

JAZZ

The Australasian contemporary Music Magazine

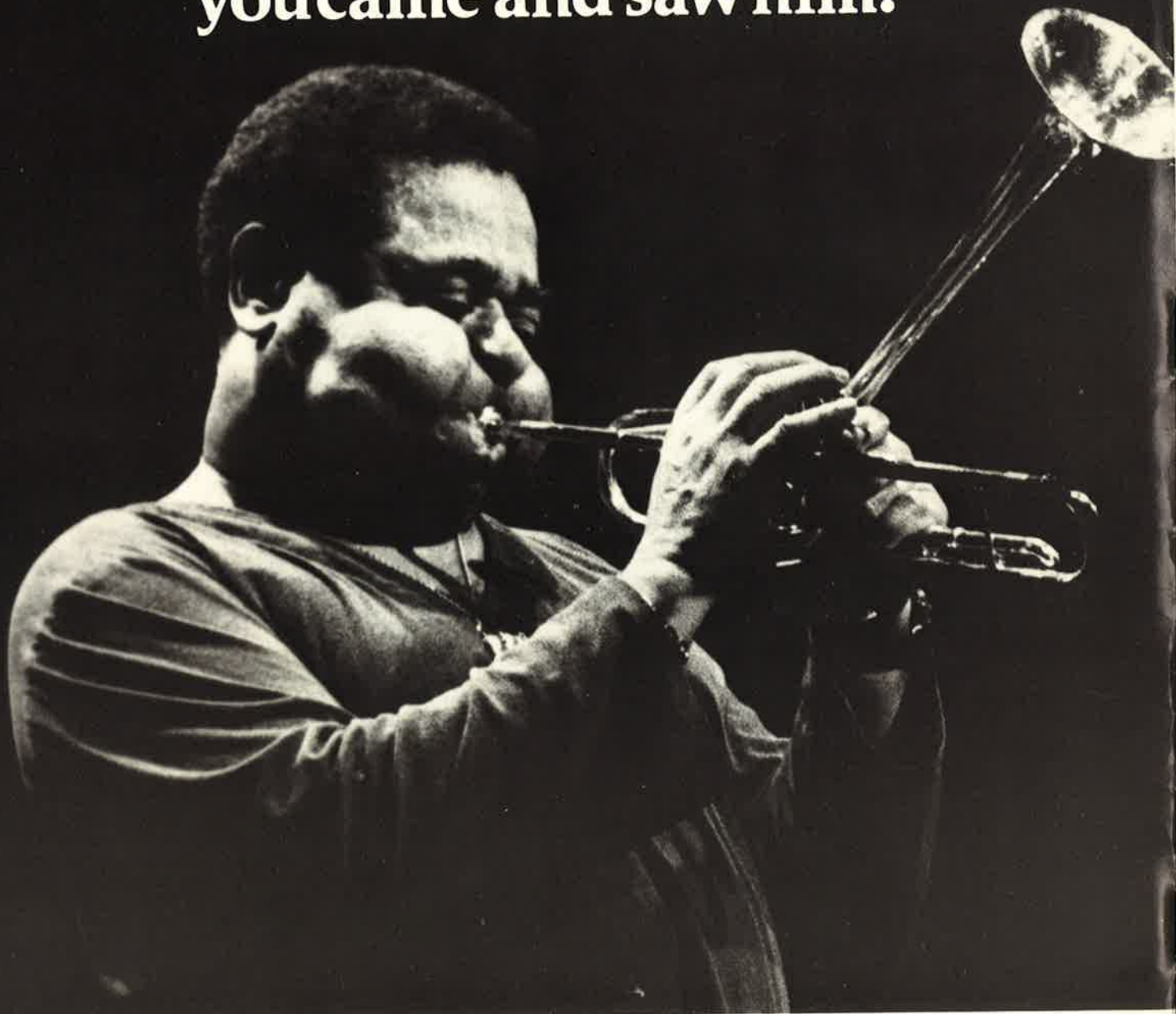


Who Is Wynton Marsalis?

ISSN 0729-3089

REGISTERED BY AUSTRALIA POST
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JAZZ

The Australasian contemporary Music Magazine

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JAZZ Magazine is a bi-monthly publication registered by Australia Post (publication No. NBQ4293). It is distributed nationally to newsagents by Gordon & Gotch, and is available in other selected outlets for \$2, and by subscription from the publisher at \$10 per annum. Overseas subscribers please write for subscription details.

JAZZ Magazine is published with the assistance of the Music Board of the Australia Council.

JAZZ Magazine is typeset by NP Phototypesetting, Mona Vale, 997 4393 and printed by Agency Printing Pty Ltd, North Sydney, 92 0297.



DEBORAH FEINGOLD

Wynton Marsalis: an enormously gifted American trumpeter, on his way.

4

Volume 3, No. 3

May/June 1983



8

Who Is Wynton Marsalis?

by Lee Jeske

4

Dave Dallwitz & Australian Jazz

by Bruce Clunies Ross

6

Great White Noise: Jazz Funkers

by Allecia Wangmann

8

Brisbane's Rick Price

by Neville Meyers

10

The Modern Jazz Quartet: A Welcome Return

by John Moses

12

The El Rocco Era in Sydney Jazz (Part 3)

by Bruce Johnson

14

John Chilton: Interview

by Eric Myers

18

Errol Buddle: Back Home in Australia

by Eric Myers

24

So, You're Thinking of Making a Jazz LP?

by Phil Tripp

26

The Crisis in Modern Jazz in Australia

by Peter Rechniewski

44

Also in this edition:

And We've Also Heard by Dick Scott, book reviews, concert reviews, record reviews, the Merv Acheson Story (Part 7), Around The Jazz Clubs, reports from interstate, New Record Releases, Lee Jeske's Scrapple From The Apple, Jazz Classifieds.



12



32

Edit.

I would like to draw your attention to an article which we publish in this edition, called 'The Crisis in Modern Jazz in Australia', by Peter Rechniewski (p. 44).

I don't necessarily agree with everything Mr. Rechniewski says, but I believe he has made a number of points which could bear thinking about in the jazz world — particularly his comments on the treatment of jazz in the media.

Within the jazz world, the relationship between audience sizes and publicity in the media is not sufficiently appreciated. People generally whinge about the lack of articles on jazz in the newspapers and the absence of jazz programs on radio, but do they do anything about it? (Ironically, some of the loudest of those whingers do little to support JAZZ Magazine, which is one of the few outlets in this country for analysis and publicity of jazz — but that's another matter).

As one who wrote on jazz for the Sydney Morning Herald for 2½ years, I can vouch for how difficult it is to have jazz regarded as at least as important as the other art forms. But, if newspaper editors ignore their contributors, they do take notice of letters from the public. In fact, they are frequently over-sensitive to such letters. One or two can cause quite a stir; thirty or forty can bring about a crisis.

Yet, in the jazz world, how many people actually perceive the relationship between the health of the art form and regular publicity in the media? How many people, given this realisation, have bothered to pick up a pen and write to the press which ignores jazz with such impunity?

Visitors to Sydney who are familiar with jazz world-wide, tell us that only New York has a more vibrant jazz scene than Sydney does. Lee Jeske of Down Beat magazine, who travels every year to Europe, wrote in JAZZ Magazine (May/June, 1982) to this effect, after his two-weeks stay in Sydney and Melbourne in early 1982.

Yet, for all effects and purposes, the one serious newspaper in Sydney, The Sydney Morning Herald, has no jazz writer. (The Australian newspaper is only interested in jazz which it considers of 'national interest'). Recently on the Herald arts page, we have seen occasional reviews of overseas artists like the Mel Lewis Orchestra and the MJQ. But local jazz has been virtually ignored, other than for the odd short piece. Such a state of affairs is scandalous and would be analagous — if such an absurd situation might be imagined — with the New York Times having no jazz writer (they have two: John S. Wilson and Robert Palmer).

Yet how many Herald readers have taken the trouble to write to the editor, suggesting that the art form of jazz deserves to appear on the arts page? Would proponents of classical music be silent if the Herald's four classical music critics were suddenly never to appear again?

While the jazz world, collectively, is so apathetic — and, by the way, collective apathy is only individual apathy multiplied — while so little pressure is placed on those who

run newspapers and radio stations, there seems little doubt that the clear trend towards decline in jazz — which has manifest itself over the past year — will continue.

ERIC MYERS
Editor

Letters

Sir,

I am relatively new to jazz, having only listened in and picked up an instrument in the last few years.

The perseverance and integrity of JAZZ Magazine in its operations are admired. Your magazine is intensely interesting and motivating.

I have been meaning to write for some time. I guess "slackness" was at work, but the excellent article entitled *The ABC: Crudity and Ignorance Prevail* in your March/April issue finally prodded me to write. In reference to that article, I can only sympathise with Dr. Semmler. We get it from all sides that "jazz is too this . . .", "jazz is not that . . ." or, worst of all, that "jazz doesn't sell — won't draw the crowds." Outrage . . . What can one say? With due respect to those, I find the alternatives of classical chamber music, "head-banging" pub rock rages, and confused new wave, really dismal things!

I love Australian jazz, and it's made good progress over the decades — a growing cultural sophistication is apparent in all this. However, as in all art forms, it seems that the conservative, established conceptions of the form, prevail.

Yes, I am "guilty" of being a "jazz-rocker". I hope that JAZZ Magazine will not be afraid to document this admittedly ill-defined idiom as sympathetically as its "mainstream" predecessor. Your excellent articles on the work of Pyramid, Crossfire and Errol Buddle and other "fusioneers" in a recent issue [July/August 1982] was encouraging to see. I hope my criticism of the local jazz powers-that-are is so far constructive.

I really dig "mainstream" — there are lessons to learn — but time flies, and the fusion of real jazz and rock is inevitable. It's been going on since the 1960s.

I hope, finally, that you publish this simply worded letter in your next issue and, in the meantime, keep up the great work.

TERRANCE A. MAR
Newtown, NSW

Sir,

Following a lengthy discussion with Time-Life Records I feel that many readers may be interested to know just what is the full series of *The Giants of Jazz*. People who have subscribed to this superb re-issue series often receive erratic deliveries which never seem to come in catalogue number order, and none of the promotional literature lists the full series.

There will in fact be 23 sets of albums, and all subscribers will eventually receive a full set. The last five on the list have not been released

at all yet, but they will be during this year. Many of the others have sold out and will be pressed again shortly. This then is what you can expect:- Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Billie Holiday, Bix Beiderbecke, Benny Goodman, Coleman Hawkins, Jelly Roll Morton, Jack Teagarden, Sidney Bechet, Benny Carter, Earl Hines, The Guitarists, Henry Red Allen, Johnny Hodges, Fats Waller, Pee Wee Russell, Count Basie, James P. Johnson, Frank Teschemacher, Teddy Wilson, Johnny Dodds, Lester Young, Red Norvo.

Of interest to subscribers are the five sets that were planned but have subsequently been abandoned. These were:- Art Tatum, Bunny Berigan, Ben Webster, Bessie Smith, Joe Sullivan.

No reasons are given for the cancellation of these sets. Especially interesting were those of Berigan and Sullivan who are poorly represented by commercially available retrospective sets. Maybe some protest letters to Time-Life would help. I hope this sets the record straight for readers.

RICHARD HAZLEWOOD
Sydney, NSW

Sir,

The May-June 1982 issue of JAZZ contained an article by Jack Mitchell on singer Des Tooley. This has prompted further research into her life and career and I have been able to collect the following information.

Her maiden name was Amy Ruwald and she was born at Redfern on 29th October 1896 (this means that at the peak of her recording career she was in her mid-thirties). Sometime during the 1920s she teamed with Sheila Lockhart to appear on stage as Joan Desmond and Sheila Desmond. After her marriage to Lionel Tooley she then took the stage name of Des Tooley.

Apart from the many excellent records she made, it would appear that her radio appearances were her only professional appearances and that it is most unlikely that she appeared on the stage.

Her radio broadcasts were fairly regular during the early thirties and she sang over stations 2SM, 2CH, and 2GB as well as singing on Saturday nights with the ABC Dance Band on radio 2BL. This carried through to the mid 1940s and she even appeared on some radio serials which are so far untraced.

She was an excellent pianist and taught piano as well as teaching elocution through the thirties, during this time she was living in Randwick.

The *Australian Radio News* for February 23, 1934 carries an article about her singing on a 2GB programme and mention is made of her having sung before the King and Queen, which must have taken place in England at one stage.

Her career suffered badly from the late forties into the fifties and she died on 5th April, 1957, aged 59, at the State Reformatory for Women at Long Bay.

The cause of her death given on her death certificate was "chronic and acute alcoholism".

MIKE SUTCLIFFE
Baulkham Hills NSW



JANE MARCH

The Tribute To Ian Neil concert on March 29, 1983 at the Musicians Club, Sydney, was a great success. A total of \$1100.00 was collected from the door charge and raffle, and most of this was donated to the Bushfire Appeal. Club President Lee Bagwell who organised the concert, presented Ian with a specially made trophy for his efforts over eleven years for jazz and jazz musicians. The audience was knocked out by the efforts of top groups and musicians including The Trio (Tony Ansell, George Golla and Stuart Livingstone), the Dick Hughes Famous Five, the Sandie White/Vince Genova Duo, Johnny Nicol's Quartet, the Jack Lesmana Trio, the Ed Gaston Trio, Marie Wilson, the Australian Jazz Orchestra, Edwin Duff and compere Alan Corb. □

Over the years the Musicians Club has been prominent in putting on concerts for many worthy causes. Now the sad news is that the Club itself is in trouble. Like many others, the club has been hard hit by the new random breath test laws. So, Wednesday June 1 has been set aside for a benefit for the Club, and a good crowd is needed to help them out after all the good work they have done for musos in the past. Groups who, so far, have agreed to perform are Merv Acheson's Mainstreamers, the Adrian Ford Band, the George Golla group, the Australian Jazz Orchestra directed by Ian Boothey, and there will be others. Keep an eye out for the up-to-date program. Of course many musos will drop in for a blow. It

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

... and we've also heard

By Dick Scott*

goes without saying that musos and music lovers need a club, for a variety of reasons, so - Sydney - let's see a good roll-up on June 1. □

The closure of Brisbane's Cellar Club in Adelaide Street has come as a bombshell. The immediate reason is the 300 per cent increase in rent which was dropped on the club, but Dr. Mileham Hayes puts the club's demise down also to poor early-week attendances, union opposition to the use of volunteers in bar work, and the club's inability to attract Australia Council support. Dr. Hayes, who points out that clubs are essential for the survival of jazz, said recently: "For years I've been badgering the Australia Council to back clubs. We are however the victims of elitism. Had Joan Sutherland been seen here, we'd no doubt have got grants." □

ABC TV Entertainment producer Barry Crook tells us that the new series of the *Don Burrows Collection* will begin on Monday June 6, after the late news. In view of Earl 'Fatha' Hines's untimely death, Barry is hoping to begin the series

with a Hines program from French television, but this may not be available. There will be six home-grown programs. From Melbourne Pyramid, the Brian Brown group plus vocalist Judy Jacques, and Vince Jones, are featured. Sydney groups will include the Errol Buddle Band, the Bob Barnard Jazz Band, Nancy Stuart's Jazz Ladies, Judy Bailey, and the Kerrie Biddell Singers. Artists in the seven overseas programs will include Count Basie, Art Blakey & The Jazz Messengers, Art Farmer, Alberta Hunter, Chick Corea & Gary Burton, George Melly & John Chilton; and there will be a tribute to Billie Holiday by five US singers. □

The Bob Barnard Band is off overseas yet again and once again at the invitation of a Festival. They recently went to the Sacramento Festival and earlier the Cork Festival in Ireland. This time it is the highly acclaimed Edinburgh Festival in September. They will be there for six days and perform on every one of them. □



PETER SMETANA

Musicians Club President Lee Bagwell (right) presents Ian Neil with a specially made trophy: a tribute to Ian for his work over the years for jazz musicians . . .

WHO IS WYNTON MARSALIS?

By Lee Jeske*

What is this thing called Wynton Marsalis anyway?

The facts: Wynton Marsalis is a trumpet player. He is the son of a piano player, Ellis Marsalis, and the brother of a saxophone player, Branford Marsalis. He is young — about the age that Dizzy Gillespie, and Freddie Hubbard, and Louis Armstrong, and other trumpet players were when *they* broke in. He is from New Orleans — as were Buddy Bolden, and Bunk Johnson, and the previously mentioned Mr. Armstrong. He is good — damned good.

The hype: The greatest thing since macaroni! Over 100,000 copies sold of his debut album! Fronts the Miles Davis rhythm section (Herbie Hancock, Ron Carter, Tony Williams) barely out of diapers! Records a classical album to come out *at the same time* as his second jazz LP! Plays the pants off of the trumpet and can blow away any trumpet player with two legs and three valves!

The backlash: Hell, he's not so hot. Christ, what about all the other good trumpet players who nobody listens to? For pete's sake, *anybody* with that much publicity can sell a zillion albums. The guy's got a lot of nerve, anyway.

Okay, you tell me. What the hell is this thing called Wynton Marsalis?

Well, he's a combination of all these things and, as usual, perspective is what is needed before we give him the Nobel Prize or send him to the Home For Unwanted Trumpet Players.

Wynton Marsalis is an excellent trumpet player. This is not fact, not hype, just the opinion of one man. Me. The first time I heard Wynton Marsalis I was not just impressed — I was knocked out. Seriously. And I didn't go see him because some record company slipped me a G-note or promised me more review copies than my apartment could hold. Nor did I go see him because I wanted to either jump on the bandwagon and trumpet (pardon the pun) the arrival of a modern day Gabriel, or tear down this young, snotty, flash-in-the-pan. I went to see him because, a) seeing Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers is something I do as a matter of course, and b) somebody whose opinion I respect — in this case Gary Giddins — said that Blakey had a good trumpeter in his band and I should check him out. So I went to the Bottom Line (where Blakey was opening for the Heath Brothers) and heard Wynton Marsalis and was duly won over. I didn't then — nor do I now — think that Wynton was sent from the heavens to play the trumpet for us. But I did know that he was exceptionally gifted and a far-sight better than the man he replaced in the Blakey band, Valery Ponomarev (remember him? See, Blakey isn't *always* right). No question, this young trumpet player was a comer.

Now, you see, I wasn't the only person who felt this way. Gary Giddins felt this way. Other critics felt this way. And Herbie Hancock felt this way. So Herbie — who, thanks to some of the worst records that have ever crossed my turntable, has an excellent relationship with CBS Records — got it in mind that he'd like to do something with this young cat and approached Dr. George Butler, the man at Columbia you approach in these situations and the man you also approach when

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



Wynton Marsalis at the North Sea Festival, 1982: sticking to his guns, calling his pieces . . .

CBS is typically half-assed in its treatment of jazz (but that is the subject for a different palaver). Together they decided that this guy was good, he was marketable (read: well-dressed, well-spoken, well-educated), and that Columbia would give him a whirl, under the wing of Herbie Hancock — a wing that helped fill CBS's tills over the preceding years.

I don't know what Dr. Butler's motives were when he inked the pact with the young Marsalis. I don't know if he shamelessly licked his lips and said, "I've found us a gold mine. Get me the publicity department!" I don't know if he thought that this was the second coming (not realising that the first CBS coming, Miles Davis, was preparing to unpack his valve grease once again), I don't know if he thought, "We'll make this guy record fusion yet?" I don't know what he thought.

I do know what Herbie Hancock thought. He thought, "I should take this guy on the road with me, and fast." He also thought, "I'm going to produce this guy's album and it is going to *cook*."

Okay, you know the rest. Wynton started showing up on Blakey albums, and he sounded just as good on wax as he did in person. He toured with Hancock, Carter, and Williams, playing most of the major jazz festivals from New York to Europe to Japan, and he sounded excellent even in that fast company. His tone could be brash and it could be poignant, and his improvisations, while owing a lot to Miles Davis and others, were clearly

well thought out and fluent. Of course, attention was paid. You could argue, I suppose, that if Mr. Ed, the talking horse, toured with Hancock and company attention would be paid. But, ultimately, Ed would be recognised for what he was — a talking horse. Wynton, too, was recognised for what he was — a steamy trumpeter. And his album came out and it was an excellent album. It showed that Wynton could write as well as play, that he could hold his own in the fast lane, and that he had a brother, Branford, who could also play.

Things happened quickly. Wynton left Blakey after completing the year with him (1981). His first album was getting good reviews and, for some reason, the "popular" press started picking up on this young handsome trumpeter — stories on him appeared in the big glossy magazines that don't know a blue note from a thank you note. The 1980s hunger for celebrities caused Wynton to get a little more attention than your normal young brassman. This, for some reason, irked a number of people in the jazz community. I don't know why certain jazzmen become more popular than others, but I do know that there is a vicious reversal of opinion in much of the jazz press when this happens. After saying, "This is the cat — this is the hot trumpet player of today — listen to him", and finding that people are paying attention, the attitude is, "He's not that good, you should hear so-and-so, he's been around since Hector was a pup and he can blow the popular guy away." There is a sense of hurt involved here, a sense of, "He was ours, but now he's yours." I don't know why it happens, but it does happen, and it happens in every art form. It is a critical backlash and, at times, it doesn't make the least sense.

In any event, 1982 found Wynton at the crossroads. He made the big splash and now it was time for him to swim. The Blakey stint was behind him, the all-star tour was only a summer event; he was expected to go out and support his record. Wynton Marsalis has survived that all-important year with grace and exceptional musicianship. First of all, he put together a band. Not just a casual bunch to play through standard tunes, but a *band*. Made up of Branford Marsalis, tenor and soprano, Kenny Kirkland, piano, Phil Bowler, bass, and Jeff Watts, drums, the Wynton Marsalis Quintet hit the road smoking. They are all exceptional players and from the beginning have played mainly original pieces — difficult pieces that require an audience to *listen*. They do the odd standard, but Wynton has a habit of rearranging standards so that they're almost unrecognisable. The band is an excellent one and is still intact today — and they are *playing* like a band that has been on the road for a year, judging from a recent performance I caught at the Village Vanguard. Wynton is uncompromising. At last summer's Nice Festival the Quintet was met with some resistance — the Nice fans like to hear the good old good ones and Wynton was booked for a lot of performances there during the week. He could have taken the easy way — playing *Perdido* and *I Got Rhythm*. He didn't — he stuck to his guns and called *his* pieces and played to the smallest audiences he's probably ever had.

This insistence of Wynton's on keeping a working band is paying off. But it's not keeping him from doing other things. He played with Dizzy Gillespie and Chico Freeman at Nice, and, in two weeks, will be the guest soloist at a Sonny Rollins concert in Town Hall (I'll report next issue). He also did a terrific concert at the Public Theatre here with his father and brother, but I reported on that some issues back. He's taking the select special project and he's doing what he wants the way he

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wants. This summer, for example, he'll be back with Hancock, Carter, and Williams for a tour called (perhaps unfortunately) VSOP II, with brother Branford taking the saxophone chair.

At the same time, there will be two new Wynton Marsalis albums on the market. One is the follow-up to the first LP and I've heard it's a corker. The other is a classical album. Now I don't really know whether or not *that* is a good idea — it seems that he's setting himself up for a fall on his face, if the album isn't up to snuff. You see, classical critics are very, very wary of jazz stars crossing into their domain, as well they should be. Similarly, I always approach with trepidation an album like the one Itzhak Perlman did of jazz pieces written out for his violin. Usually, my trepidation is absolutely correct and I'm sure the classical honchos will be gunning for young Marsalis. I am also confident enough of Wynton's taste and abilities to think that he will pull this off with élan.

In short, Wynton Marsalis is an enormously gifted young trumpeter who is growing and moving and should live up to his potential. That is not to say that he's *it* on the trumpet — but he'd be the first to admit that. I think he will live and play up to his wunderkind image and settle into a highly productive and successful jazz career. He's got all the equipment, and he seems also to have the emotional qualities to ignore his hype and just go out there and blow. He is a little cocky, too, but that goes with his instrument.

The conclusion: Wynton's on his way. But I know you didn't read it here first.

DAVE DALLWITZ & AUSTRALIAN JAZZ:

A Reply To Mr. Linehan

By Bruce Clunies Ross*

Bruce Clunies Ross's article 'An Australian Sound: Jazz in Melbourne and Adelaide, 1941-51' appears in the book *Australian Popular Culture*, ed. Peter Spearitt & David Walker, published in 1979 by George Allen & Unwin Australia Pty Ltd. In the January/February 1983 edition of *JAZZ*, Norm Linehan described this piece as "a farrago of errors of fact, misconceptions and wrong conclusions". We now publish Bruce Clunies Ross's reply:

Mr. Norm Linehan does not cite a shred of evidence to substantiate his attack on my contribution to *Australian Popular Culture*. His unmannerly accusation can therefore be dismissed as baseless prejudice. It appears Mr. Linehan did not even bother to read my essay very carefully, since he implicates me in an argument I did not address at all. I did not try to define the sound of Australian jazz; I claimed there was an Australian sound, which is an entirely different thing. My title ('An Australian Sound') was deliberately chosen to indicate this distinction, which I clarified in the opening paragraphs and elsewhere in my essay, conceding that it was not the only sound in Australian jazz at the time.

It was the sound which interested me, however, because its main exponents, Dave Dallwitz, Ade Monsborough and a few of their friends like Kelly Smith and Rex Green, were not simply trying to play traditional jazz, or Dixieland (or whatever Mr. Linehan would prefer to call it), but were tactfully exploiting the conventions of traditional jazz to create a musical idiom which had certain similarities with other cultural developments at the time, ranging from Jindyworobakism to some of the ventures associated with *Angry Penguins*, especially the kind of painting, exemplified by the work of Sidney Nolan, which has been called Australian expressionism. What I appreciate about these diverse phenomena, including the jazz, is that they were all attempts to express a vision, or experience, of Australia, often with a kind of direct simplicity or deliberate naivete.

*Bruce Clunies Ross teaches English Literature at the University of Copenhagen, Denmark.

This was the context in which I described the music of Dallwitz and Monsborough as 'an Australian sound'. I devoted a large part of my essay to describing it, and supported my account with a range of evidence, including Dave Dallwitz's own comments on the delicate question of developing the conventions of traditional jazz. Readers who want to find out about the case which Mr. Linehan has garbled are referred to pp.62-80 of *Australian Popular Culture* (edited by Peter Spearitt & David Walker, Sydney, 1979). I would like to thank Mr. Linehan for drawing my contribution to this book to the attention of the jazz community. More evidence for the association of jazz with innovative or progressive cultural developments, especially in Melbourne in the forties, can be found in Richard Haese's recent *Rebels and Precursors*, Ringwood, 1981.

Mr. Linehan may well disagree with me, though on the evidence of his article we have no dispute. However, in order to create a spurious disagreement, Mr. Linehan actually borrows, but vulgarises, one of my ideas. He claims, as support for his case against mine, that Dave Dallwitz was never influential on jazz in Adelaide or anywhere else. But I never claimed he was; indeed I suggested the opposite. My case is that Dallwitz was *original*, and originality is not measured by influence. His influence was indeed

restricted, and I offered a more fundamental explanation for this than Mr. Linehan does, by pointing out that the original approach to jazz which Dallwitz and Monsborough were cultivating was swamped by the spread of an international style of traditional jazz, through the increasing availability of recordings, among other reasons. This became the dominant influence on most Australian musicians, and it partly explains why some members of the Southern Jazz Group lost interest in what Dallwitz was trying to do, and left the band. They thought they had found something bigger and better. They failed to appreciate Dallwitz's originality, or found it constraining, and did not want to be associated with its development.

Yet while Dallwitz had no very extensive influence, his music was not completely ignored. He retained a small following, and inspired at least one Adelaide musician, Leon Atkinson, whose West Side Jazz Band, a two-trumpet group which played a lot of Morton compositions, was active around 1955 or 1956. Furthermore, the return of a number of musicians who had left the Southern Jazz Group, to Dallwitz's bands of the 1970s suggests that they later came to recognize his original distinction.

Dallwitz, unlike Ade Monsborough, was not essentially an instrumentalist (though he was able to acquire proficiency on a number of instruments). However, he needed a band to give expression to his musical ideas, and with the collapse of the second Southern Jazz Group, he dropped out of jazz, which must have been a painful decision for someone with his talents. Mr. Linehan speculates vaguely about this on the basis of unstated but evidently very slender evidence, and contrives, in passing, a slighting reference to Dallwitz's work in fields outside jazz. I happened to know Dallwitz (and several members of the band) fairly well at the time, and was involved in a couple of projects with him, so I can testify to his continued activity in music. He became involved in early music, joined an amateur symphony orchestra as a bassoonist, wrote music for the theatre and composed a large number of songs. There is plenty of evidence for all this, if Mr. Linehan cares to look for it.



The cover of an issue of *Angry Penguins*: attempts to express a vision of Australia . . .



This group gave the premier performance of Dave Dallwitz's Gold Fever Suite at Wattle Park Teachers' Centre, circa 1976. Back row from left: Bob Wright, Rod Porter, Deryck Bentley, Dallwitz, Tas Brown, Penny Eames, Graham Eames. Foreground from left: John Malpas, Keith Conlon, Bill Munro.

If Mr. Linehan had pointed out some of the errors he claims to have found in my piece I would have been grateful, and if they are relevant, would modify my case accordingly. I am aware of certain limitations in my essay, especially in its references to the earliest phases of jazz in Australia, and have since learnt from discussions with my old friend Jim Smith, and from listening to his collection of rare records, much about early jazz in Adelaide. He has discussed and illustrated this subject on radio programmes in Adelaide, and has far more detailed evidence about it than Mr. Linehan seems to possess, or at least bothers to mention in his article.

I am well aware that there are jazz musicians and enthusiasts who do not share my appreciation for Dallwitz's contribution to the art. As it happens, two of my oldest friends in what Mr. Linehan calls 'the jazz community' do not. There are no doubt various reasons for this, though two which were especially strong in controversies over jazz in the fifties were a bias towards the international and cosmopolitan, as against the local or provincial, and a tendency to reduce the criticism of jazz to matter of styles and modes. I have never been sympathetic to either of these positions. There is overwhelming evidence to suggest that provincialism has been one of the strongest regenerating forces in art, and jazz, with its roots in a distinct region, is a case in point, and every style of jazz includes good musicians who

use its conventions creatively, and mediocre musicians for whom the conventions remain constricting clichés. Likewise, there are some people who listen to jazz musically and others who only recognise it when they hear a familiar set of clichés.

I knew my essay would provoke controversy but I did not expect the unjustified rudeness of Mr. Linehan's piece. The intermittent debates on the subject I have had over the last three decades have always been conducted in a friendly fashion, and while I have encountered disagreement I have also been supported, sometimes from unexpected sources. A few years ago, some of Dallwitz's music was reviewed in *Down Beat* (July 12, 1979) and the American critic, who knew nothing of my work, but simply listened to the evidence of his own ears, had this to say:

... the trad revival in Australia, near-stagnant throughout the rest of the world for the last quarter century, has developed genuinely valuable insights into the jazz of an earlier day. Trumpeter Roger Bell, vocalist Penny Eames, trumpeter/reedman Lazy Ade Monsborough and composer Dave Dallwitz are original artists of international stature: they and a few others simply have no equivalents on the imitative, joyless American and European trad scenes.

... Dallwitz's music begins with 1928-30 Ellington (and Ellington's sources); his compositions are episodic, multi-thematic, with evocative ambitions that are occasionally even fulfilled — his 1975 Ern Malley Suite ... is a brilliant, beautiful piece of eccentricity.

Precisely.

My contribution to *Australian*

Popular Culture expresses some ideas which have been developing since I first heard the music of Dallwitz and Monsborough about thirty-five years ago. It has always seemed to me that without being recognised for it by the musical public at large or by the jazz community, they had modestly created in a jazz idiom a music which evoked facets of Australia, while composers in other branches of music were still striving with less success to achieve something similar. It was no accident, I suggest, that future composers like Don Banks and Keith Humble were associated with jazz in the post-war decade, or that musicians with a broad range of musical interests, like Ian Pearce and Dave Dallwitz, found in jazz a rich potential for self-expression.

'An Australian Sound' was inspired by a wish to explain this idea and credit Dallwitz and Monsborough with their achievement, not by anything as crude and silly as the motives Mr. Norm Linehan imputes to me. Of course, at the very beginning of his article he half-realizes that he is wrenching my argument out of all proportion, but that does not prevent him from mistaking my meaning, distorting my case, and while accusing me of misconceptions, turning his own misconceptions against me.

My essay is openly based upon my memory and occasional participation in jazz activities in Adelaide, but it is extensively supported by evidence from written sources of all kinds, and by interviews with some of the musicians involved. Indeed this is as good an opportunity as any to mention assistance which I inadvertently failed to acknowledge originally. I have discussed my ideas about jazz intermittently over more than thirty years with Roger Hudson, who let me examine his collection of early jazz periodicals, and Leon Atkinson, who inspired me to write the original piece and helped me develop some of the ideas it contains. Dave Dallwitz and Johnny Malpas gave me full access to the documents and recordings they have preserved of an early phase in Australian jazz. Obviously there is more evidence available than I exploited, and if Mr. Linehan knows of any, I wish he would not conceal it.

In fact, Mr. Linehan is very coy about disclosing the sources for his own speculations, while my carefully qualified argument is supported by enough evidence to let the reader decide for himself. Mr. Linehan writes about jazz in Adelaide as if it

were ancient Egypt. If he really wants to know all the details of the break-up of the first Southern Jazz Group, there are plenty of people still alive and well who could tell their versions. There are comments in jazz periodicals and, I suspect, newspaper references, letters and a legal record. But Mr. Linehan bungles this whole question in a pedantic and imprecise pre-occupation with dates, and rather perversely withholds the salient point, and the names of the people concerned. This is that the dissidents from the first Southern Jazz Group formed the Bruce Gray Band, which played, excellently, traditional jazz, mainly from the standard repertoire, and survived for a long time. It did not play Dallwitz's kind of music at all. That was partly why its members left the Southern Jazz Group.

Mr. Linehan is hardly in a position to criticise me for errors when he tries to avoid them himself by vagueness. He does not succeed, however. When claiming that the original Southern Jazz Group first recorded in 1950, he betrays his ignorance of no less than twenty-four earlier recordings: sixteen sides recorded for Memphis, the first, a Dallwitz original, *Southern March*, cut 21/1/47, the last, another original, *Ragtime Tuba*, cut 13/9/49, and eight sides recorded for Willco (or possibly, in some cases, recorded by Bill Holyoak and issued by Willco) during the same period. There is also a Jazzart recording from around this time which uses an extended band including musicians from Adelaide, Melbourne and Hobart, and Johnny Malpas played me an even earlier recording, of *Adelaide Blues* and *S.O.L. Blues*, cut at the 1946 Jazz Convention. The seeds of the Dallwitz style can already be detected on that disc. Mr. Linehan can perhaps be forgiven for his unfamiliarity with this example, but it was a gross error on his part to ignore the Memphis and Willco recordings, and it reveals the carelessness with which he read my essay, in which the former are mentioned.

I cannot understand why Mr. Linehan writes of musicians as abstract ciphers, shuffled around in combinations from one convention to another. This means that he remains vague about the personnel and original distinction of the second Southern Jazz Group, which made the *ABC* recordings. Dallwitz had switched to piano in this group, and the magnificent front line

comprised Keith Hounslow (tp), Tas Brown (cl), and Mal Wilkinson (tmb). The rhythm section included, in addition to Dallwitz, Johnny Carson (bjo), G. Allen (tb) and 'Tojo' Wright (dms). I have vivid memories of this band, which I heard on countless occasions.

Mr. Linehan approaches all these matters from a remote distance, apparently using a few old Jazz Convention programmes on which to found speculations which he fails to check from other sources. Yet if he has ever been to a Jazz Convention he will know that the programme is a very uncertain guide to what actually happens on such occasions. I cannot understand why Mr.



The record cover of Dallwitz's *Ern Malley Suite*: a brilliant, beautiful piece of eccentricity . . .

Linehan does not try to get closer to his subject, by questioning some of the people involved in the events he is so anxious to dispute, and by being more specific in his references. On some matters to which he refers so distantly, like the Adelaide Jazz Convention of 1951, he could even have asked me. I was on the committee which organised it, and I talked with most of the delegates. Apart from an unforgivable bout of drunkenness, when I missed most of the ball, I heard all the music performed there, and so I not only know who were in the various bands and pick-up groups, I know what the music *sounded* like. That, after all, is what matters; not the inept dithering with vague dates and unspecified personnel which pre-occupies Mr. Linehan.

All of this goes to *prove* (and not just to assert) that Mr. Linehan's contribution to your journal is, except where it borrows from my own work, a farrago of vain speculations and inaccurate trivialities. □

GREAT

"We don't compromise to suit either a jazz or a rock venue. In our playing we draw from our roots and backgrounds; rock, blues and jazz — and we get a good reception at all venues." This comment on the Sydney band Great White Noise comes from the group's guitarist, Michael Tinney.

Great White Noise can't be slotted easily into a category. Tinney has said their music could be loosely termed as "jazz-funk." It is vibrant, powerful music due to the energy output, original ideas and high musical ideals they have set themselves. Like the Lounge Lizards, James White and The Blacks, and Public Image who are part of the current jazz-funk movement in England and America; Great White Noise have been largely influenced by James 'Blood' Ulmer, Ornette Coleman and John Coltrane.

The roots for Great White Noise were set over a year ago. Around April 1982, Tinney organised a jam one night a week at the Sussex Hotel. Noted young musicians from both the jazz and rock scenes sat in: Dianne Spence (at that time in King Cobra), Louise Elliot (Laughing Clowns), Martin Moore (Kill The King). Great White Noise developed from these free-form jam sessions. After a series of Keys Music Association, (KMA) performances with The Freeboppers, Keys and The Benders, and several pub gigs, Great White Noise became a going concern.

Over the past year there have been a number of line-up changes. The idea behind that, as Tinney explained was "to see who stayed and what strong feelings would happen that would see the growth of the music." The line-up today is Michael Tinney (guitar), Lenny Bastiaans (bass), Tony Buck (drums), Sandy Evans (tenor & soprano saxophone) and Dianne Spence (alto & tenor saxophone). Recently they have been experimenting with the addition of vocals. Experimentation is something Great White Noise have been doing constantly. Late October, 1982, the band consisted of three saxophones, one trumpet, two drums, bass and guitar. Before that they had experimented with a conga player, two bassists and a six piece horn

WHITE NOISE: Jazz Funkers

By Allecia Wangmann*



PETER SINCLAIR

Great White Noise playing at Jenny's in Sydney. From left, Sandy Evans (tenor sax), Lenny Bastiaans (bass), Michael Tinney (guitar).

section.

Saxophonists Sandy Evans and Dianne Spence are well-known in the jazz scene; both performed at last year's 'Women in Jazz' Festival. Evans has been involved with 'Jazz Alive', a workshop group that taught schoolchildren about music through the vehicle of jazz;

**Allecia Wangmann is a jazz enthusiast who works for News Limited.*

she also studied the Jazz Diploma course at the Conservatorium of Music, like so many of the younger musicians today. Di Spence is a familiar face on the music scene as ex-saxophonist with the reggae group, King Cobra. It has not been unfamiliar to see Evans and Spence sitting in with various bands.

Tinney, when asked of what he thought of having an all-female reed section said: "Their music has

different potencies than males playing. It adds to the energy." Bastiaans' comment was perhaps less subtle: "Just guys playing can get pretty boring at times."

Michael Tinney is a natural organiser; it was because of his ingenuity that Great White Noise became a working band. Bastiaans and Tinney have had a predominantly rock influence in their playing. "It is important to encourage crossover and not to restrict our audiences," says Tinney. Their earlier gigs were at known rock venues but they recently completed a six weeks stint at Jenny's Wine Bar, the new hub of modern jazz in Sydney.

For Tony Buck, Great White Noise is an interesting mixture of two former bands he has played in, Ayers Rock and Sketches. Ayers Rock was a rock band of some notoriety, while Sketches was an acoustic free form jazz group that he helped to start.

In the last few months the career of Great White Noise has gone ahead with amazing progress. They embarked on their first tour in March, to Brisbane and Melbourne. Bastiaans said it was quite successful; both jazz and rock audiences seemed to enjoy their music; at many gigs people were dancing.

Their first album is in the pipeline, due for release hopefully in September. Great White Noise are excited about the album for it will be an independent production where they will have total control. It will be all original material, with some new numbers. On one of the new numbers, Bastiaans speaks Dutch, his native tongue.

Great White Noise work closely with Peter Scammell of Go-Broke Promotions, a leading figure on the independent music scene. "They are virtually part of the band, as they have the same ideas about music as we do. Work with Go-Broke is flexible and cohesive," said Bastiaans.

Go-Broke organised Sedition, a three day independent music festival in late April, and held at the Trade Union Club. For the first time in the club's history, contemporary jazz was played; The Benders as well as Great White Noise and the KMA performed. Let's hope that Great White Noise will keep on making great strides in their music. Good luck to them. □

BRISBANE'S RICK PRICE

By Neville Meyers*

If there is one word which annoys Brisbane trumpeter Rick Price, it's categorization — player and listener tolerance for only one jazz style. Playing what he preaches — a potpourri of bebop revival, mainstream, dixieland, funk — Price has become, after almost a decade's digging-in, one of Brisbane's leading jazz voices. The frustrations of being a part-time player, the self-acknowledged limits to his own playing, and the inherent conservatism of the Brisbane jazz scene overall, have all been restricting. For all that the musician is digging-in even harder to improve his playing and to break new musical ground.

Jazz Roots: The key to Price's present tenacity lies in a life-long association with music.

"If my parents had had their way, I would have been a pianist," Price recalls. "At an early age I was sent for lessons, spent months struggling through *Claire de Lune*, *Greensleeves*, and the *Jolly Farmer*. I can't say I had any real direction or purpose musically. Then, my real passions were soccer and Laurel & Hardy films."

There is however a moment of true discovery for all jazz listeners and players. For Price it came in the form of Dizzy Gillespie.

"I thought Dizzy was magic. Up until that time I had only casually heard a scattering of jazz on the American Armed Forces radio broadcasts. Coincidentally there was a major jazz revival under way in Britain and I found myself listening also to Bunk Johnson, Armstrong, and Goodman."

After hearing Gillespie Price purchased his first trumpet, a King small-bore. Dizzy has remained, he will tell you, his greatest influence. But there have evidently been a score of other names from Maynard Ferguson to Ruby Braff, and many in-betweens, as other important influences. Melbourne's Keith Hounslow and Sydney's Peter Cross are representative of several local players Price listens to.

In any event Price from his early teens became immersed in the trumpet, displaying the quality



Rick Price, performing in Sydney at the Musicians' Club. In the background is the bassist Geoff Kluge.

which any beginner, to be successful, must have: the bum-on-seat tenacity to practice; to hang-in; if necessary, to self-teach.

"At first I couldn't get lessons. With the aid of a tutor book of fingerings, I went back to my piano scales and tried to play the licks from records. The neighbours were my biggest problem. There were so many complaints to my parents about the hideous sounds emanating from my bedroom I finally had to practice amongst the shirts and suits in my wardrobe. I became a very hot player, believe me."

What followed was a series of bite-the-bullet attempts to gain experience. Fortunately there were opportunities and Price gained considerable experience by playing in the clubs and pubs of England's Southern Counties, where the typical fare including such jazz notables as Victor Feldman, Ronnie Scott, Dil Jones, and the John Dankworth Seven.

A major turning-point towards future professionalism came with enlistment as a musician in the Royal Air Force. Price during this period received his first solid grounding in major areas of trumpet-playing — brass band, light orchestral, dance band.

On leaving the RAF Price moved to London and big band touring work. The two-year experience

consolidated what he had learned in the RAF band. It also reinforced his earlier predilection for small group work with its greater scope for individual expression.

Price returned to the jazz club circuit but in 1974 left the UK and came to Brisbane. The move represented in one sense a big jump into the musical unknown; in another, an opportunity for further musical growth in the process of establishing a toe-hold in the Brisbane jazz scene.

Brisbane Be-Bop: After tentative beginnings there is no doubt Price, although restricted to part-time playing, has achieved that toe-hold. The musician has also established a recognizable niche — that of bebop revivalist.

In 1974 Price freelanced with various Brisbane bands, eventually joining Mileham Hayes' Dr. Jazz Band at the Cellar Club. This presented a steady gig as well as the opportunity to play with some of Brisbane's leading traditionalists. Price, encouraged by Hayes, was determined to try something new.

"Mileham was very interested in the presentation of a wide range of styles at The Cellar. He invited me to form a band and guaranteed opportunities for us to play. So along with Clare Hansson, Frank Tyne, Jim Howard, and Ian Cocking, I started a band dedicated

* 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.

to the cool era."

A large slice of Price's playing has since been dedicated to the cool era: a deliberate, if at times over-safe, recreation of the sound of Cannonball Adderley, the Dizzy and Miles groups. It is a style that Price has felt comfortable with, one which — the musician is quick to point out — can only be approximated. In any event the introduction of the bebop revivalist stream provided a bright splash of red in the city's hitherto predictable Dixieland-mainstream palette.

The 'cool' side to the Rick Price Quintet has also received good public response in Brisbane with regular appearances at The Cellar, Bonaparte's, the Queensland Jazz Action Society, and assorted gigs at universities, festivals and hotels. The style has also travelled well. The group earned considerable praise at the Australian Jazz Convention in Forbes and more recently at the Toowoomba Jazz Festival.

The Quintet has also produced its own audio-cassette for commercial distribution — *Blues, Bebop and Ballads* — recently featured on ABC radio Brisbane's Sunday evening programme *Giants of Jazz*.

Present Gigs: The bebop revivalist mode has continued to be a major feature of RPQ's playing. It's a style the Quintet's other members — Clare Hansson (piano), Frank Tyne (alto saxophone, clarinet), Jim Howard (drums) and David Croft (bass) seem also to be happy with.

Clare Hansson: "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."

Hansson also believes that Price's choice of material is excellent, never compromising.

On the other hand Price is actively seeking musical balance. The musician believes the ability to hold and to entertain an audience calls for variation in style and mood, as frequently as necessary, during any one gig. Consequently, RPQ has a solid mainstream and traditional repertoire to call on, with the chief mix remaining Miles and mainstream. At the 1983 Toowoomba Jazz Festival, for example, it was typical Price fare. During RPQ's three performances, Price tossed in several Miles and Dizzy licks (including *All Blues, Night in Tunisia*) and some solid mainstream from the Horace Silver and Julian Adderley bags.

Price is also keen to take the band interstate whenever possible. The group has already played for the NSW Jazz Action Society at the Sydney Musicians' Club. In fact RPQ has been the first Queensland band to be so invited.

Apart from festivals and weekly club dates, Price and RPQ have frequently been the show-opener for visiting major overseas and interstate jazz artists, too many to list here.

RPQ also continues to play weekly gigs as part of Price's efforts to keep the group a highly visible part of the Brisbane jazz scene.

Audience response has at all these venues been enthusiastic. Price is keen to keep it that way. Accordingly, Miles and mainstream will stay on the Prize jazz menu for some time yet.

Present Concerns: Price's adaptability and doggedness have ensured that he and RPQ generally have become, with the exception of Mileham Hayes's group and possibly only one or two other groups, Brisbane's most visible jazz players.

On the plus side, the band is likely to continue to play its share of gigs and, for the most part, to produce non-decaffeinated jazz.

There are also minuses. As with most part-time groups, RPQ can introduce only a limited amount of new material. The group also has a tendency to coast along, to play predictable licks, to be over-safe.

Price acknowledges these problems. The musician's major concerns in the past six months have been to improve his own playing and to force change. Price has a number of strategies for achieving these goals.

First, late last year he cut the group's umbilical chord with The Cellar Club, where Price felt the band was falling into too

comfortable a niche. The band since late 1982 has also been pushing out into new territory — hitherto untried venues for RPQ — to make fresh audience contact. RPQ has recently imported Ted Vining on drums and Tom Coburn on bass; both Vining and Coburn have the experience and talent to push RPQ into new rhythmic directions. Price himself is also playing much more pick-up work than before outside RPQ, and, musically, feels fresher for it.

A believer in consistency, Price also crams at least two hour's practice into each day. The musician has also been a regular participant at Brisbane and Sydney jazz clinics, and in 1983 has enrolled for a year's part-time study in advanced theory and practice for trumpet at the Queensland Conservatorium, Brisbane. In his present playing Price also likes to double on flugel-horn wherever possible. The musician has also switched to a larger bore trumpet.

"After some thinking I decided on a custom-built horn angled like Dizzy's, but not as a gimmick. This design frees the bell from the restriction of the metal stays and gives a more resonant sound. It's also a great advantage when reading charts. Too many players tend to blow straight into the music stand when they're playing."

Price would also like to spend the next four or five years digging into a new groove: in what musical direction the musician has not yet resolved. Although Brisbane has an unprecedented number of jazz venues — the opening of an experimental strictly contemporary venue is also now in the offing — the overall jazz scene does not favour experimentation. It's dangerous ground also to risk losing whatever measure of support has been hard-won over the years. Price, naturally,



Price performing at JAS Sunshine Coast concert, with Clare Hansson (piano) and Ian Hocking (bass).

THE MJQ: A Welcome Return

By John Moses*

is cautious about change. In any event, it's also difficult to imagine the musician straying too far from his major influences — Gillespie, Miles, Brown, Navarro, Farmer and Baker.

A feature of Price's personality is the enjoyment of whatever musical opportunities come his way. Visiting the San Francisco Bay Area in late '81, Price went armed with trumpet, sitting in wherever he could with various groups in San Francisco itself, Santa Clara County, and elsewhere. The musical standard, in every shade of jazz, was mind-blowing.

"The musicians weren't names either... simply great players in every jazz idiom. It was a great exchange, musically and personally".

Lastly, musical exchange is what Rick Price advocates most of all. He'd like more festivals and workshops for Brisbane, and greater exchange between musicians of various styles from interstate. For Price — indeed for many other players here — Brisbane remains too isolated from much of the southern happenings. There's also a tendency (the writer's observation not Price's) for Brisbane musicians to remain isolated within their own particular categories. Musical frontiers can be sharply defined and closely — sometimes jealously — guarded. Still, a few intrepid travellers have ventured to cross here. Price, at least, is a border-crosser, ultimately not tying himself loosened up the local jazz scene here. Price, at least, is a boarder-crosser, ultimately not tying himself to any particular style. For musical isolation, in any form, Price believes, is anathema.

"It's very sad, and very limiting, that so many people believe jazz began and ended with some key figure of stylist. That if it isn't avant-garde, traditional, bebop, or some other specialist strand, forget it. It's also a great pity that so many people stay at home, playing their well-worn favourite jazz records in isolation, instead of becoming involved in the life experience of a shared audience response."

Warming yet further to his subject, Price can quote from the top of his head the French jazz writer Robert Goffin:

"Jazz is a great art which is practically reborn each time it is played. It must be nurtured in a spirit of honesty, understanding — and tolerance. . . ." □

Not many distinguished modern musical careers are likely to have started at the age of 12, as pianist in a small sub-teenage group playing in an Albuquerque, New Mexico, nightclub on an evening in 1932.

Even now, half a century on, John Lewis sees nothing odd about it. He was then a Boy Scout with a merit badge for music, and the proprietor had heard him and his friends (two saxophones, trumpets, and percussion) playing at a Boy Scout convention. It was his first paid engagement.

In Australia, for the third time — the first with Ella Fitzgerald at the Sydney boxing stadium in 1954 — but now, with Percy Heath, Connie Kay and Milt Jackson, he talked more freely about himself and his music than he did when I first met him here nearly 20 years ago.

I mention the Budapest String Quartet as an example of musical togetherness. "Yes", says John Lewis. "The name lasted 45 years, but not with the same personnel. We had 22 years together, then the lay-off, and now we're back again. I don't think any other group can match it."

In any kind of musical terms, classical or jazz, it is an extraordinary

**John Moses, of The Australian newspaper, spoke with John Lewis when the Modern Jazz Quartet was in Australia earlier this year.*

achievement. Four musicians of great skill and character — as these four are — can be a volatile combination. And yet the MJQ has not only survived, but prospered.

John Lewis puts it down to the long lay-off, when each of the quartet pursued, for the first time in more than two decades, an individual career. In his case, it was solo work, teaching composition, improvisation and jazz history at New York's City College, in uptown Manhattan.

"After 22 years together" he says without elaboration, "we each needed what might be called some time for reflection. And at last, I had time for practise."

Practise? "Every day, I was able to sit down for two or three hours and practise, just sit down and hit the keys. Everything. Scales, arpeggios, all the things there was never time for when we were continually on the road."

The result is that the MJQ's devoted legion of fans — which by no means includes all jazz buffs, some of whom find their music a touch cerebral — heard a slightly more forthright John Lewis in the group's Sydney and Melbourne concerts.

I remind him, for example, of his spare epigrammatic sound in his suite derived from *Porgy and Bess*, where the piano's contribution is more like punctuation marks than



John Lewis (middle) and Milt Jackson (right) relax between concerts in Sydney, with John McGhee (left) of Pan Am, who flew the MJQ to Australia.

JANE MARCH

complete paragraphs, and Milt Jackson's baroque vibraharp monologues run free over Lewis's lean framework of chords.

"I think you might find now," he says gently, "that after all the solo work I've done, we've had to accommodate the fact that I participate more." This was something to look forward to. And it happened.

He believes, indeed, that each of the quartet has benefited from the break; Milt Jackson because of the challenge created by playing with different rhythm sections around America, Connie Kay providing percussion for a wide variety of groups, and bassist Percy Heath playing with his saxophonist brother Jimmy, in a very different kind of group from the quartet.

With his usual reserve — it was almost a kind of aloofness when I first interviewed him in 1966, but the man seems to have mellowed — he won't be drawn specifically on what the new sound is like: "Let's just say it's more mature."

As he has always been, he is not only pianist, but arranger, the job he did after four years war service in Europe for Dizzy Gillespie in the later 40s, succeeding Thelonius Monk. Those early associations with musicians like Milt Jackson, Ray Brown and Kenny Clarke were the genesis of the MJQ.

It was not easy at first. They had to develop a style, and an audience. They couldn't play for dances, because their sound wasn't right. They tried a late night supper club, Embers, on Manhattan's upper East Side but found that while one half of the room wanted to listen, the other wanted to chatter and eat. No truce was possible.

And meanwhile, John Lewis, the former medical student turned anthropology student turned pianist and arranger was acquiring a Master's degree from the Manhattan School of Music, and the group was beginning to attract the devotees — including this reporter — who have welcomed their return as a farmer would greet the breaking of a drought.

A new sound implies a new repertoire, and while the *Porgy and Bess* suite is sadly not with us this time, and John Lewis customarily is not entirely forthcoming about what's new, there is some promise in at least one item.

"It's called *Hornpipe for the Queen*," he says. This sounds surprising. "Not really" he says. "It just came to me, as a tune. And



JANE MARCH

Percy Heath (bass) during a Sydney performance, with one eye on John Lewis ...

it sounded like a hornpipe. And I think that's what sailors danced, didn't they? So I just called it *Hornpipe for the Queen*, because I guess they might have danced it for her."

End of quote, end of interview. Mr. Lewis may be more mellow, but he is no less enigmatic than he always was. On stage, and off. □

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THE EL ROCCO: An Era in Sydney Jazz

(Part 3)

By Bruce Johnson*

For the first few years of its existence it might be said that the musicians established the reputation of the El Rocco. After a certain indeterminate point in its history the reverse also came to be true: the El Rocco also established the reputations of musicians. The venue took a while to find itself. As the first meeting ground for disparate generations of Sydney's modern jazz musicians, it wasn't really certain as to how it should shape itself. Even though it was packed with patrons within a few weeks of its first presenting jazz back in 1957, there was nonetheless a period of infancy during which it was spontaneously developing its character. The residencies of musicians like Mike Nock and Bryce Rohde in the early sixties tended to confirm that character, which had been built up slowly by the dedication of all the other musicians who had worked there up to that time: the El Rocco was simply *the* most vigorous and advanced centre of modern jazz in Sydney, if not in Australia. From this point onward, the El Rocco did not merely exist, it represented something. And to play there was not simply to perform, but to signify visibly as a musician.

The significance was manifold.

Everyone to whom I spoke agreed, instantly and emphatically, that the El Rocco saw the beginning of the concerted modern jazz movement in Sydney, bringing to a focus the more or less unco-ordinated efforts of the musicians playing in the idiom. As such, it presented in the course of its history pretty well every name of any importance in post-traditional jazz. The list would be an honour roll of Sydney's main-streamers, modernists, avant-gardists. I have mentioned over three dozen already in the course of this series of articles. Even without beginning to scratch our heads, we could add names like Stewie Speer, Judy Bailey, Alan Geddes, Bob Gebert, Peter Piercy, George Golla,

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At the El Rocco in the early 60s: from left, Lyn Christie, Judy Bailey and the club's owner Arthur James.

Ed Gaston, Bob Bertles, Charlie Munro, Errol Buddle, Warren Daly, Keith Stirling . . .

The Rocco wasn't the only modern jazz venue during its years of operation, but it always had something that distinguished it from others. It was partly a matter of timing — the Mocambo closed relatively early during that period and places like the Biltmore at Bondi didn't open until later. There was the Sky Lounge overlapping, but that was never as fiercely uncompromising, as intent on pushing the music forward. I'll consider some of the reasons behind the El Rocco's special quality later, but for the moment I'm concerned with what it represented and achieved.

In many ways it opened up ground that might otherwise have remained undeveloped or unexplored. For example, it presented newcomers to the scene with a chance to exercise themselves, where a more conventional venue would stick with the established names, the reliable crowd-pullers. A great many of Sydney's biggest names in the seventies and eighties began by coming through the door of the El Rocco.

Judy Bailey, Col Nolan, Serge Ermoll, Warren Daly, are well known examples (even Errol Buddle began to build his current reputation with the jazz public through working there — although he had established himself in the most exalted company in the States, he was comparatively little known to the general public here, and apart from his appearances at the El Rocco he was often hidden away in television orchestras). For the less experienced newcomers, Arthur James provided a place to be heard and an opportunity to gain experience and confidence, even if it sometimes meant persisting in the face of poor attendances. As a footnote, the room nurtured burgeoning talent in another way as well: for a period of time Colin Bailey gave drum lessons there during the day, and I've mentioned in an earlier instalment the use of the premises to conduct auditions.

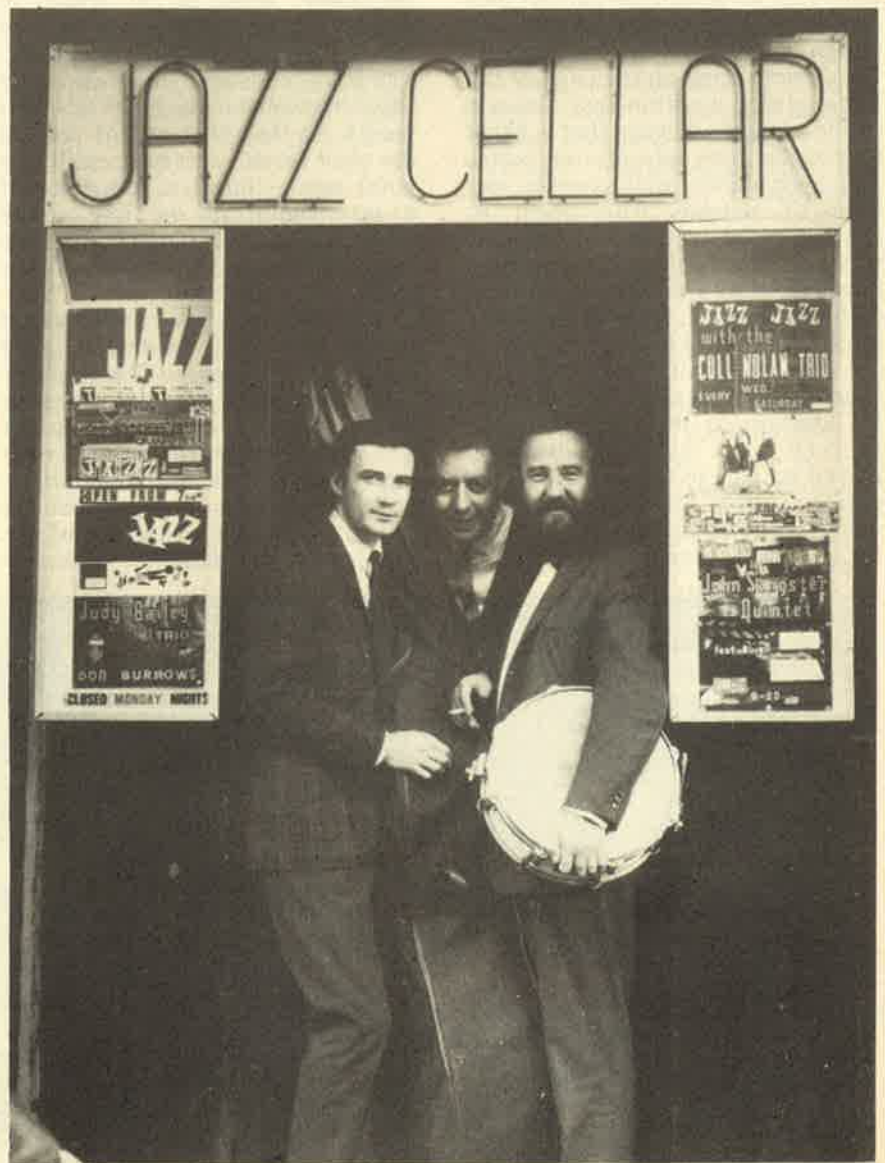
It opened up new ground in other senses. It was the place to go to hear the latest developments and experiments in the music, to begin to accustom your ears and mind to the most advanced concepts in jazz.

Gradually these sounds would percolate to a wider public, if in a slightly diluted form; but still, it resulted in modern jazz gaining greater acceptance. Two specific instances illustrate this point. The first occurred during that time when jazz was definitely music from the wrong side of the tracks, the poor and vulgar relative. One night some of the woodwind players from the Sydney Symphony Orchestra parked their cars up in the Cross while they gave a performance in the ABC Building. Walking back later, they passed the El Rocco and heard the music of the Don Burrows Quartet, at that time a drumless group playing a kind of 'chamber' jazz. They came in and sat down, five symphonic musicians in tails perched incongruously on the wooden chairs of a small coffee lounge. After the band had finished, one of the symphony men, Don Westlake, who happened to know Burrows, talked to him about the music. He confessed to being intrigued by a similarity between what he had just heard and the contemporary French compositions he and his colleagues had been playing earlier in the evening for the ABC. He asked Don and the rest of the band along to a rehearsal in a couple of days. The jazz musicians went, and were also struck by the same point. The piece being worked on had seven movements, and it occurred to some of them to invite the Burrows group along to the next rehearsal and respond to what they heard with their own improvisations. This led to a public performance called *The Best Of Both Worlds* at the Cell Block in Darlinghurst, in the course of which the chamber group presented the seven movements of the composition they had been working on, and between each movement, the Burrows quartet, on the same stage, improvised over what they had heard, thus making it a fourteen movement work. The audience response was mightily enthusiastic and the performance was repeated on several occasions to full houses. Ultimately, this experiment, springing from a chance encounter in the El Rocco, helped to break down some of the academic and Establishment prejudice against jazz. It opened up the ABC and Musica Viva to jazz, leading to officially sponsored concerts and tours in areas which had hitherto been the exclusive domain of symphonic and chamber music (I avoid the misleading word 'classical', though I'm not sure what to substitute for it).

It was a similar encounter that helped to bring jazz before the kind of audience one would hardly expect to find in a crowded coffee lounge on the edge of King's Cross. One evening a would be clarinet player walking past the El Rocco was drawn in by the sound of Don Burrows' playing. He turned out to be the general manager of the Wentworth Hotel, and he invited Don to look at the place next day. When the latter arrived for lunch he was shown over the Supper Club room and was asked, 'Do you think you could create that kind of atmosphere with jazz music, in this plush setting?' The affirmative answer led to six years at the Wentworth, with all the connections leading from that, and with an enormously larger audience for jazz. Perhaps it wasn't the raw, balancing-on-the-edge,

frontier jazz of people like Gillett, but it nonetheless showed a new cross-section of the community that jazz had a kind of validity and appeal that was not limited to a bohemian demi-monde. In a way, it helped to create an ethos in which the victimisation suffered by Dave Levy would be less likely to take place.

At the same time, then, as the El Rocco was helping to push the music forward into the experimental unknown, it was, through its popularity, helping to propagate jazz as a legitimate outlet for creative energy. And it is arguable that there was more creative energy expended in the El Rocco during its twelve years in existence than in any other single small space in Australia. Above all, the energy generated a spirit which gave the El Rocco an aura. It



The Col Nolan Trio, pictured in the entrance of the El Rocco. From left, bassist Gerry Gardiner, Nolan, John Sangster.

became, finally, the place where you had to play, as a mark of having made it. If it was the nursery of modern jazz, it was also the finishing school for its musicians. Perhaps the money was poor, but once you'd played there, you had your diploma, credentials to take you anywhere.

What made the El Rocco so special? There have been other jazz venues since that presented as much jazz. There are some in Sydney now that have jazz five and six nights a week, and that have been going for about as long. They have established reputations for themselves, but have never assumed the same quality of magic as the El Rocco, have never become as irreplaceably vital to the development of the music. The answer to what made the place unique is, tautologously, a unique set of circumstances. It developed out of an unrepeatable and unforeseeable combination of chance and design. Chance? Well, the location, for a start: being on the edge of the Cross placed it within easy distance of the kind of audience that is likely to possess more adventurous tastes and open minds, night people, the kind of patrons who begin to support an innovation long before it trickles down the habit-clogged sensibilities of a middle of the road fashionable set. It is hard to imagine a place like the El Rocco ever having got off the ground in almost any other place in the metropolitan area. In addition to this, however, the proximity of the ABC Building played its part in the success of the coffee lounge. Musicians finishing work just down the road didn't have far to walk if they felt like an after

hours blow, or unwinding by listening to some first-rate jazz. It also led to the room's being used for rehearsals by ABC musicians, as well as for auditions. And as we have seen, it was this chance proximity which created the likelihood that those SSO musicians would begin to cross the border dividing two kinds of music. Related to the building's situation was the fact of its ownership — it belonged to Arthur James's father. While, as we shall see, the young manager absorbed a certain amount of loss, it is doubtful if he could have continued to do so without the comparatively low overheads that this connection with the premises permitted. The accident of timing also played its part in the success of the El Rocco. After the Mocambo closed, fairly early in this period, it was the only uncompromising avant-garde venue in Sydney. It was a time when modern jazz was in a particularly fluid state, requiring constant monitoring by those interested in the latest developments. At the other end of its life, the place closed, as it happened, at a good time — there was something of a jazz slump in the late sixties (though of course it may be that the one was partly the cause of the other).

Perhaps the most unlikely yet fertile 'accident' concerned the question of a license. The relationship between booze and jazz has been debated somewhat of late, in a way that often generates more heat than light. Without entering into the general principles of the affair, we can say that, in the instance of the El Rocco, the absence of easily

available grog turned out to be one of the keys to its musical success. Arthur James applied for a license on a number of occasions but, for whatever reasons, the applications were denied until the last year or so of the coffee lounge's existence. By then however, it was too late. Besides which, James had learned something. Arnold Ross had noted in *Downbeat* that the El Rocco was unique, and James intuited one of the reasons that this was so:

You couldn't get this to happen anywhere else. Once you get liquor in a place, it's gone. That atmosphere's gone. Once people begin to drink, the main drawcard will be the drink. When you have that, they'll start to get more rowdy, and they'll listen to the music in a different way altogether. People go down there to have a drink. That'll be first, and then the music ... This is what made the whole place ... You sat in a room, all squashed up together — and they were in there like sardines — and you could hear a pin drop.

This is an acute observation, defining clearly the source of the room's ambience. The music. The music was the draw. It's possible that today you couldn't even get an audience together week after week, that was united simply by its undivided attention to the music.

At the same time of course you need musicians whose dedication and gifts can survive that kind of unremitting scrutiny from an audience. Any musician will tell you that you don't have to work so hard or so honestly to get a drinking audience to respond as you do a sober one (given that they are listening in the first place). A band that they appear to be ignoring soberly at



Another Col Nolan Trio playing in the El Rocco in the early 60s. Fromleft, Nolan, Ron Carson (bass) and Warren Daly (drums).

8 o'clock isn't allowed to leave the stand at midnight. And this takes us to perhaps the most powerful influence on the success of the El Rocco: a single-minded dedication to the music, to an extent that probably no other venue has witnessed since. Not to the company, not to grog, not to conversation, but to music. The music was central, crystalline, the lodestone around which all the lines of force arranged themselves. The patrons, especially in the early days, had to be dedicated to the music — there was nothing else to come for. But the musicians, even more, showed their dedication in all kinds of ways. Graeme Lyall and Chris Karan used to drive up from Melbourne just to jam on Sunday nights, sometimes to only a couple of interested patrons. Lyn Christie made jazz his life, giving up his medical practice to play five nights a week in the El Rocco. It helped of course that there was little other work which required or enabled musicians to play to the limits of their jazz knowledge. As Don Burrows said, you'd do studio work for bread and butter, "and then a night at the Rocco to keep sane". There certainly wasn't a lot of money to be made playing in the coffee lounge, and sometimes Arthur James had trouble keeping the musicians. From time to time the big promoters, sniffing a profitable vogue, poached the players with big money. But, like Mick Nock, most of them were soon back, happy to take less for playing exactly as they pleased.

Which leads us to the dedication of another character, Arthur James. It was he more than any other single individual who created the possibility of the El Rocco and all it signified. He provided the venue, dedicated it to modern jazz, and generally let it have its head, win or lose. He accepted the fact of financial risk and from time to time financial loss, as the price to pay for giving young and unknown musicians a place to test themselves and gain experience. By not insisting that every night show a profit, he carried the less commercially successful against the more popular performers. He kept prices down — apart from a modest cover charge no-one was required to spend any money once they got inside. It was generally (though not unanimously) agreed that he left the musicians to their own devices, making no attempt to steer them towards some supposedly popular and profitable formula. As manager,



JOHN VAN GAALEN

Rick Laird (bass), Don Burrows (alto sax) and Judy Bailey at the piano: At the El Rocco the music was the draw . . .

of course, he could not completely keep his own preferences out of the picture. After all, a manager expresses *some* sort of preference in the band he hires on any given night. But his spirit, the principles of his selection, seem to have been as generous as it is possible to be. Dave Levy recalls that Arthur found some of his experiments difficult to accommodate, and one or two musicians recall an occasional falling out. But against that must be set the fact that it was sometimes in the face of the formidable resistance of older and more established musicians that Arthur James insisted on exposure for the young radicals. And also, we are dealing with human beings here, not blank tablets. Anyone as dedicated to the music as Arthur James, and the musicians who worked in the El Rocco, must necessarily have formed some preferences which from time to time will come into conflict. While the music always must come first in any assessment of this kind of subject, the fact remains that Arthur James was essential in making the El Rocco what it was, and as such, is a major figure in the cultural history of this country. At least some recognition of this fact came from a television special, *Project 66*, intent on examining the

In Bruce Johnson's article on the 37th Australian Jazz Convention at Toowoomba (JAZZ, January/February 1983) the statement regarding the Perth saxophone player Lew Smith, describing his style as "light but not attacking" should have read "light but hot, attacking . . ." Apologies, Lew.

work of a number of young men and women and who had 'made their mark on Australia'. They included, among others, Charles Perkins, Andrew Peacock, Richard Walsh, Richard Meale, Craig McGregor, Marian Henderson, and Arthur James, "an entrepreneur who started a jazz cellar in Kings Cross."

Arthur James went overseas in 1968, leaving the El Rocco in the charge of a cousin. While he was away, he was able to respond personally to some of the letters he had received from places like Ronnie Scott's and the Blue Note in Paris. When he got back, he was aware of changes. A license became available to him, provided he made certain extensions and alterations to the premises. But a year away had enabled him to see that a new era in Sydney's entertainment industry was beginning. The big clubs had come in, offering competitive money to musicians on a more or less regular basis, subsidised by poker machines. There was now more work playing for TV, so that even the younger musicians were often able to walk into paying gigs. Some of the dedication seemed to have gone. Perhaps that generation was a little older, a little more tired. The way of life, the outlook, changed, new and various types of entertainment became available. Fire regulations were stiffer. Noise pollution legislation was formalised. "There's been nights down there that I've had a wall of saxophones. You couldn't have those things happening again." He decided not to take up the option

continued on page 23

JOHN CHILTON: INTERVIEW

By Eric Myers*

JOHN CHILTON, the distinguished English jazz historian and researcher, visited Australia in early 1983 with his band John Chilton's Feetwarmers and the singer George Melly, with whom he plays trumpet. His books include *Louis: The Louis Armstrong Story* (with Max Jones), *Who's Who of Jazz: Storyville To Swing Street*, *Billie's Blues* (a biography of Billie Holiday), *Teach Yourself Jazz* (titled *Jazz* in the Australian edition), *McKinney's Music* and *A Jazz Nursery: The Story of the Jenkins' Orphanage Bands*. He has also done much of the research and writing for Time-Life's *Giants of Jazz* series, and his work on Time-Life's Bunny Berigan set recently won a Grammy for 'Best Album Notes'. While he was in Sydney he spoke with ERIC MYERS, and the following is a transcript of their conversation:

EM: When was your book on Louis Armstrong published?

JC: It was 1971. We'd just finished it as Louis died. It was a great sorrow to us that he never saw a copy, because he was so helpful throughout, and no matter how often we'd checked on a point, he was always helpful. The tragedy was, he died just as it was finished, before it was printed.

Did you know Louis a long time?

When he came to Europe, I met him whenever I could. Without doubt it was the greatest moment of my life meeting Louis Armstrong. I've always admired him beyond every other figure in jazz. I really can say I hero-worshipped him, though I've never been a direct Louis Armstrong copyist, if you know what I mean. I've always felt inspiration, but I've never gone through that business of re-creating or attempting to re-create his numbers.

When did you meet him first?

In 1956, when the Musicians Union ban was lifted. The unions had an agreement and British bands and American bands started exchanging. I found him to be wonderful. I mean literally, he was the most extraordinary human being. Besides his genius at music making, he was one of the most vibrant people you could ever meet, and he had a marvellous memory. He had what I call red beans and rice interviews which he gave out. They were nearly always the same and consisted of jokes, anecdotes that were repeated over and over again, and he went through a sort of show routine on TV and for the general reporters. But once he felt that you were really interested, if he thought he didn't have to go into all the details of explaining all the people he was talking about, he would get so carried away, and it would be as though he'd forget that you weren't there at the time. For instance, he might be telling an anecdote and he'd say, 'We were walking down the street, and there was Al Washington, Preston Jackson and Charlie ... Charlie ...' 'Charlie?' I'd say, 'Who was he?' 'You know, Charlie, Charlie,' Louis would say,

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John Chilton on trumpet: ten years with George Melly, thirty years researching jazz history ...

'He used to be, you know, the waiter ...' He got so carried away when his mind went back, it went back in absolutely every detail, and he had to stop himself because of the fact that you didn't know who Charlie was. It was marvellous memory.

You got him to go below the surface then.

Yes, I think so and, as I say, I found him to be a remarkable human being who'd observed a great deal. But he didn't often delve back unless he felt people were genuinely interested. I never called Louis 'Satchmo' in my life, but once people said 'Hey Satchmo', he used to go through a Satchmo routine — that was the signal.

You weren't disillusioned by his later career were you? It's said, isn't it, that he was a great entertainer but he never really played any great jazz in his later period, although I must say he always sounded great when I heard him.

Yes, he was marvellous. He was a marvellously consistent performer, and the point we made in the book was that, regardless of climate, touring schedule, he made sure that everyone got an action-packed show. This meant sometimes that the All-Stars fell into routines, but now when you listen to them — to the live recordings — gosh, the impact of it, it's tremendous! His great desire was to keep working. Really, he was a workaholic, he had to keep playing. He felt so unhappy at the prospect of a layoff that he used to work much harder than the rest of the All-Stars wanted. I was talking to Trummy Young recently and he said, 'Good God, Pops really did go for that work'. I know that people say that Joe Glaser [Louis's manager] really made Louis work more than he should, wore him out, but actually that's not so. I've no brief for Joe Glaser, but Louis wanted to work that much, he really did. He felt if he didn't keep working that much, it would all go away.

Did Joe Glaser really have Louis on the same weekly figure year in and year out, and Louis didn't really know how much money was coming in? Is that the truth?

I would say that Louis didn't take a close interest in his own financial affairs, as long as things went smoothly and there was money coming from the office whenever he asked for it. Louis died quite comfortably. He didn't go with as much money as he should have done but, in turn, I think he lived very comfortably. He was happy because it kept him working. He did say — I heard Louis say this from his own lips — that 'Joe Glaser' — and Joe Glaser had died by this time — 'was the best friend I ever had'.

Did Louis ever mention the story that when he left New Orleans he believed that, to be successful, he should always have a white man that stood behind him, saying 'This is my nigger'? Did Louis ever refer to that?

Yes he did, and that was true, and it was said to him in New Orleans. It was something that always stayed with Louis. I realise that it would be a most offensive thing for black power people to even consider, but I think that when the image of Louis Armstrong has disappeared from those objectors' minds — remember that people saw him on TV, mugging, and in films, with his big grin — when all that is forgotten, and they just sit down and listen to the music, it's genius.

I must admit that it wasn't so long ago that I went back and listened closely to the music he played in the 1920s. I hadn't realised he was such a great trumpet player, such a great genius.

He was a great innovator. He is the cornerstone on which the whole of the music really rests. I know there were very fine players before him, and Louis would do nothing but praise King Oliver, who was a very fine player. But Louis was able to bring all the things together in one person — the perfectly

balanced jazz musician. And his influence is manifold. It goes right through to so many players today, and I don't just mean brass players. He wasn't the first person that I ever heard. I'm 51 this year and during World War II I was evacuated, and I switched on the radio one day when I was 12, in 1944, and heard a Jelly Roll Morton record. I didn't know anything about jazz or what jazz was; even the word meant nothing to me. I just heard this music and I was hooked from then on. I just had to get involved in it. It was a very quiet village in North Hamptonshire in the middle of England, and I thought 'I must find out more about this jazz'. So I went into the nearest town — and, by the way, the people who I was evacuated with hadn't a gramophone at all — so I looked at these records and thought 'I can't buy records'. So I got all the record catalogues and started a scrapbook. That was the start of my research, if you like. So I actually started scrapbooks before I owned a record, and then when I started collecting records it went hand in hand.

So you were a researcher and writer before you were a musician?

No, about the same time. This was also a brass band village, and all the kids who wanted to play could get an instrument, so I got a cornet and started to play there. The difficulty was finding someone who was interested in playing jazz. No one there was at all interested, so I had to wait until I came back to London after the war.

Your accent is a London Cockney accent, isn't it?

Yes, I was born in London in 1932. When I came back to London I didn't find any real jazz friends till I was about 17, when we formed a youth club band and started playing, I suppose, traditional jazz of sorts. By this time I was working in the day. I didn't become a professional musician till I was in my late twenties.

What were you doing for a living?

I worked for advertising agencies and the newspapers. All this time I was collating information and collecting magazines and books. The thing that was always stirring in me was that I could read the same things over and over about jazz, and no new information seemed to be coming out. This particularly became apparent when microgroove albums started being issued. The thing that really stirred me was that Bunny Berigan — I got the albums of his because I liked his playing very much — and the same information about him seemed to be there all the time. Someone would write a sleeve note and then put this same information in a different order. I thought 'I'll really find out as much as I can about this' and I wrote away to the States for his birth certificate. I thought I'd start at the beginning, and I found that they had his place of birth, and the date, and even the spelling of his first name wrong! This was the germ for doing the *Who's Who Of Jazz*. I thought that if the facts about a famous player aren't correct, what must it be for some of the lesser known guys? So then I really started digging in earnest and writing off hundreds and hundreds of letters, and then going to the States and trying to link up with people, and getting all the Musicians' Union directories for various places, and gradually forming a network of musicians who were keen on the history, and they could

look up their own local people who had disappeared, and so on.

So you must have worked on that for many years.

About 10 or 12 years. By this time I was playing music, so it became a joint thing, and it has always remained like that, I would try and research and play, and I have been with George Melly now for ten years, and that's quite a lot of touring.

So when was your first book published?

The first one was the *Who's Who* in 1970. Then the *Louis Armstrong* book in 1971, then the *Billie Holiday* book in about 1974, I think. Then I did a survey of McKinney's Cotton Pickers, then the *Jazz* book which in Britain was called *Teach Yourself Jazz*, which was a more intense work than any of the others. It was fascinating for me because I have always been pretty open-minded about jazz although I play in, shall we say, the pre-bop style. The music we play is definitely the music of the 20s and the 30s. I've always been interested in other developments, however. At one stage I went to the composer Bill Russo for arranging lessons, so I've always tried to keep an open mind on all aspects. But writing the *Teach Yourself Jazz* book, I came out with a great deal more admiration for the avant-garde than I went in with. I think there were many vital forces of jazz in the work of players in the 1970s.

I thought the musical chapters were excellent, an excellent introduction to jazz for the musician.

It was the book — I must be quite honest — that I'm most proud of. Perhaps 'proud' is the wrong word, but it's the work where I really tried as hard as I could. The most recent thing I've done is a short survey of the Jenkins' Orphanage Bands, and this came about because it came up so often in memories of black musicians. Trummy Young, for instance. In random conversations with him he'd say, 'You should have heard that Jenkins Orphanage Band. That was the first band that I ever heard that was playing hot music, and they used to parade on the streets'. They were from Charlestown, South Carolina and from this orphanage

came Jabbo Smith, Cat Anderson and Tommy Benford. I was fascinated by this. It seemed to be real Afro-American music if you like. It was young lads playing in a distinctly non-brass band style, but with a brass band lineup, and they toured throughout the States raising money for the orphanage. They come into all sorts of memories of Willie 'The Lion' Smith, and they travelled literally all over. They came to England as early as 1895. It's a researcher's dream: I'd found out that there was a black band coming into Europe in those early days. They came in 1905 and then again in the 20s. It was an absurd thing that people had somehow missed them. That really was a labour of love because it's not a very well-known story and people could hardly believe it, but I managed to track down many of the musicians and people like Cat Anderson and Jabbo were very helpful. I got this picture of these fellows that supplied even the Southern Syncopated Orchestra, which was the first unit that came over to Europe that was well publicised, with Bechet among them — members of the Jenkins Orchestra band were in that. So that was a labour of love, digging through hundreds of old newspapers trying to find clues.

So, obviously there wouldn't be any recordings?

No, but they appeared in a film which they're gradually trying to trace and set up with a soundtrack. They are actually working on that at this moment. But there is no record, no sound to go by. It's just all down as oral memories of the musicians involved. But, as I say, someone like Dizzy Gillespie remembered them very clearly because they were from his part of the world, but all over they were the envy of young black kids who could see them in their uniforms, playing away. It looked like the ideal life, and several musicians were inspired to take up instruments.

So what was the nature of the music? Was it like the New Orleans polyphonic playing?

No. This was one of the difficult areas — trying to establish what actually they were playing. I think it was a rhythmic thing, rather than polyphonic, in that they got hold



The Jenkins' Orphanage Band, circa 1905: the envy of young black kids, playing real Afro-American music . . .

of a tune, and they blew it all ways. You know, by their brass instruments.

So you've written a book on it?

Yes, a booklet. Currently I'm working on a story of the Bob Crosby band. Over the years I've got to know the fellows as they came into Europe — Yank Lawson, Bob Haggart, Eddy Miller, Billy Butterfield — and they told me so many tales when they used to sit up late at night. I thought it would be such a shame if it wasn't woven into an actual story of the band. So last January I went over to New York. They were having a reunion, and I met up with Bob Crosby and all of the fellows. I've been working on that a couple of years.

So obviously you feel that the history of the music is really important?

I think it is, and I think that we people outside America must play a special role in this because, alas, not many great American jazz historians have emerged. Something always seems to stop them from completing a project. I'm happy to say that situation has changed in the last ten years and there are people working devotedly on their music which, as you and I know, is such a great contribution to the world's music. It always amazes me that more serious or more intense study hasn't been made of the great figures. It seems to me utterly scandalous that there's no detailed study of Lester Young, no detailed study of Coleman Hawkins, from their own land.

It's strange, isn't it?

Yes. I'm happy to say that people like Eric Dolphy have been covered somewhat in *Four Lives In The Bebop Business*. Did you ever read the A.B. Spellman book? That is another excellent book that has come out of America, but in general there have been awful opportunities lost.

What about the Charlie Parker biography *Bird Lives*? That's a fine book.

I liked that because it was written by someone [Ross Russell] who knew all the people as personalities as well as their marvelous music. I also feel very disappointed that there is so little of Charlie Parker on film. The interviews with him are so fragmentary, and that seems an awful chance wasted because, when you think that Parker lived into the tape era, it seems terrible that someone didn't sit down and interview him in depth, if they caught him at the right time. I know that he lived a harem-scarem schedule, but I understand that when he really did want to talk he could be very loquacious, and he would have provided so much insight.

When you say that there are some American jazz historians emerging, who are they, and what are the books that you feel indicate this?

Well, there is a man called Larry Gushee who has done some fine work on Jelly Roll Morton. I think that he is an emerging figure. It seems amazing that Morton lived all those years ago, and people had never really dug into his origins. They'd just taken his grandiose tales, and he's actually revealed that he was born at a different time and with a different name, La Motte instead of Le Menthe, and so on. Amongst some of the people who I think should be praised is Dan Morganstern, who is really trying to get youngsters moving in the right direction. There is also a fellow called Phillip Chaap. Now Phil Chaap has got a radio program in the New York area, and he will devote a whole day to someone's



The cover of John Chilton's *JAZZ*: the book he is most proud of . . .

career, and the interviews he collates are really excellent. For instance, 24 hours of Roy Eldridge with interviews and tributes, and the important thing is, whilst these guys are alive it's a mark of respect that, alas, they have not often got in their own homeland. If Phil Chaap compiles much of the information that he's collecting into books, then the jazz world will be richer.

Can I take you back a few years now? You said that you didn't become a professional musician until your late 20s. That must have been in the 50s, so were you writing on jazz at that time?

No, not really. I did occasional record reviews but not really general writing. I wanted to be sure of myself. I am the type of person who really likes to obtain every detail before I put anything down. The research is such a pleasure to me, it's not a chore because I'm so interested. I still send off many, many letters to try and check things. I go and get American stamps from the stamp shop, and then put them on the envelopes so they can just drop their replies into the box back, and it works. I'm pleased to say I've built up an archive of replies of all sorts.

So you must have been starting out as a professional musician around the time Graeme Bell's band was in England?

No, they came in 1947 and again in 1951 I think. But I was always a great admirer of Graeme Bell's band. I was a keen listener by the time they were through.

What sort of impact did they have in London?

Great, in that they taught English musicians that jazz was to be enjoyed. Jazz in England was rather inclined to be a very serious business, with half the evening a record recital, and then a local jam session — analysed, rather clinical . . .

Intellectual?

Yes, into the intellectual thing. Well, Graeme Bell's band came through and it was like — it wasn't a breath of fresh air — it was really a wind of change. They taught the musicians to adopt a different attitude. I know

that Humphrey Lyttelton's band gained a great deal of inspiration and pleasure from the Bell band, and they also taught British musicians that they needn't just keep playing the same old tunes over and over again. They chose their repertoire from unlikely material, and they were not afraid to compose. This is still applicable to Australian jazz. It makes jazz much richer. No tune is sacred. British bands tended to go in for a great number of workhorses. Now, the only disappointment was that this flowering feeling in British jazz somehow ran wild in the 'trad boom', when honestly there were so many bands on the road playing fully professionally, who sounded exactly the same. So English jazz, traditional jazz, took a big step back, I think, and it wiped out listeners for a generation.

When did that occur?

In the early 1960s. The Beatles came along and replaced that music because they hit upon the whole generation of kids whose elder brothers and sisters listened to trad, and they thought that was the music of a few years back. They didn't want to get involved in that, they wanted something new and vital.

Are you thinking of Chris Barber, Acker Bilk, Kenny Ball and those people?

Well, I think Chris Barber has always kept an individual approach. He has always tried to mix in the elements of the blues bands. I was always most impressed by his wide selection, and searching for a repertoire. Acker's band has become free-er and looser. I don't think it was those bands so much as all the army of fellows who . . . a lot of them knew nothing about jazz, they knew nothing about jazz history. A lot of them were hardly interested in jazz other than as a sort of jollity music and the way to make a few bucks.

Sounds like some of the trad bands here, actually.

It was a pity that Graeme's message was almost swamped out. Then happily, particularly in the late 70s, young people were really listening again. We meet quite a number of young people, and we play universities regularly, and people will come up and ask sensible, investigatory questions about Bessie Smith, Louis Armstrong, Jelly Roll Morton — the area we are working in. George always makes sure that the original artist is mentioned, or the tune's heritage is given, and people come up and ask. That way we know there's going to be another generation of jazz listeners. I don't think it will ever become majority music, and in a way I hope it doesn't, because it somehow goes all riot when it becomes popular. But as long as there's a hardy nucleus, that's absolutely fine.

What sort of playing were you doing before you joined up with George Melly? Were you playing in the New Orleans style with a clarinet player and a trombone player?

This is one area that, if you like, you've offered me a nice hobby horse to jump upon, and it is this. I think that the actual trumpet/trombone/clarinet lineup can produce marvellous music, but it can also be a very deep pit to fall into. I think that somewhere along the line jazz history got it a little wrong in the enthusiasm of American jazz writers in the 1940s. Their hatred of big band swing was so great that they wanted another format, and they really put too much emphasis on trumpet/trombone/clarinet. If you look back, the trumpet/trombone/clarinet lineup

was not an automatic choice of small black bands who were working. They would use any combination. It might be two reeds, a trumpet, sometimes a trombone and clarinet front-line. It just depended. Trumpet/trombone/clarinet was not a working lineup. It was rarely used as a working lineup, even when they had the free choice. It was used on record, say the Hot Five. That's a marvellous example of trumpet/trombone/clarinet working to perfection, but it was only used because E.A. Fearn of OK wanted to re-create the type of sales that the Original Dixieland Jazz Band had had. So he suggested that lineup. It wasn't a working lineup, and Louis had hardly ever worked in that lineup in his entire life until the 40s, the revival. It's amazing, but people have got so blinkered about this; unless it's a trumpet/trombone/clarinet, is it really jazz? Jazz can be played by any combination of instruments, as we know. You could have any blowing instrument, any percussion instrument, and if they are in the right hands, jazz will emerge. I think this has been one of jazz's biggest failings — that people can't even switch on unless it's an absolutely familiar sound, unless it's the right sort of sound that greets them, the right timbre of instruments. Well, that's crazy. You could hear Coleman Hawkins playing unaccompanied, as he did, Rollins playing just by himself — and it's jazz. There's no other word to describe it.

That's a very interesting point, because I think in this country the trumpet/trombone/clarinet lineup has been overdone, and one of the things that has happened recently is that we are starting to get a few bands using a couple of tenors and playing stuff a bit like the Kansas City music of the 1930s, the small-band swing music. This could have been done years ago, except there's been this romantic attachment to the so-called 'New Orleans' lineup.

The New Orleans scene is all-important in my mind as the actual cradle of jazz. Even though I've done research about Charlestown, South Carolina, in some detail, I still have to hand 'the cradle of jazz' to New Orleans. But the impact of the Original Dixieland Jazz Band, with that trumpet/trombone/clarinet, piano and drums line-up was so great. It's difficult for us to realise now. They put out the first international record releases. They came to England and they wowed people. It somehow meant that people had a good case to argue for trumpet/trombone/clarinet but, when you look at it fairly closely, the actual people who were working in America, the great pioneers, did not automatically use that. They liked to work in permutations of different instruments. Americans have always been great ones for individualism. All their great players have a sound that no one else has, and they've also liked it in the way of groups. The John Kirby Band sounds like nothing else, but what is it? He plays jazz.

That's a very important point you've made.

I would say it's something that I would go back in chapter and verse and try to prove it to people that it has been one of the failings of jazz, that people have been blinkered to that one line-up.

Well, I'm glad I asked that question then.

Yes, it's certainly something I feel strongly about.

So, as a musician, you were playing in

various contexts?

Yes, I had a band called the Swing Kings which had two tenors doubling clarinet, and we specialised in that area of the 1930s and beyond if need be. We chose songs from everywhere. I tried to play a repertoire that people hadn't used much: Ellington tunes, Kirby Band tunes, and we had the pleasure of working with a number of visiting Americans like Buck Clayton, Ben Webster, Bill Coleman, Matty Matlock and Roy Eldridge. It was a consistent band and full of jazz lovers who were, shall we say, flexible enough to accommodate visiting musicians. That was a great experience.

When was the band formed?

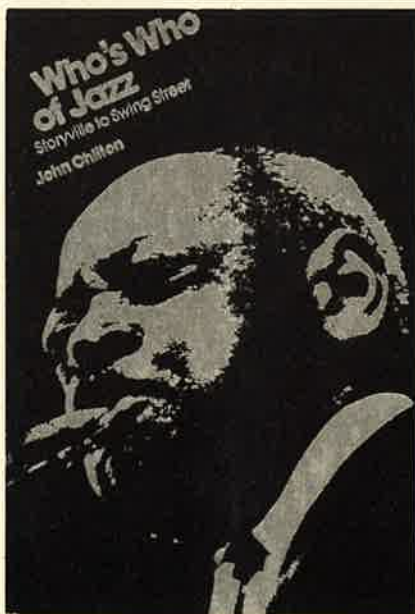
In the 1960s. Then I helped my wife run a jazz bookshop. We tried for 14 years and then we sank. My wife put a great deal of work into it, but you just can't survive on selling only jazz books.

That was in London?

That was in London. My wife carried on running it, whilst I went on the road with George Melly. I was playing in a band with Wally Fawkes who's one of the doyens of English clarinetists. Actually he was born in Canada but he has always played in England. We were playing in a pub, and George passed it on the way to deliver his copy — he was working for *The Observer* newspaper — and he came in to sing.

Hadn't George Melly sung before then?

He had sung years ago with Mick Mulligan professionally, then he had come off the road for ten years and became a journalist and, as I say, he was making his way to Fleet Street to deliver his copy and dropped in. It became a regular get-together, and people started offering us work a 100 miles away, then 150 miles away, then 200 miles. We were trying to keep both things — work day jobs and music — then we called a meeting and said, 'What shall we do? Shall we take up these offers?' People were trying to string tours together, and we said 'Yes'. So the whole band returned to professional music, and that was ten years ago. We began recording albums



The Who's Who of Jazz: it took 10-12 years of research ...

and they did alright, and it sort of rolled from there, and then we went to America and that was successful.

You've been going strong ever since?

Yes, we spend most of our time on tour. We have two months a year off, but the rest of the time is 20 days a month touring, and that's all over Britain, and then into Europe. We go into Holland, Denmark, Belgium, Germany ...

What have been some of the highlights of the sort of gigs you do with George Melly?

We played the Newport Festival in 1978; that was a marvellous occasion, really so exciting, particularly as jazz fans, which we all are. Black jazz performers were coming along and enjoying George, knowing that he's paying tribute to their heritage. He always makes sure that the originators of the songs are mentioned and although white critics might have sniped at George, no black critic has ever said a word. They really have been his most enthusiastic supporters. We had a great season in New York a couple of years ago when we did a whole evening devoted to Clarence Williams, and that really brought veterans along. Clarence Williams's son came, and W.C. Handy's daughter. It was a very proud moment for us to revive tunes that have been forgotten or neglected. It was a very moving get-together. There have been many highlights, and fortunately it takes me into places where I am able to carry on researching as well. No matter how late I get to bed, I'm always up the next day trying to follow a lead.

So you and George are partners.

Yes, we are partners, and we run the organisation called Man, Woman and Bull Polka — that's a company, an irreverent name. Happily, we've had very few personnel changes in *The Feetwarmers*. We've got two Australians in the band: Colin Bates on piano — he was a founder member — Barry Dillon on bass — who's been with us for eight years — and a London guy Chuck Smith on drums, who was also a founder member. So, we've really kept going steadily over the years, seen a lot of miles together.

I was wondering how rewarding it has been for you writing books and researching jazz. Has it been a labour of love, or is there some money in it?

I would say, per hour, it would have been more profitable for me to address envelopes or sweep the road. But it has been very rewarding for me because I've found out information I wanted to know. I am pleased to say that certain aspects have been very encouraging. For instance, I have just recently finished working on the *Time-Life Giants of Jazz* series, and they have rewarded their contributors handsomely. I did the liner notes and biographical notes for them, and they believe in paying jazz people on the same scale as they would pay other experts, which is a lovely arrangement. That was a happy time as well as a lucrative time, doing the research for that series. But overall I think anyone who goes into jazz to actually make money needs his head tested. You've got to love it and suffer the disappointments and, as I say, it's not a majority interest. Happily you're working in situations, particularly in research — like yourself, you have a jazz magazine to run and you know that not all the world is interested in jazz, but those who

are get enormous pleasure in following it — either listening to it or reading about it, and that's the great consolation I think.

On the book *Billie's Blues*, which I admire greatly, were you able to meet Billie before she died, or was it entirely retrospective?

No, it was retrospective. I'd always admired her singing, but what really stirred me into action was the film *Lady Sings The Blues*.

You must have been horrified by the film.

I couldn't believe it. Diana Ross gave a very fine performance as an actress, but there was hardly anything in the film that was true. It was ludicrous. I know that I could have written a book that sold a lot more by following along those lines and making it totally sensational, but I wanted to present the portrait of a true artist to people. I was preaching to the converted in a way, because I was really writing it for people who loved Billie Holiday's work and also found that the film was a travesty of the truth. So that was the purpose of the book, and I feel that there are many jazz people who have been neglected. I'm pleased to say that someone, I believe, is working on Art Tatum, the details of his life, but that's amazing — one of the great artists of jazz piano was hardly the subject of any serious research or detailed interviews.

Of course, filmmakers have also butchered the lives of people like Chopin and Liszt. It's not only jazz.

Yes, it isn't, but *Lady Sings The Blues* could have been a great film anyway — just the truth — and if it had been sensitively made, it would have probably made Billie Holiday more everlasting fans than that film did. People would have realised what a great artist she was, besides her personal woes. They would have become lifelong fans, once they'd approached her work as an artist, as opposed to someone whose life was wrecked by drug problems.

Was there anything in particular that you discovered about Billie Holiday from research that you were surprised to find out?

I was really surprised to find out how unsure of herself she was, that she really needed people to praise her or to bolster up her confidence. She wanted to make sure she was even on the right road for her singing. There was also the other side of her — she did get involved with men who were trouble, and she just couldn't resist that sort of fellow who was going to make her life a misery. I felt that she invited domestic trouble by getting involved with fellows everyone warned her about.

What do you put that down to? Why was she like this?

I think it would take someone who understood psychology more than I do to really find out, but I think there were very complex reasons for her wanting to be troubled by men.

Low self-esteem? Insecurity?

Yes, probably insecurity. Coming from the harsh realities of American black life, she suffered, and then suffering seemed to have to be part of her life for her to continue. But because she was able to transmit feeling in such depth in songs, we are the richer for her sufferings.

Can I ask you a question which might be a silly one, but are you fascinated by black American culture?

Yes, I am.

Do you think there's something that the

black people have that we Anglo-Saxons miss out on, or something we could well understand that they have, that we don't have? Do you know what I mean?

Yes, I think it's a very good point. In tandem with my jazz studies, I've always tried to read as extensively as I could about black history and black attitudes, and I think that jazz — the jazz force, if you like — is part of the American black attitude. You can't say it's a universal black attitude because there are millions of black people who have no interest and no aptitude for jazz. But in the American continent the black man found this marvellous way of expressing himself, and I think deep down it's this attitude for really letting go, an uninhibited release of zestful creativity. It's a marvellous example of a race, against the odds, producing something that is offered to the world, and has affected so many white lives. I don't just mean our lives — yours and mine —



Billie Holiday: because she was able to transmit feeling in such depth in songs, we are the richer for her sufferings . . .



John Coltrane: his music is now coming into film soundtracks . . .

because we are deeply interested in jazz, but I mean really changed the whole appeal of popular music. It's always there, it's always bubbling along. Coltrane's music is now coming into film soundtracks. What jazz does today, in 15 or 20 years time it gets through to the public. It might be diluted but it still changes the course of music. The American black people really have been so creative in the music sphere that I can only think it is that they have an approach, perhaps not on the surface, but an inner force if you like that enables them to be so creative and individual.

When I was in New York in 1981 I took a cab up to Harlem one night and spent the evening in a black club where an Australian saxophone player was working. It was a truly memorable experience being amongst people who were so uninhibited, friendly and into the music.

It's almost a mystic feeling in Harlem. When I'm in New York I'll go up to Harlem, and people would say, 'You're crazy, you're crazy!' But I've spent all my life researching and loving the music; I've taken that chance, and it's been totally rewarding.

Have you gone up by yourself at night?

I've caught the bus up to Harlem by myself and found it so uplifting, because of what we've been talking about: an attitude, a life force that, if it's not under scrutiny, is so free and easy without being in any way damaging or hostile. If you can get on the right wave length then it's a marvellous experience.

Do you think it's something that is in black culture that we just don't have in white culture?

There have been many, many marvellous white jazz musicians, and there have been some very fine original stylists in white music, but I think the mighty power that keeps jazz rolling, the thing that turns the wheels, is always the force of black creativity. I think that's without doubt. It's no secret society, but it just happens to be that you can get a black musician from Chicago, one from Florida, one from Detroit, one from New York City and — bang! — they seem to share the feeling that white musicians can only gain through working in close proximity for a long time. Somehow there's this enormous subconscious sharing of almost an atavistic memory that black people have.

I remember when Woody Shaw and his group played in Sydney in 1981. At one concert, after the first number, Woody turned to his group while the audience was applauding and said 'Okay, team'. It seemed to me that they were a true collective, with a great conviction about what they were saying . . .

Woody Shaw is a great example of the ever replenishing potential of players, and he has wisely got together all sorts of aspects of jazz over the last 40 years, and yet still created an individual style. Jazz is an ever-growing, replenishing plant. I'm greatly impressed by Woody Shaw, and now people like Wynton Marsalis are coming along. I can hear aspects of all sorts of players in his work, and yet he's one of today's young jazz giants stepping out. It's good that he isn't only exploring.

He reflects the past as well?

Yes, which is excellent. It must be the basis of all art: to be aware of tradition, but be prepared to carry it along to new boundaries.

BOOK REVIEWS

BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY OF JAZZ

By Charles E. Claghorn. (Prentice-Hall 1982)

JAZZ: A LISTENER'S GUIDE

By James McCalla. (Prentice-Hall, 1982)

THE 101 BEST JAZZ ALBUMS: A HISTORY OF JAZZ ON RECORD

By Len Lyons. (Morrow Quill Paperbacks, 1980)

Don't turn the page when I tell you that the only thing these three new books have in common is that they are all seriously flawed, as each has warts-and-all value to jazz readers. Len Lyons's book is particularly useful.

The dictionary is by intent the most specialised of the three books. It is a compilation of facts, far too dull to read. Most entries consist of only where-and-when details. The more important musicians have some additional information given about them: a short quotation by or about the musician, a word or two (only) about their style, perhaps the names of a couple of compositions or albums.

This approach depends for its success on completeness, and the author raises our expectations by describing his own book as "a very comprehensive, up-to-date, invaluable biographical information book."

My expectations were dashed when, for an on-air 4MBS-FM review of the book, I chose two short bios at random: Cecil Payne and Scott La Faro. The saxophonist's whole career pre-1966 is omitted, and the most important gig of the bassist's short life, the period in the Bill Evans Trio, is not there. (The Bill Evans entry gets it right). A section on bands at the end of the book has the Australian Jazz Quintet in it, but only as a Sydney combo in 1959!

The deaths of Art Pepper and Sonny Stitt (June and July 1982) are noted; that of Al Haig (November 1982) is not. So we have a fix on the to-bed date of the information. Why then are the well-publicised earlier deaths of, for example, Frank Rosolino and Babs Gonzales missed? Incredibly, author Claghorn appears to have compiled his information without using the wealth of month-by-month information in the US jazz magazines. The *downbeat* Final Bar column would have set him right.

And there are some amazing omissions, including Richie Cole, J.R. Monterose, Allen Eager, Chico Freeman (father Von cracks it!), Carl Perkins, Lu Watters and Graeme Bell. But *most* of the people you want to look up are there, and if facts are your thing, then you, like me need it on your bookshelf for daily use.

A listener's guide to jazz which has as its method the discussion of specific performances should cover alternatives for each subject style, band or musician treated. James McCalla's very readable 142-page paperback discusses 139 jazz and related (pre-jazz, blues, commercial swing) performances in varying detail. 50 of the performances are in the six-record Smithsonian Collection of



Sonny Stitt, who died in July 1982: his death is noted . . .

Classic Jazz (Smithsonian Institute, Washington D.C. 20560), and some three quarters of the 139 are more-or-less freely available on albums.

Most of the choices are standard ones. It is good to see the neglected Jimmie Lunceford band get their due, although the selection (Eddie Durham's *Lunceford Special*) is more an example of stylised swing fare than of Lunceford and a typical Sy Oliver-arranged example would have been a better representation of the band.

Tadd Dameron (*Lady Bird*), June Christy (*Something Cool*) and George Russell (*Waltz From Outer Space*) are also among welcome inclusions. But the listing of items by Betty Carter on Bet-Car, the Art Ensemble of Chicago on Nessa and Django Reinhardt on Archive of Folk Music, presumably because the author has them in his collection, is pointless without discussing alternatives; and really, alternatives from other albums should be provided for at least those 89 selections not in the Smithsonian Collection.

However, this is a good book in which to read about the development of jazz. As well as the discussion of performances there are twenty pages of insight-laden introductory and linking segments in four sections: The Beginnings (Hotter Than That!); Big Bands, Small Combos and Swing (Swing, Brother, Swing!); From Bird to Trane (Things To Come) and Free Jazz and Fusion (Directions). Well worth a read.

By naming his book *The 101 Best Jazz Albums* Len Lyons was inviting people to throw things at him and be damned! I won't oblige him. 101 is as good a number as any, and in fact as well as these *best* he deals, often in considerable detail with hundreds of other albums in the text.

His problem is depth. In their matchless book *Modern Jazz: 1945-70. The Essential Records*, (Aquarius, 1975), Max Harrison and his four fellow critics dealt with 200

albums to cover the sixteen years of jazz history chosen. This allowed them considerable space to deal with minor movements and currents in jazz; and also quite a few albums from behind the play, with nothing to recommend them than sheer musical excellence.

Len Lyons doesn't even attempt such depth; all of his 101 lie on the direct line from Number 1 (Scott Joplin — 1916, Biograph) to Number 101 (Air: *Air Lore*, Arista). The problem is that the secondary albums are more of the same, either more of the same artists, or more of the same style. This book is not the place to look for the *unimportant* (in the evolutionary sense).

Sidney Bechet, Johnny Dodds, most big bands, Lennie Tristano, the early white jazz musicians other than Bird, the traditional revivalists, the *second line* of all periods from Jabbo Smith through Sonny Stitt and Wynton Kelly to George Coleman, all get relatively short shrift if they rate a mention.

All this is bad news. However, the book's 450 pages allow for a considerable coverage of the music of the chosen, and there are excellent and needed treatments of, in particular ragtime and stride piano, Sonny Rollins, Dave Brubeck, the MJQ, Cannonball Adderley, Wes Montgomery, fusion/jazz rock and free jazz. The swing period is least well done, perhaps being a time when, at least superficially, everyone was doing the same thing; it is not suited to Lyons's method of picking out a few key figures and albums. The bandleaders do OK, the soloists are the losers.

On balance, a book well worth reading, and a useful buyers guide if its ignoring of the depth and staying power of jazz is taken with the grain of salt required.

Niels Nielsen

EL ROCCO *continued from page 17*

of the license, nor to go ahead with the extensions. In 1969 he got married, and the El Rocco jazz cellar quietly closed. The small downstairs room is now part of a restaurant. □

Bruce Johnson writes: Thanks are due to the following who generously gave time to reminisce and answer questions. The order is alphabetical: Tony Buckley (who suggested this series), Don Burrows, John Edgecombe, Alan Geddes, Arthur James, Dave Levy, Ken Morrow, Col Nolan. Photographs were supplied by Arthur James and John Pochee. Memories deceive, and begin to do so quickly. I invite anyone who has noticed errors of fact or significant omissions in these articles to write suggesting corrections.

ERROL BUDDLE: BACK HOME IN AUSTRALIA

By Eric Myers

In the last instalment of this series (JAZZ, January/February, 1983) Errol Buddle and the Australian Jazz Quintet had been at the top in American jazz for four years. It was 1958; the Australians were home-sick; they had not been home for five or six years. Despite their great success in the US, the idea of returning to Australia was increasingly attractive. NOW READ ON:

In 1958, the Australian Jazz Quintet was at its peak. Constantly on the road, they had played virtually every major jazz club in the United States. The nature of their fame had only barely filtered back to Australia, but there was an awareness, in some enlightened circles, that Buddle, along with Jack Brokensha and Bryce Rohde, had acquitted themselves in extraordinary fashion in the world's most competitive jazz scene. They were doing the same sort of work as Miles Davis, Dave Brubeck, Gerry Mulligan, George Shearing, the MJQ and others.

When they were in New York, they often went up to the offices of the Australian Broadcasting Commission on Fifth Avenue, where the idea of an Australian tour was constantly mooted. Clem Semmler, a jazz enthusiast who had known Buddle, and Rohde in the early Adelaide years, had reached a position in the ABC where he could exert real influence. As early as 1955 he had come to New York, and gone down to hear the group at Birdland. He was highly impressed and set the wheels in motion in 1956.

Buddle himself was keen to raise his family in Australia. His first son Lee had been born in March 1958 and his wife Ollie, who had always accompanied him on the road, now had to stay back in Detroit with the baby. The new baby was named after Lee Konitz. "Lee and I had got to know each other fairly well," says Errol. "He was probably the leading jazz alto player in those days, but also a very nice guy. On some of the tours we did with the Mulligan and Brubeck groups, Lee Konitz played with Mulligan. Sometimes, when we'd get back to New York, he'd leave his sax in my room and go home to where he was living in Connecticut. We got to know each other fairly well, so I named my son after him."

When the offer came through from the ABC to do a tour of Australia, the AJQ jumped at it. It involved a series of concerts in the major capital cities plus provincial centres like Newcastle and Wollongong, and also some television appearances.

Buddle quickly decided that the Australian tour would be his swansong with the group. "About a month before we left the States, I

told the guys that I was going to stay in Australia. It threw a bit of a spanner into the works — they were wondering who they could get to replace me. There was just no-one to play the bassoon and saxophone in those days. I suggested that they get Don Burrows and let him play bass clarinet instead of the bassoon."

Buddle also turned down a number of invitations to settle on the West Coast. He was prompted to go there by people like Lee Konitz and Paul Desmond. There was no-one, he was told, in L.A. who could play jazz tenor and bassoon in the studios. "I didn't take that up", says Errol. "I just wanted to get back to Australia. I thought it would be a better place to raise a family."

The AJQ did four weeks at the Round Table in New York, plus farewell concerts in Detroit and Ohio, drove to San Francisco and boarded the liner *Orcades* for Australia. It was September 1958. When they left, the Joe Glaser agency in New York expected the group back with a replacement for Buddle. The Australian Jazz Quintet was not destined, however, to survive. Dick Healey met a Canadian girl on the ship and, shortly after arriving in Australia, Ed Gaston met his present wife Diane. Gaston is still in Australia.

Back home in October 1958 the AJQ swung straight into an extensive concert tour for the ABC. The specially printed programs heralded them as "the first jazz combination formed by Australians to achieve success in the United States . . . The Quintet plays a unique type of jazz — modern chamber jazz, as distinct from Dixieland. The Quintet is credited in America with being the first ensemble to introduce the bassoon as a jazz instrument."

"Between them, the members of the group play eleven instruments, and their unusual combination of these instruments produce interesting and original sounds. It has been said that 'blending the sounds of those horns to create a mood for a particular tune over the basic rhythm structure is the true skill of the Australian Jazz Quintet'."

The concerts went well, even though Errol Buddle felt that, after American audiences, the Australian audiences were inhibited. "I remember a lot of concerts we did in the United States that were spectacular — we really had spectacular applause. Australians were a little more sedate than the American audiences were. But they were good."

At the end of the tour in early 1959 Buddle left the group. For a time Brokensha, Rohde and Gaston had a job playing at Sydney's Windsor Hotel. Dick Healey soon was married, and none of the members of the group were keen to go back to the United States. "They just didn't bother to go back", says Errol. "They didn't approach Don Burrows, either. Jack eventually went back several months later, but Bryce stayed for a fair while. Dick certainly did and, of course, Ed settled down here. The agency in New York wasn't too happy about us staying out here, but they couldn't do anything about it. We had done everything over there, and we wanted to raise families and that sort of thing."

At that time in Sydney, jazz venues were virtually non-existent, except for the El Rocco and Sunday night at the Sky Lounge where Burrows and the Australian All-Stars played. Over the next ten years or so, Errol Buddle played jazz only occasionally. Within weeks of being in Australia, he was offered the Ford Show on 2GB, a weekly radio show which employed the Bob Gibson orchestra. Buddle had played with Bob Gibson's orchestra at Surryville on Sunday nights until he left Australia in August 1952. When he arrived back in 1958, he found Gibson still there, in the same job. He walked straight back into the band which also did Saturday nights at Marrickville Town Hall. For Buddle, this was the beginning of a new career as a commercial and studio musician. Of course, he played occasionally at the El Rocco, particularly after 1962, as did all the leading modernists, but generally this was a quiet time for jazz.

This was also a time of great expansion in the television and recording industries, and Buddle became one of the elite which had first priority on the work available, along with musicians like Don Burrows, Judy Bailey, George Golla, John Sangster and others — most of them happened to be, not only excellent studio musicians, but also the leading jazz players of the day.

The Errol Buddle story over the next 15 years is mostly a tale of television variety shows: the Joe Martin Show, the Mobil-Limb Show, Bandstand, The Sound of Music, the Bryan Davies Show . . . If there



Australiana AJQ style: The record cover of one of their LPs.

was a radio or television orchestra Buddle was usually sitting in it. He estimates that he has played on more than 3,000 television programs since returning to Australia in 1958.

He remembers that there was some jazz playing on the Mobil-Limb Show. "But it would be a Dixieland tune," says Errol. "Although guys like Ron Falson, Johnny Edgecombe, Burrows, Colin Bailey, played pretty modern sort of Dixieland."

Buddle formed a band at one stage and played Jazz Messengers-style music at a restaurant on Saturday afternoons, along with the vocalist Ted Hamilton, but these occasions were rare. Around 1963 Geoff Harvey, at that time Musical Director at EMI, arranged for Errol to record an album called *The Wind*. Of course, there was a great deal of jazz playing with the Bob Gibson orchestra. For about ten years Buddle continued in the lead alto chair, and attempted to perfect his lead alto playing. But it was not until 1973 that his career in jazz livened up again.

Buddle got a call from the pianist Col Nolan, who had a quartet at a new venue called The New Push (in earlier years it had been Sammy Lee's Latin Quarter). He played there for some months with Nolan until the job folded. Shortly after, Bob Barnard offered Buddle a guest spot with his band on a Monday night at The Rocks Push. It was the start of something big.

"I just played a couple of sets with Bob," recalls Errol, "and the following morning I got a ring from the boss of the Rocks Push, wanting to know if I'd like to put a band in." Buddle rang Col Nolan, Dieter Vogt (bass) and Laurie Bennett (drums). This became the Nolan-Buddle Quartet. "After a very short time, we ended up with four nights a week there. It was a great period at the Rocks Push."

This certainly was one of the most swinging bands seen in Sydney jazz during the 1970s, particularly after Warren Daly came in on drums. Daly has said that it was "an incredible experience" playing with this band; Col Nolan swung so much that Daly occasionally felt that the piano was disintegrating. "For a while we just had Col on organ, Warren on drums, and myself — just a trio," says Errol. "Col played the keyboard bass, and that was a really good sound. That trio was incredible. We used to get off the ground from the very first note every night."

One night in 1975 Warren Daly came in and said to Buddle: "How would you like to go to Russia?" "I'd love to", was the reply, "When are you going?" "In about five days", said Daly. The Daly-Wilson Big Band, with the help of the then Labor Government, was poised to begin a tour of the USSR which, in retrospect, appears to have been an astonishing achievement that has never been fully appreciated within Australia. Daly had wanted a first-class jazz player in the saxophone section, so at the last moment offered the first tenor chair to Buddle.

Arrangements were hurriedly made, and Errol Buddle left Australia with the Daly-Wilson Big Band. They stayed overnight in Tokyo, and the next evening they were in Moscow. It was something of a whirlwind for Buddle. Things had moved so quickly that he hadn't completely tidied up his affairs. From Moscow he wrote to his startled father in Adelaide, letting him know of the trip, and paid his milk and bread bills with cheques from Moscow.

Over three weeks in Russia Daly-Wilson played some 20 concerts, all of which were sold out. "The band was an incredible success," says



The life of a studio musician: The Mobil-Limb Show in the early 1960s. Buddle is on tenor, then clockwise, Don Burrows (clarinet), Ray Swinfield (baritone sax), John Edgecombe (tuba), Ron Falson (trumpet), John Bamford (trombone), Jim Shaw (drums), Wally Wickham (bass) and Lal Kuring (banjo).

The unique talents of
ERROL BUDDLE,
captured on his new album:

RECORDER MAGIC

ERROL BUDDLE

continued on page 47

SO, YOU'RE THINKING OF MAKING A JAZZ LP?

By Phil Tripp*

Depending on whom you talk to, jazz music is either in decline or just starting to take off. Record companies have cut back on all types of music and jazz has certainly been one of them. True, there are a lot more venues featuring all styles of jazz music, but on the other side, radio programming has diminished in that area.

One of the most hopeful and hearty areas of promulgating the music styles of a wide range of talents in Australia has been through bands, individual musicians, and independent producers making their own records with or without the help of the major labels.

Many musos have realised that the only way to get their music out to a wider audience, enhance their chances to get more and better quality gigs, and provide a potential secondary income, is through releasing their own product. And judging from the increasing amount of records and cassettes hitting the market in the past year, it has been a successful venture for most.

There are two levels of self production in the hand-made record business — the one-off record of an individual or band and the higher risk method of putting together a record label. The label concept can cover a wide range of music and musicians or simply multiple releases of a single artist.

Either way, there are various factors that have to be fulfilled in order to produce oneself, and they are not all that difficult. Many who have thought of making their own record have approached the idea with a certain amount of dread and fear of the process, thinking that it is both too expensive and too complicated for them to put together. As evidenced by some of the examples given in this article, making your own record may be the most viable way, if not the *only* way to get a jazz musician's product out on the streets in these recessionary times. It is also the best way, in most instances to attract major label attention and may lead to a recording contract in the future.

*Phil Tripp is a Reaganomics refugee, currently resident in Australia. He has worked with George Wein's Jazz Festival in the USA, and the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival.



Steve Murphy (left) and Col Loughnan: the prestige of their own album has outweighed the wait for profits ...

Take the example of Col Loughnan and Steve Murphy. Ian Neil of the ABC was interested in their work in the group Endeavour and requested a few tunes be recorded at the ABC studio. Out of that session, two songs of Loughnan and Murphy as a duo were made and received a lot of airplay on Neil's program in late '79. Another session was set up in mid-1980 and their popularity soared, based on the airplay from that and yet another session in late 1980. They decided to put together an album containing those songs that had been recorded for free and went into the studio to pull another few cuts for the remainder they needed. All up, their studio costs came to \$565 and an additional \$340 for Martin Bengé to engineer all the cuts together for mastering. Using EMI Custom Records as their presser, they decided on an initial order of 1000 albums which cost \$2640. Although the pressing of the actual vinyl was only \$800, the added costs of labels (\$290), plates for printing the full colour front cover and 3 colour back cover (\$1200), and the actual printing of the covers (\$350), made up a heavy portion of the final bill. Before printing, they had also engaged an artist and photographer to assemble the cover art which came to \$160.

Since they had decided to register the name of their label, Seaside Records, they only had to pay \$45 to the government for that. Another expense was advertising which amounted to \$100 for an ad in JAZZ magazine and additional advertising and printing of leaflets for \$85.

Once all factors were assembled the total cost turned out to be \$4500 which was more than they planned, but still within their means. The quality of the album visually and aurally got them an offer for distribution through EMI and their return per album after distribution, tax and retailers' margins was about \$4. Aside from having them placed in stores, they also took them around to gigs and sold them for \$7 or so and their total sales so far, including promo copies given away is around 500 copies. Not bad for a first try, but not yet profitable.

However, they were able to get quite a few gigs from clubs and even studios on the basis of their album *Feel the Breeze* and the prestige of their own album has outweighed the wait for profits. Their attitude is positive — if EMI doesn't sell all the copies, they can easily sell them at engagements — and the pure fun and sense of accomplishment was well worth the work.

Martin Benge, who helped Loughnan and Murphy on their project, has worked extensively in Studio 301 and also formed a label with John Sangster called Rain Forest Records in 1980. Their first three albums, *Uttered Nonsense* featuring the ABC's Ivan Smith reading Edward Lear poems over John's compositions; *Meditation Music* which is an avant-garde New Age production of Sangster tunes; and *Peaceful* featuring Errol Buddle, have all done well. Two other efforts followed that successful premiere — Volumes 1+2 of the Jazz Music Series, and the new soundtrack to the movie *Fluteman* featuring Don Burrows and George Golla.

The reasons for starting the label according to Martin was to document and disseminate Sangster's music without having to go through the agonies of a major label and its inherent restrictions. "We wanted to launch the label because we had a definite statement to make, and the big companies are not interested in much other than pop."

Their records are distributed through EMI as well, and their overall sales are nearing 10,000 copies of all titles and the monies that have been recycled into other records has more than paid for the project. They still have two albums worth of material in the can, including Volume 3 of the Sangster compos and the *Fluteman* album is expected to take off when the movie starts up this school holiday period. Another successful series of albums have been produced by Graeme Bell on his Seahorse label. After 12 years with EMI and 15 years recording for Festival, Graeme was on a national tour and amazed by the response to his albums in the venues where he played, decided to set up his own company in 1977. With four albums currently out and one in the planning, the profits have been remarkable. Says Bell, "Well, I have a swimming pool and new Datsun Bluebird both paid for in cash from the proceeds. Each album recouped costs after only about three months and the cost of making the albums evens out to about a dollar each."

Not needing a large studio, Bell opted for an average of 12 hours to record and mix each album. The latest was a live set done in Holland from tapes of his performances. One of the four releases was done for another musician, a Czech composer, titled *Foggy Downtown*. In that case, all costs were picked up by

the composer and Graeme included it in his catalogue which is distributed through Carinia.

As to the methods of sales, about 10 records are sold at performances opposed to 1 through the distributor. Bell attributes that to the impulse buying that occurs when an audience is exposed to the music live and he finds that in any given gig, he'll sell 60 albums in an average audience of 400-500 listeners. He's found that cassettes sell better in the country areas due to the buyers wanting them for the car as opposed to city folk who buy mostly albums. Most initial orders that he places with the manufacturer are for 500 records and tapes and then each following order runs generally at 1000 units. His opinion? "Though I had a very happy relationship with EMI and Festival, I'm doing so well on my own that I wish I'd started sooner!"

Another example of a new label is John Bye Productions. His first album of the Harlem Jazz Band sold only 1500 copies in 18 months, but that was due to the fact that they had five previous albums out in competition. His work with Vince Jones has been more encouraging with sales of 3500 of the first album and a second one about to be released. Through radio airplay, concerts, and good ol' word of mouth, as well as helpful publicity from the media, both album and artist are doing quite well and each contributes to the success of the other. Where the first Vince Jones album was recorded and pressed for \$8000, the second release's budget will be double that, primarily due to higher studio costs.

The first album did not suffer

from any quality problems due to a low budget, says Bye, "We just had to conform to certain guidelines. But we haven't spared any time or expense on the follow-up and it should be a monster." John Bye is also exploring overseas release now that both albums represent continuous product and make Vince more viable. Another attempt at independent release is about to be made by another Vince. Vince Genova is an expatriate American who has quite a following around Sydney clubs. A decision to record a night's sets with Sandie White led to the making of their album of ballads and standards. Produced by Bob Conviser on the Jazmin Record label, it is titled *Angel Eyes* and will be launched at a concert on May 17 at the Musicians' Club in Sydney. Another album has been put together with keyboards whiz Indra Lesmana — the group's name is Nebula — and will spotlight musicians that have appeared under the aliases of the Vince Genova Sextet and Children of Fantasy.

Having originally gone into the studio and footed the expenses for recording, Vince contacted Conviser, a waterbed mogul, and the albums were picked up for release. Vince's experience with self-recorded efforts is not limited to Australia. He also appeared on two other discs by the Washington (D.C.) Jazz Ensemble on the Straight Ahead indie label in the US back in the mid-70's. He came here on a research grant in 1980 and has already been making waves with his ivories in the Harbour City.

Small labels have become more noticeable in the past few years, and both Swaggie and Batty Records are the first ones to come to mind to the casual jazz fan. Chris Batty tried to



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change his name twice through deed poll after a lifetime of ribbing but decided to use it as the record label moniker because, "People thought I was batty to do it."

Started in 1975, the first release has been their most successful. Featuring George Golla, Tony Ansell and Stuart Livingstone, it has sold in excess of 5000 copies, and the other 11 releases on the label have at least recouped their investment. Chris is happy talking about his label and the returns, though he says "We're not breaking any records yet."

Batty originally drifted into jazz because he was assured of a small but dedicated market. Chris recently completed an extra degree course which slowed down activity for a while but plans a few more releases in the next year. He has had distribution through RCA previously but finds that a limited mail order campaign has been working well with ads placed in different magazines, like JAZZ, as well as in newsletters of Jazz Action Societies. One of his recent releases by Pat O'Mara won a JAS award and he is both proud of the artists that have recorded for the label and the quality that has been maintained. As he says, "We simply make a little better than money back, but it is rewarding in so many other ways that money is not an indicator."

There are many more examples that could be made. Clive Harrison, formerly of Little River Band and a studio/jingle musician as well, put together an album of his compositions in a fusion vein and then peddled it around to various record companies before RCA picked him up for a three album deal. He was prepared to put the album out himself if the majors weren't interested and would have tried to secure a distribution deal to leave him free to stay in the studio and keep producing follow-ups.

Then there's Mileham Hayes of Brisbane who left his medical practice to immerse himself in jazz. Having put together the group Doctor Jazz and running the Jazz Cellar where they played most frequently, he has also released a couple of albums with moderate success. Then there's Julian Lee, Nat Oliver, Bob Barnard, Noel Crow, — the list goes on and on. One of the most successful albums independently released comes from Kerrie Biddell and the group Compared to What, which has racked up sales of over 7000 copies and is also Australia's first

digital recording.

Several new projects are in the offing including a Compact Digital Disc from Bill Armstrong of AAV Studios in Melbourne. Armstrong plans to record 'la creme de la creme' of Oz jazzmusos for this new format disc with a possible vinyl release in conjunction with it. As more Australian jazz musicians overcome the hurdles of technical and financial logistics, we will be fortunate to find our own special jazz scene expanding through their efforts. One of the best ways to assure this is to make an effort to buy their works and support this unique segment of the music industry and our home-grown jazz. □

THE RECORDING OF "NO STANDING" AT EMERALD CITY

by Samantha Katt

When the members of Sydney band Nebula started recording their new album *No Standing* they were quite conscious that it was a first time around effort, and wanted to record live for that reason. Andy Evans from the band explains that "we were unsure of what would happen if our sound was doctored".

They hunted about for the right spot and found that Emerald City Studios at Brookvale offered 24-track facilities at the lowest costs. *No Standing*, running 37 minutes on vinyl, was recorded for under \$1000 (count the zeros, that's three, not four or five).

Nick Mainsbridge, who assisted John Frolich in producing the album at Emerald City, confesses he normally does not listen to much

jazz. "But with Nebula, John and I were sitting in the control room and going 'wow, listen to that!'. Nebula were probably more exciting than most other projects that John has worked on.

"The studios at Emerald City cope with the live sound quite well — in the room everything picks up everything else and it sounds natural. It's a psycho-acoustic effect."

Nebula consist of Ken James (saxophone), Vince Genova (keyboards), Indra Lesmana (piano, synthesiser), Steve Hunter (electric bass), Andy Evans (drums) and Carlinhos Goncalves (percussion).

Andy says the band particularly liked the piano in the studio at Emerald City. "It's a Young Chang, and it's excellent. The piano was essential for us. So many other studios have terrible pianos."

Nebula's album is being put out by Jazmin Records, which is run by Bob Conviser. The band had put down their tracks at Emerald City when Bob saw them at the Paradise Jazz Cellar in Kings Cross and made them an offer.

"We're having band meetings on how to distribute the record", Andy says. "It is going to be very independent. We're going to do most of it ourselves."

"When we recorded the album, we wanted to get the sound down very quickly. There was no time for guide tracks — everything had to be on first or second takes. There were only a few overdubs, such as strings and handclaps."

Nebula are planning to record their next album at Emerald City, and this one is likely to have international release. □



John Levine (left) and engineer John Zulaikha discuss a point in Emerald City Studios.

Around The Jazz Clubs . . .

. . . Perth Jazz Society

The Committee of the PJS was disappointed that only about 20 people turned up for their 10th Annual General Meeting recently. Still, reports by various committee members showed that the Society is sound, both financially and musically . . . Committee members Brian Wallace (after eight years), Sue Goddard, Norrie Copeland and Peter Bellock have retired, and new committee members are Pat Hall and Mike Messenger . . . The PJS is now sponsoring three jazz programs on 6UVS-FM: Steve Robertson's *Jazz* — *The Swing Years* every Tuesday at 9 pm; David Walton's *Contemporary Jazz* every Thursday from 9-11 pm; and PJS President Graham Fisk's *Best Of Jazz* on Saturdays at midnight. Graham Fisk has been inviting jazz musicians to participate in his program — recent guests were Mike Nelson and the ex-Sydney trumpeter Pat Crichton . . . New jazz venues in Perth: The Underground, in Newcastle Street, Thursday nights, where you can hear Uwe Stengel's FourPlay, with vocalist Teresa Ridley; Brisbane Hotel, Beaufort Street, on Saturday afternoons, where you can hear Pam and Llew Hird's Perth City stompers (they also play at the Hyde Park on Thursday nights, and at Karrunyip Tavern on Saturday nights) . . . Enquiries about the PJS to Graham Fisk, phone 445.2496. □

. . . Victorian Jazz Club

VJC President Kevin Bolton writes in the Club's magazine *Jazzline* of the tragic death of member Lorraine Knorr in a car accident, and the death of Bud Baker, the guitarist/banjoist who toured and recorded extensively with the early Graeme Bell bands. Membership secretary John Newman suffered a heart attack, but has made an excellent recovery. Further sad news: the Ash Wednesday bushfires destroyed the Mt. Macedon home of member Les Thurgood and the house of ex-Red Onion Bill Howard, who lives in the Warburton area. So, recent times have not been the happiest in the VJC's 15 years of existence . . . The Club organised a benefit night at the Museum Hotel, which raised \$792.72 for the 3AW Bushfire Appeal. Musicians from Dixie Rhythm, Art Fodder's Jungle Jivers, and the Downtown Dixielanders, as well as Jim Smart, gave their services free for the night . . . Committee member David Sutcliffe, who has resumed full-time study, resigned at the previous Quarterly General Meeting, and Gretel James has taken his place . . . The VJC is continuing its series of Specials with Interstate Artists at the Museum Hotel, 293 Latrobe Street, Melbourne. On April 9, Sydney pianist Chris Taparell appeared; on May 7, it was the turn of legendary saxophonist Merv Acheson; and on June 4, one of the great ladies of Australian jazz, Nancy Stuart will appear . . . Enquiries to Secretary Bill Cooper on 836.6490. □

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

. . . Sydney Jazz Club

Patti Graham was re-elected Secretary at the AGM on March 28, 1983, and new directors are Peter Newtown (who is especially interested in bringing the younger generation into jazz) and John Nicholson (who wishes to expand the SJC's influence and membership with new kinds of functions.) Retiring President Neil Steeper has been replaced by John Clifford. Other office-holders are Ken Brown (Treasurer), Bob Muschter (Functions) and Vivien Bowman (Publicity) whose duties are being taken care of by John Bates . . . Coming events: Sunday May 22, the May Picnic at Berry Island, Shirley Road, Wollstonecraft with the Peter Strohkorb Jazz Band. On Sunday June 19, the June Picnic features Eric Holroyd's Triangle Jazz Band . . . In his message to members, new President John Clifford pays tribute to the "great work" done by his predecessor Neil Steeper, and urges members to support the Club's functions, where numbers have fallen off markedly over the last few months, apparently due to the new random breath testing laws in NSW. "If the 'booze bus' has deterred you, how about finding a non-drinker to take the wheel?" he writes . . . The SJC, which is devoted basically to traditional jazz, publishes a newsletter, and its 'where the bands are' column is a most comprehensive guide to the various venues in Sydney which feature that sort of jazz . . . Enquiries to Patti Graham on 660 7580. □

. . . Jazz Action Society, Sunshine Coast

Beth Decker has recently resigned as Treasurer, and the position has been taken over by Margaret Lloyd. Beth is thanked for her untiring efforts since the inauguration of the JASS . . . Two exciting new gigs on the Sunshine coast: Sunday afternoons 2-5 at the Boolarong Restaurant, Alexandra Headland, with the Leo Farthing Quintet and vocalist Lyn Gillett; Wednesday to Saturday at Blazes, in Stewart's Hotel, Alexandra Headland, with the incomparable Ron Edgeworth on the Yamaha grand piano, from 9 pm - midnight. The JASS May concert is at Gympie, tickets \$9, which includes free wine for lunch, which is at the Tattersall's Hotel . . . The April 19 concert at the Sunshine Plantation's Polynesian Room, featuring trumpeter Bob Barnard and vocalist Sandie White was a success, drawing around 300 people. The Sydney stars were

backed by the Clare Hansson Trio, including Clare (pno), Les Still (bass) and Jeff Proud (drums). □

. . . Queensland Jazz Action Society

Regarding the QJAS's April 10 concert in Brisbane at the Queensland Institute of Technology Campus Club, Neville Meyers writes: "At this concert, three distinctive jazz styles — mainstream, progressive and traditional — were evident. The mainstreamers, including Tom Cowburn (bass), Ian Moodie (piano) Brent McLaughlin (guitar) and Peter Hooper (alto), concentrated on standards. Briskly representative were *There Will Never Be Another You* and *Straight No Chaser* featuring competent, no-nonsense, solo work from both Moodie and Hooper. Free-form players Musiikki Oy — Ted Vining (drums), Peter Uppman (trumpet and flugelhorn), Peter Chapman (reeds) and Peter Walters (bass) took a radically different jazz path. The group's original composition *Free Music*, was a series of musical conversations, highly improvised, between flugelhorn and alto saxophone with mood and time signatures varying dramatically as Vining used a mixture of hand-drumming, mallets and sticks to inject the unexpected. *So What* and *Dollar Brand* were more restrained but in jazz spirit no less inventive, confirming that both Uppman and Chapman have emerged as two of the city's youngest, most promising, jazz stars. Dixieland renditions by the Alan Arthy Quartet closed a highly enjoyable jazz afternoon. One strong caveat — in line with Queensland Jazz Action's educational aims, audience interest and involvement would be enhanced if the musicians took time in all cases to announce their numbers and give other basic information."

The May 1983 newsletter of the QJAS refers to a downturn in the public's interest in jazz, and a consequent disenchantment in the jazz fraternity. The news of the closure of Mileham Hayes's Cellar jazz club has given people a shock, and not only in Brisbane . . . The July 10 concert will not be at its usual venue (the Campus Club) because of a convention, so it will be held at the RSL Function Room at Toowong — a good venue with adjacent parking (from Maryvale Street). □

. . . Jazz Action Society, Darwin.

News is that, following a successful Australia Day Concert, a meeting of jazz enthusiasts and musicians was held at the Public Service Club in Darwin, where a five person steering committee was elected to explore the possibility of establishing a local JAS. The concert, held at Brown's Mart, featured the 7-piece Great North Australia Jazz Band, the Glyn Baker Trio, the Down For The Count Band, the Bob Marshall Band and Mike Foley and Friends . . . JAZZ Magazine wishes these jazz lovers all the best in their attempt to get a society going . . . □

Reports From . . .

. . . Melbourne

By Adrian Jackson

Traditional jazz continues to thrive in Melbourne, with plenty of pubs presenting a good number of bands regularly. My vote for the best trad venue is The Limerick Arms Hotel in South Melbourne, which continues to present Peter Gaudion's Blues Express with guest Judy Jacques every Thursday, with Friday and Saturday nights and Saturday afternoons featuring different bands for six week seasons. At present, the bands are Maple Leaf, Bruce Clarke's Quartet and Colonel Duffy's Privates (with Ade Mounsbrough and Neville Stribling). In addition, they are planning to put on McCabe's Bones, and octet featuring altoist Peter Martin over charts for four trombones, on the last Wednesday every month.

The Victorian Jazz Club is doing well at the Museum Hotel in the city every Saturday night, with their monthly interstate guests (Paul Furniss, Chris Taperell, etc) drawing very good crowds.

On the modern scene, the most rewarding activity has been the monthly concerts at RMIT organised by Martin Jackson, which have been successful all-round. Since January, the featured acts have been:

The Brian Brown — Bob Sedergreen Duo, who performed standards and originals with tangible thought and empathy;

Great White Noise, the electric jazz — funk band from Sydney, who played distinctive music with a lot of tightness and energy. I was impressed by the playing, especially that of the two saxophonists, Dianne Spence and Sandy Evans, but not consistently persuaded by the music, although I would like to check the band out further; and

Bernie McGann, who played some typically magnificent jazz, with excellent assistance from Bob Sedergreen, Barry Buckley and Ted Vining.

Odwala's performances at these concerts have also been very rewarding.

Saxophonist Martin Jackson, pianist Jamie Fielding, bassist Barry Buckley and drummer Keith Pereira have been joined in turn by:

Anastasia Aspeling, whose graceful singing on a variety of little-known songs added a very appealing dimension to the band's sound;

Trumpeter Ian Orr and trombonist Steve Miller, who gave the band's sound more depth and flexibility. Miller's charts were as strong as his solos, while Orr shone on the bluesy grooves of Joseph Jarman's *Dreaming Of The Master* and Cal Massey's *Cry Of My People*; and Keith Hounslow and Ted Vining, who contributed both melodic grace and rhythmic drive to the band with their playing on flugelhorn and drums.

Odwala also performed at RMIT as part of the Moomba Fringe Arts Festival. Jackson, Fielding, Pereira and bassist Stephen Hadley

provided the night's climax with a ferociously intense set. Other bands performing were guitarist Matt Kirsch's Trio; guitarist Ken White's quartet, the Bourke St. Hipsters, who mostly played Monk themes; Wild Rumour, featuring singer Nichaud Fitzgibbon; One Hand Clapping, a very interesting hybrid band that comprised drums, bass guitar, two electric guitars, two trumpets and trombone; saxophonist Tony Hicks' Quartet; and saxophonist Ken Schroeder's Quartet, featuring singer Margaret Morrison. The concert was poorly publicised; hopefully that department will be better taken care of next year. At the time (early March) most bands were only rehearsal groups, but fortunately most have had several gigs since.

Vince Jones is now appearing every Friday and Saturday at Jackson Square, which is also presenting trumpeter John Santos' Big Bebop Band, with Anastasia Aspeling, every Thursday. And Pyramid has taken over Jones's former gig at the Tankerville Arms Hotel.

Martin Jackson has formed a very good band, One Step Ahead, which is playing Sunday nights at the Raglan Cafe in North Melbourne. The other players are Jex Saarelaht on piano, Craig Beard on vibes, the excellent bassist Geoff Kluge and, at present, Phil Henderson on drums (in town for a month or so). Matt Kirsch's Trio plays the Raglan on Wednesday nights, and a band called Criss Cross is there on Mondays. Jex Saarelaht continues to impress me the more I hear him — in addition to One Step Ahead, he can also be heard on Mondays at the New Orleans Tavern, playing duets (a lot of Monk and MJQ) with vibist Alan Lee.

Ken Schroeder left in April to study in Hamburg with Herb Geller; should be gone several months. He had a fine band happening with Margaret Morrison, Mark Fitzgibbon, Gary Costello and Allan Browne, mostly playing bebop. Unable to choose between offers from record companies (ho, ho), they have at least put out a cassette, which will be available via Mostly Jazz Records & Books (94 St. Kilda Rd, St. Kilda). Run by enthusiasts Roger Beilby and Ken Carter, Mostly Jazz has been going about a year now. It has a pretty comprehensive traditional and swing stock, a pretty fair modern range, quite a few second-hand albums, and several cassettes and books. It is a specialist shop that certainly deserves a visit from any jazz fan who isn't a regular already. □

. . . Perth

By Steve Robertson

Perth, reputedly the most isolated capital city in the world, is rapidly becoming the focus of interest for some of the world's top-name jazz musicians.

The city, or, more specifically, the Perth Jazz Society, has played host in recent years to some of the greats of the music, men like

Teddy Wilson, Sonny Stitt, Milt Jackson and Ray Brown. Now these musicians are telling their friends back in America that Perth audiences are knowledgeable, friendly and supportive.

Recently a committee member from the PJS toured Canada and the US. In Chicago he met the legendary Bud Freeman, who was leading a quintet and drawing rave reviews.

"I really don't enjoy travelling, but for the right audience I'd fly that 11,000 miles," Bud said. "I was in Australia in 1977 and recorded with Bob Barnard. I had a great time. Didn't get over to Perth but Ruby Braff has told me it's a very good place to play."

Braff was in town in October 1981 along with Ralph Sutton for a memorable evening of jazz. A few months later the headline group was the trio of Monty Alexander, Ray Brown and Herb Ellis. Alexander has since become a cheerleader for Perth.

"Monty says I really should try to get down there if at all possible," said Brazilian guitarist Laurindo Almeida recently in Toronto. "In fact I'd like to have my whole group, the LA Four, do an Australian tour, but with the individual commitments we have that would be very difficult. I'm going to Tokyo later this year and I'll ask my agent if he can arrange something for me in Singapore and Perth as well."

Peth's big audiences would be a delight after the less-than-overwhelming reception Almeida got in Toronto. He was playing at the intimate Lytes Room of the Royal York Hotel. Early in the week the audiences were tiny, though appreciative. There is some controversy over whether Almeida is really a jazz artist. His music is completely written out and his solos, as well as selections, are identical from night to night. Even the "ad-libbed" jokes are the same. He also found himself with a bassist and drummer who clearly did not understand the nuances of Brazilian music. Nevertheless his playing is enormously satisfying. He is a virtuoso of the guitar and the singing lyricism of the melodies he interprets cannot fail to appeal to anyone. And as for the "no-improvising" rap, more than one unquestioned jazz great has played the same solo a hundred times, but if it's good enough, who worries?

Playing and improvising with extraordinary skill these days is Perth's own Pat Crichton. In a city where top modern jazz brass players are few and far between, Crichton until recently has been an enigma. Clearly capable of imaginative and swinging solos, the trumpeter at times seemed hesitant and devoid of drive. But judging from his most recent performances, that's all in the past. Last month at the Hyde Park Hotel, Crichton dazzled the crowd with some brilliant flights on the trumpet and flugelhorn. He is playing now with sureness and drive. His tone and volume are vastly improved, and, inspired by saxophonist Jim Cook, percussionists Bruno Pizzatta and Gary Ridge, and others, he showed he is ready to fill the trumpet void on the Perth modern jazz scene. □

SCRAPPLE FROM THE APPLE

By Lee Jeske

It has been a busy couple of months over here. Herewith a short sampling:

For some reason three of the giants of bebop (and just beyond bebop) drumming were in town on the weekend and I availed myself of the opportunity to study them at close range and compare what they are up to.

Art Blakey was up to another snap-at-the-heels group of Messengers. Altoist Donald Harrison, tenorist Jean Toussaint, pianist Johnny O'Neal and, especially, trumpeter Terence Blanchard (a New Orleans school-mate of Wynton Marsalis and a barn-burner of a player) were tearing things up at the Blue Note. The kids were smoking, Blakey was smoking. Nothing unusual there.

Max Roach was, typically, up to something unusual. This was a collaboration with a couple of dancers named Bill T. Jones and Arnie Zane, and pianist Connie Crothers, at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. I usually find that the combination of jazz and ballet is screwy and boring and pretentious, but this was not. It was graceful and acrobatic and the dancers (there were five all told) were really in tune to his Maxiness. Roach never sits around on his duff collecting dust, and kudos to him yet again.

Roy Haynes takes tops honors, however. Haynes has become a journeyman — playing a night here and a week there, with whomever gives him the call. This week, at Lush Life found Roy at the helm and the band he was fronting was monstrously swinging. It was one of these hodge-podge bands — veteran George Cables on piano, Ralph Moore on tenor, David Williams on bass (those two new to me), and guitar phenom Kevin Eubanks — that played a little of this and a little of that: standards, two Monk tunes, one Coltrane melody, a calypso, a blues, a Bird line, etc. And this was one set! They were playing two hour sets, they were truly enjoying each other and feeding off each other — Cables and Haynes roaring with genuine glee, the youngsters keeping up nicely — but the top honors went to young Eubanks. This man finger-picks the electric guitar and I can't remember the last time a guitarist so delighted me. His *sound* is excellent, and so are his solos. A couple of days after this gig his debut album arrived in the mail and *it* cooks too. Remember the name, folks — Kevin Eubanks. □

The two grand old bands of fusion played in New York on two separate weekends and I attended both performances. First up was Weather Report. Let me just say here that, as a rule, I don't like fusion — it's bland, faceless, sound and fury signifying nothing. Let me also say that it still has a large audience, judging by the crowds at the Beacon Theatre (and two weeks later, at the Palladium). Weather Report, however, came out playing and won me over. I think Zawinul (as he likes to call himself — a sign of a schmuck in my book) is mellowing — his playing and composing is cool and subtle. I also think the new members of the band (Omar Hakim, Victor



Roy Haynes: taking top honours . . .



Chick Corea: one of the stupidest, loudest, most boring concerts all year . . .

Bailey, Jose Rossy) make up a good, street-wise rhythm section without anybody standing out — as Jaco Pastorius did, frequently like a sore thumb. This coherence has given Wayne Shorter the opportunity to really play, and he took biting, billowing solos all night. A long performance, and a good one.

The Palladium played host to a reunion of Return To Forever. My admiration for Chick Corea was laid down in these pages a couple of months ago. So when I say that this was one of the stupidest, loudest, most boring concerts I've seen all year, you will know that there was no malice aforesaid. This was a band that was always flashy, and prone to lengthy, longwinded solos that were just individual muscle flexes, so it is not surprising to find that it still is, only more so. They mugged, they winced, they laughed, they

grinned, they jumped around like a high school cheerleading squad, and they played nary a note worth hearing. I don't think any less of Mr. Corea now, mind you, because I know what he can do. I just hope he continues to do what he can do and not involve himself too much with Messrs. Di Meola, Clarke, and White, who can do only so much. □

I saw a concert at Symphony Space of the Muhal Richard Abrams big band recently. There is a man who *deserves* a big band. Abrams writes and arranges like a demon — really good, solid, stick-in-the-throat material. This was a one night big band, so Muhal played over three hours of material. It was too much for one concert, but there is no end to this man's talent (I haven't even mentioned the piano) and, like Gil Evans and George Russell and Carla Bley and a couple of others, he should have a big band by rights. I don't want to go into solos here — they were usually strong — but I do want to single out Andrew Cyrille's snapbean-crisp drumming and Craig Harris's enormous, swooning tromboning.

The Village Gate held a piano tribute to Al Haig one cold day and all I have to do is tell you that the pianists were Walter Bishop, Dick Katz, Barry Harris, Cedar Walton, Harold Mabern, and Monty Alexander and if you're half the piano fan I am you're realizing I was as near to heaven as a sinner like me'll ever get.

Other hot bands department: The Dave Holland Quintet played at the Public and Mr. Holland, recently recovered from heart surgery, reaffirmed his position as one of the very strongest bassists in jazz and the rarely heard-from Julian Priester (remember him?) showed that although he's been off the New York scene, he's still a divine trombonist.

The Widespread Jazz Orchestra is one of those tight little big bands that play hard core swing and really *do* swing. No corn, no fluff, just boot-in-the-kidneys swinging. They've been doing it for years, they are young, but true professionals, and I saw them at a disco called the Red Parrot where they rocked the place like the legendary bands must have done in the ballrooms of yore.

The New York Samba Band is a good band with a poor name. They are really Brazilian, they really blend jazz and samba well, they really wowed me at Seventh Ave. South, and they really deserve attention. If you're here in New York, look for them (and recommend that they change their name).

Well I told you I've been busy. And I didn't mention my recent forays into other forms of music — Laurie Anderson's space-age electronic pop/comedy/art, the Klezmorim-Jewish soul music, King Sunny Ade — African pop are all the rage here, I'm not quite sure why, and L. Subramaniam/Ustad Alla Rakha/Ustad Imrat Khan — divine Indian classical music. Jazz is still my meat and potatoes, but I always go and give a listen.

Couldn't hurt! □

CONCERT REVIEWS

Jam Sessions at The Basement, conducted by Laurie Bennett. *Sydney April 19 and 26.*

These days, the real jam session is a relatively rare occurrence in jazz. Once, they were an important institution, where the established stars of the music gathered together after their normal gigs, and took on all comers. These were "cutting contests" with no holds barred — tests of manhood, ideas, technical mastery and endurance.

One of the most memorable jam sessions in history took place in Kansas City in the 1930s, when the famous Fletcher Henderson Orchestra came through to play a one-nighter. The star of the reed section was Coleman Hawkins, then regarded as the founding father of the jazz saxophone. Hawkins had heard of the growing reputation of a number of Kansas City saxophonists, and made it known that he would be dropping into one of the local clubs to jam. Soon, every saxophonist in town had converged on the club, and the jam session began.

It is said that the contest continued throughout the night and into the next day. By noon, only four musicians remained — Hawkins himself, and the locals Lester Young, Ben Webster and Herschel Evans. The ultimate winner was Lester Young, who remained fresh and full of ideas in mid-afternoon. This was regarded as a great victory over Hawkins and, as a result, Young was named The President, later to be shortened to "Pres", which he was called for the rest of his career.

Jam sessions in Sydney today don't quite have that sort of competitive edge. In fact, the jam sessions at The Basement on April 19 and 26 were rather gentlemanly and supportive affairs, with the musicians involved in celebration of the music rather than destruction of an opponent. Still, there was a delightful, if subtle, tension about them, with the players stretched in two different directions at once — between their desire to assert themselves on the one hand and, on the

other, to be sensitive to the other players.

The April 19 session included Keith Stirling (trt), John McCarthy (clt & tenor sax), Col Loughnan (saxophones), Bob Johnson (trombone), Tony Esterman (pno), George Golla (gtr), John Ryan (bass) and Laurie Bennett (drums).

The session was a meeting-point for different concepts of musical beauty. The program was skilfully planned by Laurie Bennett, so that most of the players were able to express themselves adequately as soloists. There were also various permutations of horn players together, and of course many tunes where the whole band could roar.

It is always a delight to hear George Golla in this sort of context — relaxed, lyrical, capable of extraordinary flights of imagination, which are both technical and highly beautiful. His work on *Here's That Rainy Day* (along with Col Loughnan) and later in *Tenderly*, (which he played solo), was a timely reminder of his artistry. His style seems immortal — a standard alongside which other Australian guitarists can be measured.

In contrast to his compact, measured lines, were the biting, jagged phrases of Keith Stirling on *Night And Day* and *Bye Bye Blackbird*. In the latter, Stirling played one of those blistering harmon-muted solos, with the bell of the trumpet right into the mike. During that solo, one had the feeling that the music was coming from a deep source.

He was followed by John McCarthy on clarinet. McCarthy, one of the great pre-bop players in Australian jazz, was not out of place. Couching his melodic ideas within the lower reaches of the chord structures, he relied less on technical facility than did the others, leaning on his notes to drain the melody out of them. He was no less passionate than Stirling, and a number of people who had not heard him before, remarked on the soulful nature of his playing throughout the night.

Early in the evening, the music was perhaps a little restrained, but this tended to build a



PETER SINCLAIR

Keith Stirling: playing now with a unique, concentrated energy ...

tension which was released — indeed it exploded — in a roaring version of *Doxy* towards the end of the night. At this time the energy rolled out freely, in the first really *transcendent* performance of the session.

At the end of the evening I was left with the impression that I had heard, not sensational jazz, but music that was a welcome reminder of one of the certitudes in Sydney jazz: that we have great players who can produce, at the drop of a hat, always interesting, sometimes riveting, music. We've heard all these musicians before, but catching up with them again in this context was reassuring.

In an evening that was a brilliant and energising dialogue over familiar chord structures by many great players, it is irrelevant to single out one. But I will. Keith Stirling seems to me to be playing now with a unique, concentrated energy, with a commitment to the music that shines through his solos. There is something significant happening here with Stirling, and it bears some examination. Someone should record him now, while he is apparently at a new height of his powers.

The April 26 session included Laurie Bennett again, with Peter Cross (trumpet & flugelhorn), James Morrison (trumpet, bass trumpet & trombone), Bob Bertles (alto saxophone), Claire Bail (saxophones), Chuck Yates (pno), Jim Kelly (gtr) and Ron Philpott (bass).

It was interesting to note that this gathering took a much more vigorous, hard-bop approach than the former group. This could well have been a reaction to the presence of James Morrison, who is primarily a dynamic, somewhat brash player, bursting with energy. Peter Cross and Bob Bertles, in particular, are the sort of players who have the propensity and the ability to rise to such a challenge, and they were not found wanting. Consequently there were many solos of extraordinary brilliance and power, in a night which opened out into a freewheeling and roaring session.

The brilliance of James Morrison, and his absurd command of various instruments, have been remarked upon in this magazine many times by a number of writers. His



PETER SINCLAIR

John McCarthy at The Basement: leaning on his notes to drain the melody out of them ...

ability to capture the attention of an audience — sometimes with lines, even tricks, that might seem vulgar to the more fainthearted among us — is a rare one in Australian jazz. A musician who thrives on the adrenalin of performing under the spotlight, Morrison — once he has an audience interested — has a sure ability to deliver the goods and take the listener onto a new plane, with music of real integrity; he wants to be heard. There are few jazz musicians in this country as uninhibited as this young giant.

One of the real delights of this session (and a justification for this sort of enterprise) was the rare opportunity to hear Chuck Yates

practice of throwing together Sydney musicians into unrehearsed, impromptu sessions like this, is entirely worthwhile. Unrehearsed? Well, jazz musicians who have paid their dues don't need rehearsals for this sort of performance; the spontaneity and unexpected turns that result, give the music its magic. It never fails to amaze me what extraordinary music can be produced by disparate individuals who might not even have met before, but are held together momentarily by knowledge of a chord structure and a tradition. But that's the recurring delight of jazz, isn't it?

Eric Myers

musicians who had never heard them singing their praises.

There were some changes in the repertoire; the Straw no longer plays some favourite tunes of mine like Keith Jarrett's *Spiral Dance* and Freddie Hubbard's *Gittin' Down*, but *Mex* and *The Last Straw* (both by Bernie McGann) are still as important a part of their music as ever. One hopes that soon we may hear McGann's *Mail* and *Nights at the Wizz*, both superb pieces which only confirm what many have often said: that McGann is one of the most original composers in Australia.

Understandably perhaps after such a long time the band never got out of third gear yet the quality of the playing was truly memorable. Two McGann solos on *Atlantis*, a superb solo on *All Blues*, which contrasted with his unaccompanied playing on *Better Git it in Yer Soul* still resonate in my mind. Tony Esterman's two superb unaccompanied introductions to his solo, on *The Last Straw* (1st and 4th evenings) electrified the audience, many of whom had never heard him play. I don't think I've heard him play better. Ken James suffered from the poor sound balance, as without a microphone he was forced to play louder than he likes to normally, with consequent loss in tone quality, yet he too executed excellent solos the most outstanding for me was one on *Isotope*. Pochee's drumming was dynamic throughout, always prodding, filling in, lifting the soloist, creating rhythmic patterns and contrasts.

There are plans to bring The last Straw back to Jenny's and I hope not before too long. Meanwhile if one wants to enjoy the playing of Bernie McGann and John Pochee then Friday night at Jenny's one can hear them together with Lloyd Swanton on bass. For a band not utilising a piano player, something not often heard in Sydney I am happy to say they have drawn excellent crowds. In fact on a number of occasions there has been standing room only.

Listening to McGann play with his trio is quite different than McGann with The Last Straw where his solos are briefer and consequently the ideas more condensed. With the trio his musical essays are longer and less tense but any one may show more facets of his unique style.

Lloyd Swanton is an exceptional young player. He swings hard, listens to what is going on around him and is not afraid to take risks and in addition is an exciting soloist. I might add that what I find particularly refreshing about Lloyd Swanton's playing is that unlike many other bass players, some with vastly more experience, he doesn't feel that he must play loudly all the time. His volume level rises only with the rest of the group thus ensuring a balanced sound.

Readers of JAZZ magazine who have not heard this band should treat themselves immediately. Earlier this year on a Friday night I heard this band play a second set the last two numbers of which were *Lover Man* and *Mr. P.C.* McGann's solos in each case were classics of inventiveness, power and beauty, and in each case Swanton and Pochee also found extra musical resources. At the end of that set the applause just seemed to go on and on. It was wonderful to be part of it.

Anthony Stanton



Chuck Yates at *The Basement*: incapable of playing anything dishonest or unmusical . . .

playing in such company, particularly alongside a player like Jim Kelly. Yates comes squarely from what we might call the orthodox jazz tradition, while Kelly encapsulates in his playing a number of conglomerate areas of modern music. Still, it says something for the capabilities of both men, and the cosmopolitanism of jazz today, that their paths intersected comfortably on this one night at The Basement.

Chuck Yates is a pianist who seems incapable of playing anything dishonest or unmusical, and his solos are full of deep knowledge, reflecting years of absorbing the music. How much of his playing has been recorded? Or, will his style be just a dim memory for those who were lucky enough to hear him on one night?

Similarly, I was struck by the individuality once again of Jim Kelly. I doubt that you could hear another guitar player like him anywhere on earth; he is a complete and - might I say? - Australian original. It is a blessing that his evolving style has been captured for posterity on a number of *Crossfire* albums. It was engrossing to hear him play in this straight-ahead, swinging jazz context, rather than in the context of eight-feel music where he is normally found. His elegant, positive sound, shimmering with beauty, sang out irresistibly throughout the night.

It is not possible to mention all the memorable highlights, or all the great solos, played on this evening. But I can say this: the

The Last Straw, The Bernie McGann Trio. *Jenny's Wine Bar, Sydney during March & April, 1983*

So far 1983 has seen few highlights on the modern scene. After the non-event which was the Sydney Festival my own highlights have consisted of hearing the music of five bands: the two listed above as well as Roger Frampton's new band *Intersection*, Guy Strazullo's *In Focus*, and the Mike Bukovsky Sextet.

Few of us who had enjoyed the artistry and musical profundity of The Last Straw in the 70s believed that the band would ever get back together. I last heard them at The Basement in 1978 and came away from the final night suspecting that was going to be their swansong. I wasn't completely mistaken as the band played one more time at the end of that year. Their audiences were still enthusiastically turning up but no-one who booked jazz in Sydney appeared to be interested.

After five years apart and with only a few rehearsals, with a mediocre piano, sound balance problems, equipment failures, the non-appearance of advertising which resulted in a small first night crowd, in other words with doses of the bad luck which always seemed to follow this band, The Last Straw reaffirmed its status as one of Australia's most important bands. And what music they made! With Jack Thorncraft coaxed out of semi-retirement (I hope he forgives me) the rhythm section left some of the younger

Record Reviews



THE TED VINING TRIO
"Live at PBS-FM"
(Jazznote JNLP029)
THE HERB ELLIS TRIO
"Herb Mix" (Concord CJ-181)

Two trios, two approaches. First the Ted Vining Trio. For me this is the record of the year. A trio of overwhelming power, marvelously audacious without losing the blues roots. Occasionally the volume of the piano threatens to eclipse the bass, and in fact on *Night In Tunisia* the latter is for much of the time audible only as a woody drone. But in general and at best the sound is very good, with enormous impact, especially in that it was recorded at a concert. Congratulations to Colin Jones of station PBS-FM in Melbourne for the muscular reproduction. The cover is rather tatty, with *Night In Tunisia* wrongly attributed, and the photographs on the back so ill-defined that one wonders what they add. But after I'd heard the music I rather liked this tattiness, because it unwittingly thumbs its nose at the assumption that poor packaging means poor music. It's just the kind of unlikely sleeve in which to find what

in later years will come to be regarded as a definitive statement in Australian jazz.

The nominal leader of the trio is drummer Ted Vining. With bass player Barry Buckley he has found that delicate balance between helping to direct the music and at the same time responding to directions he might not have initiated. As much as anyone, he is responsible for the overall pulse. His solo space is modest, but adequate to show that side of his work. The power of his playing is amusingly underlined at the beginning of his solo on *Impressions*, sounding like a two stroke lawn-mower being warmed up. On two tracks the percussive vocabulary was enlarged by the presence of Alan Lee on congas (is it just the two tracks?), an addition which was more than simply a gesture, since it altered the vector of the music. Bass player Barry Buckley has a quality I've never heard before and for which it's therefore hard to find the word. His sound is springy and rich, sharp as an arrow, really spiking the tempo. Is he reviving in a modern context the great old art of slapping? He sometimes had a plosive attack that suggested it. He retains a depth of sound over the full range of the instrument, his work in the high register having the definition and propulsive force of little explosions. There's a flying momentum, an unstoppable, about his playing that is irresistible. At one point in *Impressions* I felt that the song was going to finish in a cloud of smoke, but then suddenly the bass emerged in thrilling, untroubled flight, like a fighter through flak. In the lower reaches of the instrument his work is gut wrenching. Towards the end of the same song he picked up from the piano a riff that had the same kind of distantly insistent and subliminal menace of the African music in the film *Zulu*.

It's as well that these musicians play with such strength, otherwise they'd be overpowered by pianist Bob Sedergreen. He is one of the most forceful musical personalities in the country, one of our unignorable greats. This record tends to be his, though this isn't simply a matter of his personality — apart from the occasional bias of the sound balance, the role of a piano in a trio is inevitably more prominent. The phrase 'blowing up a storm' might have been coined for Sedergreen. His vocabulary is enormous; the gospel feel of Ray Charles, the technical facility of Peterson, the quirky unpredictability of Earl Hines, and perhaps most evidently the harmonic spirit of McCoy Tyner. Near the beginning of *Impressions* there's a sudden springing stride passage, while elsewhere he becomes impressionistic, as on the beginning of *Little Sunflower*: a cluster of moody phrases out of which he gradually spins a melody. He exploits a remarkably wide range of jazz styles including the dissonance and, occasionally, the apparent amorphousness of free form. But it's always sustained by a rhythmic and harmonic context that acts as a reference point and gives the excursion formal significance. It might be felt, especially over a long performance, that there's a lack of dynamic variation. Certainly there's not a lot of *piano* in his piano-forte. But there is a different source of tension-release pulse in his playing, to which by the way Vining and Buckley seem to be telepathically sensitive. He has a habit of building pressure with flurries, gusts of notes

in the lower register, then releasing it with a simple, clearly defined pattern in the upper, like a bubble rising, clear and tranquil. He alternates between 'horn' lines and heavy tremolo chord clusters. The beginning of *Sweet Georgie Fame* exemplifies the pattern — a turbulent introspection, rising and swinging into a light, irresistible 3/4. The end falls back, a mirror image. There's a repeated turnaround suggesting 4/4, then slowly passing out of time and key like a music box slowing down. The surges in his music are living, organic, rather than mathematical. The beginning of a song is a birth, out of chaos, and the end is a death, slipping into oblivion. Sedergreen's approach is to alternate between storm and calm. He takes one shapeless lump of musical clay after another and turns them into form as you listen. His style is baroque, heavy with content, lush and swollen with creative thought. It engages your attention with a force that drains you.

This is a *hot* record. Aggressive and hard driving, quite unsuitable for seductions. It insists on being attended to. It is not background, but foreground music. Perhaps it lacks oases of tranquil reflection, but you know you've been listening to music. It has something that a lot of records, perhaps the majority of those now produced, lack: character. I'm not sure how much of this overwhelming character I could handle at one go, but I'd take it over the alternative any day.

I went straight from this to the Herb Ellis LP and the transition brought to a focus a problem or puzzle that has become increasingly distracting. It stems from the mind-boggling proliferation of first rate middle-of-the-stream jazz albums. They're all so good. Has it become too easy? Too formula based? After the Vining album, the Herb Ellis session seemed to have a rinsed, laundered quality that made it ignorable. I'm not trying to take anything away from the musicians; in fact I'd be proud to be able to demonstrate even half of their musicianship on a record. But its seamlessness and professional tidiness after the Australian LP was as deficient in impact as sliced white bread after home made. It's not just the Herb Ellis LP. So much current mainstream manifests these characteristics, summarised in the feeling that nothing will go wrong. The LP cover, beautiful as it is, reflects the same spirit; the magnificent photograph of a jar of herbs represents such technical and technological mastery of the art of photography that — and, yes, that's it — the *agon*, the struggle, that brought the art to this point has become completely invisible. It has become a safe path to take, because the idiom has achieved such firm and fully elaborated consensus.

But another voice says that has to be unfair. You can't set aside a lifetime's dedication to the music just like that. And at 62 Herb Ellis has contributed a considerable lifetime before receiving the attention his talents deserve. During his JATP years his playing tended to be hidden away in a rhythm section primarily designed to showcase front line talents. His solo work was therefore rather rudimentary. He became more prominent with Oscar Peterson and from there moved through a number of settings which cast ever more light on his work. An LP like this reminds us that Herb Ellis is a major voice;

not in any sense an innovator, but a dignified embodiment of the mainstream guitar tradition. As on *It's A Small World* and *Girl From Ipanema* his work can be very fleet, but he also knows the hypnotic power of repetition, even, like Sweets Edison, of a single note. His mind is a storehouse of popular music over the last fifty years or so. In *Ipanema* the quotes come tumbling out. After references to *Dardanella* and the *Mexican Hat Dance* I wondered if he were giving us a guided tour of geographical exotica, but then a fragment of *Ornithology* showed that it was just the spontaneous effusion of thoughts and fragments (It's often harder not to quote than to quote; as one who is unable to resist it as often as he should, I can say that frequently it is precisely the reverse of creativity). Ellis also emerges as a rather impish vocalist on this album, giving us a Clark Terry style scat chorus on Horace Silver's *The Preacher*.

He is working on this album as part of a trio. Together they constitute a propulsive and swinging unit. Drummer Jimmie Smith pushes unostentatiously; his steady brush work on *Tenderly* is a model of supportive discretion. The standout for me is the bass guitar work of Bob Maize. He just so neatly tucks the trio into the tempo and the changes. On *It Could Happen To You* the transition from the jaunty 2 feel of the first chorus, to the 4 in the bar, is the perfect set up. He has to carry a lot of weight since much of the time he's the primary harmonic reference point — most of Ellis's work is single note, horn style soloing. It's a great compliment to the bass player that you never feel a lack, that something's missing. He can also move to foreground with complete authority. On *Give My Regards to Broadway* he takes the melody. *It Could Happen* opens and closes with a dialogue between bass and guitar, yet, while fulfilling what amounts to a front line role, a collective improvisation with Ellis, he never ceases to imply a basic pulse. The programme is varied and well paced. A couple of unlikely jazz vehicles show up: *It's a Small World*, and *Regards to Broadway*. But in these professional hands, presto, they become jazz vehicles. At the same time, the standards never sound stale. Enough attention is given to colour to prevent the trio format from sounding threadbare, as in the use of rubato passages, and the alleviating of a straight 4/4 programme with a couple of latin numbers. And nothing goes wrong.

But perhaps the problem that I mentioned earlier lies in the pluralism of the art. The music on this Herb Ellis LP is a form of jazz thinking so different from the Ted Vining Trio that it may be unfair to try to apply the same standards. Herb Ellis is saying something important, which the Vining trio cannot say, or simply does not want to. When you listen to *Moonlight in Vermont*, you begin to realise what it is. This is a beautiful song, beautifully played (with, by the way, a lovely bass line behind the bridge, implying a set of changes new to me). The point emerges again on *The Way We Were*. The feeling work of Herb Ellis discloses all the unappeasable yearning implied in the title, so much so that the 'want' expressed in the lyric actually becomes a condition of aesthetic completeness. In puzzling about the differences between these two trios, I have to remember

that the puzzlement actually invokes a fully developed aesthetic attitude which sooner or later you have to work out, if you listen to music and want to understand why it pleases you. As the Ted Vining Trio reminds us, one of the responsibilities of art is to agitate the mind, to dislodge habit and prejudice. The development, the cutting edge of jazz, has always been on that basis. But, as the Herb Ellis Trio reminds me, in the wake of the exploratory developments, there is consolidation and habituation. It is there that another responsibility of art lies: to bring peace to the spirit.

Bruce Johnson



SACBE
"Street Corner"
(Discovery Records S-864;
distributed by Avan-Guard)

Sacbe is a quartet. Its members are three brothers — Eugenio (keyboards), Enrique (electric bass), and Fernando (percussion) Toussaint — and Jon Crosse, reed player from Ohio. The Toussaints are Mexican born, of French extraction. Perhaps this mixture helps to explain the openeared eclecticism of the group. Now, how to describe the jazz they play? I suppose jazz/rock fusion is the most appropriate piece of shorthand. Trying to situate them for a potential buyer in Australia, I'd probably talk about Errol Buddle's current work, or perhaps Brian Brown, as on the *Bells Make Me Sing* album. They all have in common a willingness to appropriate from sophisticated rock electronically initiated or distorted sound, different time feels, unusual instrumentation, and song structures that get away from the 12 and 32 bar foundations of the jazz tradition. It might also help to 'place' the band if I mention that Clare Fischer wrote the enthusiastic sleeve note.

They do it well, in every aspect of the music. They are all first-rate musicians willing to extend their instruments beyond the traditional role developed in the main stream of jazz playing. The bass player, for example, exploits the possibilities of the electronic element to alternate between rhythm and front line voice; two tracks open with him leading with what sound like harmonics through a phaser. His work is reminiscent of Abe Laboriel's, though not as attacking. The arrangements are very tight, with a wide variety of

rhythmic foundations and interesting dislocations of tempo. *Sunset at Sunset* is a 5/4 piece with a latin feel, and *Bob Marley* not surprisingly includes passages which adapt the crab-like rhythm of Reggae. The writing also ranges through a host of different textural possibilities, made available by varying the instrumentation, by electronic intervention, and by overdubbing. It is either this last being used with the flute work on *Coyoacan*, or an octave divider. But elsewhere on the same track there is certainly overdubbing: the flute comes in too soon after the sax solo for Crosse to have been able to make the change-over in the usual way. The compositions are all by members of the group, Eugenio contributing the lion's share. And, for the most part, they are compositions rather than the repeated fragments of much fusion music. With a couple of exceptions they are harmonically conventional in that they avoid extended dissonance, they have structure and the structure is always thoughtful, and they are highly melodic. The sprightly *Curuba* and *Sunset at Sunset* remind me of some of Don Burrows' compositions, and, also like much of his work, most of the songs are strongly atmospheric. *Street Corner* conveys a pleasant and leisurely aimlessness that fits the suggestion of loitering in the title, and yet this impression arises out of a composition which is itself carefully constructed. *Papemoe*, named for a legendary Polynesian fountain, is intensely evocative, serene and otherworldly, although beautiful as it is, it is unusual in lacking cohesion. The least appealing piece for me is *Hermanos*, its movement consisting of rather undirected atonal excursions interrupted by short repetitive figures. There were some interesting possibilities in the voicing of the final section, however.

Most of these comments seem to add up to a big plus. The music is mostly pretty, always clever and interesting. But the album is a focal point for a number of problems, in particular those which are raised by what are often separate issues: the question of 'programme' music, and the situation of jazz/rock fusion. I said that much of this is atmospheric, evocative of some reality outside itself. In fact it sounds like incidental music for film or TV. You can imagine visual sequences accompanying it. To an extent, then, the 'meaning' of this music lies elsewhere, in something the music is referring to. This complicates the aesthetic response, makes it hard to see the music directly — is the listener being moved by the sound itself, or by the sunset (or whatever) that it evokes? This complication is aggravated by the style of jazz being played. It's hard to talk critically about it, partly because it's a style that hasn't yet evolved its own criteria of excellence. You can tell that these musicians know what they're doing. They're not faking and they're honest in what they attempt. They don't play wrong notes, and the textures are pretty and inventive. But it just doesn't take me by the scruff of the neck, doesn't engage me emotionally. It's always intelligent, but somehow it has suffered the affliction of the hybrid: it's emasculate. In fact, the term 'jazz/rock fusion' is unfortunate, since one thing that often seems to be missing from the music so named is the raw elemental energy of archetypal rock.

Alright. Forget about this effete intellect-

Record Reviews

ualising and try another approach. What's the gut reaction to it? I've played this about a dozen times over the last fortnight, and the answer is — I don't think I had one. Some jazz knocks you so high that it takes much shaking of one's head in numb disbelief to start working out what happened and how. But here, in spite of the atmospheric beauty of much of the music, the body never short circuited the mind in responding to it. It remains rather cerebral. Not, that is, an intellectual exercise; but oddly cold. I think this is a very good recording by creative musicians. Because of this I want to like it more than I really do, like caviare. Anyone who is moved by or interested in fusion music should hear it, but, unlike Freddie Hubbard's *Ride Like the Wind*, I don't think it will convert anybody.

I applaud, however, the adventurousness and the receptivity of the musicians. Any controllable noise is potentially music, and it is gratifying that people grasp this instead of entangling themselves in a web of prejudice about music and electronics. And by now I think we should put our hands together for Discovery Records. This, with the Robert Conti LP and *Heliocentric* (reviewed in an earlier issue) suggests that we have here a label taking chances with comparatively unknown but promising talent. I could perhaps appeal to your avarice and remind you that out of such enterprises do the collectors' items of the future emerge.

Bruce Johnson



MICHAEL MANTLER "Something There" (WATT/13)

Michael Mantler's music is so uniquely personal that it totally defies categorization. If one were to assign a pigeonhole specifically to Mantler it would have to be labelled Relentless Music. Listening to his compositions is rather akin to the feeling one has after consuming a touch too much of an exquisite meal — complete satisfaction tempered by a niggling unease, an inability to

fully relax.

Although Mantler's works have tended to rely more and more on melody, it is the overall texture of the music that dominates. Soloists surface from thick, brooding backdrops, then subside again in a disquieting yet effortless flow. Mantler's compositions are like dark, sombre hymns. To the uninitiated they give the impression of being humourless and monotonous, but to the converted they provide a wealth of fascination in their extremely subtle and intricate shading, their carefully constructed solos, and their peerless originality.

Michael Mantler was born in Vienna, Austria, where he studied trumpet and musicology. In 1962 he moved to the USA, and in 1964 began playing trumpet in Cecil Taylor's group. He was one of the founding members of the Jazz Composer's Guild, and following its demise established the legendary Jazz Composer's Orchestra with Carla Bley. In 1968 he recorded an award-winning double album of his music with the Orchestra featuring soloists Cecil Taylor, Don Cherry, Roswell Rudd, Pharoah Sanders, Larry Coryell, and Gato Barbieri. He also established the New Music Distribution Service which still serves as an important alternative for many independent record producers in the new music field.

In 1973, together with Carla Bley he formed WATT WORKS, a record label and publishing company devoted entirely to the presentation of their own music. He has performed on all of Carla Bley's albums and also Charlie Haden's *Liberation Music Orchestra* (currently in a new edition), ex Henry Cow-ers John Greaves and Peter Blegvad's remarkable *Kew Rhone*, and Pink Floyd drummer Nick Mason's recent *Fictitious Sports*.

His own albums include: *No Answer* (1974) with words by Samuel Beckett, featuring Jack Bruce, Don Cherry, and Carla Bley; *13* (1975) for two orchestras and piano; *The Hapless Child* (1976) with words by Edward Gorey, featuring the distinctive voice of Robert Wyatt plus Bley, Terje Rypdal, Steve Swallow and Jack DeJohnette; *Silence* (1977) an adaptation of a play by Harold Pinter with the voices of Robert Wyatt, Kevin Coyne and Carla Bley, plus Chris Spedding and Ron McClure; *Movies* (1978) the first of his own albums on which he plays trumpet, also featuring Bley, Swallow, Larry Coryell, and Tony Williams; and *More Movies* (1980) with Bley, Swallow, Philip Catherine, Gary Windo, and D. Sharpe.

The diversity of performers to be found on Mantler's records reflect his broad musical tastes as well as his phenomenal ability as an arranger and engineer. Each album is recorded over a period of months, generally with the individual performers being recorded in isolation in either England or Mantler's own studio in New York. Thus the albums are literally constructed without the band members ever actually performing together in the one place. Needless to say, Mantler's music is rarely performed live.

The music for Mantler's newly released *Something There* album was actually written in late '80 and early '81, but recording didn't begin until February '82. The album features Mantler on trumpet, stalwarts Carla Bley on piano and Steve Swallow on bass, plus Nick

Mason on drums, Mike Stern of Miles Davis' new band on guitar, and the strings of The London Symphony Orchestra arranged and conducted by Michael Gibbs.

On the use of the string orchestra, Mantler has said: "My music is basically meant to be orchestral, although for economic reasons, I've recently had to more or less discontinue writing orchestrally. I also thought that my small group writing had been explored enough in *Movies* and *More Movies* and I was tired of using that format again."

The title of the album comes from a poem by Mantler's mentor Samuel Beckett. The poem was originally intended to be sung by Robert Wyatt, but Mantler eventually decided to keep the album instrumental throughout, and finished up playing the melody himself on trumpet. Apparently, the album went through a couple of name changes, from *No More Movies* to *Michael Mantler — Dead*, sort of a follow up to the last WATT album, *Carla Bley — Live!* But the humour didn't quite last.

Essentially, the music on this album is yet another logical extension of Mantler's approach. Both *Movies* and *More Movies* developed a more simple and stronger rhythmic style, and this album continues in that direction. The choice of Nick Mason is thus quite appropriate and lends to the music some greater degree of "accessibility". Mike Gibbs' string arrangements flesh out the compositions giving the whole album an exhilarating richness that was definitely lacking in the last two albums.

Repetition is an important element in Mantler's work — brooding sustained chords underpin restated bass riffs and cyclical trumpet stabs while the guitar soars over the top. At times it is like a continuous climax, almost feverish in its insistence.

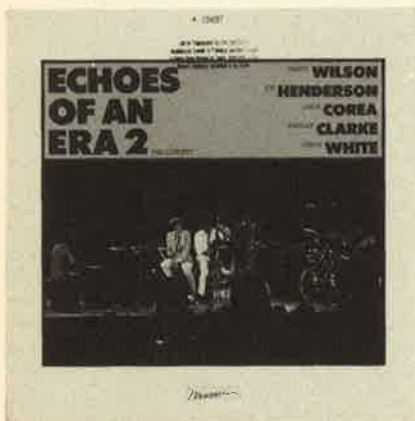
Mike Stern's guitar playing seems to owe more allegiance to rock than to jazz. Apparently Mantler hadn't actually met the guitarist until the sessions, and took him on as a result of various recommendations, particularly by Carla Bley who had heard him perform with Miles Davis. There are times, most notably on the composition *Nineteen*, when Stern's guitar positively sings in an impassioned display that Coryell, Catherine, and Rypdal with all their technique never managed to attain. Contrary to the seemingly restrictive structural environment that Mantler presents, the soloists do have a reasonable amount of freedom, and Stern makes fine use of it.

Steve Swallow's bass playing has become a real mainstay of both Mantler and Bley's recordings. His timing and technique are impeccable. Of the line-up for this album Mantler has humbly stated: "I think that all you have to do as a composer is find a great player, and all your problems are over! I feel lucky to have had the privilege of working with people of such unique talent."

The more I listen to *Something There*, the more engrossed I become. If you have enjoyed Mantler's previous work then I can promise that this one will sweep you off your feet. If you've never heard Mantler's work then it's a great place to start, because it is his most richly varied album to date. If you couldn't handle Mantler before, then you probably won't fare any better with *Something There*.

Recently, Mantler has stated: "Somehow I have always thought of this album as being my last one. I've worked as hard on it as I could, without compromises of any kind, musical or economic, in order to make it into something that could stand up, if it really turned out to be the last thing I had ever done." Let us hope that it isn't.

Tony Wellington.



CHICK COREA PLUS
"The Griffith Park Collection"
 (Elektra-Musician EI-60025)
"Echoes Of An Era 2"
 (Elektra-Musician 60165-I)

In its first two batches of releases, Elektra's upmarket jazz label, Musician, has maintained a very high average standard. One of its best releases is the all-star session titled *The Griffith Park Collection*. It is a lineup that does deserve the 'all-star' tag: trumpeter Freddie Hubbard, Joe Henderson on tenor sax, Chick Corea on proper piano, Stanley Clarke on proper bass, and Lenny White on drums. More importantly, they display the sort of rapport and spontaneity that too many such lineups find elusive.

As on most of his recent recordings, Hubbard takes the opportunity to reassert his stature as a jazz master, a truly artistic improviser; the same goes for Corea, whose

recorded output has varied wildly in both intent and worth. Henderson plays with his usual formidable knowledge, logic and conviction. Clarke's playing reminds me what a fine bassist jazz lost when he turned to the fuzak business. And White — who has struck me as a drummer who displays great dexterity and precision, but lacks real jazz understanding — overall makes a positive contribution to the music.

The music, as White notes on the cover, tends to recall the '60s Blue Note feel. White's *Le Bop* and Hubbard's *Happy Times* are blowing tunes that feature brilliant solos from Hubbard, Henderson and Corea. Clarke's *Why Wait* is a relaxed blues that would not be out of place on a '60s Miles LP (or a VSOP performance), Steve Swallow's *Remember* is a lovely trio performance, with Corea's crystal touch accompanied by Clarke, and White on brushes. Corea's *October Ballade* features a piano intro, flugelhorn melody and tenor solo; as White notes, it is "a structured ballad that doesn't sound structured". The final track, White's *Guernica* is an effectively dark Spanish piece, with strong, extended explorations from tenor, trumpet and piano. If you want proof that these musicians really are exceptional jazz players, here it is.

At the same session, this band recorded an LP of older standards with pop singer Chaka Khan, titled *Echoes Of An Era*. Unfortunately, I haven't heard that one, but there is a new album by the quintet minus Freddie Hubbard, with Nancy Wilson the guest vocalist: *Echoes Of An Era 2*, recorded live in April, 1982.

It is a very mixed success. My chief reservation lies with Nancy Wilson, who is certainly a talented vocalist, but not my idea of a jazz singer. Her attempts at swinging strike me as uncomfortable, more akin to a Shirley Bassey than the Vaughans and McRaes of this world. Thus even the fine solos from Henderson and Corea have trouble lifting the performances that feature her. The one exception is *My One And Only Love*, which is sung with accompaniment only from Corea, whose playing is simply beautiful. *500 Miles High* is a strong trio performance, while *Rhythm-A-Ning* features Henderson to advantage, but is marred by a crass drum solo.

So, unless you find Nancy Wilson's singing appeals to you, or you're keen to acquire any example of Corea's talents being put to good use, I wouldn't recommend this album too strongly.

Adrian Jackson



RAY SWINFIELD'S ARGENTA ORA
"The Winged Cliff" (Merlin Records MRF 82401; distributed by Avan-Guard)

Ray Swinfield's name will be familiar to many readers of this magazine, since he is in fact an Australian musician, active in Sydney before he departed for the UK where I understand he is much in demand as a session man. This LP is the second under his own name, and it indicates that, while he may have become a more or less permanent resident of England, he has by no means forgotten Oz. The title of the album is taken from one of the songs on side 2, part of what he calls *The Sydney Suite*.

Swinfield plays clarinet, alto, and flute, all of them within their 'legitimate' tonal and dynamic ranges, and with impeccable facility. *Willow Weep for Me* displays his clarinet work most impressively — a fairly straight tone with little vibrato, an icy clarity becoming perhaps a little thin in the high register. His alto playing is at its warmest on *Days of Wine and Roses*. It's a slightly richer, more emotional sound than the clarinet, sometimes softening to a moving plangency. But it's still fundamentally 'correct' in approach, with none of the controlled distortions and squeals that other schools of the instrument have developed. In fact, if you can mentally filter out the jazz context at the beginning of this song, you can almost hear the sound of Rudy Weidof. Swinfield's strongest voice on this LP, however, is the flute. As with the sax, many jazz players have opened up new avenues of interest on the instrument by exploring tonal possibilities for which it was not primarily designed: in particular, vocalising while playing, to produce a more savage attack. Again, however, Swinfield prefers to remain with the instrument's conventional parameters, creating interest simply by his technical virtuosity, by the intricacy and ingenuity of his lines. Not that his work is frigidly cerebral. The flute, in fact, is his most expressive instrument, partly because his 'ingenuity' is profound enough to recognise when necessary the cunning of simplicity. Especially for an instrument generally thought of as being rather feminine, his sound is unusually strong and aggressive, particularly so on Oscar Pettiford's skittish *Tricotism* and on his own very busy *Wynyard Hustle*. This demonstrates well another aspect of his skill: the definition of his work even at great speed. Withal, however, his flute work isn't frozen, and on *The Lovers* achieves considerable expressive depth simply by his control within the standard range of the instrument.

The overall idiom is post-bop mainstream, accessible to most jazz tastes. Swinfield is backed by John Pearce (piano), John Aué (bass guitar), and Simon Morton (drums). Although new names to me, the whole effect is as professional and poised as you could hear anywhere. The fact that it's not an American band has not led to any parochial unease or over-compensation. The quartet is tight — notice especially the co-ordination between Aué, Morton, and Swinfield as they

Record Reviews

zip through the head of *Tricotism* — and always forceful and mutually sympathetic. Although it's only a quartet, some thought has gone into providing a greater textural range than the number of musicians, with their conventional instrumentation, might lead one to expect. The use of modest reverberation on a couple of tracks enhances the impression of variousness created by Swinfield's use of three different horns. From time to time an alteration in the combination of instruments also throws a new sound into relief. *Willow Weep* uses just clarinet and bass for its introduction, and the extended rubato dialogue between flute and piano on *The Lovers* is a well-timed gentle interlude.

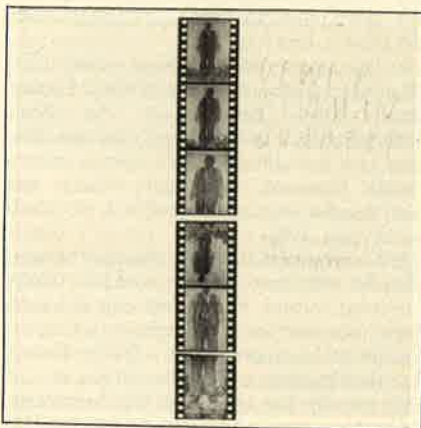
Perhaps the greatest interest for the Australian market will be directed at Swinfield the composer, in particular, of what he has called *The Sydney Suite*. His general characteristics as a composer are melodic strength operating within a well-established harmonic convention. As its title suggests, the suite is a series of evocations of Swinfield's home town. It seems to be a feature of Australian jazz composition to be programmatic or descriptive — Sangster and Dallwitz, as well as many of the younger composers, seem to be creatively stimulated by place and atmosphere rather than by the formidable abstractions of pure form. A problem with such music, as with all referential art forms, is that it seeks to turn the audience's attention away from itself, to the thing described. One's response is therefore not wholly to the music: is one shedding a briny because of the beauty inherent in the song, or at the memory of dear old Bondi Beach?

Swinfield's recollections of Sydney are, by and large, made roseate by time. He kicks off with *The Walkaround*. A representation of a sunny stroll through town, the melody has the naive good spirits of the theme music for an inoffensive Australian comedy TV series. The composer has captured something very Australian here: whether by conscious design or because it's an aspect of the Oz consciousness he unwittingly shares, he has captured the smiling unconcern that accepts the cosmetic surface of urban life, the city as a Disneyland for grownups. *Grosvenor Street*, ruminative and romantic, is more elegiac, evening music. Back to bustle again with *Wynyard Hustle*, appropriately frenetic and busy. *Beauty and the Beach* evokes the leisure of its subject, a wide open unhurried sunniness, a slow motion review of a hot afternoon on the sand. This track is one of the two which manage to incorporate an element of the unexpected into a traditional musical approach, yet without sacrificing prettiness. The title track is an oddly frantic vision of hang gliding, and shares with what had gone before a rather one-dimensional view of its subject. Above all, what I missed was the black side of city life, the deformity

of spirit which it creates. Only on the final track, *Searching for the Car Park*, did I hear something of this. It is based on a recollection of searching for a car in a car park while slightly pissed. I found this the most emotionally complex composition in the suite, as well as being the most adequate realisation of its subject. The upward, slightly lurching spiral of the melody, the uneven bar lengths, had something in them of what Dallwitz captured so completely in his *Ern Malley Suite* — the nightmarish distortion of the familiar, but without it becoming unrecognizable. The menace of the normal world we have come to take for granted makes only a fleeting appearance in *The Sydney Suite*, and this left it feeling a bit lightweight for me.

For all that, this is another instance of Australian jazz composition attempting to define its own culture, and if only for that reason, we should attend to it. Even if I personally found something missing in terms of substance, it is an essay written with total musical literacy, on a subject which we cannot ignore.

Bruce Johnson



DON CHERRY & ED BLACKWELL
"El Corazon" (ECM 1230)
DENNY ZEITLIN & CHARLIE HADEN
"Time Remembers One Time Once" (ECM 1239)
DEWEY REDMAN QUARTET
"The Struggle Continues" (ECM 1225)

Trumpeter Don Cherry, drummer Ed Blackwell, bassist Charlie Haden and saxophonist, Dewey Redman have much in common. Each is an original stylist, a true master of his instrument; for several years now they have constituted the magical quartet Old And New Dreams; and it was under the influence of their common mentor Ornette Coleman that they first found their own voices and made a name in the jazz world.

It is more than two decades since the music that Coleman introduced (with the aid of as revolutionary. On these recent recordings, these musicians demonstrate how well they continue to uphold the ideal of music being as

genuinely spontaneous and sincere as possible.

Today, Don Cherry is not so much a jazzman as a 'world musician', one who has made it his business to investigate the musical cultures and instruments of as many societies as possible. More than ever, his chief delight is in playing music that resembles folk-melodies, and improvising in the spirit of the theme. On this album, in addition to his expected pocket trumpet, Cherry is heard on piano, organ, melodica and douss'n'gouni (an African guitar-like instrument).

His partner is Ed Blackwell, a one-man drum choir whose unique style contains echoes of Africa and New Orleans as well as the more conventional drum styles of jazz. The pair made a couple of albums of brilliant, charming improvisations in Paris in 1969 (*Mu Parts I and 2*, originally on BYG, recently re-issued on Affinity). *El Corazon* is little different from the music on those albums.

It wouldn't be right to say that the musicians are more mature now; they were hardly novices in '69. But the two are certainly older masters of their art now. Perhaps the difference lies in the more focussed nature of the music: there is certainly an ambience of spontaneity, but most tracks here are based around a definite theme; there is less left to chance.

There is a great deal of wit in the improvisations here, tremendous warmth and charm in both the music and the music-making.

Much the same applies to *Time Remembers One Time Once*, a duo performance by Charlie Haden and pianist Denny Zeitlin recorded live in San Francisco. Haden has recorded frequently in duo settings: with Hampton Hawes, Ornette Coleman, Keith Jarrett, Archie Shepp, Don Cherry and Alice Coltrane among others. He excels in this situation, apparently inspired by the nakedness of his position to achieve a tangible empathy with his partner, both following and leading them, genuinely exchanging ideas rather than mere accompaniment. The Cherry-Blackwell collaboration reveals a very real rapport, but the sort of empathy that Haden aims for is different, somehow deeper. With Denny Zeitlin, as on every other duo recording he has made, Haden finds it.

Denny Zeitlin is no big name in jazz. His name will crop up here and there if you go through some *Down Beats* of the late '60s, as part of the new wave of the day. He was apparently inactive until recent years, concentrating on his psychiatry practice. On the evidence of this set, he is a fine musician; not a powerful or daring voice (maybe he could be, in another context), but an intelligent and thoughtful musician.

He can play busy bebop (Ornette's *Bird Food*), but mostly he contributes subtle thoughts and a crystal sound. Haden is the dominant partner, even if he's simply laying down a walking line. More often he's concentrating intensely as he plays solos of poetic eloquence. His thick, resonant tone is a joy throughout. Whether playing standards or originals, the pair produce music that is consistently attractive and fascinating.

Dewey Redman is an under-appreciated stylist - too often thought of as a supportive partner for Ornette, Jarrett or Cherry — but he reminds me of such greats as Ben Webster and Archie Shepp, both for his complete individuality, and for the strength of his playing in both fiery and reflective moods.

He has released several fine albums under

his own name on Impulse and Galaxy; *The Struggle Continues*, his first for ECM, is as rewarding as any of them. There is nothing surprisingly new here, just Redman blowing plenty of superb tenor, with the help of an admirable rhythm section.

Ed Blackwell again demonstrates his exceptional taste and verve, while the two youngsters, pianist Charles Eubanks and bassist Mark Helias, display a good deal of verve and sensitivity. But the focus is on Redman, who plays brilliantly throughout the varied settings on the LP. He is earthy over a throbbing beat on the blues *Turn Over Baby*, at his most poignant on the tender *Love Is*, urgent on *Combinations*, cascading and vocalised on *Thren*, relaxed on *Joie De Vivre*, and finishes with a fine bebop on Bird's *Dewey Square* (what else?)

With these three albums, ECM once again delivers superbly recorded and pressed recordings of what some of the more important contemporary musicians are into; and Messrs Blackwell, Cherry, Haden and Redman once again display their remarkable gifts for getting to the heart of their music. Such artistry deserves to be enjoyed.

Adrian Jackson



NEBULA
 "No Standing" (Jazmin Records)

There is quite a bit of good news about this LP but, regrettably, some bad news as well.

First, the good news. Nebula is a splendid group composed of Ken James (saxophones), Vince Genova (acoustic piano & string synthesiser), Steve Hunter (electric bass), Indra Lesmana (electric piano & moog synthesiser), Carlinhos Goncalves (percussion) and Andy Evans (drums). On this LP they are basically involved in Latin-oriented jazz/rock fusion which has become an established idiom. They work it splendidly, and with a sure touch throughout. What rough edges there are, are more than adequately compensated for, by the enthusiasm and spirit in the music.

The unique thing about the group is the presence of two outstanding keyboard players, and the dialogue between Lesmana and Genova is one of the most interesting aspects of the LP. There obviously is a good deal of empathy and communication between

them — witness the subtle way in which they dovetail their rhythmic comping in with each other. There are many such subtleties throughout the LP, which repay close attention. But also their solos tend to echo each other. Witness the torrential outpouring of brilliant, exciting runs on the tune *Sleeping Beauty* by both players. Each is capable of a cascading sortie, only to level off into a plateau of calming lyricism, so that the music ebbs and flows beautifully.

It's not only Lesmana and Genova. The soloing on the LP is uniformly brilliant. All the players are capable of technical ability which many will envy.

Of course, the character of any album is conditioned by the nature of the compositions. Here the personality of the LP is quite uniform: four of the five tunes are composed by Indra Lesmana (*Tis Time To Part*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *The First and No Standing*) and the other, called *Samba For E.T.* is written by the bassist Steve Hunter.

In this magazine before I have praised Indra Lesmana as a composer; these compositions confirm his growing reputation. They are beautifully written with lovely melodies and chord changes. The ease with which each soloist utilises the chord structures suggests too that they are natural vehicles for jazz improvisation.

I often think that, inevitably, the best player on an original tune will be the composer. He knows the tune best and the improvisational possibilities inherent in the chord structure. This might well explain — although all the solos are interesting — why Indra Lesmana's solos retain particular interest on repeated hearings. One could perhaps be mesmerised by the fact that he is still a comparative youngster — recently turned 17 — but, of course, he has been playing like a veteran since the age of 13 or 14.

The critical problem for this idiom — which I now think of as mid-70s Latin/jazz/rock fusion — is whether it can win over contemporary fans who want to listen without feeling that they're being beaten over the head by the power of electric instruments, or drained by a high-energy onslaught. On these criteria *No Standing* generally fares well. Witness in *Tis Time To Part*, after an explosive moog solo from Lesmana and an ironic, hand-clapping Latin section, a lovely interlude in which Vince Genova sets up a rich strings sound, while Steve Hunter plays his bass solo. There is enough of this use of light and shade, and relaxed contrast, for the LP to be, overall, a balanced experience. There is certainly enough music for those who get off on energy, but the LP should not be too much for the listener who doesn't wish to be drained.

What, then, about the bad news? I'm not enamoured with the sound balance achieved which, generally, involves a dominance of the bass in the overall sound, and the two keyboards and saxophone being too far back in the mix. To be more precise, the acoustic piano is not too badly recorded, but the electric piano is consistently under-recorded (although it is best captured on the title track *No Standing*).

Moreover, I don't feel that the engineers have captured a nice saxophone sound. Is Ken James's soprano saxophone really that

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thin? On the question of the bass, I believe that Australian engineers have to work out how to reproduce a fat, driving bass sound without allowing it to make the overall sound bottom-heavy. My point can be illustrated by playing a track from this LP and then putting on, say, a Return To Forever LP. Notice where Stanley Clarke's bass sound is in the overall mix.

I found that these problems of balance were not that serious when listening through earphones, but through speakers in the living room, they were irritating.

There is one good reason why many jazz collectors in Australia will want this LP which, despite what I say about the sound, is a unique one. If Indra Lesmana ultimately goes to the United States — where he would be lapped up as a unique Asian jazz musician — he may well, someday, be an international jazz star. If so, this LP will be worth a fortune as an example of his early work.

Eric Myers



KENNY BURRELL
"Kenny Burrell" (Original Jazz Classics OJC-019)
MILES DAVIS
"The Musings of Miles" (Original Jazz Classics OJC-004)

The reissue programme from which these two albums are taken draws on the archives of Prestige, New Jazz, Riverside and Jazzland. The list of titles accompanying the records suggests that the period being retrieved is primarily the late fifties and early sixties. In general the policy seems to be to republish the material just as it first appeared; the art work and typography have the look of the fifties. We are as far from that era now as were the traditionalists of the late forties from the classic jazz period which they sought to create. By analogy, enough time has passed to make this particular reissue series a source of historical as well as aesthetic interest. And those two poles are represented in these two LP's.

Apart from Cecil Payne, the Burrell session brings together a number of Detroiters — the leader himself, Tommy Flanagan, Elvin Jones, and bassist Doug Watkins. It is of some historical interest in reminding us of the promising work of the last mentioned, killed in a road accident in 1962 at the age of 28. It also underlines the contribution of Detroit musicians to the New York scene during this period (no date is given, but it must fall between 1957 and, probably, 1960,

when Elvin Jones joined Coltrane). But the main importance of this album is intrinsic to the music. History has not made this as significant as the Miles Davis LP, though it is much less flawed. Basically, it is beautiful jazz. The sound is very full for a one horn group, partly because of the leader's authoritative sound, and the intelligent voicing between him and the baritone. The two have a similar approach. Both are big and warm toned (though Payne has an airy quality that is often missing from the baritone's tendency to bully). Neither musician is particularly garrulous, although on *Drum Boogie* and *All of You* some very fast guitar passages demonstrate that Burrell's later sparseness was a chosen virtue not an imposed necessity. Flanagan's work also must attract attention, particularly his solo on *All of You*, ranging from jagged and astringent to a more romantic softness. *All of You* embodies the best of the record — a lovely piece of music which any follower of Burrell's work would wish to have.

The Miles Davis LP is more historically significant than musically satisfying. But very historically significant. It was his first recording date in 1955, on June 7, and with a new quartet — Red Garland, Philly Joe, and Oscar Pettiford. Just behind him were the sessions recently reissued on Prestige P 24077 (*Tune Up*) — sparkling and assured. Ahead of him, only a matter of months away, was *The New Miles Davis Quintet*, the beginning of one of the great bands. But if we didn't know what we know now, we could be pardoned for wondering if this LP signalled the end, not a beginning. It has its moments. *Bottom line Miles is still above most musicians' top line.* But basically he is in a trough between crests. There's a lack of fire and a vagueness of substance in his playing. His entry after the piano solo on *Tunisia* is inconsequential. On the first track, *Will You Still Be Mine?*, I thought for a moment (heresy!) that he was out of tune. But there's no doubt about it by the time we get to *Tunisia* — the sharpness of his last note before the interlude sticks out like a sore thumb — and *Green Haze*. On the latter he is mainly flat, as when he enters after the rhythm introduction, yet elsewhere on the same song he goes sharp. The problem is compounded by what I suspect is some dodgy intonation from Pettiford on the same number. Miles' attack is also often fluffy, as on his opening to *Tunisia*. The group as a whole seems to lack coherence. The oddly limping figure initiated by Pettiford 2½ choruses into *A Gal In Calico* has no relevance to the rest of the band, and in fact the finish to the song is woefully uncertain. In *Tunisia* I had that uncomfortable feeling of rhythmic cross purposes, and there seemed to be no cohesion between Davis and Garland. What was the problem? It seems most likely that Miles himself might not have been up to it. As he himself has said, the trumpet is the most physical of instruments, meaning responsive to the condition of the body. The fact that his tuning is up as well as down on the same song suggests a physiological problem and not a badly placed tuning slide. So too the uncertain attack and even the lack of group cohesion. He had recently, and in the most brutally effective way, cut his drug habit, and the fact that he had scarcely worked during

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the first half of 1955 could not have helped. But also, as his subsequent career was to show, he was at a point of radical transition in musical terms, tentative and experimental; he tried out three recording groups in 1955.

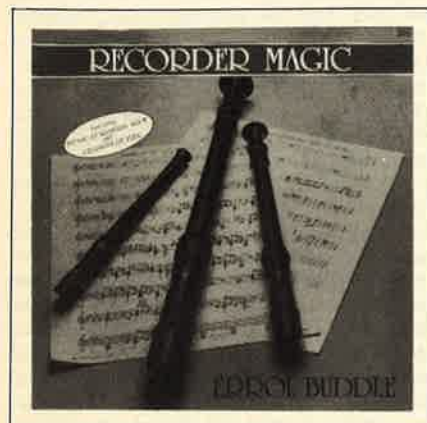
This LP captures that moment of uncertainty in a significant and telling way, like a photograph of a boxer momentarily off balance. With all its flaws it might be said that it is essential to an evaluation of the career of Miles Davis. If nothing else, the astonishing difference between his work here and that of a few months later testifies to the strength and resilience of the man. We should be grateful that an Australian company, Festival, is committing itself to this reissue enterprise.

Bruce Johnson

command of various recorders, which he uses throughout? The recorder is an extremely limited instrument (anyone can play it) but Buddle gets a very musical sound, with just the suggestion of a vibrato, to give it a warm, modern sound. I played this album while we were preparing the magazine, and most people believed that Buddle was playing flute.

Once again, one of Australia's leading jazz musicians shows — even if it is in a non-creative, middle-of-the-road context — the sort of artistry and ability that can only come from years of paying musical dues in studios, clubs and pubs. If this sort of LP takes a recognised jazz performer to a wider audience, that can only be good for jazz in the long run.

Eric Myers



ERROL BUDDLE
"Recorder Magic"
(Powderworks POW6045)

This LP has no pretensions to be a jazz album. Errol Buddle is the only player listed (other than co-producer Phil Scorgie, who presumably plays bass throughout) as if the identity of the musicians is unimportant; the tunes are popular songs, movie themes, or folk tunes; and there is no jazz improvisation as we understand it on the LP, except for the occasional short solo.

Why do I enjoy this album, then, I hear you ask? Well, the sound balance is immaculate (would that other albums, more consciously in the creative area, were mixed so well); the playing is superb from (anonymous) musicians who obviously are talented and capable studio performers; and the tunes are extremely pleasant and melodic. (Indeed, some are quite thrilling).

If the LP has an overall musical character it is about the placement of traditional or popular melodies into the context of gentle rock/funk feels. Generally they tend to be slow and graceful, with the sort of funky rhythms which are found in black soul music.

The two most popular tunes *Chariots Of Fire* and *Picnic At Hanging Rock* (a new version of Buddle's big hit) should cause a great deal of interest on the MOR radio programs. It is impossible not to enjoy them; they are, after all, outstanding tunes, and they are played beautifully. My theory is that only jazz musicians, or at least improvising musicians, play straight music as well as this.

What can one say about Errol Buddle's



SANDIE WHITE/VINCE GENOVA
"Angel Eyes"
(Jazmin Records)

Most of the ingredients are here — a considerably better than average singer and a supportive accompanist performing top quality and popular material — and the outcome is a mixed blessing indeed.

Sandie White has taken on a most exacting task with her first record, a task that can daunt even the world's best, namely singing with only piano backing. Ella Fitzgerald with Ellis Larkins can get away with it, but rarely does it work completely for performances in this context, covering an entire LP. Some of the cuts cry out for bass and/or drums or other persuasive instrumentation. Even that brilliant Helen Merrill/John Lewis classic album has three tracks with the added backing of bass, drums and flute.

There is every good reason to compare Sandie with overseas stylists, because there are two cuts here which are in world class, and parts of others are the same.

The opening show tune *On A Clear Day (You Can See Forever)* is perhaps the most disappointing, due to bad balance, finding the singer overshadowed by the piano. At times *Fool On The Hill*, even if it is a splendid arrangement, also suffers in this respect. Fortunately, this unevenness is not apparent on the second track *Spring Can Really Hang You Up The Most*, the great torch song from the pens of Fran Landesman and Tommy Wolf. It is sung quite tellingly and clearly. Sandie's diction is superb, and it's good to

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Other new releases from Musicraft (Vintage Series), Discovery, Trend (Direct To Disc):

Georgie Auld & His Orchestra with Sarah Vaughan (Vol 2), Herman Chittison Piano Genius (1944-1945), Barbara Carroll At The Piano (1980), Bob Cooper with the Mike Wofford Trio Plays The Music of Michel Legrand, Dwight Dickerson: Sooner Or Later, Duke Ellington: The Symphonic Ellington, Paul Desmond Quartet: East Of The Sun, Clare Fischer Big Band: Duality, Bob Florence Big Band Live At Concerts By The Sea 1979 (Grammy nominated), Bob Florence Big Band: Westlake (Grammy nominated 1983), Russell Garcia: I Lead A Charmed Life (1980)

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Record Reviews

hear the verse.

On *Green Dolphin Street* and (mostly) *Send In The Clowns* are up-tempo but *Spring, Here's That Rainy Day* and *Body And Soul* are taken at snail's pace, which can be risky. It isn't that Sandie is not as her best singing ballads; she sounds more at ease on them than on the brighter numbers, but with a slower-than-slow approach, and with only piano backing, even slight imperfections are magnified. In live performances, the visual impact takes the edge off the note bent in the wrong direction, the intonation trouble, the not-quite-attainable low note and phrasing acrobatics that don't completely work. Recording, however, is a cruel leveller.

I've left the best things until last. Two tracks in particular show how and when piano and voice need nobody, but *nobody* else around. *But Beautiful* is just that, a beautifully controlled, but gorgeous, reading from Sandie, together with the warm, reflective piano of Vince, whose soloing on some tracks, incidentally, races away with the honours. Vince Genova's reputation seems already well established in Sydney, and his many fans shouldn't be disappointed except, perhaps, for wishing we could hear more of his solo work. But that wasn't the name of the game on this LP. The last track, *Angel Eyes*, is a compelling transmission of the poignant Robin Adair lyric and the unforgettable Matt Dennis theme. A high spot indeed, and one that justifies proudly the album title. Appealing things happen throughout this standard, right up to the final exit line, 'Excuse me, while I disappear'.

Don't disappear, Sandie, for you really have something to sing about and should continue to record. Even if the pianist is of the calibre of Vince Genova, the piano/voice setting is a limited one. I'd like to hear you backed by more musicians on your next LP.

Joya Jensen

JAM SESSIONS FROM CHIAROSCURO

There are a couple of albums now available on Chiaroscuro that include some of the most satisfying jam sessions I've ever heard.

Jazz Greats (CR 204) has some set-pieces, and very pleasant too, from Teddy Wilson (*Body and Soul*); Ruby Braff with Ellis Larkins (who is as a jazz accompanist what Gerald Moore is to classical artists) doing wonders with that lovely old tune, *If Dreams Come True*; and a nice small group of Bobby

Hackett, Vic Dickenson, Dave McKenna (some blissful piano from him), our old mate Jack Lesberg and Cliff Leeman, playing *Thou Swell*. There's also a particularly attractive piano solo on the flip side from Don Ewell, an original called *Migrant Worker Blues* with some ingenious interweaving of boogie and ragtime strands.

But the highlights are three jam sessions, recorded in the early 1970s that are near perfect jazz. First there's *Back on the Street* (side 1) where Jonah Jones and Earl Hines come together again, abetted by Buddy Tate (a tenorman who grows on one), Cozy Cole and others. Tate has some great solos — he really is one of the most individual tenor men of latterday jazz — Jonah is at his rollicking best, Hines accepts every challenge, and the whole lot really hangs together.

Tate is to the fore again in a group you're unlikely to hear very often — a rare combination of Mary Lou Williams, Illinois Jacquet, Roy Eldridge and support. The text of it all is *Sunday* — and, among other delights, it's a classic example of how an all-out session of improvisation depends on the drummer and bassist to keep an impeccable tempo. Here it's Gus Johnson and Milt Hinton — and brother, they really do the job. Mary Lou has some classy choruses and Buddy Tate's extended solo starts with a bang and then lyrically enchants for the latter half of the performance.

Blues in C is also on side 2; with Eddie Condon, Wild Bill Davison and Gene Krupa teaming up, ably abetted by Kenny Davern's Bechet-like soprano sax and that piano man very much in the jazz eye at present, Dick Wellstood. Wild Bill's cornet is much more restrained here, and all the better for it, but I think, for inspired improvising, it's Wellstood's track.

But an even better album, which is saying something, is *The Buck Clayton Jam Session Vol. IV* (CR 163) which, paradoxically, hasn't Clayton on it (he was ill at the time), but he's identified with earlier albums in the

series. And two of his compositions are featured here — each taking up the entire side of the disc — nearly 20 minutes of undiluted jazz ecstasy.

It's a toss up, but I like better side 2, *Glassboro Blues*. The solo order is of astounding talent: Tommy Flanagan (piano), Buddy Tate, Harold "Money" Johnson (an under-rated trumpet player, then with Ellington — this was 1975), Lee Konitz (alto), Vic Dickenson, Budd Johnson, Joe Newman; George Masso (trom), Sal Nistico (tenor) and Earl Warren (alto). Bassist was Milt Hinton and Mel Lewis was on drums. And between the solos (a hard job to differentiate but I'd put Flanagan, Newman and Konitz on top) the ensemble playing is something to drool over.

The first side, *Jayhawk* (1974), is at a slightly faster clip. A different group as can be seen from the solo list (Hines, Warren, Doc Cheatham, Budd Johnson, Joe Temperley — baritone, Newman again, Zoot Sims, Urbie Green.) With Cheatham and Johnson outstanding. Hinton is bassist and there's that man Gus Johnson again — once again the perfect drummer for this jamming.

This album should be a show-piece in any collection.

Chiaroscuro, by the way, also has a nice side of chamber jazz backed by piano show-cases (*Great Names in Jazz* CR 2017). There are Mulligan and Joe Venuti groups, but the best of side 1 is a lovely rhythmic version of *I'll Get By* with Teddy Wilson in the box seat backed by Dickenson, Bob Wilber (clt. and soprano), Harry Edison, Major Holley (bass — and how he pushes it all along) and Oliver Jackson (drums). Edison has some electrifying blowing.

On the piano side — an impeccably spirited version of *C Jam Blues* by Dave McKenna, and Bobby Henderson's sensitive playing of *Aint Misbehavin'* get my vote, but there's also fine jazz from Wellstood, Eubie Blake and Hines.

Clement Semmler

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NEW RECORD RELEASES

By Roger Beilby*

This is the first of a regular column which will list records which are available through local wholesalers which, in fact, means that your local record shop can procure the records for you without much difficulty. Some of the records will not be new releases. If this is the case they won't have been available locally for some considerable time.

Larrikin Records have a new shipment of English Flyright. It includes Ralph Sutton's *Live 1975 (204)*, a superb album; *Yank Lawson with Benny Simkins band (208)*; *Billy Butterfield with Benny Simkins Band (208)*; two albums by the New City Jazzmen, a hot Sussex traditional band (203 and 206); Joe Albany's *The Albany Touch (207)*, a fine solo piano LP.

Also available are Art Pepper's *Among Friends (211)*; Warne March's *Warne Out (212)*; Bill Perkins with Pepper Adams *Confluence (214)*; and two albums by the Danny Moss Quartet, *Struttin' and Stompin' (218)* and *Straighten Up and Flyright (209)*. Larrikin also has a complete range of the excellent magpie Piano Blues LPs (Vol. 1-18). For reviews refer to recent *Jazz Journals*, where much praise has been heaped on this series. Also noticed at Larrikin: a new shipment of American Herwin LPs, including Freddie Keppard (101); The Jazz Wizards Vol. 2 (103); The State Street Ramblers, Vol 1 and 2 (104 & 105); King Oliver (106); New Orleans Sounds in New York (107); Punch Miller (108); Rare Hot Chicago Jazz (109); Paramount Hot Jazz Rarities (110); a fine double LP of Cannons Jug Stompers (208) and the funky New Orleans Jazz Band, *Make Me a Pallet On The Floor (301)*.

The Storyville All Stars (from Melbourne) have a new album issued by the ABC (distributed through CBS) called *Everything Old Is New Again*. The ABC shops in most capital cities have stocks. It is a fine LP and a worthy addition to any collection.

Another record distributor based in Hobart and specialising in European and Japanese releases have recently added to their large range the Swedish Tax, Jazz Society, Jazz Document, Everybody's, and Classic Jazz Masters catalogues. There are far too many titles to list but I'm sure any collectors who read overseas jazz magazines would be ofay with these labels. New (Jap) Verves and CBS reissues from A.R.D. include *The Jazz Odyssey of James Rushing Esq (20AP 1506)*; *The Dave Brubeck Quartet At Carnegie Hall (36AP 1488/9)*; *Monk's Dream: The Thelonius Monk Quartet (20AP 1483)*; Lambert, Hendricks & Ross with the Ike Isaacs Trio, *High Flying (20AP 1436)*; *Buddy Rich in Miami (Verve 23MJ 3200)*; Benny Carter, *Cosmopolite (MV2635)*; Blossom Dearie, *Once Upon a Summertime (MV2612)*; and *Oscar Peterson Plays Count Basie (MV 2569)*.

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

Avan-Guard are now the Australian agents for Discovery (an excellent Los Angeles based label specialising in the more modern sounds) and Musicraft (a label specialising in the bigger bands of the 40s). Both these labels contain many titles including albums by Paul Desmond, Woody Herman, George Auld, Clare Fischer and Gerald Wilson. A new release on Discovery is an LP by The World Rhythm Band, led by Jeff Pressing (an American pianist) who is lecturing at La Trobe University, Melbourne. Also available through Avan-Guard is Art Hodes' most recent LP on Muse — it received five stars in the *March Down Beat*.

Swaggie Records (distributed through Carinia) continues its excellent *Vintage Jazz Archives* series with issues by Venuti Lang 1926-30 (817); Chicago Jazz 1923-29 (818) — this album contains many alternate takes. Bands include Lil's Hot Shots, Beale Street Washboard Band, King Oliver's Jazz Band, and Erskine Tate's Vendome Orchestra. Two more volumes of Clarence Williams and his Washboard Band are also available: Vol. 2 (812) and Vol. 3 (813).

Available by the time you receive this copy of *JAZZ Magazine* will be a new shipment of *Jazz Tribunes* (Argus Music) and *Progressive Records*, *Jazzman Records* and *Japanese Atlas Records* all available through Janda Jazz.

The latest custom cassettes (available usually only from the bands) include two by Bob Barnard; a fine modern cassette by The

Great White Noise, a Sydney-based electric modern band; a new release from Melbourne-based Anteater Records (Anteater 005): Graham Coyle piano solos; Sydney bands the Abbey Jazz Band and Nat Oliver's Jazz Band also have cassettes of their performances available.

Although Japanese records are slightly dearer than other pressings, their sound is superb. I am in fact replacing as much of my own collection as possible with Japanese issues. It is amazing how *Bill Evans Trio ('64)* sounds after years of hiss and pop from the original Verve issue.

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

The Melbourne trumpeter Keith Hounslow recently had his car broken into and his two instruments stolen. They were a COUSENON flugelhorn (a rare instrument) and a BENGE pocket trumpet. On the pocket trumpet the words 'Sophie Hounslow' are inscribed. Keith Hounslow offers a reward, and anyone who has information on these stolen instruments should contact him in Melbourne on (03) 861 5612.

MOSTLY JAZZ: Melbourne's Jazz Shop

If you've spent years vainly scouring the record stores for those early 1930s recordings of Ducky Yountz and His Orchestra, Tom Gerunovitch's Roof Garden Orchestra or the Original Atlanta Footwarmers don't despair.

If you pine for that elusive 1928 pressing of *I'm Gonna Take My Bimbo Back To The Bamboo Isle* by the Clarence Williams Orchestra, then take heart.

All these and many more are there for the asking at *Mostly Jazz*, Melbourne's leading jazz store, at 94 St. Kilda Road (between the Junction and Alma Road). The proprietors are Roger Beilby and Ken Carter.

The shop only opens outside of ordinary working hours: Wed/Thurs. 5 - 7.30 pm, Friday 5 - 9 pm, Saturday 10 am - 2 pm, and Sunday 2 - 5 pm. It has been open for just over a year, and has developed a loyal following.

Ken and Roger are quick to refute the impression that they stock mainly traditional jazz and big band 30s jazz. In fact, they stock everything from trad to fusion (contemporary jazz/rock) with a strong component of Australian jazz through the years. They are the only shop in Melbourne to specialise solely in jazz.

Mostly Jazz is something of a resource centre for the Victorian Jazz Club. Both Ken and Roger have been active members for

years, and Roger has presented the Club's program on 3CR since the station started some seven years ago. They've recently started having films and talks one night a month at the shop, and would like the several pianos in the place to be used more often by aspiring jazz around Melbourne.

Speaking of Melbourne jazz, the locals believe that generally Melbourne is catching up with Sydney as a contemporary jazz centre and the new course at Melbourne State College, run by Brian Brown is a sign of this trend. To support Melbourne jazz, Roger and Ken make recordings of local live jazz and sell cassettes of these under their own Anteater label from the shop. □



Roger Beilby in amongst it at *Mostly Jazz*.

THE CRISIS IN MODERN JAZZ IN AUSTRALIA

By Peter Rechniewski*

It has become commonplace in the last few years to speak of Australian jazz, even modern jazz, as being in a healthy state. We have witnessed, some claim, a "jazz explosion" — especially in Sydney — which has resulted in an unprecedented number of venues offering musicians opportunities to play, in grants for study trips, in sponsored overseas tours by local bands, recordings, concerts, etc. True, the argument runs, there have been some reverses, like the closure of venues and the collapse of organisations such as the Australian Jazz Foundation, but such things notwithstanding, the current state of jazz can only fill the observer with optimism. And there is little doubt that we have come a long way since the early 70s when modern jazz appeared to be non-existent through lack of venues, and even traditional musicians were finding it a struggle. Therefore it might seem paradoxical and foolishly alarmist to speak of a crisis in modern jazz, but I believe if one examines underlying trends and couples them with some recent events (such as the closing of the Paradise Jazz Cellar) then "crisis" will not seem an inappropriate word.

The components of a healthy jazz scene it seems to me are basically three: 1) venues at which the music can be played; 2) relatively frequent recording of local groups; 3) the general climate (eg. print and media coverage, radio and television exposure etc). This last element is the most elusive and difficult to define, but in ways I hope to make clear, it can be crucial. All three elements are to a large extent interdependent — in fact 1) and 2) are really a part of 3) though it might be convenient to consider them as separate — but that is not to say that they have equivalent value in determining the vibrancy of a jazz scene. It is perfectly possible to imagine a small number of successful jazz clubs operating without any recording activity and little press coverage. This was in fact the case during the first year of The Basement's existence.

*Peter Rechniewski recently returned to Australia after some time in England. He is responsible for the programming at Jenny's Wine Bar & Bistro, Sydney.

What then of the current state of jazz with respect to venues? In the last issue of JAZZ Brian Brown said that he thought that Sydney had moved towards middle-of-the-road, and I think he understated the extent to which this has occurred. Roger Frampton complained in these pages at how rarely he has been given the opportunity to perform in the last eighteen months; Bernie McGann, until he started at Jenny's Wine Bar last December, had performed on only four occasions during the whole of 1982; and Bruce Cale has not performed for six months in Sydney. These are but a few examples. MOR seems to be the order of the day, and the favourite MOR style seems to be jazz-funk (junk). Venue after venue puts in bands that appear to have come from the same assembly line. Their music is mostly loud, soul-less, bland and played with little or no passion. The other variation on the theme is the so-called Latin-jazz played by bands such as The Cockroaches, Dumbala, Espirito, and while some of these groups might look good on stage, the music is eminently forgettable.

Maybe the recession is responsible for the safty-first attitude on the part of the jazz club owners. If so, it's understandable. What is less understandable is the bucketing by the proprietors of the musical ability of the musicians they won't hire, when the real reason is the drawing power of a particular band. It seems that the political-economy of the jazz scene reinforces the claim that popularity is a function of quality. Yet when bands achieve artistic and/or public acclaim outside the main venues, they are often quickly re-hired, so that that acclaim can be appropriated by the club owners. Temporary freeze-outs of creative jazz occurred several times during the 70s; the present freeze-out, the first of the 80's, is the longest.

Worse still, and with very serious implications, is the neglect by record companies of creative modern jazz. Since the demise of 44-Records there has been no record label devoted almost totally to modern jazz and none of the major companies has made any moves to develop such a prestige label. What must be remembered is that making a jazz record in Australia is not directly a

way of making money for the musician. It is, unless you happen to be Don Burrows or John Sangster, an event of artistic documentation and as such its significance is that much greater. A record also means the possibility of building an audience through airplay and reviews. At the time of writing the only recording taking place is that organised and often paid for by the musicians themselves!

Finally we come to the third component mentioned above — the general climate. If we look at the way jazz is treated in the daily press the situation is particularly disturbing. Rock dominates the arts pages of even the serious papers. *The Sydney Morning Herald* uses no fewer than five writers on rock, while its occasional jazz 'critic' David Lin knows little or nothing about the music, employs such quaint syntax and musical nomenclature as to undermine his credibility, and is rarely seen listening to local jazz. At the *National Times* the prestige of its Arts pages is enhanced by articles such as "The Demise of the Guitar Hero" and the story of Men at Work in America, while jazz might get a few column inches every quarter. The impression created is that rock is the contemporary art form whereas modern jazz is a quaint music patronised by elitists and cranks.

The negative attitude towards jazz engendered by such neglect is impossible to underestimate. Unless the public, especially the younger public which has fewer demands made on its time, is consistently confronted by information about jazz, presented in a serious manner in the form of previews, reviews, feature articles about local jazz musicians, it will simply ignore the music. Jazz must be presented as a serious, living art form, not merely as an entertainment which acts as a backdrop to eating and drinking.

The same neglect of modern jazz exists on radio. This applies much more to commercial radio than to ABC, where there is some jazz still broadcast every week. Unfortunately little of this is contemporary music, whilst *Music to Midnight* restricts the style of jazz played — no Archie Shepp or Albert Ayler ever gets on the turntable.

At one stage there was some hope in the more catholic attitude of 2JJ

(now JJJ) which, though a station devoted to playing rock albums, did broadcast jazz, even if on an irregular basis. In fact they once broadcast live from their studio some free improvised music performed by Serge Ermoll, Bernie McGann, Phil Treloar and John Clare — a first as far as contemporary music was concerned. These days the situation is very different; 2JJJ even refuses to mention jazz in its "What's On" segment. How different is the situation in London where Capitol Radio, a commercial station, broadcasts every week one hour of live modern jazz, performed in the studio by British musicians.

Like commercial radio, commercial television ignores jazz of any sort, and it is unrealistic to expect change without legislation which would compel networks to devote some time to the arts. One of the best arts programmes in England is broadcast by London Weekend Television, a commercial network. ABC TV has recently embarked on some sort of jazz policy with the *Don Burrows Collection*, and whatever criticisms one may make of Don's selections, at least there is some jazz on television. What I find objectionable, as well as depressing, is that the other publicly funded network, 0/28, screens minority interest "art" films (which I enjoy) but won't screen any jazz, a music with a world-wide following. There is no jazz, but there is time and money at 0/28 for at least three hours of rock music per week, much of it performed by pretentious German and Italian synthesiser bands dressed in black leather. This is presumably 0/28's idea of multi-cultural music. One fears that if a jazz programme ever found its way into the 0/28 schedule it would be a concert by the Dutch Swing College Band.

All these factors hinder the spread of information about contemporary jazz within the musically interested community and leads to a contraction of the size of the audience. In the past the audience for modern jazz developed from a broadening of tastes by sections of the traditional jazz audience, who either switched completely or continued to patronise both styles, and from those who consciously sought out the new. Today it is the latter path which predominates and it is far more likely that the current generation will discover Louis Armstrong, Jelly Roll Morton and Duke Ellington via Miles Davis, Cecil Taylor and Ornette Coleman than vice-

versa. The sound of traditional jazz therefore that the best of our contemporary musicians and the bands which they form receive the support of the jazz community and in particular of those who are in a position to influence the general climate of opinion.

Yet commentators on the local jazz scene, especially those involved directly with traditional jazz, continue to make the most absurd statements in print about modern jazz. One such article, written by Bruce Johnson, appeared in the November/December 1982 issue of JAZZ, and purported to discuss "Traditional Jazz in Australia". Bruce Johnson purports to discuss the question "Why does traditional jazz predominate in Australia?" and develops his argument around a comparison between the audience/musician relationship in modern and traditional jazz. I shall return to this point below, as in the course of investigating this relationship Johnson makes a number of highly questionable assertions. First I'll outline why I believe traditional jazz "seems everywhere" (as Johnson might say). Johnson himself notes that "traditional jazz made its first big impact during the forties". This is the single most important factor; traditional jazz was the only jazz played here for close on ten years and in that time made converts and gained the allegiance of people who became influential in the printed media and broadcasting. Eric Child is much further removed from today's pop music than was the case perhaps up to the early sixties, making it now more an acquired taste. The same point is valid with respect to the local jazz scene, where the delights of Bob Barnard's playing will be discovered by a younger audience after they have been brought to jazz by hearing contemporary bands. It is important

NOTE: In his review of the Don Burrows Quintet performance at the NSW Conservatorium of Music on January (JAZZ, January/February 1983, p.27) Eric Myers wrote: "The Burrows Quintet left the audience stomping for more, and it would have been gracious of them to play an encore." This comment implied that the Quintet should have played on. Don Burrows has pointed out that he and his colleagues were prepared to play on, as the audience was obviously in the mood for more. However, he was asked by the organisers of the festival not to continue beyond the scheduled finishing time, because of the difficulties involved in the Verbrugghen Hall going overtime.

has for many years played virtually only traditional jazz in his Australian segment. Moreover the pubs, where up to a few years ago most jazz was played, have never been suitable for modern jazz. Many have never had a piano, in others the "bandstand" was on top of the bar, permitting only a tiny drumkit. This lack of suitable venues meant the slower development of audiences.

Johnson acknowledges these two points but seeks some deeper reason for the alleged dominance of trad. He finds it in "alienation of the artist from mainstream life". According to this theory the modern musician stressed his artistic status, the separateness from the community, while the traditional artist immersed himself in the life of his. The conclusion is that the music reflected this state of affairs — that trad. musicians cared about their audience, while modern players did not; that trad. jazz because of this egalitarian quality communicates better than modern jazz; that this quality found a response in Australian society, which wasn't ready for modern jazz.

What is the evidence for this? Bruce Johnson supplies almost none. He claims that when he and Marty Mooney played *Groovin' High, Scapple From The Apple* or *Half Nelson* to a trad jazz audience, they got restless, whereas if the band played *Sister Kate* (with vocal) there were smiles all round. This is supposed to prove (according to Marty Mooney) that "most audiences get uncomfortable with uncompromisingly modern sounds" and reaffirms (according to Mal Rees) that trad jazz "gets across the lights". In fact, all it proves is that modern jazz doesn't appeal to a traditional jazz audience, and nothing more. Bands like Jazz Co-Op, Free Kata, and Out To Lunch have been uncompromising in their music, yet I have seen them pack out venues and festivals and bring audiences to their feet shouting their appreciation.

Bruce Johnson's article is too long and complex to discuss further here. My point in referring to it is to show that many people involved in jazz — people like Bruce Johnson, who has been commissioned to prepare an encyclopaedia of Australian jazz — continue to propagate false theories concerning contemporary music. Such theories in their small way contribute to the general climate, a general climate which is currently becoming less and less congenial to anything but the safe and familiar. □

The Merv Acheson Story

(Part 7)

In Part 6 of this series (JAZZ, March/April 1983), Merv Acheson described his experiences in music immediately after World War II, and a number of fascinating characters in musical and underworld circles. NOW READ ON:

At this time, 1946-47, there were no jazz jobs as there are today. The professional musician had to earn his living playing the dance music of the period or working in the theatre orchestras. In most nightclubs and dance halls musicians were lucky to be able to sneak in a jazz bracket once a night during a three or four hour show. True, there was the Rocket Club and a couple of other short-lived jazz places on Sundays but players there were unpaid although they received plenty of free booze.

Playing the nightclub scene was like musical chairs — these places opened, closed and changed their names and nominal managements with great frequency owing to the seemingly haphazardly enforced and archaic liquor laws of the day. In a few months I worked the Hayden, Roosevelt, Reflections, Mick's Collonade, Stork Club, Golden Key and several others.

The Stork Club had one of the best bands of the day led by alto man and arranger Tom Sterne (for many years editor of *Music Maker* magazine). There were four saxes — Ron Gowans, Fred Curry, Sterne and myself; the late and great Dick McNally on trumpet, Jim Somerville on piano, Clive Whitcome on drums (now living in the USA) and a bass player. All the arrangements were Tom Sterne originals and they swung, although most were based on corny tunes.

The club was way out of town in the George's River area and on some week nights no customers came. Then the band and staff would sit around drinking or playing cards until a car was heard approaching the front of the building when everyone would spring into activity — the band playing, waiters standing at the ready, the chef by his stove — then if the car passed by everybody would relax and sit down again.

If the Stork Club was a serious musical gig with a great band and good arrangements my next job at the Golden Key could have been scripted by the Marx Brothers.

The Golden Key, now demolished, stood at the north end of Bondi Beach and during its chequered lifetime operated under many names and many managements. I cannot quite recall who had it or what it was called when I was there in late 1947 but I shall never forget the events there.

The bandleader was a hard drinking ex-circus strongman, the late Ray Duggan, who played trumpet and sang and whose hobbies were brawling and trying to win other people's women — in that order. He delighted in showing people photos of his circus days, dressed in a leopard skin with barbells across his shoulders with a couple of hefty showgirls seated thereon. His apartment was plastered with these photographs and he freely admitted that he had never led a band before and only got the job because he was taking out the boss's daughter.

The rest of the quartet was Wally Andrews on piano and Dave Lake



Merv Acheson (tenor sax) with a female admirer. He was then playing at *Ciro's, Double Bay*, in 1945 with George Trevare and his *Hot Quintet*.

on drums.

The Marx Brothers circus began on opening night when our leader began ogling a cute little blonde dancing around with a well dressed businessman type. He made several remarks about meeting her after the show and said some derogatory thing about her partner. Duggan had been drinking considerably and was in an aggressive mood so that when I tried to shut him up and warn him what he was getting himself into he would not listen.

The "businessman type" was a kingpin of the Sydney underworld, undisputed boss of the Eastern suburbs area and the girl had been his regular live-in companion for several years. Not only were Duggan's blandishments highly dangerous for him but quite in vain — she was not about to give up her affluent life style and risk a permanent scarring of her beauty for a one night stand with a musician.

At a table up the other end of the nightclub sat the usual hard-boiled entourage without which cheer squad no top line gangster ever travelled. By this stage Duggan could not see that far. At the end of the bracket he staggered off to the toilet in a small yard behind the club. The dancer returned to his table and said something to four big men sitting there. They thereupon rose and followed Duggan.

Now nobody could help him or even warn him. A minute or two later the big men came calmly back and resumed their seats. What seemed an age later but was probably only minutes Duggan reappeared — one sleeve torn out of his dinner jacket, his shirt ripped open, his face a red lump and his clothes covered in blood. A member of the staff drove him home and we did not see him for two days — but the remains of the band played on.

Even when the situation was explained to him cold stone sober, he did not seem to realise the seriousness of the affair and that a repeat could quite easily see him fished out of the harbour.

The show faltered on for another week and then Christmas was upon us and the grand finale of the job with a scene which I will always think of as "Rome burning while the band played." The club had been decorated for the occasion with paper streamers hanging from the ceiling, cardboard Christmas bells, white paper tablecloths and pasteboard cutouts. Our fearless leader lurched in and declared he would do one of his old circus acts for the floorshow. He would, he told us, do his famous juggling act with lighted Indian clubs while the band played *The Sheik of Araby*.

Without further ado he donned his leopard skin, produced a pail of some transparent inflammable liquid and six Indian clubs wrapped in hessian. He dipped the clubs in the pail, lit them and the performance began — and ended, and so did the club, until massive repairs could be done.

Up in the air went the clubs wreathed in fire and they landed anywhere — streamers, decorations and tablecloths caught fire, the pail was knocked over and flame spread across the carpet, then the stage taking hold of the wooden music stands and the piano. The band fled, lugging instruments out the back door, the audience clambered through doors and windows with women screaming, while Duggan

stood like Nero among the ruins loudly declaiming "The show must go on — start the music." Finally two bouncers and a waiter hustled him out.

I have always been sorry no one had a movie camera that night — it was a serio-comic scene to remember. Needless to say that was the end of the job.

I met Duggan weeks later at a party in King's Cross with, once again disastrous results. We were drinking at trestle tables with the tops not attached to the legs when in getting up I accidentally bumped the contraption knocking Duggan's drink into his lap. With a yell of rage he hit me over the head with a gin bottle while I was still in a half bent position.

In the ensuing melee I was stabbed in the chest with a piece of broken bottle while Duggan suffered a badly cut hand and arm and gashes to his face and body through falling amongst the broken glass littering the floor, from the smashed bottles and glasses when the tables went over.

We both went to St. Vincent's hospital to be patched up. I received several stitches in the head and a couple in the chest injury which was not serious. An intern said to me as I was leaving — "It's funny — we have another chap here who is a musician and the same thing happened to him — he fell over at a party."

For a spell of less hectic life I decided to try theatre work. This led first to a short spell at the Tivoli Theatre with the Hal Vincer orchestra but playing two shows a day exactly the same for six weeks or so was not my cup of tea. So I joined the George Trevare orchestra at the State Theatre where the music was not continuous throughout the show as in a vaudeville house but was played only as an overture before the first movie, at interval and as a finale after the second movie.

This enabled musicians who were quick on their feet to work a nearby nightclub job at the same time, ducking back to the theatre when required for a few minutes. During this period I played several city nighteries which are now long forgotten, even the buildings where they were having been demolished. □

ERROL BUDDLE

continued from page 25

Errol. "It was an unforgettable experience, the trip of a lifetime really. I still look back on it with awe, that we even went there. The band really should have made front-page news when we got back to Australia, because of the reception we got. It must have helped Russian-Australian relations. We had a lot of Russian officials in the audience in Moscow — Government people, high army officers, high-ranking Navy officers."

The ABC sent a film crew to cover the event, but when the film finally made it to television some months later, it was somewhat downgraded — shown well out of peak viewing time, late at night.

The Daly-Wilson Big Band went on through London — where their expected engagements at Ronnie Scott's club had fallen through — and on to the United States, where they did a number of performances. Buddle remembers that, in Las Vegas, a number of leading American jazz musicians came in to hear the group, including the trombonist Frank Rosolino, whom Buddle had played with in a rehearsal band in the early 50s in Canada.

"I remember Rosolino was quite fascinated with the trombone section — Bob McIvor, Herbie Cannon, Ed Wilson and Peter Scott," says Errol. "He stood there all night and just listened to the band. He was knocked out with Peter Scott's playing on bass trombone."

After the Daly-Wilson tour, it was back to the Rocks Push, where Errol Buddle played well into 1967 until the job folded. Meanwhile, an important fillup to Buddle's career was to come. The Nolan-Buddle Quartet had recorded an LP for M7 Records called *The Odd Couple*, and enjoyed a good relationship with the record company. One day the manager Ron Hurst phoned up Buddle and mentioned that there was a new Australian film *Picnic At Hanging Rock*, and was there any music in it, which might lend itself to a jazz version?

"Col and I went out to the Chatswood movie theatre on a Wednesday afternoon, amongst all the ladies, and saw this movie," says Errol. "We came out of it thinking that there was just nothing in the movie you could make a hit tune out of."

At least, that's what they thought. Ron Hurst, however, was persistent. He insisted that Buddle listen to the movie soundtrack, which had been taken from an LP by the Rumanian musician Gheorghe Zamfir. "I took the album home and found this one track", says Errol. "I cut a few bars out of it here and there, virtually re-wrote the melody, and put it into four-four time. We recorded this as a single, and within a few weeks after it was released, it became a

hit".

"John Laws was the first to play it. In fact I happened to be listening — I don't know why — and I heard him actually play it, twice in a row. He said at the time that this was going to be a hit, and it was." Certainly the *Theme From Picnic At Hanging Rock* captured the imagination of the middle-of-the-road listening public. They bought the record in droves. M7 Records (now Powderworks Records) estimates that it has sold between 30,000 and 40,000 copies, and is still selling.

During the 1970s, Errol Buddle was also featured on many of John Sangster's LPs, in the company of other leading Australian jazz musicians. Sangster, who regards Buddle as "the boss tenor in Australian jazz", first met him in Melbourne in the late 1940s, and they played together often at the El Rocco during the 1960s, after Sangster moved to Sydney.

"Sangster is an excellent composer; very original, with quite a unique approach", says Buddle. "There is a lot of Ellington influence in his writing, but in the way he seems to combine it, there is a definite Australian flavour to his music. There is no-one who composes like him really."

"Sangster's sessions are a lot of fun — very relaxing, free and easy. But there is one thing about his sessions: you've got to make sure the first take is a good one, because that's the one he usually accepts. I remember telling him I played a wrong note half-way through the first take, and Sangster's reply was, 'Oh yeah, but that sounds even better than what I wrote.' There's only one John Sangster. He's delightful to work for on a session."

In late 1977, Errol Buddle began playing at the Soup Plus restaurant in Sydney (where he still works) and began thinking about going overseas again to study in the US. He made an application to the Australia Council for a study grant (which was successful) and left for the States in March 1978.

As he planned to stay on under his own steam after the three months study period, he felt it would be a good idea to have another LP to his credit, under his own name. So came about *Buddles Doubles*, an extraordinary LP on which Buddle played soprano, alto, tenor and baritone saxes, flute, oboe, bassoon, clarinet and percussion. The tunes on the LP were arranged by George Brodbeck for various combinations of reed instruments, but all the section work was achieved through Buddle's brilliant ability at over-dubbing. On one track *Intimacy Of The Blues*, he overdubbed 14 tracks. The LP has been described by Eric Child as "a tour de force of brilliant playing, technical expertise and sheer dedication by one of Australia's finest reed players."

Back in the United States in 1978, Errol Buddle stayed away from Australia for 15 months in all. In Los Angeles he took lessons from Russell Cheever, one of the busiest studio musicians in L.A., recently retired, and also leader of the classical group, the Hollywood Saxophone Quartet. Also, he studied with Gene Cipriano, the leading oboe and cor anglais player in the Los Angeles session industry.

Buddle played with a number of rehearsal bands and did various sessions while in Los Angeles, including some for the group Sea Wind. He toyed with the idea of staying in the USA and securing legal resident status — in order to work freely — but did not follow it up. Meanwhile he went to Detroit and stayed for a week with his old AJQ colleague Jack Brokensha.

Buddle also visited New York, and went on to Europe for some time. In June 1979 he was back in Australia, and took up again his old job at the Soup Plus, on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Predictably, he was also back into the top studio work: the Mike Walsh Show, You're A Star and innumerable others, plus many recording sessions for the new generation of Australian films.

These days Errol Buddle is excited by the new generation of young jazz musicians. "There is a pretty healthy sort of scene going now", he says. "There are a lot of good players now, some exceptional players. I think the jazz course at the Con has had a lot to do with that."

In particular, he is excited by his own band, which includes the pick of Sydney's outstanding young players: Mark Isaacs (keyboards), Phil Scorgie (bass), Dean Kerr (guitar), Sunil De Silva (percussion) and Mark Riley (drums). For more on this group, see the first instalment in this series, JAZZ July/August 1982.

Asked how it was like, running a band of young musicians, Errol Buddle replied: "It's very stimulating. I don't really care what age they are, they're such good musicians really. I haven't struck keenness like theirs for a long time. I can remember keen players when my generation were teenagers, also in later years occasionally, but I've never struck five other guys so keen." □

PETER SINCLAIR



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NEW AUSTRALIAN RELEASES

THE TED VINING TRIO: LIVE AT PBS-FM (JAZZNOTE JNLP029). Recorded live in concert in Melbourne. Our reviewer Bruce Johnson writes: "For me, this is the record of the year. A trio of overwhelming power, marvellously audacious . . . in later years it will come to be regarded as a definitive statement in Australian jazz."

RAY SWINFIELD'S ARGENTA ORA: THE WINGED CLIFF (MERLIN RECORDS MRF 82401). An LP recorded in England by expatriate Australian reeds player Ray Swinfield. Our reviewer Bruce Johnson writes: "Swinfield plays clarinet, alto, and flute, all of them within their 'legitimate' tonal and dynamic ranges, and with impeccable facility . . . The overall idiom is post-bop mainstream, accessible to most jazz tastes."

NEBULA: NO STANDING (JAZMIN RECORDS). An exciting album from a high-energy 6-piece Latin-oriented jazz/rock fusion group from Sydney. Our reviewer Eric Myers writes: "If Indra Lesmana ultimately goes to the United States . . . he may well, someday, be an international jazz star. If so, this LP will be worth a fortune as an example of his early work."

SANDIE WHITE/VINCE GENOVA: ANGEL EYES (JAZMIN RECORDS). An outstanding piano/vocal duo album from two of Sydney's most visible jazz performers. Our reviewer Joya Jensen says: "There is every good reason to compare Sandie with overseas stylists, because there are two cuts here which are in world class, and parts of others are the same . . . *But Beautiful* is just that, a beautifully controlled, but gorgeous, reading from Sandie . . ."

ERROL BUDDLE: RECORDER MAGIC (POWDERWORKS RECORDS POW6045). Popular songs, movie themes and folk songs arranged in a modern, soft/funk context for Errol Buddle, who plays various recorders throughout. Our reviewer Eric Myers writes: "Once again,

one of Australia's leading jazz musicians shows — even if it is in a non-creative, middle-of-the-road context — the sort of artistry and ability that can come only from years of playing musical duets in studios, pubs and clubs."

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