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# VJAZZ

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE VICTORIAN JAZZ ARCHIVE

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## RECENT DONATIONS

As mentioned elsewhere in this issue, Ron Halstead bequeathed his entire jazz collection to the Archive, which comprised over 1000 LPs, 117 EPs, 108 CDs, 247 78rpm, 50 reel to reel tapes, 289 cassette tapes, 109 DAT tapes, books, photos, sound equipment including a portable DAT recorder and microphones. There is even a wonderful statue of Louis! Because of Ron's involvement with the West Coast traditional style jazz, his collection would represent one of the most comprehensive collections of that style of jazz found anywhere. Apart from issued material there is a great deal of private recordings of Turk Murphy and the Salty Dogs. Amongst the reel to reel tapes are some gems, including the Len Barnard band recording at Ron's home, and Duke Ellington Australian tour concerts.

Dione McIntyre has donated two issues of the US music magazine "Etude" dated August and September 1924, where there are special articles on "Is Jazz Ruining American Music?" by many classical musicians and composers of the time, and a reply by our own Percy Grainger. Fascinating reading and material that is worth investigating for a research project. Anyone interested?

Diana Allen and Graeme Bell donated the black & white slides

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## THE FOURTH A. G. M - SADNESS AND SUCCESS

The fourth A. G. M. of the Victorian Jazz Archive on a warmish Sunday, 26<sup>th</sup> November at Wantirna, was held in the shadow of the loss of our key member and friend, Ron Halstead. His great contribution is recorded in an obituary in this issue. At the same time the committee were quite taken aback by Ron's great thoughtfulness and generosity in bequeathing to the Archive not only his marvellous collection, but also a large capital sum of \$20,000.

In my brief welcoming address I not only mentioned this unexpected gift, but also the success that has been achieved by Ron, along with David Ward and John Kennedy in the two awards for our "Acetate Action" initiative. These are the Museums Australia (Victoria) Conservation Award (prize \$1500) and the National Australia Bank Community Link State Award for Conservation and Heritage (\$5,000 and trophy).

Proceedings were short; I emphasised we were still on a knife edge financially, with only a membership of 150, but the committee was setting out a program to make the Archive more sustainable. Our thanks to Margaret Marshall, Curator of the Exhibition about to open, were recorded. It was agreed how fortunate we are in Melbourne to have a body like the Performing Arts Museum and a vigorous Arts

Centre. We also noted with pleasure the award of \$60,000 to Allan Browne for the Australia Council's Don Banks Award.

At this juncture John Kennedy expanded on the achievements of 2000 in his report of the Committee of Management.

After the formal business of presentation and adoption of the financial statement, the officers and committee of the Archive were elected. We were sorry to note that Margaret Anderson had to leave the committee in light of her new workload as Secretary to the Victorian Jazz Club. Tim Harding also resigned because of work pressure. New committee member elected was Kim Harris, whilst since this meeting Bill Armstrong has signified his willingness to join the committee.

In conclusion I thanked all members for attending and for their support, and again recorded our great debt to John Kennedy, particularly with regard to the extra work load of the Exhibition.

Dr Ray Marginson, Chairman.

## ENJOY WATCHING VIDEOS?

Wanted, the services of a member who would be willing to be responsible for the VJA's video collection.

There are about 80 videos catalogued in our collection and each needs to be viewed so as to time each sequence, list personnel and venues etc for listing in the data base. A cushy job, as you can work at your own pace, and we supply a nice armchair and unlimited cups of coffee.

## INTERESTED?

Phone John Kennedy

## OBITUARY

ALLAN LEAKE by Tom Wanliss

Allan Leake, one of the most significant figures in Victorian and later Queensland jazz, died in the Gold Coast on 9<sup>th</sup> December, 2000. Suffering from a rare respiratory condition for most of his life, he had fought a courageous battle against the illness.

Allan was born in Preston on 16<sup>th</sup> August, 1935, and was educated at Northcote High School and R.M.I. T. where he completed a Survey Drafting Certificate. He worked for the Titles Office and the Country Roads Board for a total of twenty years before resigning in 1979 to become a full time musician. He first became interested in jazz through Eric Child's "Rhythm Unlimited" and other radio programs. Learning piano as a child helped to provide musical knowledge which assisted in his musical career.

A friendship with Frank Turville, who also worked at the Titles Office led him to buying a set of drums in 1954, joining the Southern City Seven, led by Frank. Allan took over the leadership when Frank went overseas. Allan recalled the difficulties in moving a drum kit by public transport from Preston to the band's gig at Aspendale. Following the break up of this group he joined Max Collie's Jazz Kings for a period before joining a co-operative band named Opus, which included trumpeter Tony Newstead and other well known Melbourne musicians. This led to the formation of the Jazzmakers in the early 1960's, a group originally led by Max Collie, then by Paul Martin, and eventually Allan Leake.

In 1968 the Victorian Jazz Club was established to stimulate jazz in Melbourne and Allan was heavily involved in its activities. At about the same time he formed the Storyville Jazzmen. The two bodies worked closely together and

the band played twice a week at the Prospect Hill Hotel in Kew, and one night – Friday – at the Manor House Hotel in the city. The Friday night gig became known as the Storyville Club and continued for twelve years – surely a record term for any jazz band. The band attracted a loyal and knowledgeable group of jazz lovers who comprised most of the audience. The band was a co-operative with Allan as leader, referring to it as a benevolent dictatorship. Assistance was provided in various ways by enthusiastic supporters including Allan's wife Jean. The band consisted of eight members including four in the front line and could be categorised a mainstream group. New tunes were introduced each week and the members, particularly Allan, had a strong affinity with the music of Duke Ellington.

In 1975, several members left the band for a variety of reasons and a leaner group of six members was formed under the new title of the Storyville All Stars. Following a precedent emerging in the USA in 1976, Allan and Jean decided to run a Jazz Party at the Park Royal Motor Inn. These ran from Friday night to Sunday afternoon and top traditional and mainstream jazz musicians from all over Australia were invited together with paying guests – jazz fans all. This function was held on five occasions between 1976 to 1980, and were very successful both musically and socially. Eric Child was the Jazz Party Patron and always spoke enthusiastically about the events, as did Ian Neill, another ABC jazz presenter who attended.

Between 1983 and 1986 the Storyville All Stars, with many changes in personnel, played at Banjo's in North Melbourne, before and after the floor show.

This gave Allan the inspiration to form a jazz repertory company, using the band plus Dave Hthis gave Allan the inspiration to form a jazz repertory company, using the band plus Dave Hetherington, Carol Harris and Beverley Sheehan; Beverley had been the band's vocalist for a few years. In 1985 and 1986 the Melbourne Jazz Repertory Company presented five shows at a theatre restaurant in Glenferrie. Allan produced these shows in conjunction with Roger Hudson, who died tragically during the Louis Armstrong show in July 1986. The Storyville group recorded prolifically, and in addition Allan formed the Jazznote record label with several friends for the purpose of recording working Australian jazz bands of the 1970's with over thirty LPs produced.

In 1990 Allan moved to the Gold Coast for health reasons and soon formed the Storyville Jazztet, comprising other musicians who had moved North, including Lachie Thompson, Hans Karssemeyer and Vern Moore. This group made regular tours to the other States and added other musicians for the tour, such as Bob Barnard and Beverley Sheehan. The repertory concept continued in Queensland, with Allan producing a further twenty shows. For several years Allan was the Musical Director of the very popular Montsalvat Jazz Festival which attracted large crowds over the Australia Day weekend. He also was heavily involved in the organisation of the annual Gold Coast Jazz Festival and was still participating in the 2000 Festival despite declining health.

For his contribution to jazz Allan received an Order of Australia, thus joining Graeme Bell, Ade Monsborough and Don Burrows in receiving this award.

Allan was buried at the Gold Coast after a funeral service attended by a

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## OBITUARY

### LOU SILBEREISEN

by Tom Wanliss.

Lou Silbereisen, the bass player of the Graeme Bell's Australian Jazz Band died at his Beaumaris home on 11<sup>th</sup> December, 2000. He was only two months short of his 85<sup>th</sup> birthday.

At the funeral the remarkable Graeme Bell now aged 87, who had travelled down from Sydney for the occasion, said that Lou was the complete gentleman. In a letter to me Ade Monsborough made exactly the same comment. Graeme also praised Lou's ability in the rhythm section of the band, where he maintained a steady consistent beat.

Born in Sebastopol, a suburb of Ballarat, on the 25<sup>th</sup> February, 1916, Lou and his parents moved to Queenscliff in 1918. At an early age he heard records of Armstrong, Ellington and Beiderbecke, and took piano lessons. Moving to Melbourne in 1936, he joined the Melbourne Swing Club and listened to improvised jazz from Benny Featherstone and others at the Fawkner Park Kiosk. At this time he met Bud and Harry Baker, also Pixie Roberts, then subsequently the Bell brothers and Ade Monsborough. A group was formed, and as a bass player was required Lou accepted the post and bought a bass from John Clemens. In an interview with Eric Brown for the Australian Jazz Interviews Project, Lou said that he learnt to play from a book written by Bob Haggart – the Bob Crosby bassist. Graeme Bell, however thinks that Lou was taught by Ernie Tough.

At the outbreak of war, Lou enlisted in the RAAF. He was not accepted for air crew, but was recruited as an electrical fitter. Between 1941 and 1945 he served in the Middle East and England, where he played some music.

Returning to Australia in 1945, he resumed his friendship with the Bells and became the bass player for the band. For several hectic years he was a full time musician in the band's overseas and Australian tours, which included a considerable amount of recording. In those heady days, Lou was an important member of the rhythm section, but seldom had the opportunity to solo. Nevertheless he won the bass/tuba category in the Music Maker poll of 1952. The Bell Band eventually broke up in June, 1952, weary of the incessant travelling.

Lou's days as a full time musician were now over, but he continued on a part time basis and over the years played with a number of groups that included:- The Baron's Footwarmers (his own group) – Roger Bell's Pagan Pipers – Llew Hird's New Orleans Jazz Band – Max Collie's Jazz Kings – Dave White's Quartet and the Tramway's Parade Jazz Band. For some years in the 1980's he led a quartet at the Rosstown Hotel, Carnegie, and it was appropriate that his wake was held at that hotel.

Lou was a very keen sailor, being a member of the Sandringham Yacht Club for many years, and on one occasion won the 14foot Australian Championship. He also built several of his own boats. A devoted man, Lou is survived by his wife Audrey, daughter Vicky and two grandchildren. His son Karl was tragically killed in a road accident some years ago.

The Victorian Jazz Archive salutes one of the gentlemen of jazz – Lou (The Baron) Silbereisen.

### LOOKS COOL, SOUNDS HOT

The Performing Arts Museum/VJA jazz exhibition was opened by Graeme Bell on 30 November 2000. Graeme expressed his enthusiasm for the sights and sounds of the exhibition, which has been drawing very good crowds. It will be open until 25 February at the St Kilda Road Gallery of the Arts Centre, Admission is free.

### ALLAN LEAKE

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number of people including many from Melbourne. Two days later a wake was held at the Rosstown Hotel with many musicians attending who had been involved with Allan's bands. Don Anderson and John Adams spoke movingly of their long relationships with Allan, and Jean Leake exhibited a board with numerous photographs and memorabilia. The death notice in the Melbourne papers ended with a lovely touch – "Time to take the A train" He would have approved of that.

### RECENT DONATIONS

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seen at the Exhibition, whilst each donated other material, including photos and printed material (Diana), and an award "King Of Jazz – FEIP – 1976" and an etching of the Eureka Hall from Graeme. Jess Vincent donated the two photos of Willie McIntyre as seen in the Exhibition.

Maurie Garbutt has donated a copy of the Yarra Yarra Reunion Band as a tribute to Roger Janes. Tim Stevens has donated a copy of his PhD thesis "The Origins, Development and Significance of the Red Onion Jazz Band 1960-1996". Ross Anderson has donated an oil painting by Leanne Walker of Stephan Grappelli and Wes Montgomery. Barney Govan-Smith left us 6 photos and a book by Andy Kirk. Keith Atkins a photo of the Camellia Quartet. Rick Farbach of Trewantin, Qld forwarded his book "Cleftomania" (which is available from the Archive) and a CD of bands with which he has been associated.

Fred Parkes has forwarded a CDR of his playing with Art Hodes at the 1985 Ballarat Convention, including unissued tracks. Ron Jobe sent us photos he took at the opening night of the Exhibition. Dr James Milne, via Ray Marginson, donated 5 boxes of 78s.



## TRIBUTE TO RON HALSTEAD

by John Kennedy

Ronald James William Halstead was born in Balwyn, Melbourne on February 16<sup>th</sup>, 1935, to parents Jim and Leila Halstead. He attended Deepdene Primary School, and later the Box Hill Technical School. In his younger days Ron was fascinated with model aeroplanes and spent many hours building and flying his own creations. Later he became interested in cricket and for a number of years played with the Deepdene Methodist cricket team as a wily spin bowler.

Ron joined the PMG's Department to do a five year Technician in Training course in 1951. As part of that training he spent some time at the ABC radio studios in Melbourne learning the engineering side of sound recording and broadcasting. On completion of this training he specialised in microwave and mobile radio transmission systems. In 1956 he met Bill Armstrong, noted recording engineer, who was working as a Balance Officer for the ABC. Ron had experience with the ABC Internal and Outside Broadcast Units, recording diverse types of musical performances. He left the ABC to resume his Radio Transmission career, becoming Principal Technical Officer with Telstra in the Radio Design Section.

His interest in jazz started about

1956 and his collection grew quickly to in excess of 1500 LPs, 78rpm, then later Reel to Reel tapes and finally DAT tapes and Compact Discs. 1963 – 1965 saw him working on a jazz/blues program from 3CS Colac, and he also worked with Roger Beilby at 3CR, where he helped with the technical design in the building of the station.

On a trip overseas in 1970 he became acquainted with many US and UK musicians and bands, including Duke Ellington, Turk Murphy and Chris Barber. He was a sound assistant on the Duke Ellington's last tour of Australia, travelling with them from Perth through to Brisbane. Amongst his bequest are tapes of the Ellington Australian concerts and interviews with the Duke's musicians. He promoted the tour of Turk Murphy's Jazz Band in 1978. The same year Bill Armstrong asked Ron to assist him with his Jazz&Jazz label, commencing to record and produce nearly all the Jazz&Jazz records, as well as recording and producing records for other labels such as Swaggie and Roseleaf, then worked with Bill Armstrong remixing and re-collating earlier material for CD release.

Ron was a foundation member of the Victorian Jazz Archive committee, being instrumental in the setting up and installation of the InMagic Museum Data Base, and the computer programs used throughout the Archive. He worked with his friend Don Boardman with the initial transfer of acetate recordings that later

became the basis of the "Acetate Action" initiative. After the death of Don, he formulated with Dave Ward the procedures for the transfer of sound recordings to archival CD-R discs, which with his vast experience in sound recording ensured that the Archive had best available equipment including DAT recorders and CR Burners.

Ron and Dave Ward were the key players in the applications to Museums Australia and the National Australia Bank for the conservation awards built around the "Acetate Action" initiative. It was at the National Australia Bank Community Link national awards presentation on 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2000 that Ron collapsed from a heart attack, subsequently succumbing to further attack on 8<sup>th</sup> November in St Vincent's Hospital.

Ron is sorely missed by his friends and colleagues at the Archive, for it was his sense of humour, his willingness to help with any project and above all his stature as the "go to man" that helped made the Archive run smoothly, and a pleasant place to work. We certainly won't forget you Ron.

### BOOKS FOR SALE

#### BACK TOGETHER AGAIN by Jack Mitchell

The story of the Port Jackson Jazz Band  
89 pages, photos and  
discography  
\$22.00 incl GST  
Pack & Post \$4.00

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