JAZZ

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The Australasian contemporary Music Magazine

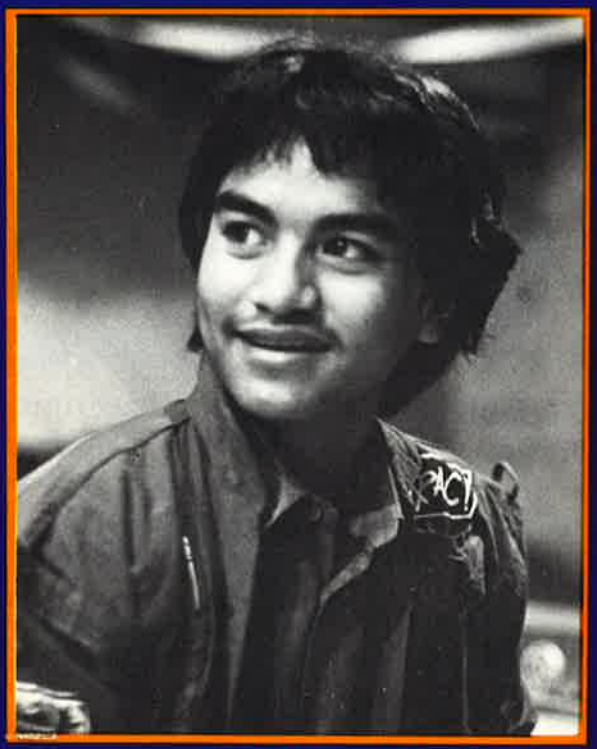
CHARLIE PARKER:

Two Perspectives

INDRA LESMANA

and

CHILDREN OF FANTASY



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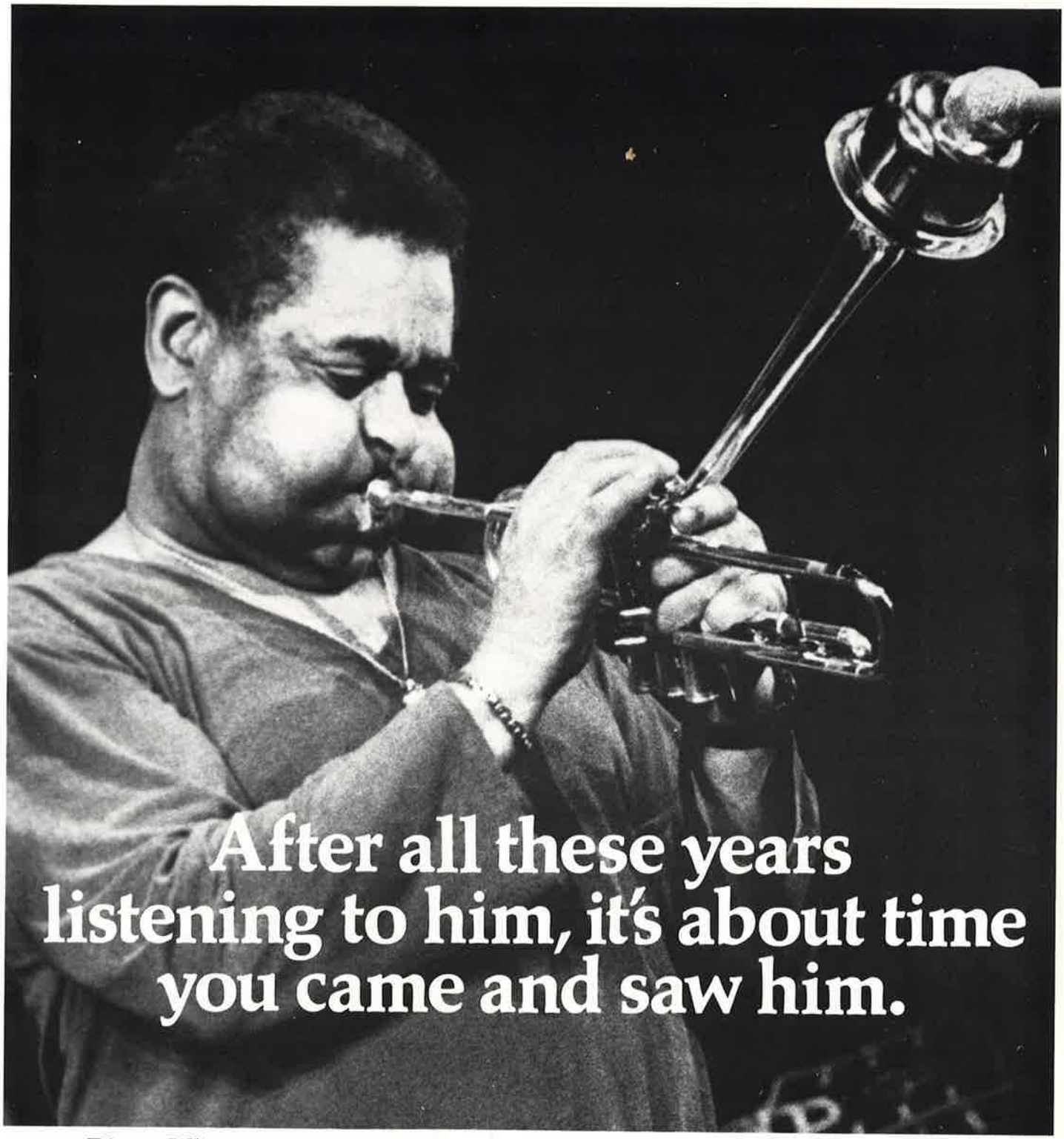

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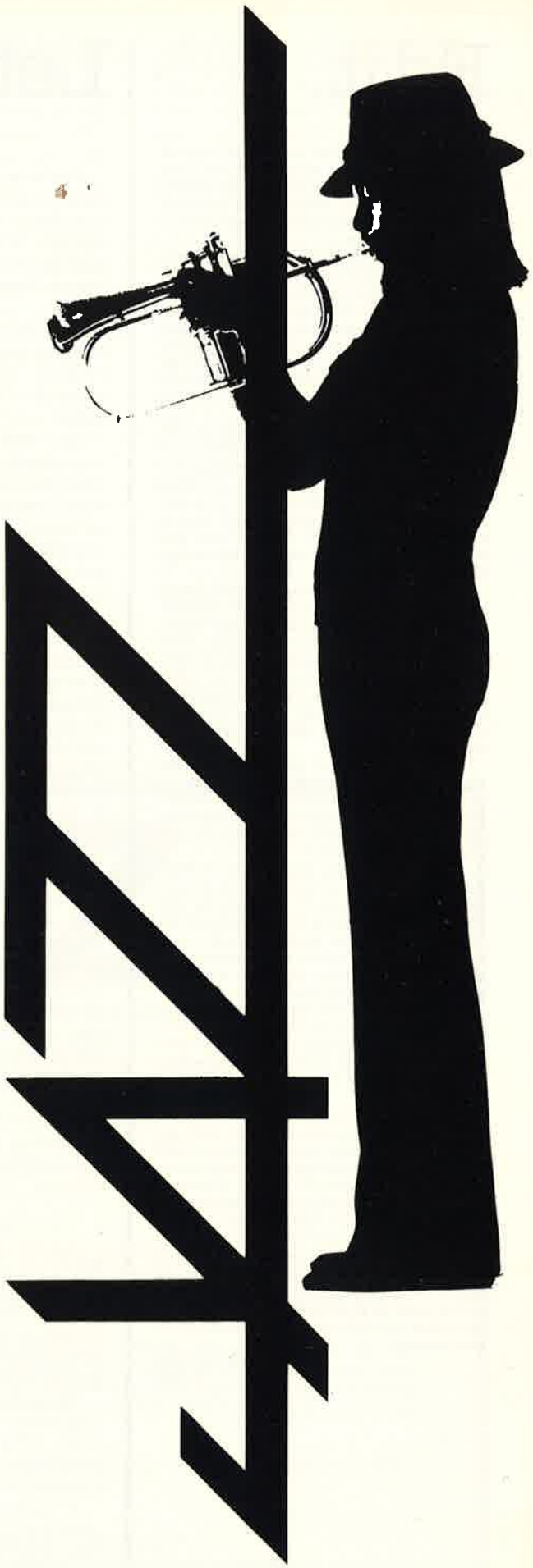


Edit.

At JAZZ Magazine we do not wish to stress the negative aspects of the jazz world. Still, it is true that in the recent past a number of unfortunate disasters have brought little credit on jazz promotion in this country.

Early in 1982 the Summer Jazz Clinics and related public concerts promoted by Mr Greg Quigley's Australian Jazz Foundation crashed. A number of Sydney musicians were not paid for their performances at the last Sydney Jazz Festival, and there is an unconfirmed rumour that the American saxophonist Johnny Griffin is still owed in the vicinity of $7,000.

According to a recent article in the Sydney Morning Herald, the promoters of the last Peter Stuyvesant International Music Festival, held in Sydney and Melbourne in February/March 1982, now owe $100,000 to various creditors, and there is a dispute between Mr Peter Korda and Peter Stuyvesant as to who is responsible for the debts.

It should be noted that the SMH article was misleading to the extent that its heading referred to the Festival as a "jazz fest". In fact, the Festival included very little jazz, and lost most heavily on the middle-of-the-road attractions such as Rod McKuen and Tommy Tycho's Orchestra with Jackie Love. Chick Corea, the only major jazz attraction, did very good business.

It is tempting to suggest that if Mr Korda had stayed with jazz, instead of venturing into so-called "commercial" areas of music, he might have repeated the successes of 1980 and 1981, when he put on genuine jazz festivals.

Shortly after the Stuyvesant festival, Australian jazz fans were shocked to hear that imminent tours of Australia by the Phil Woods Quartet and the Concord All Stars were cancelled at the eleventh hour, due to the mysterious disappearance of the promoter Mr Peter Noble, of the International Concert Connection.

Against this background, we note that Mr Barry Ward and Mr Peter Brendle, two experienced promoters, have taken over the jazz education reins, and are conducting the Summer Jazz Clinics in Sydney next January.

With financial support from the Music Board of the Australia Council, they are bringing out the Mel Lewis Orchestra from New York, and other jazz stars and educators Professor David Baker, Eberhard Weber, John Scofield and Mark Murphy.

JAZZ Magazine wishes them well in this venture and trusts that they use their vast experience to ensure that the events are successful. The jazz world can ill afford another debacle, and many of us will be looking to Mr Brendle and Mr Ward to restore confidence in jazz promotion in this country.

ERIC MYERS
Editor

Letters

Sir,

Criticism, in my opinion, is indeed an art form, for it reflects and sometimes substantiates the writer's opinion, emotions and the subject's manifestation. But unlike art, which is superfluous other than its aesthetic qualities, criticism serves to emancipate its subject's immobility, enabling it to reproduce and possibly progress to new heights. This is imperative for the survival of any art form.

We need Mr Lee Jeske and his sometimes predominant views. We need to have a constant flow of American and European jazz artists to visit here. No longer can we remain isolated from the source of our art form. Although America is the matrix of our music, jazz now belongs to the world and it is peremptory that we reach world standards. If we can attain these results only with a few contemptuous remarks on our achievements, so be it. Let us not defend our ignorance and shortcomings. Let us not be too arogant in accepting constructive criticism from a man working and living in the heart of jazz.

It is true that Mr Jeske was only in Australia for a brief period of time and missed some of our finest music, and in some cases, heard our musicians only once. But then again, does one have to consume a full bottle of wine to come to the conclusion that it is not quite up to standard? Let us be open to education and criticism and receive it in the sincerity in which it was meant. Let us not be an anachronism through our own ignorance.

As for Mr Lemke's position, his drumming speaks for itself, and in my opinion needs no laudatory defence.

CARY BENNETT,
Harbord, NSW

Sir,

The fact that you are no longer writing for the Sydney Morning Herald is a sad loss for those of us who love jazz and want to see it respected in the newspapers.

In a city that has seen very little competent jazz criticism over the years, I felt we at last had an intelligent and considered jazz writer with a major newspaper.

I welcomed your constructive comments on our Australian musicians. You had the ability to put their efforts in the context of jazz internationally, while not forgetting what is distinctively Australian about the music here.

Our loss is also the Sydney Morning Herald's loss. Your successor Mr David Lin is a lightweight whose ignorance of what jazz is all about is right there on the page for everyone to see. In his recent review of the Graeme Bell band he invented "trad ragtime" – a term which I have never seen before in years of reading about jazz.

How a serious newspaper could entrust the job of writing on serious music to such a man is beyond me. Would they ask a critic who knows nothing about the arts to write on the opera or the theatre?

MICHAEL DUNN
Bondi, NSW

Sir,

While I am a devoted fan of Ian Neil, I feel I must take issue with the closing section of his tribute to the late Art Pepper (JAZZ, July/August 1982).

To summarise Pepper's playing, in one sentence, as being that of a disciple of Parker, then of Coltrane, is to take an extremely narrow, if not erroneous view of the great altoist's music.

According to the sleeve notes of many of his albums, and his autobiography *Straight Life*, Pepper's idol and inspiration was Lester Young and his greatest influence Zoot Sims. Reminiscing about the early 50s, Art states that although he enjoyed Parker's music, he was determined to develop his own style, incorporating Young's tone.

Even at the end of his career, his approach was still a melodic, as opposed to a harmonic, one e.g. listen to the contrast between his playing and that of Sonny Stitt on the two Atlas issues reviewed in your July/August issue.

For evidence of the Sims influence, listen to Art's tenor playing on two of his own favourite albums *Art Pepper Plus Eleven* (Contemporary) and Barney Kessel's *Some Like It Hot* (Contemporary).

BRIAN MATTHEWS
Shepparton, Victoria

Ian Neil replies: Brian Matthews does well, in his excellent letter, to take issue with me over the "disciple of Parker, then of Coltrane" statement in the Art Pepper par. But he does ill to accuse me of taking "an extremely narrow, if not erroneous view" of Pepper's art. Had I been writing a profile of Pepper or a

critical appreciation of his work, the point at issue would not have arisen, because Pepper's relationship to both Parker and Coltrane would have been dealt with fully. Pepper was always original and over the years his style broadened and developed. But he was **never** *an innovator like Konitz (another influence), Parker and Coltrane. Most great artists, consciously or unconsciously, absorb the best of fellow artists. Pepper, always "searching for something", was no exception. My reference to Parker and Coltrane was intended to acknowledge the influence of two of the greatest innovators on the mature Pepper, in whose playing something of Parker's harmonic and rhythmic complexities and Coltrane's darker, harsher qualities can be heard. I assumed -- always dangerous -- readers would get the point. I was obscure, and it will not happen again.*

Sir,

I read Geoff Maddox's "inaugural article" on jazz education (JAZZ July/August 1982) with absolute disbelief. How could anyone claiming to be a journalist be so self-centred as to devote a good two-thirds of an article to promoting himself in the most blatant and immodest way? The remainder, liberally sprinkled with the word "I", seems not to contain facts but is derived from vague opinion. As to the charge that Australians suffer from "jazz ignorance", is this to suggest all jazz produced here in the past has been a product of ignorance?

Hopefully this article is not an example of future standards as I've found your magazine always enjoyable and informative.

GEOFF O'REGAN,
Darlinghurst, NSW

Sir,

As I leafed through my July/August issue of JAZZ, my fingers went into spasm as I reached pages 20-21. Was the decision to employ Geoff Maddox a subtle ruse to throw the critics of the magazine into utter confusion, or was it simply in retaliation for your sacking from the Sydney Morning Herald?

I was disappointed that Mr Maddox swept a lot of dirty issues under the carpet, thus closing the closet door on a number of naked skeletons. It's true that Rome wasn't built in a day, but so weren't a lot of other cities.

Why wasn't the important (albeit subliminal) role of Lawrence Welk as a jazz educator discussed? Secondly, I was most annoyed that Mr Maddox gave excessive space to his invention of the Foetal Phone and completely ignored my invention of the Final Phone. For those few readers who have not heard of this latter invention, it consists of a sensor attached to the heart and coupled to a device similar to the Walkman cassette player. When the wearer's heart is playing its final cadenza, the device plays the appropriate jazz tune directly into the subconscious, thus escorting the neophyte deceased out of this vale with style. (By the way, Mr Maddox, style does not consist in sending two-year old pianists out to play club gigs.)

My last complaint (for now) has to do with the wishy-washy list of topics for future articles. After all, Mr Maddox, for most of us, jazz and necrophilia is not a dead issue.

ART RAICHE,
Greenwich, NSW

Editor's Note: Art Raiche has a jazz program 'Bebop and Beyond' every Saturday at 11 am on Sydney's 2MBS-FM.

CHILDREN OF FANTASY in INDONESIA

By Eric Myers

The Children of Fantasy tour of Indonesia was sponsored by Garuda Indonesian Airways, Multi Bintang Indonesia (Bintang Beer), the Jakarta Mandarin Hotel, P.T. Tritunggal Kristal (Kristal Productions) and the Kayu Api Bar and Restaurant, Bali. Eric Myers accompanied the tour as a guest of P.T. Tritunggal Kristal, Jakarta.

It is not unusual for brilliant jazz musicians to emerge at an early age. At 16 Stan Getz was already a virtuoso saxophonist and playing in a band with Jack Teagarden; our own Don Burrows was an outstanding player in his teens and celebrated his sixteenth birthday working at the Roosevelt Club in Sydney's King's Cross.

Therefore, one has to be careful not to over-estimate the talents of 16-year-old Indra Lesmana, the young Indonesian keyboards player and composer now living in Sydney. During the recent tour of Indonesia with his group Children of Fantasy, the word "genius" came up occasionally and I must say it made me feel uneasy. Despite the young man's great gifts, this description is somewhat premature.

Still, since he came to Australia in 1979 Indra Lesmana has had his share of fulsome praise. Even at 13 he was sounding like a seasoned and advanced jazz pianist. Don Burrows has said: "I have never seen a kid who plays with such maturity. He is a super pianist and a great composer." The American jazz educator Professor David Baker has said: "He is a monster . . . and one in a million."

When Leonard Feather was in Sydney in January 1980 for the first Sydney International Music Festival he heard Indra and his father Jack Lesmana playing at The Basement. He was highly impressed by the baby-faced 13-year-old. "The high spot of my visit to that crowded, humid and happy room occurred when the amazing Indra Lesmana sat in, along with his father the guitarist Jack Lesmana," wrote Feather later in the magazine *Encore*. "The youngster's dense chords, intensive tremoloes and unlikely intervals reveal him as a true prodigy. It is to be hoped that Sydney fans will help him earn the renown he deserves."

Two and a half years and many performances later, the Lesmanas are now well-known figures in Sydney jazz. Indeed the whole Lesmana family – it also includes Jack's wife Nina, and two daughters Lani, 21, and Mira, 18 – has done a great deal to bring Australia and Indonesia a little closer together. The Lesmanas are a friendly and hospitable clan, and there are many in the Sydney jazz world who speak warmly of the good times and excellent Indonesian food to be enjoyed at their house in Eastwood.

The invitation to go to Indonesia for three weeks to hear the performances of Indra Lesmana's group Children of Fantasy was therefore warmly accepted. It was an opportunity, not only to hear some excellent music, but also to enjoy Indonesian culture (which was fascinating) in the company of the Lesmanas – a famous show business family in Indonesia, as I was to discover.

Other than Indra on keyboards the group included Jack Lesmana (bass guitar), Dale Barlow (flute and saxophones), Steve Brien (guitar), Harry Rivers (drums and vocals) and Tony Thijssen (percussion). It was therefore an interesting mixture of Australian and Indonesian musicians (plus an American) and the performances were an opportunity to present to Indonesian audiences for the first time the playing of three Australians who are busy performers in Sydney jazz.

Dale Barlow has, for some time, enjoyed a reputation as one of the most brilliant of the new generation of players to have emerged in Sydney over recent years. He has been playing with the David Martin Quintet, the Bruce Cale Quartet, and very successfully with his own quartet The Benders every Thursday night at the Paradise Jazz Cellar.

Steve Brien has come to prominence chiefly as a member of the Keith Stirling Quintet, and has recently been playing in a group with the saxophonist Mark Simmonds at the Paradise. The evergreen Harry Rivers is one of Sydney's busiest jazz drummers. For some years he has led the late band Rivers and Co. at The Basement (12-3 am) on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights.

Tony Thijssen, an American drummer and percussionist who hails from Los Angeles, completed the group. He played judicious percussion throughout the tour and also took over the drums when Harry Rivers came to the front of the stage to sing two of the group's point numbers – *Moments Of Paradise* and *Children Of Fantasy* – two impressive Latin/jazz fusion numbers composed by Indra Lesmana with lyrics by Mira Lesmana.

With this personnel Children of Fantasy were bound to be a good group. And they

Pic: Rizal Pahlevi (Fokus Magazine)

Indra Lesmana at the keyboards: his dense chords, intensive tremolos and unlikely intervals reveal him as a true prodigy . . .

were. They had rehearsed solidly in Sydney and also done a night at The Basement on August 5, coming on after Galapagos Duck and playing two hours of original music which went over well to the Duck fans. Even the presence of a last minute replacement could not disguise the quality of their music. Ken James came in on flute and saxophones in place of a sick Dale Barlow and sighted the charts with consummate skill.

Children of Fantasy at the Captain's Bar, Jakarta Mandarin Hotel. From left: Tony Thijssen, Harry Rivers, Dale Barlow, Jack Lesmana, Steve Brien, Indra Lesmana.

As Children of Fantasy's repertoire was based almost wholly on original compositions by Indra Lesmana, their music was unfamiliar to the Indonesian audiences who have heard very little hardcore jazz. The Indonesians are well aware of commercial, soft/ funk jazz, which they like very much, but I did not sense much awareness of the sort of contemporary jazz that incorporates recent developments in the art form. Some of Children of Fantasy's music therefore tended to go over the heads of the Indonesians; but I will go into this later.

There was one thing going for the group, however: Chick Corea is popular in Indonesia, as he is everywhere. This was an important factor, as Corea is one of Indra Lesmana's idols, and the batch of compositions used on this tour was highly reminiscent of the sort of Latin/jazz fusion music which the American put out during the 1970s. So, if Children of Fantasy were not playing familiar tunes, they were at least working within a familiar idiom.

The influence of Chick Corea on the young Indonesian is perhaps the key to his present stage of development. When Indra stretches out on the mini-moog synthesiser, it is Chick Corea's style which immediately comes to mind. Like Corea he rockets along with brilliant technique, and solos with the sort of impatient intensity that suggests he has long ago left behind the uncertainty of an exploratory beginner. Like

Corea he has a somewhat playful attitude towards the moog, adriotly using the left-hand modulation knob to bend his high notes, so that his improvisations whistle along from one exciting peak to another.

I would go so far as to say that Indra has largely mastered the musical language of Chick Corea. And as Corea has so many creative areas of modern jazz covered, one could hardly suggest a better model. Thus, Indra is also quite a mature solo pianist, as he showed on this tour whenever he had the use of a good grand piano. Moreover, he is an excellent exponent of comping, or articulating a rhythmic background on the keyboards behind the soloists (an art in itself, and one which is often neglected by otherwise excellent pianists). An enduring image of this tour, which I will long remember, is that of the 16-year-old boy egging on his bassist father, building the rhythmic patterns together to powerful peaks.

Indra Lesmana is probably, in relation to Chick Corea, at a similar stage to that of the teenage Charlie Parker when the saxophonist was transcribing Lester Young's solos and learning the Master's licks. Whether he can now go on, as Parker certainly did, to develop into a great jazz musician, with his own individual voice, is a question for the future.

In Jakarta Children of Fantasy played two concerts in the auditorium of the city's major arts centre, Taman Izmail Marzuki (known locally as the TIM); a nightly engagement at the Captain's Bar in the Mandarin Hotel, plus three major concerts in the hotel's ballroom; and an outdoor performance at Pasar Seni Jaya Ancol, a market area and arts centre near Jakarta's main beach.

Their opening concert was at the TIM on the evening of August 9. On the afternoon of that day there was an interesting event: a short performance for the Indonesian censor — a representative of the Government who came out to hear the kind of music being played and to check the identity of the Australians in the group. The Government keeps a close watch on all visiting artists. In the past, unethical promoters have sent bogus tapes in order to acquire visas and work permits, then sent the wrong musicians and artists. Children of Fantasy passed the test, and the concert was allowed to proceed.

The stage set-up in the TIM theatre was evidence of the care and exhaustive planning put in by the promoters P.T. Tritunggal Kristal. Behind the group was an extraordinary back-drop, featuring a huge, round Children of Fantasy logo suspended in space over a curved horizon, like a ball suspended in space. It was somewhat reminiscent of the famous photograph of the Earth, snapped from outer space against the horizon of the moon. With lighting bringing up the colours, a stunning stage environment was achieved, with an effective three-dimensional effect.

The first performance was as good as any on the tour. Dale Barlow took the trouble to learn "selamat malam" (Indonesian for "good evening") which he delivered with some aplomb when he was introduced. A nice touch which was appreciated by the audience.

The band played beautifully; its energy was infectious, and the audience reaction enthusiastic. If there were any problems they were related to the amplification being used and the efficiency of the sound technicians.

I don't wish to make too much of the sound problems that tended to recur throughout the tour. The technicians battled along with old, battered sound systems, and were doing their best. But there were problems. The musicians in Children of Fantasy often played under circumstances where, for example, they could not hear themselves adequately. Miscellaneous sound problems were inevitable. Sometimes the bass guitar was oppressively loud; sometimes the guitar and bass guitar created a muddy sound which was too strong for the other instruments; sometimes Dale Barlow's flute and saxophone solos did not cut through

clearly. Etcetera.

I mention these things not merely to be negative. When it is all said and done music, to the listener, is merely sound. A sound system is just a delivery system and if the sound is faulty, no matter how well the music is played, how can the performer communicate adequately with the listener?

Be this as it may, the sound problems were not disastrous. The band played daily, and there were, of course, many occasions when the sound was excellent, the solos carried tellingly, and the music came through beautifully. These problems never detracted from the exuberance of the band, and audiences always reacted warmly and positively to the music.

Pic: Margaret Sullivan

Morning tea with the ambassador. Back row from left: Gavan Bromilow (Australian Cultural Attache, Jakarta), Mrs. Bromilow, Tony Thijssen, Mrs. Nina Lesmana, Steve Brien, Australian Ambassador Mr. F.R. Dalrymple, Jack Lesmana, Mrs. Dalrymple. Front row from left: Indra Lesmana and Harry Rivers (with children of Mr. and Mrs. Bromilow), Dale Barlow.

After the Jakarta stint, Children of Fantasy travelled to Bali for two performances at the Kayu Api Bar and Restaurant and – the final performance in Indonesia – a concert for Radio Republik Indonesia in the capital of Bali, Denpasar. This last concert was recorded, to be broadcast at a later date. In many ways it was the penultimate concert for the group. The sound was excellent, and the band was hot, striving to get the last ounce of juice out of the repertoire they had been performing for three weeks.

Often I was surprised that the music went over so well given the Indonesians' apparently limited awareness of jazz. One has to consider that Dale Barlow does not have a light, commercial, easily internalised style. He tended to confront the Indonesian audiences with a hard-edged and uncompromising modern tenor style – a product of the post-Coltrane era. One needs to be aware of modern developments on the tenor to fully appreciate his approach – full of searing, guttural lines in the lower register; blistering runs of sixteenth notes over the whole horn; and honks and squeals which take him out of the instrument's normal range. Yet his playing was warmly accepted and applauded.

As a professional jazz writer who usually attends one-off performances, I found this trip a unique opportunity to hear a working group night after night, warts and all – the good nights with the bad. It was fascinating to observe the development in the players, and the evolution of the music over the period of the tour.

Steve Brien, whom I had considered merely as a busy, highly technical guitarist when he was with Keith Stirling, played many lovely solos where he paced his ideas carefully, leaving himself enough space to savour the singing quality which is possible on the electric guitar. *Forty-Niners*, a gentle, laid-back tune and one of Indra Lesmana's best compositions, was designed to feature Steve's guitar playing, and I found myself looking forward to it every night. This tour suggested that Steve Brien is developing that important quality of understatement which his playing needs.

The Children of Fantasy tour was an event which Jack Lesmana could approach with some pride. After three years in Australia, he was bringing a group back to his homeland to show the locals that his 16-year-old son had developed into a superb jazz musician. Jack is, of course, one of the handful of musicians which has kept the spirit of jazz alive in Indonesia over the last thirty years. There is a small, but vibrant, jazz scene in that country – visitors to Jakarta should not miss the Jaya Pub, which is a mixture of the Paradise Jazz Cellar and The Basement rolled into one – and a great many of the working musicians in Jakarta are former pupils of Jack's.

The surrounding players were impressive, but it was Indra Lesmana who commanded the most interest (and incidentally, the most attention from the press). Throughout the three weeks, his head-over-heels development was quite apparent. I would suspect that this tour has exhausted, at least for the moment, his taste for Latin/jazz fusion of the type being played. He was always taking his solos a little further out, always extending what he had played in earlier performances. He is unquestionably a chronic searcher for new ways of expressing himself – the essence of jazz.

The Children of Fantasy tour was a significant event in a number of senses. Firstly, within Indonesia, it was an experimental venture, designed to promote a sophisticated form of Western jazz. There was, on the part of P.T. Tritunggal Kristal, a certain amount of idealism involved. The promoters saw themselves, if not as educators of the public, then as a vanguard force in introducing new music to the Jakarta audiences.

Secondly, the fact that the group included Australian and Indonesian musicians working together was an important step forward for cultural relations between our two countries, particularly at a time when Australian journalists are banned in Indonesia. In what other Asian country are Australian musicians touring and playing with the indigenous musicians? The significance of the visit was reinforced when the Children of Fantasy party was received for Sunday morning tea by the Australian Ambassador to Indonesia, Mr F.R. Dalrymple and his wife, at their residence.

Thirdly, the visit underlined what has become increasingly clear over recent years: that jazz is no longer merely an American, or even Western, art form. For many years Anglo-Saxon countries other than the USA have produced great jazz musicians. The fact that fine jazz musicians, like Jack and Indra Lesmana, are now emerging from Asian countries too, indicates that jazz is now unquestionably a truly international music.

Finally, my hat goes off to P.T. Tritunggal Kristal, the organisation which put so much care and honest effort into making the tour a success. Things can go wrong easily on any tour but, on this one, the arrangements went smoothly, and our Indonesian hosts went to great lengths to consider our comfort and convenience. My thanks in particular to Mung Restiaga, Managing Director of Kristal.

CHARLIE PARKER: Two Perspectives

(1) THE ARTIST — By John Clare

When Charlie Parker — the Bird — died in 1955 of a host of dissipations, there appeared almost immediately on New York walls the legend 'Bird Lives'.

Parker's meeting with Jean Paul Sartre had been recorded by writers with the same tone of awe and baffled curiosity as a similarly brief and laconic meeting between Marcel Proust and James Joyce. "I like your playing," said Parker to Sartre. A small joke to some, while others have read much into it.

One can understand to a degree a cult of Elvis Presley (one of the best known people of our age), a cult of James Dean (a Parker fan, incidentally; he was a film star, say no more), or a cult of Jean Paul Sartre (who is taught in universities). It hardly needs saying that people are obsessed with fame. Charlie Parker never had that kind of fame. Tommy Dorsey, whom Parker was watching on TV when he died, was probably still better known than Bird.

The legend is kept alive by a small minority, unaided by academia at that. Yet Bird lives. The name Charlie Parker is known to many people who are not particularly curious to hear his music, or even to see his photo or learn anything about him. The name is passed on by a small insistent band.

Writers, awed by his capacity for drugs, sex and booze have made Parker the angel of bliss, a martyr to the cause of hedonism, as opposed to the Puritan ethic. And they have described him as the creator of a new, revolutionary jazz. Some of those writers were there, of course, while I was not. Yet I make so bold as to present a slightly different point of view.

To call Parker's contribution to jazz revolutionary, without qualification, is to ignore the work of swing era musicians who had made brief forays into the musical territory Parker was to cover so comprehensively. It is to deny the traditional elements which remained in Parker's playing, not as traces but as strongly stated expressive devices; and it is to deny that all jazz has been a part of modernism.

Charlie Parker's music was a radical (from the root) extension of an existing tradition. Like Bach, he presents a summation of the past as well

as a portent of the future. In his mode of living he has been taken for the epitomy of a new ethos; but it is an ethos whose precise beginnings are difficult to trace. Bernie McGann referred to Charlie Parker as the ultimate hipster. Not the *original* hipster.

Parker ranged so freely over musical territory which earlier musicians such as Jabbo Smith, Roy Eldridge and Lester Young had only probed, and took the 'hip life' to such extremes, that it did seem for a time that a revolution in music and in life-style had occurred. Yet his recordings with swing era musicians, with blues and ballad singers, do not sound incongruous today. He was clearly going further, because the others had done their exploring and their styles had set.

Parker was not the only one extending the vocabulary of jazz in the 1940's. He was, all in all, the best, and that is saying a lot when amongst the others were pianist Bud Powell and trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie, two of the most astonishing virtuosi and of the most original musicians jazz has produced. Not to mention Ray Brown, Fats Navarro, Max Roach, Roy Haynes, Kenny Clark, and a number of others whose places as style-setters on their instruments are unassailable.

Parker's real stature rests not on his being the first, the right person in the right place (a feat which can be achieved by a lesser musician), but on his consummate musicianship and towering genius.

Black American culture has been discovered and rediscovered throughout this century, by whites and by blacks themselves — that is to say, blacks from time to time become suddenly aware that their culture has influenced and fits into the mainstream of modernism.

Futurist painters, and some cubists, were inspired by jazz and ragtime, believing that it expressed the accelerated, angular, jerky, swirling, strangely syncopated motion of industry and the cities. The cryptic fragmentation of an improvised solo would have had a particular signifigance for a cubist painter, one of whose aims was to depict the process of vision: the way the eye scans, or judders, rapidly, to build a smooth cohesive image from a myriad fragments.

Amongst blacks, Back to Africa movements have recurred, and so have movements which elevated those black writers, composers and performers who were most European in approach. Much later, swing and then modern jazz inspired painters, writers and poets with a sense of spontaneity and freedom. Jazz seemed not only to hold the essence of the 20th Century, but to express uninhibited, voluptuous, free impulses which were opposed to its mechanistic and regimented aspects.

The overlapping of two needs — to claim an art that was 'respectable' in European terms, and to have one's own thing, independent of white values — created some wonderful and strange hybrids of behaviour, dress and music.

Jazz has been central in all this. All strands of black American music can be found in it somewhere, as well as conscious European influences and the rejection of same. Jazz represents also the major break from hymns and hollers and chants and the slow resigned wail of bondage. Jazz is the expression of the Negro entering or attempting to enter the mainstream of American life.

From Louis Armstrong, indeed from earlier than that, it has been obvious that in jazz there has been an aspiration towards a purely expressive music as opposed to a purely

functional dance music. A music which could be a repository for the highest levels of virtuosity and invention. Yet it still had to be danceable, and perhaps few wanted it otherwise.

By the swing era at the latest, the after-hours jam session had developed. After the dancing was over, freed from many of the constraints of playing for dancers, the soloists would line up and one by one extend themselves, show what they could do, make their reputations as Masters, or fail to do so.

In this climate, Charlie Parker established himself as one of the High Masters, amongst older musicians, and amongst exponents of the new extensions. He established mastery not only with his originality, but with his virtuosity and with his harmonic knowledge, his extempore fluency in every key; in short, with his consummate musicianship.

The first reaction of many listeners was that he had completely broken through the bounds of dance or entertainment music; perversely in the minds of many. It seemed to them that he made no attempt to sustain a consistent mood or a danceable beat. He might come on hot and strong for a few bars and then be off in some remote region of obscure rumination. He seemed to ignore the symmetrical phrase lengths so helpful to dancers. When you thought a phrase should be rounded off, it flared on over the bar line, and sometimes spun on and on in dizzy chromatic spirals that created a momentum of their own, adjacent to the beat.

But hadn't Roy Eldridge done all this to a degree? Hadn't there been an increasing tendency to create more contrasts, to spice the underlying harmony with passing tones, to encompass a greater range of feelings, to include the subtler emotions, to demand more and more the attention one has to give the development of, for instance, a movement in sonata form?

It was not so much that Bird was different, musically, as that he was the lot all rolled into one. Musicians have made a name for themselves and have indeed expressed themselves powerfully by concentrating on one or two aspects of Parker's playing, but when Bird was in full flight, when you 'had ears' for what he was doing, he seemed to touch every nameless feeling you had ever had, and all the familiar ones, in such rapid juxtaposition that it seemed to come at you all at once.

In simple terms, Parker discovered that you could play more music on every chord, that every chord could be replaced by a related one, opening new vistas of tonal relationships. Rather than shattering what had gone before, he brought it to a new fruition, and as a little time passed, heightened its meaning. The new verse redeems the ancient rhyme. Some musicians felt threatened, inadequate, and some simply did not like it. Roy Eldridge was depressed for some while. An explorer himself in his time, he suddenly felt redundant. Then, some years later, he listened to the Jazz At The Philharmonic recordings on which he had been thrown together with Parker and other new stylists, and he heard that what he had done had its place in there, still sounded valid.

"Go in and hear the truth," said Al Cohn to a young musician outside a club where Charlie Parker was playing.

It was the truth because it was the essence of the time for those who lived that life, as the best jazz had always been.

What was that life? What was the ethos which Charlie Parker seemed to embody? Most obviously it was an urban life, a modern life. It would be silly to call bop impressionistic or programmatic, but it seems to me it is still the most accurate and detailed realisation in music of the threats and possibilities of city life.

By reducing the emphasis of cyclically recurring accents, by reducing the up and down bounce as well as any cyclic lilting in its basic pulse, it created a feeling of pure speed at up tempo. Accents tick tocked and exploded unpredictably over this directional flow, between the beats, behind, before them, on them, seeming to accelerate or retard the best, while the speed remained, after them as before. Lilting patterns came and went, like powerful but scarcely seen pressures. Hectic polyrhythms accumulated and peeled off.

No one could take so much advantage of this concept as Parker. Even at dirge tempo (the boppers would sometimes play not only faster, but slower also than jazz had ever been played before) he would suddenly leap and race and make oblique strikes at the edges of harmony. It seemed to show ways of flying through the complexities of urban life; sometimes scalding hot, sometimes cool and inscrutable, it reflected the oblique cross town passages of the hipsters. For there was the feeling not only of urban life, but of the hip urban life, for whatever we may take that to mean.

The term hipster has been applied to a range of 20th Century types – from beatniks to zoot-suiters – and I have neither space here nor the scholarship to throw a great light on its permutations and derivations. However, I should give some indication of the complex strands which lead towards the state of hipness.

Immediately we might think of the white hipsters described by Jack Kerouac, who were drawn to Charlie Parker, and also to swing era musicians. It should be said that they read the same anarchic message in the solo flights of Illinois Jacquet and Flip Phillips as they did in those of Parker and Gillespie. It is clear that some of them were fleeing a 'square', and stultifyingly secure background. For the black hipster, almost the reverse was the case.

I think it is safe to say that the black hipster was the byproduct of the Negro's attempt to enter the mainstream of American life after slavery. Of course he was not really allowed to do that, and a subculture sprang up of people living on their wits on the fringes of respectable society. Some created a peculiar parody of that society – straightened hair, solid prosperity expressed in tremendously exaggerated suits with huge shoulders and yards of drape-shape cloth. They lived on their wits and they constructed their own system of values and pursued their own indulgences. To do this under the eyes of respectable society required furtiveness as well as flash. Somehow the two could be reconciled.

One either played Uncle Tom or one wore the mask. One was cool, and by conceptual extension, invisible. One lived the secret life. One had esoteric knowledge. One was hip. Lester Young, from whose style

sprang Charlie Parker's, might be seen as a hipster, with his elaborately distanced manners, his inscrutability, his own language, or more accurately, code.

Other impulses contributed to the distancing – to the wearing of wide hats in the zoot suit era, to the wearing of sunglasses by some bop musicians. The sunglasses (and I should say I can't recall seeing a photo of Parker wearing them) were a means of establishing distance from the audience, of saying 'this is serious music. We aint gonna smile and sweat and tap dance for you'. And of saying, 'We don't give a shit whether you understand it or not. It's ours'.

Pic: William P. Gottlieb

The classic Charlie Parker Quintet in 1947 or 1948. The trumpeter is a twenty-one-year-old Miles Davis, the bassist is Tommy Potter, and the pianist is probably Duke Jordan. Drummer Max Roach is just visible behind Parker.

Parker was seen as the epitome of all this, but not because he was the first. He was marked out by his musical genius, and by the extremes to which he took everything. The question which remains is, of course, whether Parker's impulsive, unpredictable mode of life was the result of a philosophy or simply a survival strategy. Whether Parker had really achieved a Zen or an Existential (whatever that means) state of mind, or whether he was just a super-typical product of his environment.

Certain courses were laid down for Parker which it would have taken enormous strength of will to avoid. It seems that he was addicted to heroin at a very early age (the story is that a relative first 'shot him up' at 16)' He had neither the desire nor the ability to clown and sell his music to an audience.

Assessments of his character by contemporaries are startlingly contradictory. Miles Davis and Max Roach finally left him because they were sick of trying to get their rightful pay (they got it once at knife point, or so the story goes). It is said that he could use people around him and then, having got what he wanted, treat them as objects for ironic derision.

At the same time, his wife, Chan, insists that he was a kind, loving person. Trumpeter Red Rodney, who played with him for three years, said, "He was very considerate to other people. He was really a very modest, humble man".

His personality, like his playing, seemed to contain the lot. There is no doubt that he was a remarkable individual. Having left school at 15, he startled some mathematicians by solving a problem he overheard them discussing. They could not believe he had not had higher mathematical training.

Some saw him as having achieved some kind of 'living for the moment' – the eternal present, and so on – enlightenment. In the view of one writer he had a 'personality disorder' which prevented his seeing why he should not have exactly what he wanted, when he wanted it, regardless of the consequences to himself or others. In other words, he was just a very selfish fellow. He was brought up in poverty, but spoiled nevertheless by his mother, after his father, an out of work song and dance man, had drifted away. This is cited in support of the latter theory.

If he had attained enlightenment, I do not find the thought of his being followed about by drug pushers very enlightening – except insofar as it showed that he was quite normal, despite his genius. Nor do I believe that his various addictions and excesses contributed essentially to his musical achievement.

More important than any of that, it seems to me, were the hours he spent in his room, with the green curtains drawn, painfully teaching himself to play in every key, and the experience he gained of playing in Jay McShann's basic, jumping band out of Kansas City.

To the end of his life Parker loved all kinds of music, from the modern classical composers to the earthiest blues and the most forthrightly sentimental pop songs. He did not throw anything out. I can think of no element of the jazz which had preceded him that was not still present in his own music. What may at first appear to be absent can be found soon enough in a subtler form.

One could now turn about and write as many words on Parker as a musical revolutionary. He did, after all, extend the jazz vocabulary further in one swoop than anyone since Louis Armstrong – with the possible exception of that strange case Art Tatum, in whom one can hear preechoes of things as far on as McCoy Tyner. He did take off and fly untrammelled in regions where others had extended kites, with tight hands on the strings.

It depends on whether you see bop as a new language or a broadening of the old. It depends a great deal on what you think jazz is and should be about. Parker was a revolutionary to those who believed jazz should be dance and entertainment music, and an *innovator* to those who value jazz as a conscious artistic expression of modern times.

In truth, Parker did not invent a new musical system. All his harmonic liberties had long been taken by Debussy, Stravinsky and Bartok. He did invent a way of using some of these extended harmonic possibilities in the jazz idiom, within the rhythmic continuum which seems unique to jazz, and without destroying the blues tonality which is also one of jazz's most distinctive features. Others came later with more ponderous and deliberate European graftings. While these efforts are not without interest, how much more like jazz does Parker's music sound – and how much more daring and sophisticated? I believe it sounds that way because it is firmly rooted in the jazz tradition.

For a review of the Parker LP One Night in Washington, see Record Reviews Section.

(II) THE RECORDINGS — By Niels Nielsen

Writing a short piece on Charlie Parker's recordings is a heavy task, a little like writing a brief summary of the New Testament. A good deal of generalising and papering over cracks is bound to occur. The problem is the sheer volume of Parker's playing on record, which stems from three related factors.

Bird's importance as a key figure in the once new bebop style made all of his recording sessions and public appearances into occasions. The sensational nature of his life and career made these occasions into larger-than-life happenings, just as 1950's appearances by Billie Holiday and Art Pepper's return to activity had more than just musical importance. These factors made the demand; the rise of the portable tape recorder made it possible to fill the demand. The result was that more of Parker's music got on tape per year 1946-54 than any other jazz musician's.

As little as ten years ago each new album of Parker's location recordings, often truncated to the point where only his solos were present, and usually in the lowest of lo-fi, was treated as an indispensable buy, but the law of diminishing returns now operates. We *know* Charlie Parker's music now, and each new album issued has to stand or fall on its musical and technical merits. The purveyors of newly released material have to compete against all previous albums. Just how many versions of *Cheryl* or *Groovin' High* do you need?

This question of Parker's limited repertoire needs to be mentioned. He *was* the most brilliant improvisor jazz has ever had. Fortunately for the music he was blues-drenched and road-seasoned. And he arrived on the scene at precisely the time such a musician, playing a saxophone, was needed.

He *was not* an interpreter of tunes; they were just the raw material with which he worked. He took his basic materials: plenty of blues, a few fine ballads and the chord progressions of popular songs like *I Got Rhythm, Indiana* and *Cherokee* on which the previous generation of swing giants improvised. Then he used them, with or without altered and additional chords and changed melody statements, over and over again as launching pads for his flights of invention.

From 1948 on, except for some new blues lines, almost no fresh material appeared on Parker-led live recordings which had not previously been recorded in the studio, where there was obvious pressure to come up with changed material. *Slow Boat To China* and, on Christmas Eve, 1947, *White Christmas*, are the best-known exceptions.

However, when faced with a sit-in situation, he soared superbly over whatever was being played. This is particularly shown by the newly released *One Night in Washington (Elektra/Musician E1-60019)* which, in relatively good fidelity after remarkable technical witchcraft on the tapes, lets us hear Parker with a rehearsal and weekend gig band led by Washingtonian drummer/arranger Joe Timer and called simply The Orchestra.

Parker had never seen the band's book, but as guest soloist, just walked onstage and blew, playing over the band passages and through key changes he was unaware of, as well as in the spaces where the band's regular soloists usually had their spots. The results are 28 minutes of remarkable and unusual jazz, filled out with 5 minutes or so of Red Rodney, Bird's last regular trumpeter, talking about his former employer.

In his lifetime and immediately after his death the lay public thought of Parker as the absolute improvisator, totally inventive, never repeating himself, creating the phrases played at the instant of blowing. Not so, he just had a much larger stock of pet licks and cliches than everyone else, and most were his own inventions. He also put them together better than anyone else, and blew them out of the saxophone with such power and passion that they sounded like inventions of the moment.

A misconception about Parker's last years 1952-55 is perhaps understandable given the decline in the careers and music-making ability of those other famous self-destructing jazz people Lester Young, Billie Holiday and Bud Powell during the same general period. The view developed, helped by Bird becoming *persona non grata* in some New York clubs because of hassles and his extensive absences touring in the sticks (anywhere outside the Big Apple home of bebop) that his career was finished and his health ruined. The poor results at some (only some) of the later recording sessions for Norman Granz reinforced this negative view. The electric and very fine 1953 appearance at Massey Hall, Toronto with Dizzy Gillespie, Bud Powell, Charles Mingus and Max Roach on the modestly titled *The Greatest Jazz Concert Ever (Prestige 24024)* was seen by doomsters as a brief Indian summer.

However other tapes of first class late Parker have surfaced on LP in the 1970's, notably the (comparatively) well-recorded *New Bird* and *New Bird Vol 2 (Phoenix Jazz LP 10, 12)* which come from a long engagement at the Hi Hat in Boston in the winter of 1953-54 with trumpeter Herbie Williams and the house rhythm section. All four non-stars acquit themselves more than adequately. The performances are long, with Bird mellow, and stretching out on the familiar tunes. Announcements by the unhip "Symphonic Siddie", as Parker calls him, are unintentionally funny.

It was once fashionable to claim that Bix Beiderbecke was on the way to becoming a Miles Davis when the grim reaper cut him down. As an alternative to the fading flowers routine it has been suggested that Parker was taken in his prime just as he was setting off on the path leading to Ornette Coleman and the out-to-lunch bunch. Some of Bird's performances do contain elements later characterisitc of the avant-garde, but the same applies to many of the earliest jazz soloists, of course. Charlie Parker's style remained relatively unchanged from his maturity in 1945 until his death, and there is no reason to assume it would have radically altered after 1955. He had already shown, by uncomfortable tenor saxophone performances on dates led by trumpeter Miles Davis in 1947 and 1953 that even the minor changes which turned bebop into hard bop were not to his liking.

The core of Parker's music, and of jazz itself between 1936 Lester Young and 1959 Ornette Coleman, is the series of studio recordings made under his leadership at five sessions for Savoy in New York and Detroit between November 1945 and Sep-

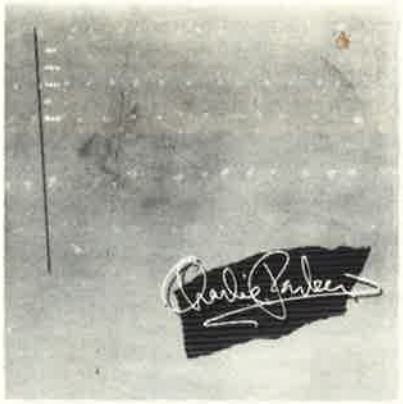
tember 1948, and at six sessions for Dial in Hollywood and New York in 1946 and 1947. One other Dial date, the *Lover Man* session, was a failure for extra-musical reasons, resulting in seven months in Camarillo State Hospital for Parker.

The Savoys, which begin with an ordinary 1944 date led by swing guitarist Tiny Grimes, are well-presented with a double and two single albums. *Bird/The Savoy Recordings-Master Takes (Savoy 2201)* contains all of the originally released versions, some dozen of which are acknowledged masterpieces of jazz, including the breakneck *Cherokee*-based *Ko-Ko*, the back-home slow blues *Parker's Mood* and the first definitive version of the faster blues *Now's The Time.* The series doesn't contain great ballad performances, one of the key areas of Bird's work, but is particularly rich in the blues. Alternate takes of the tunes are on the two single albums *Bird/Encores* and */Encores Vol 2 (Savoy 1107 and 1129).*

The Dials on average are even better. The three 1947 New York sessions (and the Detroit Savoy date which produced *Another Hair-Do, Bluebird, Klaunstance* and *Bird Gets The Worm*) have *the* stable band of Parker's unstable life: Davis, pianist Duke Jordan, bassist Tommy Potter and drummer Max Roach. Bebop trombone pioneer J.J. Johnson was added in the last session. It was with this band that Bird produced some of the most breathtaking ballad performances in jazz: *Embraceable You*, three equally beautiful but totally different consecutive versions of *Out of Nowhere, My Old Flame, Don't Blame Me* and the slightly lesser *How Deep Is The Ocean.*

The three successful Californian Dial sessions from 1946-47 produced a multitude of takes of many of Parker's most mellow performances: *Yardbird Suite, Cool Blues, Relaxin' at Camarillo, Ornithology* and the incredible *flying* break on an aborted take of *A Night In Tunisia* which was released as the 47 second *The Famous Alto Break*. The bands in California were airy and different in attack from the New York-based hard-line beboppers, musicians including trumpeter Howard McGhee, tenor saxophonists Lucky Thompson and Wardell Gray, pianists Jimmy Bunn and Dodo Marmorosa and guitarist Barney Kessel.

The Very Best of Bird (Warner Brothers 2WB 3198) double album has a good selection from the Dials which make it an absolutely essential double for anyone who can't afford or can't locate the six single albums *Charlie Parker on Dial Vols 1-6 (Spotlite 101-106),* which include all takes of all tunes in order. It's worth putting the rent into these!



After the Savoys and Dials the 1945 breakthrough Guild sides by Diz and Bird which made up the manifesto of the bebop revolutionaries are the next essential purchase. They are in *Dizzy Gillespie: In The Beginning (Prestige 24030)*, an important double album which also contains the widely influential 1946 Gillespie Musicraft big band sides, including the cataclysmic *Things To Come* which still sounds way over the hill in 1982.

The Guilds amount to only seven tunes: two popular songs *All The Things You Are* and *Lover Man*, the latter a vehicle for 21-year old singer Sarah Vaughan; three *I Got Rhythm* variants, *Salt Peanuts, Shaw Nuff* and *Dizzy Atmosphere; Groovin' High* based on *Whispering* and *What Is This Thing Called Love* dressed up as *Hot House*.

But the reconstruction of these basic themes resulted in sharpened contours and increased syncopation, and also more chords to blow on. The second of the two sessions had the first true bebop rhythm section of pianist Al Haig, bassist Curley Russell and versatile drummer Sid Catlett. The solos throughout were *hot*, in tone, in attack and in phrasing; *Salt Peanuts* is a mini-revolution on its own.

Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker were respected swing soloists well before the bebop era. In particular Dizzy was featured trumpet soloist with the Teddy Hill band in 1937. *Early Bird (Spotlite 120)* gives us, on one side only, the earliest Parker on record: seven transcriptions made by a contingent from the Jay McShann band in Wichita, Kansas in 1940, when Parker was 20. Parker's style was far from mature, and in *Coquette, Body and Soul* and *Lady Be Good* he shows successfully the influences of straight dance band saxophonists, Coleman Hawkins and Lester Young. The other side of this fascinating album has nine fine performances from the McShann band in 1944 after Parker had left. There is also a rough recording, from a 1942 jam session, of a version of *Cherokee* on the way to the 1945 *Ko-Ko*. Studio sessions of the McShann band with Parker on some cuts are due for re-release in the MCA Jazz Heritage series.

The swing credentials and general musicianship of Diz and Bird made them welcome at quite a few 1945-46 recording sessions and concerts. The relaxed nature of these dates makes them easily accessible to all jazz listeners. There was a January, 1945 session for Continental which keeps appearing in bits on a number of labels. It has the advanced swing tenor giant Don Byas, pianist-leader Clyde Hart and singing by trombonist Trummy Young and benzedrinist Rubberlegs Williams. A later Continental session featured Sarah Vaughan with our dynamic duo in attendance.

There was a great date for Comet by Red Norvo and his Selected Sextet which is available on *Red Norvo-The Dial Masters (Spotlite 127).* Many other albums feature a few cuts from the session, which is understandable, as the full date has 27 takes of 5 tunes, making it heavy going for the uncommitted. Tenor saxophonist Flip Phillips, pianist Teddy Wilson and bassist Slam Stewart are the other main selected ones.

The Fabulous Apollo Sessions (Vogue LDAP 769) has four cuts of Parker with a mixed swing/bop band including Buck Clayton and Dexter Gordon, with three other similar sessions of transitional material. *Slim Gaillard: Chicken Rhythm (Polydor Special 545107)* has Gillespie and Parker, and great bebop pianist Dodo Marmorosa, with the clown prince of Zany Vout humour, in California. Norman Granz was also able to obtain appearances by Bird and Dizzy at early Jazz at the Philharmonic concerts which have been issued on various Granz labels over the years. Charlie Parker was recorded at Norman Granz Jam Sessions as late as 1952, having taken part in two definitive alto summits, with Benny Carter and Willie Smith, and later with Carter and Johnny Hodges.

In all of these swing-styled settings Parker played superlatively, using his natural bluesiness and easy liquid logic to advantage.

After the final Savoy recording session in late 1948 Parker's record-

ings follow two paths. His regular working bands, usually a quintet with Miles Davis or Kenny Dorham trumpet, Al Haig piano, plus one each of the standard bebop bassists and drummers of the time, were recorded, either on location or from airshots in clubs and even dance halls. Because of their generally superior recording quality a series from the Royal Roost in New York over the 1948-49 winter is a treasure trove for collectors. There are many compilations of this material, but I can recommend *The Comprehensive Charlie Parker/Live Performance Volumes 1, 2 (Black Elephant/ESP P E 811.009)* and also, with Lucky Thompson and vibraphonist Milt Jackson added, *What's This? (S.C.A.M. JPG 3).*

The second string to Parker's bow was his recording contract with Norman Granz. Parker had to a considerable extent believed he had played out the regular bebop quintet formula by 1948, and sought other musical surroundings, which Granz certainly gave him! There were recordings with strings, with big bands, with latin-American afro-cubes, with choirs and, thankfully occasionally with a top, regular or pickup bebop band or a rhythm section. These latter conventional surroundings, played out or not, still sounded best by far! On most sessions for Granz Parker played with his usual brilliance, but there were a few lacklustre performances.

Charlie Parker — The Verve Years 1950-51 (World Record Club RO65051-2) is the middle double album of a Verve reissue trilogy. It is a bit string-heavy to be a classic Parker album and there is a sub-form session with a latinised rhythm section. However two great quintet sessions, with Miles Davis and Red Rodney the trumpeters, and a ballad with Coleman Hawkins, bring it up to above average value. WRC have plans for the other two double albums over the next twelve months, covering 1948-50 and 1952-54. They contain some of Parker's best work, with plenty of other stars.

From time to time the double album *Jazz History Vol 13 - Charlie Parker (Verve 2632 013)* appears in the shelves. It is a two record selection from Parker's whole period with Norman Granz. It can be strongly recommended for its musical value, but if you buy it you burn your bridges with regard to the more complete sets!

Two albums filled with history are *Lullaby in Rhythm (Spotlite 107)* and *Anthropology (Spotlite 108)* which are taken from late 1947 Bands for Bonds US Treasury broadcasts. Two French Musidisc albums have the same material. *Lullaby in Rhythm* contains the bebop portion of two broadcasts which featured a (shudder) boppers vs moldies battle of the bands. The moldies were led by non-playing Rudy Blesh, and their opposition, billed as critic Barry Ulanov's All Star Modern Jazz Musicians, included Bird and Diz, clarinettist John La Porta and pianist Lennie Tristano. They even play *Tiger Rag!* Having become the winners by, predictably in 1947, scoring more listener votes than the moldies, a revised bopster contingent did a victory broadcast two months later, which is captured in *Anthropology.* The band featured Parker, Fats Navarro on trumpet, La Porta, tenor saxophonist Allen Eager and Sarah Vaughan. Corny idea, great music! Be there!

Finally, the nearest Dizzy Gillespie came to equality with the always dominant after-me Parker was on *Bird and Diz (Saga ERO 8035),* a 1951 Birdland broadcast with Bud Powell, Tommy Potter and Roy Haynes. Trumpeter Fats Navarro could hold his own with anyone, and his 1950 meeting with Bird and Bud Powell on *Charlie Parker/Bud Powell /Fats Navarro — Rare Broadcast Performance (Musidisc JA 5136)* is electrifying. Sound quality is adequate.

Throughout this summary I've concentrated on Parker, but trumpeters Howard McGhee and Miles Davis, pianists Duke Jordan and Dodo Marmorosa, tenor saxophonist Wardell Gray and drummer Max Roach play superbly on their studio sessions.

Ornithologists are recommended to obtain the four part Charlie Parker discography, published 1975-76, by Piet Koster and Dick M. Bakker, obtainable from Micrography, Stevinstraat 14, Alphen den Rijn, Netherlands. Lastly, thanks to the typist, Lesley Nielsen.

AUSTRALIA MUSIC CENTRE RE-OPENS

By Eric Myers

The Australian Music Centre, located on the 2nd Floor, 80 George Street North in the historic Rocks area of Sydney, re-opened its doors for business on September 1, 1982.

Under the direction of Mr James Murdoch since 1976, the Centre closed in July 1981, following its inability over some years to stay within its annual budget.

The Centre's new staff of five includes Joan Bona (Administrator and Marketing Controller), Madeleine Martin (Senior Assistant), Joanna Parkes (Librarian), Elizabeth Faull (Asst. Librarian) and Kathy Avdiev (Receptionist).

Generally the function of the Australia Music Centre is to promote all fields of Australian music and musicians. It has a well-equipped music reference library, and provides an information service on Australian music.

In his re-opening address on Friday August 20 the Chairman of the Australia Music Centre Mr Frank Barnes said that incorporation of the Australian Music Marketing services (previously headed by Joan Bona) into the Centre would encourage and develop the marketing of Australian records.

Mr Barnes ranged over a number of the Centre's future goals, including the establishment of closer links with other music organisations and specialists through the appointment of honorary advisers; the re-establishment of AMC membership with a package of benefits for all members; and the launching of Arts Executive, which is designed to subdivide the Centre's considerable floor space into offices for various arts organisations.

Mr Barnes concluded: "We are here to promote Australian music in all its forms and not only contemporary written music. If anyone wants to play, record, listen to, publish, or tape anything to do with music and the musicians of Australia, we shall try to help and advise."

"We are not here to offer value judgements; that is not our role."

"The Australian Music Centre is an information resource and we need the co-operation of every person and organisation in the field to give us the information they have, so that we can become accepted as the place to go for information."

Ian Neil's GRACE NOTES

Some months ago I received a phone call from Oxford University Press which, frankly, excited me. The nub of the matter was this – did I, as a user of reference books, think there was a need for an Encyclopaedia of Australian Jazz; and, assuming there was, would "so and so" be the man to compile it. (I was not, by the way, the only one to receive such a call.) My response was both affirmative and enthusiastic . . there was a need for such an encyclopaedia and Bruce Johnson, the publisher's principal nomination, was perfect tfor the assignment. Bruce is a distinguished academic, broadly experienced in research and methodology, and a performing musician. Could there be a more favourable choice? Dr Johnson has accepted the commission and started work on the project. The *Oxford Encyclopaedia of Australian Jazz*, when published, will be, I'm sure, the most prestigious jazz publication yet produced here. I will keep you informed of the work's prgress.

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A jazz musician is an *improvisator* – often in more ways than the obvious one. For example, some years ago Tony Scott brought a new baritone saxophone from Charles Ponti, the New York dealer, who had mislaid the mouthpiece. Tony, ever the improvisator, fitted a bass clarinet reed to a tenor sax mouthpiece, and was so pleased with the set-up that he continued to use it. Scott has served jazz well – not only as a brilliant artist but also as a roving ambassador. He began his worldwide wanderings in the late fifties and for much of the sixties was in the Middle East, Asia and South East Asia. The seventies he spent in Italy. During this time he has learnt much, taught much and inspired many. The Indonesian guitarist and bassist Jack Lesmana, who migrated to Australia a couple of years ago, was charmed to jazz by "Pied Piper" Scott. In fact, every member of the Lesmana-led Indonesian All Stars, who appeared with him at the 1967 Berlin Jazz Festival, turned to jazz as a direct result of Scott's influence in the early sixties when he lived in Indonesia.

In an interview Tony Scott said, and you might like to think about this; "It all starts with the soloist. What he plays today the arranger writes tomorrow".

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From time to time people ask me, quite often really, to define *the blues*. I give them, as accurately as I can from memory, Whitney Balliett's definition. Here it is verbatim:

> *In its simplest form, the blues is a twelve-bar construction based on three chords (in the key of B-Flat, the commonest blues key, these chords would be B-Flat, E-Flat and F) the last two of which incorporate partially flattened notes, or "blue" notes, the blue third and the blue seventh. The simple rondo-like arrangement of these chords within the frame of one chorus – B-Flat, E-Flat, B-Flat, F, B-Flat – builds to a kind of climax with the F chord and then slides away to a neat resolution in the final return to B-Flat. In short, the blues chorus is a classic form that has simplicity, variation and an endless allowance – because of its ingenious construction – for improvisational flexibility.*

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Louis Armstrong contended that all music, every genre, was *folk* music. He justified his belief like this – "All music's gotta be 'folk' music: I ain't never heard no horse sing a song".

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An opinion of John Birks Gillespie from Max Roach:

> *As a musician I think Dizzy has no peer. He's inspired perhaps more musicians who are out here today than you can shake a stick at. And I mean not just trumpet players or saxophone players but percussion people as well. Dizzy was always a complete musician, both as a composer, orchestrator and, of course, one of the most innovative of soloists on trumpet. So as a musician, I don't think Dizzy Gillespie has a peer.*

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Composer Michael Leonard on the magic and wonder of the late Bill Evans playing ballads:

> *No musician plays ballads quite like Bill Evans. It's almost as though he were singing the lyrics, playing the orchestral accompaniment and conducting all at the same time. His exquisite taste and absolute sense of security allow the music to emerge in its purest form while putting his own original mark on it. There are never any superfluous pianistic embellishments in Bill's playing; everything he does seems to grow out of the music itself.*

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"Jazz cries out its soul and nobody cares," despaired Eric Satie (1866-1925) long ago, and the French composer's reproach was not solely intended for the USA where the music originated. The point of the aphorism is still, in some ways, pertinent today. The fast-dollar, would-be exploiters greatly outnumber the genuine jazz supporters and promoters . . . of that I'm certain. But jazz does make good friends – sincere, caring people who love the music for its intrinsic beauty and the mental stimulation and pleasure it gives. I have in mind the many people who, so willingly and generously, donate so much time, energy and, indeed, money to the operation and welfare of the many clubs and societies throughout Australia. For example, the Jazz Action Societies in New South Wales, Queensland and Tasmania which, collectively are doing invaluable work. If you truly appreciate jazz and the artists who make it . . . then give a little back by joining and *supporting* a jazz club or society.

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* *Ian Neil can be neard each night on the ABC in his program Music To Midnight. His column is a regular feature in JAZZ Magazine.*

CEDRIC PEARCE:

Tasmanian Jazz Pioneer

By Tom Pickering *

Cedric Pearce, one of the pioneers of Australian jazz, died of leukaemia in Hobart on 28th July.

As well as being a drummer, Cedric was a writer, a publisher and, for many years, the leading Tasmanian bookseller.

He belonged to the first wave of Australians to discover jazz, research it, play it and spread the gospel.

In spite of not playing drums professionally since 1962, when he suffered a slight stroke, Cedric Pearce is a name well-known to jazz-lovers. If they haven't heard his drumming, they know him for his jazz criticism, as an editor of *Jazz Notes* or perhaps as the author of Australia's first published book about jazz, *Trumpet In The Night*.

Although technically no Buddy Rich (his roll was never much more than a rattle), Cedric had a rock-solid beat and he used the sticks with intelligence, sensitivity and wit, doubtless helped by his extensive knowledge of the material.

His first real kit (replacing a conglomeration of cans and boxes) was purchased for £10 in 1936. It was somewhat less than adequate but, somehow, he managed to produce the right sounds; in fact, more so than many flashier, more technically proficient drummers. Perhaps it had something to do with the filthy old sandshoe he insisted on wearing on his bass-pedal foot. The bass-drum was decorated by a hectic South Sea Island sunset which I quickly converted to a caricature of Cedric. No mean feat.

Anyone listening to Eric Child's tribute on his July 30th Jazz on Friday session will have heard two examples of Cedric's drumming: *Won't You Come Over To My House, Baby*? and *No Escape*. These were recently re-released on Swaggie and feature Ade Monsbourgh with members of my band. The latter tune gives a fine sample of Cedric's woodblock work, at which he was particularly adept.

Records with Cedric on drums are deplorably scarce. Some older collectors may have the Barrelhouse Four 78's issued by Bill Miller on his Ampersand label or the Swaggie 45 on which Tom Pickering's Good-time Jazz Band accompanied the black singer, Billy Banks. Quite a few Tasmanians have tapes of the numerous ABC broadcasts under Ian Pearce's or my own name recorded during the 40's and 50's, most of which were also scripted by Cedric. Others have preserved tapes of concerts we did with visitors from the mainland.

Since schooldays, I have had close associations with the Pearce family. In 1934, my family moved into a house next-door-but-one and Cedric, Ian and I developed our interests in jazz and literature together. This led to the formation of the 'Barrelhouse Four' (Rex Green on piano, Ian on cornet) and fanatical endeavour to reproduce the sounds we heard on the records we were gradually collecting.

The war scattered the group, but also led to the discovery of Bill Miller, the Bells and kindred souls on the other side of Bass Strait who had been having a parallel experience.

Although the Barrelhouse Four reformed after the war, it wasn't long before Ian and Rex Green left for Melbourne, leaving Cedric and I to recruit a new band. This we accomplished by 1947 and soon this 7-piece group was running jazz dances which continued for over 12 years, building up a generation of followers who still turn up at present-day annual reunions.

This article is mainly about Pearce the jazzman but any outline of his life must include brief mention of his impact on the book world.

Cedric was employed by Fullers Bookshop on leaving the army and he became managing director of the business in 1960. In 1971, he was the first and only Tasmanian to be elected Federal President of the Australian Booksellers' Association. By 1977, he had achieved the further prestige of being chosen as the National Book Council's 'Bookman of the Year'. His 'Cat and Fiddle Press' published many books which have already become collectors' items.

He leaves a wife, Peg (a committee member of Jazz Action), four sons and a daughter.

Cedric's funeral on Friday, 30th July was unique as far as Tasmania is concerned. While not a religious ceremony, an atmosphere of genuine warmth and respect was generated by the large crowd. Two heartfelt addresses were delivered (one by artist Max Angus, and one by myself) and the proceedings were climaxed by a band of his musical colleagues expressing their feelings in the traditional manner with a spirited version of Ade Monsbourgh's *Jazz Parade*.

I believe Cedric would have approved.

From left: Cedric Pearce, drums; Col Wells, trumpet; Keith Stackhouse, piano; Tom Pickering, clarinet. Hobart, c. 1950. (Photograph from Australian Jazz Quarterly, reproduced by permission of Bill Haesler.)

** Tom Pickering is State Parliamentary Librarian in Tasmania, and was a lifetime musical associate of Cedric Pearce. He has recently been made a Member of the Order of Australia for his services to jazz and librarianship.*

MARK SIMMONDS: interview

By Martin Jackson

Sydney tenor saxophonist Mark Simmonds is one of the strongest talents in the new generation of Australian jazz players. A virtuoso instrumentalist, a strong composer, and leader of The Freeboppers, his background contains many of the characteristics unique to his generation: work in the rock field; formal study at an institute; membership of a musicians' co-operative; and, study in the US as a recipient of a Music Board grant. Although born in New Zealand, Mark was settled in Australia from an early age. He took up trumpet as part of a school music program, and later, after hearing jazz, also took up the soprano sax, and started sitting in with trad bands while still at school. Also while still at school , he attended the initial jazz course at NSW Conservatorium of Music in 1973, under American Howie Smith. While there, also took up tenor sax, with Lester Young as his initial influence. He recently spoke with Martin Jackson in Melbourne:

MJ: Can you tell me what the Con. course was like then?

MS: There were only about 20 people in the whole course — it was very intimate at that stage. It was just him (Smith), and later in the year Don Burrows and George Golla joined. But early on it was just him, and class sizes were quite small.

Do you feel you learnt much from Smith? He seems to have influenced your purist attitude.

Most of what I feel about the fundamentals of saxophone playing I basically got from him. I feel that I really improved a lot . . . I went from amateur to more professional through his coaching.

Who else was attending the course then?

Craig Benjamin had come down from Canberra with John Conley. Dave Glyde was in the same class too.

Do you feel that the course helped you younger players develop?

I think it did . . . Craig Benjamin became quite a voice for a few years with the group Out To Lunch. Yeah, I think it did because at that stage there was the personal contact, and it wasn't as rigid as it probably is now. The teachers, Howie and Don Burrows as well, would actually take time after the class to show me a few things if they heard me try to play something. They had more time, and it was a lot more relaxed.

Pic: Peter Sinclair

And where did you go after that? Was the David Martin group your first modern gig?

Yeah, that was the first one that I played modern jazz with. Mike Bukovsky was in that band, and I've played with him on and off since then. Also Steve Elphick, who I had gone to school with, was on bass in the original band.

Did you learn much from that band?

It was good in that Dave gave Steve, Mike and I a strong say in the direction of a lot of the pieces. That was great. It enabled us to develop our arranging and compositional skills. We also started to contribute original compositions.

How long were you with David Martin for?

Quite a few years. It was through him that I met Roger Frampton and Phil Treloar, and I played with the Jazz Co-Op for a few months. I was playing in a lot of bands at one stage — Dave Levy's, and Phil Treloar's quintet with Bernie McGann, whom I learnt quite a lot from. A bit of a scene was happening at a place called the Pinball Wizard, just over the road from the Basement. There was a lot of sitting in going on, with the Last Straw on Thursdays, and Bernie's group on Sundays, with which I used to sit in quite a lot. Bernie eventually handed that gig over to me, and I continued with a trio of Phil Treloar and Ray Martin on bass.

Also at this time, I was doing a lot of playing with rock bands. I toured and recorded with 01' 55, who were

quite popular at that stage; Buffalo; Silver Studs; Jeff St. John; Doug Parkinson, and others. I was touring a lot with rock bands, and not just for commercial reasons. I was also into a lot of the music. With rock, you learn how to get the maximum value out of the minimum amount of notes.

Was the Keys Music Association formed around this time?

No, earlier. All this time I had been playing with Keys, which was formed around 1973, but did not perform in public for quite some time. It was named after clarinetist Martin Keys, who was at both school and the Con. course with me, and died in our last year of school. So we got this band together out of the trad band at school, but we had progressed to bebop, and had started listening to John Coltrane, Ornette Coleman, and that sort of thing. So the band at first was very much moulded on Pharoah Sanders, Archie Shepp, late '60's, and early '70's music. It just began as getting together regularly and blowing. Then we got into writing compositions. It was really a group of friends as the nucleus, which gave us a brotherhood kind of feeling.

When did Keys start their public activities?

We invaded a few trad jazz conventions, and then we put on a couple of concerts, on a very low budget, with Keys, and a few other younger musicians who had been hanging around us a bit — Dale Barlow, Chris Abrahams, Andy Gander, and Peter Dehlson. They were quite successful, so we decided to co-operate with equipment, transport, and accomodation in going to Mileham Hayes's Easter Fest in Brisbane. We were quite successful, and Keys got third prize of $600 in the Modern band section of the awards. Which wasn't bad considering it was about our first major concert, we were playing original compositions, and first and second prizes went to Crossfire and McJad respectively.

So have you been with Keys fairly constantly?

When I have been in Sydney, but they have done plenty of performances without me.

And when did you come into contact with Serge Ermoll?

I met Serge around 1979 through John Conley and Barry Woods, whom I met through Craig Benjamin. Serge had the idea of getting a band together which would be slightly straighter than what he had been doing with Free Kata. We got together for a month of gigs at The Basement, and also "closed" the Pacific Jazz Cellar before touring Melbourne. The culmination of the band was the Dedication to Horst Liepolt *record, with a string quartet, added horns, and Dale Barlow as the other tenor soloist.*

How do you feel about the result of the album? Were you happy with your own playing?

Considering how hurried it was, the complexity of some of the music, and the limited number of takes, it wasn't a bad effort. Of my own playing, there is one track (Dedication 2) where both Dale and I take pretty good solos, and they are both quite different, but still both Coltrane-influenced.

What do you think is the main difference between your style and Dale's?

I think we have got some similar influences, like Coltrane, but I think some of my major influences are different to Dale's. I have been quite influenced by Sonny Rollins, earlier on Lester Young, Archie Shepp, Albert Ayler, and, more recently, David

Murray. Dale perhaps is influenced by people like Wayne Shorter.

It seems to me that particularly rhythmically, you come more out of swing than bebop.

I have always played bop, but preferred to develop it more melodically, like Sonny Rollins rather than Charlie Parker. I did play with bop bands, but I always felt fake when I played that music . . . it never felt me I guess. I sort of can do the fiddle bebops, but it leaves a bad taste in my mouth.

And you really dig some swing stylists, like Merv Acheson?

I think he is one of the greatest, and Paul Furniss is also one of my favourite players. And I collect 78's of Lester Young, Coleman Hawkins, Johnny Hodges, and Don Byas. I really love their tones.

Tell me how the Australian Art Ensemble got together.

Well, that came about when I was playing at Morgan's Feedwell in Sydney in 1979, where once again there was quite a bit of sitting in going on. I used to sit in with Bernie's band, which included Bob Gebert, and he used to come and sit in with my trio. So Phil Treloar, Bob, and myself decided to start working together regularly. We made some recordings, and then we applied for a grant to study in New York, which we got.

Did you do much public performance as the AAE?

We did a farewell concert at the Paradise, a KMA concert, and a couple of Arts College gigs.

So what was the aim of going over there as a group?

Well, we wanted to develop as a group with an open-ended approach, possibly adding other musicians to the trio nucleus. The idea was not to go there to study or play as a group, but to study and develop individually. This ultimately lead to us developing in different directions, I guess.

What did you do in your six months there?

I spent three weeks at the Creative Music Studio at Woodstock, which is like an alternative Berklee. They are involved in what they call "World Music", and they have people like Don Cherry, Jack DeJohnette, and Roscoe Mitchell teaching there, while Karl Berger runs the school.

Who was teaching during your time there?

There was Bakaida Carroll, the trumpet player; James Emery, who plays with Anthony Braxton; Karl Berger; Gary Vistad, who played with Steve Reich; and, Marion Brown, who was the resident jazz teacher. Vistad was involved with process music, and he was quite influential. Actually I have written a few pieces using techniques I have learnt from him. Carroll and Emery took the band classes, and both had different conducting techniques, from Sun Ra and people like that, to spontaneously conduct the band. It was quite interesting. I have not used it yet, but I have written a piece for the KMA Orchestra that is designed to have different conductor signals to spontaneously bring in certain sections.

Why did you leave Woodstock after three weeks? Did you feel it provided just one element of what you wanted?

I got a lot out of the Woodstock experience, and I would like to go back and stay longer, but what I really wanted was direct experience of the music in New York. So I went back and studied with saxophonist George Coleman. I am still working on the stuff he gave me. We did not really get into sax technique as he seemed satisfied with my sound, but just concentrated on techniques for getting around changes.

Did he show you much which you think you could not have acquired here?

Certainly. He had a lot of emphasis on ear training – he often negated theory as being secondary to development of the ear. There was some academic stuff, like certain patterns to get through changes, but they were different sort of patterns to the Jamey Aebersold-David Baker sort of thing. His idea was that you were learning them not to play them in your solos, but to get an idea of the sound of running through certain types of changes. He also showed me a lot of different substitutions that Monk, Coltrane, and people like that had shown him. Nobody out here has shown me anything like them, and I have not seen them in books either.

Who were the people you heard that impressed you?

Basically George Coleman as a sax player . . . he had the sound, the virtuosity, the whole trip that I had been wanting to hear. There were other great players too, like Arthur Blythe.

Did you see Ronald Shannon Jackson and James Blood Ulmer, and were they an influence on you?

A few times, in different contexts. I was influenced not so much by the music itself, but in not being ashamed of my rock background – the fact that I am from a rock 'n roll generation, growing up in the '60's. It made me feel a bit more legitimate about what I was thinking of doing, to see that it was part of a world-wide movement. And a lot of the musicians – David Murray, for instance – are about my age. Joseph Bowie, Butch Morris, and others are all doing a similar sort of thing, yet all the music is quite different. The things that they have in common are that they have not only absorbed the contemporary jazz idiom, but also rock, soul, and funk idioms of the '60's and '70's. It is more than just jazz-rock fusion – it is a real synthesis, and I hope my band is too. I would hate it to sound like a fusion band in the normal sense.

Has your concept of the Freeboppers been influenced by hearing this music?

Not really. My biggest inspiration along those lines had previously been Miles Davis, but it was good to hear all this other music. I was not aware of the large scale it was happening on until I was over there.

So what are you aiming to do with the Freeboppers?

Basically, we are playing all original music, and we are looking at a different audience. We found while playing at the Paradise last year that a lot of our audience were young people that did not really know a lot about jazz. But they were more open-minded to the music than a lot of the jazz buffs.

How do you want to develop your music in relation to the jazz idiom?

I want to retain the spontaneity, and the contemporary structures, such as polyrhythms and polytonality, which have come out of the jazz tradition via Ornette Coleman, Coltrane, Monk, Cecil Taylor, and Albert Ayler. All those elements I want to retain are, to me, the elements lost by people like Billy Cobham, Herbie Hancock, and Chick Corea in the '70's. They lost the spontaneity and flexibility when they added the rock and funk rhythms.

In summary, you seem to have very eclectic influences. Now that you have moved out of a Coltrane bag, what are you aiming for in your playing?

I am trying as unself-consciously as possible to mould together my jazz, rock, and ethnic influences in a natural way. My compositions are developing along a different line, and that is helping change the shape of my playing as well. I am aiming for a lot of textural contrasts; excitement; variation; authenticity; my own sound; and, to find myself. I want to be the best.

CRUISING ON THE MINGHUA

By Eric Myers

Last year's jazz cruise on the Minghua could be described in a number of ways. I think of it now as ten days of delicious hedonism: sun, swimming, the tropics, good company, cheap drinks (oh, too cheap!) and abundant music.

Radio personality Phil Haldeman, who is known for enjoying himself, called it, I remember, "terminal ecstasy". "When I die," Phil was heard to say, "They'll put on my tombstone – *Here lies Haldeperson, who died of . . . everything!*"

Still, despite all the talk of expiring from pleasure, everyone survived – even the two disappointed young girls who accosted the guitarist David Colton one night in the discotheque. It was during an after-midnight pyjama party. The unsuspecting Colton was dragged off to a cabin where his shorties were forcibly removed.

But alas, a jazz musician on board ship is usually limp from overwork. "He just looked at us with these funny purple eyes", said one of the girls, "and collapsed in a heap". "I thought the Tony Ansell Sextet was *really* a sextet," said the other.

Ah well, only two disappointed customers out of 500. Still, those two girls must have been used to disappointment; they were Newtown followers.

Apart from the fun – or, more exactly, part of the fun – was the jazz on board. Other than the Ansell group with singer Chris McNulty, there was the Jenny Sheard Trio, Noel Crow's Jazzmen, and the James Morrison/David Pudney Duo. So, a great range of jazz could be heard – from the happy, razzamataz trad of Noel Crow, through the mixture of soft/funk and hard-swinging, straight-ahead bebop of the Ansell group, to the dark, brooding ballads of Jenny Sheard.

It would appear that the emphasis will be on trad jazz for the next Minghua Jazz Cruise, departing on November 16. Not only Noel Crow's Jazzmen, but this time the Graeme Bell Allstars as well. Tony Ansell's group is on again (this time a quartet) plus singers Edwin Duff and Heathermae Reading, not to mention the impressionist Paul Jennings (who no doubt will impersonate Louis Armstrong).

A jazz cruise, I was to discover last time, is not only about jazz. While the jazz steamed ahead with its own momentum in the Cocktail Lounge, Cruise Director Robbie Snowden and his staff were conducting the panoply of ordinary cruise festivities in the Main Lounge: island nights, Hawaiian nights and French nights, and so on, where everyone enjoyed the inalienable right to dress up and be ridiculous.

The highlight of this activity was the Special Surprise Floor Show on the night before the ship returned to Sydney. Various members of the Chinese crew gave musical performances. The unexpected star of the evening was none other than the Minghua's captain Chien Fang An, who wore a Digger slouch hat and played *Waltzing Matilda* on the violin.

Pic: Jane March

Tony Ansell at the piano: not really a sextet . . .

Graeme Bell: emphasis on trad next cruise . . .

For those with energy, cruise activities included Tai Chi instruction, physical fitness classes, Chinese lessons, movies, table tennis, deck quoits, dancing classes, card games, bingo, water polo. (There may have been other things I didn't get around to.) Add to that list duty-free shopping in the tropics of the South Pacific, the duty-free shop on board, the gambling casino and the discotheque.

See what I mean? You were right, Phil. Terminal ecstasy!

NOTES ON OUR CONTRIBUTORS

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

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ERROL BUDDLE: Some Earlier Eras

By Eric Myers

At the end of the last instalment (JAZZ, July/August, 1982) it was 1946. Errol Buddle had stepped into the shoes of the saxophonist Bobby Limb who had left Adelaide to join Bob Gibson's big band in Melbourne. NOW READ ON:

In post-war Adelaide, there was a small, thriving jazz scene. There was a Jazz Lovers' Society meeting one Sunday every month at the King's Ballroom. The President was Bill Holyoake, one of the first important record collectors in Australian jazz and a pioneer broadcaster. One of the members was Kym Bonython, who occasionally played the drums. Jack Brokensha had been discharged from the Air Force and was playing regularly in Adelaide; the saxophonist Clare Bail was on the scene.

Every Sunday night there was a jam session, which went on until 3 am, at the Air Force Association. The President of the Association was Ron Wallace, who was also a jazz drummer and allowed jazz musicians to use the Air Force ballroom.

Still, to provincial Adelaide, Melbourne represented the big time, and most young Adelaide musicians kept one eye on the opportunities there. Not long after Bobby Limb left Adelaide, John Foster (bass), Jack Brokensha (drums and vibes) and Ron Lucas (piano) were offered a job playing seven nights a week at the Plaza Coffee Lounge in St. Kilda. They were a show band plus a comedian and a girl vocalist, but they also played some jazz.

At Easter 1947 they send Errol Buddle a telegram and asked him to come to Melbourne and join the group. He came over, but it was not an auspicious debut for the young Adelaide saxophonist. He was fired after only two weeks, when the manager, on a whim, decided to cut costs. Still, in the casual spirit of those lighthearted days, he was reinstated a week later when the other members of the group talked the manager around. Subsequently, Buddle was to become a great attraction through his tune *Buddle's Bebop Boogie*, a rousing 12-bar blues which featured a number of key changes.

For Buddle, seven nights a week at the Plaza was a dues-paying job. Originally called the Rockettes, the group stayed there for a year. Meanwhile Ron Loughhead replaced Lucas on piano. The Adelaide musicians established themselves quickly, and moved on to other jobs, such as the Galleon, a coffee lounge not far from the Plaza, and later to the Stork Club, owned by Sammy Lee.

Errol Buddle counters the view that modern jazz in Melbourne really started with the opening of Horst Liepolt's Jazz Centre 44 in 1955 – where a new generation of young musicians emerged, particularly Brian Brown, Stewart Speer, Keith Hounslow, David Martin and Brian Buckley – all youngsters who reacted against the 'cool' jazz of the 50s, and were highly influenced by black American hard-bop.

"It was going as early as 1947", says Errol. "Stewie [Speer] was playing then, but not professionally. I can remember many jam sessions at Stewie's place. Every one was very keen; we were working seven nights a week, yet we'd still go to jam sessions after work, after 12 midnight."

In 1947 Buddle worked in various groups with Don Banks, then primarily a jazz pianist, but an important figure who was to become one of Australia's most distinguished composers. Banks was head of the Composition Department at the NSW Conservatorium of Music when he died in 1981.

"Don was one of the first to play bebop in this country. He was a very studious chap, a very serious musician, a very good pianist and writer. After that, he went to England and wrote a lot of film music, and got into classical music. He had a good bebop style on piano, a bit like Al Haig."

"There was a good jazz scene in Melbourne in 1947 – Bobby Limb on tenor sax, Splinter Reeves on tenor, alto players like Eddie Oxley, very young at the time; trumpet players like Freddie Thomas; drummers like Charlie Blott; guitar players . . . Bruce Clarke was just starting at that time."

Meanwhile, at the Plaza, the singer Edwin Duff had joined the group, now under the name Jack Brokensha Quartet. They became so well-known that in 1948 they were booked to appear at the Sydney Town Hall for two concerts. They were successful in Sydney but due to poor promotion their tour of New South Wales country centres – such as Dubbo, Bathurst and Orange – was a flop. Duff knocked everyone out with his Sinatra-style sophistication and the bop-inspired unison lines he executed with Buddle.

Following the group's return to Melbourne, Jack Brokensha had a nervous breakdown in January 1949, and was paralysed down one side of his body. There was no satisfactory explanation for this affliction, but it appears to have had something to do with after-effects of the war. He went back to the Repatriation Hospital in Adelaide. Buddle stayed on in Melbourne for a while, but became homesick, and returned to Adelaide too.

Pic: John M. Duncan.

The Stork Club, Melbourne, May 29, 1948. From left: Ron Loughhead (pno), John Foster (bs), Craig Crawford (tenor), Jack Brokensha (drs), Ken Brentnall (trt), Errol Buddle (tenor).

Andrew Bisset, in his book *Black Roots White Flowers*, states that on this trip back to Adelaide, Errol Buddle took up the bassoon for the first time. Buddle says this is not correct; at this stage he had still not touched the bassoon.

In mid-1949, fol-

lowing Brokensha's recovery, the quartet was re-formed in Sydney with Brokensha, Buddle, Loughhead and a new bassist John Mowson. They landed a job at Gold's Nightclub in the AWA Building in York Street (now the Shalimar Restaurant) and became probably the most popular small jazz group in Sydney.

The American trumpeter Rex Stewart, during his five-months tour of Australia in the second half of 1949, recorded with the Jack Brokensha Quartet in Sydney. "This was the first time that a big jazz name came to Sydney," Errol remembers. "We did some recordings with him at the AWA studio, and something happened to the master. It was destroyed or damaged, and never released. Special arrangements were done by Ron Loughhead. I remember we had strings and French horns; for those days it was quite advanced.

"I was very impressed with Rex Stewart. It was quite an education listening to his style. I had never heard any American player in person, and he had a different approach to his instrument than I'd ever heard before. Of the Australian players, I think the closest to that real authentic jazz style was Ken Brentnall in those days. Ken was quite an amazing jazz trumpeter – and still is. He was one of the first to play bebop in this country."

After six months in Sydney the quartet went back to the Galleon in Melbourne in December 1949. Homesick again, Errol Buddle decided to leave the group and be home in Adelaide for Christmas. He was replaced by Ken Brentnall. Buddle found the Adelaide scene lively; there was plenty of work in the ballrooms, studios and concert venues. But he was soon itching to get back with Brokensha. By mid-1950 Brokensha was working in Sydney, and Buddle came over, expecting to join his friends again.

This time, however, he was out of luck. When he reached Sydney the group had disbanded and Brokensha had moved to Brisbane. "I was stuck in Sydney, no job, no nothing," he says. Not for long. Soon he was playing tenor with Billy Weston's band at the Gaiety Ballroom. Then, in late 1950, Australia's best-known bandleader Bob Gibson returned from England and formed, for the first time, a big band in Sydney, to do various dance jobs and radio programs. Buddle was one of the first to be invited to join.

"By this time I was wrapped in tenor", says Buddle. "Lucky Thompson really knocked me out – he still does . . . Don Byas . . . About 1951, I heard my first record of Stan Getz. At first I didn't like his style at all. It was a complete change to what I'd been used to. I preferred the hot players like Coleman Hawkins, those robust players. At that time I was into the tenor players playing with Dizzy Gillespie. To me, Getz sounded effeminate. It wasn't until later that I started to like him. In fact, when I eventually went to the States, Getz became my favourite tenor player." Buddle was developing a liking for the sort of playing that was later to be dubbed 'West Coast' or 'cool jazz' by the critics.

Meanwhile, there was another change coming on. By late 1951, Buddle was working every night at Chequers' nightclub in Sydney from 6 pm to 1 am, and recording during the day. He was becoming sick of the professional musician's nightlife. Also the woodwind player Jock McKenna had introduced Buddle to Stravinsky's works, particularly *Rite Of Spring,* and *The Firebird Suite.*

Buddle was attracted to the sound of a particular instrument used by Stravinsky in these works. At first he didn't know what the instrument was; eventually he discovered it was the bassoon. At this stage, having had enough of nightclubs, he decided to take up the bassoon and hopefully get into a symphony orchestra. He began studying at the Sydney Conservatorium with Wally Black, principal bassoon with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. Soon he was playing the instrument with the student orchestra.

"I very quickly adapted to the bassoon," says Errol. "At first I thought I'd *never* be able to play it, because the fingering is quite different. I gradually got used to it."

Fired with the idea of becoming a symphony player, Buddle returned to Adelaide where he could live with his parents and study music seriously. Once back in his home town, he studied bassoon at the Adelaide Conservatorium with Jock Goode, principal bassoon with the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, and began building up his record collection with the works of Beethoven, Tchaikowsky and Stravinsky.

Still, it appeared that once again the quiet life in Adelaide was not going to retain Buddle for long. A friend, the New Zealand drummer Don Varella, had gone to Canada and had been writing enticing letters, highlighting the amount of live jazz that was frequently available on that side of the globe. Buddle was particularly impressed by a letter which Varella had written the day after he heard the Duke Ellington orchestra with Louis Bellson on drums and Paul Gonsalves on tenor. "Soon I got the bug," says Errol, "and began thinking about going to Canada".

Buddle says that the reference in Bisset's book to the "round of farewell appearances" (page 103) is misleading. These farewell appearances did take place in April 1951, but they were to do with the plan of Errol Buddle and Jack Brokensha to go to England. "But we never went," says Buddle. Subsequently, the two men did not decide to go overseas together (as Bisset claims) nor did they go together. More than a year after the "farewell appearances" – on August 1, 1952, not April, as stated by Bisset – Buddle, aged 24 years, left as an immigrant for Canada, without Brokensha.

Andrew Bisset also states that Buddle was voted Musician of the Year by the magazine *Music Maker* before he left for overseas. This also is incorrect. Buddle's election as Musician of the Year, in *Music Maker's* All-Star Australian Modern Musicians' Poll of 1952, was announced in the magazine's edition dated October 1952. It was many months before Buddle was to know that he had won the coveted award.

Errol Buddle arrived in Canada on August 3, 1952. Immediately he and Don Varella launched into a three-weeks trip through the West Coast of the United States, to experience an orgy of jazz. At the Blackhawk in San Francisco they heard the Earl Bostock band, a rhythm-and-blues group which included a then unknown saxophonist by the name of John Coltrane. Buddle was more impressed with Bostock on alto than with Coltrane on tenor. The following night they heard the Dave Brubeck Quartet, with Paul Desmond on alto saxophone. In the next few days they heard the Ray Anthony big band, the Cal Tjader group and others, before going on to Los Angeles where they heard the Les Brown band with Dave Pell on tenor.

A shot of Klein's jazz club, Detroit, in the 1950s. The sign on the right reads: "Errol Buddle, Australia's Down Beat Winner, and his Modern Jazz Quintette".

"I was very tenor-minded", says Errol, "it was nothing but tenor I used to listen for."

"One of the things that struck me right away was the different quality of sound the Americans were getting out of their instruments. Everything sounded different to what I was used to in Australia. There was more finesse in their playing. Even the cymbals on the drums sounded more paper-like; it was a lighter sound than in Australia, where the cymbals sounded heavier. Virtually they were going for the whole concept which, even to this day, is pretty much the same. It's almost a more legitimate approach to the instruments there. But of course there are a lot of players here who are getting that sound now.

"Sax players were using closer facings on their mouthpieces than we were using, which gave them a more legitimate sound. That's what classical musicians use. The opening of the tip of the mouthpiece is smaller. I noticed it straight away with the Les Brown band. It had a different sound, a different tone to what the bands in Australia had. I guess it's just better musicianship. I found right away that the Americans definitely played quieter than we did. That's also pretty much true today."

"Also the American players had more finesse on their instruments and better intonation. It was just a more academic approach to playing. They seemed to stress certain things more than we did. They were very meticulous players in tone production and intonation. Their instrument set-ups were more geared to playing in tune, than to playing loud. It's a different concept of playing."

Back in Canada, Buddle settled in the provincial town of Windsor. He chose this town because it was just across the US border from Detroit. Soon he was playing bassoon with the Windsor Symphony Orchestra and the Canadian Ford Motor Company Concert Band. It was a stroke of good fortune that Buddle decided on Windsor. In this city there was a shortage of professional musicians, and it was possible for him to join the union. Don Burrows, who had spent several months in Canada before Buddle arrived, had been unable to join the union in Toronto, because of strict resident requirements, and therefore found it virtually impossible to play. Even sitting in was difficult for non-members. Burrows earned his living selling encyclopaedias and packing shoes in a department store. Buddle, on the other hand, was able to earn a living in Windsor as a musician.

Soon, Buddle and Varella were frequent visitors to the clubs in Detroit, where there was one of the most vibrant jazz scenes in the United States. They were itching to form a group and get into the act. Buddle went to see a booking agent, who suggested that he and Varella get some Australians together and form a group; he promised them some work, if they were able to form an Australian group.

Buddle then wrote to the pianist Terry Wilkinson (who failed to reply) and to Jack Brokensha. Eventually, in late 1952, Brokensha decided to come. Without consulting Buddle he asked the Adelaide pianist Bryce Rohde to come too. They came by ship, by way of London, and arrived in Halifax in early 1953. Buddle got a call from Brokensha and Rohde, who were in jail in Halifax with no funds and no means of support. He and Varella sent money, and the two South Australians arrived in Windsor in March 1953.

Following this intrepid journey, rewards were not imminent for the hopeful Australian musicians. Little work came in, and often they barely survived. "One night for dinner I remember we had between the four of us, enough money for three apples and a half a loaf of bread," says Errol. "I think one of us worked that particular night and got some money."

By late 1953, Buddle was playing enough in Windsor to make a name for himself. Through a local DJ who admired his playing, Phil McKellar, he landed an audition with the

Woody Herman big band. McKeliar knew Herman well, and recommended Buddle. Herman – who was looking for a new tenor saxophonist – sent Buddle a ticket to fly to New York, so that he could audition with the band, then playing at the club Basin Street.

Buddle sat in with the band over a few nights at Basin Street. One of the saxophonists in the section was a young Jerry Coker, later to become Associate Professor of Music at the University of Tennessee, and author of many books on jazz, including the excellent *Listening To Jazz*. Buddle had his own mouthpiece, and borrowed Coker's tenor when he sat in with the band.

Klein's, 1953. Errol Buddle (centre) on tenor sax. To the left is Pepper Adams (baritone sax), to the right Barry Harris (piano). Obscured behind Buddle is Elvin Jones (drums). To the left (outside the picture) was Major Holley (bass).

Woody Herman was auditioning a number of tenor players, and the chair eventually went to Jack Montrose, who had the added qualification of being an excellent arranger, which appealed to Herman. Nevertheless it was an invaluable experience for the young Errol Buddle, who was still to make his mark in American jazz.

During 1953, Buddle and Varella had begun to frequent a jazz club called Klein's, which was on 12th Street in the heart of Detroit's black district. It was the leading jazz club in the city employing local musicians. One night the two men were in the audience to hear a group led by Yusef Lateef, which included Frank DiVita (trt), Tommy Flanagan (pno), Milt Jackson's brother Alvin Jackson (bs) and Frank Gant (drs).

Varella urged Buddle, who as usual had his own mouthpiece with him, to sit in with the group. The two men spoke with Lateef, who had a brand-new Selmer tenor. Lateef agreed to allow Buddle to sit in, imploring him to be careful with the new instrument. Buddle then blew a 40-minute set of bebop standards with the quintet.

"It was just beautiful playing with those guys," Errol recalls. "The rhythm section really jelled. It was really happening. When you play with guys like that, a funny thing happens – your playing improves straight away. I sat down after the set feeling quite elated."

The manager of the club, George Klein, immediately came over and asked Buddle whether he would like to work in the club. Flabbergasted, the Australian replied that naturally he would. Klein then said he would like Buddle to take over the existing group. "I just about fell through the floor," says Errol. "His words were actually 'I want you to keep these guys in line'. I wasn't sure if Yusef Lateef was fired, or whether his contract was up."

Klein offered to smooth things over with the musicians' union, and within a short time, the Australian took over the group, which was billed as the Errol Buddle Quintet. They played six nights a week from 9 until 2 am. "After a few weeks with these guys, I started to get the hang of it. There was a different feel in the rhythm section – definitely different rhythmical concepts than we had in Australia. I started to play things I'd never played before. They were wonderful people to work with."

After three months Buddle's contract expired, but he was asked to stay on for another three months. This time, Klein wanted to bring in four new musicians: Elvin Jones (drs), Barry Harris (pno), Major Holley (bs) and Pepper Adams (baritone sax) – an extraordinary collection of young Detroiters, all of whom were to become great names in American jazz. On Saturday nights Billy Mitchell (tenor sax) was booked, for a three-way battle of the saxes.

"Billy Mitchell was a real extrovert", says Errol. "He later became deputy leader of the Dizzy Gillespie big band. I can remember him some nights taking long solos on the blues. At the beginning of each chorus he'd yell out, at the top of his voice, the number of the chorus – numbers 1, 2 . . . and so on. One night he counted up to 100! He'd played 100 choruses of the blues without stopping!"

"Elvin Jones was very inspiring to play with. Just to hear him burning along behind you turned you on musically. At that stage, there was no abstract stuff – it was more swinging music – but in his later LPs with John Coltrane he sounded much the same to me. I could recognise his playing."

"Elvin's brothers Hank and Thad had already left for New York. I remember Elvin coming in one night and saying 'guess what, my brother's got a job with Count Basie'. Elvin was quite thrilled. Thad had really made it!"

JOHN STEVENS: Free Jazz Pioneer

*Interviewed by JOHN SHAND**

In 1966, John Stevens formed the Spontaneous Music Ensemble, destined to become in the words of Brian Case, "the finest free collective in the world". The list of players to march through its ranks, just blowing, or actually recording with it, includes Don Cherry, Bobby Bradford, Rashied Ali, Dave Holland, Steve Lacy, and Evan Parker.

Stevens's activities as a drummer, composer and music organiser, extend far beyond the SME. Since the death of Phil Seamen, he has generally been considered Britain's leading jazz drummer, with considerable influence, particularly through the SME, on the other side of the Atlantic.

He also has Australian connections. When drummer Alan Turnbull was in England in 1967, he and Stevens spent some time together around a drum kit. Bruce Cale and Dave Levy are other locals John has played with. In fact, Bruce Cale, when he was in England, played on the first SME album; they met again recently at The Basement for the first time in 15 years.

John was born in 1940. From about the age of 11, he was collecting records and attending local concerts. One of these was the Jack Parnell Big Band, with Phil Seamen playing drums, who was to be an ongoing influence. By the age of 15 he owned the classic *Massey Hall* album, and the leading bebop players were his idols of the time. It was the music's bursting energy and colour that really appealed to Stevens. The discipline they were playing within was almost beside the point for him.

"I started playing on a Smith's Crisps tin, filled with rags using my mum's sweeping brushes. I would play along to records doing that, which of course, is like a real labour. I took piano lessons for a time. I shared them with a friend of mine because we couldn't afford a full lesson. We stopped that mainly because the teacher turned out to be gay, and it became very uncomfortable." Soon after he found himself in a skiffle group called The Muleskinners, playing real brushes at this stage, but still on a biscuit tin. To play a gig, the tin sat on one chair and John on another.

"My favourite actual feel on the drums was Kenny Clarke, and obviously, I liked Max Roach and Art Blakey. I thought the combination of these three should be pretty good, which I naively thought we could achieve in a relatively short space of time. But right from the word go I saw it as a pretty free conversational type of involvement."

A few years later, a clarinetist friend of John's was drafted. On his first leave he told Stevens that he had managed to get into the Air Force band. The catch was that he had to sign on for five years.

Despite the prospect of five long years in the military, John signed up too. But the military aspect proved to be nothing more than an occasional inconvenience; the important thing was that he was able to become a professional musician immediately.

He was mainly based in Germany, where he met trombonist Paul Rutherford, and alto and soprano player, Trevor Watts, later to be regular recording mates. The large number of import records flowing into Germany allowed them to follow the work of people like Ornette Coleman and Eric Dolphy.

Furthermore there were great live gigs including Coltrane with Dolphy, the Jimmy Guiffre Trio, with Paul Bley and Steve Swallow, and many dates by Kenny Clarke, who was living in France.

"It's like speeding you up, spurring you on. I'd been playing a relatively short space of time, but I got to play with good people. The important thing was that you were a full-time musician straight away, almost from the beginning of thinking 'I'm going to be a musician'. Then there was the fact that involvement with far-seeing musicians like Paul and Trevor created a constant process of cross-fertilisation."

Upon his discharge, Stevens wound up 'depping' for Kenny Clarke in Cologne, playing with the likes of J.J. Johnson.

"When I got back to London, which was at the end of '63, beginning of '64, I played at Ronnie Scott's as quite a regular drummer. I played with Ronnie Scott, Tubby Hayes, Stan Tracey, etc, but my heart was elsewhere. I actually stuck out in that scene; I was made aware of that by the other people who were in there, but nonetheless, they were employing me."

The time came to find somewhere to get on with the music he thought was natural to him. At the end of 1965, John secured the use of the Little Theatre Club, which signalled the beginning of the SME, and the realisation of John's long brewing ideas.

"Almost instinctively, right from the start, I had a speech-like attitude towards playing solo drums. If we were exchanging fours, or if I was to play a chorus within a bebop structure, I'd treat it not so much in terms of melody, but in terms of a space that existed that I could be totally creative in."

Stevens' first taste of the possibilities had come from Phil Seamen, who could maintain a buoyant rhythm, while conversing very freely. With further encouragement from the likes of Elvin Jones's work with Sonny Rollins and John Coltrane, Ornette Coleman's groups, and Albert Ayler,

* *John Shand is a freelance writer and drummer who has a day gig with the Australian Opera. He spoke with John Stevens during the latter's recent tour of Australia with the singer Donovan.*

John's attitudes developed. Though he was already playing free music himself by this time, Albert Ayler's record *Spiritual Unity* "really hit me on lots of different levels, particularly the bass playing. Gary Peacock was to be an ongoing influence. Also the freedom of Albert's playing, the texture of Sunny Murray's playing, along with the way the bass and the drums were balanced."

John heard their music as organic and natural, and his own attitude to playing was that whether the music is in time and over changes, or not, the beauty of it is what is created between the collective.

"I tend to believe in spontaneity, cross-fertilisation, and group activity. The SME refined certain approaches to that, with very positive ideas of the sort of detail that could be achieved with collective improvisation."

On the cover of the album *Face to Face* – duets between Stevens and Watts – he made the following explanation:

> *When Trevor and I perform this piece we are seated to enable the drums and saxophone to be approximately on the same level. We face each other and play at each other allowing the music to take place somewhere in the middle. This is very much an outward process. We are trying to be a total ear to the other player allowing our own playing to be of secondary importance, apart from something that enables the other player to follow the same process – the main priority being to hear the other player totally. Both players are working at this simultaneously. At this stage we are not aware of the total sound of the two players. When we arrive at hearing the other player completely and playing (almost subconsciously) for his sake at the same time, we then allow ourselves to bring into focus the duo sound. Up to this point we've let our own personal playing function in an unconscious way. From then on we start to converse naturally, retaining the group awareness we've developed between us. Free group improvisation is our aim, and a preparation piece like this is to aid us to achieve the concentration required for the best results. The actual process, loosely described in these notes, may only take a few seconds, but those few seconds are significant in getting us beyond ourselves and into the music.*

Around 1970, the SME was even financially viable. The band consisted of Stevens, Watts, Julie Tippetts (previously rock singer Julie Driscoll) voice, and Ron Herman, bass. Managed by Georgio Gomelsky, and stimulated by Julie Driscoll's popularity, the band worked regularly, but struggled to win over Driscoll's rock fans.

"In Sicily, people were actually throwing things at us. We were getting the gigs, but they didn't quite know what they were buying."

In the mid-seventies, John toured with the original folk/rock singer/guitarist John Martyn, resulting in the magnificent trio album *Live at Leeds*, the third member being the beautiful bassist, Danny Thompson. Stevens likens their accompanying role to being in the Bill Evans Trio, it was so free within the format of Martyn's songs. It also opened his eyes to the fact that the rock audience could warm to the subtlety of the music being played.

Around the same time, John fell in with a couple of rock oriented musicians who shared many of his attitudes, and the more fusion styled band, John Steven's Away, was born.

"I know a lot of people thought, 'Oh', now look what he's up to. He's playing rock 'n roll now, after all that SME shit. That shows how much that meant. But it wasn't like that. I was genuinely excited about it. I'm genuinely excited anyway, about playing with people who are energised, and who are good players, however the music sounds.

"Though you can never complete that style, I had reached a point with SME where the group improvisational language and discoveries were there, and there were lots of people I could call on to get an orchestra together playing in that style.

"But having done that, it seemed to me that there were nice things to do coming out the end of it. It was attractive to improvise with anybody who had the energy and spirit to improvise, rather than sort of disappear up your own arse, with an attitude like, 'This is officially the way to play free music.' That is the bit a lot of people seem to get involved in, and I reacted against it.

"I specialised playing SME music on an SME type kit (a miniature drum kit) for a long time, until I came out the end of it, which opened up all my other interests, which included playing on a conventional drum kit again."

As mentioned earlier, Stevens's impact has been considerable as a composer and organiser of music and players. When the SME collective first began operating at the Little Theatre Club, they tended to compose pieces as a basis for their improvisations. He composes mainly on piano or glockenspiel. Sometimes he will sing the parts to the players, or actually write it out in some form.

"I always seem to compose for specific people. But on the other hand, I am a composer with ideas, like a painter has ideas and the musicians are the ones who bring the colour into these ideas. It is a reciprocal, or almost organic process, between the colour that is suitable, and the fact that you composed it for that colour anyway.

"I try and stay honest to that. If you feel that spontaneous about composition, you are not saying, 'Well, this is the sort of piece I'm going to compose'. You actually find out what is coming up and put that type of group together.

"When I get back there is something I'm doing with John Etheridge, the guitar player, Peter King, alto, Jeff Clyne, bass, and a trumpet player, John Corvette. It's like a free bop type thing. I came out with these couple of compositions that fitted into a rhythmic context, but were freer than that, and were definitely stimulated by a certain bop approach, so I got a group together that would be suitable for that".

That is just one of a whole bakery full of pies that Stevens has fingers in. The SME continues to exist, and as far as John knows it will always exist. The current version consists of Nigel Coombs, violin; Roger Smith, acoustic guitar; and the man himself on percussion and cornet. The acoustic guitar is unamplified so it is a particularly quiet group. With the addition of a variety of other players, this becomes the Spontaneous Music Orchestra.

There is currently a nine piece Away group; a dance orchestra which John Martyn sometimes takes part in; and he has been composing for the London Jazz Composers' Orchestra. A fifth project is a band called Fast Colour, with John Corvette, trumpet, and two Africans: a young trumpet player called Peter Segona, and the remarkable Johnny Dyani on bass. And then there is Amalgam, Trevor Watts's band, which John used to be a partner in, and which he still plays with on occasions.

An album by this latter band, *Amalgam Play Blackwell and Higgins*, has powerful evidence of Stevens' ability to play swinging time, in two lengthy pieces, each dedicated to one of Ornette's original drummers. But there is a common link between all of Stevens's projects, and that is the goal of producing *group* music. The context varies from the conversational swing of Amalgam, through the ego-devoid fusion of Away, the dynamic support for John Martyn's extraordinary folk-rock, and the South African funk of Dudu Pukwana, to the total freedom of SME. But always the music comes first: there is no room for ego, pyrotechnics or abstract theory.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY:
Challenge – SME (Eyemark)
The Source – SME (Tangent)
Face to Face – SME (Emanem 303)
Amalgam Play Blackwell and Higgins (A Records A-002)
Innovation – Amalgam (Tangent TGS 121)
Flute Music – Dudu Pukwana (Virgin CA2005)
Live at Leeds – John Martyn (Island ILPS 9343)
Somewhere in Between – John Stevens' Away (Vertigo 6360135)
Endgame – Barry Guy, Howard Riley, Stevens, Watts (Jupo 60028)

JANUARY JAZZ ON AGAIN

By Dick Scott

In association with the Festival of Sydney, entrepreneurs Barry Ward and Peter Brendle are presenting the former Summer Jazz Clinics under the banner of 'Jazz At The Conservatorium' next January 29-February 2, 1983.

Heading the team of American jazz educators will once again be Professor David Baker from the University of Indiana, who is responsible for the clinic's program. He will be arriving one week in advance of January 29, to ensure a smooth and well co-ordinated clinic.

The entire 17-piece Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra, which has long been resident on Monday nights at New York's Village Vanguard, will be coming for both concerts and clinics. All the members of the band are said to be accredited music educators. Other than drummer Lewis they include Dick Oatts, Jim McNeily, Dennis Irwin, Stephanie Fauber, Joe Lovano (ex-Buddy Rich and Woody Herman), Doug Purviance (ex-Stan Kenton), Ed Neumister (ex-Lionel Hampton and Buddy Rich) and others.

The invitation to Mel Lewis came about as a result of a chance conversation between the American singer/pianist Ben Sidran, who recently toured Australia for Barry Ward, and Lewis. The American drummer said that he has always wanted to come to Australia. Say no more. Barry Ward was on the phone in a flash.

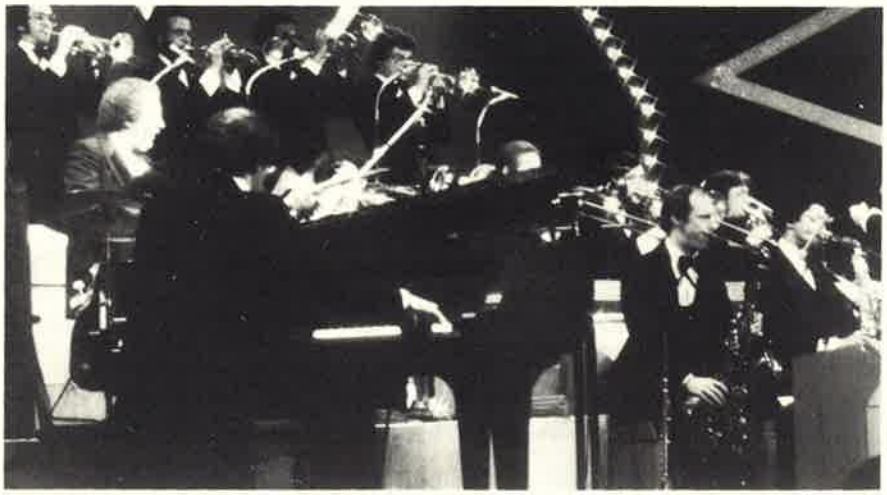
Other faculty teachers will include the singer Mark Murphy and the guitarist John Scofield from the USA, plus the German bassist Eberhard Weber. Australian musicians expected to teach and/or perform include Brian Brown, Don Burrows, Julian Lee, Ed Gaston, (who will perform with Mark Murphy), Paul McNamara, Bob Barnard, Kerrie Biddell, Judy Bailey (who will perform with Eberhard Weber), Graham Lyall, Col Loughnan, John Sangster, Vince Jones and Crossfire.

These artists will also be giving concerts as part of the Festival of Sydney between January 26 and February 2, 1983. The whole event is sponsored by the Music Board of the Australia Council, Continental Airlines, the Regent Sydney Hotel and Palings Music Centres.

Prospective students are asked to enrol as early as possible. Cost of the 5-day clinic will be $180. For further information send correspondence to Conservatorium Jazz Clinic, PO Box 108, Bondi Junction NSW 2022, or phone (02) 389-1292. On this occasion, the clinics will not be held in other Australian cities, but the promoters are working on special arrangements for interstate students.

Sydney jazz fans will no doubt lap up this opportunity to hear the Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra. This will be the first time an entire American big band has come to Australia since the Buddy Rich Big Band toured in 1974.

According to Leonard Feather, in an article in the *Los Angeles Times*, Miles Davis, now back playing, strolled into the Village Vanguard recently and sat in with the Mel Lewis band. When asked how the band sounded the Great Man replied: "Out of sight! The brass section's better than ever." Not a bad recommendation.



The Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra

Al Cohn

Cal Collins

CONCORD ALL STARS FOR BRISBANE

By Dick Scott

Mileham Hayes does it again. His Jazz Expo will be presenting the Concord All Stars on September 28, 29, 30 and October 30 at The Cellar in Brisbane. They include Warren Vache (trt), Cal Collins (gtr), Jake Hanna (drs) and Al Cohn (tnr sax). Sorry folks, they will not be appearing elsewhere in Australia — Brisbane only.

These men are four of the remarkable stable of jazz musicians who record for Californian Carl Jefferson's highly successful Concord record label and play at his annual Concord festival. As well as performing in Brisbane, they will be conducting jazz education clinics which have been funded by the Music Board of the Australia Council.

The black American singer Ernestine Anderson will also be at The Cellar on October 5, 6, 7 and 9 and either at The Basement or the new Sydney venue 73 York Street. Other gigs to be confirmed later, so watch the daily press.

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Participating Artists at Concerts and/or Clinic are: The 17-piece Mel Lewis Orchestra featuring Mel Lewis (drums and percussions), Dick Oatts (saxes), Jim McNeely (piano), Dennis Irwin (bass), Stephanie Fauber (french horn), Joe Lovano (tenor sax & clarinet), Doug Purviance (trombone) and Earl Gardner (trumpet & Fluegelhorn), Mark Murphy (vocal), Eberhard Weber (bass), John Schofield (guitar), David Baker (head of faculty) and Brian Brown, Don Burrows, Judy Bailey, Ed Gaston, Julian Lee, Bob Barnard, Kerrie Biddell, Graeme Lyall and many more.

The Conservatorium Jazz Clinic gratefully acknowledges the financial assistance from the Music Board of the Australia Council, and the support from 'The Regent Sydney' Hotel, Palings Mid-City and the NSW Conservatorium of Music.

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Fee must be submitted with registration form. When deposit only is paid, balance of $90 must be paid by 7th January, 1983.

David Baker, 'Jazz Professor' at the Indiana University and Mel Lewis are currently finalising the faculty programme. All registered students will receive monthly updated reports on developments regarding the Clinic and the Concerts.

ABC IGNORES JAZZ ACTIVIST

By Eric Myers

There are some mysterious, not to say sinister, happenings in the world of ABC jazz radio which perhaps some of its administrators may care to explain.

Dr Clement Semmler, a distinguished scholar and author in his own right, left the ABC in 1977 as its Deputy General Manager and former head of ABC radio, TV and overseas programs. By the unanimous acknowledgement of grateful jazz musicians, enthusiasts and listeners throughout Australia he had single-handedly and courageously (because of the hostile ABC program climate in earlier years) succeeded over his career of 35 years in giving jazz its due and rightful place in ABC programs.

He compered for several years from 1940 in Adelaide one of the first jazz shows on the ABC. Later on in Sydney in the early 1950s as chief radio planner he instituted Thursday Night Swing Club (a revolutionary feat in those fusty ABC days), giving men like Alan Saunders, Ellis Blain and others, as well as live jazz combos for the first time, a broadcasting opportunity.

An even more single achievement on Semmler's part was that back in 1949 he had persuaded an almost entirely classically oriented ABC Concert Management to tour Graeme Bell's band after its triumphant return from Europe. Later on, in the mid-1950s he did the same for the Australian Jazz Quintet, and just before he left the ABC he again persuaded the ABC Concert people to tour Len Barnard's band. These are all simple matters of fact.

Early in 1950 he went to Brisbane where he met Eric Child and was so impressed with Child's jazz know-how and enthusiasm that on his return to Sydney he made a place for Eric's Saturday morning jazz program – which has continued successfully for the next 30 years.

It was Semmler too who, some years later, persuaded a by now jazz-converted ABC to allow him to program a Friday night jazz show which Kym Bonython and Child ran alternately (now compered solely by the latter).

And as if all that wasn't enough, seeing in 1965 the great opportunity for late night jazz on radio, Clem Semmler personally contacted Arch McKirdy (his firm friend ever since) and talked him into accepting a contract with the ABC – Arch was then running a successful nightly jazz show on 2GB. So began the nightly *Music To Midnight* (*Relax With Me* was McKirdy's original title) which was later taken over by Ian Neil and which is now deservedly an ABC program institution.

But the important fact is that there was not, over 30 years to the present a radio jazz initiative on the ABC which was not the work of Clement Semmler.

When he left the ABC in 1977 he chose to be critical of some aspects of the ABC's administration – criticisms, incidentally, which were justified when the Dix Enquiry incorporated most of Semmler's strictures and suggestions for an improved ABC, in its Report.

But, in the manner of thwarted bureaucrats, there were, as a result, some dark mutterings in ABC corridors.

It was reported, correctly, in the National Times in November 1980, that on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of Clem Semmler's pioneering Adelaide ABC jazz show he was invited by Eric Child to take part in an interview commemorating the event in Child's Friday night program.

Semmler willingly agreed and suggested a list of records. But a few weeks later an embarrassed Child rang Semmler to tell him that a higher ABC authority had vetoed his appearance on the ABC – surely a most ungracious and churlish act of censorship. The National Times report expressed no doubt that this veto and Semmler's criticisms of the ABC were related.

But the most outrageous, and in this journal's view, scandalous happening of all was the exclusion of any reference to Semmler's magnificent achievements for ABC jazz in Eric Child's 50th anniversary program of a month or two back.

Child featured interviews and voice-pieces by Alan Saunders, the late Ellis Blain, Kym Bonython and others – all of whom Semmler had been instrumental in bringing onto ABC air (not to mention Child's own programs).

But there was not one mention, not one solitary reference to the man who had alone pioneered the introduction of jazz to the ABC.

JAZZ Magazine would be interested, as was the National Times, in the explanation for this extraordinary and, we repeat, churlish omission.

LEE JESKE reports on the KOOL JAZZ FESTIVAL

It took nearly three decades, but from a single weekend in Newport, Rhode Island in 1954, George Wein has built an empire.

Some cried "sell-out" a few years back when Wein put the beloved Newport Jazz Festival (which was years and miles gone from Newport by that time) in the hands of a cigarette manufacturer under the banner, "The Kool Jazz Festivals", but few are complaining now as the Kool entourage blankets the US with jazz, jazz, jazz. However, despite the nearly two-dozen Kool festivals taking place, it's the New York event — the transplanted Newport event — that is still the sire of them all. For ten days over a thousand musicians played under the Kool/NY aegis in concert halls, picnic grounds, dance palaces across New York City and beyond — to New Jersey, Saratoga Springs and other nearby locales. It was a rock-solid affair, though it was mired, for the most part, in the mainstream — the old mainstream: the mainstream of standard tunes. Although there were good efforts to bring some of the younger musicians of today into the fold, there was very little bebop, hard bop, modal playing, free playing, or harmolodic funk. There was a lot of dependable swinging though and a lot of good music to be heard. Here, then, is a day by day account of what I managed to squeeze into my ears over that ten days.

FRIDAY: Every year the festival gets under way with a do at the mansion of the Mayor of New York City, Ed Koch, and every year it's the same: the weather is steaming hot, the drinks and food run out in about eleven minutes, the music is provided by a mediocre college band with celebrity guests, and the Mayor runs about eating corned beef and acting like a mayor. This year things were different: the day was pleasant and mild, the fast disappearing food was replaced by a never-ending supply of hot dogs, raw clams and ice-cold beer, the music was played by a stellar unit that was as inspired as any of these players can get (which is pretty damned inspired — the players were Lionel Hampton, Freddie Hubbard, Toots Thielemans, "Sweets" Edison, Stan Getz, Gerry Mulligan, Roger Kellaway, Bill Pemberton and, especially Elvin Jones), and the Mayor was absent — he's out trying to become governor. It was a lovely afternoon and, as usual, it was delightful to see those out-of-town jazz scribes whom one gets to jaw with about once a year (there was a noticeable lack of foreign writers, though . . . the US dollar having something to do with that).

The official opening concert was a one-hour piano recital by Art Hodes at The Sheraton Hotel's Forum Room, a long, cool room with very poor sight lines, but okay acoustics. Hodes played some 18 numbers and every one — *every one* — was a blues-drenched, good-humoured joy. He played rag-blues', march-blues', standard-blues' and blues-blues' and put 70 years of wit and knowledge into each one.

Then it was on to Avery Fisher Hall for a three quartet program — Max Roach and his quartet in tandem with a string quartet and something justifiably called The Great Quartet (Hubbard, Elvin Jones, McCoy Tyner, Ron Carter). Max began things on an ugly note by making a nasty comment about how little he was getting paid (something he was to do *three* times during the week and something which is classless and out of place — if he didn't like the bread, he shouldn't have taken the gig). Then he sat down with his bunch (Cecil Bridgewater, Odean Pope, Calvin Hill) and the stringers and played a number of his where the strings swung a little, Max swung a lot and Pope played much too long; followed by a number of just Max and the strings which was interminable — nothing swung and it lasted for days; followed by a number by Bridgewater where everybody swung and the strings played Bird licks and Pope played too long again.

Then the GQ came out (strutting like a GQ) and what was lacking in subtlety was more than made up for by the *magnificent* interplay between Hubbard and Jones. I'd have preferred a less predictable pianist than Tyner, but oh the sparks did fly.

Then it was a mad dash to Carnegie Hall for a reunion of Benny Goodman, Lionel Hampton and Teddy Wilson. Stan Getz and his quartet were on stage as I straggled in (they were the opening act). I was to hear Getz about seven times during the week and if he has *ever* played with more fire and emotion, I am not aware of it. His version of Billy Strayhorn's *Blood Count* was nothing short of glorious (the sensitive drumming of Victor Lewis must be mentioned, too).

Then the headliners waddled on — arm-in-arm, belly-to-belly. I don't have to tell you *what* they played, and I really don't have to tell you *how* they played. Augmented by Panama Francis on drums and Phil Flanigan on bass, it was a low-keyed set with Goodman tossing out sly little riffs, Hampton trying to pull off some of his antics under the watchful eye of BG, and Wilson playing his elegant, port-in-the-storm self. They are a mellower bunch, but when they fall into place, how they can swing.

SATURDAY: Anne Marie Moss did the one-hour recital in the hotel and she belted out a lounge act that would have been better in a lounge. Nothing special here — just leather-lunged readings of such things as *Alone Again (Naturally)*. Not really my cup of tea.

There was only one main event this night, at Avery Fisher, but it was long enough to be three concerts and boring enough to be a 17-part BBC series on chimneys. Called *Jazz And World Music*, it was certainly well-intentioned. The premise was simple — show that jazz has broken out of the American boundaries by presenting its various non-American forms. Fair enough.

Things started with Paul Horn and his flute and some pre-recorded nonsense that was bland enough to be played in elevators anywhere in the world. This was followed by a version of Rainbow — altoist John Handy plus Indian musicians. Handy played alright, the Indians (notably violinist Subramaniam and sarodist Ashish Khan) played very well, but in the end the collaboration didn't do either art form justice. This was followed by a delicious set from Codona (Don Cherry, Colin Walcott, Nana Vasconcelos) that was mesmerising and funky and was played on guitars from Bali and berimbaus and wooden flutes and shakers and a lot of things I've never seen before. It was going along great until they were joined by Jim Pepper, an American Indian saxophonist who did an American Indian chant that proved nothing — it didn't have any relationship to jazz or to Codona.

The concert ended in a puff of pretension as Karl Berger assembled some 35 pieces (with such players as Lee Konitz, Leroy Jenkins and Ed Blackwell buried in the pile) and a couple of dancers and his wife, IngRid (sic), singing. A lot of nonsense, if you ask me. If this was Berger on vibes with about six of the players up there, it would have been listenable. As it was, it made me squirm and, eventually, flee.

SUNDAY: About 40 minutes drive from Manhattan is a town with the unlikely name of Purchase. Purchase has a gleaming performing arts center (a number of halls of varying size in one building) and it is there that the Kool/NY Festival truly acts like a festival: there is a large choice of performers and for one ticket you

can sample a veritable smorgasbord of jazz talent. On the day I went up I heard a good western swing band called the Big Sky Mudflaps (even doing some Mingus, imagine); the excellent 'rag-bop' of the Dave Burrell Sextet (I think Burrell is one of *the* underrated pianists and composers in the business); the convincing Roland Kirkisms of the Vibration Society (held together by Hilton Ruiz and full of spirit, but I miss the three-horned monster); the painfully unswinging Teddy Charles/Teo Macero Tentet (which featured Ricky Ford vainly trying to break through the walls of the leadweight compositions); the Clark College Jazz Band, which is hot and wailing on the ensembles and weak on the solos like any good college band; and a predictable jam session featuring Buck Hill, Arnie Lawrence and Cecil Payne (kudos to Hill).

As if that wasn't enough, I then raced back to Carnegie Hall and was glad I did. A well paced Buddy Rich Retrospective turned out to be, pound-for-pound, the best concert of the festival. The show was in, roughly, three segments: Buddy and band, Buddy and band and guests, Buddy and all-star small band. It was all woven together with just the right amount of narration (read by Mel Torme), film clips and slides. What made the concert so special was John LaBarbera's wickedly swinging updates of some of the big band charts Buddy played with Artie Shaw and Tommy Dorsey. This not to mention Dizzy Gillespie's two numbers with the band, Torme's two numbers with the band, the tight little small group (Zoot Sims, John Bunch, Bob Cranshaw, Phil Woods, Eddie Bert), a hilarious segment featuring Buddy accepting a plaque from one of the Zildjian family, and a touching appearance by the ailing (but still playing) Jo Jones. But, of course, it was Rich's picture perfect trap work that held the thing high. A model production by jazz writer Burt Korall, who produced the evening and wrote the narration.

MONDAY: A relaxing evening with a number of institutions. The first concert was at Alice Tully Hall, a lovely mid-sized auditorium, and featured Mabel Mercer and Eileen Farrell and about 30 songs. I happen to be a great admirer of Mercer's highfalutin, half-singing/half talking style. She's the model of elegance and taste and she can be as moving as any singer still working. She's a throw-back to a grander time and a grander place (Paris or Berlin in their heydays, for example). Pairing her with Farrell, the opera singer who dabbled in pop, was a good idea. Farrell's a two-fisted belter, the antithesis of Mercer. They traded songs — many of them familiar, many museum pieces — for two bubbly hours.

Then it was over to Roseland, the still-surviving dance orchestra. Basie played his dance book, lots of people danced, and those who remembered Basie's first gig at Roseland back in a simpler day (don't look at me) waxed nostalgic.

TUESDAY: The opening concert was called *Freedom Swings* and I've always subscribed to that. What was interesting about the concert — which was held at Avery Fisher and featured the David Murray Octet and the Henry Threadgill Septet — was how *unfree* it was; which, of course, should be no surprise. "Free" playing implies just coming out and playing what's on your mind. This was certainly not the case here. Both Murray and Threadgill are *composers* and both of these bands were rehearsed down to their eye-teeth. Personally, I prefer Murray's layer-cake compositions — they are both loose and structured in a Mingusian sort of way — to Threadgill's lean, fragmented style. Murray's unit featured a different set of players than his albums feature: John Hicks, for example, causes a stronger undertow than Anthony Davis, and Bobby Bradford is a harder trumpet player than Olu Dara, but the set was bright and distinctive and only confirmed my deep admiration and respect for Murray. Threadgill's set revealed no new secrets, but I particularly dug a way-out marching band finale — sort of a free-rag romp.

David Murray: layer-cake compositions . .

Pic: Jane March

The late show opened with Murray again — this time as one part of the World Saxophone Quartet. They played a typically lush, though rather subdued, set that featured a never ending kaleidoscope of woodwind shapes and colours.

Now, this concert was called *The World Sax Quartet Meets The Four Brothers*, so I don't have to tell you that the next set featured an ad-hoc tenor quartet of Stan Getz, Zoot Sims, Al Cohn and Jimmy Giuffre (not the original Woody Herman brothers, but I'll skip the genealogy for now). Well, they provided a nice set of four solo features and four quartet pieces, but there were a minimum of sparks. And if they ever met Messrs. Murray, Hemphill, Bluiett and Lake, neither I nor anyone else present was told anything about it.

WEDNESDAY: This evening kept me in Carnegie Hall for almost eight non-stop hours at two marathon events and along with a sore derriere I got a head full of music.

The opener was dubbed *The Young Lions* and it featured 17 players, both young and not-quite-so-young, who are at the forefront of current trends in acoustic jazz. What made the concert so long was the producers' good intention of having *everybody* do a feature. The whole evening proved that there are some *very* talented players out there, that they are most certainly composers as much as anything, and that they have a wide streak of romanticism. Generalisations out of the way, I particularly enjoyed: violinist John Blake's *Maiden Dance* which was a swinging brew of African influences and good down-home fiddling; a trio of Wynton Marsalis (as good as they say, folks), vocalist Bobby McFerrin (a cross between Sarah Vaughan and Al Jarreau) and bassist Avery Sharpe; Paquito D'Rivera's big band *Mariel*, a piece of free latin funk with congaist Daniel Ponce the sparkplug; and Hamiet Bluiett's *Thank You*, which featured the baritonist's whistles, breezes and "the ship is in" blasts amid sections of cat's paw delicacy. A lot of the evening was dull and stiff, but there was plenty of good work from the likes of Jay Hoggard and James Newton and on and on. It was all recorded and I'm sure it will make at least a couple of good LPs.

The late show was a salute to an earlier lion, Lester Young that started off beautifully with an all-star big band playing Budd Johnson's arrangements of some of the early Basie charts. By the time the night ended, hours later, it had lost a lot of steam, but in between there were tenormen Getz, Sims, Cohn, Johnson, Buddy Tate and the newly-unretired Allen Eager (including a *six* tenor extravaganza on *Tickle Toe*), and some raised-eyebrow trombone growling from the great Vic Dickenson, and a trio of Teddy Wilson, Milt Hinton and Jo Jones and lots more. But I don't think any of the players will mind if I say that the best music of the night came over the Carnegie Hall sound system in all its monoraul glory — the Jones-Smith, Inc. recording of *Boogie-Woogie*.

THURSDAY: Back to the Forum Room, this time with Max Roach. Max bitched about money before launching a one-hour solo drum recital that was a model of how to keep

an audience attentive through a one-hour drum recital — play melodies, explain what you're doing, and wail. The only thing larger than Mr. Roach's talent is his ego — but that's a topic we'll not discuss here.

After Max's cymbal cascades ended, I dashed (literally!) across the street for a farrago entitled *Now's The Time*, at Carnegie. The concert opened with a short set by Amina Claudine Myers that was unusually bland; continued with something called *Chico Hamilton and The Guitar Choir with Kathleen Adair*, a group that played cornball fluff and managed to distinguish itself by being (to these ears) the absolute nadir of Kool/NY '82; and continued

Pic: Jane March

Hamiet Bluett: whistles, breezes and "the ship is in" blasts amid sections of cat's paw delicacy . . .

with James Moody who was beautiful — his big strong tenor was funkily backed by Michael Carvin, Rufus Reid and Harold Mabern, and there was some glistening flute and old jokes for good measure. *That* concert went on to feature the Heath Brothers, but I went on to Avery Fisher for a solo piano meeting between Herbie Hancock and Oscar Peterson.

Herbie was out first and was quite impressive — playing a microcosm of his entire career (jazz career, mind you) in the one set. There was funk and blues and intricate, classically-woven romantic pieces and a number of standards, including *Maiden Voyage*. It was vintage Hancock and before the bracing hour was over I was made to think of Bill Evans and Otis Spann and Ahmad Jamal and Horace Silver and of Oscar himself, who was no doubt salivating in the wings.

Unfortunately, I was salivating in the stalls, so I missed Oscar's hour and I missed the anticipated jam session in order to repair to a nice Thai restaurant for the rejuvenation needed to make it through the four-hour extravaganza foolishly called *Musicians For Monk*, which began at Carnegie at eleven. Well, forget the title — what the concert was was a benefit for a recently set up petty cash fund for musicians, and although the line-up was star-filled, there was very, very little Monk music played. The concert began with Barry Harris, Charlie Rouse, Percy Heath, Paul Jeffrey and other Monk-minded but soon we were listening to *Mellow Tone* and other jammers from the rest of the players. The best segments included a wonderfully relaxed Oscar Peterson dueting with a playful Milt Jackson; the bullish rhythm section of Herbie Hancock, Tony Williams and Hungarian bass virtuoso Aladar Pege backing Wynton and Branford Marsalis, Jimmy Owens and Didier Lockwood through a furious *Giant Steps*; the oddball blend of Shelly Manne, Stan Getz, Dizzy Gillespie, McCoy Tyner and Eddie Gomez in a lovely *'Round Midnight*; and on and on. Max Roach was the compere and it was his third (and final) chance to gripe about his paycheck. He did.

FRIDAY: This is easy. Jay McShann played a wonderful recital at the Forum Room (though I wish he'd dig up some new material); Count Basie and his crowd played a sparkless set before being joined by Ella Fitzgerald (with her own trio — no Count) for a typical set of flag-wavers and ballads. I think Ella's voice is in only fair form these days, but I think that is de-emphasised when she is in front of the Basie band. Still, no surprises the whole night.

SATURDAY: Out of bed early, on the Staten Island Ferry at 10:30 in the AM along with Jay McShann and a band (Buddy Tate, Al Grey and others), Wild Bill Davison and a band (Johnny Mince on clarinet, there) and a load of ice cold beer. Drank some beer, peered at the Statue of Liberty tapped my foot, and didn't take a single note.

I took plenty of notes that afternoon, though, as Bob Wilber's Bechet Legacy played a concert at the Guggenheim Museum. Mostly the notes said things like "Bechet is definitely worthy of this" and "brilliant" and "in its quiet way this is one of the week's best concerts". Two hours and not a dull moment in the barrel. When all is said and done, there have been only three important soprano saxophonists: Bechet, Steve Lacy and John Coltrane. Wilber is certainly doing justice to the elder of those three gentlemen.

The evening show, at Avery Fisher, was called *This Time The Ladies* and it was an enjoyable olio with only songs written by women allowed. Of course, a lot of songs were written by women (if you count songs with only the lyrics by women — the producers did) and on hand to prove it were such women as Sylvia Syms (whose modified little girl manner appeals to my ears), Carrie

Bob Wilber: one of the week's best concerts . . .

Smith (whose raunchy bravado appeals to my ears, too), Carmen McRae (whom I've always thought over-rated), and Chris Connor (I prefer her prototype, Anita O'Day), and such men as Gillespie, Sims and the delightful vocalist Bill Henderson. A tuneful and solid evening.

SUNDAY: George Gruntz is a talented Swiss composer and Amiri Baraka is a talented American writer: together they've created a four-hour jazz opera. Now, four-hour jazz operas rarely see the light of day as far as full productions go, so the two gents took snippets of the thing and presented it in a workshop production at the LaMama Experimental Theatre downtown. The music was quite good and the plot was quite incoherent — but it was just snippets after all. I'll wait for a full production, in the meantime E for effort to Chico Freeman, Sheila Jordan and others in the cast.

The Kool Jazz Festival finally ended on Sunday night, very close to how it started: with Lionel Hampton presiding over a jam session. The concert opened with a hamburger restaurant's band (seriously!), continued with a boring set from Hamp's Orchestra and then went jamming off into the night with Getz, Gillespie, Phil Woods, Sonny Stitt, Milt Hinton, Roland Hanna, Teddy Wilson, Al Grey, Clark Terry, the majestic Arnett Cobb and a cornball Japanese drummer named George Kawaguchi. The whole thing came crashing down with thundering *Flying Home* — Hamp jumping up and down, Cobb rocking back and forth, everyone else trying to get a solo in edgewise . . . well, you can imagine what it was like.

So that's it. At a post-festival press conference, Wein summed it all up. "There should always be more music than you can handle at a festival," he said.

Hear-hear!

CONCERT REVIEWS

Don Burrows and Friends

July 4-6, Beaconsfield Hotel, Melbourne

Don Burrows had a big surprise in store for the fans who packed the Beaconsfield to see him give his usual flawless performance with the help of George Golla. The surprise was James Morrison, who brought his own partner, David Pudney, with him. To the delight of the Burrows fans, it was Morrison who drew most of the night's applause.

Of course, no-one was disappointed by what they heard from the Burrows-Golla Duo: jazz and Brazilian standards played with tasteful finesse, the music always enjoyable, whether gently pretty or happily effusive. The usual subtle brilliance.

What the Morrison-Pudney Duo provided was brilliance that was unexpected, and rather brash into the bargain. Given efficient accompaniment by Pudney on piano, Morrison commanded everybody's attention with the warm sound of his flugelhorn, in a flowing rendition of *There Will Never Be Another You.* After a dramatic version of *I Can't Get Started* on trumpet, Morrison took over the piano. Pudney took a stroll on bass while Morrison took *My New Celebrity Is You* through a strong, busy groove, then Garnered a lot of applause with *Deep Purple.*

The two halves of each night contained such exemplary sets by the two duos. But the truly memorable music came when Burrows and Morrison joined forces at the climax of each set, accompanied by bass or bass and guitar.

There was delightful interplay between clarinet and trombone on *Honeysuckle Rose,* with plenty of ad-libbing and riffing going on. *Satin Doll* was given an effectively funky treatment by flute and trumpet. The cool-grooving *Bernie's Tune* and lovely *My Funny Valentine* featured fine trumpet in tandem with Burrows' too-rarely-heard baritone sax. And *Basin Street Blues* brought the house down, Morrison tearing things up when he borrowed a glass for some exciting plunger effects, and Burrows keeping up the spirit with some rousing bugged clarinet.

James Morrison is unquestionably a young musician with remarkable talents, and a great career ahead of him. It seems that he might even one day achieve the sort of popularity that has been unique to Don Burrows for so long. His instrumental prowess and versatility are two qualities he has in common with his mentor; an even more important one is his ability to improvise in a way that people can understand; and most important of all is the fact that he takes great pleasure in playing, and communicates that enjoyment to the audience.

That James Morrison, in his Melbourne debut, stole the show from Don Burrows, may be due to Burrows's admirable unselfishness, to the fact that he was virtually unknown here, or to his obvious talents and exciting approach. (I'll tick "All of the above.") But he certainly made a great impression. Even the daily *Sun,* which usually does a good job of ignoring jazz, ran features on him by three different writers. I'm sure an audience would turn up to see the Morrison-Pudney Duo again, with or without the Burrows-Golla Duo on the same bill; I look forward to it.

Adrian Jackson

Pic: Homyar J. Mistry.

Crossfire performing in the Shanmukhananda Hall, Bombay: the most inimitable and mature music to come to India from Australia.

Crossfire

July 13, Shanmukhananda Hall, Bombay, India

"They were incandescent . . . an intense, well conceived and mature concert"; "Deep, rich melodies dominate Crossfire concert"; "A sellout audience caught in a crossfire of ambience". These are some quotes from Bombay's newspapers reporting on the Crossfire concert before an audience of over 2,500 on July 13, 1982.

The 13th did not prove lucky for Mick Kenny who, due to a technical mishap, was forced to abandon the electric keyboard sounds and settle for the acoustic grand throughout. This did not deter the audience in the least from getting thoroughly absorbed and enjoying the unique music of Crossfire.

What amazed many discerning listeners who have experienced three major international jazz festivals in Bombay — the Jazz Yatras — was the wholehearted dedication of Crossfire to their very individual style and the virtual absence of commercialism in their music. And yet there was no pedanticism; the musicians were visibly enjoying themselves and the audience certainly caught the radiations. Easily the most inimitable and mature music to come our way from Australia.

The four nights at a beach resort Bombay hotel helped Crossfire minimise the effects of jet lag prior to their appearances at the Montreux and Northsea festivals. During their sojourn they attended a press conference, a dinner reception in their honour at the home of the Consul General of Australia and Mrs. Ian Tricks, a reception hosted by the Indo-Australian Society and, most rewarding and pleasurable of all for the group, listened to some Indian classical music. An encounter with tabla player Suresh Talwalker resulted in Tony Buchanan announcing his determination to come to India again next year to learn more about Indian classical music. Buchanan responded to some other things Indian in the same mystical way that has attracted to India, more than once, people like Dave Liebman, Maynard Ferguson, Charlie Mariano and Sonny Rollins.

Niranjan Jhaveri

Alexander Von Schlippenbach Trio

July 20, 23, Melbourne

The Alexander Von Schlippenbach Trio came to Melbourne in July (sponsored by the Goethe Institute) for workshops at LaTrobe University and the Victorian College of the Arts, and concerts at the Prince of Wales Hotel and the VCA, with the reputation of being the leading exponent of the European approach to free improvisation.

Their first concert, on July 20 left me a little ambivalent about their music. There was certainly a good deal to admire in their performance. There could be no question that

pianist Von Schlippenbach and his colleagues, Evan Parker (tenor and soprano saxes) and Paul Lovens (percussion), are very skilful and courageously dedicated musicians. They have specialised in the extremely difficult field of spontaneous improvisation, completely eschewing composed structures, and generally avoiding explicit melody and rhythm in their discovered music.

That there was so much cohesion in their music was a credit to them. I did have some misgivings, that while Lovens was producing an endlessly varied stream of energy and colours from his kit, playing purely at random, Parker and Von Schlippenbach seemed to be thinking somewhat dispassionately about what they were playing; this was no crime, as just about everything did fit together fairly well, but it did strike me as a routine approach — the antithesis of what the spontaneous approach was all about. I got the impression of familiarity, rather than intuition, being the key to their performances.

And while there was plenty of tension and energy in their music, I felt it almost monochromatic: it was characterised either by suppressed tension, or escalating tension. So I was left with the impression that their music presented some challenge to the listener, but little satisfaction.

Fortunately, their second concert on July 23 made a much more positive impression on me. (I can only wonder whether the key difference was in what they played, or in how I listened.)

Their music was exhilarating; it was a tangibly inspired performance. Levens's playing was again remarkable for its breadth of sound, and flowing motion. Schlippenbach was again less erratic, but I did sense adventure as well as precision in his assertions and commentaries. And while Parker's playing was obviously virtuosic (especially in the higher register), his only concern was with the music, as he thoroughly developed his ideas with brilliant intellect and more than a little feeling.

There was plenty of drama and energy, skill and spontaneity in their music, along with a good measure of romanticism. The Alexander Von Schlippenbach Trio plays music that is not without its failings, but when they find what they're after, a receptive audience hears music that is exhilarating in a unique way. For these three musicians at least, the 'free' approach of seeking inspiration is the right one.

Adrian Jackson

Trude Aspeling

Friday August 20, Nimrod Theatre Late Show, Sydney

Australia has surely acquired one of the gems of South Africa: Trude Aspeling — a certain young lady of charm and versatility, with a big voice.

Pic: Peter Sinclair.

Trude Aspeling: a deep, amber honey of the richest ingredients . . .

On the opening night of her late show at the Nimrod recently, she presented the jazz standards of Edward 'Duke' Ellington, paying tribute to the late jazz king in an hour of good entertainment, called *Ellington — What's It All About?* It was a brief look at the man, his music and the meaning behind the lyrics of his songs. Miss Aspeling showed that she has unique style and interpretation.

I found some of the oratory a little lacking in expression and volume. However, one could not fault her individual expression in song. Her deep, mellow voice undulated rhythmically — a deep, amber honey of the richest ingredients. Her voice and body were one; her every gesture served only to strengthen the impact of a lyric; her eyes meanwhile reflected the emotions within.

She was accompanied throughout by the talented pianist/arranger/musical director Peter Locke. Originally from Newcastle, he now resides in Sydney and works regularly with other top jazz musicians. At this performance he didn't lose a beat, and the co-operation between singer and pianist was evident in the harmonic achievement of the show.

The audience reaction was favourable, and all listeners left with a sense of having been musically fulfilled for the night.

Matilda Marmastein

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BUD POWELL "Inner Fires: The Genius of Bud Powell" (Elektra Musician, E1-60030)

For Lennie Tristano, what set Bud Powell apart was something to do with his articulation; he could make his fingers reproduce exactly what he felt. Powell's music transcended the instrument, the nuts, wires, wood felt and ivory, and became something more immediate. Tristano made an illuminating comparison with Tatum: giant technician though he was, he produced a generalised effect of a piano played magnificently. In Powell's work every note had a value, the feeling of choice and deliberation even at speed. It represented the thrust of a whole personality and not just a finger striking a key.

Everything that can be said about Bud Powell is said more succinctly by his work, as on this recorded example, never previously issued. There is power behind every note, even the grace note phrasing has purposefulness which goes beyond mere embellishment, sometimes being retarded just enough to give emphasis to the mordant. It's all here: the seemingly impossible interpolations apparently headed for rhythmic disaster, but suddenly resolving as if there were never really any problem; the swoops, the one note in a run that somehow the listener wasn't prepared for and which sets the idea apart from later bop mannerists. Vintage Powell, just this side of his most pyrotechnic work.

It's a trio, including some of the best Roy Haynes on record. *Salt Peanuts* is a drum feature with beautiful cymbal work clearly articulated at speed. His drum solos are always eventful and repay closer listening than I started out giving them. The only thing wrong with the drums is not the fault of Haynes, but of the 'field conditions' under which the session was recorded. Certain frequencies are more intrusive than others, which makes the bass drum occasionally a bit overwhelming and robs the treble range of the piano of some presence. The balance also conspires against Charles Mingus, who remains a pulse rather than a crisp harmonically complementary voice. Even so, the sound is much better than many 'live' transcriptions of the period and Powell's work is always audible. It is far better to have this at something less than total fidelity, than the alternative, which is not to have it at all.

The packaging of this new label is striking. The layout is distinctive, clean and attractive. The painting on this particular cover is marvellously expressive of the tormented sensibility that was apparently Bud Powell. The notes are multi-faceted, though the descriptions of each track do little more than run through the order of solos — presumably for deaf people who buy the LP to look at the cover. There is a recorded interview with Powell which imparts *frisson*, especially hearing him sing his new composition. But it's hard to understand everything he says, so it was a good idea to include a written transcription on the cover. The notes also feature some flatulent gibberish by Chick Corea which we could have done without. It sounds like Kenny Everett, except that he's serious.

But the music remains monumental. It's a must for Powell fans, and a good way for attentive ears that don't yet know, to find out what the fuss was about.

Bruce Johnson

DEXTER GORDON "American Classic" (Elektra Musician, E1-60126)

This, Dexter Gordon's latest, is not one of his greatest. In general it lacks the depth of feeling of *Go!*, the high spirits of *Long Tall Dexter*, the intensity of *The Homecoming*. Its best moments are on side 2. Now, says I, what has side 2 got that side 1 hasn't? Answer: a pianist, Kirk Lightsey, instead of an electric organist, Shirley Scott. I think it's the instrument and not the instrumentalist that makes the difference. Back to Lennie Tristano (see Bud Powell review), who felt that the electrified instrument often became a barrier rather than a medium. This record gives substance to the idea. Scott's work has a depersonalised blandness to it which seems to have a soporific effect on the rest of the band. On side 1 the overall effect lacks bits and attack, approaching the characterlessness of Muzak. Above all, it infects Gordon himself. On *Jumpin' Blues* his flow is lost, as though he can't find the thread. Sometimes he sounds as though he's holding on to notes simply because he can't think of anything else to do. His work is sparse, edited. But while, on the one hand, you can edit to the point of irreducible essence, on the other hand you can be left simply with the appearance of having nothing in particular to say; the sparseness becomes a form of meagre ornament decorating a vacuum. Gordon's taciturnity over the muted rhythm section often feels like a kind of laziness or enervation, an impression strengthened by the frequency of quotations from other songs. Much of the work on side 1 lacks intensity and aggressiveness. It has something in common with the cover photography, which is striking, but with more flair than guts, more flash than substance. The shots strike a kind of cosmetic posture, having the brilliant emptiness of up-market magazine advertising. Side 1 comes across as the kind of music that finishes up, like candlelight, creating atmosphere at a dinner.

It's not always so. Grover Washington's contribution on soprano is buoyant, mobile, full of life, and Gordon's own work on *Besame Mucho* has a convincing economy, each note warm, thick, telling. The way he phrases the melody on the final chorus shows all the assurance you would expect from such a veteran, an imperturbable refusal to be bullied into verbosity by the tempo. *For Soul Sister* (shades of Griffin's *The Way It Is*), with its bluesy gospel feel, brings out the greatest emotional pressure on this side, a plaintive expressiveness which is taken over by Washington and built to a pitch of excitement. He even vivifies the organist.

As side 2 starts there is an immediate sense of verve which was lacking earlier, and I realised in retrospect how somniferous the electric organ was. For the front line it's the difference between jumping from a feather mattress or a trampoline. Throughout this side Gordon takes basically the same approach. The difference is that the springier feel of the piano is both a foil to his rather laid back style, and a stimulant that gives his playing more elasticity and

bounce.

It's not a bad or even a negligible record. I just said it's not Dexter Gordon's greatest. It can be less than that and still first rate jazz. It is still good enough for us to be thankful for and optimistic about this new jazz label, which also has a mouth-watering catalogue of previously unissued material from the bop masters.

Bruce Johnson

FREDDIE HUBBARD
"Ride Like The Wind" (Elektra Musician E1-60029)

Taken together with the Bud Powell and Dexter Gordon albums, this LP suggests a most catholic range of jazz to be expected from the new label. Quite unlike the others, this is more in the line of jazz-rock fusion. Whether you like it or not, it represents an alternative to the hard bop, experimental free form, and the modal directions which jazz has been taking over the last twenty years or so (though of course Hubbard's own work constitutes a synthesis of all of these). It's an approach which jazz thinking hasn't really come to terms with yet, though this record comes closer than most essays I've heard in the idiom. At its least impressive you could call it disco-jazz. It sometimes uses the same kind of musical technology and rhetoric: the monotonous rhythmic pattern and the repetitive two chord figures (*This Is It*), reminiscent of featureless music for the featureless TV series; the concluding fade out, a way of conceding the non-developmental character of the music. An unnecessary mannerism on this record. Hubbard knows how to finish a song and in fact his composition *Brigitte* was working its way to a natural ending when the technician faded it.

But, let me repeat, in jazz terms this is one of the most impressive attempts to take a current, rather soft-centred style of pop music into consideration. Flesh, bone, sinew, have been added to that poor and wretched thing called disco, giving it the substance and spirit of jazz. Hubbard above all is responsible for its guts. Apart from what amount to keyboard interludes, it's Hubbard's record all the way except for a solo by trombonist Bill Watrous on *Two Moods For Freddie*. On both fast tempos and beautiful ballads, Hubbard is at his most muscular and nimble, playing with the same overwhelming presence that he displayed recently in Australia (this was recorded in June 1981). And although it's still there, there is less of that valve flutter which, to me, became an intrusive mannerism.

Although Hubbard dominates out front however, he is well supported. He's backed by two different big orchestras, and the arranger Allyn Ferguson has used them with great imagination. The bass player, Abe Laboriel, also makes a striking contribution, accepting without apology that he is not playing the upright acoustic, and exploiting the specific possibilities of the electric instrument, especially in terms of tone, volume and attack. If you don't like what I've called disco-jazz, and you're not interested in finding out what it's capable of, you won't want to hear most of this record. But if you believe that, with creative jazz thinking anything is possible, then this is as likely as anything to fortify the belief. The track *Birdland* summarises the best of the album — it's got composer Joe Zawinul's sense of drama and his gospel drenched spirit; an arrangement which has shape and development; a crispness which only an acoustic piano seems to be able to impart; Hubbard at his most searing; and a really scary descending figure with striking voicing in the strings.

The presence of the sound is exemplary. It was digitally recorded, without over-dubbing or editing after the fact; a tribute to the professionalism of the musos. As the sleeve note by Hubbard says, "It really jumps right out at you". Listen to it with headphones.

Bruce Johnson

RED RODNEY AND IRA SULLIVAN
"Spirit Within" (Elektra Musician E1-60020)

First, the dangers of marketing hype. Every stone bebopper knows that Red Rodney, a young veteran of late 1940's white big bands (particularly Gene Krupa and Woody Herman) became Charlie Parker's last regular trumpet-playing front-line protege, succeeding Miles Davis and Kenny Dorham. Heroin made the next 20 years a virtual blank for him jazzwise, but there were a couple of fine albums, particularly the 1959 *The Red Arrow (Onyx ORI 204)* partnering him, in a glorious post-bop date, with Chicago trumpeter/tenor saxophonist Ira Sullivan and all-star rhythm sections. The last decade has been kinder to Rodney, who has become the best-known bebop survivor, with a string of emotionally sound, but sometimes lip-weak, albums for Muse, all of which are solidly collectable.

He now touts with Sullivan and a young rhythm section, the group having produced a modestly successful bop-based live Muse album, *Live At The Vanguard (MR 5209)*. So it was with a sense of dread that I approached this album, billed as

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"new music", "acoustic jazz" and, in Red's words on the liner, presenting *"music that shows our direction for the rest of the 1980's"*. I suspect this sort of stuff will turn away some buyers.

Second, a little lexicography. "Acoustic" means "relating to the sense of hearing". It does not mean "not plugged into the mains".

Third, the music, which is truly excellent, and grows better and better with repeated listening. It is programmed ideally, with mood and tempo changes juxtaposed well, often within a single piece, and the six compositions, four of which are by the band's pianist Garry Dial, give the effect of a linked suite of music. The writing is mellow, to fit the two flugelhorn coupling of most of the album. There are also fine blends of Red's muted trumpet and Ira's oboe-like soprano saxophone on the title cut, and flugelhorn/soprano on *Island Song. Monday's Dance* is a stretched, recontoured *There Will Never Be Another You* attributed to Ira which is the two flugelhorn highlight, also featuring state-of-the-art bass by Jay Anderson. Overall the album is a triumph. It *is* new music. I suspect that it will sell well to jazz buyers and to that wider market that seldom eventuates, resulting in a succession of inevitably lesser follow-ups. What Red and Ira should do now is record the ultimate 1982 bebop album to catch those bebop collectors who never got through the hype barrier.

Niels Nielsen

CHARLIE PARKER "One Night in Washington: Charlie Parker with the Orchestra" (Elektra Musician E1-60019)

Here is part of the Charlie Parker legend made suddenly real with the release of previously unissued tapes.

Accounts abound of Parker arriving unexpectedly and taking over. In some instances he is said to have come in through the door playing, and all the musicians on the stand have let their instruments fall from their mouths. In this case he was scheduled to appear, but because of his increasing unreliability by 1953, nobody was sufficiently confident to include his name in advertising for the concert. However, he did come, with a plastic alto (his brass saxophone probably in hock), too late to rehearse or even look at the charts, and while all the wind players did keep their instruments to their mouths and read the arrangements, it is doubtful that any of them would ever forget the compelling mastery of Parker's spontaneous inventions.

The Orchestra was a big band sponsored by broadcaster Willis Conover. The arrangements — by such as Al Cohn, Johnny Mandel and Gerry Mulligan — are interesting enough, with some unexpected modulations. Considered to be the height of sophistication at the time, from Parker's first entrance they begin to sound somewhat dated. At times they smack more of Hollywood than of jazz, and sound most interesting when Parker weaves his ad lib lines through the sections.

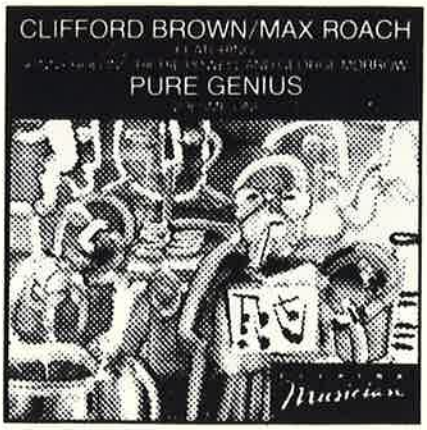
This may sound uncharitable and divisive, and Australian musicians who are still influenced by this kind of arranging might take offence. However, there is a point to be made. Around this time, Cool or West Coast jazz was thought by some to be the final product towards which bop had been leading — in an unschooled darky sort of way. These values are often thrust on reluctant young musicians here. There is some point to it, if the teachers concerned are prepared to admit that they are aiming for a "commercial product", and therefore widening the prospects of employment for their young pupils. Don't let's have them pretend they are teaching "what jazz is all about". For, I ask you, what sounds more vital, more advanced, more interesting today — these arrangements or Parker playing from the jazz tradition? And whose craftsmanship is the more impressive in retrospect?

All that aside, this is some of Parker's best work on record. The apparent casualness with which he peels off the most daring figurations, the intensity with which the most abstract ideas are expressed, the sheer unfailing fluency of it all, create the feeling of spirit manifest. Technical difficulties seem not to exist. His line is like a track of light.

This is achieved, however, by an exceptional mastery of harmony and technique. One thing that will always astonish other saxophonists is the ease with which Parker plays complex phrases in registers where the fingering is very difficult. That is where he hears it and that's where he plays it. A chorus of Parker presents a more compelling reason for students to learn their basics than the complete works of Mandel, Rugolo and Kenton combined.

However many modern jazz clichés have been appropriated by Hollywood and TV, playing like this always seems to stand apart from it. Well, for me, that's jazz.

John Clare



CLIFFORD BROWN/ MAX ROACH "Pure Genius" (Elektra Musician E1-60026).

Clifford Brown is an odd one out of the American line of talent dying young. He was not addicted to drugs or booze, nor seemed self-destructive in any way. From all accounts he was Clean Living Clive. His playing was getting better and better, stronger and stronger, until it seemed that he would burst with the joy of what he could do on the trumpet — and then at 25 years of age he was killed in a car accident.

This album of previously unissued tapes from the collection of Brown's wife LaRue, recorded in 1956, the year of Brown's death, shows an almost frightening exuberance, intensity, optimism and sheer virtuosity. Perhaps, we are tempted to think, no one has the right to be that positive!

It was not just Brown's playing, however. The whole band was fired by something, the full force of which can only be heard in concert and club performances, such as this. That something is easy enough to break into components: Max Roach's phenomenal drumming under two young soloists — Brown and Sonny Rollins (tenor sax) — who were reaching their full powers; underpinned by an excellent bassist (George Morrow) and pianist (Richie Powell).

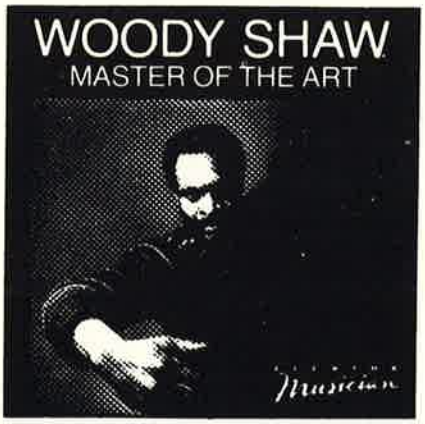
Roach was part of the underpinning too, of course, but in live performances particularly, he was part of every solo in a way no drummer except Roy Haynes had approached. This is hard bop at its fiercest. Roach's sustained holocaust of polyrhythms edges the band into areas later explored by John Coltrane and

Elvin Jones. So formidable is Roach's drum surf that Rollins — so surefooted rythmically as a rule — seems to quail before it momentarily on *52nd Street*. He and Brown ride it confidently on the manically fast *Dahoud* (compare the speed with the 1954 recorded version) and the blazing *I'll Remember April*.

Some of the appeal of Brown's playing stems from sheer technical competence — his flawless articulation, his full-bore shots at high speed at difficult intervals which he hits smack in the middle, the fact that he is absolutely in tune so that you feel you could grasp his sustained notes as though they were perfectly cast bars of brass — which is always at the service of a wonderfully musical intelligence. His ballad playing had a refined poignancy which, strangely or perhaps not so strangely, always reminds me of Mozart. There are good but not lengthy examples of it here.

The sound on this album is rather harsh. Roach's tape recorder did not pick up many of the mellower overtones. However, all the individual lines are very clear. You can hear everything they are doing, but you may still not believe it.

John Clare



WOODY SHAW "Master of the Art" (Elektra Musician E-l60131).

In Woody Shaw's style, as in Freddie Hubbard's, there are still many traces of Clifford Brown. Any graduate of Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers would have had the Brown model held up to him persistently by the leader, and they would have had to have possessed some of Brown's characteristics to get in there in the first place. Clifford was the trumpet player for Blakey.

Bill Hardman finally developed some of Brownie's polish, and it seems to me, lost some of the individuality he displayed in his raw early days. Shaw and Hubbard, however, were also associated with Eric Dolphy, and both began translating Brown's approach into a more abstract contemporary idiom. Neither of them went as 'far out' as some of the ensuing free jazz players — nor did Dolphy. While Shaw never had the kind of technique that would allow him to successfully emulate Hubbard's wide-ranging glissando effects, he applied himself to the development of an incisive technique within a more restricted range, and to exploring the possibilities of lyricism allied to harmonic freedom.

The band on this album is the one which came to Australia and played so powerfully that many of us imagined ourselves sitting in the Village Vanguard in New York. Shaw, trumpet; Steve Turre, trombone; Mulgrew Miller, piano; Stafford James, bass; Tony Reedus, drums. Guest Bobby Hutcherson is not only a fertile solo addition to the band — his vibes add very pleasingly to the ensembles, especially in Monk's *Misterioso* and Walter Davis's calypso-flavoured *400 Years Ago Tomorrow*, on which Shaw plays with a delightful tangy sweetness and relaxed fire.

One thing which I particularly enjoy about Shaw's band is their ability to get away from straight four/four without getting into the blithe, vapid feeling that characterises a lot of jazz/rock. It is all jazz, whatever the tempo or time signature. Turre plays particularly well here, combining some of the blurting, burring staccato exuberance of trombonists like Tommy Turk and Al Grey with the more contemporary approach of a Grachan Moncur.

Diane is the unexpected delight here. On flugelhorn Shaw plays with some of the lyricism and delicacy of an Art Farmer. A very satisfying album, recorded at the Jazz Forum in New York straight after a European tour.

John Clare

JOHN McLAUGHLIN "My Goals Beyond" (Elektra Musician E1-60031)

1970 and 1971 were busy years for guitarist John McLaughlin. He moved from England to the USA to

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join Tony Williams' new Lifetime unit and performed on two of their albums. He was included on Miles Davis's influential new direction albums *In A Silent Way* and *Bitches Brew*. He went to France and cut his *Devotion* album with Buddy Miles. He became a disciple of Sri Chinmoy, an event which was to drastically alter his whole lifestyle. And he established the now legendary Mahavishnu Orchestra.

Conspicuous during this extremely energetic period was a meditative acoustic guitar album, *My Goals Beyond*, recorded in 1971 just prior to the formation of the Mahavishnu Orchestra. This album has just been reissued through WEA on the Elektra Musician label.

In retrospect the album reaffirms McLaughlin's insistence that "to play jazz properly you need technique that is second to none". McLaughlin has always been a virtuoso performer, though at times during his Mahavishnu Orchestra period technique unfortunately tended to supplant emotional intensity.

Side One of *My Goals Beyond* comprises eight short pieces for acoustic guitar, three of them original compositions. Whilst the pieces are unaccompanied, the guitars are often multi-tracked, and many of the tracks feature some fairly subliminal percussion work by McLaughlin.

The playing is more than adequate, though hardly innovative. In the light of his recent acoustic guitar work, the performances here appear rather clinical, though they are not without historical interest.

Side Two consists of two suites, *Peace One* and *Peace Two*. Based as they are on Indian scales, they represent McLaughlin's earliest attempts to incorporate eastern modes into his music. The line-up includes three other ex-Davis sidemen, Dave Liebman on flute and sax, Airto Moreira on percussion, and Billy Cobham on drums, plus Jerry Goodman on violin, Charlie Haden on bass, Mahalakshmi on tambura, and Badal Roy on tabla.

The music appears rather tentative, with each soloist improvising around a scale rather than a melody. The result is a series of somewhat uninspired performances within a pseudo-raga framework. I'm sure the concept was reasonably novel in 1971, but there are better examples available today — not the least of them being McLaughlin's Shakti albums.

Tony Wellington

AMIRI BARAKA with DAVID MURRAY AND STEVE McCALL "New Music — New Poetry" (India Navigation IN-1048)

I was previously familiar with his work under the name of Leroi Jones. He now calls himself Amiri Baraka, and his work is too intense to ever simply 'be familiar' with it. This album is a programme of poetry readings set against the new music fire of David Murray, tenor and bass clarinet, and Steve McCall, drums. It was recorded in performance a couple of years ago, at Soundscape in New York City.

Amiri Baraka is a poet, playwright, author, and social/political activist. In his liner notes, he asserts the importance of poetry being oral and musical: "It is speech *musicked*. It, to be most powerful, must reach to where speech begins, as sound, and bring the sound into full focus as highly rhythmic communication . . . The poetry of the dying epoch (racism and monopoly capitalism, imperialism) exists mostly on paper. It is print bred and bound, and actually intended for a particular elite."

On the other hand, a perspective on Black poetry may be gained from poet Langston Hughes, who said he wanted "to grasp and hold some of the meanings and rhythms of jazz".

Black music and Black poetry are inextricably linked, which is powerfully evidenced by the performance on this record. The music is almost totally improvised, though the settings were obviously rehearsed. The players let the poetry breathe, but the interaction is definitely three-way: Baraka bends his verse in response to the other two.

Printed sheets of the poetry accompany the album, but to read these without listening provides a very one-dimensional experience. This poetry was conceived of as being listened to rather than read.

The verse is often angry and bitter, but this is tempered by a large range of literary plays and verbal plays, so that, like good blues, the emotional effect is not necessarily depressing, but can be uplifting. Occasionally it is positively vengeful, such as this reference to Albert Ayler from *Class Struggle in Music (2)*:

> *Then shit, they got mean, from the back room a nigger with a twotoned beard. And distance rolling out his nose. "It ain't about you!" he said, eyeing the dead things who were making dusty quartets with outofshape philosophers.*
> *and the suicidal solipsists threw down their violins hiding their alienation under white women. "Ghosts! Ghosts!" He screamed. Eery blew down. Low shit. Spooky*
> *niggers scared of everything. "Ghosts!" A Honk. A mean low scream like rich people dying in front of their offices with nigger janitors grinning.*

The playing of Murray and McCall is magnificent. But even if you buy this for *their* music, you will be swept away by the humour, the seductiveness, the fury, and the bittersweet irony of the man reading the poems.

India Navigation records are available in Sydney from Recycled Records of Glebe Point Road and Taylor Square. They also mail order elsewhere in Australia.

John Shand

JON HENDRICKS AND COMPANY "Love" (Muse MR 5258)

Lambert, Hendricks and Ross had such an impact on vocal jazz, particularly the art of scoring vocal group arrangements based on jazz compositions and solos, that in retrospect it is hard to believe that they were together for only five short years, from 1958 to 1962.

Since their demise, very little has happened in vocal jazz, notwithstanding the glittering success of Manhattan Transfer. This LP is therefore welcome; it represents the efforts of Jon Hendricks, the group's chief lyricist, to continue the great tradition of Lambert, Hendricks and Ross.

This is the sort of jazz LP which particularly appeals to me. It is not only full of spontaneous, well-played jazz, but also is the product of meticulous analysis of great jazz solos from the past. Writing lyrics to such solos, which Hendricks has taken to a high art, is in itself an important method of documenting and highlighting past achievements in jazz.

Jon Hendricks and Company include Hendricks himself, his wife Judith, their daughter Michele, Bob Gurland and Leslie Dorsey. The LP was recorded in late 1981 and early 1982.

To illustrate the preparation involved in an LP of this nature let me describe some of the tracks. *Royal Garden Blues* is a complete vocal orchestration (lyrics, not scat vocals) of Duke Ellington's classic version, with lyrics set to the riffs and lines of the various sections of the big band. Judith Hendricks sings the Cootie Williams trumpet solo and Michele swings through the Lawrence Brown trombone solo.

Bright Moments consists of Jon Hendricks' lyrics to Rahsaan Roland Kirk's anthem. *Willie's Tune* is one of the two Randy Weston tunes on the LP to which Hendricks has set lyrics, the other being *Love*, originally titled *Berkshire Blues*. On the former track Hendricks whistles an excellent solo, indicating that he would give Toots Thielemans a good run for his money.

The latter is really an extraordinary achievement in the art of setting lyrics to improvised solos. Judith Hendricks does Ray Copeland's trumpet solo from the original version, Jon does Booker Ervin's tenor solo, and Michele does a scintillating job with Randy Weston's rather abstract piano solo, described by Hendricks as "out of Duke through Monk". The LP is worth having just for the superb musicianship exemplified on this track, which is reminiscent of the very best of Eddie Jefferson.

Good Ol' Lady is a roaring bebop scat vocal with Hendricks and the horns in unison, based on riffs played by Hendricks' old friend the tenor saxophonist Wardell Gray. On this swinging track there are short but pithy solos from Hendricks and some interesting guest performers: Jimmy Smith (not on the customary organ but this time firing on the piano), Jerome Richardson on tenor sax, and Harry 'Sweets' Edison, who plays a harmon-muted trumpet solo which drips with presence.

Lil' Darlin' has lyrics for the Neil Hefti masterpiece which was written for the Count Basie Orchestra. Judith Hendricks executes lyrics to the famous Wendell Culley trumpet solo. It really is a beautiful version which loses nothing in comparison with the Basie version.

I'll Die Happy is an old Jon Hendricks original which he wrote originally for Louis Jordan. *Cash Box* voted it best rhythm and blues record of 1957. This version rockets along, including a scat vocal solo by Bob Gurland which is uncannily like a trumpet with the plunger mute.

The Swinging Groove Merchant, originally *Groove Merchant*, a hit for the Thad Jones-Mel Lewis Orchestra, was written by Jerome Richardson. Hendricks has written lyrics to the Richardson tenor solo, and they perform it in unison. Bob Gurland contributes another one of his extraordinary plunger-style voice trumpet solos, and Jimmy Smith takes off once again on piano.

Michele Hendricks makes her solo recording debut with the standard *Angel Eyes*, a tune she has been singing since the age of eight. It is a lovely version, indicating that she has inherited all the necessary genes from her talented parents.

In A Harlem Airshaft is another vocal arrangement of an Ellington classic, with the Cootie Williams and Barney Bigard solos performed by Judith and Michele Hendricks. Jon does the 8-bar Tricky Sam Nanton solo. A tour de force, which brings the album to a powerful close.

Eric Myers

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CHAZ JAZZ LPs

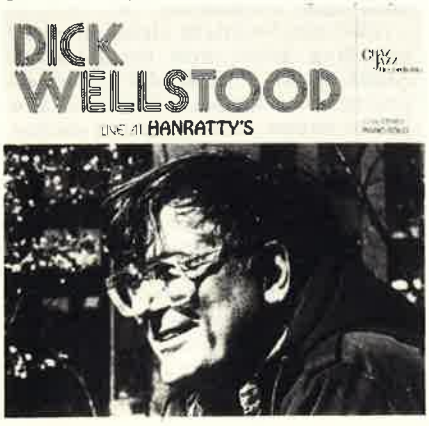
Reviewed by Clement Semmler

Listeners to the ABC jazz shows of Ian Neil and Eric Child in recent weeks have been intrigued by the tracks played of pianists Dick Wellstood, Ralph Sutton and other musicians "live at Hanratty's" — and with good reason.

Hanratty's is a bar and restaurant between 91st and 92nd Streets on Second Avenue in New York. Dick Wellstood, of whom more presently, is the house pianist; Ralph Sutton plays for monthly stints now and then; and there are occasional appearances by solo pianists such as Dave McKenna, Dave Frishberg, Art Hodes, Ray Bryant and Johnny Guarnieri.

For us, Down Under, licking our lips at such jazz goodies, out of reach for most of us, it's some consolation that an enterprising outfit called Chaz Jazz, located at North Hampton in New Hampshire, has issued four albums recorded live at Hanratty's and certainly catching the undoubted atmosphere of the place, plus two others, quite unusual and very satisfying. Looking at the Hanratty's offerings first:

Dick Wellstood: Live at Hanratty's (CJ 108). I hadn't heard of Wellstood till these albums. I only wish I had. He's one of the most inventive and stylish pianists I've heard for years. He's been around since the 60s when he was with house bands in Broadway shows; played later in a Jersey houseboat band with Jack Six and Ed Hibble; and in the 70s on jazz party circuits and with George Wein and others and for a while with Bob Wilber's band. He has recorded for Riverside, Chiaroscuro and other labels, and this is the eighth solo album (jazz disc jockeys please note).



This is a double album. Just looking at one side for example, there's *Everybody Loves My Baby*, where, amidst the most pleasing improvisations, there are shades of Waller, Tatum, and the stride of, say, Joe Turner. That's one of the intriguing things about Wellstood: he sounds now and then like these people yet with absolutely no suggestion that he's aping them.

He then takes an Irving Berlin tune, *A Pretty Girl is Like a Melody*, and dresses it up with a touch of blues here and boogie there. (And let me say he can out-Yancey Yancey, as he does on one of his other tracks, *Runnin' Wild.*)

Then, with astonishing versatility, he turns to *Cornet Chop Suey* where he works in Louis's cadenzas so expertly that you'd have sworn this Hot Five classic was made for piano interpretation.

And finally, on the side in question, he takes another ballad, the Harold Arlen tune, *My Shining Hour*, investing it with the most fanciful and delicate series of improvisations, worthy of a Teddy Wilson or Oscar Peterson, but never letting go of the rhythmic and melodic line.

Outstanding tracks on the other three sides — or at least, the ones I liked particularly, include *I Wish I Were Twins* (seldom tackled as a piano solo), *Aint Misbehavin'*, *Quincy Street Stomp* (where Wellstood takes on the rag with the assurance of a Joplin) and *Jingle Bells*, where he moves from minor to major keys and then strides us through Harlem.

Wellstood teams up with clarinettist Kenny Davern and drummer Bobby Rosengarden in **The Blue Three at Hanratty's (CJ 109)**: it's a trio as smooth and as well co-ordinated as the Goodman Trio of ages back. In any case, Davern and Wellstood have played together a lot in the last ten years or so.

The best track on the album is *Blue Monk*, an absolute masterpiece, where Wellstood swings into some mind-boggling stride (as Monk himself did on occasion), Davern glides through the blues changes, and Rosengarden is in there pitching, as steady as a rock.

Another jazz feast is that old tune *Oh Peter, You're So Nice*, which the rhythm-makers did about 50 years ago (Red Allen, Pee Wee, Joe Sullivan and the rest). Apart from the Charleston-like opening of that version, Wellstood's trio really gives it a witty and updated outing. Davern's low register is very easy on the ear, and the tempo builds up to a climactic up-beat ending.

In tracks like *Indiana* and *Don't You Leave Me Here*, Wellstood shows his adaptability as an accompanist. And oh my! that left hand too.

Turning to Ralph Sutton, what a treat to hear again an old friend in

Jack Lesberg (how I miss that warm, affectionate man) teaming up in **Ralph Sutton and Jack Lesberg Live at Hanratty's (CJ 111)**. This was recorded last year, so it's good to know Jack is alive and well and playing that wonderful bass like old times.

Sutton and Lesberg have been around together for a long time. Jack, when he was here in Sydney, used to play me some lovely tapes he'd made of Sutton in private and after-hours sessions. In fact, their association goes back to 1947 when they played in Jack Teagarden's group at the Famous Door. So here they just jell, musically and technically.

Of Sutton, that master of the tenths, and one of the most commanding pianists in the jazz idiom, enough said. Here in these tracks, Jack lays down the lines and Ralph does the rest, and they breeze happily through tunes like *Rosetta*, *Honeysuckle Rose* and *Sophisticated Lady*. But for the record, my favourite is *I Found a New Baby*, where Sutton pounds up images of Waller, James P. Johnson and Joe Sullivan, and Lesberg puts down an occasional bass solo that you really *can* listen to and enjoy.

Sutton teams up with Eddie Miller as a duet in **We've Got Rhythm — Live at Hanratty's (CJ 110).** I haven't heard much of Miller since the Bobcat days which, goodness knows, are 40 years back. I suppose some would call his tenor style old-fashioned in contrast to the pyrotechnics we have to endure from the instrument nowadays. But I'm of Miller's vintage and his playing takes me back to the palmy nights of Bud Freeman at Eddie Condon's in the Village, and to Babe Rusin and the earlier Lester Young. A lovely smooth, mellow line with a minimum of funny business.

Anyhow Miller complements Sutton beautifully, whether in the fast bouncy version of *Everybody Loves My Baby* or the thoughtful, ruminative version of *Sugar* that follows as a complete contrast. Indeed all the tracks are jazz standards (*Three Little Words, I've Got a Crush on*

You etc.) — and it's the sort of jazz contentedly to listen to after a good dinner, with a glass of port and a cigar if you feel that way.

Lesberg features again with his old rhythm section running-mate Cliff Leeman, in a quartet made up of them and Sutton and clarinettist Peanuts Hucko (**The Big Noise From Wayzata — CJ 112**).

Wayzata, in case you're wondering, is near Minneapolis on the shores of Lake Minnetonka, which is the home of the Woodhill Country Club, a jazz nest where this album was made in July 1981.

The nice thing about this album is that there are only five tracks in all — on one side *Honeysuckle Rose* and *Memories of You*, on the other, *The World is Waiting, Aint Misbehavin'* and *I've Got Rhythm*. This means you can sit back and enjoy jazz in some depth.

It would be idle to try to distinguish between the merit of the various tracks; they're all as good as they ought to be, but if I have a preference it's for *I've Got Rhythm* where you hear four guys who equally love jazz and playing with each other, and their integration and empathy is beyond praise. The free-for-all at the end is like a rocket taking off; there's an explosive power in Sutton's stride rhythms that generates like responses from his three companions. And Hucko on his day (and this is one of them) is up there with any clarinettist you can name.

Last of the six albums under review is **Ralph Sutton and His Jazz Band (CJ 113)** which features the largest group in the series, and a touch of class at that. Such a line-up — Ruby Braff, Kenny Davern, Bud Freeman, Milt Hinton on bass, Gus Johnson (drums), George Masso (trombone) and of course Sutton.

Perhaps the only unfamiliar name is Masso. He played with Jimmy Dorsey in the late 40s, went into teaching for 20 years, and then came back in the 70s to play with Goodman, Condon, and at other freelance dates round New York. Anyway, he's good.

More in depth jazz with only four tracks — *Struttin' With Some Barbecue, Keeping Out of Mischief Now* (Side 1); *Aint Misbehavin', Muskrat Ramble* (Side 2). The choice of tunes is enough to guarantee jazz happiness. This album was made at a Minneapolis jazz party last year so that there's a cheerful atmosphere of audience appreciation behind the playing. Braff is as lyrically superb as ever, especially in several choruses on *Mischief;* and it's worth the money to hear the party boys chanting and applauding behind a dynamic solo that Sutton reels off on the same track. Kenny Davern's low register improvisations are a feature of this album; altogether the music speaks for itself — it's top jazz.

Record Reviews

CARLA BLEY
"Escalator Over The Hill" (JCOA Records 3LP-EOTH)
"Social Studies" (WATT/11)
"Live!" (WATT/12)

Carla Bley's first piano recital was at the ripe old age of three! At the age of five she stopped taking lessons and has never studied anything related to music since. From such a remarkably scant formal training has stemmed an awesome talent which has consistently defied easy categorisation.

Her self-confessed influences span such disparate elements as Gospel music, Bach, Eric Satie, Thelonius Monk, Ornette Coleman, the minimalism of Terry Riley and Philip Glass, and various rock performers, particularly Robert Wyatt. She also claims that her music has been strongly influenced by film directors, in particular Hitchcock, Fellini and Nicholas Roeg.

It was not until her marriage to pianist Paul Bley in 1959 that Carla began composing. Many of her early ballad-style compositions have become favourites of Paul Bley's to be recorded and reworked time and again in both solo and ensemble contexts. Other performers to have recorded her pieces include George Russell, Jimmy Guiffre, Art Farmer, Gary Burton, Charlie Haden, Steve Kuhn, Mike Gibbs, Tony Williams and most recently Pink Floyd drummer Nick Mason's band Fictitious Sports.

In 1964, Carla Bley and her second and current husband Michael Mantler established the Jazz Composer's Orchestra Association from the ashes of the Jazz Composer's Guild. The Association was an attempt to provide an alternative to the exploitation and humiliation suffered by the more adventurous jazz musicians at the hands of the established recording industry. The JCOA issued its own albums, gave various members a chance to write for the Orchestra, conducted workshops, and set up the New Music Distribution Service for independent record labels.

The first of the JCOA's own albums was Mantler's *Communications* set, and the second was Carla Bley's opera *Escalator Over The Hill*. The three albums that comprise *Escalator Over The Hill* were recorded over a tortuous three year period and released in 1971 on the JCOA Records label. They have recently been re-released in the original box-set format through Manfred Eicher's ECM label. This means that *Escalator* is at long last readily available in Australia.

The prospect of reviewing a work of such awesome originality and stature as *Escalator Over The Hill* is daunting to say the least. *Escalator* was voted Melody Maker Jazz Album of the Year in 1972 and was awarded the French Oscar Du Disque De Jazz in 1973. It was, if nothing else, a labour of love. Each time the money ran out, work on the project would stop until sufficient finances had been amassed to carry on.

The libretto, a surreal evocation of life in Cecil Clark's Old Hotel is provided by hip-poet Paul Haines. The words are by turns obscure, humorous, and poignant — never dull. The music is so powerful as to be almost mesmeric at times. Bley's compositional style transcends the limitations of both jazz and rock conventions.

The talent assembled for the event is breathtaking enough: a 52 piece orchestra comprising the cream of the Free Jazz and Rock scenes of the day. The soloists include Don Cherry, Gato Barbieri, John McLaughlin, Roswell Rudd, Charlie Haden, Perry Robinson, Paul Motian, Michael Mantler and Dewey Redman. The vocalists include Jack Bruce, Linda Ronstadt, Viva, Paul Jones, Don Preston, Jeanne Lee, Sheila Jordan, Steve Ferguson and Howard Johnson. Elsewhere in the Orchestra one can find Enrico Rava, Ron McClure, Leroy Jenkins, Jimmy Knepper, Jimmy Lyons, Sam Brown, Calo Scott, and Karl Berger.

It is certainly beyond the scope of this review to analyse the three albums track by track. A few exceptional moments stand out however. Perry Robinson's clarinet solo during the overture is locked in the upper register with a fast and furious display only to be capped a few stanzas later by Gato Barbieri's tenor solo which is a real screamer.

The quartet comprising John McLaughlin guitar, Carla Bley organ/piano, Jack Bruce bass, and Paul Motian drums, is a powerful rock-inclined unit which finds McLaughlin playing in a surprisingly post-Hendrix mode. McLaughlin fans should own this album if only for his magnificent solo on *Rawalpindi Blues* which must rank as a high point in his career.

Jeanne Lee's free-form vocal solo backed by the aforementioned quartet on *End of Rawalpindi* is a beautiful extension of the scat tradition. *Holiday in Risk* begins as a folksy melody in which Carla Bley accompanies herself on piano until Ted Papageorge's crazy voice joins Carla's. The number then degenerates into such zaniness that both singers have trouble holding back the laughter.

Why is a classic vehicle for the assured voice of Linda Ronstadt. It presents a beautiful melody constantly interrupted by a multi-tracked Charlie Haden singing a very crass Country and Western parody.

All India Radio finds Don Cherry playing in his characteristically fragmented and quirky manner against an eastern-influenced setting. *Slow Dance* reflects Bley's passion for brass instruments, and is a dark, brooding piece scored for four trombones, two French horns, a trumpet and a tuba.

As you may have gathered, variety is the spice of this album, yet under Carla Bley's expert guidance it all hangs together as a superbly cohesive whole. A gargantuan work deserving greater historical recognition for enriching the vocabulary of modern music.

Social Studies and *Live!* are the two most recent releases of The Carla Bley Band. They appear on the label she shares with Michael Mantler, WATT, and like *Escalator* are manufactured and marketed by ECM. Generally speaking, they represent her most "accessible" music to date, certainly since her *Dinner Music* album. As always, the line-up on each features a heavy contingent of brass instruments.

Side One of *Social Studies* I found to be a little disappointing, but side two more than makes up for it. Most of the first side is taken up with *Reactionary Tango*, a composition in three parts which toys with the tango

formula. A constantly changing brass melody is laid over a traditional tango-esque rhythm section with lots of snare. Its more interesting moments include a direct steal from Nino Rota's music for Fellini's Amarcord, a short tuba solo by Earl McIntyre, and an extremely restrained though excellent solo from Michael Mantler on trumpet.

Copyright Royalties, which closes the first side, is a humorously anecdotal concoction of swing arrangements and melodies a la Ellington. Nostalgia Bley style — very cheeky.

Side Two opens with *Utviklingssang,* a sublime, wistful melody which sees Bley returning to a strong ballad-style composition. A deceptively simple alto line is tenderly performed by Carlos Ward against a sparse rhythm section. A truly haunting piece, and my personal favourite on the album.

Valse Sinistre which follows is a total change of feel and certainly lives up to its name. A strange, darkly swirling number featuring a euphonium solo by Joe Daley. It recalls a sort of fairground music out of control.

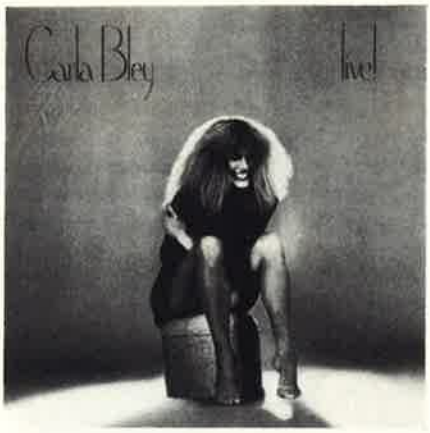
From the very first notes, *Floater* proves to be an excellent vehicle for Steve Swallow's masterful bass playing. An oddly brooding, up-tempo piece which holds a few surprises when Gary Valente's trombone solo intrudes in the middle of the number.

Walking Batteriewoman is a very early Bley composition which was originally performed and recorded by The Jazz Realities Quintet (which Bley co-led with Steve Lacey) way back in 1964. It is a fast paced composition which alludes to a be-bop style yet remains idiosyncratically a Bley composition. Sudden changes in tempo, and a speedy, syncopated melody keep the brass on their toes. A nice, light-hearted conclusion to a varied album.

All-in-all an excellent introductory album for those unfamiliar with Bley's work, yet possibly a little disappointing for Bley devotees.

Bley's most recent offering, *Live!,* sounds more like a studio album than any other live album I've heard. The product is clean and beautifully mixed, and the music faultlessly performed, yet it's somehow lacking that raw energy one expects from a live recording. Certainly it never approaches the tempestuous highs of her previous live album, *European Tour 1977.* But then this time the band doesn't include the individualistic, bravura talents of Gary Windo, Roswell Rudd, and Andrew Cyrille.

Blunt Object, which opens the album, is an aptly titled funk-oriented number featuring a bass trombone solo that is far too short. *The Lord Is Listenin' To Ya Hallelujah!* is a nostalgic gospel-style composition which harks back to Bley's formative



years (her musical awareness until the age of 14 was restricted to singing and playing piano in church halls). Gary Valente's trombone preaches the melody with a passionate lyricism. Bley's organ solo seems more appropriate in this context than elsewhere. Generally I find her organ sound rather overshadowed by the brass and somehow anachronistic.

Time and Us is a catchy little melody, perhaps rather too insubstantial to be restated as often as it is here. Bley's piano solo is simple in the extreme, yet her lovely timing renders it one of the best on the album.

Still in the Room opens the second side with an introduction by Steve Swallow on bass guitar that sounds remarkably like Hugh Hopper. After a deliberately paced and somewhat reflective beginning, the number picks up speed to become a tightly arranged jazz-rock offering that is really pushed along by D. Sharpe's fine drumming.

Real Life Hits is certainly the most striking number on the disc. It opens with a humorous, staccato brass arrangement before erupting into a dazzling, energetic piece reminiscent of some of the more dynamic moments of Anthony Braxton's Creative Orchestra Music.

Song Sung Long is a much faster, up-tempo version of the composition which appeared on Bley's *Dinner Music* set. One of the album's finest solos is provided by Steve Slagle on alto saxophone. The cut is almost raunchy in its feel and certainly concludes the album on an ebullient high.

If only the rest of the album were as good as the last two tracks. Though I don't believe Bley could ever put out a bad record, this I fear is her least impressive to date. It's still a darn sight better than your average album, and anyway, who else is writing satirical, eclectic, jazz-oriented music for large ensembles incorporating French horn, euphonium and tuba these days? Buy *Live!* if only for the inside cover — makes me giggle each time I open it up.

Tony Wellington

...and we've also heard

By Dick Scott*

There is still time left to get your act together for the 37th Australian Jazz Convention in Toowoomba. Guest artists this year both come from England – trumpeter Digby Fairweather and tenor man Danny Moss. Fairweather has performed and recorded with the best in England including Keith Ingham, Dave Shepherd, John Barnes, Roy Williams, Lennie Hastings, Peter Ind and Velvet. He broadcasts regularly and tours extensively throughout England and Europe as a featured soloist. He has recorded four solo albums, was voted BBC jazz musician of the year for 1979 and 80 and *Jazz Journal International* poll winner 1980 and 81. Moss spent the '50s with big touring bands such as Squadronnaires, Ted Heath and Johnny Dankworth. He then spent five years with Humphrey Lyttelton followed by two years with Sandy Brown and Alex Welsh.

Since 1964 he operated with his own quartet and as an in-demand soloist, also recording four albums. Both men have established solid reputations in European jazz. The Convention features, apart from the usual top music, a Banjo Jubilee on the 29th December and a Ragtime Rendezvous conducted by Dave Dallwitz. A group from the Sacramento Jazz Club in America is planning a trip following the success of three Australian bands there earlier this year. An interesting innovation at this year's event is the availability of a video cassette of highspots of the Convention. Bands still have until 31st October to register. Contact PO Box 509, Toowoomba, Queensland, 4350.

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The Campbelltown Jazz Club will be indulging in some spook chasing at the Fishers Ghost Jazz Convention on Sunday 7th November at the Bradbury Inn Hotel, The Parkway, Campbelltown, from 12 noon to 6 pm. Feature band will be Melbourne's New Harlem Jazz Band who recently recorded the music for the new movie Squizzy Taylor. It will be their one and only performance in NSW. There will be a snack bar and barbecue with drinks at reasonable prices and there is also ample parking. If you need any further convincing – admission is free.

Danny Moss

Digby Fairweather

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The Perth Jazz Society's PJS News gave this magazine a plug in its August newsletter so we'll return the compliment. Anyone in the West foolish enough not to be a member of this organisation had better get an application off quick smart to Graham Fisk or Brian Wallace at PO Box 6247, East Perth, 6000. By the look of their newsletter there is plenty going on.

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And other Jazz Action Societies well worthy of support are the Sunshine Coast (PO Box 634, Maroochydore, 4558) and Queensland (PO Box 486, Toowong, 4066).

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** Dick Scott is a professional journalist with News Limited. He writes on jazz for the Daily Mirror and The Australian.*

The irrepressible Johnny Speight, the man behind all those great young bands on Sydney's North Shore not the least of which is of course the Northside Big Band, is at it again. Last year he organised the Manly Jazz Carnival over the October long weekend at which more than 100,000 people swung to some great sounds. The figure, incidentally, is not Johnny's – it comes from the ferry operators. This year there will be 178 musicians making up 17 bands over the three days starting Saturday 2nd October. Whet your appetite on this little lot.

Saturday: Warringah Stage Band, Jazz Parade from the Manly Wharf, Martin/Morrison Quartet with Marie Wilson, Nat Oliver Jazz Band, Bruce Cale Quintet, Jay and the Brazilian Cockroaches, Harbord Diggers Band and a Jazz Ball on the cruise ship City of Sydney at night.

Sunday: NSW Conservatorium Big Band, Mike Hallam's Hot Six, Johnny Nicol's Quartet plus Bob Bertles, Clive Harrison's Risk and a Carnival Jam Session.

Monday: Adelaide College Big Band, Noel Crow's Jazzmen, Cary Bennett's Quintet, Tom Baker's Swing Street Orchestra, and John Hoffman's Big Band featuring Julian Lee. At least two bands will perform on ferries from Circular Quay – the Original Freshies and the Abbey Jazz Band. All events will take place at the ideally situated amphitheatre in the Corso, which is amply provided with food shops and pubs.

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The last weekend in October sees the Fourth Mildura Jazz Jamboree. Bands booked so far are Storyville Allstars with Beverly Sheahan (Melb) Penny Eames and Blue Notoriety (Adel), Lazy Ade and his Late Hour Boys (Melb), Unity Jazz Band (Adel), Dave Dallwitz Euphonic Sounds Ragtime Ensemble (Adel), John Holmes Houndogs (Mildura) and Captain Sturt's Old Colonial Jazz Band (Adel). It all starts on the night of Friday 29th October through until Sunday night and included will be a ball and a couple of jazz cruises on the Murray.

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Even the best magazines occasionally get it wrong. In our July/August edition we said that Sydney tenor saxophonist Dale Barlow was leaving for New York immediately following his three-weeks tour of Indonesia with Indra Lesmana's group Children of Fantasy. Not so. Barlow leaves on September 28 for Austria and Germany where he will do six weeks of engagements with a quartet led by the Australian guitarist Peter O'Mara. (O'Mara is now back in New York, courtesy of Pan American Airways and the Music Board of the Australia Council, having taken up his Don Banks Memorial Scholarship). The group includes two European musicians Wayne Darling (bass) and Billy Elgart (drums). Following those gigs, Dale will spend some time in Europe before going on to New York, where he expects to meet up with Australian ex-patriate musicians Dave Ades, Dave Panichi, Roger Frampton, and long-lost promoter Horst Liepolt. In the Big Apple he expects to study with eminent saxophone teachers such as George Coleman, Joe Allard and Eddie Daniels.

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Pic: Jack Mitchell

Bob Barnard's Jazz Band: at the Regent, October 15 and 16.

Sydney's Regent Theatre will bounce to the sound of three of our top bands on October 15th and 16th. None of the bands need any introduction in these pages – Bob Barnard's Jazz Band, Galapagos Duck and Noel Crow's Jazzmen. With them will be singers Jan Adele, Joy Mulligan, Di Horder and Joya Claire. Phil Haldeman will be compering. Probably the highlight of the two days will be a jam session on the Saturday afternoon (15th) dedicated to the memory of saxophonist Doug Foskett who died in August. All nett proceeds will go to the Australian Cancer Society and the Multiple Sclerosis Society of NSW. Regular gigs allowing, all members of the three bands will perform at some stage during the afternoon and drummer Laurie Bennett will again put together the jam session band that made such an impression at a recent JAS concert. Keith Stirling, Bob McIvor, Tony Esterman, Jack Thorncraft and Errol Buddle will be the major players and others are sure to drop in. Featured with the group will be new singing discovery Manni Lynn. For prices see ad. this issue.

The Merv Acheson Story (Part 4)

Towards the end of 1943 the good life in the Army suddenly came unstuck. Since transferring from the 17th Btn. Military Band to the 116 Ensemble there had never been a dull moment musically. Every night was New Years Eve – playing concerts and dances with the big 32 piece army unit – leading the small jazz group within it – playing Giles O'Sullivan's mighty 14 piecer at the Booker T. Washington Club – working the American officers' and sergeants' clubs with small jazz groups – playing with visiting American musicians ... . It was all a ball.

Then the axe fell. The captain in charge of the 116 Entertainment Unit, to which I was attached (although I spent a good deal of time on loan to the American forces), came into conflict with Colonel Jim Davidson, head of all entertainment units in the Australian Army.

The colonel won hands down. The unit was broken up, my seconding to the Americans was cancelled, and all the musicians involved found themselves in a hell hole up in Queensland called Canungra – a jungle warfare training camp.

One day of this was enough for me. I decided to leave. Apart from not seeing the point of wasting my time wading through muddy rivers and hacking a path through scrub and bush, I resented being one of the scapegoats of a personal dispute between two officers.

After dark I went out through the back of the camp area, hiked miles to a main road and hitched a ride on an American truck into Brisbane. I made straight for an Army staging camp where I knew an entertainment unit of Sydney and Melbourne musicians was staying and moved in with them until I could get my bearings. I won't name them here because a lot are still working in the music business but most I knew quite well and they really looked after me.

I ate in their mess hall, was issued with leave passes by their Warrant-Officer, in case I was questioned by a random military police patrol, and used all the facilities of the place for several days. As entertainment units were always coming and going in the area none of the regular camp staff knew who was who, and they all believed I belonged there.

Then the news came over the grapevine: another entertainment unit was entraining for Sydney at a certain station at a certain time and I could join them for the trip south.

The ride was uneventful. I ducked off the train at a Sydney suburban station and made my way to my parents' home in Haberfield where I picked up civilian clothes and my musical instruments and then went to see an aunt who ran a boarding house in Stanmore. She gave me a nice room overlooking the front door so that I could see any unwelcome visitors – not that I expected any, because nobody except the family knew where I was and the authorities would be looking for me in Queensland, if at all. As a matter of fact during the whole of the nine or ten months I was absent without leave from the army and working openly as a musician nobody made any inquiries at all. I found out later that all my army papers had been lost somewhere between States and officially I did not exist.

The next thing was to get work so I went to one of the places I knew best, the American Army. In no time at all I was back working with the O'Sullivan Band at the Booker T. Washington three nights a week and with another band at the Bondi US Officers' Club – later the Golden Key nightclub now demolished.

This band was led by pianist-vocalist Les Welch and had such stalwart musicians as Englishman Mike Hayes on trumpet and guitar, Des Colbert doubling trumpet and piano and other names of the period.

While there I had a narrow escape from death. Late one night the head waiter asked me would I like to come along on a trip to pick up more liquor supplies. Luckily I declined, because on the way back to the club, possibly after sampling some of the supplies, he drove off a cliff near Tamarama killing himself, wrecking the car and smashing all those good bottles. In a day when quality liquor was hard to get it really hurt to think of all that stuff mixing with the ocean and washing out to sea.

Jazz was everywhere. The 2KY Jazz Club was running Sunday nights in the auditorium basement of Dymock's Building in George Street under the auspices of trumpeter Ron Wilby and the late Eric Dunn, jazz critic and EMI producer. This spot featured the best local musicians plus American players who had been inducted into the services or merchant navy. Among the Americans two that stand out were coloured trumpeter Wilbur Wilson who had played with the bands of Erskine Hawkins and Andy Kirk and coloured drummer Jesse Price who had worked with Harlan Leonard's Rockets and Floyd Campbell's Gang Busters.

One of the most colourful characters in Sydney at the time was Melbournite Harvey Bruce, a man dedicated to

Harvey Bruce (left), with Merv Acheson at the Musician's Club, Sydney, in June 1961.

jazz music, who during his lifetime was many things including ukelele playing singer, dance promoter, jazz club owner, nightclub manager, jam session and recording organiser, bootlegger, gambler, bookmaker, estate owner and jazz writer. He knew everybody from the local paper boy and barrowman to doctors, lawyers and top underworld bosses.

A few months later he was to start the famous Rocket Club in a hall near Circular Quay and then to transfer it to Rodd island in the river between Balmain and Drummoyne. This became a week-end haven for jazz musicians.

But, first things first.

Sydney was a rip-roaring town during the war years. Every industry was working flat out, the Yanks were spending money like water, there was a flourishing black market, and the underworld was doing a roaring trade in everything from petrol coupons to nylons and liquor. In this atmosphere the entertainment industry boomed.

Pubs which closed at 6 pm had very little liquor or so they said, but nightclub tables groaned beneath the weight of bottles. The present system of licensed poker machine clubs was not in existence and hotels had no entertainment, except in the case of the really smart ones like the Hotel Australia which catered for private functions in secluded banqueting halls. By law liquor was barred from dance halls, except on occasional ball nights when a special license had to be obtained. This left the nightclubs with an open slather as they were the only places providing liquor and entertainment. And they sprang up in their dozens.

Jazz music, musicians and liquor have always gone together and it was inevitable in that time and place that some musicians should get involved in the booze supplying business.

Harvey Bruce and I, together with others, had an interest in a large amount of liquor intended for one of the nighteries and the whole load went missing.

I have always had a passion for guns of all types. Even as a child the only toys I can remember ever wanting were guns, and my years with the Australian and American forces had given me ready access to plenty of them. As a result during the whole time of my absence without leave from the Australian army I never went anywhere without a Colt .45 semi-automatic pistol and slept with one under my pillow.

When the liquor went missing Harvey and I met with other interested parties on a Sunday night in 1944 backstage at the 2KY Jazz Club. With the exception of myself all the men at this meeting have since died of natural causes. Angry words were spoken and guns produced. It has always been widely believed that mine was the only gun present but there were at least two more.

I was very drunk as were most of the others, and I tripped on a trailing curtain just as an innocent bystander walked into the middle of the group to see what was going on. My .45 went off as I fell and the slug took him in the leg. Guitarist and band leader Ray Price was in the auditorium at the time and as he had been an army medic, he was soon giving first aid. The injured man was a jazz fan, amateur drummer and in the Air Force.

Meanwhile my associates had packed up their guns and faded away into the night. I knew that I was in no condition to undergo a police interview at that time, so I left quickly taking the .45 with me.

In the morning I changed back into army jungle greens, believing that no matter what the outcome of the shooting, I would eventually be handed back to the army. At this stage I did not know that my papers had been lost and that I was not officially listed as AWL or anything else. I took a cab straight to the office of solicitor Harold Munro, put the gun on his desk and said "I am giving myself up for that shooting last night and I want you to represent me".

After some note taking he rang the CIB and two very large detectives came over to get me. I can honestly say that during the days that followed I was not in any way mistreated by the police. There was no browbeating, threats or assault such as is often alleged against them. In fact they were at all times courteous and fair.

One strange incident occurred at the CIB when an officer asked me what I was doing in the uniform and was I masquerading as a soldier? When I produced my army pay book and equipment issue card he gaped and said "We would never have looked for you in that outfit; we were after a man in a grey suit and white shirt". After checking with the Military Provost Office he told me they had no record or wanted notice from Queensland on me, and that only for the shooting, I could have got away with it until the war ended.

The police charged me with shooting with intent to murder, having an unlicensed pistol, and having goods in custody suspected of being unlawfully obtained. This last charge referred to the gun.

All these charges would later be struck out in court. It would be brought out that I knew the victim only slightly and had no reason to want to kill him and that the gun came from the United States Armed Forces to which I had been attached and that attached personnel were issued with American weapons.

The main charge was changed to malicious wounding. Now, under British and Australian law the word malicious is not always what it seems. This charge has a clause in small print which covers wounding by recklessness or carelessness where no malice is involved at all.

As soon as all this was settled I was granted bail and immediately picked up by the Military Police and taken to Victoria Barracks. Here I was thrown into a cell where I spent 27 days awaiting court-martial. The court sentenced me to 120 days detention and I served it all in that same cell coming out only for short periods of exercise in a high walled yard and to shower or go to the toilet. The Barracks jail had been built in the early days of Australia's settlement. There was no running water or lavatories in the cells and no heating.

It was customary to send prisoners to country detention camps after sentence but this could not happen to me as I had to appear frequently in court on the civil charge.

At length my army sentence ended. I was escorted to the showground, then a military base, and turned over to the Adjutant's office which issued me a temporary discharge certificate pending the outcome of my civil trial. My case had now been committed to the Quarter sessions and I still had many weeks to wait on bail until these took place. So back I went to the Booker T. Washington and the regular round of US officers clubs, nightclubs and jazz joints.

NEXT ISSUE: Jail in 1944-45 was no picnic; discharge; big theatre bands, the Rocket Club, a Melbourne stint, the colourful jazz scene of the post war years.

JAZZ next issue: November/December 1982

JOHN McCARTHY

Johnny McCarthy by John Clare
Errol Buddle & The Australian Jazz Quintet, by Eric Myers
Melbourne's Frank Traynor, by Keith Martin
Pee Wee Irwin, by Jim Coleman
The American Jazz Scene, as briefly seen by Adrian Jackson
Art Pepper Retrospective, by Neville Meyers and Niels Nielsen
Ian Neil's Grace Notes
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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 NSW 2026 at $2 including postage.

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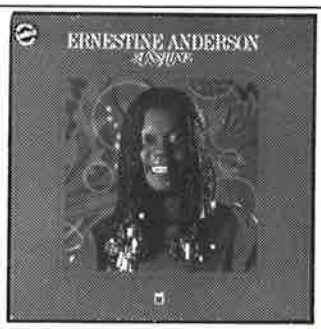

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