



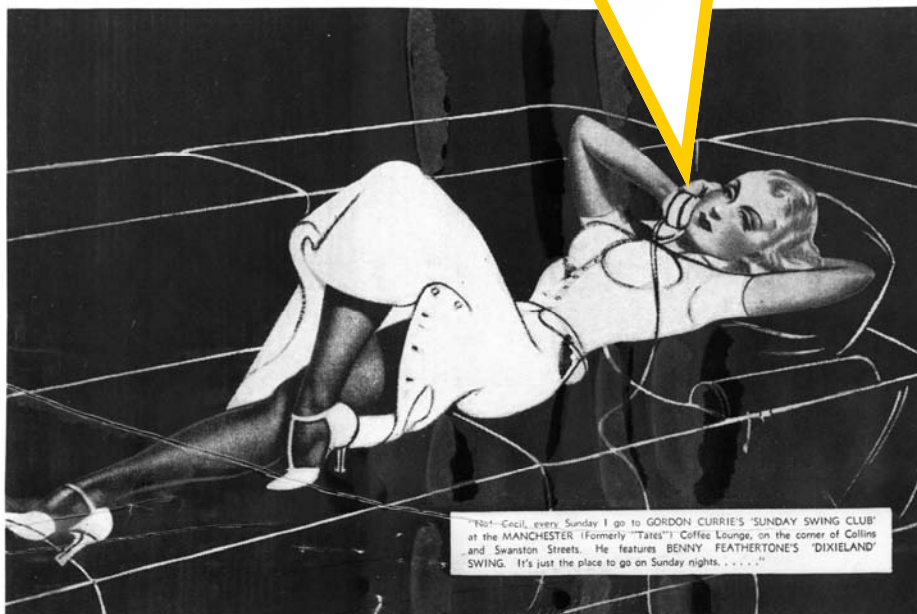
VJAZZ 49
February 2011
Distribution 650

VJAZZ

Proactively Collecting, Archiving and Disseminating Australian Jazz

Ben Featherstone, one of Melbourne's most versatile performers, is now getting a great break from the Palais people. He has taken the drums from Ben and is now also change in the fourth during the past few years now also plays in the band and is starting the new band, and in each place he has been. Probably his band is as good as any. "Daddy" is The Palais dancers crowd, and Ern Pettifer takes Ben's place on the drums. The band strikes us a fast tempo, and Ben emerge whistle follows takes his chorusvellous. Not so, and sh. Another which is trumpe the great Louis continues for a couple of choruses. And then, even though it is

There's a colour centrefold
John Gill's Novelty
Orchestra of New Orleans
Bill Brown's Rhythmakers
Graeme Davies and a lot
more



"Not-Cecil, every Sunday I go to GORDON CURRIE'S 'SUNDAY SWING CLUB' at the MANCHESTER (Formerly 'Taxes') Coffee Lounge, on the corner of Collins and Swanston Streets. He features BENNY FEATHERSTONE'S 'DIXIELAND' SWING. It's just the place to go on Sunday nights. . . ."

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE VICTORIAN JAZZ ARCHIVE INC. PATRON: WILLIAM H. MILLER M.A., B.C.L. (Oxon.)

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VJA Fundraiser at the Rosstown

The last of four fundraisers for 2010 was held on Sunday, Melbourne Cup weekend. The jazz band playing was the **Peninsula Rhythm Kings** led by John Kent on drums (the band has only been together since the Australian Jazz Convention last year). Our own treasurer Lee Treanor provided us with a glimpse of another side of him by playing the banjo. John Roberts played trumpet and Frank Stewart played alto sax and clarinet. Peter Grey played double bass; Graeme Davies entertained us on piano, trombone, tenor sax, harmonica and vocals — phew! I'm exhausted just writing about it— and the lovely Kay Younger gave us many fine vocals.

Despite a cold wet day outside, the audience soon warmed to the great jazz being played. Dancers were getting carried away and lucky people were winning great prizes. \$1600 was raised for the Archive to continue with the preservation of our jazz past and although most of my helpers were absent because of illness etc., those who stepped up to the plate did a wonderful job. I salute you all.

More great news — we are doing it all again next year kicking off on Sunday 30th January with **Shirazz** Melbourne's newest young band. See you there.

Marina Pollard Visitor Services



L to R John Roberts (trumpet), Lee Treanor (banjo), Graeme Davies (trombone), John Kent (drums), Kay Younger (vocals), Frank Stewart (reeds), Peter Grey (bass)

3rd Generation of the Howard family visits Archive.

Oscar Howard, son of Bill Howard, who featured on the cover of VJAZZ 48, visited the Red Onions Exhibition on Sunday 17th October, is shown here inspecting his dad's trombone currently on display at the Archive.

Oscar has not followed in his father's musical footsteps in any big way, yet instead he is advancing into a career in finance. His only venture into the musical world currently is to quietly strum a guitar. Ron Howard, Oscar's grandfather, was pictured on page 10 of VJAZZ 48 talking to Ron Holland and Anne Beilby.

According to 3rd generation Oscar, the creative side of the family resides with his brother Theo who is expected to return to Australia from Holland early in 2011, so there is still hope for the music tradition to continue. Time will tell.



Contents

VJA Fundraiser at the Rosstown	2
3rd Generation of the Howard family visits the Archive.....	2
John Gill's Novelty Orchestra of New Orleans.....	3
<i>Brrring Brrring</i> is that Benny Featherstone?.....	4
The Rhythmakers.....	4
The Sam Meerkin Room.....	5
The Allure of the Label.....	6
Stomp and Circumstance.....	8
Letters to the Editor.....	9

Moments to Remember.....	10
From the Library.....	11

Front Cover

Background and image taken from the Benny Featherstone Scrapbook which can be found at the Archive.

*The following article is a reprint of an article written
by David Sager in 1991*

John Gill's Novelty Orchestra of New Orleans

Smile, Darn Ya, Smile

I saw Emma only once. It was at the Deer Head Inn in Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania. I was playing trombone with a Dixieland band there that November evening in 1980. She was elderly, had snow-white hair, no eyeglasses and a pair of dancing feet. She also seemed to be enjoying her bourbon. I remember catching a glimpse of her as she danced towards the band. I drew a deep breath to play a high note and in that moment with her face only inches from mine and with a pungent whiskey breath she shouted, "Oh, play that thing!"

I would have normally dismissed her as a merry old drunk and might have ignored her had she asked for "New York, New York." What she uttered was the exclamation from King Oliver's "Dipper Mouth Blues," "Oh Play That Thing!" A line commonly known only to record collectors, weekend Dixieland musicians and their fans. Not convinced that she was any of the above, I decided to throw caution to the wind. During a break I approached her table.

"You guys play some fine stuff," she slurred as I approached. "Just like old timers used to do."

"Old timers," I chuckled. "Like who?"

By that point in my life I had been conditioned by countless similar situations. An elderly person telling me with sincerity that they like my music and it reminded them of the "old days" or their "favorites." I, of course, would then ask who their favorites were. Invariable, they would respond with names of people who were either incredibly famous, like Paul Whiteman, Rudy Vallee, Al Jolson, or names of those who played "period" music decades later like Pee Wee Hunt. Not to disparage any of these artists, it would pang me as a student, collector and lover of 'teens and twenties popular music never to hear names such as Jean Goldkette, Irving Aaronson, Isham Jones, King Oliver, Fletcher Henderson or even Billy Murray! Just a few names out of hundreds that graced the ornate record labels of the 1920s but never seemed to be among those remembered by the veterans of that era whom I would meet.

"Old timers," I chuckled, "Like who?"

"Well...Like Coon-Sander's Nighthawks!", whipped Emma as though she knew she were being tested.

Dumbfounded, I stammered, "Coon-Sander's, you actually heard them?"

"Hell, yes, I heard 'em, but you never did! Look here, Sonny, I'm 85 years old and I've been around!"

"But you said 'Oh, play that thing', where'd you hear that phrase?"

"Oh, I can't expect a kid to know about that. You see, back in the twenties my husband and I used to hear this guy, King Oliver. We lived in Chicago and we'd go to this place, the Lincoln Room or something like that...over on East 31st."

"Lincoln Gardens?"

"Yeah, gardens, that's it. Well, anyway, this guy, Oliver played the trumpet, and he'd get going pretty good, and the crowd would yell, 'Oh Play That Thing,' and he would, too!"

I thought I was dreaming. Here was the genuine article, a veteran of the early 1920s, who had not only heard of King Oliver, but actually witnessed his performance first hand, at the Lincoln Gardens.

"Oh, there was some great music in Chicago back in

those days. It was quite a place for dancing." Emma's voice was sobering and her focus was sharpening with each recollection. "Quite a place indeed. Artie, that was my husband, he and I danced all the time and not to any damn Victrola music, to live music! I loved it then and still do! Never went in for concert music much, mind you, just novelty music. Oh we'd hear Coon-Sanders, King Oliver, Isham Jones over at the Rainbo..."

"You considered King Oliver to be novelty music?", I gasped.

"Hell, yes...look if it wasn't being played in a concert hall and you could dance to it, then we called it novelty music, dance music, nothing to do, or think about but move your feet and shake your tukhas."

"Your what?"

"Your tukhas...ya know, your fanny, like this." I watched, Emma demonstrated. "Lots of songs back then about it... 'Shake That Thing', 'Jennie Do Your Low Down Dance'...I think Doc Cook played that one. They had one of the chorus girls step in front of the band and shake it good. That was over at the Plantation or Dreamland...one of those places."

"Wow, Doc Cook eh? You heard him too?"

"Loved him, Isham Jones, too. But, oh, how we loved to dance to Guy Lombardo. Oh God, what a band!"

Emma and I talked at length that night about her days and nights in Chicago, dancing to as many different bands as possible. I was surprised to find out that she and Artie had been friends with Louis Panico, the great novelty cornetist whose horn graced many of the early Isham Jones records. But what really struck me was the complete passion and lack of prejudice for music this woman had. There was no visual pre-requisite or quota of "hotness" to be filled. The only jurors were her feet.

"I did have some disappointments later on," she confided after awhile. "In the 30s when the swing bands became popular, Glenn Miller and all them, the beat was too smooth, nothing you could sink your teeth, or feet into. That's when Artie and I took up country dancing." Emma's smile started to fade as she looked off into the distance. She continued quietly, "Artie died a little while after that...I sure do miss him. Sometimes, I wonder how long I can keep going alone."

That was my one and only conversation with Emma Thurmond. She was 85 years then, and danced like there was no tomorrow. We exchanged addresses and corresponded for awhile. For a few years, I would receive an annual Christmas card from her. Once she enclosed a photo, brown with age, of her and Artie standing in front of Guy Lombardo's orchestra, clutching a huge floral wreath proclaiming, "Champions!". When one Christmas came and went without word from Emma, I knew the inevitable had occurred. I guess those feet of hers finally got a long-needed rest.

I couldn't help but think of Emma when John Gill first told me of his idea to do this project. Initially, it was to be a twenties dance orchestra type affair with a decided Ted Lewis slant.

"No problem," I said, "John will do his Ted Lewis type vocalizing. I'll throw in a little George Brunies. Charley can do a little Muggsy...let's see..." You see how I was thinking—I know, I know...just like a record collector.

"Now wait a minute Dave", John interrupted, "Hold your horses now, I also want to do some rags."

"Rags! John you said twenties dance music, Ted Lewis, stylistically speaking ragtime simply doesn't fit into the pict..."

"Now relax my boy. I've some ragtime orchestrations right here that are from the 1920s, and I am confident that we can play them appropriately. I don't want this project to pigeonhole anybody stylistically speaking. No, no, I want fun and frivolity to abound. This will be a Novelty Orchestra... We'll put a coat of joy on everything...Ah say..."

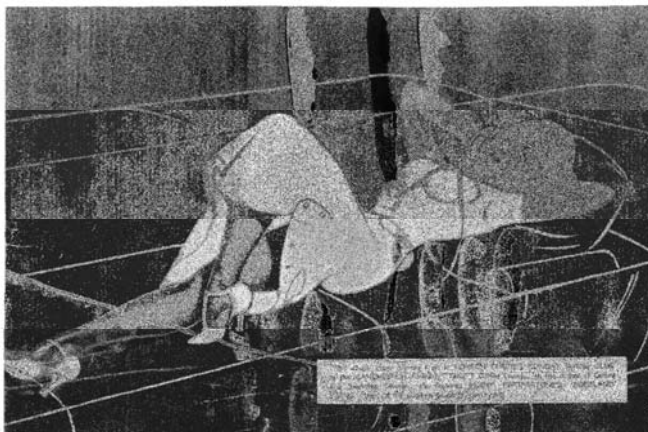
"John, where did that top hat come from?"

"My boy, we will all have top hats, yes, yes, and big smiles on all our faces, ya know why...well I'm gonna tell ya why..."

John, hat in hand, looked off toward the horizon, and following his own outstretched arm he followed himself home not to be seen or heard from for months as he worked slavishly preparing the orchestrations heard here. He never did tell us why, or how, there would be smiles on our faces. But when we heard the results of our many hours in the recording studio, he didn't have to. I'm sure I won't have to tell you either.

David Sager
February 1991

***Brrring Brrring* Is that Benny Featherstone?**



CAPTION: "No! Cecil every Sunday I go to Gordon Currie's 'Sunday Swing Club' at the Manchester (formerly Tates) Coffee Lounge, on the corner of Collins and Swanston Streets. He features Benny Featherstone's 'Dixieland' Swing. It's just the place to go on Sunday nights..."



Messrs. Mic. Bryans, Ben Featherstone and Harry Temple about to leave Melbourne for Sydney and for other places.
Music Maker February 1938

BENNY FEATHERSTONE – FORGOTTEN PIONEER OF AUSTRALIAN JAZZ

By Eric J Brown

Having just received the latest VJAZZ magazine No 48 I was pleased to see three photographs of Benny Featherstone. These reminded me of the monumental research of Ernst Grossmann on Benny, published in the Victorian Jazz Club's Jazzlines of the 1980s, which was the probable source of the above photographs.

Originally a Berliner, Ernst is one of our foremost record collectors and a world authority on King Oliver. For many years he worked as a tally clerk on Melbourne's wharves where he met up with Benny Featherstone who also worked there. Their friendship grew once they knew they had a common interest in jazz.

After visiting Benny's unmarked grave in Brighton Cemetery with Ernst, I prompted him to write something about Benny. This eventually resulted in a number of excellent articles and photographs published in Jazzline.

Editors Note: An article on Benny Featherstone is in the pipeline.

THE RHYTHMAKERS

By Bill Brown

Some of my favourite things indeed! This has nothing to do with the whiter-than-white Julie Andrews but a lot to do with my jazz collection. It is hard to pick things that are special from years of listening and acquiring. However, certain things hit the spot of this collector's mouldy old heart. Last year whilst attending the Mittagong Jazz, Ragtime & Swing festival, among other goodies I purchased a Jazz Archives CD 'The Rhythmakers'. This comprises three sessions recorded in 1932 in New York; if not the first mixed race recording sessions, certainly one of the first.

Over the sessions Afro-American trumpeter Henry Allen, pianist Fats Waller, bassist Pops Foster, drummer Zutty Singleton and singer Billy Banks played with the likes of white musicians Eddie Condon (banjo), Jack Bland (guitar), Pee Wee Russell (clarinet), Joe Sullivan (piano), and a young trombonist Tommy Dorsey before he became the renowned big band leader.

There were three sessions according to Rust's discography—April, July and October—under the titles "Billy Banks & His Orchestra", "The Rhythmakers" and "Jack Bland & His Rhythmakers" respectively. All of the tracks are hot and swinging and to my mind some of the best small-group material from the thirties.

His band inhabited a sweatshop cellar in Great Windmill Street, London, a mere G-string throw from the naughty Windmill Theatre with its stand-up comedians and still-standing nudes (if they moved it wasn't art). A certain expatriate Aussie of the time not unknown to this publication, Mr. Richard Hughes, played piano with Cy's band at this time and indeed put down two sides for posterity in 1954, "Weatherbird Rag" and "You're Next", from memory. Perhaps he can elaborate on those times. As Teagarden said "Elucidate Gate".

Billy Banks was in Australia in 1955 and recorded a few tracks in Hobart with Tom Pickering. He later went to Japan, where he died in 1967.

So there you are—one of my favourite things. Tomorrow it could be something else. A jazz collection, after all, is a broad church. Keep swinging.

The Sam Meerkin Room

A Refurbished Administration Centre

We recently moved back into our completely renovated administration area, known as the Sam Meerkin Room in memory of the late Sam Meerkin, whose bequest to the VJA partially funded the renovations. We are now able to accommodate more people, more comfortably and efficiently, due to the greatly-improved utilization of space.



The Opening of the Sam Meerkin Room



Evelyn Perks unveiling the plaque dedicated to Sam Meerkin.



Evelyn Perks with our Secretary Gretel James.



VJA members and visitors at the opening, and enjoying the afternoon tea that followed.

THE ALLURE OF THE LABEL

By Ken Simpson-Bull

ANYONE who has collected old 78rpm records, particularly discs from the 1920s and 30s, would probably have been somewhat captivated by the visual appeal of many of the label designs. Some collectors have even been described as philatelists merely interested in the label on the record rather than the music in the grooves. Whatever, here are a few examples of some of the labels, particularly those pertaining to jazz, that were available on sale in Australia during the 1920s and 30s.

It was in 1925 that Australia's first record pressing plant was established. Before that, all discs (and cylinders) were imported. By the end of the twenties however, several local pressing plants and recording studios had been set up, the major ones being HMV, Columbia, Brunswick, and Vocalion. Fortunately for the record collector, the discs of many other manufacturers were freely imported until government tariffs and restrictions were imposed a few years later, largely at the behest of the internationally controlled Australian companies.

Although the major organisations did, in general, record a significant quantity of jazz music, their output was largely confined to the most popular and best selling of international artists. Australian performers were seldom recorded until a number of small local companies with limited distribution started appearing in the mid forties.

In early 1952 the first Long Play microgroove records were released in Australia heralding the end of the 78 era. Readers desiring a more extensive and extended coverage of this subject should seek out the publications of Ross Laird, Mike Sutcliffe, Jack Mitchell, Brian Rust, Adam Miller and others.

Here then are a few brief comments on the chosen illustrations:

BELLBIRD: These discs were produced in Melbourne in 1930 and 1931 by UNBREAKABLE RECORD MANUFACTURERS. They were made from a plastic material that offered much the same degree of flexibility as later vinyl discs. The disc illustrated, pressed from an imported master, featured CAB CALLOWAY recorded in New York in October, 1930. This same recording was also released on Angelus, Clifford and Embassy, all Australian labels.

ANGELUS: Clifford industries had a pressing plant in Sydney from 1928 to 1932 and this was their main label. Issues were from the catalogues of

Cameo, Gennett, Crown, Paramount, and Grey Gull (all American), and from Imperial (English). VINCENT LOPEZ had a "sweet" band and this 1929 recording is unfortunately, for jazz enthusiasts, no exception.

COLUMBIA—PAUL WHITEMAN: Because of Paul Whiteman's popularity as the "King of Jazz" (a title generally undeserved except for some of his band's personnel), Columbia decided to give him a colourful label of his own. Known as the "potato face" label, these were pressed in Australia from American masters from 1928 to 1930. GET OUT AND GET UNDER THE MOON features a vocal chorus by a young Bing Crosby with Matty Malneck and Frank Trumbauer in the band.

ELECTRON: Another product of Clifford Industries, this label was pressed for Coles stores in 1928 and 29 (note the Coles logo at the top). Although PAUL CLIQUOT implies the Clicquot Club Eskimos who were a Harry Reser group, this recording is by Willard Robeson's band who once employed Bix Beiderbecke.

BROADCAST: Produced in Australia by Vocalion between 1928 and 1930, these eight inch records had the same playing time as standard 10 inch discs because of closer groove spacing and a smaller inner diameter. Most of the masters came from England but this recording was made in Melbourne in September, 1928 by ART CHAPMAN whose band played at the Rex Cabaret from 1928 to 1933 and later at the New Embassy.

EDISON: These discs were 6 mm thick and, because they employed hill-and-dale recording, could only be played on Edison players. They were imported from the USA and sold here for the (then) large sum of 6/6. They were discontinued in 1930. The sound quality of most of these discs was exceptional. (Today they can be played with a standard stereo pickup by reversing one of the pickup outputs.) On this recording made in May, 1928, a young Tommy Dorsey plays trombone with the SEVEN BLUE BABIES.

VOCALION: Initially imported from England, this label was pressed locally from 1927 to 1931. THE CLIQUOT CLUB ESKIMOS were actually a Harry Reser group, sometimes playing good jazz. Harry was leader and known at the time as the world's greatest banjo player. Popular drummer Tom Stacks

took the vocals. This recording, from an American master, was made in 1929.

PARLOPHONE: Eventually part of the EMI group, this label was pressed in Australia from 1927. This "stroboscope" label actually worked, when illuminated by 50Hz mains, in checking the speed. Parlophone, in the 1920s and 30s, prob-



Royalty stamps were often attached to labels to ensure that song publishers received their due fee.

ably provided Australian jazz lovers with more hot jazz than any other. This recording, which needs no comment, is from a 1929 American Record Company metal.

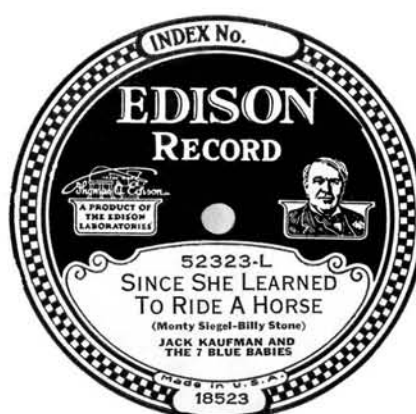
ZONOPHONE: This British label, available in Australia from the turn of the 20th century, was finally pressed here from 1926. The label merged with Regal in 1932 to become Regal-Zonophone, responsible for a large number of jazz releases over the years. This FLETCHER HENDERSON is from a 1931 American master.

PATHE: These discs were imported from the English branch of this French company. The shellac from which this particular disc was pressed was a black and red mix producing a most unusual effect. MISS LEE MORSE, an American cabaret singer who also played kazoo, was accompanied on this 1925 recording by a four piece New Orleans-style group that included Hymie Farberman (trumpet) and Larry Abbott (clarinet).

DOMINO: Available in Australia for several years from 1926 and priced at around 1/6, this label was manufactured by the Plaza Record company of New York, the titles often being duplicated on Banner and American Regal. The record material is red-brown, meant to simulate recording wax. On this recording, the HOLLYWOOD DANCE BAND is a pseudonym, probably for a house band (Brian Rust doesn't list it), but the un-named vocalist is Irving Kaufman and the year 1927. The band plays a hot final chorus.



Replaceable steel needles were almost always used in gramophones of the 1920s and 30s. This small tin held 200.



Stomp and Circumstance

Graeme Davies' Life in Music

PART SIX continued from VJAZZ 48

Circumstance again arrived this time in the guise of the now late Kenny Weate's accordionist brother Bruce. "My friend Vi Greenhalf is looking for a band for her *Walnut Tree Restaurant*. She's auditioned 16 bands with kaftans, jeans, hippy beads and all, and is just about ready to give up." I told her, "You're the man for the job." So lunch was arranged with Vi and her husband, Dutch-born master restaurateur Bernard Meester, in the magnificent surrounds of *The Walnut Tree*. Budgets and details were agreed. "Could we start on Thursday the 20th of October 1988?" "Certainly!" Another 'Tree' gig.

So the new band with Doug Parkinson's former lead man Tim Piper on guitar and vocals, Martin Campbell Electric Bass, plus yours truly on sax and flute and vocals, took the stage that evening and there certainly was dancing, but, without drums the shuffling feet were louder than the band. Saturday night came to an end. How did we go? I questioned Bernard. He replied with his onomatopoeic *Dutchness*, "You are sacked, my wife wants to hear the tinkle of the piano and the boom of the drum." "What have you got in mind then?" I proffered. "Nothing," he grumbled. *Funny I thought, my estranged wife also wants to hear tinkling, the tinkle of money to pay the mortgage and, with a five night a week gig at stake I need to get creative here.* "Can you give me a couple of days to see if I can organise something?" He did!

Back to Terry Clark again. "Terry, I need to learn piano by next Tuesday! I know where the notes are and can play a few chords." My former teenage boss laughed down the phone at me. "OK get over here now, and bring beer." It was very much in the spirit of Peter Cook and Dudley Moore's marvellous comedy sketch *"The Piano Lesson"*.

The new band started the following Tuesday night, me on piano, Tim on guitar and a hyper-active singing drummer, Paul Allen, and guess who on piano! "How was that Bernard?" "Just all-right, give it another week." After Christmas 1988, I changed the line-up to bass, piano and drums eventually finishing up

with drummer Peter Whitford and singer/bassist Ian Grattidge and sometimes bassist Mike Zutenis. One night Ian 'depped' a bassist that didn't sing, so off the high-board again. Singing pianist!

It was an amazing place to be part of as most of the predominantly male waiters were gay and all had girls' names, and the band, as associate members of the 'club', got the same treatment. I was 'Grace', Whitford was 'Petra', John the barman was 'Joyce' and so on. The kitchen was 'straight' and didn't take part in the game. The restaurant had its own 'fairy stories,' like the time an obstreperous customer sent his meal back twice, the enraged Chef at the time grabbed a passing cockroach, cleavered it into three sections, dipped it in hot chocolate and had it presented to the said customer's lady with his compliments.

Another time I watched as Vi ran a lunchtime charity auction which raised over \$70,000 in one afternoon, and a box of unused condoms went for around \$800.00. She was definitely a limited edition. We were there for nine years until the restaurant closed on New Year's Eve 1997, due to Vi's deteriorating health. We'd accompanied Ernie Sigley, Johnny Ladd, Dorothy Baker, Maurie Fields, Val Jellay and Michael "Banjo" Young just to name just a few. We were never late and never missed a performance in nine years.

I saw the end coming, and having gained some experience with weddings at the restaurant, I created a small jazz agency and advertised for weddings and functions. It worked, and still does to this day.

PART SEVEN

Piano Teacher Terry Clark popped up yet again in the nineties, this time with singer Fred Cheah, drummer, Jeff Barnes, Roger McLachlan on electric bass and your writer on tenor sax and harps—*The After Dinner Mints*. Not one of my better band names. We played some pretty funky stuff and developed quite a following. The gig lasted about two years at the former Ritz in St Kilda and then Trad Jazz loomed again in the mid-nineties. I spent some great times playing clarinet and tenor sax with *The Des Camm Band* at Geelong's *Elephant and Castle* pub. I also reconnected with John Hawes, who, as circumstance would again have it, had met and been playing for several years with Terry Clark. John and I formed a five piece combo and are still playing in that line-up today.

I then met singer/guitarist Dai "Juke-Box" Jones in the late 1990's who was recovering from the break-up of *The Swinging Sidewalks*. I got a couple of former *Sideys* together again in various trios and they all decided to settle their differences and moved forward making *Steve Purcell's Pearly Shells* the success it is today. I managed to hold down the piano chair for a while in the early 2000s then did the same with Tom McEwan's *Bop Deluxe*. Both bands had a fair amount of Jive and Boogie Woogie in their repertoires so I gradually met a whole new bunch of *groovers*, with whom I've worked on and off ever since.

Jones and I recorded a CD "Ain't Misbehavin'" together in 2004, with former Walnut Tree buddy Mike Zutenis on double bass. The drummer on that CD was none other than the old Thunderbird himself, Harold Frith!



PART EIGHT

2005 was the start of *The Troubles*—skin rashes, cramps, hot spots and stuff you really don't want to know about, save that, after curing the skin stuff, cancer was diagnosed which, with complications, put me in Peter MacCallum hospital for most of 2008 and nearly segued me upstairs. Leading up to that time the illness had demolished my wind-power and I couldn't play sax or sing lead so I conveniently bought my dear friend Ashley Keating's double bass and enlisted the highly professional trumpeter Peter Uppman to do most of the vocal and instrumental work. Playing bass wasn't all that difficult for me, it all came flooding back—The Banjo Club, playing a couple of tunes while Hamish sang out front with *The Hawes Band* and that little bit of electric bass with Bob Paul. My bass teacher was 21-year-old John Kingma and he 'taught me good.' He even bought the Ray Brown Book into hospital for me so that I could practise my fingering technique, using a fat ruler as the fingerboard *a lá* gifted cellist, the late Jacqueline Du Pré.

CLOSING

I've always persisted with new styles of music including some that I didn't like at first. Gerry Mulligan was hard on my 17 year old ears after *Kid Ory's Revival Band* and in my mid-twenties I was given a "Switched on Bach" LP, Bach played on synthesisers. Suddenly I could hear all the 'strings.' I've loved Bach ever since, and find that many of my contemporaries listen to classical music when they get 'jazzed out'. Rock star and sometime jazz musician Sting recently related his own philosophy; persevere, listen to new things, embrace all music that helps you discover new things in and about yourself. I agree

Playing piano has been like opening Pandora's Box, there is always something new to take my breath away.

Thanks Auntie Ethel, thanks Terry, and thanks Vi.

REMINISCIN'...

From time to time I smile to myself and reminisce about the life-long struggle to get to the gig on time, both at the start then, while working a day job and later, as I valiantly tried to run a business and keeping playing, to preserve my sanity. I always carried an alarm clock in the car to get that precious 20 minutes of sleep between the day and night gigs. Power-naps hadn't yet been discovered! Then there was the hanging of freshly washed socks and shirts out the car window on the way to the gig, after washing them while having a short shower. Changing clothes in the street, drying jocks with a

hair dryer, shaving in the rear-vision mirror, grabbing a sandwich and washing it down with a coffee at the wheel, long before it became fashionable.

Gotta go, I'll be late for the gig.

©Graeme Davies, Musician/Writer - April 26th- 2010

Graeme Davies can be contacted at jazz@ozonline.com.au or at

34 Lyons Street, Carnegie Vic. 3163 - 0418 587 687 - 10.00 a.m.- 8.00pm.



Piano Quiz

Courtesy of Mel Blachford
(Collections Manager)

1. Name the blind English piano player born in Battersea, London who travelled to the USA and became a star.
2. In Australia which piano player started out playing reeds before changing over to piano?
3. What was the name of the film in which Fats Waller played and sang *Ain't Misbehaving*?
4. What was the name of the blind pianist who accompanied Kerry Biddell for many years?
5. What was the real name of Joe Fingers Carr?
6. Who was the pianist/bandleader whose big band in the forties bridged the gap between swing and the newer sounds?
7. Who was the pianist on Roger Bell's 1963 LP called *The Wombat*?

Answers

1. George Shearing
2. Chris Tapprell
3. Stormy Weather
4. Julian Lee
5. Lou Busch
6. Claude Thornhill
7. Rex Green

Letters to the Editor

I was pleased to read the article in *VJazz* on Denis Farrington. I happen to have written a tribute to Denis which was published in *Jazzline* in 1996 which I enclose for your interest.

J. Neville Turner

We couldn't help quoting the following anecdote from Neville's article:

I first met Denis soon after I came to Melbourne having been recommended by a bassist. Without knowing me he booked me to play with his band at the Old Melbourne Inn.

I arrived before he did. When an ebullient figure breezed in, with a red carnation in his lapel, I knew it was he. I went up to him with my hand outstretched.

"Don't shake hands!" he thundered. "People will think the band's never played together before!" I knew at once this was a rare character.

Behind the Scenes at the Archive

(Edited excerpts from the General Manager's September newsletter to VJA Volunteers)

Security Upgrade

New security gates were recently installed at the Archive. If you find the gate closed when you come to visit us, just press the bell button on the gatepost and one of our Volunteers will come out to welcome you and bring you inside.

Disabled Access

We are pleased to report that we now have a folding wheelchair for the convenience of disabled visitors. Please enquire upon arrival

Did You Know?

WINGY (JOSEPH) MANONE got his nickname after he lost an arm in a street-car accident when he was a boy. The original spelling of his surname was Mannone, but so many people spelt it wrong that he decided to join them and spell it Manone.

Moments to Remember

Reviewed by Peter J.F. Newton

Various Artists, *Moments In Time – Classic Australian Jazz In Concert*, Jazz Australia Presents, no number.

Recorded in Melbourne between 1985 and 2002.

Moments in Time is available from VJA's shop.

The Allan Browne Jazz Band: Peter Gaudion (t); Bill Howard (tb); Fred Parkes (cl); Richard Miller (as); John Scurry (g); Leon Heale (sb); Allan Browne (ldr, d). Rec. 1985. Mahogany Hall Stomp; West End Blues.

Doug De Vries' Tribute To Django: Fred Parkes (cl); Doug De Vries (ldr, g); Brendan Shearson, John Scurry (g); Gary Costello (sb); Allan Browne (d). Rec. 1987. Cherokee; Minor Swing; Liza.

Paul Furniss and Fred Parkes' Clarinet Summit: Paul Furniss (co-ldr, ss) Fred Parkes (co-ldr, cl); Graham Coyle (p); Tony Paye (sb); Allan Browne (d). Rec. 1986. The Blues My Naughty Sweetie Gives To Me.

Graham Coyle: Graham Coyle (p). Rec. 1986. Brother Can You Spare A Dime.

Graeme Bell: Graeme Bell (ldr, p); Ian Smith (d). Rec. 1989. Temptation Rag.

Fred Parkes & The New Rhythm Kings: Bill Howard (tb, v); Fred Parkes (ldr, cl); Graham Coyle (p); Leon Heale (sb); Ian Smith (d). Rec. 1990. Walking Down Mocking Bird Lane.

Tom Baker's Sydney Jazz Allstars with Stephen Grant: Eric Holroyd (t); Tom Baker (ldr, tb); Paul Furniss (rds); Stephen Grant (p); John Bates (tu); Len Barnard (wb). Rec. 1997. Whip Me With Plenty Of Love; The Eel; China Boy.

Stephen Grant: Stephen Grant (p); Mark Elton (sb); Ian Smith (d). Rec. 2002. Stardust.

Cornet Copia: Bob Barnard, Jim Cullum Jr. (co-ldrs, c); Stephen Grant (p); Mark Elton (sb); Ian Smith (d). Rec. 2002. Dancing In The Dark.

An essential part of the history of jazz in Australia is the role played by promoters, entrepreneurs, administrators and other undersung movers and shakers of jazz promotion in clubs, venues and at festivals. I don't think this story will be written in the near future, at least not by me. In many cases, such people are fundamental to making gigs happen, ensuring that musos get fairly paid, sussing out appropriate venues and twisting the arms of print and electronic media identities in hope of getting a mention that might put bums on seats. Although some promoters manage to get support from bureaucrats in high places, for the most part the people I'm referring to often have to fall back on their own resources. That's dedication for you.

In the traditional / mainstream arena, and independent of the excellent jazz clubs, three names have loomed large over the past 30 odd years – John Buchanan of Sydney and Diana Allen and John Trudinger of Melbourne. All three have produced concerts of great significance with some of Australia's foremost artists in their particular fields of interest, augmenting these appearances with some well chosen foreign musicians and singers. All three of them have committed some of the best Australian performances to disc, thus ensuring that our jazz history does not become bogged down in the distant past at the expense of the ongoing and never-ending story.

Diana Allen's *Moments in Time* (no connection with a recent book with that title compiled by Ron Spain of the South Australian Jazz Archive) is a terrific collection of well-produced examples from the Jazz Australia vault recorded in Melbourne over about twenty years and adequately accounts for most of the jazz styles favoured by Diana and her audi-

ences. For the most part, the musicians represent the cream of mainstream Sydney and Melbourne in the late 20th Century. The one exception is the appearance of Jim Cullum Jr. of Texas, who comes to Australia regularly and has made many friends with his duets in concert with Bob Barnard.

What is of particular note here is the often forgotten art of making contrasts in jazz. Take for instance, the three piano recordings by Bell, Coyle and Grant on this set. What you get is the inevitable and interesting contrast between three generations of excellent musicians set against the subtle cultural influences of past and present approaches superimposed on to a constantly evolving music. The chance and change that leads to creativity and then to innovation, a better mark of the jazz continuum than the musical mush of never-changing nostalgia. Listen and you might find similar contrastive measures within the bands, be it the Allan Browne Band which often melds traditional and modern sounds with such ease or Doug De Vries's charming tribute to Django, where he uses a third guitar as well as some exquisite clarinet from the late Fred Parkes to get different musical colours to the original Hot Club of Paris recordings. In the Browne Band, trumpeter Peter Gaudion and reed player Richard Miller are particularly impressive – listen carefully to Gaudion's high-noting on the two Armstrong classics. On the one hand he pays respectful reference the young Louis Armstrong and on the other he salutes, perhaps unwittingly, the stellar playing of some of the big band swingers who were in transition to bop in the early 40s. Elsewhere another contrast can be found between the wonderful reed playing of Fred Parkes and that of Paul Furniss, but I

won't pursue this further at this stage.

An over-riding theme to this CD is that we are also in the presence of Australian ghosts of the recent past, namely Tom Baker, Bill Howard, Len Barnard, Fred Parkes, and Gary Costello. These are musicians who should be remembered not as dead souls but for their music as well as for their personal stories. It is appropriate that although privately produced this CD is being used as a fundraiser for the Victorian Jazz Archive. With similar application, all members of the Sydney Jazz Club and many others who are not could be part of the living archive movement in Australia (a national archive and five state archives). Can you help? Yes you can! Yes you can! You might find the effort invigorating and certainly an antidote to onset Alzheimer's. Remember the pop song by Perry Como? *Magic Moments – Moments to Remember*.

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FROM THE LIBRARY

"ELLA FITZGERALD 1917-1996"

By Stuart Nicholson

Reviewed by Ken Simpson-Bull

THERE have been many biographies written about Ella Fitzgerald, but this scholarly work by Stuart Nicholson must rate as one of the best.

It was propitious that in March, 1935, up-and-coming band leader Chic Webb was looking for a female vocalist for his orchestra. As a measure of Webb's box-office status at the time: at the Apollo Theatre Duke Ellington commanded \$4,700 a week, Earl Hines \$1,400, and Chic Webb got \$950.

Born in Baltimore in 1909, Chic arrived in New York at the age of 16 as a drummer. Despite his deformity through spinal tuberculosis, he impressed musicians of the calibre of Duke Ellington, Benny Carter and Coleman Hawkins, and by 1935 had graduated from sideman to band-leader.

Chic, striving for total success, was willing to try anything that would give him a breakthrough to the public. Chic's male vocalist, Charles Linton, suggested a female vocalist and was given the go-ahead to try to find one. Ella Fitzgerald, a 17-year-old runaway from a female reform school who had won a couple of first-prizes at amateur vocal nights, and was busking on the streets of New York to earn a living, was suggested.

Linton gave Ella an audition, was impressed, and took her to meet Chic. Chic took one look and said, "You're robbing the cradle." "No, I want you to hear her sing," Linton insisted.

Chic whispered into Linton's ear, "You're not putting *that* on my bandstand." (Ella was badly clothed, unwashed, and was said to have stunk.)

"Look, if you don't listen to her sing, I'll quit!" threatened Linton. "OK, OK. When we finish [here] you've got two weeks at the Savoy Ballroom. Let her sing with the band and if the public like her we'll keep her. And if not, out. No pay."

Author Nicholson relates Ella's rise to fame from those first faltering weeks to the point that, when Chic Webb died in 1939, his famous orchestra became Ella's own.

Yet up until the demise of her big band in 1942, and having cut 150 record sides for Decca, most of her output was pop and novelty songs of dubious merit. Certainly *Undecided*, *'Tain't What You Do* and *Dipsy Doodle* with its scat singing were pleasant; but in the context of jazz singing Ella's work barely rates a mention. This early period is really only remembered for just one song: *A-Tisket*

A-Tisket.

But when Ella cut *Flying Home* (with its extended scat vocal) in 1945, jazz singing took a significant leap forward. Scat singing had been used before of course, not just by the likes of Louis Armstrong for instance, but by even earlier singers such as Johnny Marvin, Gene Austin, Cliff Edwards, Don Redman, and Lee Morse.

Flying Home backed by *Lady Be Good* wasn't released until 1947, but when it was it created a sensation. It was clear that Ella was well aware of the emerging bebop movement (she even used the word "rebop" in the vocal). Joining the New York bebop fraternity—Dizzy Gillespie, Charlie Parker, *et al*, Ella helped shape a whole new world of jazz, and of course, became a legend.

ELLA FITZGERALD 1917-1996 by **Stuart Nicholson** is available for study or to borrow by members from the Jilly Ward library at the VJA's Wantirna premises.

VJAZZ

No 49 November 2010

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OPPORTUNITIES

RESEARCHERS

Researchers, retired teachers, jazz enthusiasts or anyone with a flair for digging into the past is invited to apply. Volunteers interested in doing research on Australian Jazz Musicians please contact the editorial committee.

TOUR GUIDES

If you would like to give it a try we'd love to hear from you.

Tour Guide Co-ordinator :
Marina Pollard 9781 4972

**Do you want to join a
tour of the VJA,
and relax with refresh-
ments and live Jazz?**

You could join the following
Group Visits booked in between
now and May 2011

January 20th Thursday
Tour 10.30am, Music 11.30,
Morning Tea 12.15.

February 8th Tuesday
Morning Tea 10 am, Tour 10.45,
Music 11.30.

February 15th Tuesday
Tour 10 am, Music 10.45,
Morning Tea 11.30.

February 22nd Tuesday
Tour 10am, Music 10.45,
Morning Tea 11.30.

March 2nd Wednesday
Tour 10am, Music 10.45,
Morning Tea 11.30.

March 16th Wednesday
Tour 1.30pm, Music 2.15,
Afternoon Tea 3pm.

April 20th Wednesday
Tour 10.30, Music 11.15,
Morning Tea 12 noon.

May 17th Tuesday
Tour 1pm, Music 2pm,
Afternoon Tea 2.45.

For information and booking
contact
Marina 9781 4972

THE ARCHIVE'S INTERNATIONAL COLLECTION OF 78s

THE Archive houses a large collection of 78 rpm records of overseas artists—no fewer than 5,146 discs at the present count which are separate from the Australian collection. Almost all of these, which include acetates, are double-sided, making over 10,000 individual tracks.

It has been our previous practice to keep any duplicate discs separately numbered within the main international storage vault, so the number of individual unique discs is actually somewhat less than the figure quoted above.

Because of our current shortage of archival-condition storage space, the duplicates are now being removed to an alternate site in order to provide room for more ever-arriving discs. Ultimately the Archive hopes to achieve the largest collection of jazz-oriented discs in Australia. It should be noted that 78 rpm shellac discs do not degrade with age and thus have great longevity.

We Welcome New Members:

Richard Bailey, Jim Caddaye, Ken Cowan, Ian Dunstan, William Edward Ellis, Brian & Jill Florrimell, Bill Harley, Robert Harrison, Justin Heskett, Ian Hore, Oscar Howard, Paul & Cathie Kelly, Maggie Main & Bernie Borschmann, B Mathiesen & D Rolfe, Bruce Parkinson, Sonia Paterson & Alf Hurst, Margaret Peachey, Bill Power, Gerald A Roddam, Bob Sheppard, Doug Smith, Clint Smith, Carole Wastell.

We would like to thank the following for their generous donations.

Margaret Cleaver, Vivienne Doolan, Howard Foster, Richard Hughes, Roger Isaac, Jane LaScala & Graeme Huntington, David McDowell.



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THE NEXT
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