



Contents

- 02 Letters to the Editor**
03 New AJM Membership Benefits
 By Mel Forbes
04 The Frank Johnson Story
 By Bill Haesler
06 The Museum's Hill and Dale Collection
 By Ken Simpson-Bull
08 A-May-zing Bill
 By Ralph Powell
11 Research Review
 By John Kennedy OAM
12 From the Collection
 By Ralph Powell
13 St Silas Shuffle
 By Ken Brandt, Mel Forbes and John Thrum
14 Three of the Best
15 Bechet Lives
 By Bill Brown



**Image: Front Cover
Frank Johnson**

Image from the Museum's collection.

Images:

Bill Brown
 Dr Pam Clements
 Tom Lucas
 Geoffery Orr
 Ralph Powell
 Ken Simpson-Bull
 Maton Guitars

Magazine Editorial Committee

Dr Pam Clements Editor
 Dr Mel Forbes
 Terry Norman
 Ralph Powell
 Ken Simpson-Bull

Board of Management

Terry Norman	President
	General Manager
Dennis Mills	Vice President
Margot Davies	Secretary
David Mc Dowell	Treasurer
Mel Blachford	Collections Manager
Dr. Mel Forbes	Membership Manager
Anne Thornton	Development Manager
Ken Brandt	
Marina Pollard	
Ralph Powell	

Location

AJM "Koomba Park"
 15 Mountain Hwy.
 Wantima
 Mel Ref 63 C8
 Open Tues & Fri, 10am-3pm

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

I was most interested in the article about the Galleon Coffee Lounge in the last issue. My friends and I were regulars, some of us were first year music students. The photo of the band was an interesting one. George Cadman was a great piano player, Danny Dare was a very funny man, "Splinter" Reeves a brilliant jazz tenor player. Doug Gillespie (DuleepSingi) did comedy songs and played alto and clarinet. We worked together at Allan's Music repair Shop, and we also opened the batting for Allan's Cricket Team in a Saturday morning comp. in 1950. Doug was a beaut bloke (English father, Indian mother).

In 1955 Paddy Fitzallen put an audition band in for a Leslie Ross produced show for the Galleon. I think George Cadman was on piano, and Alan (Chan) Redding was on reeds; (he was Kenn Jones' teacher). The Galleon was on its last legs at the time, so we didn't get the job.

My teacher (Cy Watts) had a good band at the Plaza Coffee Lounge around the corner in Barkly Street. The band contained Des Edwards on trumpet, Jimmy Ryan on clarinet, Len Holmes on drums and comedy and Les Cooper on piano. I never ever thought in those days, that I would have played with all those musicians or known most of them.

The compere in some of the shows was Roy Lyons who did shows later on Channel 7, but he was not a part of Zig and Zag. Doug McKenzie was Zag, (a good bloke, ex P.O.W.).

Cheers Harry Price

CORRECTION TO PALAIS ROYAL CALIFORNIANS Vjazz 64 Collection Report page10

The correction, or addition, is that Dave Grouse, Keith Collins and Bob Waddington were also Australians.

Waddington had been with the band since it opened at the Palais Royal in May, 1923. Frank Coughlan married his sister.

Jack Mitchell



Omission Vjazz 64 page 8

The photo ON Tour: should read Brett Iggulden, Allan Browne, **Bill Morris**, Bill Howard, **John Scurry**, Richard Miller and **Rowan Smith**.

Our thanks go to Bill Haesler and Don and Margaret Anderson for filling in the gaps and extending our knowledge.

DISCLAIMER

Opinions and views expressed in editorial and contributed articles are those of the authors and are not necessarily those of the Museum. The editor reserves the right to edit or abridge articles/special features due to special circumstances. The Museum, editor and the authors expressly disclaim all and any liability to any person, whether a Museum member or not, who acts or fails to act as a consequence of reliance upon the whole or part of this publication. The editor reserves the right to not publish any articles, correspondence or illustrations that may be offensive or contrary to AJM practices and policies. Publication of an advertisement does not necessarily constitute endorsement by the Museum of any product nor warrant its suitability. Advertisements are published as submitted by the advertiser. E&OE.

New AJM Membership Benefits By Mel Forbes

Ever since our founding in 1996 we have had a strong member focus. Not only do membership subscriptions play a vital role in enabling us to meet our operating expenses, but our members give us a reason for being. Without members with whom to share the riches of our ever-growing collection, we would be little more than a repository of stuff. And of course, we draw on our membership for our team of volunteers.

As of the beginning of this year, we've started to offer AJM members an extended range of membership benefits; we've created some new membership categories; and we're going to give members greater access to the riches of our collections. Three new benefits have been added to the basic membership, which has been renamed the Bronze membership.

- From now on, new and renewing members will automatically be sent the latest of our Vjazz CD releases, postage-free. We're doing this because we want to ensure that our collection of rare recorded jazz is shared as widely as possible (of course, if you've already got a copy of the latest release, you'll be able to nominate a Vjazz CD of your preference instead)
- All members now get free entry to the Louis Armstrong House Museum in New York City
- Each membership includes family members living in the same household

To enable us to focus better on the needs of jazz musicians, either established or up-and-coming, we've created the Musician category. Musician members will get, in addition to the regular benefits of membership, dedicated space in our online musician page as well as a mention of their gigs on our Events page. This membership is available at the 2015 introductory price of just \$25.00

We have had an "unofficial" Schools membership category for years, and now we've made it official. This will enable teachers to bring up to 20 students at any one time into the AJM for study purposes, and entitle them to take advantage of our huge collection of band arrangements (subject to copyright).

We will, of course, continue to offer Student memberships to under-25s, at the same concessional price of just \$15.00.

Best of all, there are now a series of membership upgrades, available to all members:

Silver members get all the Bronze membership benefits plus:

- your choice of any 3 additional CDs from our VJazz series of recordings of rare jazz
- a full-size reproduction of any jazz poster from the AJM collection

Gold members get all the benefits of Silver membership, plus:

- A rare, vintage 78-RPM record from our collection, in a special display frame
- a dinner/show certificate (value \$250), for use at any AJM jazz partner
- Acknowledgement on the Supporter page of our website

For the ultimate in jazz indulgence, upgrade to **Platinum membership**, and in addition to all the benefits of Gold membership we'll put on a catered dinner at your place for up to 10 people, with a live jazz band provided.

To help us manage all these new membership categories, we've simplified in other areas. We'll no longer offer 15-year memberships but will, of course, continue to honor our commitments to existing Life and 15-year Members; we've discontinued Interstate/Overseas as a separate category, reflecting our change in name and broadening of our focus; and Corporate membership will be converted to either Silver membership, or a Sponsorship, depending on the preferences of each particular member.

Here's a summary of all the membership changes:

Membership Category	Membership Benefits
Bronze \$50/year	The satisfaction of supporting the Australian Jazz Museum A free Vjazz CD of rare jazz (postage-free) Subscription to our quarterly magazine 10% discount on all gift shop merchandise. Access to the AJM collection, and to the research and lending libraries Assistance with jazz research Opportunity to be an AJM volunteer Eligibility to attend our affiliated Jazz Improvisation Workshops Discount off the price of tickets to selected AJM events Free admission to the Louis Armstrong House Museum in New York City Includes family members living in the same household
SILVER \$250/year	All the Bronze membership benefits, plus: Your choice of any 3 additional CDs from our VJazz series Full-size reproduction of any jazz poster from the AJM collection
GOLD \$1,000/year	All the Silver membership benefits, plus: A rare, vintage 78 RPM record from our collection, in a special display frame Dinner/show certificate (\$250 value), for use at any AJM jazz partner Acknowledgement on the Supporter page of our website
PLATINUM \$5,000/year	All the Gold membership benefits, plus: A catered dinner for up to 10 at your home, with a live jazz band
Musician \$25/year	All the Bronze membership benefits, plus: Dedicated space on our online Musician page Listing on our Events page, for your gigs Sell your CDs through our gift shop You can upgrade to a higher category and receive all the benefits of the higher category as well as those of the Musician category
School \$50/year	All the Bronze membership benefits, plus: The right to bring up to 20 students at a time to visit and/or work at AJM Access to the AJM band-chart collection
Student \$15/year	All the Bronze membership benefits, minus the free CD
Life/15-Year	All the Bronze membership benefits, minus the free CD This membership category is closed to new entrants



The Frank Johnson Story

By Bill Haesler

The album called **The Frank Johnson Story** was a selected release by W&G. While the music showcases some of Australia's jazz greats it is the album notes by Bill Haesler that we thought deserves to be reprinted here largely because it makes a jolly good read.

“

ONE of the greatest jazz bands in the history of Australian jazz is the band bearing the intriguing title, "Frank Johnson's Fabulous Dixielanders." This wonderful jazz band, which produced so much infectious music over a period of ten years can claim to be the only jazz group to play regularly every Saturday evening for dancing at the one location. It was here at the Collingwood Town Hall during 1947 that I first heard them. What a night that was!

Up till then I had doubted the local jazzmen could capture the New Orleans idiom so successfully. But capture it they had! And it is to their credit, for their happy stomping music became a by-word around Melbourne jazz circles. This band, which brought jazz to people never to hear it otherwise, people who came to love it so enthusiastically, was itself composed of enthusiasts. They were men from all walks of life— their common bond the music of the American Negro, played first in New Orleans at the turn of the century, eventually up

the Mississippi to Chicago in the 20s, then finally flooding the world.

It was through the efforts of the Australian pioneers of jazz, the Graeme Bell Jazz Band, that the personnel of the "Fabulous Dixielanders" first made contact with the music. Frank claims that it was by hearing the Bells that he made his decision to play jazz trumpet.

Australian jazz is unique in that it was evolved by enthusiastic musicians listening to records of the great New Orleans and Chicago jazzmen. These new releases, limited as they were, were eagerly awaited. By listening, and absorbing, our musicians became jazzmen. Theirs was the music of Armstrong, Oliver, The New Orleans Rhythm Kings, Morton, Dodds, Spanier, Williams and Ory. (And Australian jazzmen became so interested that at Christmas, 1946, they organized a jazz convention in Melbourne. Delegates from Melbourne, Adelaide, Hobart and Sydney attended, and the convention has been carried on ever since.)

The washboard bands, the race artists, the blues singers, the early Negro

big bands—here was a wealth of great jazz to be explored. So it was with "Frank Johnson's Fabulous Dixielanders".



L-R Warwick Dyer (tb) Frank Johnson (t) Wes Brown (d) Geoff Kitchen (cl) Jack Connelly (bb) Bill Tope (bj) Geoff Bland (p)

While still at school, Frank Johnson realized that his one ambition was to play jazz trumpet. With this aim in mind, he sought out people like himself—people eager to get together and play jazz. His meeting with a guitar player, **Geoff Kitchen**, and his first hearing of the Graeme Bell Band in 1945, strengthened this aim. After forming a small group which included pianist **Geoff Bland**, the band obtained their first job. Ragged as they were, their efforts were appreciated. Shortly afterwards they added **Wes Brown** who had played with Roger Bell before the war and also Tony Newstead's Band. Geoff Kitchen decided to switch to clarinet. The band found more jobs and their popularity increased. At the beginning of 1947, **Warwick "Wocka" Dyer** joined the band as trombonist, replacing Doc Willis. Here was the group that formed the nucleus of "Frank Johnson's Fabulous Dixielanders".

In May 1947, **Bill Tope**, another musician who had played with Graeme Bell and Tony Newstead, was added as banjo player. Also in May, 1947, the band was hired on a six-week trial to play at the popular Saturday night dance at Collingwood Town Hall. The effect was immediate - increased attendances made them a permanent weekly band for over nine years—in itself a record for a jazz band.

Later in 1947 Frank Johnson contracted pleurisy which later developed into lung trouble. This kept him from jazz for eight months. The band stayed together,



May-Day Parade 1947 Bell and Johnson Bands combined.



L-R Frank Gow, Frank Johnson, Wes Brown, Ron Williamson, Nick Polites, Bill Tope, Warwick Dyer.

with trumpeter Ron Weber sitting in for Frank. It was during Frank's absence that Geoff Kitchen invited bass and tuba man **Jack Connelly** to join the band.

By the 1947 Jazz Convention, the band was established as the best young group in Australia, and 1948/49 are considered to be their triumphant years. They were playing three regular jobs weekly, together with many one-night stands. In March, 1949, by popular vote, they were the victors in "Battle of the Bands" contest. In May and again in July they repeated their win. Shortly afterwards, The "Fabulous Dixielanders" opened at the Maison De Lux Ballroom as house band for the "Sunday Afternoon Jazz Club". It quickly became the mecca for all jazz musicians and enthusiasts.

Here, as guest artists, The Graeme Bell Band played, with Tony Newstead's South Side Gang, The Southern Jazz Group from Adelaide, and the young Len Barnard Jazz Band. Scores of musicians sat in with the "Fabulous Dixielanders". Then, the "Australian Jazz Club of the Air" broadcasts over 3UZ capped the fame of the Johnson Band. For over a year Frank played the records which influenced and nurtured the jazz movement in Australia. With monthly "live" broadcasts by the band, Frank himself became a household personality.

Geoff Bland was by now finding the pressure of his position as pianist interfering too much with his professional life, and on many occasions his place was taken by ex Sydney pianist **Ian Burns**. (Ian is heard on several of the tracks in this album.) But for his untimely death shortly after the 1950 Jazz Convention, Ian Burns would certainly have replaced Geoff

Bland when he finally left the group during 1951. John Shaw took over the piano till early in 1952, when he was replaced by **Frank Gow**.

About September, 1951, Geoff Kitchen left to form his own band, and Frank recruited a clarinet player whom he had known for many years—**Nick Polites**. With this new line-up, the band continued to gain popularity, and the fine, enthusiastic sound of the band remained.

It was this band that planned a world tour. Bill Tope and Wes Brown indicated that they would not be able to make the trip., and although they continued playing, it was arranged for Graham "Smacka" Fitzgibbon and drummer Charlie Blott to accompany the band overseas. Both these musicians had filled in on many occasions, and were ideally suitable.

Eight of the tracks on this recording were recorded as a "visiting card" and although the band played one night stands in Victoria, South Australia, and New South Wales, the trip never came.

The jazz revival now at its peak, suddenly slumped. Just why is one of those capricious turns of fate all too evident in the popular music world. The fans who had followed the Johnson Band everywhere gradually faded. Other bands at this time were also affected.

Their overseas trip was postponed, but the jobs were still coming in. It was while returning from one of these jobs in a country town in September, 1955, that Warwick Dyer was tragically killed in a car accident, Nick Polites received a spinal injury, Wes Brown suffered broken ribs and others in the band suffered minor injuries. Even with several members of his group missing, Frank kept going. But the effort to keep together, and the mental uncertainty produced by the accident, finally forced the "Fabulous Dixielanders" apart. The combination which had kept the feet of jazz audiences tapping for over ten years came almost to a standstill.

The 1958 recordings on this Album, with their personnel changes, were the last made by Frank Johnson's historic Australian group.

But today happily (December, 1959), members of "The Fabulous Dixielanders" are playing again. Frank Johnson is leading his own band, Nick Polites leads the "Melbourne New Orleans Jazz Band" Bill Tope and Wes Brown are members of the "Melbourne Jazz Club" house band. Frank Gow plays piano with his own group at the Cambridge Club and Jack Connelly plays regularly in Sydney jazz circles.

Frank Johnson will always be remembered in the 1947-1952 Jazz Revival, for his band was a great part of it, creating jazz which is Australian in character, yet genuinely New Orleans inspired.

Here on this record is proof that "Frank Johnson's Fabulous Dixielanders" was a truly great band.

”



L-R Geoff Kitchen (cl) Jack Connelly (sb) Frank Johnson (t) Geoff Bland (p) Warwick Dyer (tb) Bill Tope (bj) Wes Brown (d)

I usually find the stories on the back of albums of interest especially the one by Frank Johnson himself on the back cover of *Dixieland Jazz, Frank Johnson and Friends* for **The Jazz Makers** series. He sets about describing how the album came about. It's a great album and a great story, but the album notes quoted above written by Bill Haesler are like a little potted history of Melbourne Jazz.

When we consider the Frank Johnson Bands no one says it better than Frank himself:

"The reality was a collection of free wheeling individuals who got together, had a ball and were paid for it. If this sounds like an ideal situation, believe me it was!"

Pam Clements

The Museum's Hill and Dale Collection

By Ken Simpson-Bull

Hill and Dale? What we are referring to is the Museum's collection of rare 78rpm discs which have been recorded by the hill-and-dale process. Before discussing each particular record in the collection, we will examine the actual hill and dale process—what it means and its history.

In an ordinary gramophone record (be it a 78 or an LP) the music recorded in the spiral groove causes the replay stylus to rapidly move from side-to-side at the rate of the original sound vibrations. This process of sound modulation is known as lateral recording.

However, if the recording is made in such a way as to make the replay stylus move up-and-down at the rate of the original sound vibrations, it is known as vertical cut (or hill-and-dale) recording. If a vertically cut groove was examined under a microscope along its length, you would see continuous wavy lines as the needle cuts at different depths according to the tone and the loudness of the audio being recorded. These grooves show a transition from a valley to a peak, giving the characteristic hill and dale effect to the groove, similar to the appearance of a hilly geographic area.

Edison was out-of-step with almost every other record producing company which used the lateral recording process. There were a few exceptions—Pathé produced both hill-and-dale and lateral records while a few other companies released a small number of hill-and-dale records from time to time. For example, vertical cut recording was used as a means of copyright protection by the early Muzak 16-inch background music discs, and a number of radio transcription discs produced by the American "World" record company also used this process.

Because hill-and-dale discs could not be played on conventional gramophones and record players, Edison's record company eventually went to the wall. They belatedly began the production of lateral cut records in 1929 but these only lasted a short time before Edison moved on to other products.

The hill-and-dale discs in the possession of the Australian Jazz Museum are all 10-inch 78s from the Edison Company. (Actually, Edison discs were recorded at 80rpm, an unnoticeable difference in the pitch of the sound.) If one of these discs is placed on a conventional record player the expected listener will be surprised to find that no sound issues forth from the loudspeaker. One imagines that many of these discs may have been discarded over the years by people who would have thought that there was no music recorded in the groove. A special player is, of course, required.

So how does one play these discs in this day and age when, say, an Edison Record Player (a rare machine) is not available? There is a relatively easy solution.

If one uses a stereo pickup fitted with a 78 (course groove) stylus, it is possible to reverse

one pair of the wires connecting to four terminal connections at the rear of the pick-up cartridge. Since a stereo pickup responds to both vertical and lateral groove modulation, reversing one connection pair will make the pickup respond only to vertical movement of

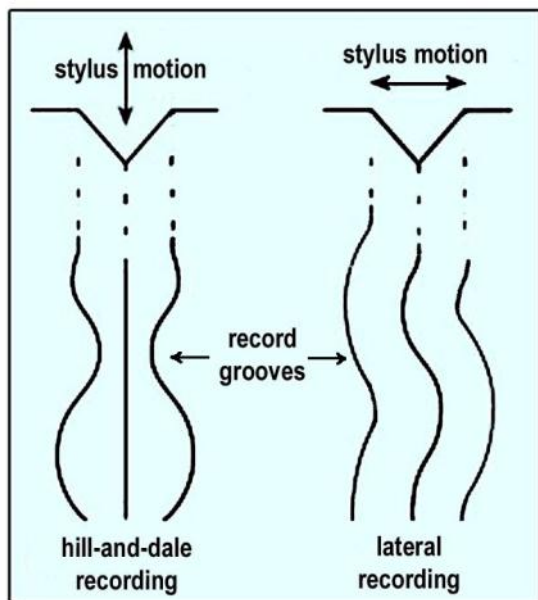
the stylus.

The sound quality from the discs held by the Museum is extremely good, considering the fact that they were produced by the acoustic process—that is, no microphones or electronics were used. In fact, the later discs sound as though they may have been made by the better-quality electric process which came in after 1925, although Edison continued recording acoustically longer than others.

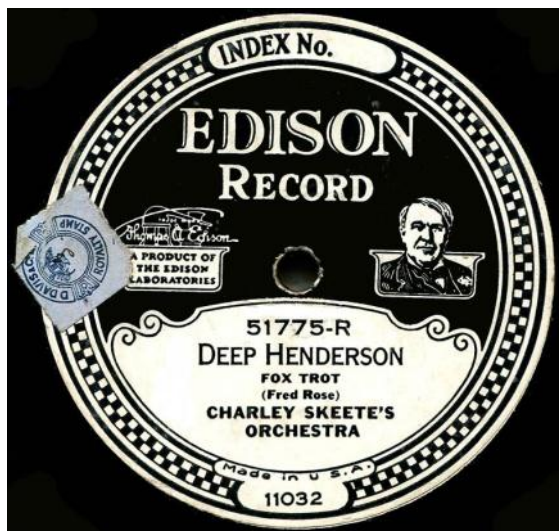
So let's look at some of the Edison discs in the Museum's International collection. On inspection, one finds that each disc is almost a quarter of an inch thick—much thicker than a conventional 78. This is so that the disc cannot warp or buckle which, on a hill-and-dale recording, would produce a tremolo-like effect on the reproduced sound.

All the records are listed in Brian Rust's definitive discography "Jazz Records", so at least Mr. Rust considered them jazz-oriented, although most are probably best described as hot dance band or novelty. Although Edison produced quite a number of recordings of this genre, the Museum only possesses twelve discs—unfortunately they rarely turn up in donated collections and most of the ones we have were kindly donated by Ray Marginson.

Most of the bands and the performers are now long forgotten and many of the personnel were not well known even in their time. The few exceptions include "The Golden Gate Orchestra" which was actually "The California Ramblers" and had Jimmy Dorsey and Adrian Rollini among other jazz luminaries in the band. Joe Candulo was a popular band leader who had Red Nichols in the band for the Edison recording of "Birth of the Blues". Harry Raderman was a well-



When Thomas Edison patented his first cylindrical sound recording machine in 1877 he used the hill-and-dale recording method. This standard was maintained throughout the life of the cylinder machine era. When he introduced disc records in 1911 he continued to use the hill-and-dale process up until his company discontinued record production in 1929.



known trombonist and band leader who recorded a few hot numbers while pianist Charley Skeete was also quite popular at the time. The "Five Harmaniacs" had the odd line-up of harmonica, kazoo, jug, guitar and washboard!

Here then is a list of our holdings. The recordings were all made in New York on dates between 1923 and 1926.

GOLDEN GATE ORCH - I Wonder What's Become of Joe / JACK STILLMAN - Valentine
 FIVE HARMANIACS - Rippin' It Off / FIVE HARMANIACS - What Did Romie-O-Juliet Do?
 BROADWAY DANCE ORCH - I Love Me / CHAS. MATSON - T'aint Nobody's Biz-Ness if I Do
 GEORGIA MELODIANS - Charleston Ball / GEORGIA MELODIANS - Spanish Shawl
 CHARLEY SKEETE - Deep Henderson / CHARLEY SKEETE - Tampeekoe
 GEORGIA MELODIANS - Ev'rybody's Charleston Crazy / GEORGIA MELODIANS - Rhythm of the Day
 GOLDEN GATE ORCH - Shake / GOLDEN GATE ORCH - What a Man!
 JOE CANDULLO & his ORCH - Birth of the Blues / B. ROLFE & his ORCH - Why Do Ya Roll Those Eyes?
 GOLDEN GATE ORCH - Brown Eyes, Why Are You Blue? / GOLDEN GATE ORCH - Sweet Man
 ERNEST STEVE DANCE ORCH - Twilight on the Nile / THE JAZZ -O-HARMONISTS - Snakes Hips
 GEORGIA MELODIANS - Why Did You Do It? / HARRY RADERMAN DANCE ORCH - Louise
 GEORGIA MELODIANS - Testop Dome Blues / MERRY SPARKLERS - When Dreams Come True



Three Industrious Volunteers



Our three resident builders

The building team, Neil Wakeman, Steve Bartley and John Thrum are working hard as always. They can be seen here making sure the Museum is just right to house our ever expanding collection.

A-May-zing Bill

By Ralph Powell

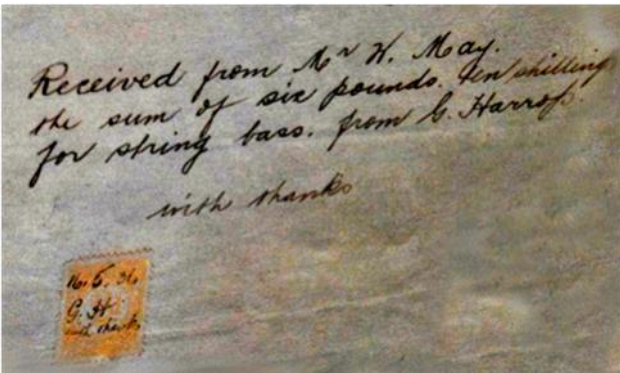


Bill May - Bass player and guitarist, jazz musician and lifelong devotee of jazz

Early 1930s: Henry Stanton, Bill May seated, ?, Fred Buckland (Maton Museum)

There are many musicians who stand at the periphery of jazz who, though artists in their own right, remain little known to history. William Arthur "Bill" May is one such musician.

The late Bill May is best known as the creator of the legendary Maton guitars played by such jazz musicians as George Golla and Bruce Clarke, by virtuoso guitarist Tommy Emmanuel, Beatle George Harrison, Blues singer Ben Harper, Led Zeppelin's Jimmy Page, and Creedence Clearwater Revival's John Fogerty. Elvis Presley famously played a Maton HG100 "Hillbilly" in *Jailhouse Rock*. Today, a visit to the Maton guitar factory is an opportunity to immerse oneself in the fascinating history of this iconic brand.



Taking pride of place is Bill's double bass purchased May 16th, 1936 for the grand sum of £6/10/-



Susan Ellis with her father's £6/10/- bass (Photos: Ralph Powell)

As a 9-year old Bill May was already interested in learning to play the guitar even fashioning guitar-like constructions substituting twine for guitar strings. Saving every penny he could Bill eventually managed to buy his first, albeit second-hand, guitar but soon found it lacked the tonal qualities and construction he sought. An added frustration for the teenage Bill was that it would take him many years before he could afford a good quality guitar. Ever resourceful, he built his own guitar, entered, and then won, a radio station talent quest in 1936.¹



Johnny Rich, Jack Banston, Roger Bell, Bud Baker, Ade Monsborough, Bill May, Pixie Roberts, Graeme Bell, with Rex Stewart on his 1949 Australian Tour. (AJM collection)

Displayed in the Maton museum, his guitar has stood the test of time playing well to this day.

Less well known is Bill's involvement in the early Melbourne jazz and dance band scene as a bass player and guitarist. Graeme Bell, Ade Monsborough, Jack Varney, Bruce Clarke, Frank Coughlan – he played with them all.

Throughout the late 30s he continued to develop his career as a musician, principally as a jazz bassist with guitarist Doug Beck and in a dance band featuring Len Williams² and in 1935 he joined the Bell band. George McWhinney had a quartet which used a double bass³ "which was unheard of in a quartet in those days"⁴ so when Graeme Bell decided to start a quartet he decided to introduce a string bass because of "the bouncy rhythm the bass gave"⁵.

Graeme tells how Bill came to join the band. "We advertised for a bass player in the paper. The doorbell rang one night and Mum opened the door to be greeted by a smiling bloke who said, 'I'm the bass.' This was Bill May, who started playing with us immediately. The bass was a great asset and Bill stayed with us for some time"⁶ including on a 1939 Christmas excursion to Sorrento performing on the *PS Weroona*. In the mid 1940s Graeme Bell "bought radio time on 3UZ"⁷ with the commercials for Graeme's music school "interspersed with a couple of tunes accompanied by Russ Murphy on drums and Bill May on bass."⁸

Jazz musician, Jack Varney, met Bill at a rehearsal. Becoming lifelong friends they shared an admiration of each other's musical abilities. According to Jack, Bill could cope with any musical style, be it Dixieland, Hawaiian or bluegrass. Varney remembers that May exhibited the sort of ability to play by ear which is commonly referred to as perfect pitch. He also had considerable abilities on both steel and Spanish guitars, and could wrench a tune out of a ukulele, banjo – virtually anything fretted.⁹



Bill May and Jack Varney (Maton Museum)

That Bill May was a talented musician is clearly demonstrated by the fact that his Tropical Five Hawaiian Quintet was chosen to perform at the most outstanding radio act of 1945 in the Grand Final of the prestigious Maples P. & A. Parade, broadcast on 3KZ from the King's Theatre, Russell Street. Had they been the winners, the band would have secured a trip to the U.S.A. and been given a screen test in Australia by 20th Century Fox Films.



Novelty act with Hymie Slade, Max Collie, Bob Barnard, Bill May, George Tack, Willie McIntyre (AJM collection)

Having given up a secure career as a woodwork teacher to pursue his guitar manufacturing dream, Bill took on various musical engagements to keep the money coming in. He also undertook a number of recording sessions with Ade Monsborough (1945 and 1962), The Bells (1949-1950), Ron Rosenberg, Bruce Clarke and His Samballeros (1952) and Frank Coughlan and His Cotton Pickers (1953) performing most tracks on bass with some guitar and, unusually, on sousaphone with the Bell Band's *Ding Dong Daddy From Dumas*, when standing in for Lou Silbereisen at 3AW. In the 1950s he also played bass with the Jeff Hawes band at the "The 431 Club".¹⁰ He backed Dorothy Baker on her 1962 self-titled EP, Kevin Shegog's self-titled LP from the same year, and Hawaiian guitarist George Xanthos on *The City Slickers Visit Hawaii* LP in 1963,¹¹ but his first love was always jazz.

As Maton Guitars came to dominate his life, Bill quietly withdrew from the jazz scene, playing occasionally with friends like Fred Buckland, Haydn Britton [VJAZZ 63 Page 11] and Jack Varney at social functions and parties.

Parkinson's disease came to impact his life in later years and he was eventually forced to retire as a consequence. Perversely, despite his illness, he was still able to play his beloved bass.

Bill had one final dream. It had been his ambition to install an electronic pickup on his bass, so his family had the bass secretly modified for his 78th birthday. Sadly, Bill died of a massive heart attack just three weeks before this milestone.

Bill May - Born May 26th 1915 - Died May 6th 1993 leaving an a-May-zing legacy.

I am most grateful to Linda Kitchen, Susan Ellis and Chantal de Fraga for their assistance in compiling this account and in sharing images from Maton's archives.



George McWhinney

Bibliography

- 1 Payne, Ron K. Ed., *The Twang Dynasty*, 2012, p. 238.
- 2 Ibid. p. 239.
- 3 Bisset, Andrew, *Black Root White Flowers*, 1987, p. 115
- 4 Williams, Mike, *The Australian Jazz Explosion*, 1981, p. 2.
- 5 Ibid. p. 30.
- 6 Bell, Graeme, *Graeme Bell Australian Jazzman*, 1988. p. 30.
- 7 Williams, Mike, Op. Cit. p. 2.
- 8 Bell, Graeme Op. Cit. p. 54
- 9 Payne, Ron K. Op. Cit. p. 239.
- 10 Hawes, Jeff; *Jazz and the Casual Dance Scene in Melbourne 1950s and 1960s* VJAZZ 60, 2013, p. 11.
- 11 Coyle, Jackey and Rebecca, *Hawaiian Music in Australia (1920-55) Aloha Australia : Hawaiian Music in Australia (1920-55)* Perfect Beat v2 n2 Jan 1995

RESEARCH REVIEW

by John Kennedy OAM

In 1985, John Whiteoak produced a thesis entitled *"Early Modern Jazz In Australia: The Introduction of Bop"* as part fulfillment of his honor's year work the Department of Music at Latrobe University, Bundoora. This 162 page work provides a fascinating glimpse into the early days of "bop" in Australia, commencing in 1946, to the end of the first phase around the 1950s and he points out this modern form of jazz appeared on the scene at the same time as the first Australian Jazz Convention in Melbourne.

In setting out to expand upon the pioneering work presented in Andrew Bisset's book, *Black Roots, White Flowers*, Whiteoak reveals the late forties as a special period of early modern jazz development in Melbourne, a first phase of bop development that ended soon after 1950. One observation he makes may startle dyed-in-the-wool traditionalists: "Even earlier stylists such as Louis Armstrong contributed a great deal to modern jazz development... by placing an emphasis on the creative and extended improvisation of jazz solos".

Don Banks receives a deal of coverage in this work, mainly through the special significance of his participation in the late 1940s Melbourne modern jazz scene and also his later international reputation as 'third stream' jazz composer. Whiteoak points out that the modern stream of jazz in Melbourne started with

the Fawkner Park Kiosk jam sessions that commenced in 1937. The April 1938 edition of *Australasian Dance and Brass Band News* notes that the 3AV Swing Club "had a hectic night which wound up with a jam-session that sent the thermometer up above the limit mark". Trumpet player George Dobson contributed an article to the December 1936 issue of *Australian Music Maker & Dance Band News* called 'Short Cuts and Suggestions on Extemporizing'. By 1938 the Bob Tough band had increased to eight musicians for the Sunday "Swing" sessions, which had become known as the 'Fawkner Park Swing Club.'

Melbourne drummer, Don Reid, whom Whiteoak interviewed, describes how the band and the individual musicians would tackle a tune, using "Dinah" as an example: "not a 'Dixie' type contrapuntal collective improvisation, but a Swing Band, a 52nd Street equivalent of it." This format, consisting of a theme followed by a string of improvised solos, was the natural environment for the development of bop in the American situation.

Throughout this thesis there are numer-

However, some of these modernists, Don Banks and Charlie Blott especially, were quite at home playing with the Bell's. It is interesting to note that Banks, Blott and Challen, who were later members of Banks' Bop-tet, had played on the Max Kaminsky session for Ampersand, as did another 'bopper', Splinter Reeves. Whiteoak then dissects Banks' piano style in detail, along with the playing of the rest of the Bop-tet. He also suggests that the style that later distinguished Splinter Reeves as a leading bop player, could be already detect-



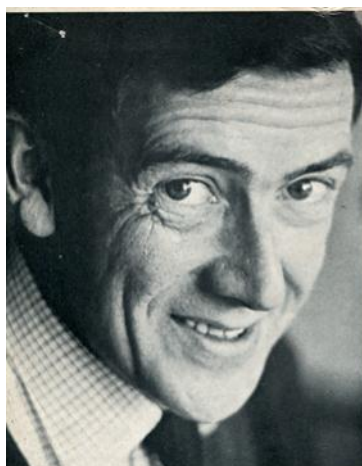
The Donny Banks Bop-tet

L-R Charlie Blott (d) Ken Brentnall (t) Don (Pixie) McFarlane (sb) Betty Parker (v) Don Banks (p) Eddie Oxley (s) Bruce Clark (g)

ed in his playing by 1946. These modernists and various others came together in 1947 to form the *Modern Music Society*, which aimed to provide professional musicians with the chance to play "un-commercial music and develop new combinations and techniques".

"Feeling Dizzy" written by Don Banks and recorded at Broadcast Exchange in early 1947 appears to have been Australia's first bop composition and arrangement. Early 1948, brought the first of the Jazzart series of recordings organized by Bob Clemens, with a label designed by local vibraphone player, Russell Jones. Clemens paid the musicians and financed the Jazzart venture out of his own pocket and this series is the main representation of the late 1940s modern jazz scene in Melbourne, apart from private acetates such as "Feeling Dizzy".

The 1947 arrival in Melbourne of the Adelaide modern combo, the Jack Brokensha Quartet, furthered the modern jazz cause and this was boosted by an increasing number of jazz concerts staged in Melbourne and Sydney. There was some negative media coverage of bop, such as Frank Johnson's comment in AJQ that, "the little dogs of



ous musical transcriptions of recorded jazz solos referred to by Whiteoak. One example is Bob Tough's tenor solo *Avalon* recorded at a private jam session in 1941; Whiteoak ponders that, "It is interesting to speculate what Tough (who died very young) could have eventually achieved in a later music context". Graeme Bell stated that the only difference in style between Swing and Dixieland lay in the collective improvisation of Dixieland. What was actually heard at Fawkner Park was a small Swing band with music played by the most technically advanced and experienced musicians, and it must be acknowledged, they do represent a starting point for modern jazz in Melbourne, if not Australia.

rebop can have their day snapping at the heels of jazz and howling at the diatonic moon... but jazz will triumph". The women's magazine, *Woman*, featured an article on bop for teenagers and, in Sydney, a progressive orientated periodical, *The Beat* appeared.

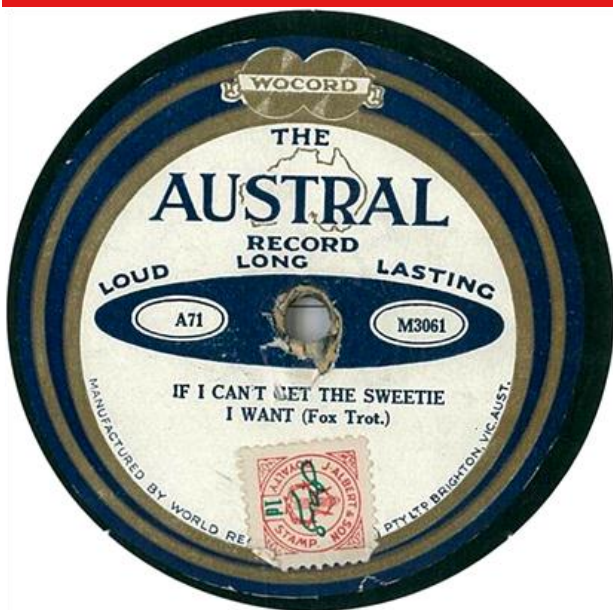
By late 1949, Don Banks was preparing to go overseas to further his music studies and, in a sense, the first phase of bop in Melbourne was coming to a close. Whiteoak has covered Don Banks career as a modernist quite extensively in this thesis and he suggests that another writer should take up what evolved in progressive jazz after 1950 but he does, in fact, follow this up to some extent in his 1993 PhD thesis, which was published by Currency Press in 1999 as *Playing Ad Lib: Improvisatory Music in Australia*. There are many photos and music examples from archival recording scattered throughout *Early Modern Jazz in Australia* and I have found it quite enthralling. There is plenty of information in here for further research into the roots of the Australia's modern jazz tradition. John is now an Adjunct Professor in the Sir Zelman Cohen School of Music at Monash University and he continues to write on jazz in Australia.



Maples P & A Parade final 1943.
Lin Challen (sb), Don Banks (p), Charlie Blott (d), Splinter Reeves (cl), Doug Beck (g).
Photo donated by Don Reed

From the Collection: Oldest Australian Pressing

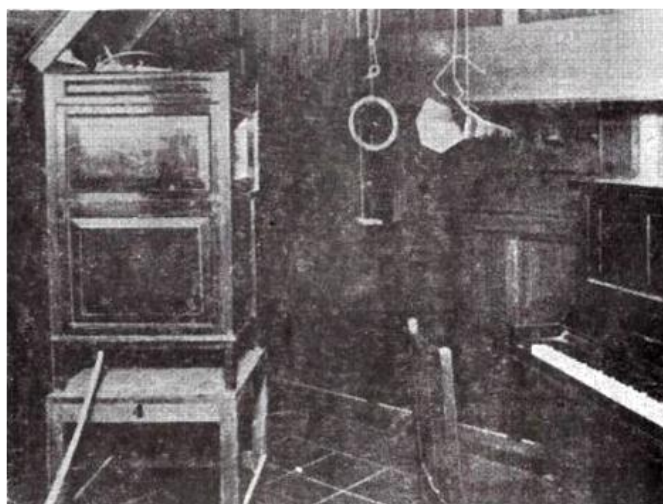
By Ralph Powell



Tracks are *If I Can't Get The Sweetie I Want* and *Oh! You Little Son-Uv-Er-Gun*.

The disc became available in 1925.

Our oldest Australian pressing is Austral A71 M3061 M3134 made by Noel Pemberton Billing's World Record Company Wocord located in Bay Street, Brighton. Taken from American Emerson's catalogue 10668, this 10" cardboard based shellac 78 rpm featured the Pennsylvania Syncopators playing numbers most likely performed at the Ziegfeld Follies in the summer of 1922.



The Brighton recording studios of Wocord

We wish to acknowledge the contributions of the following people to the Museum collection:-

Bix Eiben Hamburg, Ruth Holst, Mary McGregor, Giovanna Walker, Kim Harris, Geoffery Orr, Bill Boldiston, Nick Brown, Ralph Powell and Bob Schulz together with the numerous donors who prefer to remain unnamed.

Items include jazz posters, the Gordon Walker Collection of Australian and overseas jazz, Jazz Books, several Lyric CDS, "The Battle for Jazz" at the Sydney Town Hall, 1948-1950 Programs, 2CD History of Jazz in Victoria from Radio Mt Beauty August 2014, CDs, an Audio library collection, news clipping, flyers, The Wizard Flies Solo CD, magazines, discs, videos, 5 CD compilation of Old Jazz tracks, CDs and Victoria Jazz Club posters.

St. Silas Shuffle - An AJM Driven Return Trip

By Ken Brandt, Melvyn Forbes and John Thrum



Brandt (trumpet), Terry Norman (tenor, soprano, and alto sax), John Kessner (trombone), Tony Fairbridge (clarinet), Tony Sloan (piano), Mike Sorensen (tuba), Tanja Bahro (drums), Simon Hogg (trumpet), Maureen Beggs (alto sax and clarinet), and Bruce Herbert (guitar); plus Laura Marchese (tenor sax), Dan Charbon (banjo), Mike Cousins (trombone), Will Maltman (double bass), Jo Hagedoorn (clarinet), and Elise Whalan (flute). It was a 68 year musical comeback!

St. Silas Shuffle is a recently re-discovered Australian trad jazz classic. In mid 2014 Ken Brandt, leader of the Dirty Dozen Jazz Band and an AJM member, invited John Thrum, also an AJM member, to fill in for the band's holidaying piano player. The rehearsal was in Parish of the Parks church, which was formerly called St. Silas church. The name rang a bell with John, who realised that The Giant Chord Book by Mr Harold Phillis included chords to St. Silas Shuffle. John and Ken thought there was a connection, so began to dig.

Ken used the AJM website to discover that the AJM has a copy of St. Silas Shuffle. It was written by Tony Newstead and recorded by Willie McIntyre's Jazz Band in Melbourne in 1946. John and Mel Blachford, AJM's Collection Manager, found the recording in the collection at AJM. Terry Norman, AJM President, gave Ken a copy, and Ken's wife Judy, AJM volunteer, put it on YouTube. Listen to the original version¹ with Tony Newstead (trumpet), Keith Atkins (clarinet), Eric Washington (trombone), Will McIntyre (piano), Keith Cox (guitar), Frank Mardell (string bass), and Don Reid (suitcase). AJM member Kim Harris transcribed the sheet music from the original recording, and the Dirty Dozen Jazz Band began rehearsing it.

In parallel, Ken discussed St. Silas's jazz history with Arch-deacon Ray McInnes, the Parish of the Parks vicar. It turns out that the former St Silas church hall (now a petrol station) was the former home of the Melbourne Jazz Club (MJC). Willie McIntyre's Jazz Band and many others played there. The Dirty Dozen Jazz Band is following in their footsteps, and is now the resident jazz band at Parish of the Parks.

On 23 November 2014 the Dirty Dozen Jazz Band played St. Silas Shuffle at a Parish of the Parks jazz service, which surprised and delighted the congregation. Listen to and view the current rendition² with AJM members Ken

¹ St. Silas Shuffle – original version: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ym39ljHTp3U>

² St. Silas Shuffle – current rendition: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AGp0_Zuii8U&feature=youtu.be



**Tony Newstead trumpet, composer, leader
Willie McIntyre piano.**

Three of the Best



The Melbourne New Orleans Jazz Band

THE AUSTRALIAN JAZZ MUSEUM is privileged in being able to present a selection of rare recordings by three important jazz bands from the era of the trad jazz boom of the late 1950s, early 1960s. These bands, each with their own unique sound, present a variety of traditional jazz styles representative of the period. This forthcoming CD, to be titled 'Three of the Best' will be released on the Vjazz label early in 2015. It will feature:

The Hot Sands Jazz Band which was only ever professionally recorded once. Four items from that recording session were released on an **East** 45rpm EP in 1964. The six tracks featured on this forthcoming CD represent previously unreleased items from that session.

The Melbourne New Orleans Wanderers was another band that was only once professionally recorded. However, that session resulted in the issue of only a mere 24 private unlabelled LP records. The complete recording session will be featured on this CD.

The Melbourne New Orleans Jazz Band toured England in 1962 and '63. The items on this CD are from a live recording made in Nottingham that has never before been issued.

Radio presenter Geoff Tobin has written extensive insert notes for the CD release giving the history and background of each band as well as an overview of the jazz scene of the period. Full details of the CD release will be given in our next Vjazz magazine, otherwise watch for it on our web site,

Because of his great love of genuine New Orleans jazz the CD will be dedicated to the late Eric Brown. (One of the rare unlabelled LP records mentioned above, in mint condition and sourced for this CD, came from the Eric Brown collection.)

Bryan Joseph Clothier

The death of Bryan Joseph Clothier on the 14th November 2014, brought so many memories of the early days of the Victorian Jazz Archive.

Bryan was our very first volunteer, not on the committee in 1998, who, along with his great friend Geoff Forrest, gave their time and energy to the Archive in working conditions far removed from today's "lap of luxury" for the workers.

Bryan and Geoff laboured away at the Collection, mainly 78rpm records at a table (yes the table in the Jilly Ward Room) with no false ceiling, no air-conditioning and no floor or wall covering. Temperatures bordered on the sub-arctic, with a few possums to keep them company, and all they asked was for recorded jazz music to be heard to see them through the day. In the Winter of 1998 they came dressed in overcoats, scarves and beanies, to work in the area that is now the about where Tom Lucas sits.

Geoff Forrest was fighting cancer, to which he succumbed a short time later.

Bryan was formally known as the Deputy Chief Magistrate of Victoria and had a strong vision that the Archive would be the success it is today. All send their condolences to his wife Denise and his family. An inspirational man indeed.

John Kennedy

BECHET LIVES

By Bill Brown

Sidney Bechet, one of the great jazz originals, has been gone from us since 1959. However, his music lives on in the minds and hearts of those worthy types lucky to have been smitten with this hot 'jass' music phenomenon, usually early in their lives. Bechet was one of the early examples of this tantalising experience. In the seventies his compositions were given a new lease of life by one of his protégés reed man Bob Wilber. He and Kenny Davern, a fellow reed player, formed the band, **Soprano Summit**, which recorded often and had great success for a few years.

However, here in Melbourne's fair city we have our own version of that august line up. At a recent Jazz Australia luncheon-concert organised by Diana Allen at the Bentleigh Club they wowed an attentive and appreciative audience from the first note of the day.

Melbourne's latest acquisition from Adelaide, Jonathan Hunt is a real fan of the flamboyant Sidney. He played

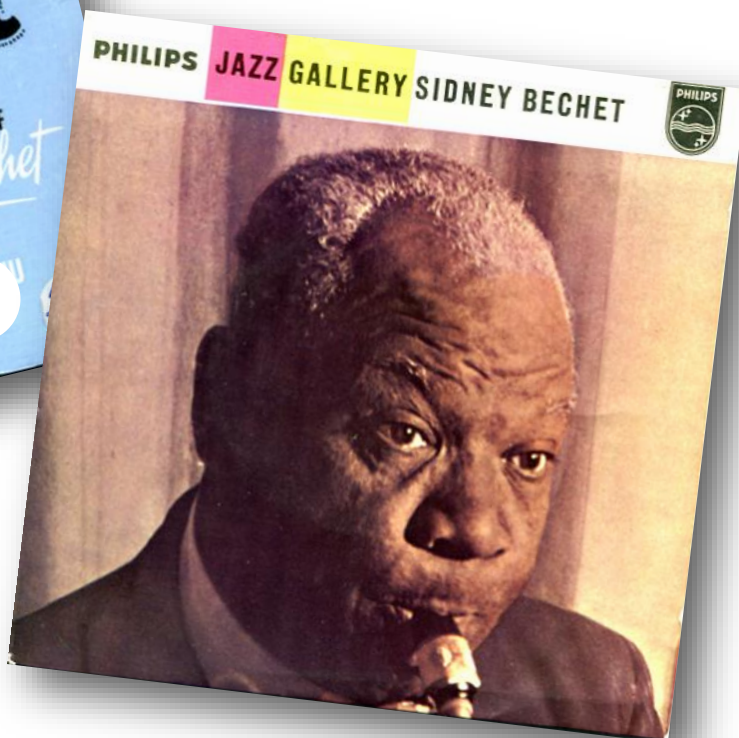
clarinet and the curved soprano sax. Michael McQuaid, a fixture on the local scene, (he pops up everywhere) played clarinet, straight soprano sax and trumpet. At the piano was the great Stephen Grant. With Andy Ross and Ian Smith handling the bass and drum duties the rhythm section was in good hands. How could the session not swing?

In two very entertaining sets the band covered a wide range of Bechet's recorded output from the early twenties up to his productive Indian summer as a resident of Paris.

A few of his compositions from that period had a quirky element—*The Fishseller*, *The Onions* and one which the Hunt/McQuaid duo performed on clarinets, the *Coffee Grinder*. They also played *Si Tu Vois Ma Mere* (also known as *Lonesome*), and his best known opus *Petite Fleur*. That tune of course performed by Englishman Monty Sunshine with Chris Barber's Band on an LP in 1956 made it into the hit parade in 1959. Sadly that was the year Bechet died.

I was particularly interested in their versions of the 1920's *Wildcat Blues* and *Kansas City Man Blues*. Since the concert I have refreshed my memory playing those tracks from my Clarence Williams collection. The forties era on the Blue Note label wasn't forgotten with the tunes *Summertime* and *Blue Horizon*.

All in all the performance on Sunday November 9th 2014 was a credit to the musicians involved and a fitting reminder of the musical output of one of jazz's early pioneers (a musician as Bechet termed himself). Hopefully this Melbourne ensemble will stay together and make some recordings. Diana Allen (Lady Jazz Australia) continues to cater for the discerning jazz enthusiast. May this continue. Anyone interested in Bechet's colourful life should read his book "Treat It Gentle" or John Chilton's "Sidney Bechet Wizard Of Jazz". I wish Jonathan Hunt well on his imminent PhD of the great man. It will add to his own accomplishments and his obvious great future as a jazzman.



We Welcome these New and Rejoining Members:

Evelyn Barber, David Bevan, Bernie Capicchiano, Maree Delbridge, Russell Downes, Jill & Bill Doyle, Peter Duras, Mervyn & Elaine Hall, Derrick Herbert, Keith Holzer, Jean James, Dennis Mills, Hussain Morssi, Lee O'Hara, John Roberts, Lian Salamanca & Lance Fishman, Phil Sandford, Leonard D Scott, Beverley Sheehan, Kevin Smith, Geoffrey Waite, Max Wellins.

We would like to thank the following for their generous financial support:

Blue Tone Jazz Band, Bill Corbett, Russell Downes, Martin Jackson, John James, Victorian Jazz Club.

(Oct, Nov, Dec)

PLEASE NOTE THE DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT MAGAZINE IS THE END OF MARCH 2015

Melbourne

BRASS & WOODWIND

The best in instruments
The best after sales service

Everything to do with brass and woodwind instruments
578 North Road, Ormond, Victoria. 3204
T. 03 9578 3677 www.ozwinds.com.au



You can come and tour the Museum or join a Group Visit

A group of approximately forty members attended the Australian Jazz Museum in Wantirna and had a very interesting three hours which included a guided tour of the various rooms, some of which are Shipping Containers converted to fireproof storage and attached to the main building. All the guides and every one working on cataloguing and recording their enormous collection of Australian Jazz are volunteers and regularly work, when they are open, which is Tuesday & Fridays each week. One example of their dedication is a 90 year-old who has registered 60,000+ tunes from 3,800 international jazz CDs. After the tour we were treated to about an hour of fabulous Jazz from six of the volunteers including a female singer. This was followed by hot sausage rolls, sandwiches and cake as our light lunch. Everyone was amazed and really enjoyed the whole experience. The Museum is open on the days mentioned and they have a shop selling CDs. Anyone interested can be a member for \$50/annum.

Ray Ward, Monash Combined Probus Club

A Group visit includes light lunch, a tour of the Museum and great music for \$25.

Free Admission for AJM Members to Louis Armstrong Museum House

We are proud to announce our first reciprocal-rights agreement with another major jazz museum. Members of the Australian Jazz Museum now get free entry to the Louis Armstrong Museum House located in Queens, New York (normally \$10.00) if they show their AJM membership card. The Museum is located in the house where the great man actually lived for many years, and is classified as a US National Historic Landmark. Visit their website www.louisarmstronghouse.org for more details of what they offer.

ONLINE MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

We're pleased to announce that membership renewals can now be done online, by credit card, Paypal, or by direct deposit to the Victorian Jazz Archive. Your renewal notice will give you full details. Alternatively, for credit-card or Paypal payments, go into the Membership page on our website at <http://www.vicjazzarchive.org.au> and find the payment option at the lower right-hand corner of the page. Don't forget you receive a free Vjazz CD with your renewal.

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