

# JAZZ

The Australasian contemporary Music Magazine

December 1982

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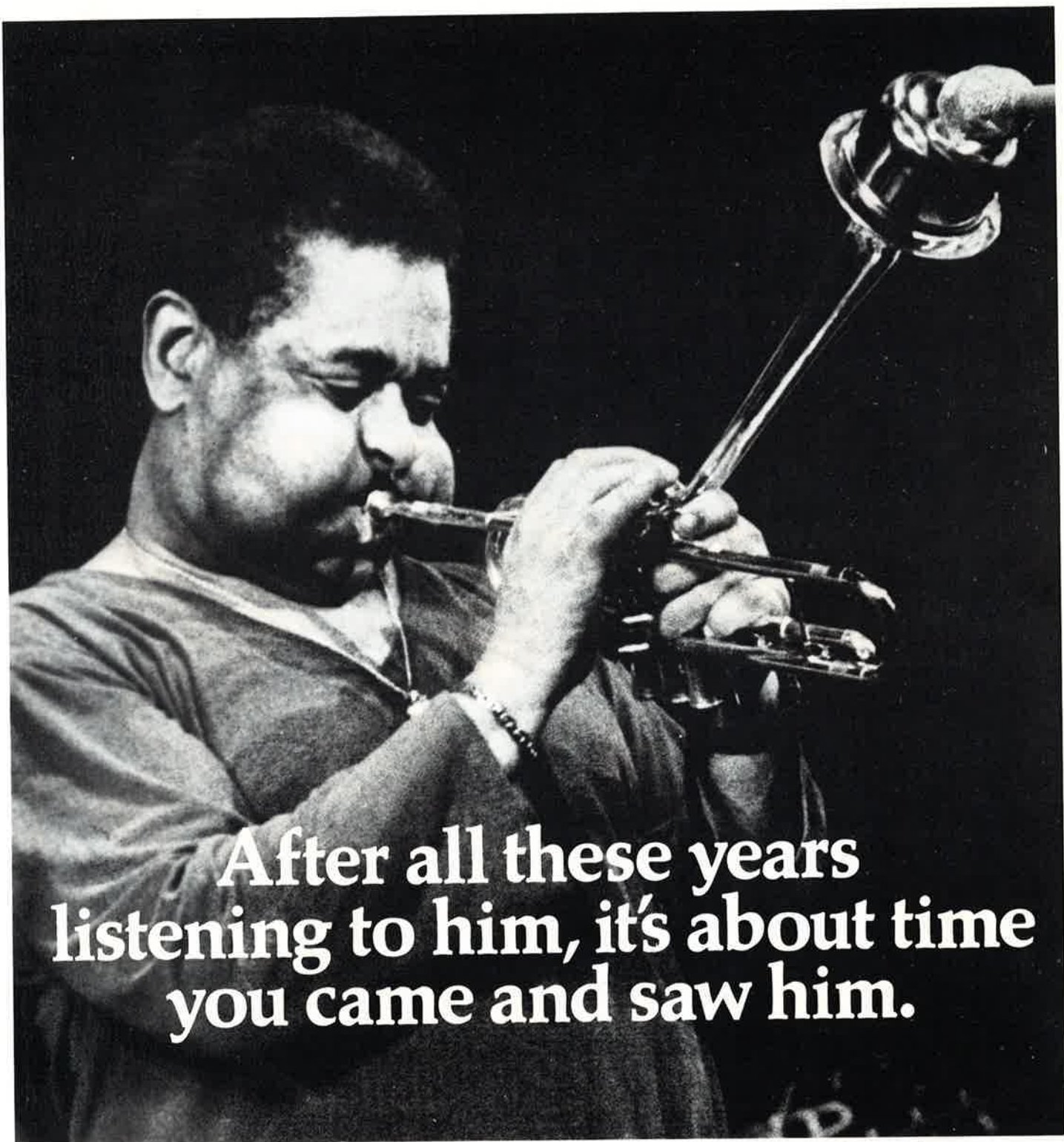
## Traditional Jazz in Australia by Bruce Johnson



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# JAZZ

The Australasian contemporary Music Magazine

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*The Manly Jazz Carnival: produced by John Speight, this event is more joyful and impressive than ever.*

34

Volume 2, No. 12

November/December 1982



8



10



24

<b>Traditional Jazz in Australia</b> <i>by Bruce Johnson</i>	4
<b>Mileham Hayes: Player &amp; Visionary</b> <i>by Sallie Gardner</i>	8
<b>A Conversation with Al Cohn</b> <i>by Neville Meyers</i>	10
<b>Pee Wee Irwin: Swing Era Genius</b> <i>by Jim Coleman</i>	12
<b>John McGhee and Pan Am</b> <i>by Eric Myers</i>	16
<b>The American Jazz Scene</b> <i>by Adrian Jackson</i>	18
<b>The First Americans</b> <i>by Mike Sutcliffe</i>	22
<b>John McCarthy</b> <i>by Norm Linehan</i>	24

**Also in this edition:**

Ian Neil's Grace Notes; the Sacramento Dixieland Jubilee; the Conservatorium Jazz Clinics; John Sangster's music for Fluteman; reports from Perth and Brisbane; Lee Jeske's Scapple From The Apple; concert and record reviews; Dick Scott's column, the Merv Acheson Story (Part 5); Jazz Classifieds.



# Edit.

In this edition we take a look at the American jazz scene, through the eyes of the Melbourne Age's jazz critic Adrian Jackson; we publish an interview with the veteran American saxophonist and arranger Al Cohn, who was in Brisbane recently with the Concord All Stars; Roger Hudson reports on the recent Sacramento Dixieland Jubilee; and Jim Coleman writes a warm tribute to his lifelong friend and one of the great, unsung mainstream trumpeters Pee Wee Irwin, who died in 1981.

Here in Australia it is no secret that one of the strongest corporate sponsors of jazz is an American company — Pan American World Airways Inc. Their activities include strong advertising support for JAZZ Magazine — assistance which is invaluable for the continued survival of the magazine. We publish a piece on the man responsible for Pan Am's involvement in Australian jazz. John McGhee, who is not only an airline executive but also a jazz lover and jazz musician himself.

Mike Sutcliffe, one of Australia's most tireless music archivists, writes on some of the first American jazz musicians to come to Australia: Frank Ellis and his Californians, who arrived in 1923 to play music for dancing in Sydney. His account updates the story as it appeared in Andrew Bisset's *Black Roots, White Flowers*.

In some ways, this concentration on American jazz has been entirely accidental. JAZZ Magazine's contents largely depend on the initiative and interests of its contributors and, by coincidence, our writers have come up with a confluence of related articles.

Be this as it may, I did suggest to Bruce Johnson that he write our cover story "Traditional Jazz In Australia", and he has approached the subject with his usual keen intelligence and perspicacity. This article is intended to celebrate the 37th Australian Jazz Convention, soon to be held at Toowoomba, as are the articles on two of our leading traditional clarinetists — Brisbane's Dr. Mileham Hayes and Sydney's John McCarthy.

We also have a short piece on John Sangster, plus our regular features Ian Neil's *Grace Notes*, Lee Jeske's *Scrapple From The Apple*, Dick Scott's column, large concert and record reviews section, and Part 5 of *The Merv Acheson Story*. We hope that you enjoy the magazine as much as we enjoy putting it together.

ERIC MYERS  
Editor

# Letters

Sir,

In the September/October issue of JAZZ you referred to several errors concerning Errol Buddle in Andrew Bisset's book *Black Roots White Flowers*.

I have added these to my already long list of errors in this book. Typical of these are: "Cedric Pearce . . . edited *Jazz Notes* from 1941 to 1946" (p. 119); the caption to the illustration "A poster from 1954" (p. 133); "The jazz concert era began in Sydney on 2 March 1948" (p. 161); and "the Victorian Jazz Club was formed in September 1968, providing a focal point which had been lacking since the demise of the Melbourne Jazz Club four years earlier" (p. 180).

Except for Cedric Pearce in 1941, all of these dates are incorrect, including the suggestion that the Melbourne Jazz Club ceased functioning in 1964 — as may be confirmed from documents in my possession, some of which, strangely, are listed in Bisset's own bibliography.

For reference purposes Bisset's book must be approached with great caution, particularly as there are clear indications that he has relied to some extent on an earlier publication which is itself now largely discredited, but which (again strangely) is not listed in the bibliography.

NORM LINEHAN,  
Bondi North NSW

Sir,

May I make use of the correspondence column of your magazine to make the following plea?

As Ian Neil indicated in the last issue of JAZZ, I have begun work on the *Oxford Encyclopaedia of Australian Jazz*. The first stage involved the circulation of a number of letters to various jazz-interested parties, requesting certain assistance. Many have responded, either with the information sought, or the promise of it when their own affairs make it possible. I can now begin the second stage of the research, but cannot complete it until all those who intend to respond have done so. Among the areas which remain comparatively poorly defined is the modern scene in Sydney, especially the younger musicians recently appearing, and the Western Australian scene in general.

Accordingly, I publish this gentle reminder: will those who intend to provide assistance please contact me as soon as their other commitments per-

mit? I would like to think that I shall have received all the replies I am going to by about Christmas. I should add that anyone else reading this who believes that he or she has information which is relevant to this project, and which is unlikely to be a matter of common knowledge, is warmly invited to convey it to me at the address below.

Thank you.

(Dr.) A.J. BRUCE JOHNSON,  
School of English,  
University of New South Wales,  
PO Box 1, Kensington, NSW, 2033

Sir,

My, what a surprise to read of my "mysterious disappearance" in the editorial of your last issue. To set the record straight, here is a brief synopsis of my meanderings since arriving back in Australia, July '79.

I have since that time toured the following: Herb Ellis (three times), Barney Kessel (twice), Earl 'Fatha' Hines, the Art Pepper Quartet, Sam Rivers, Jimmy Witherspoon (twice), John Mayall (twice), Ray Brown, Monty Alexander, Sonny Stitt, Richie Cole (twice), Milt Jackson, Josh White Jr., Phil Woods, the Charlie Byrd Trio, John Fahey, Canned Heat (twice), Art Van Damme, Dave Holland, David Friesen and John Stowell, Mal Waldron and the reformed John Mayall's Bluesbreakers.

My company Jazzis has recorded Jimmy Witherspoon in Australia, voted jazz record of the year for 1980, by the Sun-Herald and, after having sold out the first pressing, is now due for re-release. On AIM Records, distributed through EMI, the new Galapagos Duck album, *This Time*. Imminent new releases which I have recorded and have spent much of this year finalising negotiations, and are, *The Battle of the Saxes*, featuring live Sonny Stitt, Richie Cole, Jack Wilson, Errol Buddle, Bernie McGann, Dale Barlow, Barry Duggan, Ed Gaston, and Alan Turnbull. Also, a studio album Jazzorama, featuring Sonny Stitt and Richie Cole. Sadly, I believe these are Sonny's last recordings before his tragic and brave death. Other recordings are *The Cloud*, by Serge Ermoll and featuring Richie Cole, George Golla, Keith Stirling, Ed Gaston and Allan Turnbull, a studio album by Serge Ermoll, Ray Brown and Herb Ellis, and featuring Barry Duggan, Ed Gaston and Stewie Speer. A superb album by Steve Murphy, Willie Qua, Ray Forster, Dieter Vogt and Tony Buchanan to be titled, *Quills Folly*. A live recording by the American guitarist, Henry Vestine (who recorded with Albert Ayler) recorded in New



Zealand. John Mayall's Bluesbreakers reunion album and *The Quartet* — Art Pepper, George Cables, David Williams, and Carl Burnett.

Regarding the cancellation of the Phil Woods tour earlier this year, my company suffered monetary losses around January with the Jazz Masters (Herb Ellis, Ray Brown and Monty Alexander) and the John Mayall's Bluesbreakers tours, due, I believe, to the amount of overseas musicians performing in the country at the time. Strangely, in Sydney, although the public didn't overly patronise the Jazz Masters, the American musicians who were teaching at the Conservatorium and performing at the Basement, were down at the Musicians' Club almost to a man at every performance of the Jazz Masters — hailed in the Melbourne press by jazz critics as the finest jazz performances in Australia for 20 years. With the monetary losses of the aforementioned two tours I decided to take a break from touring and finish my recordings. I had been on the road or in the recording studios continually for almost three years, my family life was under great stress, and, frankly I needed a rest to restore energy so as to finalise projects and initiate

new ones. I decided to postpone the Phil Woods Quartet Tour to a future date, and the Concord All Stars Tour credited to myself in the last issue was only a probing phone call from Concord Records chief Carl Jefferson upon which I did a call-around and ascertained there was not sufficient monetary interest to promote a tour. I was most pleased to see one of Australia's great jazz promoters, Mileham



*Herb Ellis: toured Australia three times for Peter Noble . . .*

Hayes of Brisbane, tour the All Stars during the Commonwealth Games.

I have always been proud of the fact that, as far as I know, unlike every other major jazz promoter in Australia, except for Mileham Hayes, I have up until this point, never applied for, or received, any funding from the Australia Council nor any other funding body in this country to assist in my ventures. I have always believed that when jazz can stand on its own feet monetarily in this country only then can it stride forward into the Australian and world marketplace as the unique and creative form that it truly is.

With worldwide interest currently in the abovementioned Australian/US jazz recording collaborations and imminent tours next year of many of the greats of the jazz world I look forward to a creatively stimulating future that becomes more exciting every day.

PETER NOBLE,  
Double Bay, NSW

*Editor's Note: Mileham Hayes did receive a grant recently from the Music Board of the Australia Council — \$5,000 for jazz education clinics in conjunction with the recent visit of the Concord All Stars.*



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# TRADITIONAL JAZZ IN AUSTRALIA

By Bruce Johnson\*

Readers of this magazine are likely to agree already that jazz in Australia is in an extraordinarily healthy condition when compared with other parts of the world. Sydney, for example, probably has more jazz played in it than any other city outside New York, and if we add the phrase *per capita*, then it's likely that no exceptions need be admitted. Of course this is not to say that the kind of jazz that preponderates here is anything like the dominant sound elsewhere. And I'm not talking about the 'Is there an Australian jazz?' debate, so much as the fact that most of the jazz played in this country is traditional. New York continues to be the 'state-of-the-art' city, where the latest experiments are most likely to be heard. While Australia has no lack of modernists, the idiom which gives us a reputation for being surfeited is several evolutionary steps back from the sounds of Greenwich Village. I know that the grey area between what are understood to be traditional and modern is large and in flux, and that many musicians wander back and forth across it. But we don't have to enter that contentious area to be able to say the following two things: first, that there are musicians who fall unambiguously on one side or the other — no-one would ever call Geoff Bull a bopper, nor Keith Stirling a mouldy fygge. Second, that if we do some arithmetic involving these two categories, it seems clear that jazz in Australia has been predominantly traditional.



MARGARET SULLIVAN

Keith Stirling: no-one would ever call him a mouldy fygge . . .

Furthermore, our traditional jazz has achieved an unsurpassed degree of excellence. The point is advertised in a number of ways, both obvious and indirect. For example, while virtually every young Australian modernist aspires to visit New York to further his education in a way he could do nowhere else, even the most dedicated traditional jazz musician feels no analogous compulsion. The equivalent journey to New Orleans is a pilgrimage rather than a sub-batival, a sentimental journey, not an opportunity to expand the vocabulary. Indeed, the usual impression brought back from abroad by our traditionalists is that Australians are doing it as well as anyone. This can often be the manifestation of closed-mindedness: many traditionalists close their ears beyond a certain point of jazz development and thus maintain an insecure self esteem

by defining anything beyond their immediate comprehension as having nothing to do with jazz. But this is not always so. The most generous and catholic ears often conclude that Australian traditional jazz is, at its best, as vital as anywhere in the world (and those ears have often been attached to American and European heads).

Why should it be that traditional jazz should be both so prolific and so good in Australia? The following thoughts on the matter are more in the nature of speculation than dogma, a turning-things-over-for-a-look. It is also intuition after the event; I don't want to suggest that the situation as it has developed could have been predicted. And finally by way of opening disclaimers, let it not be thought that I am expressing some kind of partisan gratification in what I am describing. Anyone who thinks that the basic thesis from which I begin is a way of scoring points for traditional jazz at the expense of modern, is simply reading his own prejudices into the matter. Both idioms have their own dialectic (their pluses and minuses, to put it crudely if misleadingly), both in what they are and in what they come from; and if this country has seemed to favour the earlier styles, it need not be for reasons that reflect well upon our character.

At the outset it might be more prudent to express the question, not as 'Why does traditional jazz predominate in Australia?', but as 'Why does it appear to do so?'. The two questions presuppose circumstances which are not necessarily identical. I am implying of course that traditional jazz has had what might be called a more extensive press than modern music. For whatever reasons the earlier style seems to have attracted followers who include a large proportion of the historically minded. Most of the books or other publications related to jazz have been written by individuals or produced by organisations more concerned with the traditional end of the spectrum. Three of our most tireless jazz archivists, Norman Linehan, Roger Beilby, and Jack Mitchell, are basically though by no means exclusively aligned with the traditional movement. The closest thing we have had to an encyclopaedia of the subject was the work of Mileham Hayes, Peter Magee and Ray Scribner: again, associated primarily with the earlier styles of the music.

Some work I happen to be involved with at the moment seems also to dramatise the point. As a preliminary tactic in the preparation of an encyclopaedia of Australian jazz I have circulated a letter to some 80 jazz-interested people in all parts of the country, representing in about equal proportions every stage in the development of the music, from hot dance bands of the 20s and 30s to the most avant-garde experiments of the 80s. My purpose was to receive information which would cover every facet of the development of jazz in Australia. The range of responses has been enormously interesting, and in a way that is relevant here. First, of those who have responded, only 20% could be said to represent modern jazz ranging from post-bop to avant garde. (It's also worth making the point that among those who have not troubled to respond are many musicians whose reputations are based very largely upon their alleged fervour as jazz educators, proselytisers, publicists, men who make much self-righteous noise about the lack of recognition which jazz receives in this country.) Second, of those traditionalists who have provided the majority of responses, 95% are amateurs in the sense that their main professional commitments are outside music. Perhaps

\* Bruce Johnson is Senior Lecturer in English Literature at the University of New South Wales, and an active jazz musician who has worked with a number of bands here, in England and the USA. He presents a regular weekly jazz programme on 2MBS-FM, where he is Jazz Co-ordinator. He writes for a number of jazz publications, including 'Quarterly Rag' of which he is also editor.





NORM LINEHAN



NORM LINEHAN



JANE MARCH

Tireless jazz archivists Roger Beilby (top left), Jack Mitchell (top right), and Norm Linehan (directly above): basically aligned with the traditional movement. . .

this fact is the most pregnant: that is, that a greater percentage of traditionalist jazz musicians are 'amateurs', with a commitment to the non-musical world. The concept of the amateur will become crucial in our consideration of the preponderance of traditional jazz. In the present instance I think it may be relevant in two ways. On the one hand, the man with the 'day gig', with the need to accommodate and relate to the non-musical world, is likely to have a larger perspective which provides him with a historical sense. Hence, he is more likely to feel inclined to help to document his favourite music. On the other hand, modern musicians are more frequently professionals, specialised to the point where they are less likely to be accomplished public articulators. Exceptions are not the point here; I am noting a tendency over the whole range. The combination of all these considerations means that traditional jazz is likely to become more visible than modern.

But having accepted this possibility, and therefore trying to see past it, I think the fact remains that traditional jazz doesn't just *appear* to be dominant, but in fact is, even if not quite so much as it appears. Why should this be so? Why should Australian audiences over the whole range from pub to concert hall respond more vigorously to traditional jazz? Some of the reasons may be found in that foggy territory full of mythical beasts, called sociology. It may be that the historical moment at which jazz first impinged with any force upon Australia, was such that

our national temperament was ripe for a profound imprinting process. Traditional jazz made its first big impact in this country during the forties. As I've indicated in an earlier series on the Bell brothers, we were more isolated then, so that whatever sounds we heard seemed louder. And this was true in another way as well: there were fewer competing stimuli, like television, to distract or dilute our attention. Jazz, too, at that time, still had a raffish, subversive quality that made it congenial to young, independent, and powerfully creative minds who in turn would exercise a dominating influence. Indeed, the very inaccessibility of the music and its theory (compared with today's situation) required a greater strength of purpose in its neophytes, and tended to ensure therefore that they were more profoundly dedicated.

In the cultural origins of traditional jazz as opposed to modern there are also elements which portend the stronger affinity of the earlier style with what seems to be the Australian temperament. The pioneer jazz musicians were themselves not a professional body, but were required to cope with the demands of the mundane world of mainstream life. The old black jazz musicians of New Orleans were a part of the life of their community: heaving coal, cutting hair, publishing newspapers, stevedoring, labouring in the fields, playing music. Their music interpenetrated the active life of society, at picnics, parades, funerals, dances. The life of the community, the life of the musician, and the music itself, were all in the same dimension. One of the most enviable aspects of life in New Orleans as reported by early twentieth century inhabitants (listen to Morton's Library Of Congress records), was the fact that music was heard everywhere, part of the normal rhythms of life and work. Byzantium, but no saints. Many of those early musicians were surprised and even slightly irritated that interviewers and historians were interested in them only as musicians. They were proud of that side of their lives which many modernists scorn as 'straight'. Although not from New Orleans, Bill Dillard, whose origins lie in the same era and style, made the point recently when I interviewed him. He insisted on leading the discussion away from jazz to his skill as a carpenter, in which he took great pride.

The beginnings of modern jazz tell a different story. Between the turn of the century and the late forties to the early fifties, the black American community lived out at an accelerated pace the whole history of the bourgeois consciousness, passing within one generation from a communal wholeness to the kind of fragmentation which creates alienation, in particular, the alienation of the artist from the mainstream of life. The process was reflected in their music. Modern jazz, the bop revolution, expressed in every way the separateness of the artist, his special status. Bop is hard for the uninitiated to dance to, to sing along with, to understand. Every facet of it says implicitly to the community, 'You cannot share in the creation of this'. It is a musical dramatisation of specialisation, of the division of labour, and in fact often measures its success by the distance it puts between a lay audience and the performer: that is, by the astounding virtuosity of its musicians. The peculiarity of the relationship which modern jazz establishes with its audience was demonstrated to me in the most forcible way when Marty Mooney worked with me in the Dick Hughes band. Basically it was a traditional band with a Kansas City flavour, but to add variety and (as it turned out, selfish) interest, Marty and I would introduce the occasional bop head — *Groovin' High*, *Scrapple*, *Half Nelson*. Almost invariably the audience, made up of an unexceptional cross section of white middle class Australians, became physically restless and inattentive. But if the band played *Shimmy Like My Sister Kate*, with a vocal,



you had them on side. This is not just a matter of presenting a well known song. Marty observed that most audiences get uncomfortable with uncompromisingly modern sounds.

In the simplest terms, and to use a phrase I learned from another member of that band, Mal Rees, traditional jazz 'gets across the lights'. A neat way of making a complex point, because it says in effect that traditional jazz tends to break down the barriers between musician and audience, while modern jazz often tends to erect them. Jazz began by expressing a communal solidarity, by asserting that no-one was above the common man. I think this is why most jazz clubs have been traditional rather than modern; because the whole idea of clubbing together, like the old Lodges in New Orleans, is more historically appropriate to traditional than to modern. This distinction is no more abundantly demonstrated than in a consideration of the Australian Jazz Convention, which has done as much as anything in maintaining continuity and *esprit de corps* in this country's traditional jazz. While its idiomatic tolerance has expanded over the years, the Convention remains essentially a traditional affair. And in comparison with the other jazz festivals which have come and gone in Australia, and in particular those with a modern bias, it dramatises the whole range of differences between the two types of music. The normal modern jazz festival places all its bands on stage and its audiences in seats, a static situation emphasising the distance between the two groups of people. At the Australian Jazz Convention that distinction is blurred and even disappears. The audience moves about during the 'concert' sessions, but more to the point, the most memorable music of the week generally evolves from unplanned jamming which develops spontaneously within the strolling or reclining crowds. It grows out of the dynamism of a temporary community,



JANE MARCH

Marty Mooney (tenor) seen here with Tom Baker (trt) at the Manly Jazz Carnival: audiences get uncomfortable with uncompromisingly modern sounds . . .

and not out of the regimentation of a time-table. The rigid schedule of the more usual and generally modern festival cuts across the natural flow of life and fragments a community (the delegates) by isolating its members in separate and static seats. The improvisational nature of most Jazz Convention activities makes the function a medium for music rather than a structure enclosing it. In this way it might be said that the Australian Jazz Convention keeps the original spirit of jazz alive far more than the concert hall festivals. In fact, the 'concert' situation is a theatrical convention totally alien to the earliest and least self-conscious traditions of jazz, a Western mannerism thoughtlessly grafted on to an exotic art form.

The question still remains: why should traditional jazz, with all that I have suggested it implies, take such a hold in

Australia in particular? Perhaps it goes back to that point in the development of bourgeois consciousness at which we, as a nation, became arrested. Rather like the unique fauna of Australia, when our ancestors arrived here, cut off from their European origins, they ceased to evolve in the same way (if at all) as the world they had left behind, a situation which persisted until the communications revolutions of the past twenty years. In that state of cultural isolation our national sensibilities evolved distinctively. Generalisations about the Australian character are dangerous, but necessary if we are trying to make any sense of ourselves. One attribute which seems to have been prominent for much of our history is amateurism, in its best and worst senses, and with all its corollaries. This, I think, has helped to make traditional jazz more congenial to us than modern, and for a whole range of associated reasons. In terms of instrumental technique, for example, the 'bottom line' is lower in the former than in the latter. You can get by in a traditional group at an earlier stage of your development, so that it simply doesn't require the specialised development of the professional. This is related also to what until recently was an Australian suspicion of the exotic in any form. It goes back to the pragmatic streak in the British empiricist tradition, and to the need in a young, barely subsistent colony, for all activity to have a recognizable relevance to and function within the social order. Our Puritan distrust of pure play, in the sense of activity that does not contribute measurably to the common weal, militates more against modern than against traditional jazz. Professionalism tends to fall victim to the 'tall poppy' syndrome, for the professional becomes, by his skills, a man apart and therefore an object of suspicion. The negative side of this is obvious, and manifests itself in some traditional jazz thinking: a suspicion of excellence, disguising itself as a vote for authenticity. I recently heard a Sydney traditionalist telling a joke at the expense of someone who played what he called 'demented seventh chords'. The joke, as it happened, fell flat: his audience consisted of musicians with modern ears that could also tell whistling in the dark when they heard it. But the positive manifestation of this amateur spirit is that traditional jazz is generally prepared to be accountable to its audience. A happy band can generally convert the roughest pub audience to traditional jazz, but not to modern. Our notorious 'cultural cringe' is probably also significant in this connection. Our servility discourages experimentation and leads us to emulate what is formally established, to adopt what is traditional rather than to push beyond the vanguard.

There are signs that this situation is changing. The culture as a whole has evolved considerably since the forties, so that the music it produces has to adapt to a different matrix. The enormous vigour of the Jazz Action Societies, which tend (in NSW at least) to favour more modern styles, has made an impact on the public perception of jazz. The conservatorium courses, increasingly popular, are slanted the same way: I don't know of one musician whose training has been confined exclusively to the Con, who has emerged as a traditionalist. The ranks of the modernists are growing yearly, augmented by a new generation. But how many newcomers to traditional jazz have there been in the last few years? Looking around at Sydney Jazz Club meetings, you realise that the average age of traditionalist musicians and followers is rising — very little new blood is coming in. For the last 30 or 40 years Australian jazz has been dominated by the traditional spirit. But for good or ill, this could very well cease to be so, especially if its devotees complacently refuse to believe that this is possible. This is not a prediction, but a statement of a possibility: it may be that the great age of traditional jazz in Australia will fade with the generation that incubated it.





PETER SINCLAIR

# Ian Neil's GRACE NOTES

As this is the last issue of JAZZ magazine for 1982, I will begin by wishing you all a safe and very happy Christmas and health, success and peace in the New Year.

\*\*\*\*\*

This is the time of the year when I take out my copy of the Burrows Quintet album *Cool Yule*, and revel in its vital musicality and sheer joyousness. Funny thing about this album . . . I have an unexplainable reluctance to programme it during the rest of the year. It's not that I regard it as seasonal material. No, Don's jazz treatments of the wonderful old carols are very rewarding listening anytime. It's just one of those things, and, well, I suppose we all must confess to the odd peccadillo or two. So, in 1983, I promise you, when the spirit moves me *Cool Yule* will go to air. It's an album you all should have . . . *Cool Yule*, The Don Burrows Quintet, Cherry Pie CPC 1037.

\*\*\*\*\*

*Honest and spirited mainstream jazz never loses its lustre and appeal. Because jazz is so much a product of the moments during which it is played, it undergoes constant change as the moments pass into days and the days into years. This is why jazz of different decades seems so unrelated. Today's jazz is minutely different from last week's jazz. It is a reflection of the life and times contemporary with its performance. The past can never be completely recaptured, even by those who were among the moulders of jazz past. Even men whose concepts have matured, whose styles have crystalized, are subject to the changing times.*

Woody Woodward

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

*The viewpoint may change, the form may change, but if it's jazz it still has to swing. It has to take you away. If it stops swinging, it'll all perish . . . You don't have to be a musician to understand jazz. All you have to do is be able to feel . . . To pass through life and miss this music is to miss out on one of the best things about living here and now . . . I'm always learning from these new cats too, not to mention from other kinds of music. I learn from everything, everyone —*

Art Blakey

\*\*\*\*\*

Miles said: *Music is an addiction.*  
What a beautiful thing to be hooked on.

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The talent of Andre Previn can only be described as prodigious. Has music ever known a more versatile practitioner? I doubt it. There are four albums — once difficult to obtain — now available which illustrate the brilliance of Previn the jazz pianist. There are other LPs of course, but these, I think, are very special. They were recorded by Contemporary Records in the mid-fifties and feature Shelly Manne and Red Mitchell with Previn. The trio was billed as Shelly Manne and Friends on the first three, which were *Collard Greens and Black Eyed Peas*, C3525; *My Fair Lady*, C3527; and *Li'l Abner*, C3533. The fourth, billed as Andre Previn and His Pals, is *Pal Joey*, C7543.

The musical *Pal Joey* came about in a most interesting way. The book of the show is by the famous American author John O'Hara, and has its source in his *Pal Joey* stories. These were a series of letters (published in *The New Yorker*) from Joey, the mediocre singer/MC of a sleazy club on the south side of Chicago, to his pal Ted, a successful swing musician of the thirties. O'Hara began work on the book, with Larry Hart, in early 1940, and the show, with Dick Rodgers' memorable score, opened on Christmas night of the same year. *Pal Joey* took the Broadway musical in a totally new direction; as *Oklahoma*, by Rodgers and Hammerstein, was also to do years later.

Bobby Hutcherson on Milt Jackson:

*At the age of fifteen I heard a recording of Bemsha Swing and, on it, Milt Jackson. I said: Damn, that's beautiful. It sounded like they were just riding down the highway . . . You can't help but be influenced by Milt Jackson . . . I don't think I play like Milt. I think it would be ridiculous to try to play so . . . And why try to play like someone else?*

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Jackson on Jackson:

*What is soul in jazz? It's what comes from inside . . . in my case, I think it's what I heard and felt in the music of my church. That was the most important influence of my career. Everybody wants to know where I got my style. Well, it came from the church.*

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The greatly talented expatriate musician Ray Swinfield has a new album out. His band is still called Argenta Ora and its members, with the exception of drummer Simon Morton, are the same fine players who made the earlier album *Rain Curtain*. That was on Piccadilly, a London label, and this one, *The Winged Cliff*, is on another London label, Merlin. *Rain Curtain* had limited distribution by Astor, but distribution of this latest recording has (as I write) yet to be arranged. The matter is being handled by AMMS (Australian Music Marketing Services) now incorporated into the re-organised and recently reopened Australia Music Centre. I hope the recording becomes available soon because I am sure many of you would enjoy it. One side of *The Winged Cliff* is devoted to Ray's composition *The Sydney Suite*, which, I am delighted to see, was sponsored by The Arts Council of Great Britain.

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*Music is the universal language of mankind*

H.W. Longfellow

# MILEHAM HAYES: Player & Visionary

By Sallie Gardner\*

Mileham Hayes's latest joy was buying back the 78 player he sold 30 years ago.

It's a long way from the days of hard saving in his youth for a new record every three months. Now his house in Eight Mile Plains overflows with jazz in every shape and form. His own albums are amongst thousands lining the walls.

A practising GP until two years ago, he has all the trappings of affluence; an intercom to stop unwanted intruders at the front gate, tennis court, pool and magnificent sprawling family home. So how can one describe Mileham Hayes, or Dr Jazz as he is more popularly known? Some say arrogant. But after listening to the love affair he shares with jazz, after hearing him play and talking to the man, that would seem an unduly harsh description.

Determined, yes. His obsession was born when, at 14, he heard a recording of Jelly Roll Morton. By first year University in 1959, he begged Lachie Thomson for help to start his own band. Lachie suggested he get a banjo and learn chords. He did.

"I looked at the cover of a record with a photo of a guy's hands and said, that must be a chord." From there, he worked out all the chords, and thanks Lachie for the advice. "I can hear front-line players who don't know chords and the changes, and they've got a block in their development."

He remembers the horror when he first bought a Louis Armstrong Hot Five record. "I expected *Blueberry Hill*, and instead out came this 'awful' noise. It was like watching the house you'd spent all your life savings on topple into the sea. What do you do?" Then the penny dropped. "I could still whistle you every note. That's jazz. The revelation".

From that moment, he saved for the clarinet, and today his name is part of the history of jazz in Queensland. Dr Jazz put Brisbane on the map. It was only in the last year or so that Mileham, now 40, had any formal training. His jazz soul sprang up first and along with it he developed his ability to play. In that order. "It's the only way."

Today he has all that he aspired to. He has the musicians he wants in his two bands: on Friday Wayne Moore, trombone; Ron Edgeworth (and now Chris Saunders), piano; Dave McCallum, drums; Horsley Dawson, bass; Alan Murray, trumpet; alternating on Saturdays with Mal Jennings, trumpet, Vic Connor, piano; Ron Rae, drums; Jeff Kluge, bass; and of course Mileham on clarinet. And they have a club of their own, or at least one they helped to build.

The Queensland Jazz Club's Cellar is open seven nights a week at lunchtime through the week. They boast cumulative membership of 16,000 with over 66% renewal rate. "I would point out that The Cellar is still the only club that I know of in the world that tolerates all kinds of music under the label 'jazz'".

Mileham's first band, Varsity 5, opened up a small club and on Sunday nights they would have up to 600 people (without booze). "Some bands have a profound influence even though they may not be very good."

In 1975-76 he had an ABC radio programme, *Stop Off, Let's Go* which stimulated immense interest in jazz in Queensland. Then he was asked to do a TV series. "I'd been playing for one month. I was so bad on clarinet that I had



to form my own band. No one else would play with me." He smiled.

Realising he had nothing to lose, he agreed to the programme. There were 25 editions of *Dr Jazz* in the series, making it one of Australia's most successful and longest running TV jazz series of its kind. The series featured Mileham's band, plus various guest artists from other cities.

"The right way to begin is like I did. You've got to be inspired to pick up an instrument that you love and imitate someone that you idolise. Then, when you get so frustrated with not being able to play it, you go and learn to play. It's the only way to swing."

He is modest about his own playing style and technique, but sad that his band is underrated. "Unfortunately, the band has never been recorded properly. When most of the southern bands hear us, we are in the middle of a Festival with three sleepless months behind us. We're too tired."

Mileham himself is still in awe of Louis Armstrong, but more recently he has come to appreciate Benny Goodman as one of the greatest of all players. "My classical teacher had great difficulty with one of his transcribed solos and yet Goodman plucks this out of his head."

His initial hero worship of Johnny Dodds expanded to Australians Jeff Kitchen, Tich Bray, Greg Gibson, Ade Monsborough and the Melbourne inheritors Neville Stribling and Lachie Thomson, but observers feel he shares ideas and the way of thinking of Frank Teschemacher. He feels he may have the influence halfway between Negro New Orleans influence and Goodman and Shaw. He listens a lot to the tone and ideas of Kenny Davern, Bob Wilber and Don Burrows.

"I've done my apprenticeship, learning to love it first, trying to play, succeeding and wanting more. I'd gone as far as I could on the seat of my pants, so I took myself to a classical teacher."

However, he sees the jazz club still as the cradle, the nursery of jazz. He has been criticised for his strong opinions, loudly voiced, on this and many subjects but it does

\* Sallie Gardner is a Brisbane freelance writer.



n't worry him. He stands up for what he believes in. In March 1982, he stood as the National Party candidate for Carina. Because he stands up for the little person, some people express surprise that he is not a Labor man. "What's misunderstood is that my politics are against multinational takeovers. I believe in the freedom of the individual."

The papers carried photos of him as candidate, playing with his band in front of City Hall. But he didn't win. This time. "I think I'm an achiever. If you're made to look foolish, interpreted as being brash, aggressive, self-centred, ego-maniacal, you have to wear that and get the job done. Someone has got to stand up for jazz."

Jazz can't survive commercially much longer, according to Mileham. He sees it as an endangered species. Record sales have dropped from 7% to less than 2%, he says, and there is very little jazz played on commercial radio. He is quick to point out, however, that classical music is obscenely funded and no one is standing up to say that some of the money should go to jazz.

Despite his differences of opinion with the Australia Council, he believes that it will eventually be seen that what he has been fighting for is simply a better deal for jazz throughout Australia.

He compares this with what he feels will be unfavourable recollections of others of the people on the Music Board. "None of them, by their past record, has made a decision to date which, I think, in the light of history will be seen as a sane, just or fair decision; one that they can be proud of on their deathbed."

So he has decided to go over their heads, but that is all he will say about it at the moment. "I understand that they're trying to do their best, but they're a little bit too trying for me, I'm afraid."

"I'm a firm believer that actions speak louder than words. I think that the problem with jazz people is that they seem to get obsessively jealous of anyone trying to do anything. They start to fight among themselves. Meanwhile the Australian Opera yet again has a record financial deficit of \$¾ million, on top of \$2.5 million they're allotted."

"It would seem to me much saner if everyone who loves jazz marched on the Australia Council, kicked the doors down and demanded a stop to this waste called the Australian Opera."

That is not to denigrate Opera, he explained. It is that he seems concerned that no one is actively opposing the bureaucracy. "I would have much preferred to present a reasoned argument and move slowly and progressively towards an agreed end result on behalf of jazz in Australia. But when you encounter such mediocre intelligence and this passive and now active opposition, then I'm afraid it requires different tactics."

"I feel that it is my medical duty on behalf of Australia to lance the carbuncle which is the Australia Council. I leave it to other surgeons to lance the ones in NSW, Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania, all of which I'm sure will occur."

According to Mileham, the Australia Council Annual Report should be published in the newspapers. "If people read this their hair would turn white overnight. All the people in the Australia Council and Department of Cultural Activities know what's going on, and of course they're trying desperately to shut me up, but they're not going to succeed."

In the past, Mileham survived a period of heavy study overseas because of his love for jazz. He came back to Brisbane to keep on playing and to keep fighting because for him there is nothing like it.

"With other forms of art, you can correct your mistakes. In jazz, you can't. Stuff it up and all your peers on stage know it. Do something great and they all know."



The 1982 band. Standing from left, Dave McCallum (dms), Alan Murray (trt), Horsley Dawson (bs) Ron Edgeworth (pno), Wayne Moore (tbn). Seated, Mileham Hayes (clt).

He feels that his band shines when it is backing another artist." The guys concentrate on setting up a platform for these players." And it works. When they went to Canada as official representatives to the XI Commonwealth Games Art Program (1978), they went on to Eddie Condon's Club in New York and received a standing ovation.

But sometimes it is a burden. "The clarinet's not even out of my hand, I'm doing a solo, people are tugging at you saying 'can you play Tiger Rag etc', things straight out of your idiom or that you hate. You're at the beck and call of every fool, every drunk."

Having achieved his dream of the club and his band, Mileham has no need to tour, but he took Dr. Jazz to Rockhampton and Gladstone this year.

He will go on learning, growing and fighting for his vision of jazz clubs throughout the country. "As I told the last Director of the Music Board, I'm younger than the lot of them, my serum cholesterol level is batting zero, there's a genetic history of longevity and if they think I'm going away, they're f... mistaken."

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# A Conversation with **AL COHN**

By Neville Meyers

Al Cohn, veteran tenor saxophonist, composer and arranger, was in Brisbane recently with the Concord All Stars, substituting for Scott Hamilton (see Concert Reviews section). In this article NEVILLE MEYERS looks at Cohn's reputation as a "musician's musician". Between sets at Brisbane's Jazz Cellar, Meyers also interviewed Cohn to gain first-hand impressions from the man Leonard Feather has described as one of the most "underrated" players in jazz.

Alvin Gilbert (Al) Cohn looked dapper in reefer jacket, white shirt and tie, grey slacks, horn-rimmed glasses; more like a banker or golf club president than the searingly-hot tenor player just off the stand at Brisbane's Jazz Cellar. Moreover, softly spoken, quietly humorous, non-pushy, Cohn during an interview does not exactly come across as a jazz 'legend'. A 'legend' however this gentleman of jazz surely is. The facts speak for themselves.

Born Brooklyn, New York on 24 November, 1925, Cohn has some forty years of playing and arranging behind him. He's literally done it all — played it all — with just about anyone of jazz significance. Now, after years of mostly behind-the-scenes work for Broadway and television, Cohn is back on the road playing jazz: As a player he's fresher and more aggressive than ever before. His earlier record output has recently been augmented by several albums on Xanadu and Concord (his next Concord — Cohn couldn't remember its title — will be out shortly).

Cohn, never a highly visible player because of his concentration on writing and arranging, has for years been largely underrated by the jazz public. Increasing attention is at least being given (major article *Down Beat* April, 1980) to his place in jazz. Still, even when off the stand for a while, Cohn has remained, to quote Phil Woods, "a musician's musician".

The "musician's musician" began his training on clarinet, but switched to tenor, in his teens. At only nineteen he was hired to play and write for Georgie Auld's orchestra. Cohn spent three years with Auld, then joined successively Buddy Rich, Alvino Rey, and Artie Shaw. His real break came, however, with his recruitment alongside Zoot Sims, Stan Getz and Serge Chaloff in Woody Herman's second Herd. They became known as the Four Brothers. During the 50s Cohn was also one of the main exponents of swinging, small band jazz; his Lester Young-based style and commanding technique saw him teamed regularly



Al Cohn at the Jazz Cellar in Brisbane: more like a banker . . .

with Zoot Sims in a quintet mode, playing major clubs in both the US and UK, as well as recording. In the recording studio Cohn was also in considerable demand; he's played with or supported Sims, Tony Bennett, Bill Watrous, Dexter Gordon, and others too numerous to mention here.

Apart from recording, Cohn's talents as an arranger are considerable. He wrote for TV specials (the award-winning Anne Bancroft Show, the annual Tony Award shows, also *S' Marvellous*, *S' Gershwin* in 1969-70. Cohn was also chief arranger for such Broadway musicals as *Raisin* (1973) and *Music, Music, Music* (1974), and at this time was featured soloist on the sound-track of the film *Lenny*. In between all this he also wrote arrangements for, amongst others, Gerry Mulligan, Quincy Jones, Jimmy Rushing and Terry Gibbs. Despite this concentration on writing, Cohn has continued to appear in clubs and concerts with Zoot Sims and with his own quartet.

In the following interview Al Cohn talks about his background, musical philosophy, and jazz future.

Meyers: What, musically, has been the high-point for you?

Cohn: *Aside from playing, the orchestrations for 'Sophisticated Ladies' (the Broadway production based on the music of Duke Ellington); secondly, my long association with Zoot Sims; thirdly, having a first class record company — Concord records — to record and be associated with.*

Al Cohn and Zoot Sims have been called "the inseparables". How far back does your musical relationship with Zoot extend?

*We played together with Herman in 1948, teamed up again in 1955. We don't really play together all that much. People keep asking us back together.*

Why is that?

*Well, I guess we just demonstrate a great rapport in our playing, which is exciting to us as well as to the public. And of course we have such a backlog of material to draw on.*

What is the source of your musical bond with Zoot?

*When you play together as long as we have — after all it's been 25 years or so now — you gain a deep understanding, an instinctive feeling, which you just can't get elsewhere. It's both musical and deeply personal.*

Why do you think the two-tenor plus rhythm section format was so well-received?

*We're not the only ones of course. Gene Ammons and Sonny Stitt have played together. There're many others.*

Yours is the most durable, surely.

*Yeah, I guess so. It's uncanny, really — just a deep feeling for each other's music.*

What are some of the special attributes you like in Zoot's playing?

*That's easy! Melodically, harmonically and rhythmically, Zoot puts all the component parts together so beautifully.*

It's been said of you yourself that musically you've never suffered an identity crisis.

*I've always tried to be myself musically. You can acknowledge another player's influence, but not at the expense of losing your own musical identity. If you don't believe in yourself, how can you convince anybody else?*

Which of the reeds is the easiest to play?

*The alto — it weighs less. No, seriously, they're all hard.*

You've also played baritone, apart from tenor?



*Yes I did. Only on a few records. I've never owned a baritone.*

Lester Young was, I suppose, the total embodiment of the 'cool' conception?

*He was what everybody tried to do and what everyone wanted to be. A great individualist — the direct anti-thesis to Hawkins.*

How far did Young's playing influence what you, Zoot and the others were attempting to achieve in the Four Brothers?

*Sure, we were influenced, but not dominated, by Lester. Bird of course was another major influence.*

You weren't dominated by Bird's technique either?

*It wasn't for the want of trying.*

Looking back, which was the major influence on you?

*Lester certainly was my earliest influence. His playing encouraged me to be a sax player in the first place. I was 18, when along came Parker. I tried to copy him, like everyone else in my generation. You couldn't ignore Bird. A truly pervasive influence.*

Many bop influences were part of the 1950s West Coast jazz scene. As a central figure of West Coast jazz at the time, what do you think of it all now, looking back?

*In California we were, I guess, more lay-back, certainly less musically frenetic, than the East Coast guys. Still, musicians were travelling back and forth all the time. There was a lot of cross-fertilisation. West and East coast influences, so-called, blended.*

Were, then, the distinctions between East and West coast jazz largely artificial — dreamed up by the record companies?

*They were artificial, really. Besides, everyone continued to grow musically. Look at Shelly Manne.*

Let's look at him, then.

*Put simply, a beautiful player. He's still growing, musically. In fact I played with him August this year, and he just gets better. You can't really categorise someone like that.*

Still, to push the point — and your patience — a bit further, there was arguably a distinctive style, clearly a 'cool' style. As Marshall Stearns has said, "Cool without being cold"?

*Well, alright. There was I suppose a soporific quality about West Coast music then. It was also very thoughtful. But on the whole, at a solo peak, even the coolest musician liked to sound hot, if you follow me, albeit in a more restrained way.*

On the East Coast, the Half Note in New York was also a musical haven for you. Do you have any special or particularly memorable moments there?

*I was there 12 years off and on. A*

*remarkably long association. I can't think of anything special — it was all just great music.*

Of Woody Herman, Leonard Feather has said: "No name bandleader has ever been better liked by the men who worked for him".

*I greatly respected Herman's ability, everybody did. He was simply THE man. He had the final word on everything the band played. You could completely trust in Woody's professionalism.*

He was instinctively right?

*Yes.*

You've the reputation as a gifted and prolific arranger. How has this affected your time available for actual playing?

*One way or another I've lost a lot of time off the stand. The worst effect was on my chops. Writing took so much out of me I didn't have time to practice, and that always worried me. So, aside from missing out on public appearances I deteriorated technically for a while. Now I practice at least an hour a day, every day, except when on the road.*

Is there a contradiction between improvisation and arrangement?

*The arrangement shouldn't inhibit the freedom of improvisation. A good jazz arrangement should lead into improvisation.*

Your record output has taken off once more, it seems.

*Yes. I have several recent albums out on Concord — including the most recent although I can't think of it's title — with my son on guitar.*

Back for a moment to your arranging. You have composed for Miles Davis? On Prestige as I recall?

*Yes, I did such things for him as 'For Adults Only' and 'Tasty Pudding'.*

Was Miles really picky about your arrangements? Did he have his own firm ideas?

*No. Then he was starving, just like the rest of us. Just grateful to be playing.*

There've been of course a number of tragic jazz figures — Pepper and Baker, to name a couple. Why is this?

*Well, Chet's back in business of course and better than ever. There's no real answer to what drives someone like Pepper.*

What was your opinion of the late Pepper?

*I played with him a couple of times. Musically — the tops. His personal life — that's another story.*

How have you found your Australian tour?

*Well, tour isn't the word. It's been crazy really. I had to travel almost twenty hours to get here, for just five nights playing in Brisbane. Sure would*

*have liked to play your other cities. I was here before as Errol Garner's road manager, and liked the country.*

What are your future goals?

*Really, just to keep playing — to do what I've been doing — only better. □*

## JAZZ CLINICS ON THE APPLE ISLE

By Di Gaston

This was my first trip to Tasmania since I accompanied the Stephane Grappelli tour seven years ago.

This time, I accompanied husband Ed who was invited by Alan Brown and the Contemporary Jazz Society to do clinics in Tasmania with pianist Paul MacNamara, guitarist George Golla, drummer Alan Turnbull and saxophonist Col Loughman, all of whom teach in the NSW Conservatorium Jazz Studies course.

The clinics were held at the Matriculation College, North Hobart. Around 50 students enrolled for the four days. Ed and Alan gave master classes for bass (electric and acoustic) and drums, respectively, as well as coaching combos. George Golla took care of the guitar students. Loughnan reeds and combo plus beginners' arranging, while MacNamara took keyboards and improvisation as well as a combo.

The student response was excellent and a big improvement was noted by Alan and Ed regarding those who were in their 1981 clinics.

It was a three-hour drive to Devonport, northern Tasmania, for a clinic at the Don Matriculation College where about 25 people of varying ages attended and were encouraged to join in with the Sydney musicians in a combo situation. Again, the response was good and the trip north was particularly worthwhile just to give encouragement to some very promising young talent. This again proved that these clinics are seeking out the players of the future who deserve all the help their peers can give them. Hopefully, very soon, we will see clinics being given throughout Australia to promote, encourage and foster the playing of jazz in this country. Perhaps the time is coming when we will have music appreciation courses available in all schools and, most importantly, beginning with basic improvisation and rhythm fundamentals in infant schools.

Interest in jazz in Tasmania is spreading and a new jazz society is being formed in Northern Tasmania. The tour ended with concerts in Devonport and Launceston. □

# PEE WEE IRWIN: Swing Era Genius

By Jim Coleman\*

George (PeeWee) Erwin was one of America's most talented, durable, and loved jazz trumpet players, and his death at the end of June 1981 brought down one of the few remaining curtains revealing the exciting and dynamic world of the music of the 30s and 40s.

Usually dubbed the "Swing" era because of the basically easy-going dance music which came to be firmly identified with it, the period spawned — or at least brought into focus — the great variety of popular music forms which intermingle, cross-fertilize, bounce off each other and unceasingly develop and re-develop into new varieties, continuously reaching higher realms of imagination and technical performance.

A complete product of the times was PeeWee Erwin. A product of the mid-West rough-and-ready milieu with Red Nichols and Bix Beiderbecke as his early heroes, he was possessed of a glorious, soaring tone and brilliant technique far superior to those early giants. He went on to become one of the king-pins of the great 30s dance band craze, later settled down in New York studio work of every conceivable description, added leadership of a mainstream Dixieland band to his daily (or nightly) program, and to the end of his days continued to be in demand in the US and abroad for assignments ranging from jazz festivals to Carnegie Hall concerts. He melded effortlessly into every combination.

Though his name was a by-word with knowledgeable musicians, it was never as well known to the listening public.

It was largely because of his extreme versatility — as well as his modest personality — that he was perhaps not so well known among listeners as were other more extroverted performers.

In one of the many published tributes shortly after PeeWee's death, Kenny Davern, who had received one of his early breaks in an Erwin big band experiment in the 1950s, remarked that "probably the real reason that Erwin never became recognized as a stylist was his unwillingness to as-



sert himself as a jazz player. He seemed to fall into jobs and the styles that went along with them. With Dorsey, he took on Berigan's mantle; at Nick's, it was Phil Napoleon; with Jackie Gleason, it was Bobby Hackett's. Yet, a personal voice was discernible in each of his reincarnations."

Benny Goodman once said: "What a beautiful player. He never played a lot of notes, but my God, what he played was just lovely. He had a sound, taste — immediately recognizable — distinctive."

Perhaps one of the most significant and lasting evidences of PeeWee's immortal contributions is the credit that goes to him for inspiring the everlasting "Glenn Miller sound."

In the mid-30s PeeWee had already reached the top in his profession, and, tiring of working on the road, settled in New York where radio studio opportunities abounded. He came to the attention of Miller, who was increasingly becoming involved in organizing groups. He put together the first Ray Noble band, in which PeeWee played lead trumpet. (At the same time he was playing with the first Goodman band on dance dates and the *Let's Dance* radio program which took Goodman to fame.) As Miller later told it to his biographer, George T. Simon, "While he was with the Noble band, PeeWee had a mania for playing high parts; he always asked me to give him stuff written way up on the horn. Sometimes I'd write things for him with the saxes underneath. There came

a day when PeeWee left and a trumpeter who couldn't play those high notes replaced him. In desperation, we assigned those B-flat parts to Johnny Mince on clarinet and doubled the clarinet lead with Danny D'Andrea an octave lower on tenor sax. That's how the clarinet-lead sound — which people now call 'our style' — started."

PeeWee told an interviewer, "There was never any doubt I would be a musician. Music was all around me as a kid. My mother and aunt played good piano. My Dad, a fine trumpeter, a band leader and frustrated banjo player, drew me into music. By the time I was four years old I had a trumpet and was performing."

This was in the small town of Falls City, Nebraska, 100 miles up the Missouri River from Kansas City.

His first big public appearance was at the age of eight, when he travelled to Kansas City to appear on radio with the then-famed Coon-Sanders Night-hawks orchestra.

By the time he was in his teens he was travelling with territory bands, and it was at that time that I first knew him.

Halfway between Kansas City and Falls City lies Atchison, Kansas, on the same Missouri River where the big excursion boats used to ply. PeeWee arrived in Atchison in 1929 with a group led by a local musician, and called Roland Evans and his Rainbow Ramblers. (Even in those days every group had to have a fancy name.) Determined to finalize his education,

\* Jim Coleman went to school with PeeWee Erwin in Atchison, Kansas, 1929-30, and was a lifelong friend of the trumpeter. He came to Australia during the Pacific War in 1942, and later established a major publishing company in photography in this country.



George — as he was known then — enrolled at the local high school. Naturally he joined the school band and orchestra, who were actually pretty advanced for their day.

The four members of the trumpet section between them created a certain amount of history. Besides PeeWee, there was Ralph Brewster, also a highly talented musician. A few years later, while playing with a college band, Brewster auditioned for a singing job with a group led by Henry Halstead, got the job, became a full-time singer, and later achieved fame as one of the four Modernaires, first with Charlie Barnett, then Paul White-man, and then, as history knows, Glen Miller. Brewster later went to Hollywood to studio work with many groups such as Bob Crosby and Gordon Jenkins, and at last report has actually gone back to trumpet with a touring band of Russ Morgan's. My own achievement, minor but memorable, consisted of seven years with college and travelling bands; Bill Muchnic, the fourth, deviated to the symphonic world, still plays occasionally, and through having maintained a close association with PeeWee, produced and financed three fine records for him six months before his death. (Details below.)

After a year in Atchison, PeeWee moved back to Kansas City, where he had been living, and finished high school in 1931. During those times he played regularly with the Eddie Kuhn band at the Kansas City Athletic Club, and became exposed to some of the most important musical developments of the time, represented by local bands such as George E. Lee, Andy Kirk, Pete Johnson, and the legendary Bennie Moten.

Free from the encumbrances of school, PeeWee in 1931 joined the Joe Haymes group, which had in fact deliberately arranged their bookings to make the union possible. "Joe had a swing band before the word swing came into common usage," PeeWee later recalled. "He was such a fine writer! His voicings were quite original and advanced for the time. The scores were built around rhythm and moved right along."

Among the musicians were clarinetist Johnny Mince, sax players Dick Clark and Mike Doty, and trombonist Joe Harris. Later when the band was sold to movie actor Buddy Rogers it was joined by drummer Gene Krupa and saxophonist Toots Mondello.

The Haymes band gravitated to New York City, and because of their arrangements and the way they played them, they were soon contending with the top bands — this, of course was in

the days of the "battles of the bands." They were booked at the Roseland Ballroom opposite Fletcher Henderson, appeared on the same bill as Claude Hopkins, and at the Empire Ballroom shared the stand with Rex Stewart. PeeWee said "Rex just floored me with his playing!"

From there he went to Isham Jones, who featured jazz arrangements by Joe Bishop; Gordon Jenkins was staff orchestrator. (Modern day arrangers would not be envious to know that in those days Jenkins received a weekly salary similar to the players, in return for all the scores he could turn out.)

In 1934 PeeWee settled in New York, where radio was the focal point of everything for the top echelons of musicians, and he was greatly in demand because of his ability to read, improvise, and inspire. A typical day would involve the *Heinz Pickles* program, the Goodman *Let's Dance* program, a semi-classical session with Andre Kostelanetz, and sometimes even a classical assignment — to finish with a dine-and-dance go-round atop the Rockefeller Centre with Ray Noble in the famous Rainbow Room.

The "swing" movement was developing fast. The jazz craze, which had spread northward up the Mississippi through St. Louis and Kansas City to Chicago, brought about (or catered to) a great instinct for people to dance. From coast to American coast, ballrooms sprung up everywhere. Not only did all the cities, particularly in the mid-West, have a selection of them, but in every small city or town, and in between them, there was a ballroom. This movement coincided with

and probably was a part of the emancipation from America's anti-drinking era, and naturally those who felt like it could express their exuberance.

Literally thousands of full-sized or small dance bands were called for, and the area was an unprecedented spawning ground for musicians.

Probably 95% of those young men earning a dollar and at the same time having a great time could never make a career of it — but when a genius such as PeeWee Erwin came along, he obviously was destined to soar to the top.

One of the most important transitional groups between the "flamboyantly inclined dance orchestras of the late twenties and early thirties, and easily identified 'swing machines'" — a phrase borrowed from jazz writer Burt Korall — was the Dorsey Brothers Orchestra. Put together from the remnants of the Smith Ballew orchestra in 1934, with an odd instrumentation of three trombones — Tommy Dorsey, Glenn Miller, and one other — one trumpet, George Thow, three saxes, including, of course Jimmy Dorsey, plus rhythm section — with all their skills and background they met the need of the day for the dancing inspiration of a swing band, and the soloist excitement of their Dixieland origins.

They were the reigning kings of the radio and dance world until Benny Goodman took over.

By this time there were scores of top musicians in New York available for radio studio work, or to be picked up any evening from the corner of 7th Avenue and 48th Street for a "gig" or a full-time band job. Goodman knew



At Nick's, New York 1953. From left, Jim Coleman, PeeWee Erwin, Billy Maxted, and the late Mrs. Nedra Coleman.

what he wanted — top instrumentalists who could read, improvise, could submit to his discipline and above all play the variety of charts he collected.

One of the first he picked was PeeWee Erwin. As PeeWee later recalled, "I played with him from the last week of December 1934, until June 15, 1935. I did the *Let's Dance* (radio) show and made many of the first recordings for RCA. One day in 1935, the band recorded the entire *Let's Dance* library — fifty-four tunes. I played practically all the lead and all the jazz on those records. At the end of January, 1936, I rejoined Benny in Chicago. The band had great public acceptance by then. It was full of fire and enthusiasm. Because we were playing almost every night, the band kept getting better. By the time we reached the Palomar Ballroom in California, the site of Benny's first great success, it was outstanding."

"The Goodman band was inventive, often inspired. (*Sing, Sing, Sing*, Benny's biggest hit, evolved because of what the guys brought to it. Originally it was supposed to be a vocal for Helen Ward, I added some riffs I had heard Rex Stewart play (or perhaps the Christopher Columbus theme from the great Chu Berry picked up in Kansas City — author) and a couple of ideas from a fine work by Gustav Holst, *The Planets* (Bix's favourite, of course.) All the guys put something in the pot, so to speak, and it developed into a major opus — because it inspired the musicians to think and keep it fresh."

From there PeeWee went to the great Tommy Dorsey band, in early 1937. He was not yet 24. Perhaps the reason was still his beautiful tone and flawless technique, his ability to lead and inspire the band, but there was probably another reason — Bunny Berigan.

As PeeWee said, "Bunny played a major role in my life over an eight-year period, from 1934 until his death in 1942. When Bunny left CBS radio, I replaced him. When he made his first exit from the Benny Goodman band, I took his chair. If recording executives couldn't get him, they'd call me. I'll tell you why.

"In the 1930s, being able to play in the upper reaches of the horn — high F concert — was very much admired. I had a good, consistent high F. I don't think it was as good as Bunny's. But we both had a reputation as high note players."

Following the pattern, PeeWee joined Tommy Dorsey in 1937 to replace Berigan, who had scored an enormous success with *Marie*. Because he played — or was able to play — like Berigan, Erwin was showcased on fol-

low-up numbers along the same lines — *Who* and *Yearning*.

He stayed with TD until 1939, because "it was almost impossible to leave." Not only was Dorsey an astute businessman, he was not loath to pay big money for the men he wanted, and the result was an exciting versatility that involved every kind of material from Willie "The Lion" Smith and Sy Oliver through Benny Carter scores to distinctively-arranged classical numbers.



Erwin at the Jazz Party, 1971, with Teddy Wilson on piano.

Tiring of travelling, PeeWee returned to studio work in 1939 with the Raymond Scott Quintet at CBS, and kept busy with a variety of radio shows, with more than enough to do, and more time with his second family in New Jersey than he had had before.

But somehow, the early indoctrination in jazz could not be kept below the surface. In 1946, while still a studio musician, he organized an experimental modern orchestra that mirrored the revolution that Charlie Parker and Dizzie Gillespie had fomented, and included, among others, Red Rodney, Gerry Mulligan, Kenny Davern and Al Cohn. Unfortunately, though rehearsing off and on for a year, they never recorded.

Then, in late 1949, in association with the pianist Billy Maxted, PeeWee took over the assignment in Nick's, in Greenwich Village, which was currently (along with Eddie Condon's) a mecca for Dixieland fans. He was still busy in the daytime with recording and radio work, and "a seven-hour day was an easy one."

PeeWee had, like most other of his contemporaries, investigated the pleasures of old "John Barleycorn" in his

younger, more impressionable, days, but had eventually seen the light, and from about 1950 onwards had not touched alcohol. Undoubtedly this contributed heavily to his personal and musical reliability in that hectic world.

During his years based at Nick's, he increasingly returned to jazz, leading other groups at the Metropole in New York, working at Disney World in Florida, even doing a season at Bourbon Street in New Orleans. He always kept busy. He said "I only want to play my horn."

Overseas jazz enthusiasts discovered Erwin, and over the latter years he travelled increasingly, to South Africa, South America, Germany, Sweden, England, Holland and elsewhere.

The variety of assignments which came his way were understandably a constant challenge, and a tribute, which in his quiet way he truly never quite tried to find an explanation for. To quote his great friend — and neighbour in later life — Warren Vache Snr., "He was fond of referring to himself as a 'saloon cornet player,' and called his musical style 'hotsy totsy,' but those who knew him and were aware of his distinguished career weren't fooled."

It can truly be said that his musical prowess never diminished. He could be blowing away happily at a somewhat seedy Eddie Condon's or Jimmy Ryan's lunchtime session on New York's West 53rd Street, move from there to a very different radio or recording session, and finish the day at Michael's Pub or Carnegie Hall with Dick Hyman's Perfect Jazz Repertory Quintet, always rising perfectly to the occasion.

One of the highlights of his and many another jazz musician's life was the annual jazz party staged by Dick Gibson in Colorado, which started in 1953. Over a weekend holiday in early September, more than 50 of the top mainstream musicians gathered for 40 hours of nearly non-stop music running from lunchtime on Saturday to late Monday evening. From 1971 PeeWee was a mainstay of the event, and largely because of his rare dependability was usually among the members to finish with the last group at around two am, but ready to go again at nine am the next day.

There were no established groups. But indicative of the line-ups from which Gibson, with sometimes inspired, sometimes perverse omnipotence, would assign groups for half-hour sets, was this cast of 1973: trumpets — Clark Terry, Bobby Hackett, Billy Butterfield, Joe Wilder, Joe Newman, PeeWee Erwin; trombones — Urbie Green, Carl Fontana, Vic Dickenson,



Frank Rosolino, Tyree Glenn, Trummie Young; clarinets — Barney Bigard, Peanuts Hucko, Johnny Mince; saxes — Benny Carter, Zoot Sims, Flip Phillips, Budd Johnson, Phil Woods, Buddy Tate, Kenny Davern; piano — Teddy Wilson, Dick Hyman, Roger Kellaway, Hank Jones, Ross Tompkins, Dick Wellstood, Ralph Sutton; bass — Milt Hinton, George Duvivier, Ray Brown, Slam Stewart, Dr Lyn Christie (an Australian MD), Major Holley; drums — Cliff Leeman, Alan Dawson, Oliver Jackson, Bobby Rosengarden, Barrett Deems, Gus Johnson; guitar — Bucky Pizzarelli, Herb Ellis, Joe Pass; tuba — Howard Johnson.

As can be expected, the musicians had more fun than anybody else, including the 600 invited guests (who of course paid). They received normal union scale, plus their transportation, accommodation, and all they needed to eat and drink for the weekend. Little wonder that a bid from Dick and Maddie Gibson was never turned down. They played their hearts out on the stand, and had one great long reunion in between.

On one occasion the original Akiyoshi-Tabackin band was on the program.

PeeWee was an integral part of the Gibson party every year from 1971 to 1980, and was expected to appear as usual in 1981 — but died suddenly two months earlier. At the climax of that event, the entire audience dissolved when old-time Kansas City saxophonist Budd Johnson played a wrenching eulogy, *My Buddy*, for PeeWee.

Having travelled so extensively in Europe, South Africa, and other areas, he was fascinated with the idea of making a performing/teaching visit to Australia in 1978 — having also had feelers from Japan for a similar jaunt. I had discussed the idea with him when I had the good fortune to attend some of the Gibson parties. Unfortunately, though the interest of such people as Merv Acheson, Bill Haesler, Eric Child and others was tangibly expressed, a time shortage and other technical problems prevented such a tour from taking place.

It was largely because of the increasing demand for his presence in Europe that the Australian appearance could not be arranged. He was the kingpin of the groups with which he travelled, acting as MC as well as star soloist, with an insouciance, sense of fun, and instinct to inform and entertain at the same time that always had audiences of all nationalities in the palm of his hand.

PeeWee's last engagement was the

Breda Jazz Festival in Holland, in May, 1981. He entered hospital shortly after his return to the US, and died on June 20.

Though suffering for many years from emphysema, rising above it in typical Erwin style to not let anything stop him from "playing my horn," he was terminally attacked by the "big C," for his coda.

As was befitting, Time Magazine, The New York Times, and publications around the world recorded his passing.

A memorial service at St. Peter's Lutheran Church in New York — "the musicians' church" — on June 23 was a fitting tribute. Dick Hyman played *Buddy Bolden's Blues* on the organ; a clarinet trio of Bob Wilber, Kenny Davern, and Johnny Mince played *Creole Love Call*, assisted by Jim Andrews (piano), Major Holley and Bobby Rosengarden; Ruby Braff led a jam session on *Ain't Misbehavin'*; and there were eulogies by three trumpeters, Chris Griffen, Jimmy Maxwell, and Ed Polcer.

On October 25, America's genius of the tuba, Harvey Phillips, was presented in concert in Carnegie Hall by Dick Hyman in "A Tribute To Friends," one of whom was PeeWee Erwin. Hyman wrote and accompanied Phillips in *Requiem for PeeWee Erwin*.

Tributes flowed into print everywhere. Examples: "He exuded joy," from Ed Polcer, himself a trumpeter and manager of Eddie Condon's Club. "He seemed to feel his role in life was to give joy." Johnny Mince: "We were like brothers since we were 17 years old. His style, well, he was PeeWee Erwin. He never sounded like anybody else. And he was a great guy — he had an awful lot of heart." Chris Griffen: "When people didn't know him, I'd say to them, 'If you met this man, within two minutes you'd say this was the most beautiful man you'd ever met in your life!'" Richard Sudhalter: "I am and always will be much richer for having known PeeWee Erwin. Measurable immortality, we're told, lies in discernment of the effect that an individual has had on his fellows; if this is so, then this remarkable man will be with us forever."

During his long career, PeeWee was of course a part of thousands of records, but, typical of his modesty, he actually starred in few productions of his own. Fortunately, during the last two years of his life, his old high school friend Bill Muchnic undertook to encapsulate as much as possible of the Erwin artistry, and they worked together on three priceless records. It seems that those, together with a unique project *Oh, Play That Thing*,

which PeeWee had put together for Capitol Records in 1958, were the only collections in which he had had a musical control.

Under the Qualtro Music label, three LPs were produced during 1980. At this late stage, PeeWee had switched to cornet, on a horn given to him by Warren Vache Snr.

They present a good cross-section of his work.

QM 100 is *Classic Jazz by PeeWee in New York*, and consists of Bob Wilber arrangements using — as well as himself — Johnny Mince, clarinet and baritone sax, Frank Wess, clarinet and tenor sax, Ed Hubble, trombone and baritone horn, Milt Hinton, bass, Bobby Rosengarden, drums, Derek Smith, piano. The material is all classic ballads.

QM 101 is *Classic Jazz By PeeWee in Hollywood*, and consists of old Dixieland standards performed by Kenny Davern, clarinet, Eddie Miller, tenor sax, Bob Havens, trombone, Dick Cary, piano, Nick Fatool, drums, Ray Leatherwood, bass, and Dick Hyman, piano, with PeeWee.

QM 102 is *Classic Jazz by PeeWee Playing At Home*, and was actually recorded at the New Jersey home of guitarist Bucky Pizzarelli, who also enlisted a reliable rhythm guitar fill-in from his son John. The accent is on nostalgia and melody, and to listen to PeeWee's rendition of *The Hour of Parting* can only induce feelings of premonition.

The Qualtro team also arranged for a re-issue of PeeWee's own production, *Oh, Play That Thing*, from 1958. This was a collection of old "numbers that hadn't been done too much," as he explained it. Five of the tunes were "associated with" Jelly Roll Morton, if not his own compositions, which indicates the vintage of origin. Then he used Kenny Davern, Lou McGarrity, trombone, Dick Hyman, piano, Tony Gattuso, banjo and guitar, Harvey Phillips, tuba, Jack Lesberg, bass, and Cliff Leeman on drums. PeeWee referred to this as his favourite record.

To round out the collection, they arranged for a re-issue of another production called *Tom Artin and Condon's Hot Lunch, featuring PeeWee Erwin*, which has as well as the featured star, Tom Artin, trombone, Jack Maheu, clarinet, Bobby Pratt, piano and vocals, Dick Weldburger, bass, and Ernie Hackett, drums.

Thus far the records — numbers 100, 101 and 102 also being available on tape — are not available in Australia, but Bill Muchnic, at 1020 Prospect St., Suite 407, La Jolla, California 92037, who is Qualtro Music, would like to hear from anyone who needs them. □

# JOHN MCGHEE and PAN AM:

**Supporters of Australian Jazz**

By Eric Myers

*John McGhee behind the desk at Pan Am.*



PETER SINCLAIR

These days, it is not unusual for business corporations to be involved in the sponsorship or promotion of the arts in Australia. But, one of the most interesting developments in this area over the past few years has been the involvement of the American company Pan American Airways in Australian jazz.

Members of the capacity audience at the second Sydney International Music Festival, 1981, at the Regent Theatre, might have been surprised to discover that the youthful-looking drummer with the opening act, the American group the New Reunion Jazz Band, was — in real life, you might say — the Regional Managing Director of Pan Am for the South Pacific, John P. McGhee.

John McGhee is almost certainly the only executive in Australia who runs an airline by day and is also a practicing jazz musician by night. At

present, he can be heard playing drums at Sydney's Sheraton-Wentworth Hotel on Thursday evening and the Sydney Hilton on Saturday afternoon.

Of course, jazz is the only art form which is truly indigenous to the United States, so it is not illogical that the American national airline should be making strong moves to associate Pan Am with it.

"We promote jazz, not as something that is unique to America, but as something that has emerged from America", said John McGhee in a recent interview. "It's a music that is readily identifiable with America and, frankly, that's what we're selling. My role here is to sell tickets to the United States of America and I think jazz is a pretty good medium to identify in this Sydney market — a market that quite enjoys jazz and recognises its origins.

"There's certainly a really vibrant

feeling for jazz in Australia. We try to associate Pan Am, jazz, and the United States as a novel way of getting our point across. It beats having a cocktail party, or doing something more traditional in terms of marketing."

Accordingly, Pan Am has sponsored the last three International Music Festivals in Sydney and Melbourne and the various Summer Jazz Clinics run by Greg Quigley's Australian Jazz Foundation.

The latter program involves the importation of some 25 leading American jazz musicians and educators for highly intensive periods of teaching in January. Assisted strongly by the Music Board of the Australia Council, it has become an important annual institution in the Australian jazz calendar (although Pan Am is not involved in the forthcoming January 1983 clinics being staged by the entrepreneurs Peter Brendle and Barry Ward).



Another important Pan Am involvement concerns the sponsorship, along with the Music Board, of the Don Banks Memorial Jazz Fellowships. Banks, who was Director of the Composition Department at the NSW State Conservatorium of Music when he died in September 1980, was one of Australia's most distinguished composers of classical music. One of his first loves, however, was jazz, and his group the Don Banks Bopset did much during the 1940s to bring into Australian music many new impulses in modern jazz.

The Don Banks Memorial Fellowships enable two Australian musicians to travel to, and study in, the United States. The inaugural awards in 1981 went to the saxophonist Brent Stanton and the trombonist Dave Panichi, two of the most talented among the extraordinary crop of young jazz musicians which has emerged in Sydney over the past few years. In 1982 the recipients were the pianist Paul McNamara and the guitarist Peter O'Mara.

"We fund these scholarships as a public service", says John McGhee, "as involvement again in this overall music which has its origins in the United States".

Even the staunchest defender of jazz would agree that much of its history has been somewhat unsavoury and that, at least in the popular mind, jazz has long been associated with such things as dissolute lives, alcoholism and drug addiction. How does John McGhee resolve the incongruity in being a top airline executive and a practicing jazz musician?

"I have had difficulty with that situation, in that I want to be perceived within my own company as a regional managing director and not as a drummer", he says. "I'm paid to do what my company has me do".

"But I think I've found a happy mixture of involving my hobby with my work. It really isn't unlike my being an avid tennis player or an avid golfer. Drumming is my form of release and hobby. It's mildly physical and somewhat artistic, so it's a pleasant release from the day-to-day activity of an airline."

John McGhee points out that, while his father Johnny McGhee was a professional musician who played trumpet with Benny Goodman, Glenn Miller and Tommy Dorsey, and usually worked at night, their family life was otherwise perfectly normal. John McGhee junior started out on trumpet like his father, but switched to drums at the age of 12.

His playing career therefore goes back to high school and college; in those days the nucleus of the New Re-

union Jazz Band was an active, working group. On graduation from college in the summer of 1962, this band of 20-year-olds played for free passage to Europe on the student ship the Grot Beer.

John McGhee remembers that it was a memorable voyage. "The ship had 600 girls and 200 guys on it," he says. "When we arrived in Europe, the band didn't want to get off the boat, naturally".

After a period in Europe ("a real hand-to-mouth existence, but a very carefree and pleasant period") the student band broke up and dispersed. John McGhee met some Pan Am personnel on that trip, and through them he was introduced to the airline. Shortly after his return to the United States, he gave up the carefree existence of a jazz musician and joined Pan Am in New York.

The New Reunion Jazz Band did not play together again until 1977, on the occasion of their 15th college reunion. "You know, we sat down and played again as if 15 years hadn't passed, had the greatest giggle of our lives and said 'we've got to do this again'."

Since that time the New Reunion Jazz Band has fulfilled many engagements around the world, usually as a promotional vehicle for Pan Am. Following their appearance at the 1981 Sydney International Music Festival, they were back in Australia for various engagements in March 1982. Most members of the nine-piece ensemble are connected with the airline, and go back to college days in Philadelphia. The band has permanent annual engagements in Bermuda, in August and at the resort town of Saratoga, New

*The third article in Eric Myers's series on the career of Errol Buddle, 'Errol Buddle and The Australian Jazz Quintet', has been held over until the January/February 1983 edition.*

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

York.

Even though most of the players who make up the group have their major professions outside music, they are concerned to maintain their involvement in jazz. "It's a great release and terrific fun", says John McGhee.

It is this feeling for the jazz spirit which motivates John McGhee to involve his company in Australian jazz, at a time when there is unprecedented activity and enthusiasm in the art form here.

Not only is the airline's support good for local jazz; it is, of course also good business for Pan Am, which John McGhee feels is the airline best equipped to bring out the American jazz stars who are coming to this country with increasing frequency.

"I can go to the jazz organisations as the only practicing jazz musician running an airline down here", says John McGhee. "Who better than I could understand the needs and requirements of the musician?" □



John McGhee behind the drums.

PETER SINCLAIR

# THE AMERICAN SCENE

As Briefly Seen by Adrian Jackson\*

A recent trip to the USA enabled me to hear plenty of memorable music, and also to learn a little about the environment in which jazz is played, and heard, over there.

The steady stream of tours by American bands that we have enjoyed over recent years has been invaluable in increasing our understanding of jazz as the Americans play it; but you really do have to go to the States to hear the music and the musicians in their proper perspective.

The jazz scene in the USA (or really, in New York City — there is little need to differentiate) is terribly competitive, and the prevalent standards are the highest there are. On just about any given night in Manhattan, a jazz fan can choose between at least half a dozen, more likely a dozen or more, really significant jazz performances. For the clubs to do business, they need to be presenting fairly big names, and preferably ones who are not resting on their laurels.

Similarly, for a musician to make a name for himself and earn a living, he must be doing something that is, if not wholly original, at least personal, and worth listening to. Technical competence, such as we tend to marvel at here, is not merely taken for granted, but also regarded as being of little consequence. Individuality and integrity are what counts: superficial players, college-approved Coltrane imitators and such, are in no demand on the New York scene.

In three weeks there, I heard very few performances that fell far short of excellence, and a good number that surpassed it.

The most memorable:

George Coleman playing tenor sax, accompanied by Harold Mabern on piano, Jamil Nasser on bass and Kenny Washington on drums. They played as if their lives were on the line, with ferocious intensity and inventiveness. Their muscular music drew strength from the courage of their convictions.

Sonny Stitt in glorious form, aided by a splendid rhythm section, with Walter Davis on piano, George Duvivier on bass and Leroy Williams on drums.

Richard Abrams' 13-piece big band substantiating the leader's reputation as a brilliant writer and inspiring lead-



JANE MARCH

*Superlative musicianship of Sphere: Buster Williams (bass) and Charlie Rouse (tenor)...*

er: he drew the best from each player with his imaginative settings, and also with his promptings as pianist and leader.

The superlative musicianship of Sphere (pianist Kenny Barron, Charlie Rouse on tenor, bassist Buster Williams and drummer Ben Riley), playing both originals and gems from the Monk legacy, and

Cecil Taylor's presentation *The Eye Of The Crocodile*, performed by a 10-piece band (the pianist as magnificent as expected) and five ballet dancers (Sounds in Motion) who superbly captured the passion, mystery and poetry of Taylor's music.

Some performances I caught were concerts at venues like church halls or The Public Theater, but most of the jazz is played in jazz clubs, bar and/or restaurant rooms that present music five to seven nights a week. You will find some in the uptown area, rooms like the West End, Eddie Condon's or Jimmy Ryan's, that concentrate on dixieland or Swing era stylists. But the major jazz rooms are clustered around the Greenwich Village area.

A night at a jazz club can vary in cost from say \$7, which is what some clubs charge you to sit at the bar, through the Village Vanguard's \$7 entrance plus a drink per set minimum, to clubs that charge say \$8 music charge plus \$6 minimum per set, or even both music charge and minimum for each set. Clubs can be VERY expensive.

The Village Vanguard is essential to visit, a cramped basement room covered with photos and posters that reek of jazz atmosphere. Jazz Forum is a fairly basic, but inviting left room. The Cookery is a restaurant that thrives on the drawing power of the delightful octogenarian Alberta Hunter. The Brecker brothers' club, Seventh Avenue South, is a small, pricey room that seems more geared to the trendy rock audience, although it does present some heavy jazzmen from time to time. Several bars feature pianists (such as Jaki Byard, Barry Harris or Hilton Ruiz) in solo, duo or trio settings; despite the noisy ambience, I was pleased to catch Jaki Byard at The Angry Squire and hear the sparkling piano of Hank Jones with the glowing bass of Red Mitchell at Bradley's. The clubs that most impressed me were Lush Life and Sweet Basil; both are comfortable rooms which cater to the customer and the musician well, and, while I was there, presented most of the more enticing names; while not inexpensive, I found they provided good value.

If you're visiting New York, *The New Yorker* has an informative guide to what's on, but the most comprehensive is in *The Village Voice*. I imagine that, no matter what time of year you go, you can expect to hear plenty of great, near-great and up-and-coming jazzmen, both innovators and interpreters. Don't be put off by stories about street violence: I never felt

\* Adrian Jackson is jazz critic with the *Melbourne Age*. He visited the United States during May and June this year.



in any danger (admittedly, being 6'5" does help). And accommodation need not be too expensive: I got a safe hotel room on 23rd St for \$120 per week (and the cockroaches were friendly).

Above all, I stress that, if you want to hear excellent and important jazz, New York is the place to go.

(I'm sure the many people who knew Horst Liepolt through his years of involvement with jazz in Australia will be interested to hear that he has established a foothold as a jazz entrepreneur in New York. He is putting out a "More Jazz" leaflet, managing vibist Harry Sheppard representing saxman Charles Davis, co-ordinating the Greenwich Village Jazz Festival in September, and generally keeping busy).

As well as New York, I also spent some ten days between Chicago, Los Angeles and San Francisco.

San Francisco is a charming city, with one major jazz venue, namely Keystone Korner. It always presents top names - I caught Dexter Gordon in fine form there, and Freddie Hubbard was to follow with Joe Henderson. There are some fine local musicians around who seem to get work every now and then.

Los Angeles on the other hand, is a very unattractive city. It has quite a few jazz clubs, mostly featuring local studio jazz musicians. The biggest expense is likely to be getting around the place: the cabs aren't cheap, and the distance from one suburb to the next amazing. I was unlucky enough to be there when the esteemed local musician Horace Tapscott was out of town, but lucky enough to catch Big Joe Turner at the

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funky Parisian Room.

Chicago is a divided city, with a lovely northside, and desperately tough areas to the south and west. It has two major rooms, the reputedly ritzy Rick's Cafe Americain, and Joe Segal's Jazz Showcase, located at the Blackstone Hotel (\$8 charge, with no drinks minimum). While I was there, I caught Jimmy Smith with Phil Upchurch, Old And New Dreams in marvellous form, and the Johnny Griffin Quartet, ablaze in front of the

leader's hometown audience.

There are plenty of blues bars in Chicago of course, foreboding rooms like the Checkerboard on the South Side (when I was there, Buddy Guy only felt like doing three songs, and I didn't feel like arguing), or more comfortable bars on the northside like BLUES or Kingston Mines, where I caught some strong blues from Magic Slim and The Teardrops, Taildragger and Hubert Sumlin.

The AACM puts on concerts most Sundays, and there are occasional campus concerts, at one of which I caught Ornette Coleman's Prime Time, a thrilling experience thanks to Ornette's brilliant concoction of intricacy and momentum.

Also unforgettable was the music I heard Von Freeman play at The Enterprise Lounge on the Southside. Backed by a rhythm section including longtime colleague John Young on piano, Freeman blew chorus after chorus of eloquent soulful blues, or inspired probings into the heart of standards like *Laura* or *Invitation*, all in a unique tenor sound, and with spellbinding logic and conviction.

If you get the chance to visit almost any major city in the USA, chances are you'll get to hear some good jazz, especially in the cities where the 'name' bands go on tour around the clubs. But if you're unsure of what you're doing, concentrate on New York - it's where you'll hear the very best. □



JANE MARCH

*Joe Henderson: playing at San Francisco's Keystone Korner with Freddie Hubbard...*

# THE SACRAMENTO JAZZ JUBILEE

By Roger Hudson\*

Sacramento, capital of California, claims to be the centre of a nationwide Dixieland Renaissance in America. And it could well be right.

As a member of Jazz Powerhouse, one of three Australian bands appearing at the 9th Sacramento Dixieland Jubilee held in May 1982, during the Memorial Day Weekend (a sort of American Anzac Day), I was impressed by the sheer size and scope of the event, even though we were so heavily programmed that we didn't get to hear as much of what was offering as we would have liked.

Organised by the Sacramento Traditional Jazz Society, and manned by an army of 2,100 volunteers supplied with walkie-talkies and other sophisticated devices (eat your heart out Toowoomba), it is centred in Old Sacramento, an historic section of the capital, equivalent to about six city blocks in area, which has been restored to its original Gold Rush Days magnificence. The place is riddled with saloons, courtyard restaurants, pizza joints, theatres (even a Confucian temple) all providing the intimate type of setting in which jazz flourishes. The entire area is closed to vehicular traffic for the duration of the four-day Jubilee, which is as well, as it attracted no less than 180,000 visitors this year.

In addition, nearby motels and convention centres were utilised to create four other sites — all serviced by free shuttle buses — making a total of 44 different venues, some of them virtually 24 hours non-stop. Certainly nobody went short of a blow!

The 98 bands, all specially invited to play by the Sacramento Jazz Society, included 15 overseas groups (from Scotland, Sweden, Poland, Australia, Holland, West Germany, Hungary, Finland, Canada and England), a variety of outfits from all over America and, naturally, a goodly number from California itself. Alongside the regular bands, a team of 24 big-name guest artists was on hand, appearing throughout individually with other selected musicians in All Star combinations (pick up groups if you like). The list included Johnny Mince, Gus Johnson Jr., Johnny Guarnieri, Bob Haggart, Nick Fatool, Dick Cathcart, "Big" Tiny Little, Eddie Miller and Abe Most.

In a rather daunting, but nonethe-

\* The Melbourne pianist Roger Hudson attended the Jubilee as a member of Jazz Powerhouse.



Noel Crow's Jazzmen: representing Australia in Sacramento . . .

less enjoyable experience, I was listed to play with a group which included Dick Cary (on alto horn), Gus Johnson and a tenor player called Tommy Newsom of whom I hadn't heard, but who turned out to be the Assistant Musical Director of the Johnny Carson *Tonight Show*. The blow did tend to support my contention, though, that no matter how exalted the company nothing very exciting is likely to happen any more, in the area of traditional jazz, without some sort of prior preparation to nut out some new approaches.

One encouraging feature of the Jubilee was the number of very young bands invited to play. They ranged in quality from fairly execrable to really excellent, but it was pleasing to see youngsters (in some cases pre-pubescent) deriving such obvious enjoyment from playing. In fact one of the high points of the whole weekend, for me, was a most evocative reconstruction of the Trumbauer *Ostrich Walk* by a bunch of high school kids. I suspect it was looked upon by them as something of an historical exercise, but no matter what sort of jazz careers they may pursue, I am sure an awareness of the masterpieces of previous eras can only be of benefit, and will be favourably reflected in their future playing.

Another highlight, in a somewhat similar vein (you've probably

gathered there were no representatives of the avant-garde present and, for that matter, very few post-bop adherents of any kind) was the exceptional playing of a largish band called the Royal Society Jazz Orchestra. They came on straight after us at one of the main concerts, and played a whole set of numbers straight from the late 1920s Paul Whiteman book, dressing for the part and including a troupe of incidental dancers amongst their entourage. Convinced that this was their specialty, I was amazed to see them again the following morning, this time authentically recreating masterpieces exclusively from the Jelly Roll Morton repertoire with equal flair and authority.

Jazz Powerhouse were received with great enthusiasm everywhere they played, and I understand the other two Aussie bands met with similar receptions, so it seems that Australian jazz may have something to offer (perhaps indefinable) which is not readily accessible in the average traditional American band.

The Sacramento Jazz Jubilee may not be extending the musical boundaries of jazz in any way, but it is clearly succeeding in creating a large, appreciative audience for traditional jazz, thus helping to keep alive a form of music which might otherwise, too easily, become just another relic of the past.



# JOHN SANGSTER: Music for FLUTEMAN

By Eric Myers

I think we can safely say that there is such a thing as a "Sangster sound", which is exemplified throughout his music — whether it be designed as instrumental jazz or written for a film, as in the case of his music for *Fluteman*.

In other words, John Sangster's music is so individual — like that of the great jazz composers — that you only have to listen to two or three bars before you realise instantly that it's his characteristic writing.

Sangster is masterly at evoking the moods of nature. His *mysterioso* alto flute lines and spare percussion (so effective in his theme music written for the TV series *Harry Butler In The Wild*) bring to mind immediately the melancholy feeling of the outback. His vibraphone, wind-chimes, lush strings and reeds writing can epitomise the rain forest, the feeling of the everglades. His music has the feeling of a man who is at home with nature.

To me, one of the most endearing aspects of his music is his use of gentle dissonance. His horn writing, while rarely experimental or avant-garde, always has a hint of the unorthodox, with voicings that suddenly bite the listener's ear. This quality is distinctly Ellingtonian, and is evident particularly on Sangster's *It Don't Mean A Thing* LP.

A quality which gives Sangster's music great potential for the building and release of tension is his juxtaposition of bright, happy, melodic themes against passages of atonality (where there is no settled key), chromaticism (two keys at once) or modality (where a soloist explores one



John Sangster

ALLAN HOWARD

tonality) for an extended period. A good example of this can be heard in *Toby's Theme* on the *Fluteman* LP, where both Sangster (vibes) and Don Burrows (clarinet) extemporise in one tonality over a floating rhythmic background, before the theme re-enters with the tempo re-established.

The firmly melodic and accessible nature of Sangster's themes is doubtless a legacy of his experience in traditional jazz. Yet they are not corny enough to be Dixieland as we know it — the harmonic thinking which underlies it is too sophisticated, and the general feeling of the music too free and spacey, which is perhaps why Crossfire's Mick Kenny has called Sangster's

music "cosmic Dixieland".

If Sangster's bright melodies appeal to the child in all of us, and make his music peculiarly attractive for children's productions, a deeper quality is his unerring ability to evoke emotion. His LP *Requiem (For A Loved One)* is essentially a sad album and — perhaps — the manifestation of a deep sorrow. On a more limited scale, consider his piece *The Lost Children* which he wrote for *Fluteman*. This is relevant to the episode in the film when, under the influence of Fluteman (a modern-day Pied Piper), the children of a small country town have vanished, leaving only a young, deaf boy Toby alone, and searching for his lost friends. It is a genuinely touching piece, scored for Don Burrows's alto flute and George Golla's guitar.

Before the premiere of *Fluteman* at the Lyceum Theatre on October 26, John Sangster and some of the musicians who played on the soundtrack performed music from the film (handicapped, by the way, by a poor sound system). Other than the composer, they included Don Burrows (flute and clarinet), Jim Kelly (guitar), Tony Ansell (keyboards), Chris Qua (bass) and Alan Turnbull (drums).

The music comprised a number of the film pieces in extended form — which is also the case with the *Fluteman* LP. In other words, the themes from the film have been expanded in order to make complete pieces and give solo space to the musicians. Therefore, *Fluteman* is just as much good value as a jazz LP as it is an example of John Sangster's imaginative scoring for film.



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(The Owl & The Pussycat)

Double Album: RFLP-001

Cassette: RFC-001

### PEACEFUL

Album: RFLP-002

Cassette: RFC-002

### MEDITATION

Album: RFLP-003

Cassette: RFC-003

### NEW RELEASE

#### FLUTEMAN

featuring Don Burrows

Album: RFLP-006

Cassette: RFC-006

### JOHN SANGSTER JAZZ MUSIC SERIES

#### VOL. I: IT DON'T MEAN A THING

Album: RFLP-004

Cassette: RFC-004

#### VOL. II: REQUIEM (FOR A LOVED ONE)

Album: RFLP-005

Cassette: RFC-005

# THE FIRST AMERICANS

By Mike Sutcliffe



Frank Ellis and his Californians. From left, Bob Cruz, Monte Barton, Danny Hogan, Bob Waddington, Walter Beban, Frank Rago, Loris Lyons. Ellis is at the piano stool.

With American bands and musicians jetting regularly across the Pacific to Australia these days, it might be time to reflect on the first Americans to come to these shores and the effect they had on the Australian public and Australian musicians in particular.

Individual musicians started touring Australia from the early days of the century. Billy Romaine arrived here in 1912, but the first band to arrive was that which arrived in 1923, led by Frank Ellis and billed as Frank Ellis and his Californians.

This band was brought to Australia by J.C. (Jim) Bendrodt who had leased the Hall of Industries at Sydney Showground from the Royal Agricultural Society from 1920 onwards and christened it the Palais Royal. Bendrodt had used Billy Romaine as leader of orchestras at this dance venue in the preceding years up to 1923, when Bendrodt decided to travel to America and choose a band that he could import for the forthcoming winter season.

In San Francisco he heard the Frank Ellis band then playing at the St. Francis Hotel, and signed him for a six months season to play in Sydney. Ellis had been a member of the pioneer Art Hickman Orchestra that had been playing around San Francisco since World War 1. Drummer Hickman had led at the Rose Room in the St. Francis Hotel since February 1915, initially with six musicians, but by 1919 he had enlarged the band to ten pieces and had recorded extensively on the west coast for Columbia in

1921. Hickman turned the band over to Ellis in late 1921 and it was this band that Bendrodt saw in early 1923.

The musicians who came to Australia were Frank (Shorty) Rago, trumpet, Monte Barton, trombone, Walter Beban, soprano and alto sax, Loris (Laurie) Lyons, tenor sax, Frank Ellis, piano, Bob Cruz, banjo, and Danny Hogan, drums.

They arrived in Sydney in late April 1923. While waiting to open at the Palais Royal, they played a weeks engagement at the Haymarket Theatre on stage. Publicity for this one week claimed:

*The orchestra that played for the return of General Pershing from France.*

*The jazz numbers of the orchestra that*



*has moved a million feet. The £300 a week Jazz Orchestra.*

No bass player was brought from America, as the bassist at the St. Francis Hotel had had enough of their practical jokes and didn't want to travel to Australia with them. Ellis had arranged to audition bass players in Sydney upon his arrival.

The day he arrived in Sydney Ellis went to the theatre that night — the newly opened JCW hit *A Night Out* — and found the bass player he wanted playing in the pit orchestra. He was Bob Waddington, who rehearsed with the band on May 3 at noon, played his last night at the theatre on the 4th, and after another rehearsal was ready for the opening night on the Palais Royal on May 5.

At the first rehearsal, which only lasted ten minutes according to Bob Waddington, Bendrodt complained that Ellis played much too fast, and that dancers in Sydney would not be able to dance to his music. He insisted that the band would have to play at 36 bars to the minute after he and Peggy Dawes danced before the band. However slow this may have been for Ellis and his musicians it was only adhered to for a fortnight or so, when it went up to 40 bars to the minute and reached 56 bars after five or six weeks. This faster rate of music then became the standard for Sydney dance bands.

The opening night of May 5 was a smash hit with the Sydney Sun of March 6 carrying this description:

*Last night's grand opening was an event unprecedented in the history of Australian dancing. Even the huge Palais could not accommodate the immense crowds who clamored for admission. The Palais was jammed by 8.15 and the crowds who came after that saw only the 'Full House' sign.*

The former billing of £300 a week was broken down to "the £50 a night band". Weekly salaries for the musicians were; Ellis — £75, Beban as deputy leader — £40, and £30 for each of the other musicians. (The average wage around this time was about £3.18.0.)

The influence of the band on Sydney musicians was enormous, with Lyons and Ellis making the biggest impressions. The late Jimmie Elkins used to go to the Palais Royal just to watch and hear Ellis play. Frank Coughlan later was to say:

*Their influence was tremendous, introducing vibrato for saxophones and trombones, drumming for rhythm instead of noise, swinging bass on piano, pizzicato bass and featuring of artists.*

A number of Americans gave music lessons to the Sydney musicians in



their spare time.

Various balls were held in the spring and summer months with the NSW Governor opening the first Annual Movie Ball on August 9. Their contract was extended with the band playing right through the winter and summer season, finishing on February 28, 1924. They then moved south to open at the Palais de Danse, in St. Kilda on March 1st. This was however only a short season, which lasted until May 8th when they returned to the Palais Royal to open on May 10th.

From a copy of the Palais Royal News dated August 4, 1924 a list of tunes that they were playing that week, shows mainly a variety of popular hits of the day with the one-step showing the only blues number.

Fox trot *Take Those Lips Away*  
Chicago *Aggravating Papa; My Sweetie Went Away*  
One step *Tin Roof Blues*

The winter season in Sydney finished on November 27 and the band again travelled by train to Melbourne to open at St. Kilda on December 1st. (By this time Bob Waddington's diaries shows that he was then being paid £15 a week, so presumably the other musicians wages were correspondingly lower).

While appearing at the Palais de Danse, trumpeter Eddie Frizelle, formerly with the touring Bert Ralton band joined Ellis and two replacements in Frank Coughlan and Joe Aronson came in for Monte Barton and Laurie Lyons who both returned to California.

This summer season lasted until May 2, 1925 when the band moved back to the Palais Royal to open their third winter season on May 5th. By this time Ellis had left after disagreements with Bendrodt, his place being taken firstly by another American called Breckenger, who didn't last long before being replaced by Sydney pianist, Keith Collins. Joe Aronson had stayed in Melbourne, his place being taken by Ern Pettifer. The band was now known as Walter Beban and his Famous Californians.

The season finished on Christmas Eve, 1925, and from that date until May of the following year it is uncertain just what the band members did. Bob Waddington played for four months at the Galciarium, but the others may have played separately or as a group around Sydney.

The fourth and final winter season opened on May 1st, and by now Dave Grouse had been added on tenor saxophone to give the band a three piece sax section. Bob Waddington's wages were now up to £16 a week. When the Columbia Graphophone Company

opened their factory at Homebush in June 1926, it wasn't long before the band was in the recording studio. The first three sessions, all acoustically recorded, are pieced together from company files and Bob Waddington's diaries.

July 27, 1926 *That Certain Party* (Columbia 0517); *Unknown title*.  
August 3, 1926 *Unknown title; Unknown title*.  
August 30, 1926 *Milenberg Joys* (Columbia 0517); *Unknown title*.

This Columbia release was credited to the Palais Royal Californians and full personnel at this stage was Eddie Frizelle and Frank Rago, trumpets, Frank Coughlan, trombone, Walter Beban, soprano sax, Ern Pettifer, clarinet and baritone sax, Dave Grouse, tenor sax, Keith Collins, piano, Bob Waddington, bass, Bob Cruz, banjo, Danny Hogan, drums.

Almost certainly two songs were recorded at each session, but no details are known of what the other four titles were. Frank Coughlan was once quoted as saying that there was a second Jelly Roll Morton composition — *Wolverine Blues* — recorded but no confirmation of this has been found.

At the official opening of Columbia on October 14th, the band were there as guests along with other dance/jazz bands of Sydney and the next day the band was back at Homebush recording on the recently installed Western Electric recording system. Although details are fully known on these three recording sessions, none of them were ever issued.

October 15, 1926 *Sweet Child; I Never Knew How Wonderful You Were*.  
November 1, 1926 *That Night In Araby; That's Why I Love You*.  
November 19, 1926 *That Night Of Love; Moonlight On The Ganges*.

The contract with J.C. Bendrodt finished on New Years Eve 1926, and Beban and Rago returned to America. Danny Hogan and Eddie Frizelle stayed on in Australia and joined the local musicians seeking work in Sydney and Melbourne.

None of the Americans who returned to California moved on to bigger things in the music world. The only details known on their subsequent activities are as follows:

**FRANK ELLIS:** Returned to lead the band at the St. Francis Hotel in San Francisco, and made a number of records for Columbia between March and October 1927. (One side was issued on Australian Columbia but under the pseudonym of the Denza Dance Band). In the 1930s he led a band aboard the cruise ship 'Lurline' which toured throughout the Pacific, occasionally calling into Sydney.

**FRANK RAGO:** Returned to America in 1927, but came back to Australia in September 1938 and played with local bands led by Billy Romaine, Craig Crawford and Al Elliott.

**WALTER BEBAN:** In April 1933 he was at the NBC studios in San Francisco writing scripts and conducting radio orchestras.

**MONTE BARTON:** According to Bob Waddington, he became a millionaire recluse on a mountain top!

**LAURIE LYONS:** Was accidentally shot dead by a policeman in San Francisco, when he was grappling with a would-be thief.

**DANNY HOGAN:** Stayed on in Sydney, and led a band at the Palais Royal, known as Danny Hogan's Frisco Six.



Walter Beban and his Californians. Waddington (back corner), then clockwise, Eddie Frizelle, Frank Coughlan, Hogan, Keith Collins, Cruz, Beban, Dave Grouse, Ern Pettifer.

# JOHN MCCARTHY:

## One of Australia's Great Jazz Musicians

By Norm Linehan\*

*John McCarthy: the promise he held out to us almost forty years ago has been fulfilled...*



NORM LINEHAN

John McCarthy was born in Sydney and except for a brief period about 1950 in Melbourne when he played with Frank Johnson's Fabulous Dixielanders has spent his life and made his professional career in that city. He became interested in jazz at about the age of twelve through the ABC's Thursday night swing show then conducted by Alan Saunders on 2FC (late 1940's) and because some friends had instruments he got a clarinet. The choice was between trumpet and clarinet but he was influenced by a liking for such as Benny Goodman and Artie Shaw, a fact which might have startled the jazz purists of the time (myself

included) had we known it. We believed that he came out of the Johnny Dodds/Omer Simeon mould in which we all believed in those days.

The first band job John McCarthy had was with the Riverside Jazz Band formed by Jack Parkes in 1947. He remembers playing at various places with this band, including the Arts Ball at Paddington Town Hall, the Universities of Sydney and NSW, the Trocadero, Spellson's Restaurant in Pitt Street, and South Steyne SLSC where the Riverside band played for a Saturday night dance for some years. During this time, they appeared at numerous concerts at the Sydney Town Hall and the Assembly Hall.

After this John McCarthy was mainly involved with the Port Jackson Jazz Band, sometimes led by Ray Price but sometimes not. He remembers a time when Harry Shoebridge was on guitar in that band. He enjoyed the company of a number of trumpet players in this band including Ken Flannery, Bob Barnard and John Sangster. Later there was a split in this group and John McCarthy became a member of the Dick Hughes Quartet.

John McCarthy was an early member of the Graeme Bell All Stars, following Laurie Gooding into the clarinet chair. During the 1950s he had a day job with the NSW Public Service but he gave this up when he found that there was a lot of work in the clubs and it was possible to earn a living in music. The club he got into was the Paddington-Woolahra RSL Club, where the band was led by Bob McGowan. When McGowan left, John Costelloe took over the leadership, and on Costelloe's departure John McCarthy became musical director and the nominal leader.

He was there for a long time, and jazz musicians such as Dieter Vogt, Laurie Thompson, Bob McIvor, Darryl May, Jim Somerville, Jan Gold and Alan Geddes passed through. McCarthy says that the club scene was confining in some ways in the musical sense, but there was the frequent challenge of artists coming on with their charts written for a different type of group. There would be perhaps a two-minute conference before the act went on, to make sure that the musicians got everything right.

There was an overlap period here when John McCarthy, still MD at Paddington, became a member of Bob Barnard's Jazz Band which was formed about 1974. Later in the 1970s the RSL Club put the band off while alterations were made to the building. When these were completed they invited the band back but, by that time, the musicians had found other jazz jobs and weren't really interested in going back into a club. Since then he has been a regular member of Bob Barnard's band as well as being in demand for casual jobs such as the jam session Jazz Action Society has presented on several occasions since the one at the Seymour Centre in 1976. He has been to Europe and the United States with Barnard on several occasions, including their appearances at the Bix Beiderbecke festival in Davenport,

\* Norm Linehan is a Sydney freelance writer and photographer. His *Australian Jazz Picture Book* is still available.



thought — because he got into little trio and quartet jobs (I remember one with Barry Jones on piano and Peter Hawkins on drums) where he was expected to play the saxophone. Since then has extended himself to the full range of saxes except the bass, which he leaves to Chris Taperell in Bob Barnard's band. His favourite is the baritone but he does not take it to many jobs because it is so heavy to carry around. Particularly when the band is on tour, he tends to favour the clarinet and soprano sax because of the ease of carrying them, although as an instrument he prefers the tenor to the soprano.

He spoke at length on the intonation of the various saxophones and suggested that, in fact, they are all out of tune with themselves and it is up to the musician to play them in tune. He also thought that older instruments were better than the modern ones, "They just made them better then, they put more metal in. Bob Wilber wouldn't consider playing a modern instrument". John McCarthy bought his curved soprano from Bob Wilber.

As a professional musician John McCarthy goes to the Australian Jazz Convention if time permits. In recent years time has been kind to him. In 1978 as a member of Bob Barnard's band at Adelaide he shared the "guest artist" arena with Turk Murphy's band, and in 1980 (Forbes) and 1981 (Geelong) under the titles of Canary Conference and Canary Row took part in some battles with Paul Furniss that may have been more friendly than their fiery stage appearances suggested.

Personal modesty would preclude John McCarthy from making any claim to fame on the Australian jazz scene. Facts however speak for themselves, and there can be no doubt that he is one of Australia's great jazz musicians. The promise he held out to us almost forty years ago has been fulfilled.



A young John McCarthy, snapped at Port Kembla, 1956: a day job with the Public Service during the 1950s . . .

Iowa.

A professional musician's life is fairly precarious financially but John McCarthy has been, as he puts it, "able to survive". Most of his work is in jazz but he does get called for the occasional studio job when they need a "dixieland" clarinet player (well, we all get put in bags). His musical peers know better; John has been called on by Don Burrows and John Sangster when they knew he could do what they wanted.

He has made a number of recordings, the earliest commercial ones being with the Port Jackson Jazz Band, although before that there was a broadcast from the 5th Australian Jazz Convention at Ashfield Town Hall in 1950 by the Riverside Jazz Band. Recordings of the broadcast are known to exist. There have been recordings with Graeme Bell, Ray Price and more recently with Bob Barnard. John McCarthy spoke appreciatively of the recordings he made with the ABC's big band produced by Peter Wall and arranged by Eric Cook — about 40 tracks which have been sold to American FM radio. "It's not quite jazz. Not everybody likes those sorts of things. But it's lovely to have this big bank of strings behind you, this big lush sound".

He also enjoyed the *Lord of the Rings* recording sessions with John Sangster. "He's a great composer and musician, always a lot of fun to record with; it's quite complex what he writes; he puts you at your ease but it isn't easy. He's always got some evil little thing in there that makes it hard".

John McCarthy started playing the saxophone quite early in his career — another thing that might have disturbed the purists at the time had they given it much

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Wednesday, January 26

MARK MURPHY with the Ed Gaston Trio  
plus The Erroll Buddle Band

Thursday, January 27

THE DON BURROWS QUINTET  
plus David Baker with the Tony Ansell Trio

Friday, January 28

MARK MURPHY with the Ed Gaston Trio  
plus the Vince Genova/Indra Lesmana Quintet

Saturday, January 29

THE MEL LEWIS ORCHESTRA  
plus the Julian Lee Trio

Sunday, January 30

EBERHARD WEBER with the Judy Bailey Trio  
plus The Murphy/McKenna Guitar Duo

Monday, January 31

AUSTRALIAN SUMMITT with John Sangster,  
Bob Barnard, etc. PLUS The Conservatorium Big  
Band under the direction of Don Burrows

Tuesday, February 1

THE MEL LEWIS ORCHESTRA  
plus The Ray Alldridge Trio featuring Jan Adele

Wednesday, February 2

THE MEL LEWIS ORCHESTRA  
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SYDNEY

## CONSERVATORIUM JAZZ CLINICS

The promoters Barry Ward and Peter Brendle are at full steam ahead in preparations for the Conservatorium of Jazz Clinics to be held in Sydney from January 29 to February 2, 1983.

The latest news is that the guitarist John Scofield has pulled out of the American team, as he and his band will be playing engagements in Europe at that time. However, the organisers are delighted to report that they have secured the services of one of the most respected guitarists in New York to replace Scofield.

He is Jack Wilkins, aged 38, who will be coming to Australia with the following credits: "Probably the most exciting guitarist in town" (Whitney Balliett in *The New Yorker*); "a stunning technician whose concept is uncommonly fresh and often quite moving" (*Playboy* magazine); "a pure musician, his approach is wholly pianistic. He plays beautifully articulated legato runs, and his chords are dark, throaty and explicit" (*Philadelphia Daily News*); "he is universally respected among fellow musicians as a master of the guitar, natural and amplified, with limitless technique, imagination and a strong identity" (*New York Post*).



Jack Wilkins

John Wilson, jazz critic with *The New York Times*, has written: "Mr Wilkins seems to have absorbed a wide area of jazz guitar styles from an unaccompanied solo manner that borders on the flamenco, to a glittering flow of imaginatively phrased lines, developed on fast bebop themes... He is becoming a more fascinating and polished guitarist with every performance."

Wilkins has a number of LPs out under his own leadership including *Windows* and *Merge*. *Windows* was described by *The New York Times* as "a stunning achievement". Of *Merge*, *Cashbox* said: "The performance is stunning — a stimulating set".

Jack Wilkins, like most top American jazz musicians has played with and recorded with a host of great singers and musicians. He has recorded with Buddy Rich, Sonny Fortune, Astrud Gilberto, Morgana King, Earl Hines, Dizzy Gillespie, Lionel Hampton, the Brecker Bros and Charles Mingus.



He is Professor of Music at New England Conservatory, Boston, Massachusetts, and an instructor at the Rhythm Section Lab, New York City. The promoters of the Conservatorium Jazz Clinics regard the signing of Wilkins as something of a coup. He is a vastly experienced clinician, and he is expected to play alongside the top Australian guitarists Steve Murphy and Steve McKenna during concerts at the Conservatorium.

Barry Ward has recently returned from New York where he made final arrangements regarding the visit of the Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra, and also heard the band on two occasions at the Village Vanguard, where it is resident on Monday nights. "It was the best big band I've ever heard", says Barry Ward. "Its range of dynamics was magnificent. They are still doing a lot of Brookmeyer and Thad Jones charts, which are very exciting." On the nights Barry Ward attended the Vanguard, queues waiting to hear the group stretched for some 100 yards down the street outside the small entrance to New York's most well-known jazz club.

Mel Lewis is reported to be looking forward to coming to Australia to play and teach. This will be his first visit to this country.

Also the ubiquitous Professor David Baker is looking forward to coming again, after missing the 1982 clinics. He is scheduled to arrive on January 21, one week before the commencement of the clinics, in order to fully supervise the preparations for the classes. Those who attended the 1982 clinics maintain that, without someone of Jamey Aebersold's or David Baker's expertise, the grading system for those clinics was chaotic. The organisers reassure all prospective students that, with the early arrival of Professor Baker, this problem will not re-occur.



Professor David Baker

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# Reports From . . .

## . . . Brisbane

By Jim Barlow

The Commonwealth Games and Festival '82 have now passed into the history and folklore of Brisbane leaving in their wake jazz-jazz-jazz. In the parks and in the streets, in the clubs and in the pubs and whilst it did not attain the fabled-ambition of the Ball at Kirriemuir, performances were generally outstanding and in some cases inspired. Afternoon and evening concerts were given in King George Square and the new City Mall by a satisfying cross-section of local jazz groups. At the Cellar Club, the Concord All Stars plus Ernestine Anderson enchanted a legion of fans. The first of two public concerts in the Botanical Gardens organised by the Festival 82 jazz sub-committee featured five local jazz groups Wylie Reed; Dave Bentley 4; Vocal Jazz Ensemble; Jupiter; and the Pacific Jazzmen. An audience of 2,000 attended. The second concert on Saturday October 2nd was much larger with an audience of 5,000 and featured the Conservatorium Big Band, The Vintage Jazz and Blues Band, Rick Price 5, Judy Bailey and Margaret Roadknight (Wow! with fireworks describes their set). The Festival '82 All Stars featured Col' Loughnan, Keith Stirling, Bob Sedergreen and Jeff Kluge, organised by master drummer Ted Vining, receiving a storm of applause for their swinging, sometimes funky, performance.

The Vintage Jazz and Blues Band is also producing a new album shortly, their third, entitled *Eight To The Bar*, the allusion being non-musical. The personnel differs slightly from previous LPs with that Peter Pan of the soprano sax Tich Bray enlivening the front line in place of Andy Jenner. Buy a copy quickly otherwise you may find the Yanks have cleaned out all the stocks as they did before. The Vintage was in cracking form at the 2nd Annual Jazz Band Ball at Cloudland on Sunday 17th October. Vocalist Paula Cox's a cappella gospel number *Precious Lord* almost levitated the 1,200 dancers through the roof. But make no mistake — each of the twelve participating bands played their asses off. The Australian Youth Jazz Big Band under John Callaghan provided timely reassurance that the future of jazz is in good hands with performances of swing band charts that had the crowd shouting for more. On Monday night, optimism regarding the future of jazz was further reinforced at the judging of the secondary schools Stage Bands competitions when the Wavell High School (MD Roy Theoharris) band scored an impressive first place ahead of Churchie and Ipswich. Section and

solo work was excellent. The Judges were Messrs. Dubber, Buchanan and Vining.

Director of Cultural Activities in Queensland, Kevin Siddell was pleased with the variety of venues available for jazz and its public acceptance. The concept of high school stage bands was a project which had been growing and improving over several years and "contained opportunities for spontaneous improvisation and understanding of jazz idioms," he said.

1982 abounded with gems of jazz from local groups and overseas stars, with perhaps the sleeper of the year going to the Melbourne Hotel concert of July 2nd with those barristers of jazz laws Barnard, Sangster, Bailey, Philpott and Barnard playing like angels. Jazz Action concerts by Brisbane and Sunshine Coast societies provided the venues for that interaction between local and interstate jazz musicians so essential for the welfare and future of their art form, but Gold Coast Jazz Action — where are you?

Saddest tale of 1982: audience of only 40 people for the Alex von Schlippenbach trio concert at the Conservatorium of Music.

Thoughts for 1983 . . . Establish a Jazz Line telephone information service to be updated weekly. What about it John Morris, Johnny Cox, Dr. Jazz?

Resolutions for 1983: Attend more live jazz performances! Publicise the 5th Jazz Appreciation course at Ithaca State School sponsored by the Adult Education Branch and presented by Niels Nielsen. Happy New Year.

## . . . Perth

By Steve Robertson

Perth audiences are getting set for the most impressive line-up of Eastern States stars ever to visit the west in a short span of time. No less than four Melbourne and Sydney groups are to play for the Perth Jazz Society before the end of the year, and there are hopes a fifth group can be brought over in December.

On the surface, the idea of having the band from the *Rocky Horror Show* play for a Jazz Society sounds like a horror in itself. But the five musicians who make up the band bring west with them a reputation as superb modern jazz improvisers.

"We play rock and roll in the show, very basic stuff," says leader-saxophonist Paul Andrews. "But what we really like to play is jazz, bebop, middle-of-the-road, you name it."

Besides Paul, the band includes another Sydney musician, drummer Pete Dehlsen. From Melbourne come pianist Ian Mawson, guitarist Gordon Mathieson and bassist Maurie Sheldon, who's recently recorded with Allan Zavod. They've been touring with *Rocky Horror* for about two months.

"My favourite players are Coltrane and Ornette Coleman," says Andrews, "but the band plays things that are not quite so avant-garde, Joe Henderson-type music. Mawson (the pianist) really likes McCoy Tyner."

Modern jazz also takes the spotlight with the welcome return of the Melbourne-based duo, McJad. Trumpeter Keith Hounslow and pianist Tony Gould were last in Perth in 1980 and their appearance in late October this year is the culmination of months of work by fans they impressed then. Perth bassist Murray Wilkins, a veteran of several appearances by major American players, will complete the trio.

The PJS has a long-standing policy of covering as large a range of jazz styles as is humanly possible, and in keeping with that, is putting on a classic jazz night featuring Paul Furniss and Johnny McCarthy. It's being billed around town as the Australian answer to the celebrated Soprano Summit of Bob Wilber and Kenny Davern, a delectable group that sadly disbanded in 1977.

The concert is a special delight for the hundreds of traditional jazz fans in Sandgroper Country. While Perth boasts at least five top-quality "classic jazz" bands, all maintain the standard Dixieland front line. It's extremely rare that two reedmen get together and simply play for a couple of hours, and in McCarthy and Furniss, Perth audiences will be getting two of the best. Backing them will be pianist Barry Bruce and his trio.

The end of November sees the highly-regarded modernists Brian Brown and Bob Sedergreen playing at the Hyde Park Hotel. This is the third Perth visit for the duo, and will be joined by the ubiquitous Mr Wilkins on bass, and drummer Duncan McQueen, who has played with Sedergreen in Melbourne.

Recent visits by Eastern States stars such as Col Nolan, Errol Buddle, Mike Hallam and Doc Willis have ranged financially from break-even to very successful. With a dearth of overseas artists coming to Perth following booking difficulties, the influx of Easterners is welcomed here in the west. But there's a strong move afoot here towards some sort of reciprocity. Musicians such as trumpeter Pat Crichton are outspoken in their desire to see the best of the west proceed across the Nullarbor to play. Brisbane and Adelaide are two cities often mentioned as likely locales for Western bands to visit, even if it's just for one night. The west doesn't lack the talent, just the opportunities.



# SCRAPPLE FROM THE APPLE

By Lee Jeske\*

When I was in Australia last January, it seemed the first thing anybody asked me when they found out I was from New York was not whether it was safe to walk in Central Park or what the hot shows on Broadway were — everybody asked me how Horst Liepolt was. Now I didn't know Horst Liepolt from a pack of chewing gum at the time, but I gathered from all the enquiries that I had best make his acquaintance . . . and *fast*. Well, in typical fashion, it's taken me awhile, but I was finally introduced to Horst Liepolt at a performance of Howard Johnson's Gravity (six tubas and a rhythm section — quite good, incidentally, but very, very bottom-heavy, like a plate of dumplings washed down by a couple of beers). The bescarfed Horst immediately began rattling off the spectacular productions he had up his sleeve for the New York jazz world, and I take it, from what I heard in Australia, that he will become a force to reckon with over here. Good for him — we need all the help we can get . . .

I recently attended one of the most delightful concerts I can remember in many moons and I mention it here only in passing because it wasn't a jazz concert at all (so why did they invite me, I wonder?). It was a concert of early 20th Century Brazilian music called "choros." Apparently, it's a brand of music native to Rio and was cooked up by the "lower middle class: postal or railroad workers . . . to provide animation at suburban parties". (I'm quoting from the program notes). Anyway, to these ears it sounded akin to ragtime, but it's played mainly on various stringed instruments — guitars, ukeleles, mandolins — along with piano, flute and soprano saxophone. The concert consisted of over two dozen tunes, a good number of them composed by Ernesto Nazareth — sort of the Scott Joplin of the idiom — and the music was warm, good-spirited and swinging, with a feeling very reminiscent of the Quintet of the Hot Club of France. The players were an exceptional crew — ranging from one of Brazil's premiere classical pianists, Arthur Lima, to one of their top jazz saxophonists, Paulo Moura. Good, good stuff . . .

Sometime before the summer fizzled to a close, I attended a jazz festival at Jones Beach. Now Jones Beach is a beach, but they have a pleasant open-air theatre, which is nice in the summer, but on the two nights I showed up was *freezing* cold. All in all I saw four acts: Betty Carter, the Great Quartet (Freddie Hubbard,

McCoy Tyner, Elvin Jones and Ron Carter) and the Modern Jazz Quartet on the first night, and Miles Davis on the second night. No surprises at all: Betty Carter was superb, the Modern Jazz Quartet was magnificent, and Great Quartet was just about up to snuff, and Miles Davis was lousy. I'm sorry — this was to be my second encounter with the new Miles Davis live and the first since his much ballyhooed Kool/New York appearance in the summer of '81. I thought *that* concert was a disappointment — I was cheered by the leader's strong playing, but was depressed by both the less-than-mediocre quality of the band and how much of the concert was turned over to them. I thought the *Man With The Horn* LP was similarly run-of-the-mill. Okay, this is a year later, the band has been out there touring their collective derrieres off for all this time, the *We Want Miles* LP is chockful of the most impressive trumpet work from those quarters in 15 years, and I was *ready* for Miles.

Simply put, the band is still awfully bland (I just don't think the players are that good) and Miles didn't play much of value at all. He played a lot and he mugged a lot (pretending to be about to sing, dancing all over the stage, covering his face coyly with his grey cape, playing a solo into the lap of somebody in the first row) and he performed two full one-hour sets, but most of the music was bullshit — choppy trumpet fragments and endless jiving. All Miles has to do is to put together a crackerjack band and *play* — he *can* do it, he hasn't lost anything — but, until he does, the cries of "We Want Miles" are going to get fewer and fewer . . .

Which brings us to a great concert by Columbia's pretender to the throne, Wynton Marsalis. (I heard a



Wynton Marsalis at North Sea, 1982.

rumour, which I don't believe, that the reason Miles was so anxious to come out of retirement when he did was because Columbia was grooming the young Wynton for the post of Trumpet King in Miles's image — that is they figured that if the centerpiece of their jazz catalogue was going to sit on his butt, they'd find somebody easier to promote. I told you, I don't believe it, just passing it along). Well, Wynton is living up to everybody's expectations — his band is uncompromising and fiery, as is his first album, and he toured Europe this summer like a pro — taking such things as jam sessions with the likes of Dizzy Gillespie absolutely in his well-tailored stride. Not only that, but his brother Branford, the other horn in the band, is proving to be an absolutely top-flight player in his own right. Now these two firebrands spring from the loins of a fairly snappy New Orleans pianist named Ellis Marsalis and recently the Public Theater decided to put pappa and kiddies together for a concert, but to add extra cayenne pepper to this New Orleans gumbo, they tossed in master drummer Ed Blackwell, and largely-unknown-north-of-Louisiana-but-superb-nonetheless clarinetist Alvin Battiste (bassist Mark Helias rounded out the ensemble, but I don't know where the hell he's from). This was an A-one concert — although the front-line was traditional looking (minus a trombone, perhaps) the music was updated hard-bop with a distinct southern twang. All three Marsalises are deceptive — throwing in twists and turns when you don't expect them — but that Battiste is a monster. Basin Street might be two-bit strip joints and garter-around-the-arm dixieland saloons, but there is still vital music coming out of the delta, yes indeed . . .

What else have I seen lately? George Russell is one of our best arrangers and composers and if he wants to can easily be one of our best big-band leaders, but he doesn't always want to. This summer he wanted to and the thing was a towering inferno of raw, driving, big-band music. I never went in for the soggy Akiyoshi/Tabackin aggregation, give me some oomph anyway . . .

The AACM gave a couple of concerts uptown at an empty barn called Symphony Space recently and they displayed their strengths — dynamite from Air, powerhouse piano from Muhal Richard Abrams, surprising fire from Anthony Braxton, thoughtful composing and trumpeting by Frank Gordon — and their weaknesses — ponderous big-band work, for example — but the former far outweighed the latter. Somebody should give that organization a medal. □

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

# CONCERT REVIEWS

**Trude Aspeling, Barbara Canham, Marie Wilson and Sandie White**

*September 7, Concert for the Jazz Action Society of NSW, Musicians' Club, Sydney.*

The Jazz Action Society, in its September concert, departed from its usual format to present an offering listed as "An Evening Of Singers", the singers in question being a diverse quartet of ladies — Trude Aspeling, Barbara Canham, Marie Wilson and Sandie White, supported by the David Martin Quintet.

The quintet — David Martin, piano, Dale Barlow, reeds, James Morrison, trumpet and flugelhorn, Lloyd Swanton, bass and Tom Parkkonen, drums — opened the evening with a well selected group of tunes which the band's skills in a variety of settings: from the ballad *I Thought About You*, through Ken James's original *Here and Now* to a stunning climax featuring James Morrison on *I Remember Clifford*. James's performance will be remembered for a long time by all who heard it.

To the ladies, Trude Aspeling, a young South African who has been making a name for herself around town lately presented a group of standards including *On A Clear Day*, and *Perdido*, which demonstrated her range and theatrical flair, both of which are considerable. Trude is young and at times her inexperience working with an unfamiliar band showed (I believe that none of the ladies had any rehearsal with the band, so this may be unfair criticism). Trude shows a lot of raw, natural talent and is improving all the time. If she returns to Australia after her overseas engagement with Dollar Brand she could become a force to be reckoned with on the Sydney scene.

Barbara Canham's set showed her Billie Holiday influence (and who better to be influenced by?). Barbara sang a group of standards including *Just Friends*, *You Go to My Head*, *Desafinado* and a haunting version of *Yesterdays*. Apart from a touch of nervousness Barbara showed that she is one of Sydney's finest stylists.

Marie Wilson continued the Billie Holiday motif with her opening number, *You've Changed*. Her renditions of *Lover Man* and *Them There Eyes* carried on the tradition without being a copy. To me the highlight of Marie's set was a rarely heard ballad, *A Sinner Kissed An Angel*, a difficult song which Marie handled with rare taste. A fine performance.

Finally to Sandie White — Sandie is one of the most distinctive of all our stylists. At times she can get carried away and become a little strident in her approach, but on this night she

showed admirable restraint and taste. One thing predictable about Sandie's choice of material is that it is unpredictable. She chose ballads which are not heard very often around this town, such as *Spring Can Really Hang You Up The Most*, *My Romance* and up-tempo classics such as *Get Out Of Town* and *Night in Tunisia*, Sandie's control of her impressive upper register was very good and was used with taste and to good effect.

To sum up, an enjoyable evening of top flight jazz, both vocal and instrumental, worth repeating again with some of our other singers both male and female.

Kevin Casey



Marie Wilson (top left), James Morrison (top right), Barbara Canham (bottom left), Sandie White (bottom right): With the exception of Marie Wilson, all the girls displayed intonation problems...

I did not attend this concert, but studied the tapes carefully while editing them for broadcast on 2MBS-FM. Undistracted by the visual element, I am therefore primarily aware of the concert as a collection of pure sounds.

Although it was the singers' night, the band deserves a bouquet for its warm up set, in which the work of Swanton (*Summertime* in particular), and Barlow (everything in general), especially impressed. Both Morrison and Barlow are of course the current *enfants terribles* of Sydney modern jazz; perhaps because of his slight seniority, Barlow came across on the tapes as the more convincing and developed player on the night, and his study trip abroad is certain to consolidate his work further.

The concert brought out two sides of the situation for local singers. First, that we have a pool of potentially

first-rate singers coming to the fore from the female populace. Everyone of the four showed a distinct sense of style and personality, and a willingness to work to her limits, including in the audacity of much of the repertoire. They have thoughtfully and feelingly absorbed their models, and then have gone on to superimpose their own sensibilities. Each showed a particular and individual strength — Trude's breadth of tone, Barbara's capacity to convey a tender vulnerability, Sandie's adventurous high register flights, and Marie's solid conviction with the sense of a lyric. The other side of the coin reflects a general problem with being a singer, it's hard to get work unless you can put your own band together. Established bands don't feel the need for what they often regard as expensive supernumery personnel, especially if one of their members already doubles up on vocals. Performers can

practise their bums off at home, but the finishing touches come with steady experience of a band and an audience. More experience is what our singers need (don't we all!). With the exception of Marie Wilson, they all displayed, to varying extents, intonation problems. Mind you, this was often because they were all game enough to take chances, which I appreciate more than a seamless correctness. And it's only fair to add that towards the end of Barbara's set the brass and sax were blowing slightly out, which is hell for a singer to cope with. Perhaps partly because Marie Wilson has a steady gig with a regular band, her delivery was more consistent and therefore more impressive overall. But more experience, more exposure, will always add more burnish to the glow. Congratulations to the JAS for providing some of both.

Bruce Johnson

PHOTOS: PETER SINCLAIR



## THE CONCORD ALL STARS

September 29 — October 7, The Cellar, Brisbane

Cool professionalism, zestful swinging, foot-tapping audience rapport — and possibly the best jazz heard in town all year — were consistently evident during a series of performances at Brisbane's Jazz Cellar.

The Concord All Stars — the legendary Al Cohn on tenor saxophone, Warren Vache cornet, Cal Collins guitar, Nat Pierce piano, Jake Hanna drums, with Sydney bassist Ed Gaston — were at The Cellar as part of Brisbane's Jazz '82 (September 29 — October 7).

It's rare for all group members to be inspired at the same time. Not so Concord. Each evening was a jazz blaze: boots and all playing from the beginning with the right mix of tight ensemble playing and brilliant, soaring solo work.

*Sweet Sue*, normally dripping with over-kill, exemplified on a couple of occasions that old standards never die, they simply have to be re-created, as Cohn fired off several pace-setting choruses followed, with equal zest, by Vache. Likewise, with fresh creative insight, *Sweet Lorraine*, *Way Back Home in Indiana*, and a score of other standards, all came out brand spanking new. Vache, a young and extremely gifted horn-player, is a born-again mainstreamer — a composite of Louis Armstrong, Bobby Hackett, and Roy Eldridge but also capable of sliding into a Miles groove as the occasion demands.

In particular Vache's rendition of *Too Late Now* was something Burton Lance and Alan Lerner its composers would have applauded. Vache explored the harmonic potential of this beautiful ballad to the fullest. A failed trumpet-player myself, I was riveted, as was everybody else, at the apparent ease with which Vache probed and nudged the ballad's essence with some delicate trilling in the upper high-C's and down to lower-register and immediately back again.

Al Cohn these days plays much harder, more driving tenor bringing, like Vache, uncanny modernity to such oldies as *Just You Just Me*, *Jeepers Creepers* and others. Cohn moreover is a master balladist. His rendition of *Willow Weep for Me*, again like *Sweet Sue* almost done to death, combined just the right blend of reflective throaty tenor and hard articulation for ironic bite.

During each set Collins, Pierce, Hanna and Gaston provided more than just competent backing. At several points each player was featured. Collins' extended, laconic treatment of *Summertime* was superb. Unfortunately space does not permit further kudos to these most deserving of players.

"We're just out to have a good time here — a bunch of musicians doin' nothing great and just enjoying them-

selves," Nat Pierce had said at the start of the last session. But this was more than just a good time — rather, a super band playing super jazz, eminently professional, playing as if it were their last night on earth.

*Postscript: That the Concord All Stars — and, the next week, Ernestine Anderson — played Brisbane at all was something of a jazz miracle. The Jazz Expo component of Brisbane's Festival '82 failed to attract funding. All the more reason for acknowledging the efforts of Mileham Hayes who was able at the last minute to get commercial sponsors for both Concord and Anderson. Nor is it the first time that Hayes' wheeling and dealing has succeeded in bringing major artists to Brisbane.*

*There's a lesson here somewhere. Nat Pierce perhaps should have the last word. "Really strange, we're flown from the States to play just one gig. We'd have loved to play your other cities."*

Neville Meyers

## Ernestine Anderson

October 5, The Cellar, Brisbane

Duke Ellington, Billie Holiday, Frank Sinatra and Sarah Vaughan were in Brisbane recently — in the choice of material, and stylish presentation, of American jazz singer Ernestine Anderson at The Jazz Cellar.

Anderson, here for Jazz Expo '82 played to capacity crowds. That she can sing with exceptional taste and jazz feeling was evident during her performance. Intermittently, during each number, she drew spontaneous applause with each mood change as her style shifted from gutsy blues to subtle intonation, alternating raunchiness and delicacy.

*Teach Me Tonight* and *Come Rain or Come Shine* were daringly brisk and up-tempo. Billie Holiday's *Ain't Nobody's Business* was at a more leisurely, more reflective, blues pace.



From left, John Colborne-Veel, John Bates, John Roberts at the Australian Compositions night.

For nostalgia there were *Just One More Chance*, and *Long As I Live. Am I Blue* was especially poignant.

The Cellar's audiences are getting younger. For many it would have been the first opportunity to hear and appreciate the standards.

It is encouraging that Brisbane can now draw on its own local talent — Clare Hansson (piano), Geoff Kluge (bass), and Jeff Proud (drums) — to back a singer of Anderson's international jazz standing. Clare Hansson in particular provided more than just competent backing; at times the pianist drew as much applause as Anderson herself.

Neville Meyers

## A Night of Original Australian Jazz Compositions

Sydney Business and Football Club Limited, October 10

John Colborne-Veel is one of a small number of people who pay attention to the place of the composer in Australian jazz, so that it came as no surprise when he assembled a band of himself, Bruce Johnson, Paul Furniss, Harry Harman, Hans Karssemeyer and Alan Geddes, at the Sydney Business and Football Club on 10th October, to present a complete program of Australian compositions. Some lyrics were sung by John Bates.

Most of the 23-odd tunes presented were written by members of the band and the good humour of the night was demonstrated by the opening number which was described as an extempore blues in E flat composed by the band. Other compositions included Graeme Bell's *Czechoslovak Journey*, Roger Bell's *Halcyon Days*, John Roberts's *Jop*, and John Bates's *J.B. Stomp*. Several of them were winning tunes from the Australian Jazz Convention's Original Tunes Competition, including Colborne-Veel's *Alone* (1969), Paul Furniss's *Hourigan's*

*Swing* (1970), *'Twas a Time* (1977), and *Eclipse* (1980), John Roberts's *Jop* (1963) and John Bates's *J.B. Stomp* (1976).

The centre-piece of the program was Colborne-Veel's *Toad Hall Suite* of five movements in a range of musical styles from classical blues to some whole-tone music and Monkish themes. There were some little-known compositions and in this regard Bruce Johnson stood out with *That Time of Night*, *Confirmation Blues* and *Sans Toi c'est la Nuit*. Bruce, for all his activity on the Sydney jazz scene, has not previously put himself forward as a composer.

The announcer for the night was Dick Hughes, himself a composer of modest dimensions who also pays attention to the Australian composer on his job at Soup Plus. It was a pleasure then to hear Colborne-Veel's band play the lovely *Kelly's Deal* by Ade Monsborough which Dick's band will play even without the drop of a hat.

John Colborne-Veel has written much more than the *Toad Hall Suite* and other compositions of his presented were *King Kenny's Cakewalk*, *The Woogie Boogie*, *Stomping in the Devil* and *Prelude to the Night*. Much of his work has been recorded and may yet become available to those of us who respect the jazz composer as we do the performer.

Norm Linehan

### Doug Foskett Memorial Concert October 12, Musicians' Club, Sydney

Doug Foskett, reedman, foundation member and stalwart of the Daly/Wilson Big Band, passed away recently. Doug is gone but not his memory, as was shown by several hundred musicians and fans who, on the 12th of October, gathered at the Sydney Musicians Club for a memorial concert, proceeds of which were donated, at Diane Foskett's request, to cancer research.

Let it be understood that this was not a wake, but a joyful celebration: musicians paying tribute to one of their own in a manner he would have wished. Considering the number and quality of opposing attractions that night (including Ernestine Anderson at 73 York Street, the Battle of the Saxes at the Marble Bar and Killer Joe Lane at the Basement), the attendance was remarkable — approximately 300, with standing room only.

The Muso's Club house band, Stuart Livingston, drums, Kenny Powell, piano and Jack Thorncraft, bass, was joined by Bob Bertles, reeds, for the opening set. A group of standards such as *No Greater Love*, *If I Should Lose You* and *Smile* settled the crowd down for a great night of jazz. Bob's comment that they only played standard tunes because they were only a standard band met with some amusement. Some standard!

The Daly/Wilson Big Band was next on stage with a roaring version of *Take The A Train*, which gave notice that

here was a great band. *Count Me In*, *Willow Crest* and *More Soul* emphasised the point, with great solos from Ed Wilson, Bob McIvor, Tony Hobbs, Ted White and Paul Panichi. A Kenton medley followed, reminding people of this band's great contribution to big band jazz. Tony Hobbs was featured on the band's moving tribute to Doug, *Angel Eyes*. But to restore the happy mood the band swung into Basie's *Nasty Magnus*, featuring Kevin Hunt, piano and Ted White tenor. The band finished with a real flagwaver, featuring Ted White and Warren Daly, which brought the crowd to their feet.

For a complete change of pace, the Ian Boothey Sextet was next on. Ian, backed up by Keith Stirling, trumpet, Mal Price, piano, Tim Brosnan, bass, Barry Canham, drums and a late replacement, Joe Epps, trombone, gave a spirited rendition of a number of pieces, of which the standouts, to my ears, were Freddie Hubbard's *Blues for Duane* (featuring Keith Stirling) and a lyrical *Moonlight in Vermont* (featuring Ian Boothey). At this stage the band switched styles to become the backing group for a diverse group of singers: Jill Lindfield, Edwin Duff and Marie Wilson.

Jill's choice of songs, from the poignant *Am I Blue?*, to the tongue-in-cheek Bessie Smith classic, *I've Got What It Takes*, was just right, although her *Wild Turkey*, may have caused the temperance lobby (if they were there) some heartburn. Edwin Duff, a crowd pleaser at any time, turned in a witty, swinging performance on standards, such as *I've Got You Under My Skin* and *There Will Never Be Another You*.

Marie Wilson, a lady who, in my opinion, is not seen nearly enough, captivated everyone with *You've Changed*, *Sleepytime Down South* and *Sugar*.

The night (or should I say early morning by this stage), was finished off in great style by the John Hoffman Big Band, featuring, among others, Col Loughnan, Graeme Jesse, Michael Bartolomei, Bob McIvor, Darcy Wright and Bob Bertles, opened with a small group version of *Bernie's Tune*, which gradually built up to a roaring big band finale. After a short reminiscence of Doug Foskett by Warren Daly, the band featured a group of arrangements by Gerry Mulligan (*Grand Tour*), Bill Holman (*I Remember You*) and George Brodbeck (*Surrey With The Fringe On Top*). John Hoffman was spotlighted on the Thad Jones Classic *A Child Is Born*. The concert ended with Warren Daly replacing Alan Gilbert on drums for an exciting version of *Love For Sale*.

Final impression . . . a great tribute to a great musician.

Kevin Casey

### Women and Jazz Concert

October 14, Everest Theatre, Seymour Centre, Sydney

The respected jazz critic for *The*

*New Yorker* Whitney Balliett once called jazz "a peculiarly male music . . . for which most women lack the physical equipment — to say nothing of the poise".

With this comment ringing in my ears, I attended the Women and Jazz Concert. Somehow, the comment seemed irrelevant. Overall, the night was an unusual and memorable one, producing gentle, exquisite music that was surprisingly moving.

The singers Bernadine Morgan and Lorraine Silk, accompanied only by the latter's guitar, set the evening's chamber music mood with a clever program, featuring a number of songs whose lyrics were appropriate for the evening's theme, including Irving Berlin's *He's Not The Man For Me*. Blessed with lovely voices, the two women moved with ease between solo, unison and harmony lines, with clarity and musicality.

Claude Bolling's *Suite For Jazz Piano and Flute* was performed by Victoria Gaston (flute) and Jenny Cochran (piano). With both young ladies reading the music determinedly, this performance had the formal, more stilted, feeling of classical music, rather than the spontaneity and looseness of jazz. Still, it was a spirited, brilliant rendition, even if a little rough around the edges.

The seven-piece All Girl Jazz Band was an unexpected delight — and not only because, in an ironic gesture, they appeared in men's clothing! They were led by Sandra Evans (flute and saxophones) and included Dianne Spence (saxophones), Kathy Conners (trombone), Robyn Mackay (trumpet and flugelhorn), Monique Lysiak (piano), Terry McDonough (electric bass) and Julia Hush (drums).

There was one aspect of their playing that was deficient, in terms of conventional jazz expectations: the band's time was not articulated solidly, making much of the section work and some of the solos sound laboured. I would put this down to the tentative drumming of Julia Hush, who could have done more to capitalise on the strong bass figures of Terry McDonough.

Despite that rhythmic weakness, the music was interesting and creditable. The horn arrangements, mostly done by Kathy Conners, featured nice voicings, and spirited solos were played, particularly by Sandra Evans and Dianne Spence. Both players showed familiarity with modern concepts and, as a duo, included a completely improvised, free jazz statement — an adventurous contribution.

After interval, the pianist Judy Bailey performed solo. By this time, the night was gathering momentum, and there was a feeling in the audience that this was indeed a unique and historic concert: the first time, possibly since the 1930s, that all-female groups had appeared in a major concert in Sydney. It was entirely appropriate therefore that Judy Bailey caught the





Terry McDonough, Dianne Spence, Sandra Evans and Robyn Mackay (top left), Nancy Stuart (top right), Petra Gaffney, Kerrie Biddell, Nina Solomon and Naomi Warne (bottom left) Daphne Hubner (bottom right).

included Petra Gaffney, Nina Solomon and Naomi Warne.

To say that the vocal arrangements (done by the members of the quartet) were ingenious, and that they were brilliantly executed (without amplification) would be understatement. We have rarely heard such disciplined, rich harmonic singing in Australian jazz, and the audience was stunned immeasurably.

If the evening had been full of variety and delights, none quite matched those of Nancy Stuart's *Jazz Ladies*, who closed the concert with some swinging, rousing, mainstream jazz. The real sensation of the evening was the tenor saxophonist Daphne Hubner, who played effervescent solos with echoes of Ben Webster, and ripped through an audacious version of *Golden Wedding*. I would love to see Daphne performing alongside Merv Acheson one time. Perhaps an enterprising entrepreneur will consummate such a musical marriage; it would be a fascinating coupling.

Other than Nancy and Daphne, the group included Pat Qua (piano), Jean Williams (bass) and Lorraine Rutherford (drums). With standards like *I'm Beginning To See The Light*, *Misty*, *Ain't Misbehavin'* and *The Saints*, the night was brought to a close with everyone smiling. The organiser and compere Di Gaston could be well pleased with the night's achievements.

As a postscript I should say that I contacted a leading female freelance jazz writer/broadcaster and asked if she would review this concert for *JAZZ Magazine*. She replied that she would not be there, as she had not been invited. I later asked a leading female jazz photographer why she had not attended. She also replied that she had not been invited. It appears that, despite the gains of the women's movement, some ladies still sit at home waiting for the phone to ring!

Eric Myers

mood and was moved to say, "All those lovely ladies . . . It's a hard set to follow. Things have occurred on this stage tonight that I thought I never ever would see . . ." An emotional moment.

She then played a selection of Lennon and McCartney tunes which, I think, would have surprised Whitney Balliett. She may lack "the physical equipment", but Judy Bailey is capable of producing the widest range of dynamics at the grand piano, from a gentle whisper to the strongest orchestral sound.

I was disappointed that she played only one of her own compositions:

*Lonely Child* from her suite of the same name. (Her lovely tune *The Spritely Ones* would also have gone down well.) Still, the performance, including a nostalgic version of Fats Waller's *Alligator Crawl* (the tune which drew her, as a young girl, into jazz) and her Gershwin medley, showed what exemplary command of the keyboard she has.

The Kerrie Biddell Singers, performing a *capella*, gave a short, exquisite performance, which included *Hey There*, *Surrey With The Fringe On Top*, *Have I Stayed Too Long At The Fair?* and a selection of Beatles songs. Other than the leader, they



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## WHY WE SING LIKE WE DO

### WORKSHOP PERFORMANCE





## Manly Jazz Carnival

October 2-4, Manly Corso Plaza, Sydney

Manly Tourist Promotions estimates that 80,000 attended the Manly Jazz Carnival over the three days of the October 2-4 long weekend — a little less than last year's 100,000. Still, a massive number of people turned out to hear a formidable array of Sydney's top jazz groups.

Considering that John Speight, a well-known proponent of jazz for the young, was the Carnival's producer, it was fitting that some of the most impressive and creditable music was played by the student bands which opened proceedings on each of the three days.

The Warringah Stage Band, which serves as a reserve group for Speight's Northside Big Band, was surprisingly good. Like many others who had not heard this group, I was delighted to hear the band's tight section playing, warm sound, and good, swinging soloists. The rhythm section had a nice feel, too; this really was a very good student band.

The NSW Conservatorium Big Band, directed by Dick Montz, which opened the second day, was too immaculate to be classified as a student band. Indeed, the band is full of brilliant young players, many of whom have passed through the Jazz Studies course at the Con. and are now fully-fledged professionals.

The saxophone section included Paul Millard, Brent Stanton, Mike Haughton, Ricardo Mattos and Mark Dennison — every one capable of brilliant solos. The tune *Altameda* was a good opportunity to savour the different approaches of Brent Stanton and Mike Haughton who were featured. Stanton played mellifluous, warm tenor, with subtle and enervatingly musical ideas rolling out; Haughton took a more strident, exciting approach and got a great reaction from the crowd.

Later, Mike Haughton (in dark glasses, with his long blonde hair streaming from under a white floppy hat) took a similarly fiery solo in George Brodbeck's arrangement of Jerome Richardson's *Groove Merchant* showing once again that hot, passionate playing clears the air and warms up the audience.

Other than a weak trombone section — it played tentatively and lacked a good soloist — it would be hard to find fault with this band. Overall, it took a mellow, unstrident approach, with lovely separation of sound between the various sections; its range of dynamics was impressive, and it used natural energy rather than muscle when it wanted to open out in volume.

It was good to see that a non-commercial program — no flag-flying versions of *Star Wars* or the *Theme From Shaft*, but rather state-of-the-art big

band music — was so warmly received by the middle-of-the-road Manly crowd.

The Adelaide College Big Band, directed by Hal Hall, opened the third day of the Carnival. It lacked the sophistication of the Montz band, but swung beautifully and produced a number of first-rate soloists. It too demonstrated how much spectacular progress has been made in the teaching of big band jazz in this country over the past five years or so.

Dick Dawson, an elderly retired psychology professor who switched to music, was a great favourite of the crowd with echoes of Ben Webster and Coleman Hawkins in his tenor sax solos. The band was handicapped by a tentative trumpet section but the trombone section, led by Bob Hower,

but one that will be warmly supported by a number of Marie Wilson admirers (and I'm one) who have been aware of her work for some years. It is gratifying that she is now out performing more and receiving due recognition.

There is little to say about the traditional jazz groups which appeared at the Carnival, except that, as usual, they got standing ovations. Nat Oliver's Jazz Band, Mike Hallam's Hot Six and Noel Crow's Jazzmen all dispensed the sort of hot, toe-tapping, Dixieland music which is played so well by a score of bands in Sydney, and which is so popular. The music was always happy, infectious and predictable, well balancing the more modern idioms that dominated the program.

The Bruce Cale Quintet, with Cale



James Morrison, Marie Wilson and Dave Martin (top left) Indra Lesmana (top right), Hal Hall conducts the Adelaide College Big Band (bottom left), Alan Turnbull (bottom right).

was very strong indeed.

Marie Wilson, performing with the Martin/Morrison Quartet on the first day, confirmed her growing reputation with nicely-paced versions of *Them There Eyes*, *When It's Sleepy Time Down South*, *It Don't Mean A Thing and What A Little Moonlight Can Do*. She has emerged as one of the most pleasant and capable singers in Sydney jazz, always riding easily over the pulse of the rhythm section, without histrionics, without ever forcing the music along — just swinging naturally with a good feel.

John Christian, in his report on the Manly Jazz Carnival in the November newsletter of the Jazz Action Society of NSW writes: "Marie Wilson . . . would have to be Sydney's leading vocalist among the female fraternity. Big statement?" Well, it is a big state-

on bass, Mike Bukovsky (trumpet and flugelhorn), Brent Stanton (saxophones and flute). Mike Bartolomei (piano) and Alan Turnbull (drums) gave a warm rendition of Cale's abstract, angular compositions. This was one of Mike Bukovsky's first performances after a six months study period in the USA. His playing suggested that he has matured considerably in tone and execution as a result of his overseas experience.

On the second day of the Carnival the Johnny Nicol Quartet represented the kind of hard-swinging, mainstream jazz that we all associate with Nicol and his colleagues (on this occasion Col Nolan, piano, Chris Qua, bass, and Willie Qua, drums, plus a special guest, the saxophonist Bob Bertles).

Johnny Nicol's versatility was as impressive as always. Not only is he a



superb singer, blessed with a wonderful voice, and a splendid guitarist. He also scat sings and whistles (a la Toots Thielemans) in unison with those solos. Splendid musicianship combined with a sense of fun made this group one of the popular hits of the Carnival.

The following group Clive Harrison and Risk, brought home an essential fact about Sydney jazz: that there is vibrant activity in virtually every jazz idiom. In this case, it was jazz/rock fusion. Led by the brilliant bassist Harrison, Risk showed the fruits of regular work at the Paradise Jazz Cellar, articulating blistering themes in unison and playing brilliant jazz over high-energy rock and funk rhythms.

Other than Harrison, the group included Paul Panichi (trumpet), Rich-

piano, playing authentically spare, Basie-style licks.

At this impromptu session, the 16-year-old pianist Indra Lesmana was in top form. His playing was so hot in *The Theme From The Flintstones* that the audience spontaneously broke into applause in the middle of his solo. Later, in Charlie Parker's *Groovin' High* he and James Morrison (trumpet) took a scintillating series of four-bar breaks, answering each other with unmitigated brilliance. This was world-class stuff by two outstanding teenage musicians. But it would have been fascinating to hear some of the older players alongside these young lions. Where were they?

The third day saw an appearance by the Cary Bennett Quintet, including Bennett on drums, Warwick Alder

and it would be splendid to see them working regularly in a Sydney venue. It is this sort of group which is the lifeblood of a healthy jazz climate.

I think it would be true to say that the hit of the Manly Jazz Carnival was the new group The Swing Street Orchestra. Led by Tom Baker (trumpet and alto sax) plus reedmen Marty Mooney and Paul Furniss, George Hermannn (piano), John Ryan (bass), Graham Conlon (guitar) and Alan Geddes (drums), this group dressed up in tuxedos and played music that recalled the small swing bands of Kansas City in the 1930s.

While the 1920s-style New Orleans (or Dixieland) idiom has been played exhaustively in this country, it is an interesting fact that very few 1930s-style bands have emerged (with the possible exception of the Dick Hughes Famous Five). Baker and his group have filled the void well. It is unusual to have three such outstanding saxophonists as Baker, Furniss and Mooney working together in one band, and the warm audience reaction indicated that this group will win a strong following in Sydney.

The John Hoffman Big Band closed the three-day Carnival on a powerful note. Although there are a few crowd-pleasers in their book, the band plays such challenging and complex music that they undoubtedly represent the pinnacle of excellence in big band jazz in this country. Composed of seasoned, established professionals in Sydney jazz, the band has only one (minor) weakness. The trombone section, composed of Bob McIvor, George Brodbeck, Herb Cannon and Bob Johnson, lacks a top-class soloist. Moreover, it is an unusually strident section, blasting its way through the arrangements, pushing the other sections to play louder. Still, this is a relatively minor carp about a great big band.

It would come as no surprise to most jazz lovers that, despite demonstrated public interest in this event, — 80,000, according to the authorities — it was virtually ignored by the newspapers (although Marie Wilson and the Martin/Morrison Quartet appeared briefly on one of the commercial television news programs).

The Manly Jazz Carnival is the kind of unique event which — being free to the public, and non-profit-making — takes a wide range of jazz styles to many people who may not normally be exposed to the art form (like families and children), thus increasing the potential audience for jazz. Manly Tourist Promotions, and the shopkeepers and business houses who fund the event, are to be congratulated for their continued patronage of the arts by making this splendid event possible. Under the direction of John Speight, who balanced the program skilfully once again, the Manly Jazz Carnival (this was the fifth) is more joyful and impressive than ever.

Eric Myers



JANE MARCH



MARGARET SULLIVAN



MARY BOUSFIELD



MARY BOUSFIELD

Bob Bertles (top left), members of Risk, Richard Gawned, Steve Brien (partly obscured), Paul Panichi, Clive Harrison (top right), dancers (above left), John Speight (with cap) with John Hoffman and his Big Band (bottom right).

ard Gawned (saxophones and flute), Steve Brien (guitar), Jay Stewart (piano) and Mark Riley (drums). Theirs was a particularly well-paced performance, with the solos not too long, and distributed judiciously, so that the interest of the audience was always retained.

The Jam Session at the end of that day was something of an anti-climax chiefly because the more established players were absent (other than the drummer Barry Stewart). Most of the participants were young, enthusiastic musicians — some from the Adelaide College band — anxious for a blow.

Still, some fine jazz was produced under the tutelage of James Morrison, who herded players on and off the stage with splomb. An unusual treat was the opportunity to hear the Carnival producer John Speight on the

(trumpet), Trevor Griffin (alto sax), Kevin Hunt (piano) and Gary Holgate (bass). All young men who have come through the Northside Big Band and/or the Jazz Studies course at the Conservatorium, they played a brand of rather intellectual jazz, informed by many of the more modern impulses in the music.

In a program which included *Parker's Mood* and Coltrane's *Lazy Bird* the solos were long, but not arduous; there was much light and shade in their music, with the group continually building and relaxing tension with firm confidence. The rhythm section, reacting flexibly to the ideas of the various soloists, gave the impression that it could go in any of a number of directions. This was a fine performance by a quintet operating in a relatively non-commercial area of jazz,



# Record Reviews

## GOIN' TO TOWN WITH LUIS RUSSELL



### LUIS RUSSELL "Going' To Town with Luis Russell" (Antipodisc AD14449)

If your eye has been caught by the title of this LP you will probably not need to be told anything about the band involved, but just in case, Luis Russell's band was, with Fletcher Henderson's, one of the most throbbing big bands of its day, and Henderson's didn't really catch up in terms of elasticity until a few years later. The mighty pulse of the sessions made during the year beginning September 1929 has tended to distract from the rest of the band's output. But the group was scarcely less swinging, if at all, up until at least August 1934. The loss of Red Allen and J.C. Higginbotham may have deprived the band of depth, of what Samuel Johnson would unembarrassedly have called 'bottom', but it gained a quicksilver fleetness in Rex Stewart's precocious cornet solos.

These sides, along with the Lou and His Gingersnaps session of September 13 1929, have been neglected in re-issue programmes. We should therefore applaud the enterprise of this new Australian label in making available the complete issued sequence of recordings from October 24 1930 to August 8 1934, plus 'Gingersnaps' from 1929. They have been reissued before, with the exception of the earlier tracks including for the first time together an alternate master. But, on Collector's Classics CC34, it received such scant and brief distribution that my copy is the only one I have ever seen. Furthermore on the tracks which I compared, the new Antipodisc reissue has a deeper and crisper sound — thank you, John R.T. Davies — and the cover note information is more extensive. This is a labour of love in which no expense has been spared (to coin two new phrases, to coin a new phrase). Record production is a more tedious business

than the gleaming finished product suggests, and few people, especially on a small independent label, have the dedication, not to mention the contempt for a budget, to make a second pressing simply because a cleaner copy of one of the tracks turned up at the last minute. It has been done on this occasion.

If you blinked when the Collector's Classics reissue appeared, you'll welcome this LP with enthusiasm, and in any event, the added tracks and the superior sound quality should open your wallet. Nor is this a one-off venture. I understand that the next album on this label features previously unissued material by the great man himself, Louis. Watch for it, and — dare I say it? — make room, Swaggie.

Bruce Johnson



### RED RODNEY "Red, White and Blues" (Muse MR 5111, Distributed by Avan-Guard)

### "Live At The Village Vanguard" (muse MR 5209, Distributed by Avan-Guard)

### "Night And Day" (Muse MR 5274, Distributed by Avan-Guard)

It is unlikely that the jazz world noticed a young boy named Robert Chudnick playing piston bugle in a Jewish War Veterans' band in the late thirties. But when he reappeared in the early forties as Red Rodney, still in his mid-teens, playing with Jerry Wald and Jimmy Dorsey, he began to gain attention as a young prodigy in the style of Harry James. Then he heard the Bird. He was so struck that in 1945 he accepted a chair in Gene Krupa's band for a brief season at the Hollywood Palladium simply because it enabled him to hear Parker every night at Billy Berg's club. He evolved quickly into a bopper of such conviction that his idol invited the 24 year old trumpeter to join his quintet in 1949. Rodney still regards the 3 years he spent with Parker as the most important period of his career. Unquestionably it was a profound imprinting process: more than 30 years later, Rodney remains the bop trumpet player *par excellence*.

We begin to form an impression of his individuality within that tradition by seeing how he responded to subsequent nodes in his career. His time with Parker laid the ground for the first of these. Rodney's work suggests a personality of enormous warmth and enthusiasm. His passionate and emulative admiration for Parker is very likely what led to his addiction to heroin, and for most of the fifties he was besieged by the psychological and legal consequences of his habit. Much of this time was spent in the Federal Narcotics Hospital, Lexington, Kentucky, though he appeared during a parole period at the Bee Hive in Chicago in a prophetic pairing with Ira Sullivan. In 1957 he was able to return to professional playing, and marked the occasion with an LP called *The Red Arrow* (Onyx 204). It was, however, to be his last album for 14 years.

Rodney became involved in the American equivalent of the club circuit, until his playing was interrupted by an injury that would have driven a less resilient temperament into a fatal depression. He was struck in the mouth by a policeman, and spent much of the sixties undergoing painful and complicated dental surgery, including teeth implants. When you consider that the aperture through which a trumpet player produces his sound is scarcely larger than a pin head, you can begin to understand the infinitesimal tolerances of the physiology of blowing. In physical terms Rodney virtually had to relearn his instrument. The temptation to despair is hinted (but only hinted) in a letter written in 1972:

*I'm hoping that I can play as I feel I should, not the way that others feel is good enough to get by. If I can't play my best because of chops not working, I would rather retire with the respect of the musicians than keep playing and earn their pity.*

Following training with the brass teacher Carleton MacBeth in LA, he announced his intention of staging his second comeback, and put it into effect with the album *Bird Lives* (Muse 5034).

In the spring of the same year, however, he suffered a stroke, which affected a new set of embouchure-related muscles; and began another period of the kind of physical exercise that most 44-year-old professionals have long since ceased to have to worry about. But Rodney bounced back yet again, serving notice of his return with a season at Donte's in North Hollywood, and an appearance at the 1973 Newport Jazz Festival. And although he felt he still lacked endurance, his 1974 album, *Superbop* (Muse 5046) shows no diminution of his overwhelming exuberance.

Since then his star has been in the ascendant and his output increasingly prolific. Three of his most recent albums at last seem to reflect his stature



undiminished by the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune. *Red, White And Blues*, 1976 (Muse MR 5111) and *Night And Day*, 1981 (Muse MR 5274) display the complete bop master. He expresses himself through the idiom as fluently and naturally as breathing itself. The titles are dominated by bop standards, and even if the title is unfamiliar, you'll often find that it's simply a new head on familiar shoulders — *Red Arrow* (Onyx 204), *Red Tornado* (MR 5088), *S.A.S* (Sonet SNTF698), are all *Cherokee*; *Yard's Pad* (Sonet SNTF698) is *Yardbird Suite*; *Little Red Shoes* (MR 5111) is . . . of course. Unlike many of the later copyists of the style, Rodney manages to be simultaneously the total bopper, yet immediately distinctive. There are a few personal clichés that show up — *As Time Goes By* and *Turkey In The Straw* as quotations — but I mean a more profound and less imitable distinctiveness than this. He never lost the Harry James warmth of tone and ability to construct long, supple, legato passages. It gives his playing a bubbly happiness that belies the obstacles he has had to overcome to get to where he is. In fact to ears not attuned to bop, Rodney is possibly the best introduction. He is perhaps the most approachable exponent of the style, with none of the harshness of attack and harmonic sense that many of the black musicians displayed. Nor does he disappear into what has been called the sound of solitude. His effervescence is long-affirming, his spirit always humane and generous. He seems to be entirely free of resentment or professional jealousy. There can be few musicians magnanimous enough to set up a recording session at which they're still hampered by dental problems, and choose the occasion to introduce a fellow trumpeter of the awesome calibre of Sam Noto (*Superbop*). Rodney can surround himself with such established masters as Dolo Coker, Bill Watrous, and Ray Brown, but still takes the trouble to foster young talent by association, using people like Richie Cole back in 1976 and more recently David Schnitter.

Rodney is probably the most complete living white bop trumpeter whose career goes back to the early days of the music. Now that he has finally overcome the malice of Chance, and been able to develop his playing without distractions, he may begin to feel restless. On *Live At The Village Vanguard* he ventures into modal territory. He seems a little uncertain, to the extent that his relentless drive is slightly less overwhelming (though I am told that a more recent album shows a further advance). His roots are in a more conventional tonality — “. . . here am I, saying to (Ira), ‘Please tell me what key I’m playing, will you?’ — and so, still, are his strengths. If you like this style of music and you haven’t got any Red Rodney, you have an inexcusable gap in your collection.

Bruce Johnson



**HELIOCENTRIC**  
“Heliocentric” (Discovery Records, DS-806, distributed by Avan-Guard)

The album scores well in general presentation. The pace and mood are varied and the sound has strong, sharp presence. The tracks are generally short and to the point — nothing much over five minutes. The long fade-out on *Traditional Song for a Loved One* seems to me to be contrary to the improvisational aspect of jazz, and in fact during the fade a new tension-release cycle is set up, but its resolution is scarcely audible. The music is for the most part formally structured, but the forms are non-traditional. Some idea of the style might be gained from some extracts from the sleeve notes: *Afferent Connection* — ‘Contemporary Latin-folk in 6/16; *Goliath* — ‘Slow funk intro in 7/4 to medium rock in 4/4; *Arrow* — ‘5/4 Bossa Nova with percussion in lieu of drum set’.

It’s a tight group producing a solid, dense sound that’s bigger than you might expect from a quartet, a circumstance sometimes compounded by overdubbing Al von Seggern, flute and sax player. On the higher pitched instruments his work is somewhat characterless, and his tone on soprano has that blandness that has become fashionable among many modern players. But on tenor, much meatier, more robust, and interesting. Bass (John Leftwich) and drums (Norm Scutti) are rock solid without ever bogging down; notice especially Leftwich’s work on “Y”. And the work of keyboard player Jeff Pressing stands out especially, as both player and composer of seven out of the nine tracks. There is a formidable creative energy in this man, who now plays and teaches in Melbourne. America’s loss is Australia’s gain, and we can presumably look forward to hearing much more of his work here.

A big minus for the album’s verbal essays. If you’re going to try to impress people with your learning and vocabulary, you simply have to get things right (including your spelling), and avoid using words for their cosmetic effect. The occasional pretentiousness of the brief cover note

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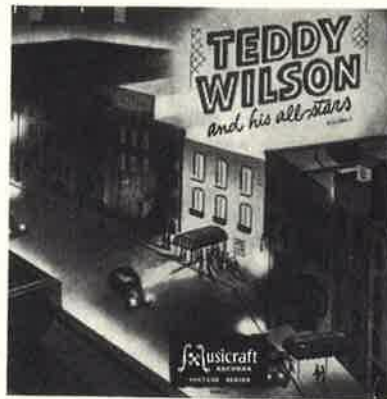
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# Record Reviews

belies the honest joyousness of the music. There are also three vocal tracks. Two of them are very brief greetings from the drummer, who enlightens us as to the meaning of the LP's title — 'sun-centred solar system' (his words), the discovery of which he solemnly attributes to Galileo. So much for Copernicus' *De Revolutionibus Orbium Caelestium* (1543). There's also a 'spontaneous composition' called *Town of Dog*, an improvised tale over free musical backing. Improvised narrative is fine, if you've got a repertoire of things to say. In our poetically stultified civilisation few can manage it — most of us lack the abundant conceptual stock and the feel for the music of language. The result is analogous to a beginner on a musical instrument playing what he thinks is 'free' jazz. There's no point in turning on the tap if there's no water in the mains. *Town of Dog* is, and represents, the worst aspect of the record. Its whimsicality is brittle, and it fails to grasp that nonsense has its own logic.

But this is only 1/8 of the total playing time. You're still left with 35 minutes or so of an opportunity of hearing what some of the younger and less well known Americans are doing. And it's a striking letter of introduction for Jeff Pressing.

Bruce Johnson

## BOB FLORENCE BIG BAND



Westlake

**BOB FLORENCE BIG BAND**  
"Westlake" (Trend Records  
DS 832)

*Personnel: Kim Richmond, Ray Pizzi, Pete Christlieb, Bob Cooper, Bob Hardaway, Lee Callett (woodwinds), George Graham, Rick Baptist, Warren Leuning, Steve Huffsteter, Nelson Hatt (trumpets), Chauncey Welsch, Charlie Loper, Herb Harpet,*

*Don Waldrop (trombones), Bob Florence (piano), Joe diBartolo (bass), Nick Ceroli (drums).*

This is the companion album to *Live At Concerts By The Sea*, which I reviewed previously (JAZZ, May/June 1982). *Westlake* differs in a number of ways. Firstly, it is studio recorded, which allows for editing, retakes and better control of the overall mix.

Also, as we know, the sense of excitement of a live performance is often missing in studio recordings. The performers and producers of *Westlake* have managed, however, to minimise this drawback. Through musicianship and engineering skills, superb clarity and high art form have been brought to Bob Florence's arrangements.

Because of my association with the problems of the recording studio, I deeply appreciate what they have achieved. This LP is an inspiration to musicians who trust that someday the studios will reproduce their performances accurately.

There are some personnel changes from the CBTS album, notably in the trumpet section: Buddy Childers and Gene Goe out, with George Graham and Rick Baptist in. I'm not sure who the lead players is, but I think I recognise the precise swinging of Rick Baptist on several selections. Rick visited Australia in 1981 with the Osmonds, and greatly impressed everyone. He has great control, endurance and sight reading ability, enhanced by his long experience as a lead player in Las Vegas orchestras.

The other changes are in the woodwinds: Bill Perkins out, Bob Hardaway in, and Kim Richmond to lead alto. I have long been a fan of Kim's playing and writing, and am sorry he doesn't get a solo on the album. His lead playing, avoiding eccentric ego trips, contributes to the good ensemble sound in the saxes.

The same could be said about the lead instruments in the other sections. Jazz orchestras develop personalities and are readily identifiable by the styles of their lead players as well as their soloists. The Bob Florence band has changed its personality slightly with these changes, especially in the brass sound. Buddy Childers, for many years the super lead player with many bands, including those of Kenton and Oliver Nelson, has a soloistic approach to lead playing — as the late Bill Chase had with Woody Herman and the late Conrad Gozzo with Billy May. Their playing is readily identifiable, full of pleasing stylistic trills. They tend to embellish the thoughts of the arranger.

Rick Baptist and George Graham, on the other hand, have non-egocentric lead styles. This leads to a more precise but not less spirited ensemble sound. Lead players of this quality make it easier for the sections to work with them and the total sound is more cohesive. One listens to the leads and more to the ensembles collectively.

I love both approaches for different reasons. The soloist lead style can make a band of indifferent section players sound great, but can also create musical friction in strong-willed sections. The ensemble style of lead illustrates the concept: if we play together we all look good and can collectively be proud of our performance. But it also has a negative side. If the compositions and arrangements are lacking in creativity the performance tends to reflect this more so than the soloistic style. In the case of *Westlake* the changes have not been negative. Case in point: listen to *One, Two Three*, based on an ingenious combination of triple meters in three movements. The ensemble and accenting are all as together as I've ever heard. The leads are part of the ensembles.

Pete Christlieb again shines for total musicianship in *Autumn*. His tenor sax solo shows the results of many years of listening to the pathfinders and creating his own unique style from their insights. Warren Leuning (trumpet) on *One, Two Three* deserves recognition for his classic, good time, big band solo in the tradition of Marvin Stamm with the Kenton band.

As with the CBTS album, if you have difficulty finding this recording locally, order it directly from Trend Records, PO Box 48081, Los Angeles, CA 90048, USA.

Dick Montz



## SURF, SUN and ALL THAT JAZZ





**GRAEME BELL ALL STARS**  
"Graeme Bell in Holland" (Sea Horse Records SHL 004)

**THE ORIGINAL FRESHIE JAZZ BAND**  
"Surf, Sun and All That Jazz" (EMI Custom YPRX 1950)

For followers of Bell music, this could become an item of real interest. Before the sad beyond words death of Ken Herron, six days before this tour of Holland, the band had been together for some time, to jell into what John Sangster still calls "a Graeme Bell Band".

Since then, Ken Harrison (drums) and Stan Kenton (bass) have left. So here we have a collection of live performances of that band with Dan Barrett from Los Angeles filling the trombone situation.

*St Louis Blues* has a good singing line on bass from S.K. and provides a nice stretch out for all.

A carping criticism at once. The drums are a shade off-mike throughout, except for accented passages, such as *Hindustan*, where K.H. has a really good time. The opening two choruses are extremely spirited — a lively track. Dan Barrett shows musicianship here, and again on *Ory's Creole Trombone* which is nicely voiced.

*Buddy's Habits* — a sprightly chorus from Graeme, reminiscent in touch to his old *Rocking Horse Rag* — Bob Henderson's stinging lead on the final ride-out. B.H.'s pleasant vocal sonority on *Someday*. Romping, relaxed rhythm and Barrett's superbly constructed solo.

*Tin Roof* is similarly relaxed, and features Graeme's broken twelve-eight figures behind the second trombone sob, thus setting up his own first chorus. A pleasant device. S.K.'s great-toned solo on this one. Jack Wiard is drifting down the chalumeau — thence to high register on *After You've Gone*. A good set. The music throughout is excellent. G.B. is, as ever, a thorough professional — always entertaining.

Now, here is a curious bundle. There is a paucity of "who-really-does-what?" on the sleeve, but not too bad, considering some of the rock-cum-fusion-type sleeves. It's a happy selection of material, obviously from live performances.

There are interesting musicians here. A commingly of youth and maturity. James Morrison is the envy of most brass players because of his chord knowledge and a lip which apparently doesn't give a damn, whatever the diversity of size of mouth-piece, or general approach to the material to be played. He also plays excellent piano at times herein on *Don't Get Around*, *Blue Skies* and *Jazz BB*.

On *Muskrat Ramble* there is an exciting trombone "chase" sequence

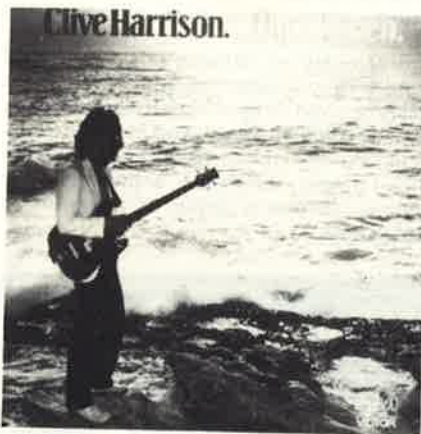
with J.M. and Dick Bradstock. Having unloaded all that, this album is a team thing. *Indiana* has a strapping tenor solo from Rod Travis. The penultimate chorus is front-line only, then a cavalry charge finale. At this pace, the four-bar drum tag is inexorably obligatory. Ask any drummer, and Alan Jones has crispness and experience in plenty.

This is basically good-time music, and on *Bubbles* — can't-tell-who-is-doing-what, but Noel Crow will be green with envy. A good lifter, this.

Generally competent throughout, the album should appeal to many, particularly with tracks like *Basin Street* — strutting white jazz with a good "laid-back" feel. Rod Travis has an eel-like sixteen bars, and J.M. hurls in some very florid trumpet.

Full marks to this band for their enterprise in getting a record together. It's not easy these days. It's difficult to take A and R men to task about album content, but I suspect musicians condone the release of hackneyed tunes. A valid criticism of this album and the Graeme Bell album would be lack of imagination in title selection. But it happens all the time in America, too.

Len Barnard



**CLIVE HARRISON**  
"Once Bitten" (RCA VPL1 0390)

The cover of this record is so appallingly tacky, it will discourage all but the most ardent from bothering to listen to it. It is the type of cover you would expect on a 'TV special' collection of love songs: Clive, clutching Maton bass, is standing on a rock beside the foaming surf, with the sun setting on the horizon. Unsmiling, he stares at us intently, while in shocking colour co-ordination, the names of artist and album are proclaimed.

This may seem unimportant, but the point is that some people will like this record, if they bother to listen to the vinyl after witnessing the sleeve.

That 'some people' category is probably a pretty specific one: basically, those who are into the Stanley Clarke/Chick Corea school of music

making, which means lightweight melodies, funk-based rhythms, and extreme technical expertise.

The album was recorded in Sydney just under a year ago, and features superstar Chick Corea himself, soloing on minimoog on three tracks. (Corea, you will remember, was touring at the time.) Whilst this might be a good selling point, it must be observed that in no way does he overshadow the less renowned local players. In fact, on *Bondi Bump*, his solo sounds rather damp beside the fire of Paul Panichi's trumpet.

These occasional waves of solo heat are the saving grace of the album. Listen to drummer Mark Riley's dramatic use of roto toms at the beginning of his foray on *Bondi Bump*; Steve Brien's guitar solo on *The Serpent*; Corea on *Madrid*.

However, the whole is less satisfying, for two reasons. Firstly, the rhythm section tends to play *rhythms* rather than *feels*, and, secondly, the compositions are covering similar ground to the themes of American TV cop shows.

There are two exceptions: a piece admirably titled *The Serpent*, and *Little Girls*. This latter, the standout track, opens with beautiful solo bass from Harrison before settling into a relaxed funk for the head, split between gentle, pretty flute, and raunchy horns (just like little girls, see). Harrison and Riley establish a great bouncy feel, on which Richard Gawned builds a lovely, longish flute solo, that really does travel somewhere.

This record might not make any converts, but for those who like this sort of thing, the playing is just as good as your favourite Yanks.

John Shand



**NEW HARLEM**  
"Live Before a Recorded Audience" (EMI YPRX 1890)

New Harlem includes Chris Ludowyk (tbn and v.), Bob Gilbert (reeds and v.), Sandro Donati (tpt and v.), Chris Farley (bjo, gtr and v.), Bill Morris (tuba) and Richard Opet (dms).



# Record Reviews

From the first bar they drive furiously, basing their music on the classic jazz style of the twenties — Ellington, Luis Russell, Waller, Morton etc. The band plays with a verve and enthusiasm very often missing from many of Australia's professional jazz bands. They can play relaxed and pretty, a good example being *Just a Gigolo*, but the hot dance music of the early big bands is where their tastes seem to lie.

The vocals are one of the strengths of the band. Having five singers out of seven musicians puts them way ahead of most of our local players. We've all heard embarrassingly bad singing when some musician thinks a vocal is necessary and has a go. Not here though; they can sing.

I find myself tempted to compare them with the Red Onions. The same approach to repertoire, playing over or right on the beat and the tight arrangements. Is this a Melbourne style? Ten to fifteen years after the Onions, however, there is a difference. The style has been learnt and assimilated. Chris Ludowyk, for instance, on *Saratoga Shout*, while bowing to J.C. Higginbotham, is obviously his own man.

The Moten-style two-beat. I find a little heavy at times. Why don't these bands listen more to the Morton style of four across two? A few of the numbers suffer from being played too fast to swing, and sound like a race-back versus front line. A minor point though, as the enthusiasm of the band makes up for it.

The New Harlem is innovative within the framework in which they play — the test of creative traditional jazz players. Bill Morris by the way is an ex Red Onion. The artwork and production are excellent, and the cover is the most amusing I've seen in a long while.

Adrian Ford

## THE COMMODORE CLASSICS — 2nd Edition

Reviewed by Clement Semmler

In reviewing the 1st Edition of these Classics in the July/August Edition of JAZZ I wrongly included the Eddie Condon Leiderkranz album which belongs to the 2nd edition of this series. There are ten albums in the 2nd edition (as in the 1st).

As with the 1st edition the span of the 2nd edition is from 1938 to 1946 and again there is the bonus that most of the albums feature alternative "takes" of the various items, most of them never before issued. As before I

will deal chronologically with this cornucopia of jazz riches.

**A Giant of the Tenor Sax** (6.24293) features Chu Berry and his two jazz ensembles on recording dates as far apart as 1938 and 1944, both in New York. Side 1, the Little Jazz Ensemble, (1938) has Berry with Clyde Hart (piano), Danny Barker (gtr), Roy Eldridge (tpt), Art Shapiro (bass) and Sid Catlett (drums).

Berry doesn't seem quite at home in the Milt Gabler original *Sittin' In* which goes at a fast clip, but Eldridge is a stand-out and there's some great playing by Hart, a pianist whom we've heard far too little of in jazz. But Berry hits his straps in the slower moods of *Star Dust* and *Body and Soul*. *Forty-Six West 52* is a Berry-Gabler piece, and though again taken up tempo, here everyone really fires and Berry and Eldridge have stunning solos.

Flip side (The Jazz Ensemble, 1944) has Hot-Lips Page (tpt), Hart, Berry, Al Casey (gtr) Al Morgan (bs) Harry Yaeger (Dms). A more exciting side this, with Page, about whom I have a little to say later, in fine form and blending beautifully with Berry, especially in the opening track, *Blowing Up a Breeze* (their joint composition) where they have a captivating jazz conversation.

*Monday at Minton's* is a sprightly piece on a riffed theme where Hart sets a solid tempo much to the liking of Berry and Page. And on *Gee Baby* there's one of the best Hart solos I've ever heard, as stylish a piece of jazz piano as you'd strike in a month of Mondays.



**Jess Stacy and His Friends** (6.24298) is really a Stacy showcase with a musician or two added here and there and his wife Lee Wiley singing on two tracks.

The side 1 1938 and 1939 tracks are mainly solos, ranging from old standards like *She's Funny That Way* to Stacy originals like *Ec-Stacy* and *The Sell-out*. I've always thought that Stacy has one of the most incisive right hands in all piano jazz; he strikes the keys with such masterly assurance that (as in *The Sell-out*) there's almost an illusion of drums present.

Lee Wiley on Side 2 (1940 and 1944 stars on *Sugar* (one of her best tunes always). There are 5 tracks with drummer Specs Powell (four of them previously unissued) who gives quite a lift and Stacy responds, especially on his originals *Blue Fives* and *Ridin' Easy*.

Next chronologically comes the Condon Leiderkranz session (1939/40) reviewed last issue. And so to an absolutely priceless Jelly Roll Morton



album — titled *Last Band Dates: Hot Six and Hot Seven* (1940 — New York: 6.24546) which includes the last three tracks he ever made commercially.

I make it out that Morton was 55 when he recorded these with ensembles including Henry Allen (tpt), Albert Nicholas (clt), Wellman Braud (bs) and Zutty Singleton (dms). Claude Jones (tromb) sat in on the last three tracks.

Well, Ferdinand Joseph la Menthe Morton claims to have invented jazz, and when you listen to the verve of his singing and exhortations to the band here and his punched out piano, you can well believe it. Frankly I've never heard him play better, and two of the tracks, *Shake It and Dirty, Dirty, Dirty*, will send the blood to your head. Henry "Red" Allen, his New Orleans compatriot, complements Morton superbly and on one of the tracks, *Swinging the Elks*, (which is a Morton original with a march motif) there's a passage between these two grand jazzmen which is the very epitome of what jazz is all about. This is an experience repeated in the last track on Side 2 (*My Home is a Southern Town*) where the two of them obviously play with a deep nostalgia, and very moving it is too. I'm tempted to say that this album is almost worth the price of the set, but that the good things continue in abundance.

Next comes the Bunk Johnson's **Jazz Band: Old New Orleans Jazz 1942** (6.24547). It was recorded in New Orleans when Bunk, by my reckoning was pushing 64. He's assisted by a local band of 6 pieces of whom George Lewis (clt) would be best known. The trumpet, trombone, clarinet, piano, banjo, bass and drums gives very much a New Orleans sound,



with march tunes (*Big Chief Battleaxe*, *Franklin St. Blues*) predominant. A couple of old blues tunes, *Weary Blues* and *Sobbin Blues*, are also essayed in the N.O. manner. Bunk, understandably, doesn't blow his horn with a great deal of flexibility, and the album is probably more valuable for historical reasons than for its music.

There's a most interesting album dubbed Jimmy Ryan's and the Uptown Cafe Society (6.24296) with on one side the De Paris Brothers' Orchestra (Sidney — tpt, Wilbur — tromb, Edmond Hall — clt, Clyde Hart — pno, Bill Taylor — bass, Specs Powell — drums: Rec. N.Y. 1944) and on the other The Edmond Hall Sextet with the imposing line-up of Hall plus Emmett Berry (tpt), Vick Dickenson (tromb), Eddie Heywood (pno), Al Casey (gtr) Bill Taylor (bass) and Sid Catlett (drums).

The De Paris band achieves a strong Dixieland flavour on tunes like *I've Found a New Baby* and *Black and Blue* with Wilbur, not all that often recorded, demonstrating his gutsy threatening sort of trombone style. There's an unusual piece, *Change of Key Boogie*. I don't particularly care for manufactured boogie but this Wilbur De Paris original is really something. Hart shows his great versatility, playing the style as to the manner born and Sydney De Paris and Ed Hall play their best solos on this side.

But the flip side is the surprise packet. Of course, Hall is one of the clarinet greats of jazz and *Man I Love* is a shop window for him.

Eddie Heywood is an absolutely brilliant jazz pianist and in *Downtown Cafe Boogie* he lets loose with some scintillating choruses. *Uptown Cafe Blues* has memorable solos from Dickenson, Heywood and Hall and is easily the best track of the album. Some magic moments there, believe me.

*Tin Roof Blues*, (6.24294) the next album, has George Brunis and His Jazz Band (Wild Bill Davison — tpt, Brunis — tromb., Pee-Wee Russell — clt, Eddie Condon — gtr, Gene Schroeder — pno, Bob Casey — bass, George Wettling — drums: Rec. N.Y. 1943) backed by Wild Bill Davison and His Commodores (Davison, Albert Nicholas — clt, Brunis, Condon, Schroeder, Jack Lesberg — bass, Dave Tough — drums: Rec. N.Y. 1946).

Both groups, of course, are obvious off-shoots from the Condon gang and the music is predictable with Wild Bill's driving horn setting the pace on most tracks. There's a blood-curdling opening with *Royal Garden Blues* where Brunis cuts loose (but PeeWee is almost lyrical) followed by Brunis taking over with solo and vocal in *Ugly Child* and then a most relaxed version of *Tin Roof Blues* which has more than a dash of Aunt Hagar thrown in.

The flip side has a slightly different approach thanks to Nicholas (though he sounds uncannily like PeeWee on a couple of tracks) and the idiosyncratic rhythm contributions of Tough and

Lesberg. *High Society* at a merry pace suits Wild Bill admirably. *Wabash Blues*, at a sprightly tempo, has Nicholas soloing at his best over Tough's cymbals and rimshots pyrotechnics and all in all is the best track on the album.



*Prez and Friends* (6.24292) — the others are Bill Coleman — tpt, Dickie Wells — tromb., Bushkin, John Simmons, Joe Jones — is a complete session by the Kansas City Six. We are told it was recorded on March 28, 1944 between the hours of 12.15 and 3.15 am. Not surprisingly these are genuine jam sessions where melodies like *Three Little Words* and *I Got Rhythm* are treated with cavalier disregard as the jazzmen take over.

It's most exciting jazz, certainly one of the best albums in the set. Lester Young's best solo is in *I Got Rhythm*; Bill Coleman, one of the most reliable trumpet players ever, has some lyrical solos on both sides, and Bushkin shines in his own composition, *Jo-Jo*, based on an entertaining riffed theme. Dickie Wells, one of the all-time trombone greats shows why especially in *Four O'Clock Drag*, a relaxed swinging tune where Bushkin backs him beautifully. Really great stuff, this one.

*I'll Be Seeing You* (6.24291) is a Billie Holiday album with backing by the Eddie Heywood Orchestra (side 1 — Heywood — pno, Doc Cheatham — tpt, Lem Davis — alto, Dickenson — tromb., Simmons and Catlett) and Trio (Heywood, Simmons, Catlett) — both recorded New York, April 1944.

Heywood shows what a magnificent pianist he can be, whether as soloist, in ensemble or as accompanist. Billie at this time was singing as well as she ever did and her version of that lovely Johnny Green ballad, *I'm Yours*, would drop you in your tracks; "chill the blood" as James Lincoln Collier once wrote of her effect on audiences. There's an awful lot of meaning and feeling in lines like "... you used my heart just like a stepping stone." Heywood's orchestra is content to play second fiddle to her all the time, which is as it should be.

The Trio (side 2) backs just as effectively, especially on one of Billie's favourite tunes, *Lover Come Back to*

*Me*, taken at a lovely tempo. On *Billie's Blues* ("I love my man . . .") she sings her heart out with Heywood perfect in the background. This is undoubtedly one of the best Billie Holiday albums ever released.

Finally, there's *Boogie Woogie and Blues* (6.24297), recorded in N.Y. February 1944, featuring pianist Albert Ammons with Hot Lips Page, Don Byas, Vic Dickenson, Israel Crosby (bass) and Sid Catlett on side 1, and as soloist in side 2.

I've always regarded Page highly as a jazz trumpet player; he tends to be underrated by many critics and jazz writers, yet it's worth remembering that he was one of Eddie Condon's first choices when Condon organized his famous Town Hall concerts. There's a mind-blowing passage in *The Breaks* where he plays strophe to Dickenson's antistrophe, and anyhow, Dickenson is one of the best blues trombonists ever. *Blues in the Groove* has a splendid Byas solo. Ammons, though no great stylist, is as solid as a rock in ensembles, and he has a nice duet with Dickenson in *Bottom Blues*.

On his solo side Ammons shows his peculiar galloping technique to advantage on tracks like *Albert's Special Boogie*, and *Bugle Boogie*, but then modifies his style to an attractive blues approach in *Blues on My Mind*.

These albums are, of course, all available separately. But the two sets, attractively boxed, make up, to my mind, a cross section of some of the most enduring music in jazz history. Obviously there's a limit to the number that can be imported and they are therefore not only an investment in listening pleasure but one bound to become a most valuable collectors' item in the future. They should not be missed by any enterprising jazz lover.



### BENNY CARTER (Time-Life STL-J10. 3 records)

Another winner in the *Giants of Jazz* series, this essential set scores an overall very good rating for the music, and even higher as a piece of jazz history. The forty selections from 1929 to 1977 show us Carter from age 22 to just a few days before his 70th birth-

# Record Reviews

day, the most recent piece being the finest in the whole set (*Three Little Words* from Montreux, out of the Pablo album available as World Record Club R10104).

The first four pieces, two led by Don Redman and two 1930 cuts from the Fletcher Henderson band, are ordinary and it is fair to say that Johnny Hodges and Charlie Holmes were more convincing saxophone soloists than than Carter, who really began to fire from 1933 onwards.

The real meat of the set lies in the 33 pieces from *Dee Blues* (1930) to *Cadillac Slim* (1946). They fall into three broad groupings: eight cuts from 1936-38 while Carter was in Europe; twelve tunes by his own big bands 1939-44 and thirteen sundry US small-band tracks which contain the best jazz of all, although not necessarily the best music.

Throughout Benny Carter's magnificent career jazz critics and writers have confused his impeccable musicianship, on display 100% of the time, and his equally impressive jazz qualities, which are often not on display, particularly when Carter the arranger is ascendant. His big bands, always thought of as unlucky, in fact had too strikes against them: they had too much good music and not enough novelty in them for the dancing public; and, at times they had not quite enough driving jazz for us jazz people. There are examples of this variability in the dozen big band sides. *Slow Freight* is a fine train piece to add to the other jazz railway classics, while, best of all, *O.K. For Baby* is a Basieish medium-tempo driving tune sparked by trumpet from Shad Collins. But *Back Bay Boogie* is a seamless, jazzless performance, the only fire being provided by guitarist William Lewis. The notes say of it that "everything has been prepared in advance" — and it sounds like it. Carter's impressive trumpet showpiece *I Surrender Dear* is a showpiece for a great trumpeter, not a great jazz solo performance. And so on, although Carter's writing for saxophone sections always catches the jazz ear.

Carter's chief value to us, as jazz record collectors, lies in the inventive, driving alto saxophone, clarinet and trumpet solos on the casual American small-band dates. Some of these groups went under the generic title of the Chocolate Dandies, and in them we hear top work from trumpeters Bobby Stark (1930), Max Kaminsky (1933), Roy Eldridge (1940) and Buck Clayton (1946); trombonists Jimmy Harrison (1930) Floyd O'Brien (1933) and Al Grey (1946); tenor saxophonists Coleman Hawkins (1930, 1940),

Chu Berry (1933) and Ben Webster (1946), and pianist Teddy Wilson (1933).

There are some gloriously offbeat matchings on other sessions. *Apologies* (1934) has Mezz Mezzrow, Bud Freeman and Willie The Lion Smith! *Twelve Bar Stampede* and *Men of Harlem* from 1937 feature Pete Brown on trumpet and alto saxophone, Bobby Hackett cornet and Joe Marsala clarinet. At one point Carter, Brown and Hackett all play brass instruments! Carter's also on the second of these cuts is outstanding. The poms and Europeans just don't measure up on the 1936-38 items, but Carter and Coleman Hawkins do their stuff superbly.

Benny Carter is a multiple threat. Other gems include perfect alto saxophone solos in Lionel Hampton's *I'm In The Mood For Swing* (1938), and with Art Tatum and Louis Bellson in *Blues in B-Flat* (1954), where he really digs in. His clarinet shines through the first quarter-century of his career, particularly in the big band version of *All of Me* (1940). His best (jazz) trumpet solo in this set is with the Chocolate Dandies in *Once Upon A Time* (1933). Among the top arrangements are *Stardust* (1936) for the American Willie Lewis band in France and the small band *They Say* (1938) with Teddy Wilson and Billie Holiday. This set meshes well with STL-J06, the Coleman Hawkins set.

Niels Nielsen



James P. Johnson

## JAMES P. JOHNSON Giants Of Jazz Series (Time-Life Records)

The latest in Time-Life's Giants of Jazz subscription releases focuses on a musician whose recordings are not as well known as previous artists released in the series.

James P. Johnson is acknowledged as the mentor of Thomas "Fats" Waller and made about fifty five piano rolls and over four hundred record titles during the period 1921 to 1947 yet few but the serious collectors in Australia have more than a handful of recordings by this great artist — the father of stride piano.

Time-Life have rectified this with their three volume set containing forty tracks evenly spread over the three decades 1920, 1930 and 1940. The set includes fifteen solo tracks including *Carolina Shout*, *Keep Off the Grass*, *All That I Had Is Gone*, *Snowy Morning Blues*, *Riffs*, *What Is This Thing Called Love*, *Jingles* and a piano duet with Clarence Williams, *How Could I Be Blue* which features a dialogue between the two in the best black face vaudeville tradition.

Musically James P. Johnson was a big man, well respected by all who knew him. This is reflected by the artists he recorded with. The names read like a jazz Who's Who — Bessie Smith, Perry Bradford, Johnny Dunn, Cootie Williams, Fats Waller, Ethel Waters, Ward Pinkett, Andy Razaf, Pee Wee Russell, Max Kaminsky, Freddie Green, Wellman Braud, Zutty Singleton, Frankie Newton, John Kirby, Cosy Cole, Henry Allen, Jay C. Higginbotham, Pops Foster, Sidney De Paris, Vic Dickenson, Ben Webster, Rod Cless and Omer Simeon.

The usual booklet which accompanies each boxed Time-Life set is always a welcome bonus and the James P. Johnson booklet is of the usual high standard, well researched and informative. The notes on the music were contributed by well known New York pianist Dick Wellstood in collaboration with musicologist Willa Rouder. As usual they are written with an appreciation of the music in mind and highlight the essentials to be heard on the recorded sides.

The biographical notes by Frank Kappler I found a little patronising at times, in spite of the wealth of fact. Kappler was a feature writer, editor and jazz reviewer with years of experience dating from the 1940s which probably accounts for his style. He has contributed to previous Giants of Jazz Biographies and the Time-Life Swing Era Series. As usual the booklet is well illustrated.

The biggest problem with reviewing any of the Time-Life Giants series is that there is little to criticise. The tracks are well mastered and the material carefully selected. Unlike previous issues however this set will have a greater appeal to the serious collector for it includes material not readily available on LP.

What does surprise me is that, in spite of the ready availability of Johnson's piano rolls today, not one example was included, particularly as the notes devote so much space to this part of Johnson's early career and even reproduce an advertisement for his *Arkansas Blues* on QRS No 1670.

Each track has been lovingly selected and naturally includes some fairly common material such as Bessie Smith's *Back Water Blues* and *Preachin' The Blues*, some of the earlier piano solos and the previously unissued band items from March 1939 which are still around on a CBS LP. Not that it really matters for *Hungry Blues*



from James P's one act opera *De Organiser* with a great vocal from Anna Robinson deserves better exposure. For many years I suspected that this might be a Billie Holiday item using Anna Robinson's name for contractual reasons. — That's how good I think it is.

The other band tracks from the late 1930s and 1940s team James P with a variety of New York musicians. If we selected the sides on personnel alone the more mouldy minded jazz collector would give them a miss. Not so when you hear the music. Frankie Newton, *Rosetta*, *Who* and *Hesitation Blues* which features Johnson's only recorded vocal; Sterling Bose, *Pallet on The Floor* and Sidney De Paris, *At The Ball* fit Johnson's style like a glove, for all the while the mastery of this great pianist shines through, now softly, now striding but always present, welding the performances together. Dick Wellstood tells it as it is at great length, almost bar by bar, in the music notes section of the booklet. I can take a lot of Wellstood's analytical essays on piano jazz.

There are no low spots on this Time-Life set, only highlights. Such as *Lucy Long* by the Original Jazz Hounds with vocal by the session organiser Perry Bradford. In spite of Time-Life's claim this track of take 3 was issued before on LP, legally, in Britain on the VJM label.

The rare Blue Note solo recordings of *Carolina Balmoral*, *Mule Walk*, *Arkansaw* (sic) *Blues* and the band version of *After You've Gone* are included and may hopefully prod someone into re-releasing the whole Blue Note set someday.

I also find myself replaying the unusual solo, *Blueberry Rhyme* made for Columbia in June 1939 and unissued until the special CBS issue mentioned earlier.

Time-Life have excelled themselves once again with this release. Remastering and production are of their usual high standard and this boxed set should be on every shelf.

Bill Haesler



## JOHNNY DYANI QUARTET "Mbizo" (SteepleChase Records SCS-1163)

*Personnel: Dudo Pukwana; alto and soprano sax; Ed Epstein; alto and baritone sax; Johnny Dyani, bass; Churchill Jolobe, drums.*

Johnny Dyani is a Xhosa tribesman from South Africa. In 1964 he left his homeland with Chris McGregor's Blue Notes to play at the Antibes Jazz Festival. As with the other members of the band, McGregor, Dudo Pukwana, Louis Mohole, and the late Mongesi Feze, he opted to remain in Europe rather than return to apartheid South Africa. As Dyani has said, "South Africa is heaven and hell . . . You have to be like some animal, they hunt you, man . . . Now we have to run out, we have a chance, we have to take the plane or boat and go somewhere else, where they call it free. I would like to go back to South Africa because that's where life is for me. That's where the music is, where all I know is. Everything I need is there really, you know, I'm just a tourist here."

To understand the anguish that Dyani suffers as a result of his being cut off from his home and family is a necessary prelude to understanding his music. This, combined with the very real problem of trying to make a living playing free jazz has had a devastating effect on the lives of Dyani and his fellow expatriate South Africans. In 1975, the trumpet player Mongesi Feza suffered a nervous breakdown, was sent to a public institution in London where he caught double pneumonia, lay unattended and died. Dyani says, "I went through what Mongesi went through, but I was stronger I guess . . . Mongesi was much quieter, he would lower himself, take it inside him . . . Mongesi died with nothing, yet Don Cherry still talks about him in a very honoured way."

Dyani, like Pukwana, Moholo and other black South Africans living in Europe and Britain have missed out on the international recognition and financial security fellow expatriots Dollar Brand and Hugh Masekela have gained living in America. Dyani explains, "It's very easy for me to work in America. McCoy (Tyner) wanted me to stay. I had all sorts of offers from musicians . . . Don Cherry, Booker Evan and Wes Montgomery had told me before that if I went to America the way I played — the way Dudo, Louis and Mongesi played — it would be easy for us. I guess that's where we belong, but it would not be healthy to live there . . . New York is just like Johannesburg — you can't trust what is going to happen to you."

Dyani sees the development of a free music in America and Africa as a sort of parallel evolution: "When I was in New York I got to play with McCoy

Tyner. He plays music from South Africa — he doesn't know he does it, but he does . . . It happened in America and started with Eric Dolphy. The Americans didn't copy the Africans: it was a twin thing. They grew up towards the same point."

Dyani's bass playing is comparable to Americans Reggie Workman, Henry Grimes, and Cecil McBee, yet he is less well known. He has performed with Archie Shepp, Dollar Brand, Don Cherry, Evan Parker, Steve Lacy, Peter Lemer and Turkish drummer Okay Temiz, to name but a few. Charles Mingus was keen to record a duet album with him, but Dyani could not get the money together to do it. Dyani has been living in Copenhagen since 1972 and makes occasional forays to England to play with McGregor, Pukwana and others.

*Mbizo* was recorded at the Third Eye Centre in Glasgow, Scotland in February, 1981. Of the four tracks on the album, three are Dyani compositions and the other is by Pukwana. The whole album really fires, with every member of the band extending themselves. All four performers display a remarkable empathy resulting in a union that is at times quite breathtaking. This is the best I've ever heard Pukwana, with the possible exception of the *Blue Notes for Mongesi* album. He really is a sax player who is "up there with the best of them". The interplay between Pukwana and Epstein is a joy to behold.

Churchill Jolobe is a fine South African drummer who has been playing in various bands of Dyani's for many years. He is less pushy than Louis Moholo, and to my mind a little more sensitive. Certainly his playing is beautifully suited to the quartet context — more so than on Pukwana's recent big band album *Zila*. Whereas Moholo seems to work best powering behind a large ensemble, the contrary appears to be true of Jolobe.

The rapport achieved between Jolobe and Dyani results from a very special sympathy. As Dyani has said, "I have a problem with drummers . . . I need someone from my own country, but then I'm into that kind of thing." And as for Dyani's bass playing . . . it is remarkably lyrical, often humorous, and always passionate. It ranges from the melodic sensitivity of Charlie Haden (particularly during his unaccompanied solo on *Musician's Musician*) to the energy and momentum of Harry Miller.

Certainly the long track *Musician's Musician* is the *piece de resistance* of the album. The title appears to refer to Mongesi Feza. Midway through the number, a woman in the audience begins to shout, "Tell me, how did he die?" Jolobe shouts back, "They killed him." "He died in hospital," asserts the woman. "They killed him in Africa!" insists Jolobe.

Tony Wellington

# ...and we've also heard

By Dick Scott\*

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travel to the USA and hear the great jazz performers in the company of other Australian jazz enthusiasts. John Whiting, a keen jazz musician himself, is a friendly gentleman who tells us that he has free accommodation at his house at Kinka Beach for any jazz musicians who might wish to have a week or a few days holiday in sunny Queensland (Kinka Beach is near Yeppoon). He can be contacted at Lot 3, Cool Waters Esplanade, Kinka Beach Q. 4703. Enquiries on the planned jazz tour of the USA can also be answered at JAZZ Magazine. Phone (02) 560-4449.

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MEL LEWIS

Mel Lewis and the Big Band, *by Lee Jeske*  
 Art Pepper Retrospective, *by Neville Meyers and Niels Nielsen*  
 Errol Buddle and The Australian Jazz Quintet, *by Eric Myers*  
 Ian Neil's Grace Notes  
 The El Rocco Era in Sydney Jazz, *by Bruce Johnson*  
 Mike Bartolomei, Brent Stanton and Graham Jesse talk about the New York Experience  
 Dave Dallwitz: The Creation of a Myth, *by Norm Linehan*  
 Scappel From The Apple, *by Lee Jeske*  
 Book Reviews, Concert Reviews, Record Reviews  
 The Merv Acheson Story (Part 6)  
 Reports from . . . *Australia and overseas . . . and much more!*

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**PERFORMANCES**

**DICK MONTZ JAZZ ORCHESTRA.** Friday, November 12, Sutherland Civic Centre, Sydney. 8 pm. Tickets \$8, \$6 concessions, available from Cronulla Sports Complex. Phone 523-5842. Sponsored by Cronulla Surf Lifesaving Club.

**DICK MONTZ JAZZ ORCHESTRA,** featuring Julian Lee. Friday November 19, Earlwood-Bardwell Park RSL. \$10 for 3-course meal plus show. Enquiries Sydney 599-7420.

**TUITION**

**DRUM TUITION.** Alan Turnbull, Sydney. Phone (02) 398-2487.

**JAZZ IMPROVISATION, COMPOSITION AND DOUBLE BASS LESSONS.** Both in Sydney and Bathurst districts. Contact Bruce Cale at Sydney (02) 560-449 or Bathurst district (063) 593138. Bruce Cale will also accept students from anywhere within Australia on the principle of lessons by cassette tape. Those interested please write c/- PO Hampton, NSW, 2790.

**PHOTOGRAPHS**

**NORMAN LINEHAN JAZZ PHOTOGRAPHER.** Photographs available from library or to your order. Phone Sydney (02) 30-7395 or write 55 O'Donnell St, North Bondi 2026.

**JANE MARCH JAZZ PHOTOGRAPHY.** Prints of local and overseas jazz musicians. Adderley to Zavod. Phone (02) 938-2180. 27 Wyadra Av, Harbord 2096.

**NEW AUSTRALIAN RELEASES**

**CLIVE HARRISON: ONCE BITTEN (RCA VPLI 0390).** Brilliant jazz/rock fusion from Harrison (bass), Paul Panichi (trt), Richard Gawned (reeds), Steve Brien (gtr), Jay Stewart (pno) and Mark Riley (drs). Special guest Chick Corea plays on three tracks. Says our reviewer John Shand: ". . . for those who like this sort of thing, the playing is just as good as your favourite 'Yanks'".

**ORIGINAL FRESHIE JAZZ BAND: SURF, SUN AND ALL THAT JAZZ (EMI Custom YPRX 1950).** An album of good time music, well played by one of Sydney's more happy-go-lucky mainstream/Dixieland bands. Many people will find James Morrison's presence on many of the tracks the most interesting aspect of the LP. Our reviewer Len Barnard says: "Strutting white jazz with a good 'laid-back' feel."

**GOIN' TO TOWN WITH LUIS RUSSELL (Antipodisc AD 14449).** Re-issue of tracks recorded by Luis Russell and his orchestra. Says our reviewer Bruce Johnson: "We should . . . applaud the enterprise of this new Australian label in making available the complete issued sequence of recordings from October 24, 1930, to August 8, 1934, plus Gingersnaps from 1929". If you have trouble locating this LP, contact Tony Baldwin of Antipodisc, PO Box 331, Neutral Bay, 2089.

**GRAEME BELL IN HOLLAND (Sea Horse SHL 004).** An enterprising LP of Dixieland jazz from the Graeme Bell All Stars, recorded live in Holland in mid-1981, when the band was in Europe to perform at the Breda Traditional Jazz Festival. Our reviewer Len Barnard says: "A good set. The music throughout is excellent. G.B. is, as ever, a thorough professional — always entertaining."

**JAZZ AT THE SYDNEY BUSINESS & FOOTBALL CLUB 204 PITT ST, CITY.**

28 November  
**ROGER JANES BAND**

5 December  
**ERIC HOLROYD'S TRIANGLE JAZZ BAND**

12 December  
**PURPLE GRAPE JAZZ BAND**

19 December  
**ABBEY JAZZ BAND**

**FOOD AVAILABLE**  
**Enquiries:**  
**267 6083**

**RECORDS**

**MOSTLY JAZZ: SPECIALIST JAZZ RECORD SHOP IN MELBOURNE,** 94 St. Kilda Road, St. Kilda Vic 3182. Postal address: PO Box 342, Elsternwick, Vic 3185. Phone (03) 51-5240. Shop hours: Wed-Thurs 5-7.30 pm, Fri 5-9 pm, Sat 10-2 pm.

**WANTED.** Ray Charles LP which includes versions of A Rainy Night in Georgia and Never Ending Song of Love. Name of LP unknown. Phone Sydney (02) 560-4449, or write Margaret Sullivan, 67 Macauley Street, Leichhardt NSW 2040.

**SKAT JAZZ RECORDS.** Sydney's leading specialist jazz records store. 119 York Street, Sydney. Formerly Blues and Fugues, Sydney Square Arcade. Enquiries Saville Kapelus (02) 29-1126.



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Georgie Fame



# The Merv Acheson Story

(Part 5)

At last my trial came up at the grim old Darlinghurst Courthouse . . . I appeared in army jungle green shirt and trousers and all my military regalia, even though my temporary discharge allowed me to wear civilian clothes. This was agreed between my lawyer and myself because we thought the serviceman appearance might favourably impress the jury.

However, when I saw the blank countenances of the very middle class (and very square) jury I was not so sure. The Crown called all the witnesses and their names read like a roll call of the top jazzmen of the day. They included Ade Monsborough, Ray Price, the trombonist Jack Parks, the blind multi-instrumentalist Dick Jackson, the jazz promoter Harvey Bruce and the record producer Eric Dunn. All are now dead except Monsborough and Price.

At one stage Judge Holt, who was presiding, said to the Crown Prosecutor, "Why do all these witnesses produced by the Crown called the accused Merv? Why can't they call him 'the accused' as is proper in a court of law?"

All charges except the one of wounding had been dropped in a lower court, so that was the only one the jury had to consider. The jury eventually brought in a verdict of guilty with a recommendation for mercy.

Then came the worst ordeal of the whole business. I was remanded in custody for several days while the judge considered his sentence. Prisoners remanded in this way had nothing to do all day except sit in a yard with brick walls on three sides, bars on the front and bars and mesh forming the roof. Penned up this way with no inkling of what the sentence was going to be, was the most nerve wracking period in my life. As the law stood at that time I could have drawn anything from a good behaviour bond, which would mean immediate release, to seven years.

The day came when I went back to court. This time there was no jury, no lawyers, just the judge, very solemn in his black robes and the court officials. He gave me a lecture during which I can remember him saying "This could have been much more serious. You were apparently so drunk that you hardly knew or cared what was going on, or realised what your actions could lead to. However, in law, drunkenness is no excuse. People have to learn that they cannot go around doing these things."



*Merv Acheson at the Windsor Castle Hotel, Sydney, 1969.*

He then sentenced me to nine months. I was highly pleased with this sentence which was not nearly as severe as it could have been, and would not only clear up the shooting, but get me an automatic discharge from the army. It must be remembered that I was still officially a soldier and if I had been acquitted or granted a bond the army would have claimed me and tried to send me back to that jungle training camp in Queensland, or somewhere just as bad.

Much is written these days about the comforts and even luxuries available to prisoners in NSW jails. We read about their colour TV sets, carpets in the cells, varied menus, study courses, outside telephone calls, day leave, work release programs, unlimited mail, canteens, and all the rest. There was nothing like that in 1945.

The jail was there as a punishment centre and that is exactly what it was — grim, cold, draughty, with no amenities, little food, primitive workshops, restriction of inmates to their own yard and cellblock, very limited mail, one visitor a month and strict discipline.

On being booked in, photographed and fingerprinted, prisoners were issued with a shirt, a pair of trousers and jacket in coarse grey material, a belt, a hat made from an old cut down army hat, and a pair of worn discarded army boots. No underclothes or socks were provided even in the middle of winter. The jacket bore on the back and left front a large white oval patch with the prisoner's number on it. It was explained to me by other unfortunates that

these white ovals made very practical targets for the warders to shoot at if anyone attempted to go over the wall. Unlike today when the men wear their own clothing in jail all personal effects were taken away, even handkerchiefs.

There was not the overcrowding there is today, and each man had his own cell, a bit bigger than the average bathroom. These cells had no toilets, no taps and no heating. There was a hammock, slung wall to wall, blankets, a small, rough table and stool, a couple of wall shelves, a bucket, a water jug and a strip of coarse matting. A clean shirt was thrown through the door once a week and two weekly showers with tepid water at best were allowed. Library books and magazines were issued once a week, all of ancient vintage and all with pages missing. This was because no toilet paper was supplied.

Meals were terrible. In the morning a tin plate of hominy, a kind of gooey porridge without milk, a mug of lukewarm black tea, and a couple of tiny paper containers of brown sugar which had to last you all day. This exact meal was repeated in the evening while at midday there was a (supposedly) hot dinner (which had been standing in canisters on a barrow in the cell block yard for anything up to an hour before being doled out). This dinner consisted of perhaps a potato, a piece of pumpkin or a few beans and a minute piece of meat, all swamped in watery gravy. What saved the day was the bread, a large loaf every day of excellent quality because the jail bakery supplied a number of hospitals and other Government institutions.

A ration of tobacco and cigarette papers was distributed every week. I was lucky that I didn't smoke, because I soon learned that tobacco was currency and could be bartered with the kitchen staff for food. After that I was never hungry for the rest of my sentence.

Another way to get better food was to volunteer to work, so I did this and got a job painting army tin helmets green — whatever for I'll never know.

One of the horrors of jail was the Saturday afternoon amateur concerts held in the church which also doubled as the recreation hall. During winter months this was the only place that was warm, and the alternative was walking about a large barred yard, in the cold, like animals in a zoo.

These concerts were put on by well-meaning amateur musical societies from the Sydney suburbs which played the various jails in rotation. They usually opened with Mrs. Bloggs, the voluntary accompanist, belting out a selection of her own favourite pieces on the tinny piano with many fumbles, tempo changes and wrong notes. This would be followed by a fat basso booming *Asleep In The Deep* or *Cockles and Mussels*, then the ever present Shirley Temple act with the *Good Ship Lollypop* and a hopping, skipping, stopping, starting attempt at tap dancing. Most excruciating of all were the comperes and comedians with their worn old patter trying to make men laugh who had spent years in jail living under miserable conditions.

I don't think anyone ever told these do-gooders that the men only came to the show to get in out of the cold.

There came the day that I was called to the office and told that I was being transferred. This was routine and happened all the time. I was taken to Goulburn jail but I was only there for a short time, before being transferred to Emu Plains Prison Farm.

All this led to an incident a few years back when I was riding in pianist David Stevens's car to a gig in Canberra. We passed through Goulburn and I was asked what the large stone building on the hill was. He replied that it was the jail and looked at me very peculiarly when I told him I had never seen it from the outside. This was true as I had entered and left it in an enclosed black maria.

Emu Plains was quite different to the maximum security institutions. It was a proper farm with the inmates living in

little huts like gypsy caravans without wheels. The meals were enormous and good; everything needed was produced right there.

My work there consisted of digging up huge fields, making garden beds and planting shallots. I must have planted thousands of these abominable weeds and have never looked at a shallot since.

One of my workmates there was the late Chicka Reeves (gunned to death a couple of years ago at Port Kembla). One day the warder in charge of the gardens pointed out a *huge* field to use and said to plant that one next. Chicka said "What? All that?" The warder replied "You've got plenty of time, son."

There were a few amateur musicians in the camp so I applied for permission to bring my instruments in and to form a band. This was granted and we started off with piano, bass, drums, a vocalist and myself. It was not a good band as the others were only learners, but we practised diligently on Saturday afternoons and in about three weeks gave an hour concert in the recreation hall on Sunday. It was a great success with even the jail Governor and the duty warders applauding.

After that, these concerts became a regular thing. One of the top warders was an elderly Irishman who was soon to retire and take a holiday in his native land. He never failed to ask for traditional Irish songs like *The Mountains of Morn* and *Take Me Home Again Kathleen*, so I had a book of these airs sent in, and played them for him regularly. In return there was always a parcel of cakes, sandwiches and assorted delicacies made up by his wife.

My time to leave came well before it was due, because in addition to the usual remission for good behaviour, the war had ended in both Europe and the Pacific and for each of these was an extra remission of sentence.

On the way out the gate the head warder called me over and said "You've made a great difference to the entertainment here, and done a fine job with the band. If ever you get into trouble again, tell them to get in touch with me; you've got a job here for life. I'm only sorry you can't stay longer this time."

I told him thanks very much, but I had some very nice offers on the outside more to my liking. Both the nightclub proprietor Ollie Ward and the theatre and nightclub bandleader George Trevare had written offering me jobs.

During my time in the various prison establishments I saw only one nasty incident when a man who had done more than 30 years for murdering members of his family with poison and was obviously stir crazy, attacked a young lad in the showers. He was quickly pulled away by other prisoners.

There was none of the homosexuality, riotous behaviour, drug murders and bashings among the inmates that we hear of now, perhaps because a great many prisoners were soldiers in for purely military crimes, after being tried by Court Martial, not by civil authorities. This is not generally known today, but the military detention camps were crowded and soldiers who received 12 months or more and a discharge usually went to civil jails where they were treated the same as everyone else.

While at Emu Plains I had received my military discharge papers and a bankbook containing over 100 pounds in deferred army pay, a considerable sum in 1945 and probably in spending power equal to \$3,000 today.

I had also been measured by army tailors for one of the corny civilian suits issued to discharged servicemen, but I did not bother to pick this up. I had plenty of hip drape clothes at home.

Next issue: The coming out party, working the post-war theatres, nightclubs and jazz clubs.





MEL LEWIS

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### NEW AUSTRALIAN RELEASES

**CLIVE HARRISON: ONCE BITTEN (RCA VPLI 0390).** Brilliant jazz/rock fusion from Harrison (bass), Paul Panichi (trt), Richard Gawned (reeds), Steve Brien (gtr), Jay Stewart (pno) and Mark Riley (drs). Special guest Chick Corea plays on three tracks. Says our reviewer John Shand: ". . . for those who like this sort of thing, the playing is just as good as your favourite Yanks".

**ORIGINAL FRESHIE JAZZ BAND: SURF, SUN AND ALL THAT JAZZ (EMI Custom YPRX 1950).** An album of good time music, well played by one of Sydney's more happy-go-lucky mainstream/Dixieland bands. Many people will find James Morrison's presence on many of the tracks the most interesting aspect of the LP. Our reviewer Len Barnard says: "Strutting white jazz with a good 'laid-back' feel."

**GOIN' TO TOWN WITH LUIS RUSSELL (Antipodisc AD 1449).** Re-issue of tracks recorded by Luis Russell and his orchestra. Says our reviewer Bruce Johnson: "We should . . . applaud the enterprise of this new Australian label in making available the complete issued sequence of recordings from October 24, 1930, to August 8, 1934, plus Gingersnaps from 1929". If you have trouble locating this LP, contact Tony Baldwin of Antipodisc, PO Box 331, Neutral Bay, 2089.

**GRAEME BELL IN HOLLAND (Sea Horse SHL 004).** An enterprising LP of Dixieland jazz from the Graeme Bell All Stars, recorded live in Holland in mid-1981, when the band was in Europe to perform at the Breda Traditional Jazz Festival. Our reviewer Len Barnard says: "A good set. The music throughout is excellent. G.B. is, as ever, a thorough professional — always entertaining."

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**WANTED.** Ray Charles LP which includes versions of A Rainy Night in Georgia and Never Ending Song of Love. Name of LP unknown. Phone Sydney (02) 560-4449, or write Margaret Sullivan, 67 Macauley Street, Leichhardt NSW 2040.

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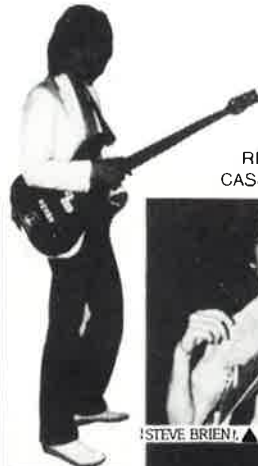
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