

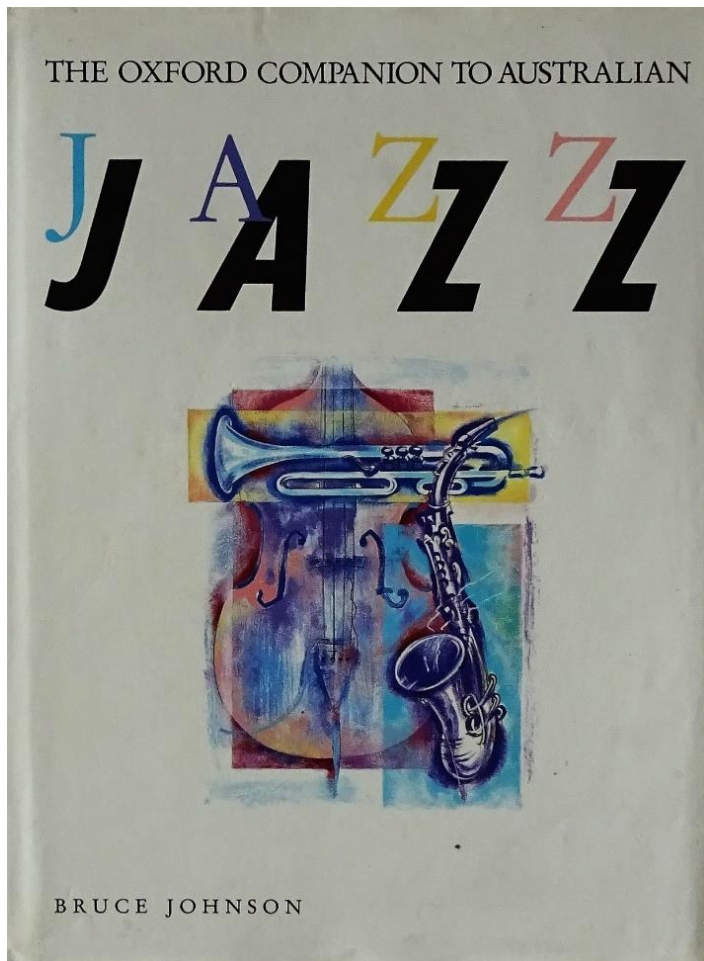
## MELBOURNE

by Bruce Johnson

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*[The following is the 'Melbourne' entry, pages 205-211, in the Oxford Companion to Australian Jazz, published in 1987]*

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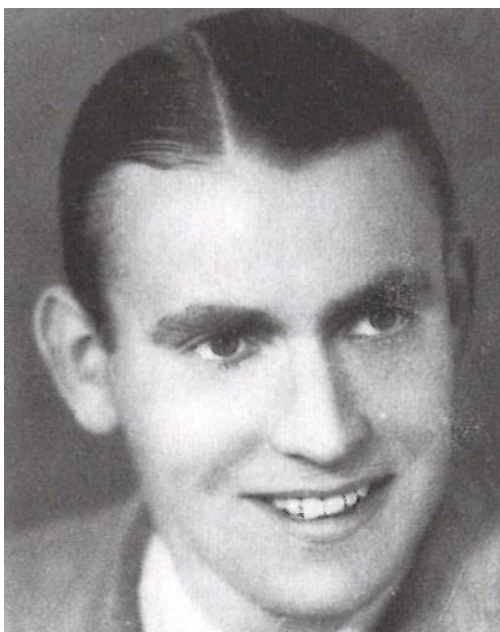
*At the beginning of this entry, Bruce Johnson writes: "As in Sydney, the magnitude of jazz activity in Melbourne requires its own book. Melbourne has been a crucial centre of Australian jazz, in particular its more traditional styles. The contribution made by Melbourne to attitudes regarding the music has been sketched in some of the major essays in this volume. More detailed aspects of the subject are incorporated in the relevant shorter entries on individual musicians and bands. The purpose of this essay is to deal with matters which fall somewhere between the general and the particular, and which have been distinctive to or unusually important in Melbourne."*

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**M**elbourne experienced the first wave during the '20s in much the same way as, though at a lower level than, Sydney. As elsewhere, those characteristics of the history of its jazz that were peculiar to Melbourne began to emerge most clearly during subsequent activity. The onset of the swing movement found its focus in Melbourne in the 3AW Swing Club, inaugurated in August 1936 under the presidency of Colin Keon-Cohen. With programmes of record recitals and discussion groups, its membership mushroomed to more than 300 within a few weeks, and over 500 by the end of the year. It was clear that there was an enthusiastic public for some alternative to the rather bland dance band fare hitherto available.



*Bob Tough (left) and Benny Featherstone (below) were linchpins at the Fawkner Park Kiosk on Sunday afternoons...PHOTOS COURTESY OXFORD COMPANION TO AUSTRALIAN JAZZ*



The club was soon able to present live music, in which Bob Tough and Benny Featherstone were linchpins, as they were also at the most important public venue for jazz or small group swing at that time, the Fawkner Park Kiosk on Sunday afternoons.

In 1937 the beginnings of a parallel movement with a more finely articulated jazz philosophy were signalled in the foundation of the Melbourne University Rhythm Club, of which Ade Monsborough was a co-founder.



*Ade Monsborough, co-founder of the Melbourne University Rhythm Club... PHOTO COURTESY NIGEL BUESST COLLECTION*

Swing, and other forms of jazz-based popular music, quickly filtered through the entertainment industry. Most dance bands absorbed the idiom to a greater or lesser extent, with the most important leaders during this early period being Jim Davidson and Frank Coughlan, the latter dividing his time over the years between Sydney and Melbourne.

The late '30s also saw the growth in importance of cafes and coffee lounges as workshops for jazz, particularly in the St Kilda area where musicians including Featherstone, Billy Hyde and Stan Bourne introduced a strong swing inflexion into the commercial fare.



*Stan Bourne, one of the musicians who introduced a strong swing inflexion into the commercial fare...PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN*

Radio was also a major medium through which newcomers to the music were initiated, aided by the beginning during the war of significant reissue programmes of early jazz records. The arrival of the Mills Brothers in 1939 was greeted with near-hysteria, and in December 1940 Melbourne had its first 'band battle', a Battle of Swing bands at the Trocadero Palms involving Frank Coughlan's Trocadero Band, Mickey Walker's Radio Band, and Ern Tough's Fawkner Swing Band featuring Neville Maddison.



*The arrival of the Mills Brothers (above) in 1939 was greeted with near-hysteria... PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN*

During the war, the different strands of jazz in Melbourne became increasingly identifiable, though musicians and the general public for the most part moved freely between them. The convergence of the Bell brothers, Pixie Roberts, and Ade Monsborough, laid the foundations of the traditional jazz revival, although the initial spirit was not exclusively revivalist.



*The convergence of the Bell brothers (above, Roger, left & Graeme), Pixie Roberts, and Ade Monsborough (below) laid the foundations of the traditional jazz revival...PHOTO CREDITS NIGEL BUESST COLLECTION*



The establishment of *Jazz Notes* in 1941 and the release of the first Ampersand records in 1945 manifested and further reinforced a focus on jazz as distinct from other forms of modern music which, as early as this, was distinctive to Melbourne. In this, Bill Miller was the crucial figure.



*Bill Miller, the crucial figure in reinforcing a focus on jazz as distinct from other forms of modern music...*  
PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN

At the same time, swing continued to be the staple fare at the major dance band and cabaret venues, augmented during the war by the Palm Grove (1940) where Bob Gibson opened, and the Dugout, for allied servicemen.



*Bob Gibson's orchestra, Palm Grove, Melbourne, 1940, L-R, saxes Vin McCarthy, Bob Storey, Lester Young, Bob Gibson (clarinet), Bernice Lynch, Mae Knuckey (vocals), brass Harold Broadbent (trombone), Bob Trembath, Fred Thomas, Billy Weston (trumpets), Keith Cerche (drums), Alf Warne (piano), Gordon Peake (bass)... PHOTO COURTESY MIKE SUTCLIFFE & OXFORD COMPANION TO AUSTRALIAN JAZZ*

Mark Solomon led the band at the opening in May 1942, but shortly was replaced by drummer George Watson. The coffee lounges burgeoned with the increased demand for entertainment, and continued to provide venues for Dixieland and small band swing, as well as incubating experiments which would lead to the brief but energetic bop movement in Melbourne. The Plaza, the Junction, the Galleone (aka Galleon), Saul's, the Swing In, the Manchester, all provided opportunities for musicians to play less diluted jazz programmes, from traditional to increasingly progressive.

In the post-war explosion of jazz activity the coffee lounges continued to play a major role, aided by nightclubs like *Ciro's* and the *Storkclub* which frequently played host to after-hours jam sessions, where the core of progressive jazz stylists grew, with musicians incl Jack Brokensha, Bob Limb, 'Splinter' Reeves, Orm Stewart, Doug Beck, Ken Brentnall, Don Harper, Ted Preston, and in the late '40s young newcomers Bruce Clarke and Ron Rosenberg.



*Progressive jazz stylists included Jack Brokensha (here on vibes) and trumpeter Ken Brentnall (far right). Others, L-R, are Ron Loughhead (piano), Edwin Duff (vocals) & John Foster (bass)...PHOTO COURTESY MIKE SUTCLIFFE COLLECTION*

The focus for traditional jazz activity began at the Uptown Club with the Bell band, but spread under the leadership of Frank Johnson, Tony Newstead, and Ken Owen, with Ade Monsborough and Kelly Smith also leading groups, notably at the jazz concerts. In Melbourne some of the earliest of these were at the New Theatre, where the progressive fraternity presented its first function in 1947. Suburban town halls, like the Brunswick, as well as Melbourne TH, became concert venues, and the Downbeat series organized primarily by Bob Clemens was a continuous thread

through the concert era. These functions brought virtually all the jazz strands together, including some of the larger swing and Stan Kenton inspired bands, notably under the leadership of Fred Thomas.

1946  
**SUNDAY, JULY 7th**  
 8 p.m. at EUREKA CLUB  
 104 Queensberry St., Nth. Melb.  
**ONE NIGHT OF**  
**HOT JAZZ**  
 FEATURING MELBOURNE'S GREATEST GATHERING OF  
 JAZZ MUSICIANS

- ★ Graeme Bell's Famous Dixielanders
- ★ Adrian Monsborough's Backroom Boys
- ★ Frankie Johnson's Hot Five
- ★ Don Banks' Jump Quartette

WILL McINTYRE, BLUES SHOUTER  
 BOOGIE WOOGIE PIANIST

HARRY BAKER NEW  
 ORLEANS PIANO MAN

*They will tell the Story of Jazz in Music with  
 Compere Tony Underhill (late A.B.C. Hobart)*

PRESENTED BY THE EUREKA LEAGUE Phone: FJ 2947

*Poster for a Eureka Youth League jazz concert, Melbourne, July 1946... COURTESY OXFORD COMPANION TO AUSTRALIAN JAZZ*

From 1950, music in Melbourne entered a slump. The coal strike of 1949 was followed in Melbourne by a long public transport strike in 1950, and these were among the more obvious blows dealt to the entertainment industry. Naturally, a minority music like jazz suffered most, and through the first half of the decade the centre of gravity of the music gradually moved to Sydney. Smaller gigs began to close and bands to break up. Tony Newstead's venture at the Katherina was short-lived, the Copacabana night-club closed, Geoff Kitchen was unable to get his band any work and it never got past the rehearsal stages.

By the end of 1951 only a handful of traditional groups, including those of Frank Johnson and Max Collie, was in regular work. Coffee lounges resorted to variety acts, and the concerts were in decline by the mid-50s. The decade saw a draining of musicians away from Melbourne on a short- and long-term basis. Frank Johnson and Len Barnard investigated country tours, Terry Wilkinson, Billy Weston, Geoff



Kitchen, Dick McNally were among a great number who moved to Sydney while others, incl. Laurie Parr, Ross Fusedale, and Lin Challen, went further afield, if only temporarily.



*Pianist Terry Wilkinson (above) & clarinetist Geoff Kitchen (below) were among a great number of musicians who moved to Sydney...WILKINSON PHOTO COURTESY CATHI WILKINSON; KITCHEN PHOTO COURTESY NIGEL BUESST COLLECTION*



During this lean period, anything which gave support to jazz therefore assumed unusual importance. The Southern Jazz Society was founded in 1949 by Shirley

Wood (later Shirley House), with Will McIntyre as its first president. Len Barnard led the house band, a monthly magazine, the *Southern Rag*, was edited by Tony Standish, who later founded the Heritage record label. The society organized jam sessions, annual balls and ran the 1952 AJC in Melbourne. It provided jazz experience for a number of enthusiasts who were later to make significant contributions to the music, including Bill Haesler, Dick Hughes, and Frank Traynor.

Above all, it provided a forum for traditional jazz during a period when the music was enjoying comparatively little public support. The society ceased operating in 1958, passing the flame on to the Melbourne Jazz Club. Towards the end of the '50s there was a resurgence of jazz activity in Melbourne, as always with the emphasis on the traditional styles. This growth manifested itself primarily through the casual dance or club scene, in which local halls of varying sizes were hired, generally by bands, for dances attended primarily by teenagers, who were beginning to constitute an affluent market. An early venture had been opened by dance band leader Mick Walker at Malvern Grove ballroom in 1951, but it was not until the late '50s that these dances became the major entertainment centre for young people.

Under the leadership of Len Barnard, Max Collie, Frank Traynor, and increasingly using younger groups like the Melbourne New Orleans Jazz Band, the dances and clubs ranged from ephemeral events to durable institutions like Club 431 which ran from 1957 to about 1964, the Esquire in Glen Iris, the Gasworks in Kew, and the Peninsula Jazz Club at Frankston. The clubs were not licensed, and as far as alcohol being on the actual premises in the possession of the 'members' was concerned, this was fairly strictly adhered to.



*The Melbourne New Orleans Jazz Band, L-R, Mookie Herman (bass), Nick Polites (clarinet), Graham Bennett (drums), Frank Turville (trumpet), Willie Watt (banjo)... PHOTO COURTESY ROGER BEILBY*

The casual dances were dominated overwhelmingly by traditional jazz. That was the sound that characterized these functions for socializing, entertainment, courtship, for this generation was not much interested in the cabaret and nightclub atmosphere, which was associated anyway with an older generation. They wanted more energetic outlets than movies, radio, and TV, and something more regularly timetabled than the increasingly infrequent and commercially contaminated jazz concerts.

The extent to which the casual jazz dances made inroads on the established industry is hinted at in the April–June 1960 issue of *Melbourne Jazz Club News*. It took issue with Bon Gibbins of the Council of Ballroom Dancing who had gone into print with one of the oldest objections to jazz, that the jazz dances were breeding grounds for immorality. The article in reply insisted that the clubs were run strictly, that they were no more inherently immoral than ballroom dancing, and that the real grievance was that the casual dances were stealing custom.

Although the emphasis was on traditional jazz, there were some venues which experimented with a broader spectrum of the music, including Jazz Centre 44 and Bob Clemens's Downbeat Jazz Club which opened in 1958 with a band that included Brian Rangott (guitar) and Stewie Speer. Although in a separate category from the clubs or dances, mention should also be made of The Embers nightclub which opened in 1959 in Toorak Road on the site of the old Claridges.



*American singer Mel Tormé performing at The Embers. Two of the musicians to the left of Tormé are Ted Nettelbeck (piano) and Frank Smith (alto saxophone). To the right is Errol Buddle on tenor saxophone... PHOTO COURTESY TED NETTELBECK*

Addressing itself to a more sophisticated, wealthy, and older clientele than that which supported the casual dances, it nonetheless signified in the renewed interest in

jazz by virtue of the outstanding musicians it employed, including Frank Smith\*, and top-line imported artists like Oscar Peterson and Ella Fitzgerald.



*Ella Fitzgerald at The Embers in 1960. From left: Lou Levy (piano), Ella, Wilfred Middlebrooks (bass), Herb Ellis (guitar), Gus Johnson (drums)... PHOTO COURTESY TED NETTELBECK*

The establishment of the Melbourne Jazz Club perpetuated the tradition embodied in the Southern Jazz Society. While most of the casual dance/ club activity was simply oriented to providing a context for teenage socializing, the Melbourne Jazz Club was specifically set up to promote jazz. It grew out of record sessions at the home of Bill and Jess Haesler, with Frank and Pat Traynor also prime movers. The club opened at the RSL Memorial Hall in Church St, Richmond on 6 June 1958 with a house band led by Traynor. The club's rapid growth led it finally to St Silas Church Hall, Albert Park in June 1959, then into the church itself when the hall was demolished in 1960. The club became a centre for traditional jazz in Melbourne. Young musicians gained early experience at its functions—Ian Orr (tpt), Bob Brown (bs), John Hawes (tpt), Gavin Gow (clt), Kevin Goodey (clt), Eddie Robbins (ch)—older musicians knew they could resume contact through the club, interstate visitors and bands could use it as a jumping-off point.

In July 1961 it produced its first newsletter and in August 1962, began a magazine which appeared alongside it until the former ceased publication in mid-1963. These publications promulgated information covering the national traditional movement

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\* An article “Frank Smith at The Embers, Melbourne 1960-61” by Ted Nettelbeck can be read on this site at this link <https://ericmyersjazz.com/essays-page-26>

and contributed to its solidarity. In June 1965 the club moved operations to the Musicians' Union premises in Queens Road, then expanded its activities in May 1966 to Marco's in Exhibition St with the advent of 10 o'clock hotel trading, as well as holding Sunday afternoon functions at Frank Traynor's club.



*Trombonist Frank Traynor: a key figure in the Melbourne trad boom of the early 60s...PHOTO COURTESY AUSTRALIAN JAZZ MUSEUM*

Following another shift to the George Hotel in Fitzroy St, St Kilda, the club gradually wound down as the trad boom receded, ceasing operations at Traynor's in 1967. The Melbourne Jazz Club was a fixed point in a dispersed and fluid club and dance scene, and brought together at various times virtually every major jazz musician, particularly in the traditional area, of the post-war period.

The casual dance/club phenomenon set the scene for Melbourne's trad boom. In addition to the continued activity of veteran Frank Traynor, the early '60s saw the rise to importance of a number of new bands and musicians. Some, like the Driftwood JB and the Melbourne Dixieland JB, scarcely survived the boom, but two, the Yarra Yarra Jazz Band and the Red Onions Jazz Band dominated the traditional field well into the '70s, and the former continued to carry the flag of New Orleans jazz in 1986.



*Two bands dominated the traditional field well into the '70s, the Yarra Yarra Jazz Band (above) and the Red Onion Jazz Band (below). The Yarra Yarra band includes, back row L-R, Dennis Ball (clarinet), Lee Treanor (banjo), Don Hall (drums), Les Fithall (trombone). In front are L-R, Judy Jacques (vocals), Maurie Garbutt (trumpet), Bob Brown (string bass). The Red Onions include Allan Browne (front centre), then L-R, Richard Miller, Rowan Smith, Brett Iggulden, John Scurry, Bill Howard... RED ONIONS PHOTO COURTESY AUSTRALIAN JAZZ MUSEUM*



As elsewhere, this boom reverberated into the more modern styles of jazz, though at a greatly reduced level. Brian Brown and Alan Lee continued to be significant exponents of progressive approaches. Doug Dehn's Souldtet enjoyed a brief burst of activity, as did groups led by Les Patching and Geoff Bartrum (with Roger Sellers, drums). Jazz Centre 44 had reverted to a traditional jazz policy by 1963, but in the same year American entrepreneur Ali Sugarman opened the Fat Black Pussycat at 90 Toorak Road, South Yarra.



*Saxophonist Brian Brown (above) and vibist Alan Lee (below) continued to be significant exponents of progressive approaches...BROWN PHOTO COURTESY DAVID MARTIN; LEE PHOTO COURTESY JAZZ DOWN UNDER*



The Pussycat became Melbourne's centre for jazz experimentation, opening with a band led by Barry McKimm (trumpet), and ex-German Heinz Mendelson (tenor), with Brian Fagan (bass) and Barry Woods (drums). The Pussycat also presented visiting musicians including Bob Bertles who joined McKimm/Mendelson for some months in 1963, and the Heads (Bernie McGann, John Pochée, Andy Brown, bass and Dave MacRae) in 1964-65.



*Drummer John Pochée (right) at the Fat Black Pussycat, Melbourne, 1964, with the group The Heads. In the background is saxophonist Bernie McGann...PHOTO COURTESY DAVID FRANKLIN ASSOCIATES PTY LTD*

By May 1965 the Pussycat had become a disco, but later that year Adrian Rawlins took it over and installed Brian Brown on Saturday and Sunday nights and Barry McKimm's trio on Sunday afternoons. With the ebb of the early '60s jazz tide, however, the Pussycat's days were numbered. In early 1966 a rock policy was introduced, and by about April it closed its doors.

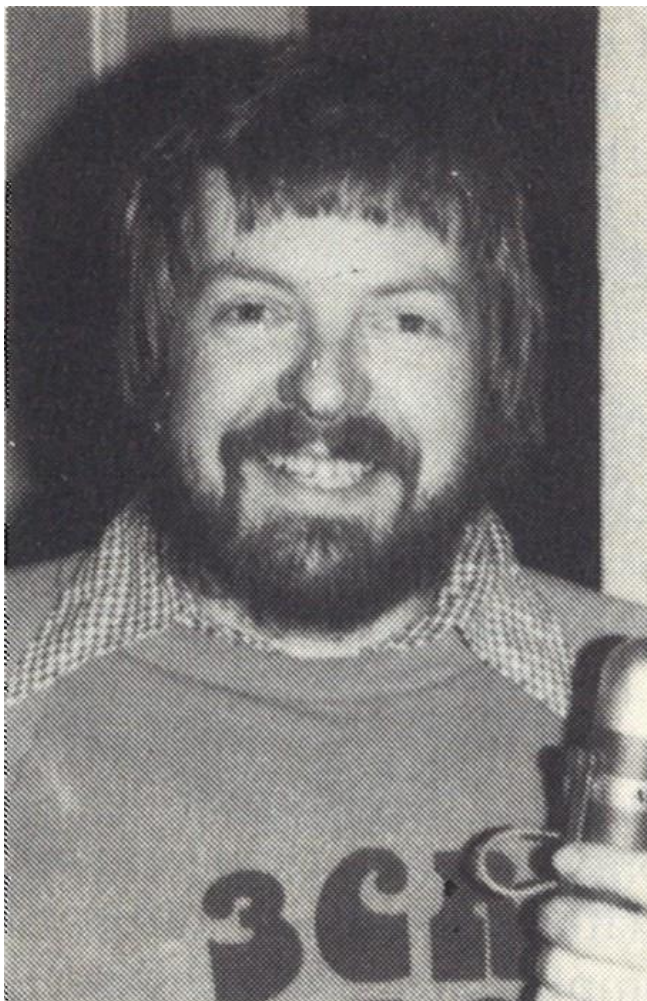
The late '60s saw jazz eclipsed by electric pop as the music of the new generation. Jazz venues closed, most of the bands spawned by the trad boom folded, and again, musicians began leaving for Sydney with its more extensive entertainment industry. As in the previous decade, anything that kept jazz alive was that much more important. The liberalizing of licensing hours in 1966 created new opportunities of which jazz was at least partial beneficiary. More directly influential was the establishment of the Victorian Jazz Club in 1968.

At the outset the club was run wholly by a collection of committees, each with its own portfolio. Many of the members were musicians including veterans of the '50s like Nick Polites, others were part of the new generation that emerged in the trad boom,



including Geoff Thomas (drums), Allan Leake, Peter Grey, Bob Paul, Don Heap, John Murray. Some of the non-musicians, like Ken Carter and Don Anderson, have remained active in jazz up to the present. Using the Prospect Hill as its base, the club presented regular functions, using bands on a rotation system. It published its own magazine, *Jazzline*, first under the direction of a committee, then under the editorship of Jim Loughnan from February 1969.

In March 1970 it started a second night each week at the Manor House Hotel, and severed connections with the Prospect Hill from January 1971. The '70s also saw the beginning of its own radio programme on 3CR presented by Roger Beilby, from 1974 a newsletter in addition to *Jazzline*, and from 1977 a series of jazz workshops. The club moved from the Manor House in March 1981 and finally settled in at the Museum Hotel, where it was still based in 1986.



*Roger Beilby: he presented the VJC's own radio programme on 3CR...PHOTO CREDIT NORM LINEHAN*

Over the years, the Victorian Jazz Club has organized balls, commemorative concerts, picnics, barbecues, even sporting events. It is the contemporary manifestation of a distinctive element in the history of Melbourne jazz, the main antecedents of which are the Southern Jazz Society and the Melbourne Jazz Club. For this succession of clubs, jazz has been more than just a form of entertainment,

rather, it is the centrepiece of a way of life, with club members being part of an extended family, often (by blood and marriage) literally so. The social functions, the newsletters and magazines, have created an esprit de corps which centres on, but goes beyond jazz, creating a national fraternity.

In the late '60s the Victorian Jazz Club created opportunities for new bands. Some, like the Limehouse JB, the Chicagoans, Kansas City Six, enjoyed active but brief lives. Others, notably the New Harlem Jazz Band and the Storyville group, both established in 1968, have continued to operate through to 1986.



*The New Harlem Jazz Band, 1972, L-R, Bill Morris (tuba), Chris Farley (banjo), Doug Rawson (piano), Richard Opat (drums), Chris Ludowyk (trombone), Ian Fleming (clarinet), Ian Smith (trumpet)...PHOTO COURTESY BILL MORRIS & OXFORD COMPANION TO AUSTRALIAN JAZZ*

In the '70s the situation for traditional jazz stabilized somewhat after the violent fluctuations of the previous decade. John Kellock's La Vida JB, John Tucker's Yacht Club JB, and Peter 'Poppa' Cass's Dixielanders all enjoyed relatively regular work in addition to the older surviving groups. The '70s also saw some stylistic opening up in the traditional area in Melbourne. The Storyville Jazzmen ventured into mainstream territory that had been rather fenced off in previous decades (though Kenn Jones's long-running Powerhouse residency had also situated itself in that area). A number of musicians hitherto associated with the traditional style also absorbed rock influences, notably the groups led by Dave Rankin (his Rankin File included Ian Orr,

Ian Coots drums, Ron Sedgman keyboards, Tom Cowburn vocal/electric bass, and Graham Davies sax: a blend of musicians from various stylistic areas).

Brian Brown continued to be the dominant figure in more modern jazz styles during the '60s, with his sometime bass player David Tolley pushing further into electronic experimentation and free improvisation. Brown's work at the Commune in the late '70s brought in a new generation of young musicians interested in contemporary styles and, in mid-decade, there was also a minor bop revival which threw into prominence musicians like Ken Schroder, Ray Martin, and Mike Murphy, only one of whom, however, has remained in Melbourne.



*Melbourne bassist David Tolley: pushing further into electronic experimentation and free improvisation...PHOTO COURTESY JAZZ DOWN UNDER*

It remains true that Sydney offers more to musicians interested in playing outside the traditional idiom. The brief impetus to contemporary styles which was hinted at in the foundation of the Victorian JAS in 1974 failed to materialize when the society went into abeyance. In the '80s there has been an increase in the level of contemporary jazz activity, partly because of the introduction of jazz studies courses at institutions like the Victorian College of the Arts, through other institutional support from government funding, and through exposure on community FM radio. Three groups have provided the main focus for such music: Onaje, Pyramid, and Odwala.



*Quartets involved in the increase in the level of contemporary jazz activity include Onaje (above) and Pyramid (below). Onaje includes (rear, L-R) Bob Sedergreen, Richard Miller, Gary Costello and (front, seated) Allan Browne; Pyramid includes L-R, David Hirschfelder, Bob Venier, Roger McLachlan, David Jones...PYRAMID PHOTO COURTESY JAZZ MAGAZINE*



Odwala (named for a composition by Roscoe Mitchell) grew out of a meeting between Martin Jackson (reeds) and Jamie Fielding (piano) when they were taking lessons from Bob Sedergreen. Both had earlier been drawn to contemporary jazz after hearing Brian Brown in the late '70s. Odwala stabilized with Jackson, Fielding (until he moved to Sydney in 1985), Barry Buckley, and Keith Pereira (drums), though other alumni include Stephen Hadley (bass), Jex Saarelart (piano), Craig Beard (vibes), and Steve Miller (trombone).



*L-R, Jamie Fielding (piano) and Martin Jackson (tenor sax) playing with the group Odwala at The Met in early 1982... PHOTO CREDIT RODDIS THOMSON. Odwala grew out of a meeting between Jackson and Fielding when they were taking lessons from Bob Sedergreen. Fielding is pictured below in a rare photograph... PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN*



Pyramid was formed by David Hirschfelder (keyboards) and David Jones (drums), with Bob Venier (trumpet) and Roger McLachlan (bass), and came to general notice with its first album in 1981. Its performance at the Montreux Jazz Festival in July 1983 was so acclaimed that the group was immediately booked to do a second concert. The band has since broken up, however, and David Jones has moved to Sydney.

Onaje is the most durable of the three groups and, interestingly, consists largely of veterans of earlier decades of Melbourne jazz Allan Browne, Dick Miller, Bob Sedergreen, with Gary Costello and Derek Capewell both having served on bass. Less free form than Odwala and Pyramid, Onaje nonetheless works in contemporary areas, but closer to the mainstream.



*A later version of Onaje with bassist Geoff Kluke (second from left) replacing Gary Costello. Others L-R, are Richard Miller, Allan Browne & Bob Sedergreen...*

*PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN*

In 1986 Melbourne continues to be essentially a stronghold of traditional-based jazz, albeit more loosely and generously conceived than during the '50s. Peter Gaudion's Blues Express and Roger Hudson's Jazz Lips moved into bop areas, the current New Harlem Jazz Band has an eclectic repertoire that includes material by Randy Newman. But the basic lines of force in Melbourne jazz continue to arrange themselves around the traditional core. The longest residencies are held by bands like the New Harlem, Storyville, and such products of the late '70s as Steve Waddell's Creole Bells and the Maple Leaf Jazz Band.



*Trumpeter Peter Gaudion: his Blues Express moved into bop areas...PHOTO COURTESY JAZZ MAGAZINE*

One of the most successful new groups in the '80s has been Ross Anderson's New Melbourne Jazz Band, formed in 1982. It has performed at the Sacramento Dixieland Jubilee, recorded for Roger Beilby's Anteatr label, and has worked on radio and TV. Unlike most other centres throughout Australia, Melbourne has also enjoyed a steady, if small, influx of new traditional musicians in the post-'trad' boom period. Pip Avent (tuba) and the late Maurie Dann have made significant impact. Graeme Pender (clarinet) is a more recent recruit, and even younger musicians are showing interest in and enthusiasm for a style of jazz which is almost completely ignored by the new generation of players in other cities.



*Pip Avent (tuba): part of the steady, if small, influx of new traditional musicians in the post-‘trad’ boom period...PHOTO CREDIT DANNIKA BONSER*

The strength and vitality of traditional jazz in Melbourne is unique in Australia. No other state has boasted a jazz community which is simultaneously so durable and so elaborately and tightly reticulated. Why such a phenomenon should arise specifically in Melbourne is a matter for speculation, but indisputably it has been largely sustained by the succession of clubs which have maintained a very palpable sense of fraternity embracing every traditional musician active in the post-war period.

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*\*Editor’s note: Bruce Johnson’s account of jazz in Melbourne ceases circa 1986, as the “Oxford Companion to Australian Jazz” was published in 1987. To some extent subsequent activity in traditional and mainstream jazz in Melbourne is documented in Diana Allen’s memoir “The History of Jazz Australia” which deals with the 40 years between 1985 and 2015. The latter can be read on this site at this link <https://ericmyersjazz.com/essays-page-73>.*