

HOUNSLOW AND GOULD AIM McJAD AT INDIA

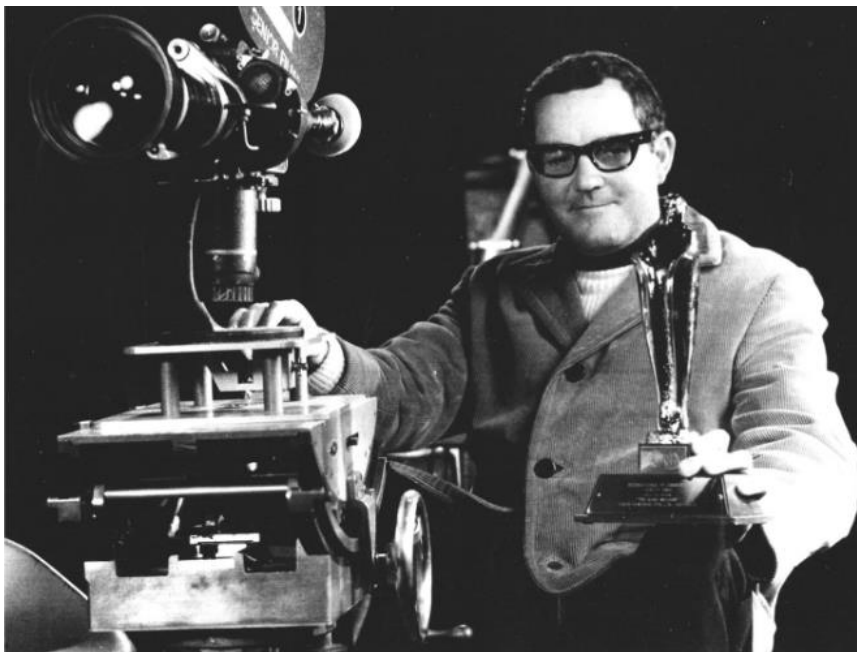
by Eric Myers

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No-one can say that the Melbourne jazz trumpeter Keith Hounslow has not been universally lauded by serious writers on Australian jazz. John Clare described him in 1978 as one of the "three most naturally gifted trumpeters we have." Bruce Clunies-Ross described him in 1979 as "Australia's most brilliantly original jazz instrumentalist" and referred to his "individual genius as an improviser."

Yet critical acclaim in the past is no substitute for an audience today. He and the brilliant pianist Tony Gould have formed a duo called McJad (Melbourne Contemporary Jazz Art Duo). I asked Keith Hounslow if they felt unappreciated in Melbourne.

"You can't play real jazz in Melbourne and live off it, and support a family," he said. "We're more widely known, perhaps, interstate; we don't play much in our own city. No one seems really interested. Modern jazz in Melbourne is practically non-existent."



Hounslow has been writing and directing films and documentaries for 20 years. Here he is holding an award from the Chicago Documentary Film Festival, 1962, for his film on Shell Co Australia... PHOTO COURTESY KEITH HOUNSLOW

Both men, therefore, like many leading musicians in the Victorian capital, have their major professions outside performing jazz. Hounslow has been writing and directing films and documentaries for 20 years; Gould is a lecturer in jazz studies at the Victorian College of the Arts, and the classical music critic for the *Melbourne Sun*.



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Next January, however, these two part-timers will be playing one of the most important engagements of their careers. They will represent Australian jazz at India's third Jazz Yatra festival in Bombay — the biennial event that the organisers claim is the only cultural event of international stature held regularly in the Third World. In 1982 it will attract some 20 leading groups from Europe, Eastern Europe, Asia and the United States.

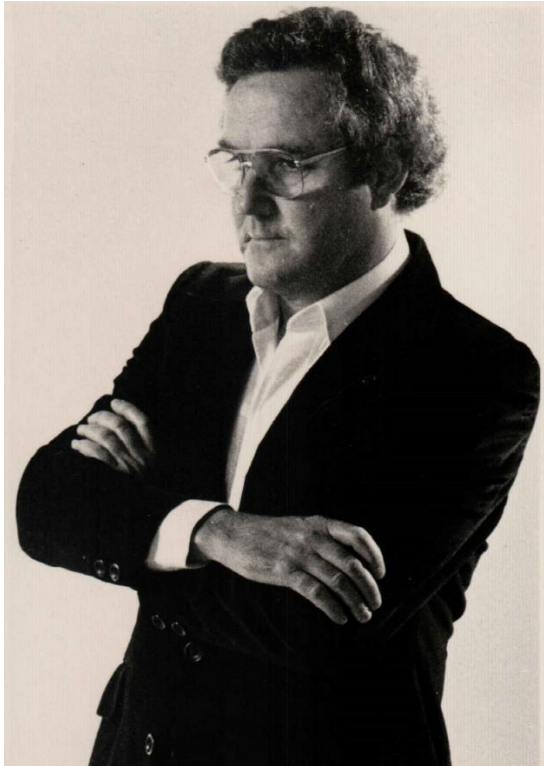


*Tony Gould (left) and Keith Hounslow in a shot subsequently taken in India...
PHOTO COURTESY KEITH HOUNSLOW*

"Our appearance at Jazz Yatra won't achieve anything for us in Australia," said Hounslow. "No one will know about it, I guess. But, I'm terribly into Indian music, and it's going to be marvellous to hear it and to hear other nationalities play jazz."

Over three weeks, they will go on to performances in Sri Lanka, Japan, Hong Kong and possibly mainland China. It will be interesting to see how Hounslow and Gould's music goes over at Jazz Yatra. Their music is basically free improvisation. In simple

terms, the two men begin playing and make it up as they go along, relying on spontaneous musical empathy for success. But unlike most others in this field, they do not use the language of contemporary jazz. Instead they take a traditional, highly melodic approach.



Hounslow: A lot of jazz is intuitive. You learn to play your instrument and as much about scales as possible. After that, it's feeling...PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN

While Keith Hounslow's achievements over 30 years are as distinguished as those of any major figure in Australian jazz history, he does attract criticism on one count: that he is an intuitive ear player, who does not read music. It is said in some circles that, while he is active in the demanding area of free improvisation, Hounslow does not understand the superimposition of different keys and the other technical aspects that make modern jazz every bit as complex as contemporary classical music. How does he react to such criticism?

"That's one hundred per cent correct, if you want to consider music in academic terms," replied Hounslow. "I don't know the modal systems, and I haven't bothered to study those contemporary forms of expression in jazz.

"But a lot of jazz is intuitive. You learn to play your instrument and as much about scales as possible. After that, it's feeling. Pretty soon all the tenor sax players will sound like one another. Even now, a lot of the Americans sound the same. Where's the individuality in their music?

"The whole thing about the Americans is that they only perpetuate themselves. It's cultural imperialism; they don't really believe anyone else plays jazz. At Jazz Yatra, I'm looking forward to hearing the groups from Europe."