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VJAZZ

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE VICTORIAN JAZZ ARCHIVE

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CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN

By Ray Marginson

F. Scott Fitzgerald, in his piece "Echoes Of The Jazz Age" wrote "*Though the jazz age continued it became less and less an affair of youth. The sequel was like a children's party taken over by the elders*".

This is a sobering thought and gives us further strong impetus to expand our contact with younger musicians and bands. The V.J.C. funded program this year for young learners enthusiastically developed originally by Marg Burke and now co-ordinated by Marina Pollard and a number of local jazz musicians is a good start, as is our forecast Schools Program being developed by Tony Newstead. However there is still much to be done, both by the Archive and the V.J.C. There has to be a continuing objective to find and keep the younger enthusiasts involved.

This has been a great year for exhibitions at Wantirna. The very successful Frank Traynor exhibition, which ran for over six months and attracted nearly 300 visitors, will be reprised at two special concerts at 45 downstairs, Flinders Lane on the 22nd and 23rd January, 2003 (see enclosed flyer). Our thanks to Ms Diana Allen for her untiring work in coordinating this fundraising event for the Archive.

Also a recently opened permanent display of memorabilia of ABC broadcaster, Eric Child, is a most important and comprehensive coverage of this jazz broadcaster.

On the 10th November we had the highly successful launch of the exhibition of paintings, watercolors and crayons by jazz musician Bob Davidson. This art work principally features well known Australian and New Orleans musicians, including members of the La Vida Jazz band.

On the occasion of the AGM, the Ron Halstead Catalogue Room, constructed from funds from his most generous bequest was declared open in the presence of members of his family, including his sister Betty Hilton. The Library and Exhibition space was also declared the R. D. Marginson Library in my name, and a complete surprise, and one that shows you should not miss committee meetings. Thanks to Patron, Bill Miller for his generous speech and for the committee, the gesture was greatly appreciated.

The release of the excellent Fred Parkes CD, VJAZZ 1, is a great start for our determination to make available, never before released performances from the Archive's holdings.

Finally we are all glad to hear Ray Bradley is recovering well from his recent road accident, and that John Rippin is picking up after a stretch of ill health.



GEORGE TACK. Photo by John Ellis. 1976.
Tony Newstead's tribute on page 3

THE COMMITTEE AND VOLUNTEER STAFF OF THE VICTORIAN JAZZ ARCHIVE WISH A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY AND SAFE NEW YEAR TO ALL MEMBERS AND THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT IN 2002.

EXHIBITION OF JAZZ PAINTINGS AND PRINTS BY BOB DAVIDSON

NOW OPEN— UNTIL 28 FEBRUARY, 2003

This special exhibition of jazz paintings and prints by the recently deceased musician and artist, Bob Davidson, has been arranged by the Archive in conjunction of Ms Judi Anderson and the Davidson family. Bob who was leader of the La Vida Jazz Band painted the members of the band plus musicians from New Orleans, also our own Bob Barnard.

Examples of other jazz art work by Bob will also be on show.

For further details contact the Secretary, Gretel James on 9800-5535 (Tuesday & Friday)

ERIC CHILD PERMANENT EXHIBITION

With the lodgment of material by Bill Haesler from the estate of Eric and Angela Child, the Archive has decided to mount a permanent exhibition of this most important material. Included is a Louis Armstrong white handkerchief autographed by the members of the All Stars, photos of Lucille (Wilson) Armstrong from 1936 given to Eric with suitable inscriptions, a bronze bust of Eric, plus his OAM medal and his ABC 20 years service medal. Also included are photos of Eric and Angela with Louis and Lucille in Sydney.

ANNOUNCING

THE RELEASE OF THE FIRST VJA MEMBERS ONLY CD.

It has been the intention of the Victorian Jazz Archive to start releasing material from the Archive's vaults, so the Committee has agreed to produce two series of CDs, namely "Historical Series" and "Contemporary Series". The criteria used will be to issue where possible, all previously unissued performances.

The Historical Series will feature performances up to the mid 70's and will contain tracks with some minor imperfections of clicks etc., the historical significance outweighing all else.

The Contemporary Series will feature later recordings where the sound will be of very good to excellent quality, again all unissued material where possible.

The first release **VJAZZ 001** from the Contemporary Series.

FRED PARKES NEW RHYTHM KINGS - 1987 including Bill Howard, Graham Coyle, Leon Heale and Ian Smith. There are two tracks of Fred playing with Art Hodes, John Scurry, John Bartlett and Allan Browne.

This CD is available NOW !

All "Members Only" CDs will sell for \$20.00, plus \$5.00 postage

VJAZZ 002 Historical Series "The Melbourne—Hobart Sessions— 1943 -1949" featuring Tom Pickering, Roger Bell, Ade Monsborough, Rex Green, Keith Stackhouse, Col Wells, Ian and Ced Pearce. These are taken from the acetate collection of William H Miller. Marvelous stomping music. **This CD will be available early in the New Year.**

WANTED URGENTLY

The Archive urgently requires the services of a volunteer who is willing to be our Maintenance— Cleaner —Gardener Person.

Nothing too strenuous.

You would be asked to attend the Archive at least two days a month, but preferably once a week for four hours a day either a Tuesday or Friday.

Please contact John Kennedy on 9800-5535.

George ("Tacka") Tack 14.5.1919 – 24.9.2002

Jazz Stylist, and Unforgettable Character

by Tony Newstead

George William Tack was raised in a three story building in the heart of the Melbourne CBD where his Mandarin father Bill ran a well known Chinese restaurant. His mother Winnifred hailed from Manchester, so George was able to quip "My father is Manchurian and my mother Mancunian!"

George was educated at University High School and gained a scholarship to Melbourne University where, despite a mild aversion to country lifestyle, he graduated Bachelor of Agricultural Science. He joined the CSIRO, Division of Forest Products and became an acknowledged research leader in timber preservation, developing new techniques and later founding his own successful company, "Tacknology".

Tacka was a man of great personal charm – charismatic, with a keen intellect and a brilliant wit. We met in the early forties, part of a group of young men of widely different backgrounds and occupations – students, musicians, artists, business workers and public servants – but all sharing a common passion for jazz. A number of us took to playing an instrument and a few like Graeme Bell and Ade Monsborough made music their lifetime careers. Others, including George and his good friend Roger Bell became proficient jazz musicians but chose to keep music as a counter balance to their work.

The jazz aficionados would meet most Friday afternoons in the city, pay a visit to one of the music houses – Suttons or Brash's – and review the new jazz releases on 78 rpm. Then to the Metropole Hotel in Bourke Street, imbibing until 6pm closing time and following with a meal together. Through Tacka's expertise we became devotees of Chinese food. In subsequent stages we embraced Italian and Greek cuisines, the latter featuring Ouzo camouflaged in demitasse coffee cups! The evening usually continued by adjourning to someone's flat where records would be played and jazz stylists discussed and debated until the early hours.

The war intervened but we picked up the threads a few years later. By then a few of us had formed regular jazz groups playing at university dates, jazz clubs, private parties. George became a member of my Southside Gang, which followed Graeme Bell into the Uptown club in North Melbourne when his band sailed to Czechoslovakia in 1947 and then on to UK to be a driving force in the English jazz revival.

George's great natural talents developed: a unique clarinet stylist, a gutsy tenor sax man and an appealing vocalist in the Jack Teagarden idiom. He also developed as a master compere with a quirky humour, convoluted and often bordering on surreal, who could extemporize indefinitely, both verbally and musically! So while he was much in demand as a compere for jazz recitals, such as the weekly Friday lunch hour sessions at the New Theatre in Flinders street, there was also the downside risk that the program timetable would be sabotaged by his impromptu excursions! George performed at the first Australian Jazz Convention in 1948 and has appeared as musician and compere at many of the subsequent AJCs, now into their fifty-sixth year.

George was proud of his ethnicity. On rare occasions when he became the butt of some racist comment, he kept his cool and defused it with a witty response, secure in the knowledge that his ancestors had an advanced civilization when the rest of Asia and Europe were still barbarians. A generous man, he quietly gave material support to a number of friends, relatives and newly arrived students from China.

George married Lorna (thereafter known exclusively as 'Darl') in 1944 and their union endured with love and devotion, right until the end. On the first night of their honeymoon, staying at a hotel in Portsea, Darl had removed her engagement ring in the bathroom and was unlucky enough to somehow have it flushed down the toilet. Breaking the sad news to George, he responded immediately with a classic bon mot - "Well Darl, think of it as just a flash in the pan!"

On my own wedding night, we had a small family reception at home then moved on to a local hall that we had booked for a big jazz party. On entering, we could hear the music loud and clear and see all the musicians on stage, except for Tacka who had become invisible. Then, looking high up above the stage, there he was – suspended upside down from the rafters by his knees, playing his clarinet!

He surely led a charmed life, considering this and other dangerous episodes – such as doing slaloms, in his 1930 Delage, around the palm trees outside Earls Court, down by the Yarra river. He also had a strong lucky streak, consistently winning (so he claimed) on his extraordinarily complicated horse-racing system.

When the USA/Soviet space race was on, Tacka extemporized on the Chinese Space Program. As Prof. Hifly, Chief Chinese rocket scientist, he produced a scale model, based on a used tea-bag which, on ignition, amazed everyone by rising steadily to the ceiling! This experiment was repeated on numerous party occasions. Right through his final years of protracted illness, George kept his keen mind, his love of jazz and marvelous sense of humor. This was only possible with the unlimited love, devotion and support of Darl and her sister Ray (Bubs).

Tacka, everyone has fondest memories of your friendship and thanks you for being that unforgettable character.

GENERAL ARCHIVE NEWS

LIBRARY DAYS

Commencing Sunday 10th November the Archive's Library is open each second Sunday of the month during the daylight saving period for the loan of jazz books and magazines. Members who cannot visit the Archive during the weekly opening hours may find this a convenient day to make the promised visit. It is hoped this experiment, if successful, will continue throughout the year, and see the presentation of music from the Archive.

Open Sundays 8th December, 12th January, 9th February, 9th March.

On Sunday 13th April, the Archive will also open for a special day for the Senior Workshop Band who will perform for Archive members and friends from 12 noon to 3 pm.

EMAJOR HAS ARRIVED

The long awaited next edition of Jack Mitchell's Australian discography "Even More Australian Jazz On Record" (EMAJOR) is now available in the Archive Shop.

Printed and published by the Archive in recognition of the wonderful discographical work of Jack Mitchell, copies sell for \$25.00 (\$22.50 for members) plus \$5.00 pack and post within Australia.

JAZZ CHARACTERS CALENDAR

Produced by artist and cartoonist Bill Beasley, this calendar for 2003 is available from the Archive shop for \$18.00 post free or \$16.00 for members. Personalities include Morrie Fabrikant, Ade Monsborough, Roger Bell, Nick Polites, Adrian Ford, the late John Pickering,

LOOKING FOR A LATE CHRISTMAS PRESENT?

Don't forget the **Archive Shop** has wide range of jazz CDs, books, videos, calendars, and de-accessioned records and books.

What about a **VJA Gift Certificate** for any amount you wish to nominate.

All proceeds from the sale of these items goes directly to Archive funds in our quest for the preservation of Australian jazz

NEW MEMBERS SINCE THE LAST NEWSLETTER **LIFE MEMBERS**

Michele (Boardman) Hatrick

ANNUAL MEMBERS

Peter, June and Nigel Davies, Isabel Wilkie, John Walker, Julian Bailey, Margaret Ricketts, Patricia Hadley, Douglas Luxmoore, John and Helen Trudinger, Graeme Pender.

CASH DONATIONS SINCE THE LAST ISSUE OF VJAZZ

Professor Bill Hare, Royston Coldicott, Monica Coldicott, John Kennedy, Doug Unmack

Please note the Archive will close on Friday 20th December 2002 and will re-open on Tuesday 7th January, 2003

MAX MARGINSON 1928-2002

Max died in late September after a short illness. He was not widely known in the jazz fraternity of today. However, back when Frank Johnson and Geoff Kitchen were finding their jazz roles, he was recognised as a very individual clarinet stylist. He played with great dexterity on an A flat Boehm instrument that Don Roberts converted to B flat by turning a solid brass barrel for it. It wasn't the exhausting weight on his lower jaw that led to his abandoning playing, rather the perceptive observation of the lifestyle of his jazz musician friends that determined him to embark on a career in science!

Max became a dedicated teacher of medical biochemistry who influenced generations of budding doctors. He was also known as a man of committed friendship with a wide and detailed knowledge, not only of scientific matters, but of literature and music. I am fondest of the small reference in Bill Miller's "Jazz Mine" column in Jazz Notes, where he says the trip down to Elwood to Ken Owen's place had two benefits. One being to see Ken's sister Margaret, and the other to hear Max Marginson's clarinet.

I am only sorry that in the hundreds of CDR transfers of 1940's acetates we now have in the Archive's vaults, there is no recording of his playing. A loyal and supportive member and consistent Donor to the Archive, he left us his collection and an excellent computer system, already in use in the Catalogue Room.

Ray Marginson

THE VICTORIAN JAZZ ARCHIVE IS OPEN EACH TUESDAY & FRIDAY AND EVERY SECOND SUNDAY OF THE MONTH DURING THE DAYLIGHT SAVING PERIOD FROM 10.00AM TO 3.00PM. OR BY APPOINTMENT.

DONATIONS OF \$2.00 AND OVER

Made to the VICTORIAN JAZZ ARCHIVE Inc are **TAX DEDUCTIBLE.**

(EXCLUDES MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS)

The Victorian Jazz Archive wishes to acknowledge the support of the following organisations. Arts Victoria and the Community Support Fund through the Department of Premier and Cabinet. Parks Victoria. The Ian Potter Foundation. The Myer Foundation. The Pratt Foundation. The Trust Company of Australia. The Helen McPherson Trust. The Archive gratefully acknowledges the financial support given to our Capital Fund by Dame Elisabeth Murdoch A.C., D.B.E. and the Estate of the late Ron Halstead, and the Estate of the late Don Boardman.