



VJAZZ 38
April 2008



From the General Manager

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In keeping you informed of what is happening around the Archive, here are a few items you may find of interest. We have installed 7 x new LCD computer monitors and an A3 scanner purchased by courtesy of a Knox City Council Community Grant. These pieces of new equipment are providing great service to all volunteers who use them.

Our "Jazz Spans the Decades" exhibition at the Town Hall Gallery, Hawthorn from 7th to 23rd February 2008 and featuring a number of musicians who lived (or still reside) in the City of Boroondara was adjudged very successful by the gallery staff, with quite a lot of interest being generated.

Due to popular demand, we have extended the Fitzgibbon Dynasty exhibition (currently on show at our Wantirna premises) until end of October 2008. So, if you haven't yet had a chance to view this extensive exhibition, here's another opportunity for you to visit us. Courtesy of Ross Anderson, the New Melbourne Jazz Band will be featured in the exhibition to follow the Fitzgibbon Dynasty.

Detlev Lueth, a senior archivist and curator with the National Archives of Australia, conducted a Preservation Audit of the VJA in late 2007 – courtesy of funding by a Dept of Sustainability and Environment Grant through Heritage Victoria. A favourable report has since been delivered to the Archive by the author.

Ms Caz Laffan a professionally qualified Curator and Archivist who has extensive experience working with the Performing Arts Museum (PAM) of Victoria has commenced our Significance Assessment project — courtesy of funding from the National Library Community Heritage Grant. The assessment process has two principal aims, namely how the VJA compares with other "like" archives and heritage museums within Australia, and the identification of 20–30 of the most significant items within the collection and how they are being preserved for future generations. In terms of the latter, our Collections Manager, Mel Blachford, has prepared an extensive list of such items in collaboration with John Kennedy OAM.

Ray Sutton

By Popular Demand

"THE FITZGIBBON DYNASTY"

Exhibition has been Extended to October 31st, 2008

We are honouring the Fitzgibbon family who are arguably one of Australia's most prominent families in entertainment circles including music and stage. Their contribution to Australian jazz is both significant and exciting.

The exhibition features three generations of this talented family including Minnie, Maggie, Graham "Smacka", Nichaud, Mark and Andrew, and is open from 10:00am to 3:00pm Tuesdays and Fridays.

Guided group tours on other days can be arranged by special appointment.

Smacka Fitzgibbon became a jazz icon performing for and presenting his talent to enthusiastic audiences between 1949 and 1979.

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**QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE VICTORIAN JAZZ ARCHIVE INC. PATRON: WILLIAM H. MILLER M.A., B.C.L. (Oxon.)
15 Mountain Highway, Wantirna 3152 Melway Ref. 63 C8**

(All correspondence to: PO Box 6007 Wantirna Mall, Vic. 3152) Registered No: A0033964L ABN 53 531 132 426
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Bill Miller, the Playhouse Theatre, Hobart, for the 32nd Australian Jazz Convention, 1977

"BILL"

The recent (Thursday 7 February 2008) VJA exhibition "Jazz from the Archive" not only displayed our unique banners on Victorian jazz history but covered, in biographical notes, with accompanying photographs, instruments and important related memorabilia, significant jazz figures who were born or lived in Boroondara (Hawthorn, Kew and Camberwell). Among those featured were Graeme and Roger Bell, Brian Brown, Ade Monsbrough, Keith Hounslow, Dr Sam Benwell, Dione McIntyre, Verdon and George Morcom, Dr Phillip Law, John Kennedy, Diana Allen and me.

There was included also a brief note on Bill Miller. Many of our members may not be fully aware of the background and life of our patron. I thought therefore it might be of interest to recap the notes from this exhibition and publish them serially in the newsletter, and thankfully, the editor has agreed.

This intention is sharpened by the fact that Bill is in the process of transferring to the Archive his great collection of 78's, magazines, detailed scrapbooks on musicians, early discographies and indexes plus his jazz library and much else. He has already passed to us approximately 75 meticulously typed scripts of talks he gave on radio 3UZ from April '39 to Oct '41. These scripts also list all the recordings he played, with the dates and personnel. Bill also founded and administered the 3UZ Jazz Lovers' Society at that time.

So here goes, with a very summarized outline of the life to date of the redoubtable Bill Miller, Master of Arts and Bachelor of Civil Law of Oxford University, and, until quite recently a practicing Melbourne solicitor.

Bill went straight to Oxford after rowing in the Head of the River Melbourne Grammar crew, and matriculating.

He was in England in the middle thirties, a very exciting time for jazz, with visits by a stream of American greats from Armstrong, Ellington and the like.

On his return he married, commenced practice and speedily

became central to jazz appreciation in Australia. He was the doyen of record collectors, a broadcaster, lecturer and publisher of the trail-blazing journal "Jazz Notes" (which he even kept going whilst an army sergeant). Further, he was the founder and proprietor of his own record labels "Ampersand" and "Double Cross" (xx). The latter initiated because E.M.I., the major recording company, was not interested in issuing jazz records. In fact the first ever post-war jazz records were the sides cut by the Bells in 1947 and issued on Regal-Zonophone, the cheap label. Bill had already issued the celebrated "Ja Da" of 1943 featuring a pick-up with the Bell group, members of the pioneer cool groups and Max Kaminsky.

It was Bill who first rescued jazz musicians from the surface cut acetates on which preservation of their performances depended up until then (and which, under the title of "Operation Acetate", the Archive has spent hundreds of hours transferring to CD so they will be available in the future).

It is impossible to over emphasize the importance of Bill's influence and impact on both musicians and jazz lovers alike. He was a key figure in the inauguration and organizing of the Australian Jazz Convention and, about the time of the first one, started a further magazine the "Australian Jazz Quarterly".

It was from Bill's home turntable, or from broadcasts, that many heard for the first time the wide range of jazz styles from New York white to Chicago, Kansas City, early New Orleans, big negro bands, blues singers; the list is endless.

Few today realize how difficult it was in those days to obtain jazz records. The local catalogues had some limited material, particularly the early Armstrongs, but jazz lovers spent hours combing secondhand and junk shops looking for survivors of the original issues of items like the Whiteman Beiderbeckes. Even after the war importation was virtually impossible due to stringent exchange control, particularly with the U.S.\$\$. It is said that the first time Ade Monsbrough heard the relaxed individual style of the small negro groups, such as the Blythe combinations was from Bill's collection. These made an indelible impression on him and became incorporated, with many other influences, into his own urgent, forceful but infinitely melodic style.

Bill is also known for his strong washboard playing with the Portsea Trio and groups built around the clarinetist George Tack, pianist Willy McIntyre, and the trumpeter Tony Newstead.

The playing years were very good years that rounded out the expert collector and authority and made him a vigorous participant in the jazz scene in which he was a well-known figure with his late wife Norma.

At 94, after an eventful and extremely busy life as a combination of trusted Melbourne solicitor and a vigorous participant in all aspects of the Melbourne jazz scene, Bill lives quietly in Hawthorn and is shortly due to move into a supported unit. He enjoys the continuing friendship of very many, the support of his son and family and of his frequent companion, Jess Vincent, Willie McIntyre's sister.

Both my wife Betty and I count it a great privilege to be one of his friends over the 65 odd years since we first met.

Ray Marjinson - 15th April 2008

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The Victorian Jazz Archive acknowledges the support of the following organisations: The State of Victoria through the Department of Premier and Cabinet and Arts Victoria, Parks Victoria, The Ian Potter Foundation, The Myer Foundation, The Pratt Foundation, The Trust Company of Australia, The Helen McPherson Smith Trust, Diana Allen of Jazz Australia, The Estates of the late Don Boardman, Ron Halstead and David Ward and Ward McKenzie Pty Ltd. The Archive gratefully acknowledges the financial support given to the VJA Capital Fund by Dame Elisabeth Murdoch, A.C., D.B.E.

BOB'S PARTY

In the jazz world there is nothing novel about musicians getting together for a jam session. Jazz history is littered with such events. Some are listed on record and chronicled in the various discographies down the years. Often it was musicians playing in dance bands or orchestras in theatre shows letting their musical hair down after hours in some smoky club. Happily some of those sessions were recorded and the intrepid jazz collectors are the benefactors of this. Let's face it, you have to be intrepid to be a jazz collector.

In the fifties in that strange period when jazz had been divided into two camps – Trad and Modern, a lot of good swing musicians' big names in the pre-war period had fallen on hard times. This especially affected the fine black musicians of the era who ended up working as lift operators or petrol pump attendants or some such menial pursuit.

However, in the fifties a series of jam sessions were organized, the most famous were under the leadership of Buck Clayton one time trumpeter with the Count Basie Orchestra. In the years between 1953 and 1956 a series of great LPS were made featuring the best musicians [white and black] of that era. This situation continued and indeed two English jazz critics/writers, Stanley Dance and Albert McCarthy, came to America and organized sessions presenting a lot of those musicians. Some, in their Indian summer years were given a chance to shine once more.

By the sixties this trend had spread to the Jazz Party. In Colorado the well-heeled jazz fraternity set the ball rolling using a weekend with a cross section of say thirty musicians playing in various configurations. This free and easy concept led to a few more permanent groups forming. For instance out of this phenomenon came bands like The World's Greatest Jazz Band and the hot little band co-led by Bob Wilber and Kenny Davern, the Soprano Summit.

In our august land this trend didn't pass unnoticed. In the seventies in Melbourne that adventurous bandleader Allan Leake organised a few of those jam session weekends. This lasted about four years and resulted in a couple of fine LPs representing some great Australian jazz which warms the heart and tickles the feet.

All of this preamble [pheeew, long-winded twit] brings me to the title of this piece. The Bob Barnard Jazz Party has been going for ten years. Organised by the intrepid [that word just keeps recurring] John Trudinger, it is built around Australia's Louis Armstrong/Buck Clayton rolled into two, Bob Barnard. Bob has carried the torch of Australian jazz in the jazz world for years and certainly deserves the accolade of this recurring festival in April in his name being perpetuated. Rumour has it that this is the last one—surely not. Hopefully there is a benefactor with a love of the good noise and deep pockets out

there to keep this great event going. Similar weekend jazz parties exist in England at Blackpool and Norwich. Although I know recordings were made, nothing has been produced on CD so we are ahead of the game here.

One positive. Out of those ten years of great music some wonderful recordings have emerged on the Nif-Nuf label. As well as our local stalwarts the visiting jazzers have been captured. Such a galaxy of talent, too many to name but all fitting into the fraternity of jazz musicians who all subscribe to the dictum of 'It Don't Mean A Thing If It Don't Have That Swing'. I personally possess those recordings and think they shape up well to the various sets put out under the Buck Clayton Jam Session LPS.

Many comments have been made about Jazz promoters being supreme optimists. I recall British critic/broadcaster Peter Clayton saying that promoting jazz was like trying to sell party hats in a cemetery. Another critic reckoned that after a festival in the UK where a lot of hoons caused havoc, the promoter lost money and ended up shirtless. However like Monty Python 'Let's look on the bright side of life'. After all the last time I saw the amiable John T. at the Archive he was still wearing a shirt.

Bill Brown

NEW MEMBERS

Marie Ballantyne, Desley Dixon, Ian Elliott, Tim Elsum, Len Fox, John & Dorothy Kessner (f), Cam McAllister, Bruce McIntyre, Cliff Restarick, Steve Robertson, Walter Schubach (f), Jim & Jan Sharp (f).

Heidi Victoria MP and the Bendigo Bank took out Corporate Memberships. Graeme & Elizabeth Harvey and Detlev Lueth took out Life Memberships.

We welcome you all and thank you for your support.

RECENT CASH DONATIONS

Diana Allen, Margaret Cleaver, Liz Currie, Jessica Farrands, Jan & Jim Sharp and Bruce Treadwell.

SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE NOW DUE

FOR THOSE WHOSE MEMBERSHIP IS DUE IN MAY AN ACCOUNT IS ENCLOSED. WE WILL BE PLEASED TO RECEIVE YOUR PAYMENT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

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**PLEASE NOTE DEADLINE FOR COPY FOR THE NEXT NEWSLETTER IS
8th JULY 2008**

FABULOUS FIFTIES MUSOS GROUP

When I attended the funeral of the very popular vocalist Roland Bonet in 2003, it occurred to me that I was meeting up with many of my old muso mates at funerals which were becoming more frequent given that we were all getting much older.

My good friend Tony Buckley, a bass player and resident of Sydney, had told me that the older Sydney musicians were regularly meeting at a Sydney Club on an informal basis. With this in mind, coupled with Roland Bonet's funeral on my mind, I decided to convene a meeting with John Fordham, Terry Stanhope and Frank Leonard.

This meeting resulted in the first get-together of the Fabulous Fifties Musos Group in 2003 at the German Tivoli Club in Prahran.

It was most encouraging to have a roll-up of about eighty musos, most of whom had literally not seen or spoken to one another for about thirty to forty years. But the honour of the oldest attendee went to Fred Hosking, age 91. Fred was a multi reeds player in the original Channel 9 In Melbourne Tonight Orchestra.

Our group gets together twice a year and is absolutely informal in that we have no rules or bank account and is a non-profit "organisation" privately underwritten with financial assistance from Palmi Snorrason, the proprietor of Music Junction, Camberwell.

For further information simply Google Fab Fifties Musos Group, or telephone me on 9354 6103 or email alexhutch@optusnet.com.au.

Alex Hutchinson

VALE—DERYCK BENTLEY by Graeme Bell AO., MBE.

The well-known seven-piece ensemble of the Graeme Bell Australian Jazz Band had been increased to eight musicians but when the second overseas tour was scheduled for 1950 a sudden vacancy occurred. A quote from my autobiography explains what followed.

'With Johnny Rich unavailable for the forthcoming overseas trip, we had been trying out trombonists on a weekly basis. We tried out some excellent players but were looking for someone who had a special feeling for the type of product we were selling and one who we thought had the right temperament for the rigorous professional touring scene over there, different from the laid-back life in Australia. After all, we'd been thrown in the deep end and were hardened troupers by now. Also, and this a most important ingredient, we needed someone who could fit in socially and put up with a pretty lively and sometimes slightly crazy bunch of characters. Moreover, a sense of humour was a prerequisite.

One day I received a letter from Deryck Bentley, an Adelaide pharmaceutical chemist who played trombone. He'd heard from the Dallwitz boys that we were looking for someone and they had advised him to contact me. We had a three-day booking coming up in Mildura and I

invited him to join us there as part of the band. We found he had a good ear for harmony and a rorty tone and we accepted him on the spot.

Deryck had just been married when we offered him the trombone chair and he and his wife, Pat, had booked a passage to Europe, where he intended to do pharmacy. They cancelled this trip and came to Melbourne in June 1950. This gave Deryck an excellent opportunity to learn the band's repertoire as we had four months of touring before leaving for London. When it came to our notice that Deryck was not over-fond of his name Roger jumped in with the suggestion of Kanga. He thought it was high time we had an indigenous name in the band.'

Deryck was the first movie cameraman to become a band member, and made a remarkable record of the band's off-stage antics. He and I always agreed that this band reached its pinnacle at the concert in January 1952 at the Schumann Salle, Dusseldorf, Germany.

There are many references in my book to his great contribution to the band, but that is not the purpose of this personal message from me. Deryck was the constant gentleman, and with his good humour and easy-going nature was the perfect sideman to join a bunch of tour-hardened achievers,

My friendship with Deryck and Pat continued, and with their son Peter they always called on Dorothy and me when visiting Sydney. I cannot count the number of times we stayed with them at their home in Fulham, Adelaide, where, from time to time, we would meet their lovely children, now grown up. Taking the happy little dog, Sadie, for walks was always part of my routine.

The Bentley hospitality was five-star and, in our opinion, Pat stands tall as a great human being who unselfishly always cared for the needs of her husband and family.

Kanga was Australia's gentleman of jazz, and a musician in the true sense of the word.

Graeme Bell

29th January 2008—Sydney

VOLUNTEERS WANTED

Volunteers are needed to train as Tour Guides for the Archive. A knowledge of Australian jazz is preferable to answer any questions that may be asked of you. One or two days a month (Tuesdays or Fridays) and maybe the odd other time would be welcome.

Also, we have literally thousands of photographs of musicians which have to be identified. If you have been 'around the traps' for a long time and have a good memory for names, we need YOU urgently.

Please ring Ray Sutton at the Archive if you can fill either of these vacancies.

STONNINGTON JAZZ 2008

If you are in Melbourne please support this Festival which is held from 15-24 May 2008. Details are available at www.stonnington.vic.gov.au. All tickets (03) 8290 7000 or www.chapeloffchapel.com.au

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From the Collections Manager

What happens when you make a donation to the Victorian Jazz Archive?

The VJA as a not for profit organisation relies on donations of records and other items. Over the last few years we have received several large jazz collections due to the death of a jazz lover or because of downsizing to a smaller home. Without this generosity we could not have built up the world-class collection we have at Wantirna, which is stored under archival standards.

I thought it might be useful to explain what actually happens when items are donated to the collection.

- A donor file is created and a unique number allocated. This ensures that donors remain anonymous.
- Donated items receive an interim receipt, which lists in broad terms the items donated.
- Our volunteers, under direction of the collections manager, label items with the donor number. In the case of recordings they are assessed against our database to see if we already have a copy in the vaults. The VJA maintains up to three copies, a preservation, a duplicate and an access copy. If we already have 3 copies we will physically inspect to see if the newer donation is in better condition. The aim is to have the best possible condition in the collection. A swap will be made if the new donation is better.
- If there are less than 3 copies the new donation will be entered in our official register and given a unique VJAZ number. Currently we have over 12,000 items on our data base. Our main focus is on Australian jazz although we do maintain for access purposes a large overseas jazz collection of LPs, CDs and 78s. Each Australian recording is stored in an acid free paper folder. This is stored in a ziplock bag along with the cover. They are stored in our compactus units in archival polypropylene boxes that hold 10 records each. Each box contains a label with the registration numbers printed on a label. In this way any record can easily be located. The storage is designed to protect the recordings from heat, cold, vermin and accidental water damage.
- Excess records are sold to VJA members from time to time to help pay for the cost of running the archive. Non-jazz recordings, often donated, are sold in a similar way.
- Other items such as books, photographs, instruments, and posters are considered on an individual basis. Specialist advice is sought if the item requires extra material to store correctly.
- All items are entered on a donation (or loan contract) which is signed by the donor (or their agent) and the VJA. Each party receives a copy.

This is only a brief outline of the care we take with treasured items donated. If you or your family have a jazz collection you can rest assured it will be accepted and stored according to the standards of Museums Australia who have recently reaccredited the VJA till 2012. Items donated are in good hands.

If you would like to discuss making a donation we would be delighted to see you at Wantirna or you can ring on (03) 9800 5535 on Tuesday, Wednesday or Friday or email to info@vicjazzarchive.org.au

Mel Blackford Collections Manager

BIG BAND SUPPER DANCE

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Early Autumn – the true story

For a piece of jazz that is so justifiably celebrated, Ralph Burns' *Early Autumn* is also one of the most misunderstood. I've read otherwise knowledgeable writers who get the chronology confused, the inspirations muddled. Here's my attempt to set the record straight:

My interest in the tune, recorded December 30th, 1948 by Woody Herman's Second Herd, began when I first heard it as a uni student at Missouri in 1972. This, clearly was no ordinary jazz performance. The theme is rich, complex and haunting. The chord changes flow like a great river and the solos, by Woody, vibist Terry Gibbs and tenor star Stan Getz are miniature works of art. I would feature it on my jazz radio show every year in early September, the start of the lovely fall season in the American Midwest.

Fast forward to late 1977. Woody's band is touring far northern California, where I am working as a TV reporter. I catch up with the band at a College Of The Siskiyous concert in the ridiculously-named town of Weed. Armed with a tape recorder, I worm my way backstage an hour before the concert to interview Woody for my radio show on KCHO in Chico, an affiliate of National Public Radio. Woody, gracious as always, consents to talk, and one of the first topics is *Early Autumn*.

"Ralph came to me in the middle of '46 with this long thing he'd written called the *Summer Sequence*. He's been staying out on Long Island with Chubby Jackson that summer and he wrote it on the beach, just lying there in the sun. We went into the studio and recorded the first three parts in September that year. I think we didn't record part four because the arrangement wasn't quite ready yet. A little over a year later, we finally got around to that last part (which was really sort of a re-statement of part one), and by this time, Stan Getz had joined our band. I gave him a solo near the end and he played it so beautifully, it brought tears to our eyes."

Listen carefully to part four of the *Summer Sequence* and you will hear a strong hint of what will eventually become *Early Autumn*. Woody continues:

"So, that little theme was so lovely, a lot of people said to Ralph, 'why don't you expand on it?' So he did. We put it into our book and played it every night on a big cross-country tour we were doing in the late fall of 1948, from New York by train out to LA. Stan got the big solo again and each night he played it, well, it just got better.

I asked him if the recorded version was the best that Stan ever played it:

"Second best. The very best was a dance date the night before, in San Diego, I think it was. He really nailed it that night, just perfect. Of course it was three times longer because at a dance we didn't have the limitations of a 78 RPM record. But the solo on the record, well, it was magic, too."

I praised Woody's luscious Hodges-inspired alto solo.

"Hell," Woody replied, "I just played the melody."

When I finished the interview, I mentioned to Woody that at the end of the year, it would be the 30th anniversary of his record of *Early Autumn*.

"Why don't you do a little radio program about that," suggested Woody helpfully. "Look, call Ralph in LA - here's his number. Tell him I suggested it. And maybe Stan and Terry might talk about it, too."

When the college concert began, Woody opened with a blazing *Four Brothers*. His second number was *Early Autumn*, which he announced he was dedicating to "...a young man in the audience who really likes this tune." I turned red with embarrassment, and delight.

A month later I phoned Ralph Burns, who was more than happy to do a taped interview. He said he had got the idea for *Summer Sequence* and *Early Autumn* from listening to the 20th century American composer Eastwood Lane, and from some of Ellington's longer works. He agreed that Stan's astonishingly lyrical solo at the end of *Early Autumn* lifted it from "a pleasant tone poem to an immortal work of art."

A few weeks later, luck intervened. Stan and his quartet were booked in for a weekend at Keystone Korner in San Francisco, one of my all-time favourite jazz clubs. I made plans to drive down and interview Stan, the last name on my list. Just one small problem: Stan in those days had a reputation for eating journalists for lunch, tearing into the unwary for wasting his time dredging up the past. He had turned violent with strangers before – he might do it again.

Ten minutes before the gig was supposed to start, I nervously approached him, introduced myself and mentioned that the project had Woody's personal approval. Stan smiled and I was visibly relieved.

"Sure, I'll do it," Stan promised. "Just come back to the dressing room at the interval."

Stan's opening set was a gem. He played a couple of tunes by his old pal Gigi Gryce and was obviously pleased that I was a Gryce fan, too. Then it was down to serious stuff.

"That solo made my career," Stan said. "It, like so much I was doing back then, was mostly inspired by Lester Young. I kept thinking as I worked on it that fall, how would Prez play this. Later Prez told me he liked it a lot, and that was a huge thrill for me. Yeah, Woody is right, I DID get to play it a lot before we recorded it – that's why I think the solo worked so well."

"I don't remember much about the recording date itself, except that I really dug Terry (Gibbs') vibes solo and I think that lifted me a bit, but basically, my part was pretty well worked out already. I just played it."

Yeah, right. Sort of like Michaelangelo saying he's got some paint lying around and there's a chapel that needs doing up.

The three key interviews now in hand, I went into the editing suite at KCHO and put together a 17 minute radio feature mixing music, commentary and interviews. I opened with Getz's solo, used some interview segments, played the tune all the way through, more interviews, then closed with the solo once again. Because the station was part of the nationwide NPR network, we could offer radio features like this to their flagship magazine program *All Things Considered*. I wrote to the producer suggesting it go to air around the USA sometime near December 30th, the 30th anniversary. I had already given NPR some jazz features, a profile of Pee Wee Russell and an anniversary feature on the Goodman Carnegie Hall Concert that included an interview with Jess Stacy. My work was pretty familiar to the network; they liked it and aired it at year's end.

The *Early Autumn* feature prompted some nice feedback from across the country, especially from people who had heard the Herman band that fall as it crossed America just before the record was made. All the major figures in the creation of that magical piece of music (except for Terry Gibbs, whom I never managed to catch up with) are gone now. But whenever I hear that melody, memories of their faces, their voices, come flooding back.

(cont'd page 7)

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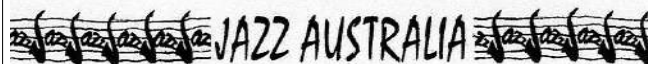
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