



QUARTERLY MAGAZINE OF THE AUSTRALIAN JAZZ MUSEUM. FOUNDING PATRON: The late WILLIAM H. MILLER M.A., B.C.L. (Oxon.)

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# Contents

- 02 Letters to the Editor**  
**03 Jazz Band at the Savoy Hotel, London, in 1926**  
 By Jack Mitchell  
**04 Jack Mitchell**  
 By Ken Simpson-Bull  
**07 Coco Schumann - A Swing Legend**  
 By Detlef Ott  
 compiled by Ralph Powell  
**09 From Berlin to Bonegilla and Back**  
 By Ralph Powell  
**12 Clark Terry Jazz Great**  
 By Bill Brown  
**13 Margaret Ann Harvey**  
 By Dr Ray Marginson  
**14 Bowing Out at Bowral**  
 By Bill Brown  
**15 Now at the Museum**

## Image: Front Cover



**Jazz Band at the Savoy Hotel, London, 1926 oil.**  
**Artist: Harold Septimus Power**  
**National Gallery of Victoria**

## Images:

Anna Rosner Blay  
 Australian Jazz Museum  
 Bill Brown  
 Coco Schumann  
 Detlef Ott  
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# Letters to the Editor

Dear EC

I congratulate you on the magazine it's always packed with interesting articles. I got much pleasure in reading the article by Ron Gates in the Graeme Bell recording session. When I went to Armidale in 1981 to manage 2ARM-FM community radio station I was told that there was someone at the University of New England who had deputised on the piano in the Graeme Bell Band. After awhile I found that it was Professor Ron Gates the then recently retired Vice-Chancellor.

Years later when I was working as a journalist on the Armidale Express I reviewed Graeme Bell's autobiography and did an interview with Graeme. As a side story I did a short piece based on Professor Gates' recollections of his visit to Czechoslovakia in 1947 where he met up with the Bell band. Shortly after this I had Ron Gates as a guest on a desert island discs style program I conduct on 2ARMFM.

In the hour long program he showed a deep appreciation of jazz and we played a number records from his collection. One was a George Wettling Group recording which occupied both sides of a 78. While I had devised a technique which allowed me to flip a vinyl and have the second side playing in seven seconds I was certainly more circumspect with the fragile disc particularly with its owner present in the studio.

Yours faithfully  
 David Milne

Dear EC

On page 13 (Vjazz 65) with reference to St. Silas Shuffle - St. Silas church hall was the home of the **MELBOURNE JAZZ CLUB**, not the Victorian Jazz Club. The Melbourne Jazz Club ran from 1958 until 1965. The house band was called The Melbourne Jazz Club Band and then in 1962 Frank Traynor's Jazz Preachers. One Donald Anderson was on the committee of the MJC. When it closed in 1965, it was three years before the Victorian Jazz Club came into being, in 1968, and this was at the Prospect Hill Hotel in Kew. One Donald Anderson was a founding committee member in 1968.

Don and I still have the wedding present of 6 different coloured tumblers presented by the MJC committee on the eve of our wedding. They insisted we came down on the Friday night to receive this gift. As an aside, I understand Willie McIntyre played there in the 40s.

Best regards  
 Maggie Anderson

Dear EC,

Dropping you a line to let you know I enjoyed all the articles in VJAZZ. Good reading, and informative.

Ken, I had a 78 (maybe more than one) when I was a kid, wouldn't play, 70 odd years later I now know the answer.

Regards  
 John Thrum

Dear EC.

Just wanted to say I read your article (St Silas) in the jazz magazine. Congratulations on your research and the article, and good on you for posting your performance on Youtube!

With best wishes,  
 Marion

Dear AJM

I would like to thank you and all past members for your presence and participation on the committee of our Victorian Jazz Musicians' Benefit Fund. Without your wonderful expertise and love for our music, this benefit fund would never have become the great success that it has been over the past twenty-three years, up until the time of closure. Our friendships have grown and I believe that this was an essential part of its growth and success.

Our remaining funds were passed into **Support Act**.

**Support Act** is a national body who assists musicians Australia wide. The Victorian Jazz Musicians' Benefit Fund has worked closely with them over recent years. This arrangement has met the requirements of Consumer Affairs Victoria. We should all be proud of a job very well done.

Sincerely  
 Jim Beadman



## Jazz Band at the Savoy Hotel, London, in 1926

By Jack Mitchell

**B**ROWSING through Australian newspaper files I came across the following which appeared in papers in most states on 29 and 30 April 1926. "*The Australian artists Isaac Cohen, George Coates and Septimus Power have the distinction of being 'on the line' at the Royal Academy, Power with an original canvas depicting a jazz band at the Savoy Hotel*" [London]. This was news to me so I contacted my friend Nick Dellow in England who is an expert on the Savoy Hotel and has had access to the hotel's archives.

Nick said that the painting was indeed famous and prints of it are still on sale. He believes that the band in question is that of *Bert Ralton's Savoy Havana Band*. The leader looks like Ralton, the sousaphone player is certainly Jim Bellamy, and Ralton was the only Savoy leader who was a saxophonist and his instrument stand is illustrated. This stand is also visible in a photograph of Ralton at the Tivoli Theatre in Melbourne in December 1923. All other leaders at the Savoy were either violinists or pianists.

Researcher Mark Berresford, editor/publisher of VJM's *Jazz & Blues Mart* is also convinced that the painting is of Ralton's outfit. However...

Artist, Harold Septimus Power, studied art in Australia and exhibited successfully in 1899. He moved to Adelaide where he worked as an illustrator for various newspapers. From 1905 to 1907 he studied at the Academie Julian in Paris, then settled in London, becoming a member of the Royal Institute of Painters in Oils and exhibited at the Royal Academy of Arts. He returned to Melbourne in 1913. In 1917 he was in France as an official war artist with the AIF, returning to England at war's end.

In May 1921 the *Argus* said "*Mr. Power had spent many years in Melbourne before going to London where he had been successful and he had returned to Australia to make pictures of Australia*".

American Bert Ralton had arrived in England on 13 July 1921 and commenced at the Savoy on 27 September, leaving England aboard the *Ormonde* on 13 October 1923, bound for Australia. During that period Power was well and truly in Australia so the painting could not have been created during that engagement. In *The Mail* [Adelaide] 12 May 1923 Power criticised the Adelaide Art Gallery as a "*jumble—instead of selecting pictures which will harmonise they have produced an effect like a jazz band*". This

suggests that he was not then particularly entranced by jazz, even as it was rendered at that time.

Ralton and his band arrived in Sydney on 22 November 1923, playing for two weeks at the Tivoli, then nine days at the Melbourne Tivoli, returning to Sydney about 16 December. Whether Septimus Power heard or saw Ralton's band during that time is not known to me, but obviously the picture at the Savoy couldn't have been painted in Australia. On 16 February 1924 Mr Power and family sailed on the RMS *Osterley* for London, where they stayed until mid January 1927.

Ralton had returned to England, arriving about the end of October 1925, but did not return to the Savoy Hotel, instead he toured music halls, theatres and ballrooms with great success. He resumed recording for Columbia with his group called *Bert Ralton and his Havana Band*. At the same time the *Savoy Havana Band*, led by violinist Reg Batten, was recording for HMV. Ralton and Power were both in England up to 3 September 1926 when Ralton sailed to South Africa but at no time did Ralton appear at the Savoy.

Power returned to Adelaide on 12 February 1927. In an interview with *The Advertiser* he said: "*Discussing art in general, at present in England there appeared to be a spirit of unrest abroad. Artists were not content with the old methods and ideals but appeared to be continuously striving for the unusual and bizarre. He himself had succumbed to the demand for something new to the extent of painting the jazz band at the Savoy Hotel. Though that was quite different from his usual work it had been a great success*".

The only conclusion I can reach is that the painting was done in early 1926, possibly late 1925 as it would presumably have required more than one sitting, but how it showed Ralton's band is indeed a mystery.

In 1927 the original painting was acquired by the National Gallery of Victoria, where it is dated as c.1926. It was last hung at the Gallery in 1996, and has been loaned on several occasions for exhibition in other galleries. Perhaps one day it will appear on a wall in the **Australian Jazz Museum**.







# Jack Mitchell

Jazz Historian and Discographer

By Ken Simpson-Bull



Recent photo of Jack Mitchell

**M**UCH of the wide-ranging information pertaining to the Australian Jazz Museum's collection of recorded music owes so much to one man—Jack Mitchell. Jack's knowledge of the Australian Jazz scene is legendary and his continually updated version of "Australian Jazz on Record"—a comprehensive jazz discography—is totally invaluable.

The science of discography (the collecting and collating of recording groups, their personnel and other relevant details) dates back to the 1930s with publications by Hilton Schleman, Charles Delaunay, Brian Rust and others. Australians were able to gain their knowledge, not from the record companies who published very little in the way of dates and performance personnel, but from a few investigative journalists (so to speak) such as Bill Miller (in the long running magazine "Jazz Notes" and of course, Jack Mitchell.

Although Jack contributed a number of discographical articles to (mainly) "Jazz Notes", it was in 1950 that he conceived the idea of compiling and documenting the recording achievements of Australian Jazz musicians in one comprehensive publication. He approached Bill Miller with the idea and Bill helped him produce his first modest jazz discography of only 361 titles. It wasn't until 1988 that Jack's first fully professional hard-cover discography was published (by the National Film and Sound Archive) under the name "Australian Jazz

on Record". In that book's forward, jazz luminary Graeme Bell wrote:

*"Jack Mitchell first heard my original Melbourne band in the late forties, but my friendship with him did not take hold until the early sixties when, after a gig in the mountains with my Sydney band we called at the Mitchells' Lithgow home to talk about jazz and records over a few drinks. We ended up spending the night on couches and other make-shift beds.*

*Ever after that it became 'de rigueur' when appearing in Lithgow or nearby towns to call in on Jack Mitchell, before or after playing, to listen to records, have a few drinks and partake of his wife Jan's excellent cooking. Other bands visiting the Blue Mountains region fell into the same habit.*

*Jack's knowledge of Australian jazz recordings had already become legendary in jazz circles throughout Australia, and even abroad. Finally, he published his first discography, which ran to two limited editions, the last of which appeared in 1960.*

*[Jack was] an indispensable source of reference for any writer, broadcaster or jazz musician, and I have used Jack's early incomplete publications on countless occasions ... the musicians themselves are too busy creating and performing this music to be bothered keeping complete information of their recording activities, and if it were not for people like Jack these priceless details could be lost forever. Jack Mitchell is indisputably the top man in his field in this country*

*It is rather appropriate that Jack*

*Mitchell should, at last, be rewarded with the publication of his definitive work of Australian jazz on record by an organisation devoted to the preservation of Australia's heritage in film and sound. This sorely needed work, comprising 12000 entries and three major indexes of tune titles, artists, record labels and catalogue numbers, is not only a discography, it is almost a history of Australian jazz.*

Graeme Bell MBE  
November 1987

Later editions of Jack's Australian Jazz discography were called MAJOR (More Australian Jazz on Record) and EMAJOR (Even More!). Today, Jack's latest edition is now published in CD ROM form for rapid information access. It contains a complete listing (so far as it is humanly possible to ascertain) of every officially recorded Australian jazz performances from 1926 to 2014

But Jack has also produced many comprehensive articles for a variety of local and overseas magazines and publications. His latest book, "Coggy" is a biographical work on the great Australian trombonist and Band Leader, Frank Coughlan. Jack is presently working on a new book on Australian jazz and hot dance-band music of 1920s to be called "Blistered Heels".

So, who is Jack Mitchell? Jack was born in Sydney on the 29<sup>th</sup> of May, 1926. Recently interviewed, he flippantly quipped, "I'm only 88 you know!" By 1942 the family was living in Bondi which is when Jack left school and began his first job as an assistant cinema



Jack Mitchell, Wild Bill Davidson (some years ago)



projectionist at the Victory Theatre in George Street. But Jack wanted something more professional so he studied hard and entered university in 1948, finally becoming a dentist.

While working at the cinema, Jack became interested in music, particularly jazz, which could be heard every day on the radio as part of regular programs. On his early morning shifts he was able to access the city record shops ahead of others in order to get the latest first-release records which were hard to come by in those days. Although his mum only had a wind-up gramophone, his sister had an electric radiogram (rare at the time) on which he was able to play his records to great effect.

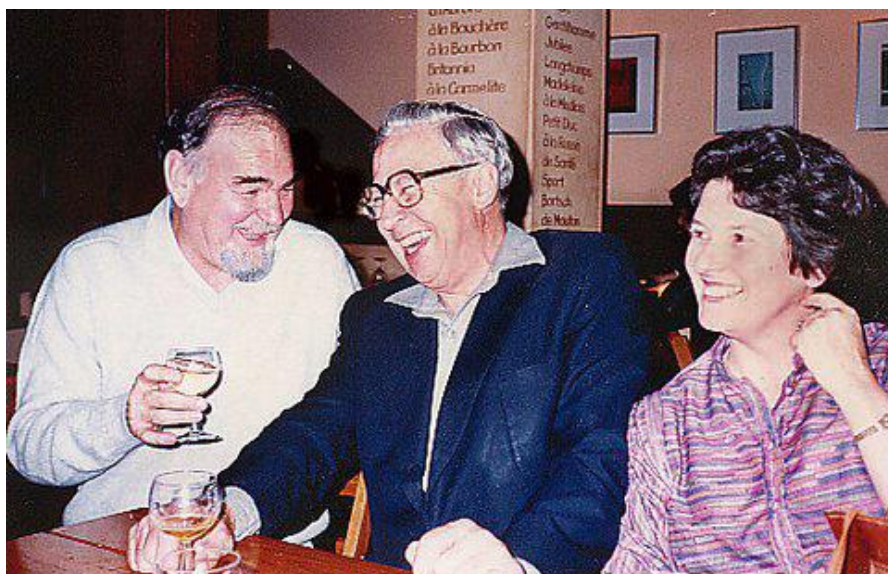
In 1944 Jack started going to the Sydney Swing Music Club where he was able to hear rare records played by Ron Wills, Eric Dunn and other jazz enthusiasts. Ross Fusedale then introduced him to "Jazz Notes" magazine which created his interest in jazz history and discography.

Very few local jazz records were available at that time and Jack, being as he described himself, "a very patriotic Australian" bought all of the first George Trevare records, Amper-sands, Jazzarts, and the like. Jack soon started making a comprehensive list of all the records he had and was advised by Norm Linehan that he should get it published. Jack then approached Bill Miller of Ampersand records who helped him publish his first "Australian Discography" in 1950. His second edition came out in 1960, "just a duplicated affair", Jack said.

Peter Burgis, who worked at the National Library, became aware of Jack's ever-growing discography and organised its first professional publication, "Australian Jazz on Record". This was in 1988, delayed by eight years because of the transition of the Library to "The National Film and Sound Archive".

Jack related that, over the years, he had written hundreds of letters to record companies and musicians seeking information for his work. "You're lucky if you get ten-percent replies", he said sadly. "Then they read your book and ask you why you didn't include this and that!" Australia's biggest record company, EMI, he discovered, had almost nothing in the way of files. It was Ron Wills who helped Jack retrieve what little information they could from that company's meagre paperwork back to 1926.

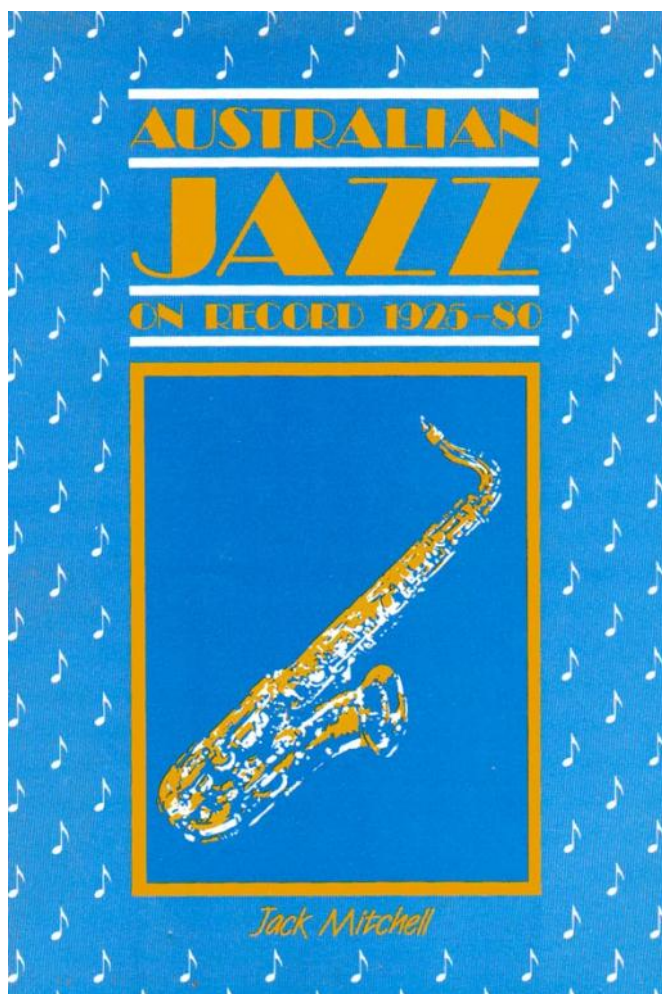
Jack's record collection has continued to grow over the

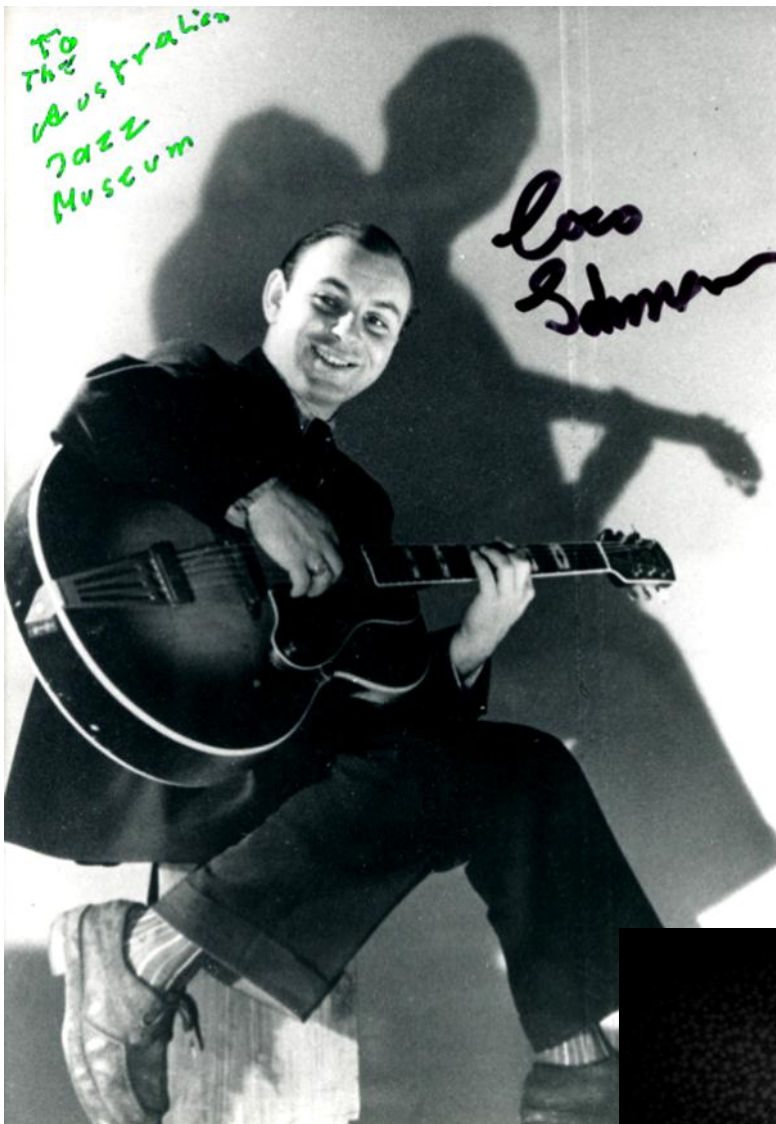


Early photo of Johnny Mc Carthy, Jack Mitchell and wife Jan

years with many rare and one-off recordings being donated by like-minded friends. Other unique recordings he was able to borrow and tape for his own research and, of course, entertainment. Asked about his rarest record, Jack was proud to have in his possession the first-ever recording of "St Louis Blues". This was by the Ciro's Club Coon Orchestra recorded in London in 1917.

Jack still lives in Lithgow with his long-time wife, Jan. The Australian Jazz Museum is very thankful for the assistance Jack continues to provide in the production of its Vjazz CDs and in answering some thorny questions.





**Coco Schumann**





# COCO SCHUMANN - A SWING LEGEND

By Detlef Ott compiled by Ralph Powell



In November last year Detlef and Kerstin Ott visited the Australian Jazz Museum seeking information on their friend and compatriot, German jazz guitarist, Coco Schumann. They spent several hours at the Museum and were both delighted and impressed with the resources made available.

The following is translated from the original German article by Detlef Ott entitled "Solange ich Musik mache, habe ich keine Zeit, alt zu werden" published in the Just For Swing Gazette (Vol. 6, April 2014 pp.10-11)

## "As long as I make music, I have no time to grow old"

### Coco Schumann – a Swing Legend celebrates his 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday

AS a teenager of 12 Heinz Jakob Schumann often listened to the swing orchestras behind the fence of the legendary Entertainment Palaces of Berlin. This was in 1936. Later a friend, a French girl who couldn't pronounce "Heinz," called him Coco which became his stage name.

It seems not so long ago that his 85th birthday was celebrated with a big Gala in Berlin, and also in a theatre in Hamburg with a show about his life. On May 14th, 2014 the legendary Swing guitarist turned 90. "*Solange ich Musik mache, habe ich keine Zeit alt zu werden.*" — As long as I make music, I have no time to grow old. His spirit is that of a young man. Much has been written about his life in recent years. His autobiography, "Der Ghetto-Swinger — Eine Jazzlegende erzählt" from 1997 moved many people to tears. From this time on he often spoke about his life which he had never done before during concerts and readings, but especially in front of students and teachers in schools. He doesn't become tired of answering the same questions, although they bring back bad memories. "*Bis heute kann ich wirklich nicht begreifen, dass ich das Inferno lebend verlassen konnte, während Millionen andere sterben mussten ... Warum sie, warum nicht ich?*" — Even today I can't understand that I survived that inferno and millions of other people had to die ... Why them, why not me?

Coco was introduced to Jazz and Swing

while listening to the newest records from the USA on portable Gramophone players. With Ella Fitzgerald's "A Tisket, a Tasket" he became infected with the Swing virus. Later, he became a great fan of Teddy Stauffer whom he listened to in the famous Delphi Palace in Berlin in 1936. It was this music that helped save his life.

When he went to school it became clear to him that, as he had a Jewish mother, he was a "Halbarier" (Half Arian) under the law of the Nazi regime. "*Menschen wie wir wurden 'Mampe' genannt. Mampe war ein Berliner Likör, Halb und Halb.*" — People like me were called 'Mampe'. Mampe was a special liquor in Berlin, half and half. Despite this he was not interested in politics, concentrating on playing guitar and drums. From 1940 on he took every chance to play with Bands in order to entertain Berlin audiences. His great skills allowed him to learn the repertoire very rapidly and he watched the other players to develop his skills.

His Swing feeling became legendary. Hans Korseck was pivotal to Coco's development. Korseck played guitar in the United States with Benny Goodman and became Coco's teacher. But the government made it more and more difficult to play Swing. Over the years Coco was able to play even though he had no cabaret card from the so-called "Reichsmusikkammer" - State Music Bureau. Nevertheless, he recorded for broadcasts and records mostly with the

violin player Helmut Zacharias with whom he was befriended until his death in 2002.

In 1943 Coco was denounced and was sent to the "Ghetto" Theresienstadt, which was a special concentration camp that the Nazis used for their propaganda to show the world that they'd protect the Jews. Music helped Coco to get through the daily life of overcrowded rooms, hunger, illness and the daily fear of unexpected transports into the death camps like Auschwitz-Birkenau. He became the drummer of the so called "Ghetto Swingers", a Swing orchestra that was founded in 1943 and that was led by Bedrich "Fricke" Weiss, and later by the piano player Martin Roman, who was, for a short time, the piano player of the Weintraub Syncopators and Secco's Gitanos which performed mainly in the Netherlands. In 1944 the Nazis urged the actor Kurt Gerron to make a movie about the "wonderful" life in Theresienstadt. The film had the ironic title "Der Führer schenkt den Juden einen Stadt" — The Führer gives the Jews a city. The "Ghetto Swingers" had to participate, too. When the film was finished most of the participants were sent to Auschwitz. Here, too music saved Coco's life. "*Die Bilder, die ich in jenen Tagen sah, waren nicht auszuhalten, und doch hielten wir sie aus. Wir spielten Musik dazu, ums nackte Überleben.*" — What I saw was unbelievable and hard to stand. We played music like hell only to survive.

Every time when the SS gave the order they had to play for their amusement, including Swing. The SS had a favorite song – La Paloma. “Desire for freedom”. It was a cynical background for the prisoners who were sent into the Gas chambers. Even today Coco finds it hard talk about this: *“Die Kinder, die an uns vorübergingen, schauten mir direkt in die Augen, ich schaute nicht weg. Sie wussten genau, wohin sie gingen. Diese Bilder sind auf meiner Netzhaut eingebrannt. Ich kann noch so oft blinzeln. Manchmal hilft mir, dass die Tränen kommen, aber kaum öffne ich die Augen, ist das Bild wieder da. Mit ihnen ist in mir endgültig etwas zerbrochen, das nicht zu reparieren ist.”* — The children who passed by looked straight into our eyes. I looked at them. They knew where they had to go. Those pictures are burned into my eyes. Sometimes it helps me that I close my eyes and tears roll, but when I open my eyes, all these pictures here again. Something is broken in me that no longer gets repaired.

In January 1945 Coco came to Dachau near Munich and was liberated by American soldiers. He never spoke a word of his experiences for a long time after. *“Ich jammere nicht, dass ich im KZ war, ich juble, dass ich da rausgekommen bin.”* — I don’t complain that I was in a concentration camp, I rejoice that I came out. He wanted to be recognized as a musician and not as somebody from the concentration camp who is playing a little bit of music.

*„Ich bin Musiker. Ein Musiker, der im KZ gesessen hat, kein KZler, der auch ein bisschen Musik macht. Die Lager und die Angst veränderten mein Leben grundsätzlich, aber die Musik hat es geführt, und sie hat es gut gemacht.”* — I am a musician who was in a concentration camp, not an imprisoned person, who makes a little music. Those camps and my fear changed my life but music led it and this was good.

His close friend, the saxophone player Karl Heinz Böhm, told me, “I knew a little bit about his life and that he was in a concentration camp. But we never talked about details. All this I only got to know much later.”

After the war Coco looked for opportunities to play his music in the destroyed Berlin. Helmut Zacharias took him in his Band and they recorded some of the first Swing records after the war for the East German Label “Lied der Zeit”, later Amiga. During that time Coco heard Charlie Christian play. He was fascinat-

ed by his sound. Roger Rossmeisl, a famous luthier, told him the secret — the strings were amplified electronically. So Schumann let him rebuild his guitar with parts of headphones that the soldiers from the Wehrmacht used. An electric guitar in Germany at that time was something complete new. On his first recordings with Zacharias he is heard as the first musician in Germany with an electric amplified guitar.

The fact that Post-war Germany was still administered by “old” Nazis still led him to emigrate with his wife Gertrude and her son Peter to Australia at the end of 1950. He started to play in Melbourne with his friend Leo Rosner and his Gypsy Band and recorded his first record under his own name (but in the English version with only one “n” on the Label) Spotlight Varieties “Coco Schumann’s Quintet” and a second one — The Melody Lingers — with the clarinet player Geoff Kitchen. Although he was loved and obtained plenty of work playing, he became homesick. Shortly before he was to get his Australian citizenship he left Australia. His desire for Berlin, his parents and his brother was bigger. So he went back to a country that he never would call his *home* again. *“Heimat’ ist für mich eine zwiespältige Angelegenheit. [...] Ich bin nirgendwo mehr zu Hause.”* — ‘Home’ is a difficult word for me. I am nowhere home any more.”

He now lives in a quiet area of Berlin. A suitcase is always packed under his bed.

His wife died many years ago. Friends often visit. So does his longtime friend and member of his Quartet, Karl Heinz Böhm. “When I phone Coco, I always start joking with, ‘Do I interrupt your practicing?’.” They became known in the 1960s when Coco played in a little Club in Berlin. Meanwhile they tour all over Germany playing the wonderful Swing standards. Especially the very intimate concerts in a little Berlin Jazz club “Badenscher Hof”. A highlight is having old friends looking in. He knows a lot of anecdotes and jokes. The atmosphere is respectful and very social. He can talk for hours about his meetings with Les Paul, Louis Armstrong, Ella Fitzgerald or Marlene Dietrich, who was accompanied by his Melody Trio when she performed in the Titania Palace Berlin in 1946. He especially loves ballads, the quiet moments, when he is speaking, with his guitar, to

an appreciative audience.

Armstrong gave him the advice, “Coco, it is not important what you play; it is important how you play.” When he starts to play the intro of one of his most favorite ballads “Autumn Leaves” - the plectrum between his lips while smiling into the audience — and then changes to the chords — these are *the* moments that everybody will remember forever. Coco: “Notes are only pixels on a paper. You can play them, of course. But it is a big difference to awake them to life.”

His life story is of great interest. Hollywood planned to make a movie with Leonardo DiCaprio as Coco. The actor Jeff Goldblum came especially to Berlin to talk about this project but, unfortunately, nothing has yet happened.

Coco never lost his sense of humor. His motto for life was a quotation by Charlie Chaplin: “A day without laughing is a lost day.” “As a Jazz musician I had the great advantage to have a home in my music and to have a family worldwide.” He always talks with fond memories about his life in Australia and is very sad that he never could return.

Text and Photos: Detlef A. Ott

All Quotations are from many talks led by Detlef A. Ott with Coco Schumann and Karl Heinz Böhm

**Books:** Coco Schumann: Der Ghetto-Swinger.

Charles Lewinsky: Geron Roman Nagel & Kimche, Zürich 2011, ISBN 978-3-312-00478-2

Eine Jazzlegende erzählt. Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag München 1997, ISBN 3-423-24107-1

**Films:** Coco, der Ghetto-Swinger (1986), Swing under the swastika (1989,) und La paloma adé (1997), “Theresienstadt – Musik als Zuflucht” Dokumentation by Dorothee Binding und Benedict Mirow (2013)





## From Berlin to Bonegilla and Back

By Ralph Powell

NAME SCHUMANN  
Heinz  
 Address BONEGILLA TRAINING CENTRE  
 Nationality German  
 Place of Birth Berlin  
 Date of Birth 14.5.24  
 Single or Married Married  
 Occupation LABOURER  
 Arrived in Australia on 17 DEC 1950  
 Port of MELBOURNE per CASTELBIANCO  
 Signature of Holder Heinz Schumann  
 Certificate issued at MELBOURNE on 17 DEC 1950  
 Issued by [Signature] For COMMONWEALTH MIGRATION OFFICER

Personal Description:  
 Height 5 ft 5 ins  
 Build Medium  
 Eyes Blue Hair Fair  
 Remarks

DEPARTMENT OF IMMIGRATION  
 17 DEC 1950  
 VIO.

HEINZ SCHUMANN

"My name is Coco Schumann. I come from Germany and I am a musician and music is my life. If I go back to the camp I will be sent to pick fruit and will not be able to play my music and if he could arrange for me to go to a larger city so I can play my music. The minister looked at me and smiled, and said to his secretary, "Write down his name. We'll give you a call in Bonegilla."<sup>4</sup> When the placement officer informed him he would be sent fruit picking Coco, having had the *chutzpah* to demand that he be treated as a special case, responded, "Sorry, but you must call Mr. Armstrong. He will give you another order."<sup>5</sup> As a result, in late February, Coco moved to South Yarra to begin working at the IXL Jam Factory in Chapel Street, Prahran.

He endured this for a fortnight before seeking an opportunity to get back into the music scene. Coco takes up the story, "After 14 days, I thought my god, my hands have got

As a Mischling, Heinz Jakob "Coco" Schumann was ill at ease in post war Germany and sought a fresh start in Australia. Having sailed out of Bremerhaven on the Castelbianco on 14 November 1950, Coco, his wife Gertraud and step-son Peter arrived in Melbourne during a summer heatwave. From Station Pier they headed by train to the unlined Nissen Huts of Bonegilla Migrant Reception and Training Centre.

Fortunately for Coco, there were several musicians in the camp who knew him personally or by reputation. Coco describes how, "Joshi, a Hungarian piano player asked me whether

I would like to play in the camp band. What a stupid question! So I stood the very first evening after our arrival on the boards that meant the world to me".<sup>2</sup>

He also performed at the 1951 Golden Jubilee of Federation celebrations in Canberra to which the musical newcomers from Bonegilla had been invited. "There was ballet, music of all kinds and a kilometre long buffet. It was a grandiose banquet on a well-kept lawn... We stood around in the ice-cold night and drank lots of beer. During our breaks we watched the spectacle."<sup>3</sup>



Lowell Morris (d) Leo Rosner (pac) Stan Walker (p)



Gertraud, Coco and Peter on board the Castelbianco Dec.1950

**"I am a musician and music is my life"**

It was on this occasion that Coco's brashness stood him in good stead. The assistant-secretary in the Department of Immigration, Robert Armstrong was at the event – the man responsible for the development of post-arrival services which facilitated the successful settlement of migrants. Under the impression that Mr Armstrong was the Minister for Immigration, Coco approached him saying,

bigger. Two of us had to lift 100 kg sugar bags and empty them into the jam all day long. So I made (fruitless) enquiries with bars, dance halls and coffee lounges."<sup>6</sup> Consequently, one night, he roped his heavy amplifier to his back, took his guitar and walked down to the Oran Coffee Lounge, in Barkly Street St. Kilda, "the number one address in town". Coco continues, "The man who looked horrified when I came up the steep stairs was the owner himself. I told him that I came from Berlin and that it is a long time ago that I played. I only wanted to sit in a little bit. He asked his musicians who rolled their eyes – a wunderkind from Berlin - that is all what they wanted. But they let me play. They asked me in what key I wished to play the songs. When I answered them that it

## Coco Schumann's Australian Sojourn - 17 December 1950 – 30 June 1954

doesn't matter what key, they were amused by the little booster."<sup>7</sup>

The six degrees of separation which seem a feature of his life again occurred. Suddenly the door of the kitchen opened and Walter Jöckel from Terezin Concentration Camp (where Coco had been interned) came out. Walter, who was a fan of Coco's, had been the butcher in the Terezin kitchen. "He had the little, sweet and naïve boy in mind, who made the daily life in Terezin endurable with his guitar playing."<sup>8</sup> Walter was manager of the Oran Coffee Lounge and asked Coco whether he would like to continue playing that evening. Finally, the owner asked Coco to leave his guitar and invited him to return the following Friday but

singer Peter Kotek. The band often played at Jewish weddings and confirmations and also "travelled half Australia with a Fashion Show."<sup>11</sup> In just 6 months the German émigré was being lauded as one of Australia's most outstanding guitar players.<sup>12</sup>

**Coco Schumann must be considered among the best of the guitarists playing in Australia today**

Keen to get back into the jazz scene, Schumann took every opportunity to play with local musicians. Graeme Bell mentions him amongst the jazz band leaders of the 1950s Melbourne Town Hall Jazz Concerts<sup>13</sup> and "when the opportunity presented



Lowell Morris (d) Coco Schumann (g)

Coco explained that he was under contract and had to stir jam. "He assured me that he would call the Employment Office the next day!"<sup>9</sup> as he had a permit to serve food and employ someone in the kitchen. "So he took over my contract and I was hired as kitchen help. And for the next two years I played music."<sup>10</sup>

At the Oran Coffee Lounge there was a four piece all-migrant band led by accordionist, Leo Rosner, with Coco on guitar, Stan Walker piano and Lowell Morris on drums. Their repertoire comprised everything from folk songs, Viennese waltzes and Russian dances to modern dance music.

His involvement with Leo Rosner soon led to dance music recordings with "Leo Rosner and his Gipsy Band". Produced by Homecrafts Pty Ltd, the records were singles that included Coco on guitar and baritone

itself to perform at Melbourne's Downbeat Jazz Festival he leapt at it".<sup>14</sup> Schumann performed at the Downbeat Festival for the following

three years declaring that, "The atmosphere of those days inspired me to compose and arrange my own songs".<sup>15</sup> In 1953 Coco Schuman's (sic) Quintet released *Rhythm Cocktail* with the band made up of Adriano Smith p, Trevor Torrens sb, Ron Loughhead vb, Charlie Blott d. He also recorded *The Melody Lingers*, with the Geoff Kitchen Quintet on the 'Spotlight' Varieties label.

Both microgroove discs were well reviewed by the newspapers of the day.<sup>16</sup> The 1953 *Downbeat! Big Band Bash* in the Mel-

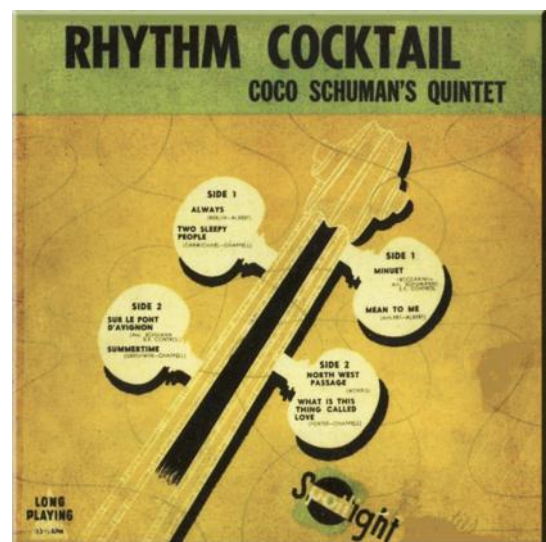


Geoff Kitchen (right)

bourne *Wirth's Olympia* saw Coco performing with the "Jazz at the Phil" Team – an Australian version of the legendary American Session - under the leadership of Lowell Morris.

**There was a saying about Melbourne, that it's as big as New York's Central Cemetery and twice as dead.<sup>18</sup>**

Eventually, the lack of any late night activity, combined with homesickness and a desire to be with his family, led Coco to return to Germany. Melbourne after midnight looked more like a science fiction movie set.





With nobody about, it was nothing like Berlin where a vibrant nightlife existed. The streets were empty, no pubs were open. There was a milk bar at St.Kilda Junction patronised by taxi drivers. Coming out of the Oran late at night he would walk the streets in a vain attempt to unwind but "there was just nothing and I had to go home still on a high." 17

Thus, the June 1954 Downbeat concert, for which he received the princely sum of £6/3/4<sup>d</sup>, was his parting performance. Billed as *Farewell to Coco Schumann*, it featured Coco g, Lowell Morris d, Stan Walker p, Lou Silbereisen sb and singer Wally Wood in the line-up. John Sangster and Charlie Blott supported on maracas. A fortnight later he departed for Germany. Leo Rosner's Gypsies were on the wharf to farewell them on 1st July 1954. Standing at the railing of the Toscana, the family waved goodbye

to their friends and "looked forward to uncertain days in the – again - new homeland." 19

#### ENDNOTES

1. Mischling (crossbreed) was the term used by the Nazis to classify persons of Aryan and Jewish heritage.
2. Schumann, Coco, (1997) *der Ghetto-Swinger: eine Jazzlegende erzählt*, Taschenbuch Verlag, Munich, p.139.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid. p.140.
5. Ibid.
6. Schmitz-Koster, Dorothee, "Kaviar und Wassersuppe : Coco Schumann: Ein deutsches Musikerleben" Radio-Bremen 2, Bremen, 2nd.December 1996, Web. Transcript, p. 16.
7. Schumann, *op. cit.*, p.141.
8. Ibid. p.141.
9. Ibid. p.142.
10. Oikonomakou, Katerina, *Berlin Interviews* <http://berlininter>

[views.com/?p=1058](http://views.com/?p=1058) March 4, 2014.

11. Schumann, *op. cit.*, p.143.
12. Tee, Frederick, (1951) "Music For Moderns." *The Listener* In July 21-27.
13. Bell, Graeme. (1988) *Australian Jazzman*, Child & Associates, Frenchs Forest, p. 190.
14. Hurley, Andrew W. *On the Sunny Side of the Street: A 'Ghetto Swinger' in Australia*, Extempore, No. 4, May 2010: p. 106.
15. Schumann, *op. cit.*, p.144.
16. "On the Record" *Argus* 18th April 1953 p. 14.; *The News* (Adelaide) 28th April 1953 p.10.
17. Schmitz-Koster, *op. cit.*, p. 18.
18. Oikonomakou, *op. cit.*
19. Schumann, *op. cit.*, p. 147.

#### Translations by:

Detlef Ott and Guenter 'Charles' Schaefer

Coco celebrates his 91st birthday in May this year

#### Leo Rosner & His Gipsy Band



CONTINENTAL RECORDS by HOMECRAFTS

Another new Spot-light Varieties disc we liked is Coco Schumann's quintet's "Rhythm Cock-tail," consisting of ever-greens like Irving Berlin's "Always," Carmichael's "Two Sleepy People," and Gershwin's "Summertime" from "Porgy and Bess."

**Dim light . . .**

It is just the music to dance to in a dim light, with some interesting arrangements featuring electric guitar, vibraphones, piano, and clarinet. The "Summertime" arrangement for piano and guitar is well worthy hearing. Coco Schumann is also featured guitarist in with Geoff Kitchen's disclet presenting "The Melody Lingers" — including such numbers as "Music, Maestro, Please," "Indian Summer," "September in the Rain," and "The Song is Ended." Within the frequency range they have set themselves, the recording engineers have done a job favorably with most imported popular music discs we've heard so far.

28th April 1953 The News (Adelaide) p10



Coco Schumann	4 3 4	(Paris)
Lowell Morris	4 3 4	(Paris)
Stan Walker (Hawthorn)	4 3 4	(Paris)
Lou Silbereisen (Bell Band)	4 3 4	(Paris)
Wally Wood - Vocalist	4 3 4	(Paris)
(with Sangster & Blott on Maracas)	4 3 4	(Paris)

Downbeat accounts for the farewell concert.



## CLARK TERRY JAZZ GREAT

By Bill Brown

YET another Jazz Giant has left us with the recent passing of Clark Terry a very fine brass man, proficient on trumpet and flugel horn. He had been ill for some time but over half a century he made his mark on the World wide jazz scene. A stalwart of the Duke Ellington Orchestra of the fifties he appeared on a few famous albums in that period when the Duke's band had a bit of a renaissance following the 1956 Newport Jazz Festival. I think Clark enjoyed his Ducal stay despite having to play Perdido every night.

I first came upon him in the Count Basie Octet around 1950 when the Count gave up his big band as there was a slump in the big band popularity. From memory tracks like *Bluebeard Blues*, *Those Foolish Things* and the *Golden Bullet* were real swingers.

My favourite sessions were three LPs from the early sixties when his front line partner was valve trombonist Bob Brookmeyer. *Tonight*, *The Power of Positive Swinging* and *Ginger Bread Boy* are all stand out performances with the two brassmen knocking sparks off each other. Not all serious stuff by any means as Clark displays his lighter side with his offbeat 'mumbles' vocals which became a trademark of his sessions.

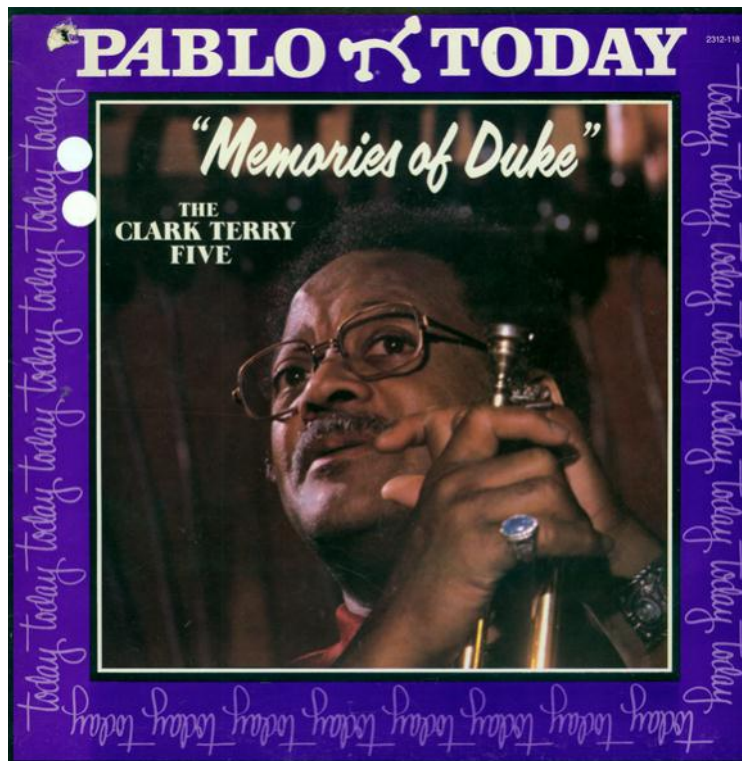
Having left the Ellington fold in the sixties he recorded in different settings including a set in New York in 1961 with the British Tenor man Tubby Hayes. Personally I think that Clark was the most successful of the Duke's sidemen who had pursued their careers post Duke. I reckon that diverse players like Barney Bigard, Rex Stewart and even the great Johnny Hodges were at their best under the Duke's umbrella so to speak.

Clark was often acknowledging Ellington in his own recordings. In 1957 there was an LP *Plays Duke*. On hand were Ellington players. Then in 1980 an album on Norman Granz' **Pablo** label entitled *Memories Of The Duke* featured Clark with among others Joe Pass on guitar and Ray Brown on bass.

Somewhere in my collection I have dub of a broadcast Terry did for the BBC. It ran over a couple of nights and consisted of an interview and selections of Clark playing with some new young musicians in the US. He talked of his early career including an unsavoury encounter with a redneck policeman in the Deep South.

Clark was here in Australia at least twice. I missed seeing him when he attended the 1974 AJC but saw him at Dallas Brooks Hall around 1972. One of Kym Bonython's tours of the time. Rather loosely dubbed 'A Tribute To Louis Armstrong' he was in the company of fellow trumpet men Wild Bill Davison and Bobby Hackett. From memory Earl Hines was on piano. They were the days.

So another star in the jazz galaxy has waned but as with the other jazzers who preceded Clark their music lives on for us true believers.





## MARGARET ANN HARVEY - 11.1.1937 – 25.9.2014



**August '97 Margaret Harvey  
Room 7 Barry Gallery Museum of Victoria**

It is a sad and difficult task to write something about a lively friend like Marg Harvey who died recently after a debilitating illness.

Margaret was with the Archive from the very start. I sat with her and her partner, Jeff Blades, at our historic meeting in Hawthorn's White Horse Hotel in August 1996. It was at this meeting that John Kennedy took up the challenge saying significantly, "I'm starting tomorrow."

Margaret has been very much part of the job of ensuring the success of the Archive from that day. Her contribution was sustained and substantial. Her unflagging and enthusiastic work in establishing support services has been an essential part of building a common feeling, a family style to all our work and social occasions. She was a key person in the core group that created this element along with Margaret Anderson, Sharon Bartley, Thea Boyes, Helen Church, Liz Currie, Jenny Edwards, Doreen Fabrikant, Gretel James, Lorraine Mitchell, Fay Norman and Irene Sutton. They worked very hard to provide the basis of welcome relief and so-

cial time in what, particularly in the first few years, was dominated by substantial physical effort. Many also worked in other roles in the Archive itself.

Margaret served on the General Committee and the then Executive Committee from 1996 until late in 2013 when her illness made continuing difficult.

It is hard to remember how primitive our facilities were in those early years. No hot water or heating, a small single bowl sink for hand washing dishes in the tiny unplumbed kitchen. Even worse a primitive unisex toilet!!

Margaret and her ladies' group organized, in these simple facilities, all the catering, bringing in prepared food, providing crockery and cutlery. She personally took on things like the afternoon teas on Saturday for the Junior and Senior Workshops and similarly for the suppers provided for the Knox Jazz Orchestra. These services, in a developing voluntary organization are part of its road to success and group cohesion.

As we moved to more detailed and sophisticated systems and archiving procedures, Margaret took on many tasks, such as the operating of the Error Check Monitoring System to visually prove the quality of all the CDs produced in the Sound Room, before they were registered and stored in the vault.

Through the recent years of her illness, her enthusiasm and commitment to the Archive remained constant.

Margaret saw all that has led up to our now highly professional State of the Art Museum; saw all the developments from our time occupying a room in the echoing Reading Halls of the recently vacated old Museum in Swanston Street, to the way in which the tin shed of Parks Victoria ex truck Maintenance Building was morphed into what can be regarded as the equal to any special purpose museum in Australia.

Margaret was one of the true pioneers of the Australian Jazz Museum, and we miss her.

***Dr Ray Marginson, A.M.***

## BOWING OUT AT BOWRAL

By Bill Brown

OVER a recent weekend (March 14.15) to be exact, there was a jazz festival held in the picturesque countryside of the Southern Highlands of New South Wales. The Memorial Hall in Bowral was the venue for this event organised by that outstanding man about jazz, John Buchanan.

John had been running this gig for many years, however he seems to have had enough as this was mooted as the last one. A good few of the musicians who had attended the first soiree back in 1997 were present and over the two days many references were made mainly in music to ones who couldn't be present.

A cross section of jazz from the pre-Bop era of jazz was represented. The much travelled New Wolverines brought the music of Bix and Frank Trumbauer to life. Stand out here for me was Geoff Power. He excelled on trumpet, trombone and tuba in various groups over the two days.

Geoff Bull's Band ploughed the New Orleans path with swinging vigour, George Washingmachine's group nodded in the direction of Django Reinhardt and the French connection as well as airing some original material. The two guitarists, George's sons, acquitted themselves well. Added to this line up was a lady accordion player Clare O'Meara. She also played violin and joined George in the vocals.

Stephen Grant delighted the rapt audience with some dynamic piano solos, especially featuring the compositions of two of the early jazz composers, Jelly Roll Morton and Duke Ellington. In a later segment dealing with Ragtime, Stephen shared the genre with a group called the Kings Of Ragtime.

He drew our attention to the Ragtime and Stride playing of his friend and colleague the late John Gill, a great performer who had appeared at this festival down the years. Not to be outdone Stephen played rousing trumpet along with Bob Pattie's cornet in the front line of the Melbourne band Steve Waddell's Creole Bells. This group celebrated the music of two Australian trumpet stalwarts, Frank Johnson and Roger Bell.

Paul Furniss, reed man from Sydney, organised a jam session situation on the Saturday night which featured the one and only Bob Barnard. Reminiscent of the records of the Eddie Condon concerts in the US with two front lines rocking the hall to its rafters.

Singer Carol Ralph and the Creole Bells appeared at the service in St. Jude's church so the Jazz 'Sinners' could enjoy the second day of music suitably cleansed in spirit.

All too soon after a session paying homage to another fallen hero, the late multi-instrumentalist, Tom Baker, it was all over and John Buchanan was saying farewell. Surely not. To quote the lyrics of an old Scottish song *Will Ye No come Back Again?* Amen to that.



**Saturday night All Stars  
including Bob Barnard**





# DOWNBEAT

## Now at the Museum

On the way upstairs to the AJM's recently renovated studio by John Thrum, Neil Wakeman and Steve Bartley, two acquired neon signs have been installed. They were once positioned either side of the doorway to the Downbeat Jazz Club.

If you patronized the Downbeat Jazz Club back in the 60s through to the 70s you would have made your way to 165 Russell Street, and climbed the stairs above Bob Clemens' music shop, probably in your black duffle coat and desert boots.

The club was opened in 1958 with a band that included Brian Rangott (gtr) and Stewie Speer (dms). A darkened place with tables and chairs that rumbled to the music of many bands and chatting patrons. If you were one of those patrons we would love to hear about it.

# DOWNBEAT



**Stewie Speer with Max Collie's Jazz Kings, 1958.**

**L to R. Graham Coyle (p) Lou Silbereisen (sb), Roger Bell (t) Stewie Speer (d) Pixie Roberts (cl) Max Collie (tb)**

Image from: *The Oxford Companion to Australian Jazz* by Bruce Johnson.

### We Welcome these New and Rejoining Members:

Eugene Ball, Clive & Faye Barber, Peter Beaton, Chris Bell, Abigail Butler, Brian Grumont, Peter Guest, Frank Hajnci, Glenda Joy Handby, Jeremy Hanley, Mervyn Hayman-Danker, Robert Hillis, Peter Hodges, Jill & Dan Kellett, Gianni Marinucci, David Milne, Saleh Ramezani, Greg Spence, Bill Templeman, John Whiteoak, Travis Woods.

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Judith Batchelder, Maggie Beare, BlueTone Jazz Band, Errol Broadhurst, Dr Noel Cass, Kate Dunbar OAM, Fred Gaudion, Heather Heywood, Jean MacKenzie, David & Margaret Martin, Dr Ray Marginson AM, Val Martin, Brian Maunder, B. Mathiesen & D. Rolfe, Nick Ribush, Ralph B. Stride, The G.R.A.I.N. Store.

(Jan Feb Mar)

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