

## INTRODUCTION TO 'ROGER FRAMPTON COMES ALIVE!'

by Emily Rytmeister\*

---



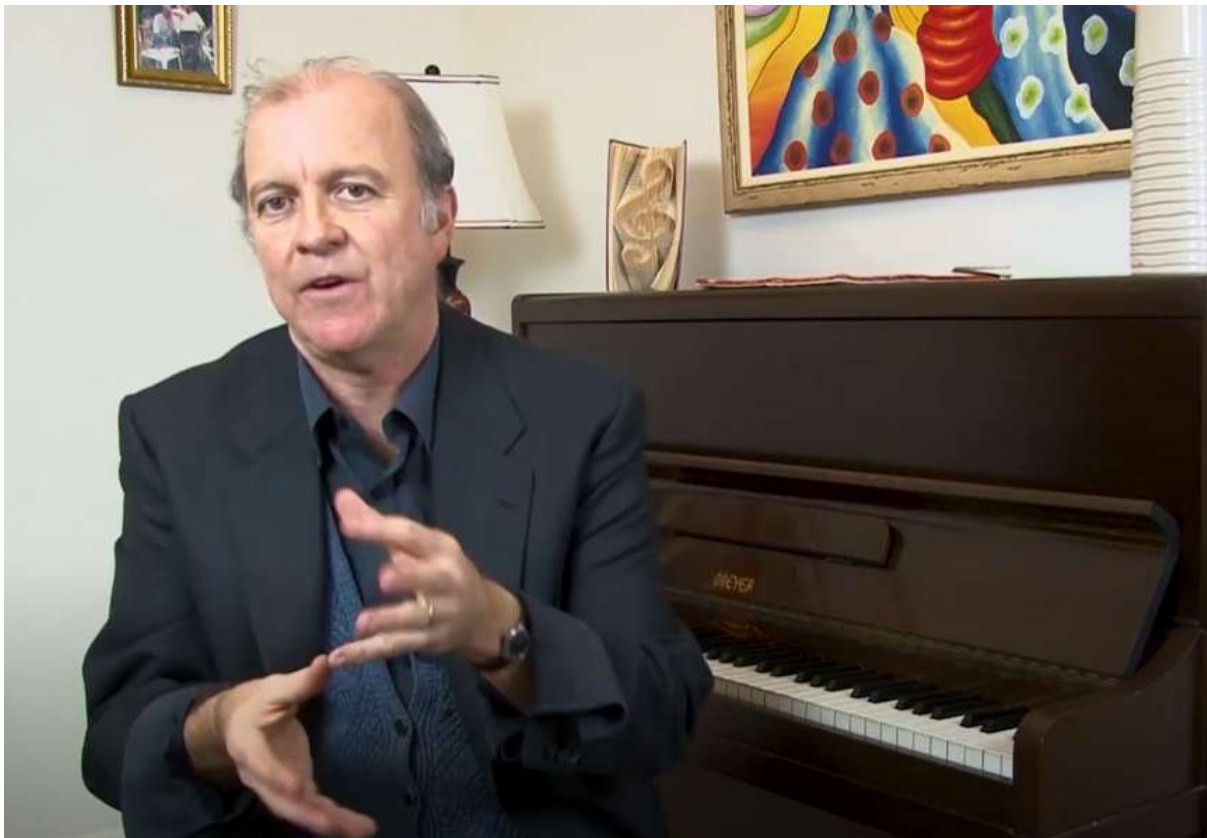
*Roger Frampton in his home studio... PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN*

---

*\* Emily Rytmeister is the daughter of the jazz musician and composer Roger Frampton, who died in 2000, at the age of 51. 'Roger Frampton Comes Alive!' is the title of Emily's "student film", which was part of the PhD she completed at Western Sydney University in 2021. The following is the address she gave at the premiere of the film, which was launched as part of Western Sydney University's annual 'Research Creation Showcase' at Casula Powerhouse on 3rd November, 2022.*

I'll start by acknowledging the Cabrogal Clan of the Darug Nation, who are the Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet tonight, and that this land was also accessed by peoples of the Dhurawal and Dharug Nations. I also acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the lands on which the campuses of Western Sydney University now stand, and on which the majority of the work for the film you're about to see took place – those of the Tharawal, Eora, Darug, and Wiradjuri nations. These lands were neither sold nor ceded and I pay my respects to Elders past, present and Emerging.

I want to thank Craig Donarski, Shaun Driscoll, Nicky Merrigold, Boden Evans, and all the staff here at Casula Powerhouse, for opening their extraordinary venue to Western Sydney University, for our annual celebration of creativity that is the 'Research Creation Showcase'. Can we please also show our appreciation for Kevin Hunt, Jonathan Zwartz and Gordon Rytmeister - or Randomesque - who played in the Turbine Hall as you arrived. And pre-emptively, thank you to the Giraffe Quartet –John Encarnacao, Jon Drummond, Holly Harrison and Brendan Smyly - who'll play after the film.



*This is a shot from Emily Rytmeister's film of pianist Kevin Hunt, who performed in the company of Jonathan Zwartz (bass) and Gordon Rytmeister (drums) before the film was shown on November 3, 2022... SCREENSHOT FROM THE FILM*

In writing about her father, the American painter Philip Guston, Musa Mayer offers the following reflection:

*I am forced to look elsewhere, aware that there is something more than a little pathetic about my turning to these secondary sources—like some doctoral student researching her dissertation—to learn about my own father’s life. Nevertheless, it is what I have to work with. Perhaps then, through reading all this, I will know him at last.*



*The painter Philip Guston (above) and (below) his daughter Musa Mayer...*



The quote captures Mayer’s desire to understand her father – and, of course, my own. The film, ‘Roger Frampton Comes Alive!’, represents my journey of ‘coming to know’ Roger. He was my father, friend and confidante, yet none of these relationships allowed as much insight into who he was as the process of making this film allowed me. While the film traces his entire life, it centres on ‘Roger Frampton the musician’. As all who knew him will remember, music defined him. It was his life’s purpose, and everything (and everyone) besides, was secondary.

I like to think that what the film lacks in cinematographic sophistication it makes up for in raw charm. I've sought to craft a portrait of Roger that acknowledges his flaws, but recognises his contribution to music, and is imbued with the fondness so many of us had for him. When the preliminary written project was assessed at the Master of Research level, it was considered by one examiner to 'veer into hagiography'. While I'm sure most who knew him will concede that Roger was no saint, I accept that, ultimately, the scales may well be 'tipped in his favour'. André Gérard, a leading theorist in the field of patriography (or 'writing the father'), states that 'the father is often a giant who cast light so bright and shadow so dark that true sight is never possible'. I believe this is so, but I've striven for true sight nevertheless.



*André Gérard, a leading theorist in the field of patriography (or 'writing the father')...*

Filmmaking is collaborative, so there are a number of people I have to mention.



*Gordon Rytmeister, Emily's co-producer, music and technical consultant, her favourite person and stalwart companion...  
PHOTO CREDIT  
WILL DOWER*

First and foremost, my co-producer, music and technical consultant, who also happens to be my favourite person and stalwart companion, Gordon Rytmeister. Gordon was present for, and played a key role in, almost every interview undertaken for the film, of which there were over 30. He sat through and digitised hours of footage, and was the master of the Ken Burns effect. Throughout the various stages of the filmmaking process, we laughed, cried, argued, and grew closer. The film is a greater quality artefact because of his involvement.

I could not have completed the film or the doctorate without the expert guidance of my supervisory panel. In particular, my principal supervisor, Hart Cohen, whose generosity of time and knowledge allowed me to realise the potential of the project, and the potential I had within myself. I thank John Encarnacao for his open, inquiring mind and constant encouragement, Rachel Morley for her creative and scholarly intuitions, and Bruce Crossman, whose experience with Roger's doctorate at Wollongong University was an asset to this project.

For her most exquisite artwork—her sketch animations—I thank my friend and colleague, Janet Saunders. Janet's art takes a number of forms, but her usual process with this particular one involves sketching on an iPad whilst observing live musical performances. In this case, of course that wasn't possible, so we compensated with photos, recordings, and audio-visual material. The result, I'm sure you'll agree, is one of mesmerising beauty.



*One of Janet Saunders' sketch animations, of Roger Frampton with his colleague in the Modern Jazz Duo, trumpeter Don Rader... SCREENSHOT FROM THE FILM*

I thank all those who provided additional photographs, recordings and footage for the film. Thanks to Eastside Radio, Paula Langlands and Laurie and Alwyn Lewis, whose interviews with Roger form the basis of his narration. There were also key post

production elements undertaken by Glenn Wilson and Stefan Nowak for which I'm extremely grateful.

I'm forever indebted to all my extended family, friends and mentors who supported me throughout the filmmaking and doctoral process. You know who you are. You kept me sane, you kept me on track, and you believed in me.

My three beautiful children--Mabel, Mollie, Elijah-- thank you for being the unique and inspiring souls that you are. I hope you enjoy learning about your Grandfather tonight, that you know he's part of you and your stories, and that you take from him a boundless curiosity and the courage to pursue the creative if you so choose. My mother, whose dementia prevented her from being interviewed, did see an early trailer of the film. After it, she said simply, 'Roger Frampton'. I asked, 'What do you remember of him?', and with a wistful smile, she replied, 'Oh, I loved him'. And I know she did – until the day she died in 2018.



*Cabaret artists the Claire Poole Singers, L-R, Annette Tyrrell, Claire Poole, Joe Andre, and Emily's mother Betty Lys...*

To all the interviewees – this film is as much for all of you as it is for me. While regretfully, I couldn't honour my initial goal of including something of every interview, every interview enriched my understanding of Roger. Your time and willingness to share your memories, insights and impressions are deeply appreciated,

and helped create a resource that I hope will be shared with new generations of Australian jazz musicians.

---

As you'll see in just a moment, the film opens with a brief, off-camera question that I pose to my Grandmother about Roger's legacy. While it's really the only time I occupy any kind of audio-visual presence in the film, my Grandmother's response captures the essence of my experience of being 'Roger Frampton's daughter', as well as the experience of all his family members. Her remarks refer to how Roger 'belonged' to the jazz community. The comments resonate, once again, with the words of Musa Mayer, who observes that 'what [artists] give is given to the whole world, not only to their families. Though we may love them, we can never really claim them, [for] they are not ours to claim'.



*Emily's grandmother Margaret Frampton: her remarks in the film refer to how Roger 'belonged' to the jazz community... SCREENSHOT FROM THE FILM*

In his own way, on his own terms, Roger belonged to us all. My greatest wish is that the film does justice to his life and his music. Thank you all for being here, and I hope you enjoy, 'Roger Frampton Comes Alive!'