a number of sounds. Their music definitely isn't introverted.

Linda Cable is a fine singer — she likes to use the voice as an integral part of the group – not just as a vocalist, but also in an instrumental sense, exploring melodies in her own style. In the past Linda has worked with the Daly-Wilson Big Band and more recently, the Peter Cupples Band.

The other members of the group are all well known for their technical and creative abilities – David Jones is drummer with Melbourne's Pyramid group and has also worked with John Farnham and Peter Cupples. Jeremy Alsop's bass is a regular feature of Brian Brown's Australian Jazz Ensemble and Peter Jones's tasteful and swinging keyboards have backed many top artists all over Australia.

Cajj made their debut appearance at Mainstream, 453 Swanston Street, Melbourne, on June 30. Mainstream is an established rock venue that is swinging its Wednesday nights to alternative music. It has excellent bar facilities, good food, and a 3 am licence.

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The Australian Film Institute will be screening *The Last Of The Blue Devils* at Paddington Town Hall on July 22, 23, 24, 29, 30 and 31. This classic film is based on a reunion of many of the giants of the Kansas City era, including Count Basie, Jay McShann and Big Joe Turner. For details, phone the AFI on (02) 33 0695.

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Saville Kapelus, whose shop Blues and Fugues in the Sydney Square arcade has been one of the best jazz record shops in Sydney for many years, has opened a new, jazz-only store, called SKAT JAZZ RECORDS situated at 119 York Street, Sydney. JAZZ Magazine had a sneak preview of the store before its opening, and there is no question that it could well be the most impressive and well-equipped specialist jazz record store in Australia. Jazz buffs are advised to pop in and say hello to Saville. If he can't acquire that jazz LP you want, it's likely that no-one else can. Enquiries (02) 29 1126. SKAT, by the way, is not merely a form of improvised singing – it also stands for Saville Kapelus And Team.

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The expatriate Indonesian jazz musicians Jack Lesmana and his son Indra will be touring Indonesia for three weeks, leaving on August 1. Their 5-piece group, called Children of Fantasy, includes Jack on bass guitar, Indra (keyboards), Dale Barlow (saxophones and flute), Steve Brien (guitar), and Harry Rivers (drums and vocals). They will be performing mostly Indra Lesmana's original compositions. The group will play a series of concerts on the Hyatt Hotel circuit in Jakarta, Surabaya and Denpasar, the capital of Bali, plus a number of public concerts. There will probably also be at least one performance in Bandung. Although Jack Lesmana and his family have now settled permanently in Sydney, he still enjoys a large following in Indonesia, where, for many years, he was that country's best-known jazz musician and educator.

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With the imminent departure of Dale Barlow and Roger Frampton for New York, Bruce Cale has formed a new group. A quintet, it includes Brent Stanton (saxophones, flute and bass clarinet), Keith Stirling (trumpet and flugelhorn), Mike Bartolomei (piano), Alan Turnbull (drums) with Cale himself, of course, on bass. Cale has snapped up Stanton and Bartolomei, who recently arrived back in Australia after study periods in the USA. The new Bruce Cale Quartet will give its opening performance at The Basement on Tuesday, July 27.

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Jack Lesmana and son Indra: touring Indonesia in August.

The NSW Jazz Action Society's Original Jazz Composition competition is on again in 1982. It is open to all residents of New South Wales. The winner will receive $1500, the runner-up $300, and there is an encouragement award of $200. Those submitting a composition should be aware that it must be (1) written in the last 12 months, (2) capable of performance by a professional jazz group of not more than eight musicians (3) no less than 32 bars (4) of no more than eight minutes duration (5) recorded on tape. The closing date for entries is November 1, 1982. The judges are the well-known jazz musicians Col Loughnan, Paul McNamara and Julian Lee. For further details and entry forms contact the JAS, 80 George Street, The Rocks (phone 241 1880) or write to PO Box N9, Grosvenor Street, Sydney, 2000.

HUTCHINGS KEYBOARDS

By Peter Sinclair

The name Hutchings is probably known to most jazz musicians in Sydney because at one time or another they would have hired or played in a club on a piano hired from Reg Hutchings. What is less well known is that Reg has a son – with blue eyes, of course – called Greg, who, following in his father's 'giant steps' is also into keyboards, but not the accoustic variety. No, Greg is strictly ELECTRONIC KEYBOARDS – anything electronic – like Yamaha electric grands or Fenders, and almost every type of synthesiser made, from $275 to $25,000 jobs.

As Greg sells only electronic keyboards and nothing else, he is probably the most versed person in Australia on synthesisers. He constantly keeps up with the latest overseas developments and their Australian releases and is a wealth of information on the subject. Almost before the product is released Greg can tell you what it has, what it hasn't, its good points and its bad points. In fact, Greg's only fault as a businessman is probably that he is too honest. If he personally doesn't like a particular model – meaning it doesn't measure up – he won't stock it.

So, if you're thinking of getting into synthesisers or you want to update your last year's model, Greg is the person to have a chat with. Greg Hutchings is at 9 Edgecliff Road, Bondi. Phone (02) 387 5507.

The Merv Acheson Story

(Part 3)

Pic: Jane March

In the last edition of JAZZ, Merv Acheson described life as an army musician during World War II. The Americans, now in the war, stimulated a boom in music in Sydney. The American Army took over the old German club, just off Flinders Street, Darlinghurst, and transformed it into the Booker T. Washington Club for Negro servicemen and merchant seamen. NOW READ ON:

The Booker T. Washington Club was a phenomenon in Australian show business. It embodied all that was best in the music world of the day – the swinging thirties and forties.

Liquor flowed and the air was thick with fumes of various kinds of cigarettes. It must be remembered that "pot" was an unknown quantity in this country then and was not illegal. I have never smoked even ordinary cigarettes, but for months I floated along on a haze of good whisky fumes.

The patrons were all black servicemen or merchant seamen. Their dancing partners were local coloured girls specially recruited and investigated as to background by the American Red Cross. Any girl suspected of having a shady past was barred. Looking back it is ludicrous to think of the vice squad wading in through clouds of marihuana smoke to sternly remove some lady of the night who had slipped in unnoticed.

Guns were everywhere in those days. A bottle of whisky or gin would buy a brand new American Army issue Colt 45, and these weapons were coming into the country by the hundreds of crate loads.

I will always remember the night when I was swaying in the liquor-sodden breeze playing a solo into the mike when I heard hissing noises to the left of me – there was that late great alto man Rolf Pommer pointing at my feet. I looked down and my Colt 45 was laying on the floor – it had slipped down from where I had it tucked in under my shirt.

The Booker T band had everything going for it. The Americans imported loads of arrangements from the books of Basie, Erskine Hawkins, Andy Kirk, Jay McShann, Chick Webb, Benny Goodman, Fletcher Henderson and Tommy Dorsey.

Personnel was no problem. The American army funded the hiring of Australian civilian musicians while members of the Australian forces could be requisitioned without trouble.

Like any big band the line-up of the orchestra varied from time to time but a casual run-down of the musicians who passed through the aggregation reads like a who's who of the decade: Marsh and Gerry Goodwin, George Fuller, Mike Hayes, Des Colbert (trumpets); Billy Weston, Ron Wills, Orm "Slush" Stewart (trombones); Rolf Pommer, Fred Curry, Jack Baines, Paul Thompson, Nat O'Toole (reeds); Jim Somerville, Jock Nesbitt (piano); Reg Robinson (bass); Ray Price (guitar) and the leader Giles O'Sullivan (drums). The vocalist was Marie Harriott, later to become famous in England as Marie Benson – a fine blues singer.

Newcomers to the band were always amazed at the musical knowledge and sensitivity of the audience – particularly if they had come from one of the large palais bands which catered for the schmaltzy "Moon-June" ballroom dances of the period.

This was the day of the "jam session" – the spontaneous get-together of keen musicians after hours. A favourite venue to meet with a few bottles and no chance of interruption was Mrs. Macquarie's Chair in the Domain, where playing could go unhindered until dawn. In fact it had to go until that time because all public transport ceased at midnight and taxis were forbidden to ply for hire after that hour.

Today the jam session is a thing of the past, largely because jazz has become a commercial property. Once a musician had to play music he scorned to make a living, and was eager to relax later and play jazz on his own time. Now any good jazzman can play his own music and get paid for it. At last count there were more than 100 jazz venues in Sydney and suburbs hiring live bands.

During the time I was playing at the Booker T. I was still a member of the AIF, although on loan to the American forces, and could be called on to perform with the Australian Army Entertainment Unit the 116 Rhythm Ensemble.

It was while playing at a war bond rally at the Bondi Masonic Hall in 1943 that I first met Don Burrows. The 116 and an American all-Negro group had been requisitioned to play at this function and everybody was swinging way out. In the interval Mischa Kanaef, a fine guitarist and now boss of the Mischa's chain of plush restaurants, came backstage accompanied by a young boy in short pants and said "This kid plays good clarinet; can he sit in?"

I looked at the boy – I was only 21 myself at the time – and said, "These guys on stage are all professionals. They'll cut him to ribbons musically, and probably affect his whole outlook on music."

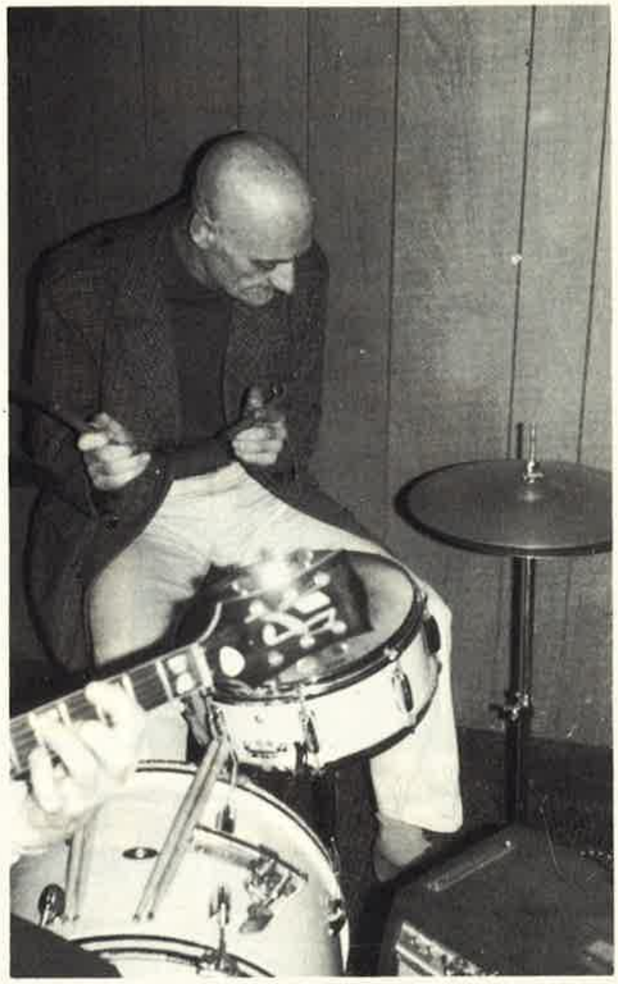
But Mischa prevailed, and the kid got his go with the rhythm section: John Best (piano); Max Daley (bass); Peter Leunig (guitar) and Frank Marcy (drums). To use an old vaudeville phrase Don "laid 'em in the aisles", receiving the biggest ovation of the day and astounding some of the musicians twice his age or more. He would have been about 12 at the time. His two numbers were *Whispering* and *The Sheik of Araby.* Don's mother was in the audience and was one of the proudest mums ever.

In all the years I have known Don Burrows I have only one complaint to make: he is a teetotaller.

NEXT ISSUE: The later war years, the army gets difficult, plus the "one and only permanent music job offer".

Merv Acheson circa 1946 with friends from the American merchant navy. Taken at the Maccabean Hall, Darlinghurst, during a ball for ship personnel.

OBITUARIES



John Ceeney, playing at the Bellevue Hotel, Paddington, circa 1976.

Drummer John Ceeney, for 15 years a member of Merv Acheson's Mainstreamers, was found dead recently in his Kings Cross apartment.

He had given up full time professional music because of constant severe attacks of asthma. This ailment finally killed him.

He was found by a visiting friend who called the authorities. Members of his family arranged a private funeral at Mona Vale Cemetery.

Ceeney played with the Mainstreamers for nine years at the Criterion Hotel, Park Street, Sydney, for four years at the Windsor Castle Hotel, Paddington, and a year at the Stage Club, Cleveland Street, Redfern.

At the time of his death he was in his early sixties.

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Multi-instrumentalist Dick Jackson died following a stroke recently. He played piano, organ, tenor saxophone, clarinet and bass, and recorded with one of the early line-ups of the Port Jackson Jazz Band on saxophone. He was about 70 years of age.

A brilliant all-round musician, Jackson had been blind from birth. In later years he concentrated on playing organ and piano on the club circuit in the south coast and Newcastle areas.

JAZZ

next issue:

September/October 1982

BRIAN BROWN

Pic: Jane March

Melbourne's Brian Brown, by David 'Doctor' Pepper

Mileham Hayes: Player and Visionary, by Sallie Gardner

Errol Buddle and The Australian Jazz Quintet, by Eric Myers

Ian Neil's Grace Notes

Mike Bartolomei, Brent Stanton, Graham Jesse and Peter O'Mara talk about the New York Experience

The El Rocco Era in Sydney, by Bruce Johnson

The Californian Connection, by Mike Sutcliffe

Lee Jeske reports on the Kool Jazz Festival

Free Pioneer John Stevens Talks to John Shand

Niels Nielsen surveys LPs from the bebop and post-bebop eras

Record Reviews

Book Reviews

The Merv Acheson Story (Part 4)

Reports from . . . Australia and overseas . . . and much, much more!

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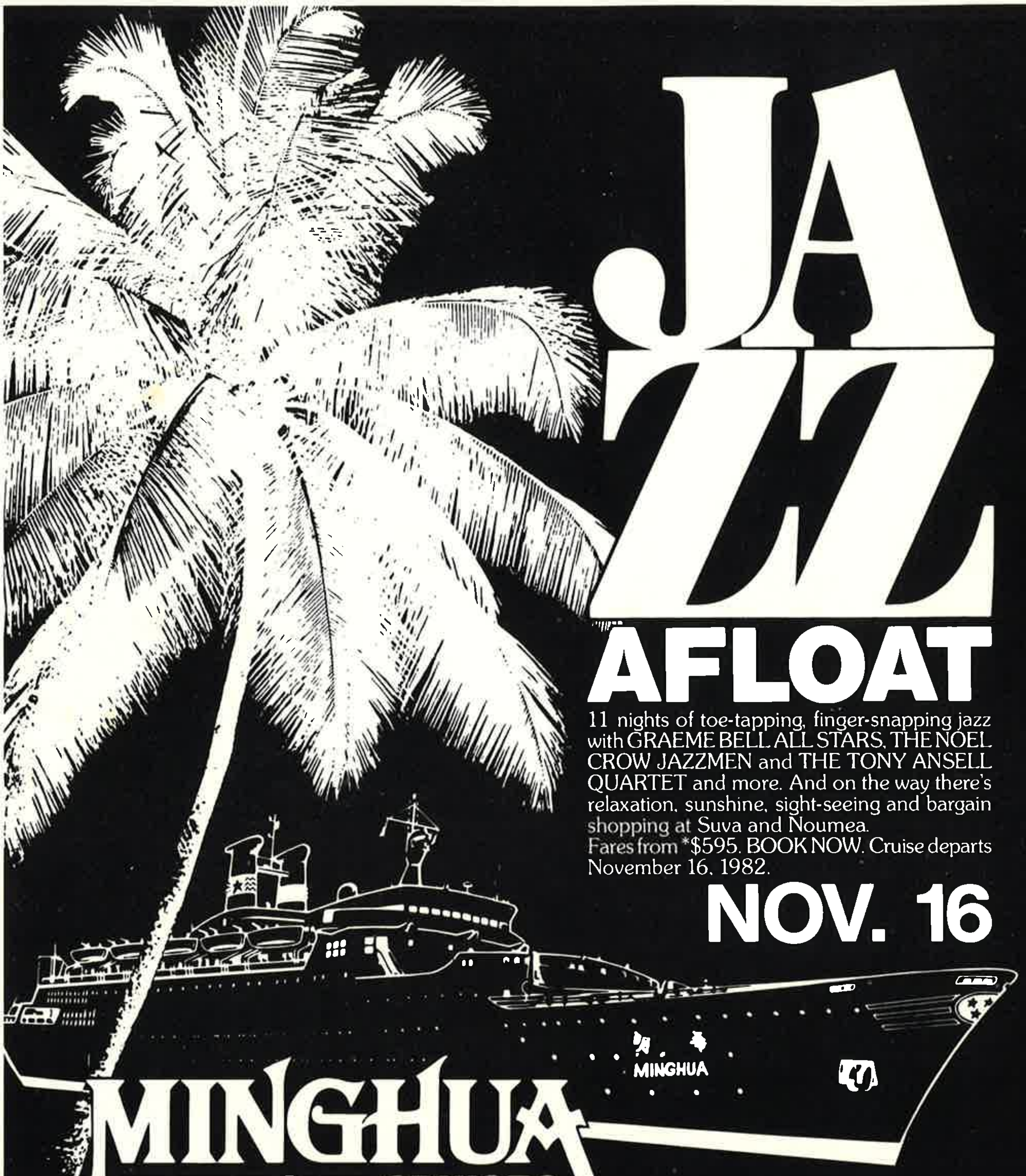

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