



JOHN BUCHANAN: A WARRIOR FOR TRADITIONAL & SWING JAZZ

by Eric Myers

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John Buchanan: awarded an Order of Australia Medal (OAM) in the 2016 Australia Day Honours for, “services to jazz music, and to the broadcast media”...

John Buchanan is probably best-known today as the presenter of the popular radio program “Swing Sessions” on Sydney’s 2MBS-FM Fine Music station, on Mondays at 12 noon. It’s a program I hate to miss, as John invariably plays music that I, as a modernist, have tended to miss out on, despite a lifetime of listening to jazz. In a nutshell Buchanan has prompted me to completely revalue the various pre-bebop jazz styles which were played in the 1920s and 30s.

I was of course well aware of New Orleans giants Sidney Bechet and Louis Armstrong. No jazz enthusiast goes through life without hearing their music. But no matter how important such icons are, there are other amazing and interesting jazz musicians whose work John regularly highlights on his programs. These have been an eyeopener for me. There are too many to mention here, but some whose names quickly come to mind which now have a special meaning for me, are drummer Chick Webb, trumpeter Bunny Berigan, and clarinetist Artie Shaw.

Listening closely to their music I've found it much more sophisticated and hip than most modernists suppose, so much so that the conventional view that so-called "art music" or "creative jazz" begins only in the early 1940s with Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker should seriously be questioned. Listen carefully to other pre-bebop giants such as say, Coleman Hawkins or Roy Eldridge. Their creativity is overwhelming; you cannot tell me they are not playing "art music".

John Buchanan was awarded an Order of Australia Medal (OAM) in the 2016 Australia Day Honours for, "services to jazz music, and to the broadcast media". That phraseology somewhat disguises the lifetime of entrepreneurial activity which John was to undertake, following the memorable day, in 1952 when, as an impressionable teenager of 17, he heard the Graeme Bell band at the Sydney Town Hall. This was Tuesday April 19, 1952, a seminal anniversary in Buchanan's memory. The Bell band, being presented by the ABC, had shortly before arrived back from a world tour.



*The program of the Bell band for the concert on Tuesday April 19, 1952, which takes pride of place in John Buchanan's memorabilia...
COURTESY JOHN BUCHANAN*

“I remember that they played *High Society*” John recalls. “I’d never heard anything like it in my life. And then for the rest of the night they just played all the classics, all the great jazz tunes that we all know about. And that was it. My life was laid out in front of me there and then. After that I was sold - I had a new interest.”

1952 was in fact a key year in the history of Australian jazz. In March of that year the jazz pioneer Clem Semmler at the ABC facilitated the first serious jazz radio program on the network: a Saturday morning coast-to-coast program called *Rhythm Unlimited* compered by Eric Child. That great broadcaster never looked back; his program was to run for over 30 years - an ABC record – and have a profound influence in bringing jazz to the notice of radio listeners.



ABC broadcaster Eric Child: his program “Rhythm Unlimited” was to run for over 30 years... PHOTO COURTESY AUSTRALIAN JAZZ MUSEUM

Buchanan was a regular listener, and was later to acquire pirate recordings of many of Child’s programs, given to him by a keen listener to the ABC who was in the practice of taping Child’s programs. Those tapes are now a valued regular feature of John’s own programs on Fine Music FM.

In 1964 Buchanan married his wife Jill Palmer. He was then an accountant but, bored with that line of work, decided he needed a change. So, he and Jill sold up at Greenwich where they were living and, in the early 70s, bought a five-acre property

in Dural. There, he decided he'd become a publisher and work from home. He published magazines on whatever interested him: project homes, wine and spirits, cricket, golf, a series of books on the Australian cartoonist Emile Mercier, and of course jazz. It was a small publishing business, but lucrative enough for a reasonable living.

"I did it from home, Jill worked with me", says John. "I decided this was the best way to spend your time in Australia at that time. It was a great country then, it was so free and easy, you could get a job doing almost anything. If you wanted to be a doctor and just scrape through the Leaving Certificate you could become one. I just loved it when we went to Dural in the 1970s."

With the advent of rock and roll in the 50s, and its ubiquity in the 60s, John felt keenly the declining interest in jazz. The rock and roll era "basically knocked jazz for six" according to Buchanan. With the advent of Tom Baker's San Francisco Jazz Band in the mid-1970s however Buchanan's enthusiasm was reawakened. "Tom had top Sydney musicians like Eric Holroyd, Paul Furniss and John Bates in his band", says Buchanan, "Traditional jazz was alive again in Sydney."

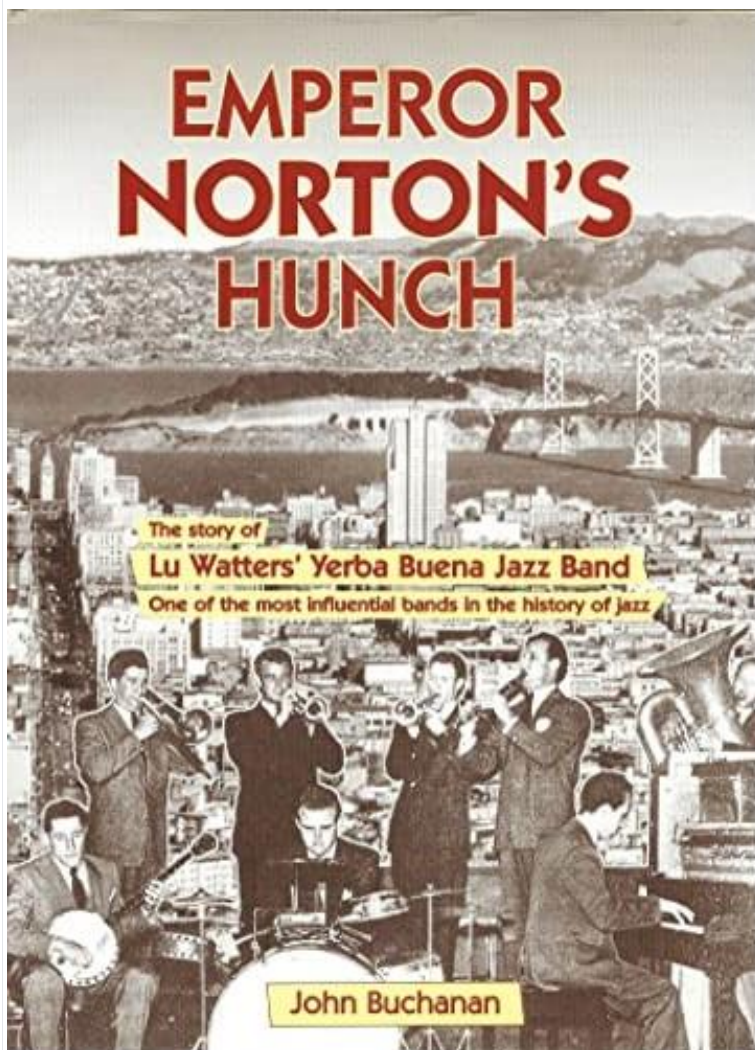


Tom Baker's original San Francisco Jazz Band, which was formed in August 1975 and debuted at the 20th Australian Jazz Convention in December 1975. Standing, L-R, Len Barnard, Eric Holroyd, Baker. Seated, L-R, John Bates, Hans Karssemeyer, Paul Furniss, Chris Qua, Dave Robison... PHOTO COURTESY ROGER BEILBY

John and Tom shared a liking for the two-trumpet style of Lu Watters and his Yerba Buena Jazz Band, which in the 1940s in San Francisco revived the spirit of King Oliver & his Creole Jazz Band and other bands active during the early days of jazz in New Orleans.

It was typical of John Buchanan that he took his interest in Lu Watters to the nth degree. A normal jazz fan might well have restricted his interest to simply collecting the available LPs. This was not good enough for Buchanan. He decided that he needed to know more about the Watters phenomenon and, in line with his experience as a publisher, thought he would research the subject and write a book. The result was his book *Emperor Norton's Hunch: The Story of Lu Watters' Yerba Buena Jazz Band*, published in 1996.

Buchanan travelled to San Francisco on two occasions to seek out and interview the remaining members of the Yerba Buena Jazz band and its followers. Ironically, Watters himself died on November 5, 1989, the very day Buchanan first arrived in the US. According to Peter J F Newton, who wrote the book's Foreword "John has also followed the path that all putative historians must take if their work is to be believed. He has checked contemporary reviews and articles, spoken briefly to a few authors of 'San Francisco' oriented books and articles and selected suitable quotations to reinforce his story. He has consulted with collectors, historians and discographers in Australia too. I'm pleased to say that John has also attempted to place the band within its proper historic and social contexts."



The front cover of John Buchanan's book "Emperor Norton's Hunch"...

Reviewing the book favourably in the magazine of the Allegheny Jazz Society in October, 1996, Larry L Quilligan described Buchanan's effort as "the first book to have specifically done Watters and the YBJB in such a studious manner. There have been many previous written stories and commentaries on Watters and his disciples, mostly in jazz publications, liner notes from recordings and other audio and video sources, but nothing quite like this labour of love by Buchanan, an Australian magazine publisher and jazz cornetist. This is a valuable book. It can be used as a primer for anyone interested in the so-called 'traditional' forms of jazz music, and especially for those interested in the genesis of what is now often called the San Francisco 'jazz revival'. It is an excellent reference source."*

Meanwhile, back in Australia Buchanan had already flexed his muscles as a jazz presenter. In Buchanan's exceedingly well-organised memorabilia the first evidence of the sort of concerts that would take place under Buchanan's stewardship over the next 30 years is the "Evening with the Bob Barnard Jazz Band" on April 27, 1984, presented at the Dural Country Club. Other intermittent concerts over the next four years in Dural featured Paul Furniss's San Francisco Jazz Band (1986 & 1987); and in 1988, Roger and Graeme Bell.

It's important to note that we are not talking about jazz as it was presented normally in pubs and clubs. From the outset Buchanan had a particular vision: that the jazz he loved should be presented in the formal surroundings of the concert hall, and he was to spend much of his life making that vision a reality.



*John
Buchanan
with his wife
Jill: she
supported him
in his quest to
indulge his
passion for
jazz... PHOTO
COURTESY
JOHN
BUCHANAN*

**The full review by Quilligan can be read on the internet at this link
<https://ericmyersjazz.com/book-reviews-21>*

John gives much credit to his wife Jill who supported him in his quest to indulge his passion for jazz. “It was just a wonderful time for music, I just discovered this thing, my wife allowed me to indulge myself in whatever I wanted to do. Amongst all her credits was that, and so there I was on a property having a wonderful time, publishing magazines, and I published the book on Lou Watters *Emperor Norton’s Hunch* in 1996.”

The first practical manifestation of Buchanan’s preoccupation with the Watters oeuvre was his presentation on November 12, 1990 of a concert at the Sydney Town Hall entitled “1948 Memorial Jazz Concert” subtitled “A Tribute to the music of Lu Watters and Turk Murphy”. With proceeds going to the Sir David Martin Foundation, the evening was hosted by Graeme Bell OA, MBE. Shortly before the concert Sir David, Governor of New South Wales, and a close friend of John and his wife Jill, had died on 10 August 1990 of pleural mesothelioma, a rare form of lung cancer caused by asbestos, to which Martin was exposed during his naval career.



Sir David Martin: Governor of NSW, and a friend of the Buchanans. He died in August 1990 of pleural mesothelioma, a rare form of lung cancer caused by asbestos...

This concert was reviewed in the December, 1990 edition of *The Sydney Review* by journalist and jazz pianist Dick Hughes. Referring to Tom Baker's trumpet work, Hughes described it as "rocking, socking revivalist jazz at its best." In the case of Steve Grant, the young pianist whom Buchanan had brought up from Melbourne, Hughes was glowing, describing him as "one of the most extraordinary young musicians I have ever heard... His touch is sure and confident, his rhythm impeccable, his technique staggering".*

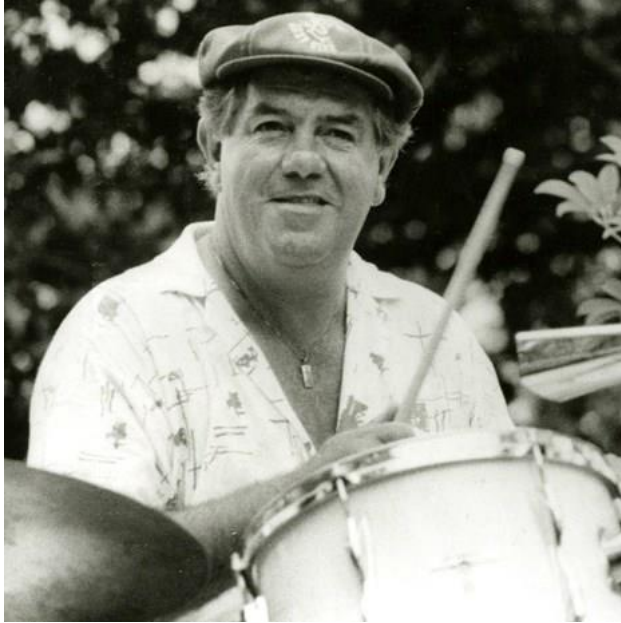


Melbourne's Steve Grant (in front on the piano), pictured with another regular performer on Buchanan's festivals Perth pianist John Gill: Dick Hughes wrote that Grant's "touch is sure and confident, his rhythm impeccable, his technique staggering"... PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY DIANA ALLEN

One of Buchanan's typical promotional strategies was demonstrated in the case of this concert: if such a concert was worth doing in one venue, there was no harm in repeating it at another venue. Therefore the "1948 Memorial Concert", tweaked

*This review entitled "Review of 1948 Memorial Jazz Concert" is on the internet at this link <https://ericmyersjazz.com/essays-page-118>

around the edges with the participation of the Melbourne band Steve Waddell's Creole Bells, was repeated on November 8, 1991, at Willoughby Town Hall, and again the following night, November 9, at Randwick Town Hall. Old faithfuls such as Tom Baker and Graeme Bell were of course involved with drummer Len Barnard and singer Carol Ralph added to the Willoughby Town Hall line-up. These concerts were once again in support of the Sir David Martin Foundation.



Drummer Len Barnard (above) and singer Carol Ralph (below) were added to the Willoughby Town Hall line-up...



Why 1948? As Hughes explained in his review, 1948 was a seminal year for enthusiasts like Buchanan. It was a high point in the revivalist movement of New Orleans jazz internationally. Not only was there Lu Watters in San Francisco and Graeme Bell in Australia, but also in England Humphrey Lyttelton and pianist George Webb, often said to be the father of the traditional jazz movement in the UK. There was Claude Luter in France, and the Dutch Swing College Band in Holland – all playing music in the spirit of King Oliver’s Creole Jazz Band, Jelly Roll Morton’s Red Hot Peppers and Louis Armstrong’s Hot Five and Hot Seven bands.



Pianist George Webb, often said to be the father of the traditional jazz movement in the UK... PHOTO COURTESY UK NATIONAL JAZZ ARCHIVE

During the 1990s Buchanan embarked on a series of concerts at a new venue for him, the North Sydney Leagues Club. They began on November 10, 1995 featuring from Melbourne Steve Waddell’s Creole Bells plus Sydney favourites singer Carol Ralph, and this time Tom Baker with a newly-named ensemble, his Hambone Kelly Eight.

Inspecting Buchanan’s memorabilia one is constantly struck by the attention to detail in his programmes. Invariably the compositions which each group played would be listed in the promotional material which speaks to the meticulous planning which Buchan put into such concerts. In the case of this concert Waddell’s band, after interval, was to play the following tunes in a tribute to Turk Murphy and the San

Francisco Legacy: *Minstrels of Annie Street, Chicago Breakdown, My Honey's Lovin' Arms, Something for Annie, This Way Out, San Francisco Bay Blues, King Porter Stomp, Trombone Rag, Bay City, and Royal Terminus Rag.*

Similar concerts followed in November 1996 (this time two nights in a row at North Sydney Leagues and in 1997 Buchanan inaugurated what was described as “Tom Baker’s San Francisco Jazz Club”, with an invitation to patrons to “dance, dine or just come and listen to Tom Baker’s 8-piece Barbary Coast Jazz Band”.

Buchanan was always looking for new ways to promote the music he loved. Inspecting his memorabilia one is constantly impressed by the innovative ways in which the next concert is marketed. For example on July 21, 2000 at North Sydney Leagues Club there is a concert “A Tribute to Hans Karssemeyer”, the pianist who had died shortly before in 2000. Every opportunity would be taken by Buchanan to find new ways of promoting the same music. The Karssemeyer tribute featured the two San Francisco Jazz Bands led respectively by Tom Baker and Paul Furniss, with some sharing of personnel between the two groups: Tom Baker, Paul Furniss, Eric Holroyd, Len Barnard, John Bates, Dave Robison, Mal McGillivray, Don Heap, Viv Carter, John Bartlett, Paul Baker, plus Chris Taperell and Carol Ralph.



Singer/violinist George Washingmachine: a regular performer on John Buchanan's events...

On three consecutive nights in March 2001, Buchanan presented “A Weekend of Jazz & Hot Country Swing”. The Friday night featured many of the old faithfuls but this time the line-up included Monica Trapaga and her seven-piece band Mano Y Mano.

The Saturday night presented a Battle of the Bands “with two great swing bands, The Café Society Orchestra and George Washington’s Big Spin competing for the audience’s approval”. The Sunday night featured what appears to be a new genre described as Hot Country Swing, “a music inspired by the early fiddle/guitar bands and hot improvised jazz bands of the 1920s, early blues and folk music”.

Buchanan took every opportunity to find new ways to shape a programme and new concert venues to explore. On July 14 2001, Bastille Day was celebrated at the newly refurbished Mittagong Playhouse by presenting the New Hot Club Quintet, featuring violinist Ian Cooper, and guitarist Ian Date, joined by Jim Pennell, John Blenkhorn and Stan Valacos, with special guest pianist Kevin Hunt. On July 28, John Gill, billed as “Australia’s foremost ragtime and stride pianist, gave a recital at the Independent Theatre in North Sydney. And on August 10, Tom Baker’s Blue Blowers and The Paramount Hot Seven played at North Sydney Leagues Club under the banner “Classic Jazz Era Revisited”.



Violinist Ian Cooper (left) and Tom Baker (right) on cornet: two stalwarts of John Buchanan’s festival programs...

And so on through the years. Buchanan would constantly find new themes to explore, giving audiences the impression always that something new was being presented: a Legends of Jazz Concert, subtitled The New Orleans Jazz Revival at the North Sydney Leagues Club featured Geoff Bull’s Olympia Jazz Band and a group called The Buddy Bolden Revival Orchestra; a 40th Anniversary Jazz Party featuring Geoff Bull’s Olympia Jazz Band at the Kirribilli Club; an International Centennial Tribute celebrating Fats Waller; Michael McQuaid’s Red Hot Rhythm Makers would be

brought up from Melbourne and presented two nights in a row at the Independent Theatre on April 1, 2005, and the next night at Mittagong Playhouse on April 2; The Creole Bells, on their way to the Sacramento Jazz Jubilee in 2000 would stop over in Sydney and give a concert at North Sydney Leagues Club in May 2008.

Despite this activity It was Buchanan's Southern Highlands Classic Jazz & Ragtime Festivals, however, which did so much to fertilise the local jazz scene. They commenced in November, 1997 at Annesley School for Girls in Bowral over three days. Concerts would commence on the Friday night, and proceed over the weekend, with the final concerts on Sunday night. The program was vintage Buchanan. Steve Grant was brought up from Melbourne, John Gill came from Perth, and interesting groups included Roger Bell and his Pagan Pipers, Graham Spedding and his Bowral Café Syncopators. It would be tiresome to list all the groups, but they amounted to a cavalcade of the finest traditional jazz groups in the country.



Another regular on the Classic Jazz & Ragtime programs, Perth ragtime virtuoso John Gill, who died in 2011...

This initial festival event was a big success. About 1,300 people attended over three days. A weekend pass cost \$75; a Saturday pass \$50, and a Sunday pass \$40. While exact box office figures are unavailable, quick estimates are possible. 1,300 patrons x \$75.00 brings in \$97,500, a decent return for Buchanan's fledgling festival organisation. Certainly a return of this nature allowed him to cover costs. Buchanan was quoted in the local newspaper *Highlands Post* on November 19, 1998: "I was bowled over with the amount of positive comments that came back from the festival. Generally all the comments were about how wonderful the music was all over". Plans

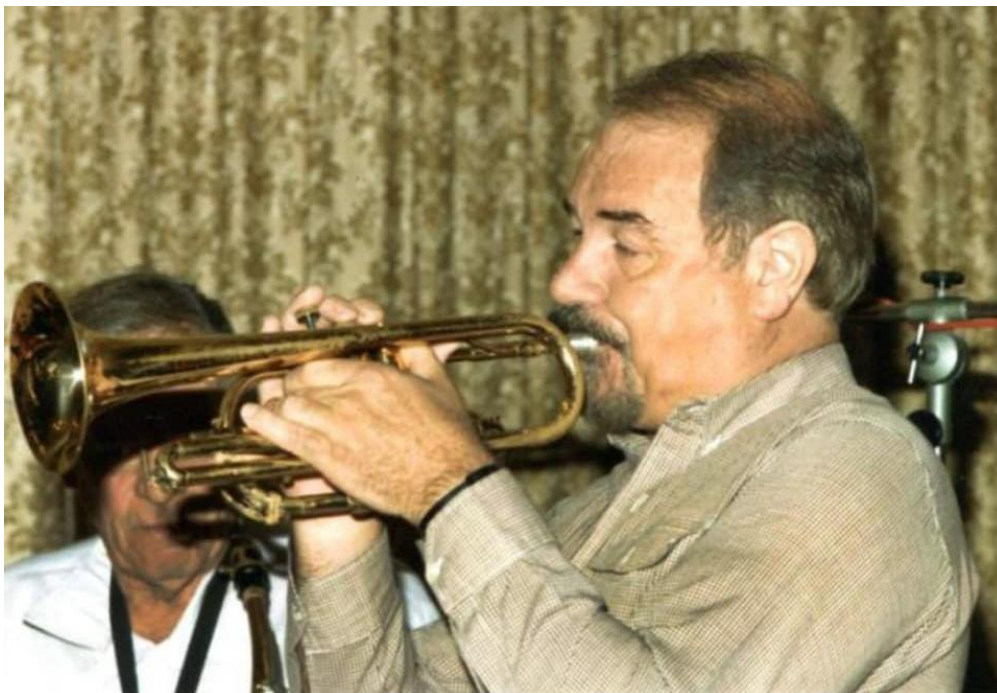
were immediately in train for a repeat festival in 1999, with Buchanan committed to mobilising more local community participation.

The 1999 festival took place in Bowral on November 12, 13 and 14 but this time with Buchanan experimenting with different venues. The Bowral Memorial Hall was the main venue, with events being presented also at Empire Cinema, Corbett Gardens, St Simon and St Jude's Church, and Bowral Uniting Church. A typically strong program included the visiting American pianist Jon Weber.

And so on into the future. Looking through Buchanan's memorabilia one is struck by his increasing confidence and ambition. The 2000 event "A Celebration of 100 Years of Classic Jazz and Ragtime" took place, not in Bowral, but in Canberra, at two venues: the Old Parliament House*, and the Canberra Rex Hotel.

2001 was a big year for John Buchanan. On April 27, 28 & 29 the Southern Highlands Classic Jazz and Ragtime Festival moved to what would become Buchanan's favourite venue for many years: Frensham School for Girls in Mittagong. The main venue was the school's Clubbe Hall, with seating for 700, with three smaller halls available as well for other performances. A typically strong program was presented (see image of the festival program) and a full festival pass now cost \$95, with other passes costing Friday night \$30. Saturday \$60 and Sunday \$40.

**Bob Barnard's version of the Louis Armstrong classic "Cornet Chop Suey", recorded at this event in Old Parliament House in 2000, is on YouTube at this link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QPPgX4M7onQ>*



Bob Barnard... PHOTO COURTESY FACEBOOK



On October 12, 13 & 14 Buchanan conducted what appears to be in retrospect an experiment in presenting the Macedon Ranges 2001 Classic Jazz and Ragtime Festival in Kyneton, a gold rush town in west central Victoria about an hour's drive from Melbourne. According to documents which Buchanan provided, he enjoyed considerable local support from the Macedon Ranges Shire Council, the Kyneton Chamber of Commerce and Elliott Midland Newspapers. This festival was successful enough to be repeated the following year in 2002, on October 11, 12 & 13.

The international component at Kyneton, always an important part of such festivals, was substantial: the legendary American singer Pat Yankee, known for her work with Turk Murphy's San Francisco Jazz Band, presenting her show "To Bessie Smith with Love"; Phil Mason's New Orleans All Stars & singer Christine Tyrrell from the UK; and from Sweden, the trombonist Jens Lindgren.



John Buchanan with Kyneton Chamber of Commerce President Michael Maloney, taken either in 2001 or 2002...

On October 25, 2001, a disaster of the highest order struck: the death of Buchanan's close friend and favourite musician Tom Baker, who died unexpectedly of a heart attack in The Netherlands, aged only 49. On November 24 and 25 two concerts, "A Celebration of Classic Jazz & Ragtime" scheduled for the Old Parliament House and the National Gallery in Canberra were hastily transformed into events to honour the memory of Baker.



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The Classic Jazz & Ragtime festivals continued apace. On the Easter Weekend, over two days on March 30 & 31, 2002, the Vintage Jazz and Swingtime Festival was held in historic Williamstown, established in 1837 as Melbourne's first port, and only minutes from the Melbourne CBD. Buchanan's event took place "in co-operation with" the Hobson's Bay City Council and the Williamstown Advertiser. The main venue was the Williamstown Town Hall where Sydney's Café Society Orchestra and Melbourne's Radio Rhythm Orchestra conducted a "battle of the bands" on the Saturday night. Concerts were also held in two other venues, the Mechanics Institute and the Victoria Inn Hotel.

No sooner was this over when the normal Southern Highlands Classic Jazz & Ragtime Festival took place in hot pursuit at Frensham School in Mittagong on April 26, 27 & 28, 2002. Twenty-two bands were presented, and Buchanan was proud to say that five great pianists were to be featured, including Graeme Bell, Graham Coyle, John Gill and Steve Grant plus the return of the American pianist Jon Weber, who had been a big hit in 1999.

It would be tedious to go through all the subsequent Southern Highlands Classic Jazz & Ragtime Festivals in April 2003, May 2004 and May 2005 all at Bowral Memorial

Hall, and in subsequent years returning to the old favourite venue Frensham at Mittagong with similar programs: in 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009; 2010, always in April.

In 2011, the festival, now called “A Celebration of Classic Jazz Ragtime & Swing” featured something new: a tribute to the Artie Shaw Orchestra on the Saturday night. In 2012 the festival continued as usual on April 14 & 15 with refreshments during the weekend provided by the Rotary Club of Bowral and Mittagong.

2013 saw the presentation of a routine program at Frensham over two days on April 20 & 21. As usual Buchanan was able to find an international component, this time in the form of African American jazz & gospel singer Marilyn Keller, with an interesting program including the Young Northside Big Band under the baton of Geoff Power doing a tribute to the Glenn Miller Orchestra, and what appears to be a fascinating set “The music of the early Clarence Williams bands” presented by Brett Iggulden (trumpet, alto sax), Michael McQuaid (reeds), Steve Grant (piano), Paul Baker (banjo), Geoff Power (tuba) and Neil Macbeth (drums).



African American jazz & gospel singer Marilyn Keller...

With the benefit of hindsight, it appears that by 2014 the Classic Jazz & Ragtime Festival concept was running out of steam. John Buchanan believed that many of his elderly audience members were now dying off. The normal Mittagong festival was moved from April to September in 2014 so it could combine with what was known as “Tulip Time” in Bowral. Meanwhile Buchanan began a new initiative, the North Shore Jazz Festival to take place over two days at North Sydney Leagues Club on April 12 and 13, 2014. “The program has been designed to portray a history of the first forty years of jazz”, he wrote. Two Americans Andy Schumm (cornet) known as “Chicago’s hot jazz maestro” and Josh Duffee (drums) were featured in the various line-ups which, as usual, featured a cavalcade of leading local musicians.

Buchanan's memorabilia has no further mention of the 2014 festival, but we can assume it took place. The final Classic Jazz & Ragtime Festival took place at Bowral Memorial Hall on March 14 & 15, 2015. Only the Sunday program on March 15 survives but it is tinged with sadness, as there were several tributes to many of the festival's regular stars who had died. They included Tom Baker (who died in 2001); Roger Bell (who died in 2008), John Gill (who died in 2011) and Graeme Bell (who died in 2012). Significantly the closing concert – the very last concert of many hundreds which had been part of Buchanan's distinguished career as an entrepreneur - was entitled "Tom Baker and his San Francisco Connection", subtitled by Buchanan as "A tribute to the man who really made it all possible".

The John Buchanan story does not end here. There was another parallel category of entrepreneurial activity going on simultaneously throughout the years of the Classic Jazz & Ragtime Festivals. In retrospect one wonders how Buchanan managed to fit all these events into what was an intensely crowded schedule. Nonetheless the evidence is there in Buchanan's memorabilia: wave after wave of concerts, all celebrating the music he loved, primarily from the first 40 years of jazz history. Many significant jazz events which marked those years were re-created for the Australian audience. For example, a recreation of the legendary Benny Goodman 1938 Carnegie Hall Concert by 14 leading Australian musicians took place at North Sydney Leagues Club in September, 2010 (a concert so popular that it was repeated twice at the same venue in January, 2011 and in February 2012; and also once again in November 2014 at the Concourse Concert Hall, Chatswood).



Topsy Chapman, direct from New Orleans, pictured in 2013... PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN

On October 19, 2010 a concert by the Swedish Jazz Kings, then on an Australian tour took place at the Mittagong Playhouse. In June, 2011 there was a performance by the American gospel and jazz singer Topsy Chapman “direct from New Orleans” in cabaret with Geoff Bull’s Olympia Jazz Band. In September, 2011, at Clubbe Hall in Mittagong there was a “battle of the bandleaders” featuring the music of Artie Shaw vs the music of Benny Goodman, with local singer Helen Fenton doing the songs of Helen Forrest, Martha Tilton and Billie Holiday. Shortly after in November 2011 at the Bowlers Club in York Street there was a “Jazz Violin & Guitar Summit”, featuring Marcus Holden & George Washingmachine (violins), Ian Date & Nigel Date (guitars) and others.

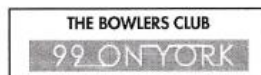


Six of Australia’s finest jazz violin and guitar players get together to feature the music of jazz pioneers Joe Venuti, Stephane Grappelly, Eddie Lang, Django Reinhardt and those who followed in the great tradition of the violin and the guitar in the history of jazz.



Marcus Holden, George Washingmachine (violins)
Ian Date, Nigel Date, Arthur Washington (guitars)
Howard Cairns (string bass)

2pm **Sunday, 20 November 2011**



99 York Street, Sydney (between Market and King Streets)
 Easy walking distance from the Queen Victoria Building and the Town Hall Railway Station

Tickets \$27

Bookings 0438 654 267

(Seating plan shown over page)

In June 2012 over two nights, a 1939 Chesterfield radio broadcast featuring the music of the Glenn Miller Orchestra was re-created at a new venue for Buchanan, the Glen Street Theatre, Belrose. The following month in July 2012, a new band called

the Juglug Stringband with guest Trevor Rippingale was presented at the Bowlers Club. In October 2012 at Mittagong RSL “A Night in New Orleans” was presented by Geoff Bull’s Olympia Jazz Band. In October 2012 “Gypsy Swing” was presented at the Bowlers Club, sub-headed “A style of music often said to have been started by guitarist Django Reinhardt.” Later in 2012, in August/September a three-night series called “Jazz in the Glen” featured three concerts once again at the Glen Street Theatre: “The 1940s Worldwide Revival of New Orleans Jazz”; “Helen Fenton sings the songs of the Great Jazz Singers of the 1930s”; and “A Night at the Cotton Club”.



Trevor Rippingale on bass saxophone, pictured at one of Buchanan’s festivals...
PHOTO CREDIT BOB GREAVES

Similar concerts went on and on over the next three years or so with Buchanan continuing to celebrate the music he loved. He was fortunate, of course, to have had at his disposal an unprecedented army of great Australian jazz musicians who loved the same music and performed it with infectious spirit. Musicians such as Bob Barnard and Graeme Bell were only the tip of the iceberg. There were many musicians who might not have been so iconic as Barnard and Bell, but who played the music Buchanan loved with dexterity and brilliance. Many of them were perhaps underrated in the 70s, 80s and 90s. It would become increasingly clear in ensuing years that the best of them were, in many ways, among the greatest traditional and swing musicians in the world, certainly on a par with the best musicians in the UK and the US.

In the latter years perhaps the most notable aspect of his presentations was the emergence of outstanding younger musicians who came to Buchanan's notice and whom he was delighted to present. For example, on Sunday, January 31, 2016 in one of the last concerts Buchanan presented, "A Sunday Afternoon Concert" featured Geoff Bull (trumpet), Bob Barnard (trumpet) and Ben Jones (saxophones). Michael McQuaid (clarinet), Ben Jones (saxophones & clarinet), and introduced five young musicians from "the New Generation", who were said to "help take Australian jazz into the future": Justin Fermino, Harry Sutherland, Ben Pannuci, Sam Dobson and John Hibbard.

JOHN BUCHANAN PRESENTS

A SUNDAY AFTERNOON CONCERT

featuring



Geoff Bull



Bob Barnard



Ben Jones

and the

NEW GENERATION



**Justin
Fermino**



**Harry
Sutherland**



**Ben
Pannuci**



**Sam
Dobson**



**John
Hibbard**

A wonderful afternoon of music featuring three of our greatest jazz musicians, with careers spanning over 65 years of jazz in Australia, and five outstanding young musicians who will help take Australian jazz into the future.

North Sydney Leagues Club

2pm **Sunday 31st January 2016**

\$30 Bookings 0438 654 267 Seating plan over the page

Of the non-musicians who have played a crucial role in jazz presentation in Sydney, providing regular work for countless jazz musicians, two modernists stand out in the jazz community's imagination: Horst Liepolt, whose 30-year career in Melbourne and Sydney has been amply documented before he left for New York circa 1980; and

Peter Rechniewski, who, as artistic director of the Sydney Improvised Music Association, shepherded the modern jazz scene in Sydney from the early 1980s until well into the 21st Century, before opening his own jazz club Foundry 616, which survives to this day.



Both Horst Liepolt (above) and Peter Rechniewski (below) are noted for their passionate advocacy for the music they championed...



Both Liepolt and Rechniewski are noted for their passionate advocacy for the music they championed. John Buchanan's advocacy for traditional jazz and swing, while probably more low-key and below the radar compared to the modernist giants mentioned, has been equally passionate. Certainly he is the third giant in jazz presentation in Sydney, alongside Liepolt and Rechniewski. Even today at the age of 88, his enthusiasm is still infectious.

Perhaps I can leave the last words to one of the jazz musicians who was prominent in many of John Buchanan's festivals and is still alive: violinist/vocalist George Washingmachine. George says "John was a real conduit for jazz in Sydney and the Southern Highlands. Bringing together musicians from all persuasions and ages. Always encouraging to the young Turks and respectful of the old guard. He presented many a show at the North Sydney Leagues Club. A great room with a terrific stage. His festivals in Bowral and Mittagong are legendary."