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VJAZZ

Proactively Collecting, Archiving and Disseminating Australian Jazz

I've Got One For Ya' by Graeme Davies. The Lady with the Camera by John Sharpe. Geoffery Orr by Ken Simpson-Bull. Jazz Memories of the USA by Tony Newstead. Standish and Company S&C #7...a Newsletter. Bix Lives At Mittagong And Elsewhere by Bill Brown. A Good Funeral by Lee & Beverley Treanor. Ragtime Pianist Extraordinaire by Gretel James. I've Got One For Ya' by Graeme Davies. The Lady with the Camera by John Sharpe. Geoffery Orr by Ken Simpson-Bull. Jazz Memories of the USA by Tony Newstead. Standish and Company S&C #7...a Newsletter. Bix Lives At Mittagong And Elsewhere by Bill Brown. A Good Funeral by Lee & Beverley Treanor. Ragtime Pianist Extraordinaire by Gretel James. I've Got One For Ya' by Graeme Davies. The



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Contents

Letters to the Editor	2
Geoffery Orr by Ken Simpson-Bull	3
I've Got One For Ya' by Graeme Davies	4
The Lady with the Camera	
by John Sharpe	4
Tony Standish S&C #7	5
Jazz Memories of the USA	
by Tony Newstead	6
A Good Funeral	
by Lee & Beverley Treanor	8
Bix Lives At Mittagong And Elsewhere	
by Bill Brown	9
The Story of a Trombone	
by Kate Dunbar	9
Ragtime Pianist Extraordinaire	
by Gretel James	10
From the Library	11

Images

Tom Lucas
Geoff King
Dr Pam Clements
Ken Simpson-Bull

Front Cover

Image



Image supplied by Tony Newstead which shows Tony playing with Eddie Condon 1958.

Left to Right - Eddie Condon, Ray Diehl, 'Buzzy' Drootin, Rex Stewart, Leonard Gaskin, Tony Newstead, Gene Schroeder, Herb Hall.

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Letters to the Editor

WHAT'S in a name, as Shakespeare once said. *Wingy Manone is not the only one to have made changes. Jack Mitchell has written us:*

Just received Vjazz 50 (a good number) - many thanks. Further to Wingy Manone's name change: George Brunies was influenced by the same nutter, became firstly Georg Brunis, but finally settled on George Brunis. Fortunately it didn't affect his trombone playing.

Another name changer was Stéphane Grappelli, originally Grapelly. Perhaps our readers can contribute a few more.

JAZZART COLLECTION NOW COMPLETE

THE ARCHIVE has now released Volumes 4 and 5 of the "Jazzart Collection" CDs. This completes the entire output of forty-two 78s and three LPs that were issued by Bob Clemens on the JAZZART label between 1948 and 1951. Volume 4 features the works of the "progressives" Don Harper, Don Banks, Ron Loughhead, Rex Stewart, and Bruce Clarke, while volume 5 is dedicated to 'Splinter' Reeves. The complete **Jazzart Collection** is an important part of Australia's recording history of Jazz performances and is a *must* for lovers of the local Jazz scene from days gone by.

All CDs are available from the VJA shop in Wantirna or on-line at www.vicjazzarchive.org.au

100

HAPPY BIRTHDAY FRED

Swing man Fred Hosking recently celebrated his 100th birthday.

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VJA BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

The VJA Rosstown Fundraiser

The Rosstown Fundraiser was held on Sunday 29th May featuring the New Melbourne Jazz Quintet.

The group comprised Peter Uppman (trumpet and vocals), Ron Trigg (tenor sax, clarinet and flute), Charlie Farley (banjo, guitar and vocals), Simon Vancam (bass fiddle), Peter Whitford (drums and washboard).

The Fundraiser was a great success. The popular Dixie jazz was enjoyed by the large audience who often sang along with the band. Many raffle and door prizes were shared by the audience and we raised the wonderful sum of \$1,900 on the day. The next fundraiser at the Rosstown is on Sunday 31st of July featuring **The Moonee Valley Jazz Band**.

Marina Pollard – Visitor Services

Kenny Powell Died. 19.6.2011

Sadly, I report that pianist Kenny Powell died on Sunday, 19th June 2011. A great musician, a genuine character and a friend to so many of us. His jolly chuckle will be missed. **Bill Haesler.**

We Welcome these New Members:

Garry Adams, Geoff Asher, Lorraine Bell, Owen Brown, Marceau Camille, Ray W. Chapman, Mark Cherny, Claire Crewe, Barry Gust, Ken Hallam, Arthur E. Howard, Kenton Johanson, Ron Kreymbors, Colin Macleod, Beverley & John McArthur, Peter McErlain, Bruce Phillips, Keith Rogers, Ron Santen, Daniel Saporta, Stewart Sharples, George Simons, Joseph Tobias, Wim Van Der Leeuw, Norman Whitfield, Joel Yong, Audrey Youdan.

We would like to thank the following for their generous donations

Rowland Ball, John Bentley, BlueTone Jazz Band, Ron Bowman, Ron Breckenridge, Wes Brown, Bryan Clothier, Pauline Collins-Jennings, Peter J. Fullarton, Prof. William Hare, John & Dorothy Kessner, John May, Keith McCubbery, Deslys Milliken, Wal & Jill Mobilia, Geoffrey H. Norris, Mario Proto, John D. Thompson, Peter Tierney, Ngaire Turner, Frank Van Straten OAM, Cecil Warner, Tom Woods.

GEOFFERY ORR

Band Vocalist, Music Historian,
Archivist, and Creator of Lyric Records.

By Ken Simpson-Bull

GEOFFERY ORR has been singing for many years. As a child he sang with the local church choir where he became the number-one boy soprano. At age nine he was invited to join the Australian Boys Choir but was unable because of family commitments. Nevertheless, he continued his singing at high school and later at Monash University where he was training to be a teacher—something that he never became.

One of Geoff's first jobs, in the early 1970s, was with the *Bentleigh Sewing and Record Centre*. Forget about the sewing! Jim McManus' *Bentleigh Record Centre* was a Melbourne icon at the time. The store, in Centre Road, Bentleigh, was the source of much rare jazz, imported popular music, classics and nostalgia—records that were generally not available elsewhere.

Working in the store amongst all this esoteric material inspired Geoff to become a collector, especially of memorabilia relating to Australian performers and their music. It was during this period that he started restoring the works of popular artists of the 1930s and releasing them on his own *Lyric* record label—artists such as Al Bowlly, Chick Bullock, and Smith Ballew.

Graeme Bell was a client

The client-base of the shop included many jazz musicians and radio-station presenters. (Graeme Bell, Neville Stribling, and Ian Smith were all clients.) As a result, Geoff found that he had access to much Australian musical knowledge as well as rare radio transcriptions and the like. Unlike many collectors, Geoff felt that this material, representing Australia's musical heritage, needed to be preserved and made available for future generations. He began to restore and preserve this material in a more durable manner than the form in which it existed at the time—acetate discs, reel-to-reel tapes and cassettes. Geoff used CDs as his major preservation format soon after the introduction of this technology.

For posterity purposes, Geoff has posted much of this material, which also includes photographs and printed matter, with the Victorian State Library (and hence the National Library). The Victorian Jazz Archive is also a beneficiary of much rare and historic jazz that Geoff has rescued from oblivion and kindly donated.

It was also during Geoff's employment at the shop that he decided to return to singing. He took singing lessons and joined a small band—*Max Hooper's Hot Shots*—as their vocalist. This popular group included Johnny "Ice-cream" Hopwood on guitar and banjo, Max's wife Susie on bass, Don Standing on trumpet, Herman Scheidler on trombone and Roy Gillott on piano. They often played at the

Manor House in the city with guests such as Des Edwards.

Geoff next formed a band of his own known as *Art Fodder's Cream Jungle Swooners*—basically a "cool" group, with Ken White on guitar, David White (no relation) on trumpet, Bill Kerr on clarinet, and Ron Dann on drums. "We played classy café joints in the city," Geoff remembered. "I also worked for a while with Tim Harding's *Cotton Club Orchestra*."

The John Wanner Band

One day Geoff got an offer from band-leader John Wanner to join his band. That was in 1983 and Geoff has been their vocalist ever since, both with John's Big Band and also his smaller group known as *Silver Service*. Their long-term contract with the RACV ensures regular work. Geoff greatly admires John's band arrangements, in particular the recreations of the music of the 1920s and 30s. Because of the great familiarity and knowledge that Geoff has of the singers of that period, he is able to emulate the mood completely. "The young people love it because most of them have never heard that type of music before," Geoff observed.

"There's nothing like live music," he remarked. "These days you look at the music magazines and they praise the DJs. But that's not live music. However, there are a few places we refuse to work at because we get treated so shabbily. The Crown Casino is one." The customers are obviously not there to listen to music.

Geoff continues to restore early Australian sound recordings and make them available on his *Lyric* record label. The original *Lyric* label, with its Lyrebird logo, was created by the *Klippel Record Company* in Sydney in 1932 but only lasted a short time. A second *Lyric* label was formed by Alf Potter in the early fifties. Geoff recalled, "I believe there was only one release, and that was William Flynn and the 3DB orchestra."

Geoff decided to keep the Australian lyrebird logo going with the creation of his own *Lyric* label in 1977. His first releases were on vinyl and featured vocalists like Smith Ballew about whom he wrote a biography. Nowadays, virtually all of Geoff's *Lyric* releases are of Australian performers. For instance, he has just concluded the restoration of "With a Song in my Heart", a musical radio series of 52 episodes that 3DB made between 1949 and 1951. The programs were written and directed by Jack O'Hagan. William Flynn conducted the orchestra.

Geoff is very familiar

with Jack O'Hagan, who was probably Australia's most prolific and talented song composer of the 1920s and 30s. "Jack was the CEO of *Allans Music* from 1920 to 1931," Geoff said. "He also ran his own *O'Hagan Music* from 1928 until 1936." Jack, who was also a singer, made several short films for *Efftee* (Frank Thring Senior's company) around 1930, and Geoff has transferred their sound-tracks to CD. Geoff is a friend of the O'Hagan family and recently liaised between the National Library and the family regarding the borrowing of some of their historically valuable memorabilia. Geoff has ensured that most of Jack's recorded compositions are now in the State Library of Victoria.

Geoff the composer

On the subject of song composers, Geoff has had at least one of his own compositions released. Inspired by the Sydney Harbour Bridge tunes that became popular at the opening of Sydney's great landmark, Geoff wrote "Westgate—the Bridge We Have Waited For" and recorded it with *Ken Hunt & His Quartet*. In the group were Fred Sommerville on clarinet, Ken Hunt on vibraphone, Roy Gillett on piano, and Jim Mills on guitar. Geoff, of course, sang.

About ten years ago Geoff decided to retire from singing. "My voice was becoming very tired in the vibrato," he said. However, after a while he developed a form of asthma and his doctor advised that he return to singing. This Geoff did, and presently he is singing as well as ever. Nevertheless, Geoff stated that he still benefits from the voice training he continues to get from his friend, Ron Rosenberg.



Geoffery Orr at the microphone

I've Got One For Ya'

By Graeme Davies



I'VE GOT ONE FOR YA'! has been David Rankin's opening line since he first learned to dial a phone, it was usually a limerick, he being a master limericist, or a joke of dubious origin bursting with feminine lewdity, viz.

*A pianist who played in a trio,
Was fond of a girl called Cleo
As she dispensed with her panties,
There was no andantes,
Only allegro con brios.*

A measure of Rankin's limerick skills was apparent when a limerick challenge between him and American trumpeter Clark Terry ended in a toe-to-toe draw in 1974 at the 29th Jazz Convention in Croydon, Victoria. There was always an endless supply of laughing material from David Laurence Rankin born in 1936 near Moonee Ponds, Melbourne, Victoria.

His mother, singer Frances, didn't survive the birthing and father, pianist Bruce, passed young David into the care of his married sister Anne Rankin's family. An education at St Bernard's College Essendon shaped the young Rankin's attitude to life, the beatings and sadism at that time probably pushing him towards a career that would make people laugh, be happy and also jolt them out of their everyday routines. This he achieved! The name "Rankin" became synonymous with, not only great entertainment but also outrageous stunts, in restaurants, on stage and in the streets of Melbourne when conservatism ruled the day. His penchant and skill with twisted lyrics is ably demonstrated in "If you see Kay". His foray into jazz was with drummer **Spike Edwards Rhythm Ramblers** circa 1956 followed by various bands including the famed **Melbourne New Orleans Jazz Band** and eventually the **Alan 'Sny' Chambers' Bands** which played hard, drank hard, partied hard and made the hit parade in 1963 with their version of *Steptoe and Son*. Rankin and Sny were the perfect

combination, *nice people* as the music reminds us. Sny, an excellent trumpeter and vocalist was ably supported by **David Robinson**, clarinet, **John Cavanagh** banjo/vocals, **Tom Arrowsmith**, piano, with **John 'Gypsy' Bennett**, sousaphone, taking over from the prematurely lost **Brian Carter** plus **Don Boardman** drums and our hero on trombone, gags and stunts. The band kept Melbourne Town Hall dancing and laughing from around 1958 up to 1966 during which time Dave was privileged to work with comedians Maurie Fields and Sid Heylen during Sunday *closed door* nights at Elizabeth Street's **Hollyford Hotel** where he refined his timing and comedy talents while playing their 'straight man'.

He then moved to Adelaide and played in several bands with **Dick Frankel** and other Adelaide luminaries, including the very successful **Abraham Lott Blues Band** which featured regularly on Adelaide's Channel 10 "Teen Time". Returning in the early 70s he formed the first **Dave Rankin Band**, which played at Doug McIntyre's (brother of pianist Willie) **Railway Hotel** in Port Melbourne. It included trumpeter **Ian Orr**, electric bassist/vocalist **Tom Cowburn**, with **David Robinson** clarinet, drummer **Peter Clohesy** and banjoist **Peter McCormick**, who were replaced, after the band moved to The Lemon Tree Hotel, by saxophonist **Graeme Davies**, pianist **Ron Sedgeman** and the remarkable drummer **Glenn Bayliss** to become the **Rankin File**.

The Lemon Tree Hotel was Melbourne's first Saturday afternoon gig. It was hugely popular leaving just enough room for number-one fans Harry and Susie to dance on the wine sodden carpet. Rankin and Davies commenced most Rankin File gigs by giving a reading of the Women's Weekly social pages, updating a captivated audience with the current antics of Toorak's daughters, Prue, Tiffany, Jane and their beaux' adventures in Portsea, South Yarra and Hayman Island. The dynamic duo also gave weekly translations of, as yet undiscovered, Lemon Tree chef Iain 'Huey' Hewitson's French menu, all resulting in tears, laughter and much muttering from the band waiting to play. There was always a bit of interplay with Owen Yateman's bands and Yatey's drummer, **Ian Coots**, who played the last eighteen months of the Lemon Tree and also Thursday nights at **Bob Walton's** Dick Whittington Hotel. When **Owen Yateman's** Big Fat Brarse took over the Lemon Tree gig in 1975 they seconded Graeme Davies and held the residency until 1980. When he left 'The Tree' Dave formed Rank 'n' Banned which featured **Doug Dehn**, trumpet, **Pat Miller**, tenor sax, **Dick Cullen**, banjo, plus bassist **Derek Capewell** and **Alan**

Richards on drums. In 1983 our boy got wanderlust again and moved to Sydney where he did quite well until tighter liquor laws decimated the Sydney gig scene. An offer to join a band near Lismore took him further northward to the little town of Iluka. He then joined **The Grafton City Jazz Band** which had **Colin Jones**, trumpet, **Dave Croft**, electric bass, **Kevin Maling**, drums, **Geoff Gissane**, piano, and the now re-branded '**Davey**' **Rankin**, trombone and vocals. Davey eventually settled in Lismore, attending Lismore University to complete an Arts/Music Associate Music Diploma, buy a house and create a highly successful singing telegram service. *He's still there.*

The Lady with the Camera

By John Sharpe

THOSE who regularly attend jazz festivals around the country will have seen her. She is usually towards the front to the left or right of the stage or sometimes located upstairs in the hall or theatre with her video camera pointed down at the action below. Diminutive in stature, she does not stand out but can be seen hovering around the tripod continually making adjustments, scribbling in a note book, glaring at people who move in front of the camera or breaking off every now and then to applaud a particularly good solo or laugh heartily at a humorous remark made by one of the jazz musicians on stage.

It may be in the capitals of Canberra, Sydney, Perth or Melbourne or in the rural jazz festival centres of Kyneton, Halls Gap, Merimbula, Dubbo, Bowral, Wagga, Moe and many other places where jazz bands come together including the annual Australian Jazz Conventions at various locations across Australia. She also pops up at special jazz club functions, tributes, exhibitions and the occasional private jam session. Wherever jazz is likely to be played by prominent local musicians.

She is the lady with the camera – Lois Stephenson. Lois lodges her master tapes with the Australian Jazz Archive, housed and administered by the National Film and Sound Archive. Along with this goes meticulously recorded information on their contents – dates, places, bands and individual members and their tunes. Screen Sound Australia values the contribution she is making and the quality of her work and provides her with film. She also provides a copy to her local archive, the Victorian Jazz Archive.

Apart from the travel and the many hours spent making the film there are the hundreds of hours involved in editing



Image supplied by Lois Stephenson

them before lodgement. While a very large quantity of her film has already gone to the Archives, her house is full of as much again waiting to be processed. Husband, Fred, puts up with all of this. Luckily he has the same interest in the music and its preservation and on some occasions will accompany her but, being a bass player, from time to time other commitments, including band gigs preclude him from doing so. So there can be long road trips on her own. Lois receives no financial gain from her efforts. It's something she personally wants to do. She meets her own travelling and accommodation expenses and they can be considerable. Her efforts go relatively unsung and this is partly my motivation for writing this article.

Old newsreel clips in which Australian jazz musicians appear are relatively few in number and their contents fragmented or incomplete and, while a significant number of musicians appeared on television programmes, enquiries often find that the particular film has been culled or otherwise disappeared from station libraries. A need has therefore existed for a more formalised archiving effort. This Lois provides. Her contribution is enormous and will not be fully appreciated until, with the passing of time, and of the current, sometimes aging crop of musicians, we come to realise how important the images she is busily recording now, will be, for those in the future with an academic, studious or personal interest in the history of the Australian form of this music and the individual contributors to it. Just think of the number of musicians you are aware of who have passed away in the last year or so, some of whose live performance was never visually recorded. Examples of deceased musicians Lois was able to capture on film in recent years include Greg Gibson, Bill Howard, Hans

Karssemeyer, Neville Stribling and Tom Baker.

Those interested in Australian jazz and its preservation owe Lois a considerable debt of gratitude. I hope she continues the good work and that others appreciate it as much as I do. Next time you see her, tell her.

John Sharpe has had a life-time interest in Jazz especially Australian Jazz and is a jazz trombonist, researcher and author. We consider ourselves fortunate to have his books in the Archive-

A Cool Capital: The Canberra Jazz 1925-2005

Don't Worry Baby, They'll Swing Their Arses Off—The Stories of Australian Jazz Musicians'.

I Wanted to be a Jazz Musician.

Tony Standish S & C #7... a newsletter

MY FIRST recollections of Warwick Dyer are of a crumpled sort of bloke in a white windcheater and trousers that had obviously been slept in, or of a musician dressed like the New Orleans Rhythm Kings in the photograph with Rappolo, dinner suit shiny, on a bandstand – I think at the Dance Palais at the Mordialloc Carnival, circa 1947, Summer.

I was an embryonic jazz fan then. I knocked around with a bunch of pseudo-tough, Catholics, mostly ex-St Bede's College, who cruised the beaches and parks of Mordy, looking for sheilas and being revoltingly boisterous and – harmless. Summer nights we hung out at the Mordy Carnival, where the incredibly sexy Pat Henderson ran a stall where you were invited to knock over cigarette packs with a pop gun at threepence a go, keep the fags if you won.

We heard the music on this warm bayside night, wafting in from the pier end of the carnival. Could this be Bolden, callin' his chillun home? (I was deep into Charles Edward Smith at the time.) We sauntered down to the Palais for a listen. A sign said it was *Frank Johnson's Fabulous Dixielanders*. Tommy Lavin, 'Ecca' Harvey and I had a bit of a conference, and decided we'd put in a request. I was elected. Looking as cool as anyone can in fawn gabardines and two-tone cardy, I approached the band. The leader fresh-faced, with lank blond hair like a Scotch College lair, looked askance at this callow lad. I stared him in the eye and said: "You know 'Snake Rag'?" That got him! He asked me where had I heard of 'Snake Rag'. Impressed. In those days we really were an underground movement, and I'd uttered a password.

Anyway, the band played 'Snake Rag', and it sounded a whole lot better than the Bob Wilbur version that was around on Ampersand 78. In fact, hearing the Johnson band then was sort've like being present at Funky Butt Hall, or the Royal Gardens, or the Onyx Club – it was something that, over forty years down the track, you realise you were very fortunate to have witnessed.

The *Fabulous Dixielanders* were like a good footy team, each member was a talented individual in his own right, but the team work was the Main Thing. Like the Beatles, the whole was better than the individual components. Something jelled with the Johnson band, and they never really survived the losses they eventually sustained. Nick Polites is a fine clarinettist, but when he replaced Geoff Kitchen the band was not the same. And the death of Warwick Dyer not long after Kitch's departure really signalled the end of an era.

Well, that's it - 'Wocka' Dyer played the trombone with the Johnson band. He played as he was - unbridled, passionate, fun-loving. He could sound as sweet as Tommy Dorsey at times, roar like Ory at others; he could go from raucous to romantic, from 'Ice Cream' to 'Stealaway Blues' or 'Sweet Substitute'. He would light farts on the bandstand, fall off his chair during a 'Pride of Erin' (Mechanics Institute, Mordialloc) and above all, he laughed a lot. He was a fabulous jazz musician and a friendly, nice bloke. I, for one, still miss him.

From the Tony Standish files.

HISTORY PROJECT GROUP

THE HISTORY of the Victorian Jazz Archive from day one and even before that, is the subject of the History Project Group, formed recently at the behest of Jeff Blades. Although there had been some talk over the past couple of years to do something about our history, it took a strong reminder from Jeff, that a lot of the pertinent information could be lost, as time races by.

As I have a deal of the early material available, it was up to me to start the ball rolling. After much discussion it was determined that a written history would be too costly to produce, so the Group decided to digitize all that was available and transfer it to portable hard drive. This would mean scanning all the written material, although much has already been committed to digitization including photos, and the 50 issues of VJAZZ Magazine.

It is hoped the project will be completed by this time next year, and most of the sorting and collation finished by Christmas. Thanks to Jeff for giving us a kick up the backside.

John Kennedy

Jazz Memories of the USA

Tony Newstead—Part 1

MY FIRST VISIT to the USA was in 1958. The future possibilities of telecommunications (my particular field) were just beginning to be recognised and I had been lucky enough to get a government scholarship for a year's post-grad. study in UK and USA. For the first nine months I was at Imperial College, London University, where we formed quite a creditable jazz group. A couple of us also played at a regular Friday lunchtime concert at the Fleet St. Jazz Club in Fetter Lane, the heart of the newspaper fraternity. This was reputedly the oldest jazz club in Britain and is still going strong.

We had some fine guest artists on occasions including Sandy Brown, Kenny Baker and Kenny Ball who took my place when I left. At that stage he wasn't well known but a year later he had made "Midnight in Moscow" and a considerable amount of fame and fortune.

The rest of the year I spent with companies in Europe and USA. Paris, Brussels, Munich and Stockholm were the European cities and all had exciting jazz spots. The 1958 Brussels World Fair was in session and the US pavilion featured daily recitals by jazz greats. I caught up with a band that included Sidney Bechet, Vic Dickenson, Buck Clayton and Sarah Vaughan. In Stockholm the Norman Grantz "Jazz at the Phil" was performing, with Zoot Sims, tenor sax and Phineas Newborne, piano. Jazz was alive and well in Europe!

Arriving in New York where I spent the final month of winter, I was booked into a small hotel just off Times Square; not the most salubrious part of the Big Apple but at the centre of Downtown and the entertainment district. The Metropole Bar was within walking distance where every night and week-end afternoons you could hear and meet players like Coleman Hawkins, Roy Eldridge, Joe Jones, and Charlie Shavers for the price of a beer. The Metropole was a long narrow room with an elevated band stand down one side with mirrors behind to make it less claustrophobic, and a string of tables along the opposite wall. (When I next visited New York, ten years later, the physical set up was the same but the jazz had finished; there was a rock group with go-go dancers.)

It was an informal set-up. Musicians would sit in for a set or two, then adjourn either to the house bar or to Julius's opposite, where drinks were cheaper and the noise level more conducive to conversation. Here you could meet and actually talk to your jazz record idols!

With very few exceptions they were great guys, amazed and amused to learn that their names and their music were known and admired in places that must have seemed to them to be almost off the planet.

Down in Greenwich Village, Nick's was the top jazz spot, where the Eddie

"you could hear and meet players like Coleman Hawkins, Roy Eldridge, Joe Jones, and Charlie Shavers for the price of a beer."

Condon alumni had held sway for some years, but the Condon Club had recently moved to a new venue on East 56th St.. Bobby Hackett was doing a season at Nick's then, and being a committed Hackett devotee since his famous Commodore record session with Condon in 1949, it was some thrill to meet the man and hear that wonderful horn in the flesh. I still treasure a signed greeting from him on a Nick's menu card.

Back in central NY, at the Condon Club, Rex Stewart was on trumpet. I had got to know Rex fairly well during his Australian tour with Graham Bell in 1949. Graham had invited my group as a caretaker for his regular Saturday night at the Uptown Club in North Melbourne (the venue for the first Australian Jazz Convention), when his band first went overseas to Prague and UK in 1948.

Soon after their return in 1949 they organised an Australian tour with Rex Stewart, and my band played on the bill at the memorable **Rex Stewart-Bell concert at the Exhibition Building, attended by some 2500 fans!** In the following months Rex also did a number of gigs and sessions around Melbourne so we got together quite a few times. On my first visit to Condon's, Rex invited me to sit in and the following night I brought my horn and did just that - with some trepidation!

The set went pretty well and Rex asked if I would like to play for the next hour or so as he wanted to catch the Turk Murphy band - domiciled in San Francisco at Earthquake McGoons - which was performing briefly in New York, that week.

So, a memorable night it was for me. We had Herbie Hall's (Ed's brother) on clarinet, 'Cutty' Cutsall trombone, Gene Shroeder piano, 'Buzzy' Drootin drums, Leonard Gaskin on bass and Eddie Condon on guitar - that is, when he was-

n't working the room with a glass of Chivas at the ready! The band photograph (pictured), duly notated by all and Eddie actually playing, still occupies pride of place in my music room today.

A short distance further uptown was Jimmy Ryan's, another famous jazz venue which had as house band the Wilbur de Paris ensemble with Wilbur on trombone, brother Sydney on cornet, Omar Simeon clarinet, Don Frye piano, Wilbur Kirk drums and Lee Blair on banjo. A marvellous relaxed combo playing authentic New Orleans Creole jazz. Their "Martinique" LP is a classic.

For intermissions, they had a trio comprising Don Frye piano, Zutty Singleton drums and Cecil Scott clarinet. I got friendly with these guys and, with a verbal reference from Rex, was invited to sit in. This worked out well and for my remaining few weeks in New York the Friday night intermission trio was expanded to a quartet, and I also played a couple of college jobs with them. My cup runneth over!

One weekend Cecil invited me to join his family for Sunday lunch and I spent the afternoon with them. He lived in the deep heart of Harlem, not a location where white folks normally visited, accessed by subway "A" train (honestly!) followed by a half mile walk. But Cecil had it well organised; his son Ronald would meet me at the subway station and escort me to the house. Everyone in the neighbourhood knew Ronald and I would be OK. And so it worked out.

Lunch was traditional N.O. fare cooked by his wife Leone - southern fried chicken, collard greens, red beans and rice. Cecil washed it down with the first third of a bottle of Scotch I'd brought for him. Ronald had been sent down to the drug store to get a six pack of Michelob beer for me as this was before I acquired a taste for finer things.

By the end of the afternoon the whisky bottle was exhausted but Cecil wasn't visibly impaired, just a bit more talkative than usual as he got ready for his evening gig. In the afternoon he had been reminiscing about the early years when he played with the *Clarence Williams Washboard Band* and first came to New York. He got his initial big break here - like so many of the great black jazz artists - playing at the Apollo Theatre in Harlem. He featured in a trio as both clarinetist and tap dancer. Halfway through his number he would jump on top of the grand piano, do his dance then take another chorus concluding with a jump to the floor into the splits position, still playing, to loud applause.

This career finished prematurely

one night when after a job he had visited a lady friend whose musician husband returned home unexpectedly early, just when things had reached the critical stage. He went for Cecil with a razor. Cecil's response was an immediate exit via the window which unfortunately was on the second floor. As a result he had to exchange one leg for a wooden one which put an end to his Apollo days but fortunately not to his clarinet playing, which was always original, creative and exciting.

Clive Whitcombe, an initial drummer with The Port Jackson Jazz Band (Sydney), had moved to New York a couple of years earlier and was working part time for a Middle Eastern Embassy (which provided the work permit), running a small printing press in his basement and doing a late night shift looking after a car parking lot in mid - Manhattan. A real enthusiast, Clive knew the good jazz spots and a number of the musicians, both downtown and up in Harlem.

One Saturday night he picked me up around 11 pm in his ageing Chevy and we headed north in search of the action.

"Make sure you bring your horn with you", he had said; not for playing purposes but to provide a measure of protection. "If they see you're a musician we'll be a lot safer!" We had a great night doing the small Harlem jazz spots like Bill Basie's; the only white folk in the place but nobody hassled us. I hope the same would apply today...

This was the start of an era when small groups were displacing the bigger bands for economic reasons, aided and abetted by the advent of electronics whereby one muso could replace a three piece rhythm section - badly.

Around 4 am we meandered back to Clive's car parking lot. They had a small caravan there for the all-night attendant, where we adjourned for a couple of hours. Clive was learning the trumpet and the still Manhattan night was rent with the sound of enthusiastic, if somewhat primitive duets.

At dawn, hunger got the better of blowing and we headed for a mid-town diner frequented by some of the late night New York jazz musos and by Clive after his night shifts. A guy in his early twenties with a soft alto case under his

arm came in and joined us. Clive introduced him as Phil Woods. The name didn't mean anything to me at the time, until Clive confided that he had just been nominated Downbeat's top alto sax player of 1958. Phil had learnt alto from none other than Charlie Parker and was a close disciple of Bird in his final years.

Jazz was likewise alive and active at least in the big cities, but the popular heyday was drawing to a close. Rock and Roll was capturing the multitudes and the Beatles were soon to burst on the scene.

When I arrived to live in Washington D.C. twelve years later, there were still some great jazz venues with great players, but the scale had diminished. Audiences were smaller and jazz once again returned to the status of specialised music for aficionados. Not altogether a bad thing. After all, that's how it was when most of us all discovered it.

Tony Newstead - a wonderful musician and a founding member of the VJA. His CD - *The best of Tony Newstead - a Retrospective* can be purchased from the Archive's shop.



TONY NEWSTEAD PLAYING WITH EDDIE CONDON

Left to Right - Eddie Condon, Ray Diehl, 'Buzzy' Drootin, Rex Stewart, Leonard Gaskin, Tony Newstead, Gene Schroeder, Herb Hall.

1958

Tony, it was a pleasure!
Buzzy Drootin

To Tony
The Best of Luck
Leonard Gaskin

Tony - 1600 Broadway
Eddie Condon

Good to know you, Tony,
Gene Schroeder

Ray Diehl
Keep Blowing

Fair Dinkum, "Cobber"
you are still session me!!
Rex Stewart

Keep Swinging Old Top!!
Herb Hall

A Good Funeral

By Lee and Beverley Treanor

TRICKY THINGS FUNERALS. Overwhelmingly sad, deeply religious, woe-fully impersonal, grief stricken, maudlin; they can be any or all of these, but rarely are they 'good'. No doubt it helps if the deceased has provided some guidance as to what she wants, as my mother-in-law, Margaret Wratten did when we were faced with her death in March. She had prepaid for her funeral, way back in 1985, and had requested a graveside service and a New Orleans-style brass band. Margaret suffered a stroke, and in her final days her daughter Beverley, our daughters Helen and Kim, and I ensured her bedside was never left unattended. Tired and emotional as we all were, her requests were just one more burden.

If her son, Barry, had been in the country he would, no doubt, have attended to the matter, but... So where to find a brass band? One phone call to Sandro Donati and the problem was solved. On the day, Sandro, Ian Smith, Hugh de Rosayro, Les Fithall, Pat Miller, Nick Polites, Howard Cairns, Richard Mander and Lyn Wallis lined up and led the hearse to the grave, playing *In The Sweet Bye And Bye*, and *What A Friend We Have In Jesus*. The chaplain from the nursing home had volunteered to lead the service and, after a few words of welcome, invited the band to continue with *Just A Closer Walk With Thee* before continuing with a brief outline of Margaret's life. This was followed by a full and graceful eulogy by our daughter Helen. A Mozart clarinet concerto was

played on CD during the laying of flowers and the committal to the grave. The service ended with the band playing *Just A Little While to Stay Here*, which even had the chaplain softly singing along. If the music could reach her in some way I am sure that Margaret's eyes would have been dancing in step with her smile.

I met Margaret on the same night I met Beverley and Beverley was only sixteen. I knew very early on if I was going to marry Bev, then Margaret was an integral part of the package. Liking her wasn't hard: indeed, I was to find out she had a subversive sense of humour which she deployed with effect within the family. Over the past fifty years, Beverley and I helped her through the death of John and of her husband, Robert; the times when she sorely missed Barry due to his extended periods in Sydney, Europe and America; the death of her beloved sister, Dorrie. We helped her move house on several occasions as she rearranged her life. The photo albums Bev has assiduously put together show Margaret at the centre of our family; she is there over all those years, with our daughters, with our friends, on our holidays and in our various business endeavours.

I met Beverley because I was part of the Yarra Yarra New Orleans Jazz Band, which her brother, John, had hired to play at the local scout hall. The band played a lot of gospels. Thus, Margaret was introduced to New Orleans jazz and was able to hear songs she had known from her days as a Methodist performed in what was, to her, a new and exciting form of music. I was also instrumental in Barry, by then fifteen, moving from the piano accordion –

which he didn't like – to the clarinet – which he took to immediately – and I took great joy in watching him become one of Melbourne's finest jazz musicians. Much later, on her visits to Barry in New Orleans, Margaret was to hear these gospels first-hand. She always loved them, frequently playing George Lewis' versions of them at home. Having the band play them so beautifully at the service was a delight and, as everyone there agreed, was a major factor in making it a 'good' funeral. Our family extends our thanks to each of the musos and to all of the jazz fraternity who attended.

Melbourne International Jazz Festival June 4 -13

THIS was a jam-packed exciting Festival program with many thrilling performers.

A Tribute to Australian Swing: featuring James Morrison and special guests, one of whom was Don Burrows, was held on the 13th.



This photo was taken at the Melbourne Town Hall at James Morrison's concluding concert. Jennifer Kerr, General Manager of the Melbourne International Jazz Festival, Les Newman, roaming ambassador for the VJA and Melanie Pose, Production Manager MIJF, are seen here in front of the VJA's display in the foyer.

An almost capacity crowd enjoyed a journey through the history of swing legends at this concert, which was enhanced by the projection of photos and archival footage provided by the Victorian Jazz Archive.

The Archive was very pleased to play an active part in this year's festival and is looking forward to taking part next year.



Ian Smith (Trumpet), Sandro Donati (Trumpet), Les Fithall (Trombone), Pat Miller (Saxophone), Hugh De Rosayro (Trombone), Nick Polites (Clarinet), Lynn Wallis (Drums), Howard Cairns (Tuba), Richard Mander (Drums).

Image supplied by Lee Treanor.

BIX LIVES AT MITTAGONG AND ELSEWHERE.

By Bill Brown

THE annual pilgrimage to the lovely Southern Highlands area of New South Wales for John Buchanan's jazz 'knees-up' is a must for discerning jazz lovers. I have attended three of these illustrious events and each one has afforded a wealth of great musical cavalcades. Always well thought-out programs bring out the best in the assorted array of musicians gathered in various groupings to highlight sundry periods of jazz history from the pre-forties era of the 'good noise' as some of us seasoned punters are wont to refer to the golden age.

This year was no exception; indeed the program was enhanced by the presence of two American visitors Andy Schumm (cornet and piano) and Josh Duffee (drums). Both musicians are steeped in the music of the legendary white cornetist Bix Beiderbecke. Indeed, Duffee hails from Bix's birthplace, Davenport, Iowa. Back there he leads a big band, which emulates the music of Jean Goldkette, a band that the great Bix played in for some time.

So both of those fine players fitted in well with the Bixian sets over the weekend also contributing to other twenties tributes, including a nod in the direction of Freddie Keppard, a somewhat obscure figure, an eccentric, who covered his trumpet fingerings with a handkerchief in case anyone copied him; then a set covering the music of Tiny Parham, another twenties identity. On those tracks Andy Schumm revealed his prowess on the piano.

Both of those fellows really excelled in the Saturday afternoon session of music from a reconstructed Jean Goldkette Big Band segment. In this aggregation were two of Melbourne's stars, and indeed, in a way the hosts for the two visitors, Michael McQuaid on various reeds and trumpet, and Jason Downes on reeds.

Further sets on the Saturday included a ragtime session of Scott Joplin's red book arrangements and as a contrast, a tribute to the great Coleman Hawkins in his blossoming period in the thirties. Michael McQuaid excelled himself here on tenor including Hawk's tenure in Europe. I thought, "He must do *Body And Soul*," a number embedded in jazz history and, of course, he did.

The evening of Saturday was given over to the 1938/39 tracks of the great Artie Shaw Orchestra. Last year, at this time, there was a replay of the Goodman 1938 Carnegie Hall Concert. This year equaled that. A fine big band did the honours with Trevor Rippingale's clarinet fulfilling the Shaw role with panache.

On Sunday a church service, with jazz hymns provided by Geoff Bull's band, was the start for another fine day of hot music. There was a segment dealing with the activities of the Dorsey Brothers Tommy and Jimmy, before they became big band swing leaders. It was remembered that both brothers, renowned as trombone (Tommy) and sax and clarinet (Jimmy), had played trumpet in their formative years. Geoff Power, renowned brass player, gave a classy rendition of Tommy's *I'm Getting Sentimental Over You* plus an authentic 'dummy spit' impression of Tommy storming off the bandstand when the brothers had their memorable falling out.

Further sets dealt with New Orleans groups in the twenties and a tribute to **Wingy Manone** a charismatic off-beat trumpet man who led a few hot little bands mixing fine jazz playing with showbiz-type tunes including *Ain't It A Shame About Mame* often featured by our own late, great Roger Bell.

Finally a session by the 'Hot Jazz Alliance', basically the two U.S. guests plus Michael, Jason with John Scurry (Guitar, Banjo), and Leigh Barker (Bass). This group had been on a tour around and I'm sure would have made a great impression on discerning jazz lovers.

The week prior to Mittagong, Andy and Josh appeared with Michael's Red Hot Rhythmakers at Melba Hall in Melbourne assisted by vocalist Tamsin West. There was a mixture of big-band numbers with Bix from the Whiteman/Goldkette repertoire, also a few small-band segments from the Bix/Tram sessions. I have a few of those originals on Swaggie LPS – **Bix and Tram, Bix and his Gang, The Rare Bix**. It was fantastic to hear this music re-created with love. There were no raccoon coats, bathtub gin or flappers on show but that era was evoked by the music.

For this concert 'Jason Downes Enterprise' deserves great credit, more power to his arm.

The Story of a Trombone

By Kate Dunbar

ANYONE who has been fortunate enough to spend some leisure time with a group of musicians as they "wind down" after a gig will remember the many laughs they would have had as these guys relate their various experiences. I can recall many such times, with great affection, especially when I think of those who have departed this world leaving us all sadder as a result.

So when I heard of a trombone up for sale which had been purchased many years ago by Bob Learmonth, from fellow trombonist John Costelloe, and played by both, my thoughts wandered back some years to these two lovely talented and dedicated chaps.

I recalled Bob Learmonth being challenged by his wife Wendy, Ian Cuthbertson's wife Vonnie and myself. We three declared that Bob always closed his eyes when he played and we stated that he could NOT play with his eyes open! To prove his "innocence" Bob accepted a wager of two shillings that he could play Trombone Rag without closing his eyes. We three women watched him carefully as he played - eyes wide open - right through until the very last note when he closed his eyes much to the mirth of the four of us. Bob paid up!

And then there was "Cossie" who turned up to a Ray Price gig with a large empty jam tin as a trombone "attachment". Everyone agreed that it sounded good, but Ray Price pointed out that an old jam tin wasn't exactly appropriate on the stage of some of the salubrious Town Halls etc, where the band was often appearing. Cossie listened attentively and solemnly agreed, and at the next gig he turned up - same old jam tin - but chrome-plated, as big and shiny as the smile on Cossie's face !!

To sum up my long story, I bought the instrument knowing that the V.J.A. would treasure it in the same way I treasure fond memories of these long-departed friends.

However, as the trombone had been residing in Deniliquin for many years, I had to ask Gretel James a question, "How do I get this trombone from Deniliquin over the border and down to Melbourne?" Nothing ever seems to be a bother to Gretel who solved the problem in a matter of minutes.

Thank you, Gretel and others who were willingly "roped in"... and thank you to the VJA for accepting this gift "sight un - s e e n " .



JOHN GILL RAGTIME PIANIST EXTRAORDINAIRE

28th January 1954 – 15th April 2011

By Gretel James

WHEN JOHN GILL passed away on the 15th April, the world lost one of its greatest Ragtime and Stride piano players. At the early age of just 57 John suffered a massive coronary attack in a shopping centre in his home town of Perth, W.A. Although John was born in Morecambe, Lancashire, in 1986 he joined his parents who had already migrated to Australia.

John was one of the “Professors” of Ragtime, an accolade afforded only the best. He was a regular headliner at the Ragtime festivals in the U.S.A., St Louis, Sedalia and Blind Boone to name but three. Here he played with more of the world’s best and he received many honours, not the least of which was being invited to become a Bosendorfer Concert Artist along with André Previn, Victor Borge, Chick Corea, Philippe Entremont and Oscar Peterson. Nearer to home he was regularly seen wheeling his piano on its trolley from under the Town Hall in Perth into Murray Street Mall, where he would sit and play for hours at a time, delighting shoppers and visitors alike. John just loved to play for all ages. He enjoyed going to retirement homes and playing for the elderly, especially the old tunes they recognised and could sing along with. His talents were not confined to the piano, nor was he always recognizable when performing, for example as Jean-Pierre—a bereted, rakish-looking Frenchman playing his French-tuned Italian piano accordion. He was also a Punch and Judy show ‘Professor’, as practitioners of that art are called. These two talents he would display when travelling through France and when he was resident pianist in Guernsey in his earlier years. He spoke French fluently. He also collected Eiffel Towers, telephones and anything with Betty Boop on it.

I first met John in January 1990 following the 44th Annual Jazz Convention. He nearly fell off the piano stool when I approached him in the Pig and Whistle, an English-style pub in Perth, and asked him to play some Eubie Blake. He had been playing to a somewhat disinterested audience who were having their Friday after-work drinks. I asked him if he had ever been to the eastern states and he said he was waiting for someone to ask him. With the help of Diana Allen, that invitation eventuated and was the start of a long and happy relationship between John and the many thousands who heard him up and down the eastern coast – even venturing to Mt. Isa with the late Allan Leake. He appeared many times at the Montsalvat Jazz Festival, Wangaratta Jazz Festival and Mittagong Ragtime and Jazz Festival, as well as many other gigs organised by Diana Allen in Melbourne and John Buchanan in Sydney. He particularly enjoyed playing duets with Stephen Grant as “**The Tiger Ragamuffins**” – a tribute to the English pianists Ivor Morton and Dave Kaye.

John stayed at my home every time he came to Melbourne, and having a piano, I was lucky enough to get many “private” concerts – just me, the cat and the dog. At the time of his death John was preparing for his seventeenth visit to the USA, following which he was to appear in Melbourne. The world has lost a genius but some of us have also lost a dear friend.
RIP John.



John Gill playing *Kitten on the Keys* for a feline admirer taken about 1998.

We'll miss you Dutch.

The Blues Man Matthew “Dutch” Tilders.
Vocals, guitar, harmonica .
Born. 29.8.1941 Died. 23.4.2011



AN IRISH FAREWELL

Ben Johnston. Piano and vocals. Born 1971. Died April 2011.
Ben, seen here in 2001 chatting with Jenny Edwards at the Coolart Jazz Festival, was buried in Newtown Co. Carlow, Ireland on the last day of April 2011.



FROM THE LIBRARY

"The Real Jazz"

**Reviewed by
Ken Simpson-Bull**

ONE OF the advantages of being a member of the Victorian Jazz Archive is that one has access to many rare and out-of-print books. One such item is the English translation of this 1942 book, once regarded as a bible of jazz, by French jazz critic and writer Hugues Panassié (1912–74).

This is not really a review. I would just like to quote a few paragraphs from the book that today, some 70 years later, make interesting, if not startling, reading. Panassié appears to have been quite concerned that "real jazz" was being usurped by what he called "a commercial counterfeit of jazz". He wrote:

The word jazz (and this is an historical fact, unchallengeable and unchallenged) originally described the music of the Negro orchestras of the South of the United States, music radically different from the counterfeits which I have mentioned. I am well aware that there are other words used to describe authentic jazz—the most common being "hot jazz" and "swing music." But experience has shown that these terms create confusion. The expression "hot jazz," which I first thought would be a good one to use, seems to imply that there are two varieties of authentic jazz in existence: hot jazz and some other kind. In reality there is only one real jazz.

As for the term "swing music", it has been too frequently used to designate a new form of jazz when no such new form existed. Thus it is possible for Benny Goodman to be described sometimes as the creator of swing music, when in fact he has created nothing of the sort. The word "swing," to be perfectly understandable, should never be used as a noun or adjective but only as a verb.

For these reasons, it seems preferable to stick to the original designation and to reserve the expression "jazz music" for the one and only authentic jazz.

It must not be forgotten that jazz was created by the Negro people. When confronted with this music, the white race has found itself completely bewildered. This does not mean that white people are incapable of understanding jazz. We know that there are already good jazz musicians belonging to the white race. But in general the Negroes prove more gifted while white people

approach it with resistance and adopt it very slowly.

Jazz musicians repeatedly incorporated into their music very different sorts of material, material different from the basic material. It is easy to understand how fake jazz, the commercial product, was derived. It lost no time in supplanting real jazz in public favour. With the success of the first Negro orchestras, white orchestras imitated it in New Orleans and other Southern towns. Since the white musicians were not familiar with the original blues, the inspiration they derived from the Negroes was superficial.

At best these white orchestras of the South, being in contact with the best coloured orchestras, sometimes came very close to playing real jazz. But by the time jazz had reached Chicago, and then New York, there had already been considerable distortion. The white orchestras did use the repertory of the Negroes, for the most part, but since the Negro style of interpretation was scarcely familiar to them, they did not know how to play with the same accent.

So [the music] executed by white musicians in a style without real affinity with the blues was but a faded and hackneyed version of the real article. In short, these white orchestras, if they used the same instruments and often played the same numbers as the coloured orchestras, did not at all create the same kind of music.

The public, who did not look into the matter too closely, lumped the whole together under the name jazz. Naturally, the white orchestras pleased the white public far more, since that public did not understand the style of the Negroes. Once this lack of understanding became apparent, numerous people set to work organizing the commercial exploitation of jazz.

The white public was, of course, by far the richest and most important. Certain white bands, deliberately turning their backs to the style of the coloured orchestras, offered the public the kind of music most calculated to flatter its taste, and at the same time preserving a superficial resemblance to jazz for its "novelty" value. Instead of improvising, they used arrangements and played them with the utmost softness. In the light of such examples, sometime later the coloured orchestras in their turn fell into commercial ways in order to make more money.

Even by today's standards, quite a controversial item, *n'est-ce pas!*

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