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15 Mountain Highway, Wantirna Melway Ref. 63 C8
(All correspondence to: PO Box 6007 Wantirna Mall, Vic. 3152) Registered No: A0033964L ABN 53 531 132 426
Ph (03) 9800 5535 email: info@ajm.org.au. Web page: www.ajm.org.au

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PLEASE NOTE THE DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT MAGAZINE IS THE END OF JUNE 2017

australian jazz museum

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Bands playing that day were Spellbound with Barrie Boy- and Friends (left) Jazznotes featuring Ann Craig and Kevin Blazé (below left) and Solead Q (below)

THE STORY OF THE ABC MELBOURNE DANCE BAND

The ABC Dance Band with Jim Davidson (left) circa 1935

WHEN I joined the Jazz Museum in 2009, then known as the Victorian Jazz Archive, I wrote an article about a recently departed dear friend of mine, Alan Saunders. Alan had been a musician since the early 1930s, had become the longest continuing member of the ABC's Melbourne Dance Band (33 years), been a radio broadcaster scripting and presenting "The Swing Show" for six years in the 1940s, and, despite claims to the contrary, was the first to present Graeme Bell on ABC radio. In fact, the Jazz Museum has an acetate recording of Alan compering a Graeme Bell jazz presentation (undated) from probably the late forties. Certainly, Alan was presenting "The Graeme Bell Show" in 1948.

I recently came across Alan's private autobiography typed by his wife Grace and daughter Joy, in the vaults of the Museum. It contains much important information about the formation and the early days of the ABC Melbourne Dance Band which was invaluable in documenting the story of this long-surviving band.

Alan was born in Oakleigh in 1910 and began his musical career by first learning the violin and later the saxophone, performing with his brother Ike (a drummer) in local Melbourne suburban dance bands from 1932. Initially these were predominantly "Old Time Dances" which later included the new rhythm, jazz, as they managed to interpret it at that time. As the band progressed they had gigs at the Palais Royale in the Exhibition Building, the Masonic Hall in Collins Street, the Prahran Town Hall, the Collingwood Town Hall, The Palais de Danse in St Kilda, and the St Kilda Town Hall.

Then, in 1934, Alan was offered a job with "big time" orchestral arranger Art Chapman who was planning a grand opening at the Wattle Path Ballroom on the Upper Esplanade, St Kilda. ("Wattle Path" had been the home of Frank Thring Senior's film studio and was later to become the St Moritz ice skating rink.) The band that Art Chapman organised featured Dick Bentley (of later "Take it From Here" fame) on sax, violin and featured vocals, Benny Featherstone multi-instrumentalist and drums, with Chapman out in front "wielding a big stick".

Unfortunately, Wattle Path didn't last long, out-gunned by the Palais de Danse, Melbourne's number one night spot, on the Lower Esplanade. The band however, now known as Chapman's Chappies, continued to perform at several suburban picture theatres. The band was supported by a male trio known as the "Rhythm Boys" consisting of Fred McIntosh, Les Fiddes and Cedrick Zahara who doubled on guitar and string bass. (Fred's guitar was one of the first electric ones.)

In 1935 came a job at the most exclusive night club in town, the Embassy in Alfred Place off Collins Street with Art Chapman "surrounded by percussion", leading. Alan was now on a salary of eleven pounds a week, four times the basic wage. Others in the band included Dick Bentley, Keith Chew, Arthur Rothwell, Abe Walters, and Ted Fitzimmons. They modelled themselves on London's Lew Stone band with a mixture of modern dance and mainstream jazz. Alan said that when Art Chapman decided to leave and Benny Featherstone took over on drums they really had a decent rhythm section.

The Australian Broadcasting Commission had had a broadcasting dance band in Melbourne since its inauguration under its "Commission" name in 1932. (There was an earlier Australian Broadcasting *Company* band led by Cec Morrison.) The first Commission band was led by Cecil Fraser and later by Jim Davidson. Davidson had initially led a very popular band at the St Kilda Palais de Danse but was offered a job in 1935 to lead the ABC band which he accepted. He worked out of Melbourne

With much information from an autobiography by Alan Saunders
By Ken Simpson-Bull

but his performances were also heard in Sydney via land-line. He was also extensively commercially recorded on the Regal-Zonophone label. Then, in January 1936, Davidson left the ABC to take a position at Sydney's Palais Royale.

Distressed that the ABC band had lost its extremely popular leader, Melbourne had a visit by Hal Hammett from Sydney to say that the ABC was setting up a new band and, with the help of prominent saxophonist Terry Kelly, was looking for recruits from the Embassy band who were to be combined with some members of the Hillier's Nightclub Band from Sydney. Alan accepted a position in the new band which consisted of Terry Kelly, Charles Crowley, Arthur Rothwell, Harry Bennet, Tom Davidson, Al Hammett, Dan Scully, Denis Collinson, Ed Cordery, Frank Dyke, Harry Bloom, Maurie Gillman, Albert Simons, Wally Walters, Gordon Cricher, and Jack Stites.

To help shape the band, well known musical personalities Howard Jacobs (who was to become the leader) and Cecil Norman came over from London. They quickly decided that the hall in Elizabeth Street in which the band had been given to practice was hopelessly echoey, so they were moved to Cyclone House at number 17 Hardware Street which was being used (and continued to be) by the ABC's Drama Department. However, for public performances, the band played in the 3LO studio in Melbourne Place off Russell Street. In those days, the studio only had a maximum of three microphones (RCA 44s), one for the band, one for a soloist and a spare for spotting.

In the beginning there was Art Chapman, Dick Bentley and Benny Featherstone

At Cyclone House, the upstairs offices were managed by two young ladies from the Drama Department. Wilga, an original women's Libber, saw the band as horde of invaders. "Tell that mob of hooligans", she said, "there is to be no smoking!" By leaving the control room door open the band managed to further annoy the two ladies with a goodly amount of decibels permeating up the stairs and through the ceiling.

The Melbourne band toured many country and interstate venues with great success during 1936 with accompanying personalities like Gladys Moncrieff and Father Sidney McEwan. Suddenly, in early 1937, Jim Davidson decided to return to the ABC. Because of his popularity, Davidson was set up as leader of his own Sydney ABC Dance Band which continued until he joined the war effort in 1940 as a lieutenant in the AIF. The Sydney band was disbanded in January, 1941. However, in June, 1941, Jim Gussey was appointed as ABC Dance Band leader in Sydney, the band now being named the ABC National Dance Band although it was commonly billed as the ABC Sydney Band.

In Melbourne, the ABC constructed their own purpose-built premises, Broadcast House, on the corner of Lonsdale and William Streets in 1943. The Melbourne Dance Band, which had suffered no disruption, then moved to what was to become their permanent home known as studio 320 which was actually an old church hall, refurbished, on the land on which Broadcast House had been constructed. They had some first-rate arrangers like Ed Corderoy, Harry Bennett, Elford Mack and Sid French. There were some excellent vocalists, too—the Parker sisters (Pat, Marie and Eula), Geoff Brooke, and Peggy Brooks with her "Doris Day" style.

Over the years, the Band had many changes of personnel which included Dutchy Turner, John Robertson, Jack Moore, Charles Crowley, Phil Cohen, Charlie Fields, Bert Pettifer, Charles McFee, Billy Hyde, Eddy Oxley, Bruce Clarke, Ron Rosenberg, George Dobson, Bernie Duggan, and many more; plus leaders Dennis Collinson, MacDuff Williams, Frank Thorne and Brian May.

When Kevin Hocking came along in 1969 he changed the name to the Melbourne ABC Show Band which by then was mainly performing show music, big band items and appearing on television. Sadly, in 1981, due to lack of funding, the band was finally disbanded after almost 50 years. It was the end of an era that could never be repeated.

Alan Saunders retired from the band just before the name change but continued working for the ABC as the Music Librarian for the Light Entertainment Department until his retirement in 1975.

The ABC Dance Band with MacDuff Williams in 1948. Alan Saunders is on violin at bottom far left. Frank Thorne who took over the band when Williams died in 1952 is far left in the light suit. The vocalist is Geoff Brooke.

Wheelers Hill Combined Probus group enjoying a visit to the Australian Jazz Museum
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The First Hundred Years. Part One.

By Bill Brown

IN recent times, February 24th to be precise, the Jazz World celebrated the centenary of what is called the first jazz recording, "Livery Stable Blues", and "Dixieland Jass One Step", by the white group the Original Dixieland Jass Band. This aggregation became very popular and certainly got the jazz ball rolling. Other players emerged and I must admit that I personally wasn't all that keen on the ODJB (as they became known) as I felt that they veered towards the weird noises and 'funny hat' field of popular music. My own personal tastes regarding the White players who followed were for the New Orleans Rhythm Kings, and Bix Beiderbecke's Wolverines, plus the various small groups Bix was involved in with his contemporaries Frankie Trumbauer, Eddie Lang and Joe Venuti. Bix's playing stood out, the first great white jazz cornet/trumpet star.

On the African/American side, the recordings in Chicago of trumpeter King Oliver's Creole Jazz Band (including the young man fresh up from New Orleans, one Louis Armstrong on second cornet/trumpet) hit the spot in my estimation. Likewise the recordings of the colourful character, pianist Jelly Roll Morton (I invented Jazz - well?). What he did I think was provide the link between the Ragtime compositions created by Scott Joplin, Tom Turpin and the other composers of that ilk and the groups involved in collective improvisation, usually consisting of six or seven players. Of course too, one mustn't forget the series of studio sessions done under Louis Armstrong's aegis, the Hot Fives and Hot Sevens.

In that Twenties period as jazz became popular with the general public it was fashionable to add the word Rag to any tune which was a bit 'jazzy'. Actually usually this tune would be far removed from the more austere music stemming from the likes of a Joplin composition. As a recent scribe to this magazine, Peter Baddeley has mentioned a similar situation occurred when the word 'Blues' was often added to a title for sales purposes even if the tune was far removed from the province of the down-home blues ditties of the cottonfield or the bar room.

New Orleans has always touted as the birthplace of Jazz, however when the red light district of Storyville was closed in 1917 a lot of the musicians moved north to Chicago where many of their careers prospered in the numerous clubs and then on the many studio recordings that abounded as the twenties moved towards the next decade. By the beginning of the thirties quite a few big bands emerged: Fletcher Henderson, McKinney's Cottonpickers, the great Luis Russell group, bands littered with many fine players whose talent was to be the lifeblood of jazz for decades. My favourite is the magnificent Duke Ellington Orchestra, an institution that took Harlem by storm and lasted through many changes and phases of jazz up until Duke's death in 1974. Harlem like Chicago and Kansas City became a jazz capital. Harlem, indeed New York also nurtured some fine solo piano players in what was known as the Stride idiom. In the late thirties impresario John Hammond brought a shouting Blues big band led by pianist Count Basie from Kansas City to New York.

Back among the White players a youthful clarinet player named Benny Goodman was emerging with the Ben Pollack Orchestra. Soon he was leading his own big band and after a ground breaking concert at Carnegie Hall in 1938 was dubbed the King Of Swing. The Pollack band broke up and some of the players gathered under the leadership of singer Bob Crosby (Bing's brother) and became known as purveyors of Big Band Dixieland in the Bob Crosby Band with their smaller offshoot the Bobcats. By the end of the thirties many players and vocalists had appeared, from the strident tones of the legendary Blues singer Bessie Smith through to the wonderful poignant songs of Billie Holiday. Other ladies who made their name at that time were Mildred Bailey, Maxine Sullivan and Lee Wiley. Saxophonists Coleman Hawkins and Lester Young were leaders in their field destined to influence many future jazzers. As I mentioned, the Crosby crew had their small group the Bobcats. They were not alone. Most of the Big Bands followed suit. Goodman had his trio/quartet, Tommy Dorsey had his Clambake Seven, Woody Herman had the Woodchoppers, Artie Shaw His Gramercy Five and so on. As the forties dawned obviously the World War 2 affected the music scene. However, the Big bands ruled the roost. Eddie Condon guitarist and great organiser, a refugee from the great twenties era of Bix, Jack Teagarden, Bud Freeman started up a series of New York concerts that were broadcast to the overseas servicemen. However other stirrings were afoot especially at a club called Mintons.

A few young African/American musicians bored by the predicable output of the Swing era had notions of a new aspect of Jazz that 'those white guys' couldn't play. Their attempts to further this trend in the bands they regularly appeared in to make a living got short shift. Band leader Cab Calloway addressed trumpet man Dizzy Gillespie "Don't play that screwy Chinese music in my band".

However, as they say, "the times were a-changing". Soon the status of the music would be under threat from two sources – the new sound known as Bebop and a movement to re-create the hot 'authentic' music from the early period of the twenties. However that upheaval is for a future article, so, as they say in the Classics, bear with me Dear Reader (or Readers-plural hopefully). Happy listening.

Nick Polites OAM Recalls His Journey

Nick Polites, a much-loved jazz musician who has been performing for many decades, still continues to entertain fans every week at the impressive age of ninety.

This article first appeared earlier this year as a visual narrative at an exhibition at the Emerald Hill Library and Heritage Centre. The exhibition was curated by Lella Cariddi with the support of the City of Port Phillip and under the umbrella of the Multicultural Arts Victoria project "What Happened at the Pier". This is the story of Nick Polites' life in his own words, as told to Con Pagonis.

I was born in Melbourne in 1927, the third child of Theodore Polites and Philia Tsarouchas.

My father first emigrated from the island of Lefkas, a small island near Ithaca in the Adriatic Sea, to South Africa in 1898. And from South Africa he sailed to Australia in the early 1900s.

In the late nineteenth century there were very few Greeks coming to Australia, and by consequence, there was a fledgling Greek community in Melbourne; primarily from the Greek Islands of Ithaca, Kythera and Kastellorizo. And they had formally established themselves in 1897 as the Greek Community of Australia.

A significant push factor for prospective migrants at this time was an olive tree disease which devastated the Greek economy and prompted mass migration, particularly to the United States.

My father had two brothers and a widowed mother. The brothers wanted to go to the USA but the family did not have enough funds to send them. In 1899 my father left Lefkas, with his brother, my Uncle John, in search of income to support the family back home.

Theodore and John made their way to Cairo via Athens, and then sailed south down the Nile River. They continued down eastern Africa to South Africa unaware that the Boer War was underway. They found some work in Cape Town and sent money home to their mother.

Australian soldiers were part of the British Imperial Forces engaged in the Boer War. While in South Africa these two boys aged 16 and 19 respectively, were befriended by Australian soldiers, who encouraged them to go to Australia where they would help them to find work. So in the early 1900s, the boys boarded a merchant ship enroute to Australia. On arrival in Sydney though, they quickly realized that the main Greek-Australian community hub was Melbourne.

In the prevailing racism of that time, people from the Southern Mediterranean were regarded almost as "Asian" and not able to find employment in factories easily. Italians tended to work in fruit and vegetable shops, and Greeks typically had confectionary and fish & chips shops. This level of racism towards Greeks and Italians continued until the aftermath of the Second World War.

My father, Theodore, started out his working life in Australia as a self–employed man, beginning with a fruit cart round in inner Melbourne, to eventually running a number of small businesses.

During the First World War, he operated tea rooms on Beaconsfield Parade, near St Kilda Pier and near the old St Moritz ice skating rink. Around 1920 Theodore passed this business on to his brother John and he established a restaurant in the city on the corner of Elizabeth Street and Flinders Lane (in what he told people was the tallest building in the Southern Hemisphere). He continued to operate that business until the lease ran out in 1921.

My mother, Philia Tsarouchas, and her family were First World War refugees from Alatsata near Smyrna in Asia Minor. She was born in 1897, and while astutely intelligent, being a girl, she never had a chance to go to school. Like so many people of Greek heritage living in Asia Minor, in 1914, with the imminent explosion of World War 1, her family was forced to leave Alatsata. At the end of the war in 1919, they returned to their hometown, but with Turkey being poised to take over the entire region, they were again forced to leave in 1922 with only two weeks' notice, and the family fled to mainland Greece.

These displacements swelled mainland Greece's population by a third, with people arriving there as paupers, bereft of their land holdings.

After the first expulsion of 1914, my mother was sent to a monastery on the island of Samos to learn to paint religious icons. She was so good at this that merchants would come along on donkey-driven trucks to buy icons from her. And her small enterprise helped the family to survive.

After the second expulsion, my mother's older brother John who was living in Alexandria, Egypt, suggested she should go and live with him. She was there for one year, where she did domestic work with an Italian family, and learned to speak Italian and French.

My mother was 26 by the time Con, another one of her brothers who had been living in Australia since 1912, arranged for her to emigrate and financed the cost for her journey to Australia. She travelled with other relatives arriving in Melbourne in 1923. By then, a good number of people from the township of Alatsata had come to Melbourne and settled around South Melbourne and surrounding suburbs.

My parents met and married in Melbourne in 1924; relatively late (particularly for those times) for both of them. My mother being in her late twenties, and my father in his early forties.

My parents had four children – Helen in 1925, Peter in 1926, myself (Nicholas) in 1927, and Maria in 1929. The family initially lived in St Kilda and then Elwood.

At home, we didn't want for anything. My mother was family-centred, but always kept a watchful eye about social mores which were stricter for girls than boys, to the extent that my sisters could only consider marrying someone who was also Greek.

Left: Mookie Hermann, Nick Polites, Graham Bennett, Frank Turville, Willie Watt

I went to Elwood Primary School and then Melbourne High School. At primary school I won an academic prize which was subsequently withdrawn on the grounds that my father was not naturalised, albeit that I was Australian-born. This injustice became a great motivator in my academic life thereafter. I went on to be dux of my school and captain of the school football team. However, outside of school Greeks were not allowed to play in Australian football and cricket teams; so I and other Greek friends went on to establish our own football team which we called *The Olympic*.

In 1945 I got called up for military service, but on the same day two letters came, one from the Government to say I had to report for military duty and one from Melbourne University to say that, as one of a handful of the university's top students, my WWII military service was deferred. At the age of 20, I graduated from the University of Melbourne with a degree in Commerce. I then went on to do a second degree in Arts, majoring in history and philosophy. And in 1954 I did what is now known as a "gap year"; travelling to London and driving to Greece.

My father explored business opportunities in Mildura and Tasmania. Eventually though he learned about the confectionery business. When the last manager of the former Playhouse Theatre (in the area now known as Southbank) moved on, the owner employed my father to manage the candy bar. Impressed with my father's ability, the owner paid him a second wage to also manage the theatre. As he wasn't fluent in English, through the years of competition between silent movies and then "talkies", my father employed a secretary whom he paid at above the award to assist him with the paperwork. When the depression was at its worst around 1930-31, the theatre's name changed from *The Playhouse* to *The David Garrick Theatre.*

Soon after, my father was also operating a confectionery store opposite Flinders Street Railway Station, on the corner of Elizabeth Street – "Green Gate Confectionery" (named after one of the historic gates into London). It was in this business that he established the family's wealth.

After I graduated with a Bachelor of Commerce, my father bought a family confectionery factory – *Green Gate Confectionery* — in Spencer Street. I was the CEO from 1949 until 1971. We manufactured chocolates, toffees, snowballs and the like. When at the age of 41 a Chicago-based company

made me a generous offer for the business, we decided to sell it.

Up to the early seventies there were no Greek-speaking social support services whatsoever for Greek-Australians. Mothers didn't know what to do with rebellious daughters, and because of a perceived lack of moral and ethical teaching, Greek kids would be sent back to Greece to be educated.

This opened up the opportunity for me to work in the field of community services and social policy, particularly around cross-cultural family issues for the Greek-Australian community.

I started by volunteering at the *Australian Greek Welfare Society* which I had helped to establish in 1972. But in order to be able to get government grants the agency would have had to employ qualified staff. As at the time (1973) there were no qualified Greek-speaking social workers in Melbourne, I went back to University to do a social work degree which, with credits from previous studies, I completed in two years.

Building on experience as a social work practitioner I was also called on to work in social public policy development. Most significantly this included membership of the Galbally Committee that reviewed Australia's multicultural public policy in the late 1970s.

The Fraser Government's acceptance of the committee's recommendations resulted in key parameters of Australian multiculturalism that we are all familiar with today – the establishment of SBSTV, Ethnic Communities' Councils, Migrant Resource Centres and so on. In 1981 I was proud to receive "The Order of Australia" medal for my contributions.

Going back to 1938, when I was only 11 years old, a friend from *The Olympic* footy team loaned me some jazz records, and said, "listen to these".

Once I started listening to tunes like Louis Armstrong's "West End Blues" I went red in the face and realized that this was what I wanted to do. I was immediately hooked on jazz. However it was a battle to convince my parents, who expected their sons to become doctors and lawyers, to allow me to learn a musical instrument. They considered it would be a distraction from my academic studies. My brother Peter did become a lawyer. Eventually they relented and at the age of 14 I started teaching myself to play the alto saxophone and almost immediately was offered a job with Russ Marshall's Dance Band. At 16 I took up the clarinet and joined the *Varsity Vipers* band at Melbourne University. Because many older musicians had been called-up into military service, I was sought-after to join bands well before I had achieved any sort of proficiency.

I went on to perform in a succession of leading Melbourne bands performing traditional jazz, right up to the present. These bands all played what is known as New Orleans revival jazz; a subgenre of jazz internationally popular circa 1940. I commenced my recording career with *Frank Johnson's Dixielanders* on the *Verve* label in 1951. Today I continue to perform regularly with "The Louisiana Shakers", a band I joined in 1994 and with whom I have toured internationally and recorded several CDs. Over my career as a musician I have had the opportunity to play alongside jazz legends such as Louis Armstrong, Dizzy Gillespie and New Orleans clarinettist George Lewis, on whom I modelled my own playing style.

As I approach my ninetieth birthday, I am proud of my family's migration story – from humble and challenging circumstances on my father's small Adriatic island and my mother's township in Asia Minor, to the prosperity offered by life in Australia; and the opportunity to contribute in commerce, the law, community development and music. ■

Left: Nick Polites, Graham Eames and Bill Beasley.

What do we know about Hadda Brooks' visit to Australia?

I recently came across a 1989 television interview on the Internet with black American singer and pianist Hadda Brooks. She was born in 1916 as Hattie L Hapgood and trained as a classical pianist. At the end of World War Two Hadda turned to jazz and became known as the **Queen of the Boogie**. She was successful both as a boogie-woogie pianist and a stylish vocalist. Hadda Brooks made quite a few piano and vocal 78s and is claimed to be the second African-American woman to host her own television show (1957).

Hadda made cameo musical appearances in a number of Hollywood films, including *In a Lonely Place* (1950) with Humphrey Bogart and *The Bad and the Beautiful* (1952) with Kirk Douglas. Details of her career then become sparse until she was rediscovered in the United States in the late 1980s. She was found playing nightclubs and supper clubs. In 1995 she turned up in a Jack Nicholson movie *The Crossing Guard* in which she sang *Anytime, Anyplace, Anywhere.*

What caught my attention in the 1989 TV interview was her response when asked where she had been during her "missing years". She replied that she had spent almost ten years in Australia. She briefly mentioned it had been a beautiful engagement and she loved Australia and its beautiful people.

I can find no reports of the **Boogie-Woogie Queen** working in Australia and wonder if any readers can confirm where and when she performed. Did she make any records or appear on television?

In 2000 the Los Angeles Music Awards honoured Hadda Brooks with the Lifetime Achievement Award. Hadda died in Los Angeles in 2002, aged 86.

Peter Burgis

NOTE:
We did discover that Hadda Brooks appeared on In Melbourne Tonight and at The Embers (South Yarra) during the 1960s.

AMERICAN vocalist Hadda Brooks, a specialist in folk music and sophisticated swing, will appear in GTV-9's In Melbourne Tonight at 10.30 p.m., Friday, September 30. Miss Brooks is currently appearing at the Embers night club.

On Hearing Bix for the First Time

(In another place and another time.)

By Peter Baddeley

FROM a jazz perspective, I was lucky enough to be in my early teens (I was born in 1942) in the '50s in England when the "Revival" was well on its way. There was no commercial radio in Britain at that time - we had the BBC. There were three radio stations: the Light Programme (note the spelling) the Home Service and the Third Programme. The first one had 'light' material like comedy – like the Goon Show — the Home Service had more 'serious' programs such as radio plays and orchestral concerts. The Third Program had poetry, philosophy (in the form of "The Brains Trust") and Schoenberg. I first heard Dylan Thomas' *Under Milk Wood* with Richard Burton on the Third in 1953.

One has to remember that at that time — the early '50s - there was no rock-and-roll, (and virtually no TV) but there was jazz. Consequently, there was a lot of jazz on the radio. Not only was it on request programs like "Family Favourites" (12 noon Sunday for an hour) but on dedicated programs like "BBC Jazz Club". It now seems 'odd', but Humphrey Lyttelton's *Bad Penny Blues* recording was not only the first British jazz record to get into the "Top Twenty" in 1956, but it stayed there for six weeks. Every time that the radio was turned on there was Humph. There was also Chris Barber's band with Ottilie Patterson, Pat Halcox on trumpet and Monty Sunshine (was that his real name?) on clarinet. Mention must also be made here of Bernard 'Acker' Bilk, Kenny Ball and that well — known purist of the New Orleans genre, Ken Colyer. As a bonus, we had Lonnie Donegan's skiffle and the inimitable George Melly.

I had a set of WW II RAF earphones that were given to me. We also had a big 'stand-up' that was termed a 'radiogram'. This stood about a metre high and was a valve job. When it was on for a long time you could just about fry eggs on it. I don't know where it came from, but it stood next to my bed. On winter nights, snuggled down beneath the blankets, with my earphones plugged into the back of the radiogram, I would (in the dark) trawl through the radio stations. Even though Thursday night was BBC Jazz Club night on the light Program, there was a veritable smorgasbord of music to listen to. Radio Luxemberg (208 metres) had a lot of jazz on it. However, it had these strange things called 'commercials'. (It was an off-shore – outside the UK – station.) It was on this station - via the earphones – that I first heard Duke Ellington's version of *Rockin' in Rhythm.* Also heard by station-trawling in this manner, was AFN: American Forces Network. There was, at this time, still a British and American army of occupation in Germany and it was possible to pick up broadcasts to them. Willis Connover's jazz program was one of them and it went for two hours. Along with the BBC Jazz Club, this was one of my regulars. (It was also by this method that I first heard the Brahms violin concerto. The next day I went out and bought an LP of this – and I've still got it.)

Even though Long Playing records (and EPs at 45 rpm) were the 'norm' by this time and affordable, even on my apprentice wages, 78s were still around and not just in op. shops. My father had his second pub (we had the first one from 1951 to 1955) from 1955 to 1959. It was here that I first heard Bix. In this pub – the *Greyhound Inn* – on the second floor there was a large room that I think had at one stage been a dining room. My sister and I used it as a play room.

My father had, because he had a pub, many and varied contacts. One day he struggled into our 'play room' with a battered suitcase full of Arthur Mee's *Children's Encyclopedia*. These were published and printed in the 1920s and had had a lot of use. Not only that, the set was incomplete! However, they got a lot of use by me. (Once a base drum complete with cymbals, wood blocks, drum sticks and wire brushes arrived, but that was at the next pub.) The next thing to arrive at the *Greyhound* was two men carrying in a large piece of furniture; along with it came a cardboard box. No explanation was given and they left. On inspection, the furniture was a two-door wind up gramophone in beautiful condition. Behind the left-hand door was vertical record storage. Behind the other was the speaker. Lifting the lid (like opening a chest freezer) revealed the turntable and the arm and head that held the needle. Finding my father in the bar, I asked him what was going on. He told me that the gramophone (remember those?) was mine. Like the Mee encyclopedias, it had been donated.

What was in the cardboard box? There were three 78 rpm records also in very good condition. One was a recording of Bizet's Symphony in C. The second was a foxtrot on either side by some obscure (well it was by 1956) dance band. The third was treasure. I knew that

it had to be jazz because it had *Jazz Me Blues* on one side and *Savoy Blues* on the other, but who was Bix Biederbecke? I had to wait to find out – there were no needles. Later, I made a special trip to the record shop in town hoping that they had some. When I asked for them in the shop – remember that this was in the age of 33s and 45s – the owner never batted an eyelid and promptly provided a small tin about 30 mm square full of steel gramophone needles. It cost me a shilling.

Hot-footing it home, I worked out how to put the needle in the head (another first) wound up the spring with a crank handle, took it out – you couldn't leave it in – put the jazz record on, side "A" upward and released the catch on the turntable. With the door to the speaker open, the record spun at 78 revolutions a minute and I lowered the needle to the outside edge. "Crackle-crackle-hisssssss" and then, with no volume control, out came: "Dad-ad-dada/dad-a dada/da-da-da" the opening of *Jazz Me Blues*. This was no surprise, it was a jazz standard after all. What was a surprise, even familiar as I was with the sound of Armstrong, Pat Halcox, Ken Colyer and a lot more trumpeters, was the Bix solo.

The English language does not contain the words to describe the emotion produced in me by that sound on my impressionable ears. I was hooked on jazz before that, but it was at that moment that I began my life-long passion for 'classic' jazz. The bonus was that that is how it would have sounded in the year that it was released. Two for the price of one. Thanks, Dad.

Editors Note:
Monty Sunshine, is of Anglo/Jewish heritage. Sunshine is the Anglicization of Sonnenschein.

From the Collection

It never ceases to amaze me the amount of material coming into the Museum which we have never seen before. A case in point is Ian Pearce's comprehensive Library – an eclectic mix of (mostly) jazz titles with a smattering of classical and other musical genres. Ian clearly had very catholic tastes. Of the many volumes donated to the Australian Jazz Museum by his son more than five dozen are new to our collection and another score will expand our Members' Borrowing library.

Ian Pearce next to his innovative portrait by Gary Gregg

In the nine cartons of material John Pearce and Jenny Tuffin bestowed are 28 cassettes, jazz magazines and concert programs together with two framed Jon Gray photo portraits of Ian and a photograph of Garry Gregg's innovative portrait of Ian.

Recent donors to the collection:

Jens Lindgren, Keith Atkins, Geoffery Orr, Kate Warren, Leon Heale, Noel Jeffrey, Jeremy Sawkins, John Brewer - Jazz Action Society of NSW, Newmarket Music, Geoffrey Waite, Peter Neubauer, Jack Mitchell, Ian Milne, Albert Dadon, Lois Stephenson, Ralph Watson, John Turner, Bob McCully, Peter Rasmussen, Jim Klages, Diana Walford, Paul Williamson, Bob and Barbara Gardiner, Nigel Buesst, Geoff Power, Diana Allen, Ian Coots, Newmarket Music, Judy Swanson, Thanh Dovan, Cliff Wright, Wes Brown, Les & Joan Sullivan, Jessica Henderson, Clarke Ted, Jan Gill, Playback Records, Peter Neubauer, Lee McNeill, Peter Milley, Stephen Smith - estate Dale Smith, Ken Mitchell, Bob Netting, Cheryl Kelly, Bill Farrell

Fiddler on the Hoof
By Bill Brown

AN incongruous assumption a violinist on horseback, riding side saddle perhaps? Enough already.

The title refers to an itinerant jazz musician who travelled widely over a lengthy period. A man who doubled on the violin and guitar over his career. This gent called Claude Williams was a bit obscure. Born in Oklahoma in 1908 he first appeared on record around 1929/1930 with the band of Andy Kirk's **Clouds Of Joy**. I first came across Fiddler Williams in the eighties, when he was in Denmark and recorded with Fessor Lindgren's band. Then I heard a radio program with the doyen of broadcasters, Eric Child. Eric charted Williams' career with his usual detailed acumen. Williams, in the late thirties had been on guitar with the big sensation of the time the Count Basie Orchestra. He appeared on their first four recordings, *Honeysuckle Rose*, *Swinging At The Daisy Chain, Roseland Shuffle* and *Pennies From Heaven*. I have the first three in my collection. From the earlier Kirk band sides I possess *Blue Clarinet Stomp* and a title perhaps alluding to a dance of the time, *Loose Ankles*. Here Claude was on violin.

Apparently the impresario John Hammond, who brought the Basie band from Kansas City to New York wasn't happy about Williams wanting to feature the violin and sacked him replacing him with guitar man Freddie Green. Thus the stellar rhythm team of the Basie ensemble was put in place as the all American rhythm section—Basie, Green, Page and Jones.

Eric then featured two different recordings from the seventies when Claude and other violinists, Grappelli and Venuti had a renaissance in the jazz scene. In 1972 Claude was in Canada and recorded in a quartet including Kansas City veteran pianist Jay McShann. Claude played both instruments here violin on *Things Ain't What They Used To Be*, and Ray Charles's tune *Mary Anne* which McShann sang and Claude played guitar on a fast Nancy Boogie.

The other recording was in Denmark in 1976. Both tracks were on violin with the American contemporary pianist Harold Mabern and a local Danish backing. *There Is No Greater Love* and *Get Happy* were the tunes recorded.

The sessions with Fessor's band were done in Denmark in 1980. Claude was featured on both of his instruments and vocal on *That Certain Someone*. The other non-vocal tracks were *Blue Fiddle Blues*, *A Little Bit Of Country*, *After Theatre Jump* and *Jumpin' With McShann*.

Fiddler Williams outlived most of his peers dying aged 96 in 2004. Another figure who contributed to the rich fabric of our music. The Good Noise.

Born (1908-02-22)February 22, 1908
Muskogee, Oklahoma
Died April 26, 2004(2004-04-26) (aged 96)
Kansas City, Missouri
Genres Jazz
Occupation(s) Musician
Instruments Violin, guitar
Years active 1927–2000
Labels SteepleChase, Arhoolie, Progressive, Black & Blue
Associated acts Andy Kirk, Jay McShann

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gaU0QKKEYP4

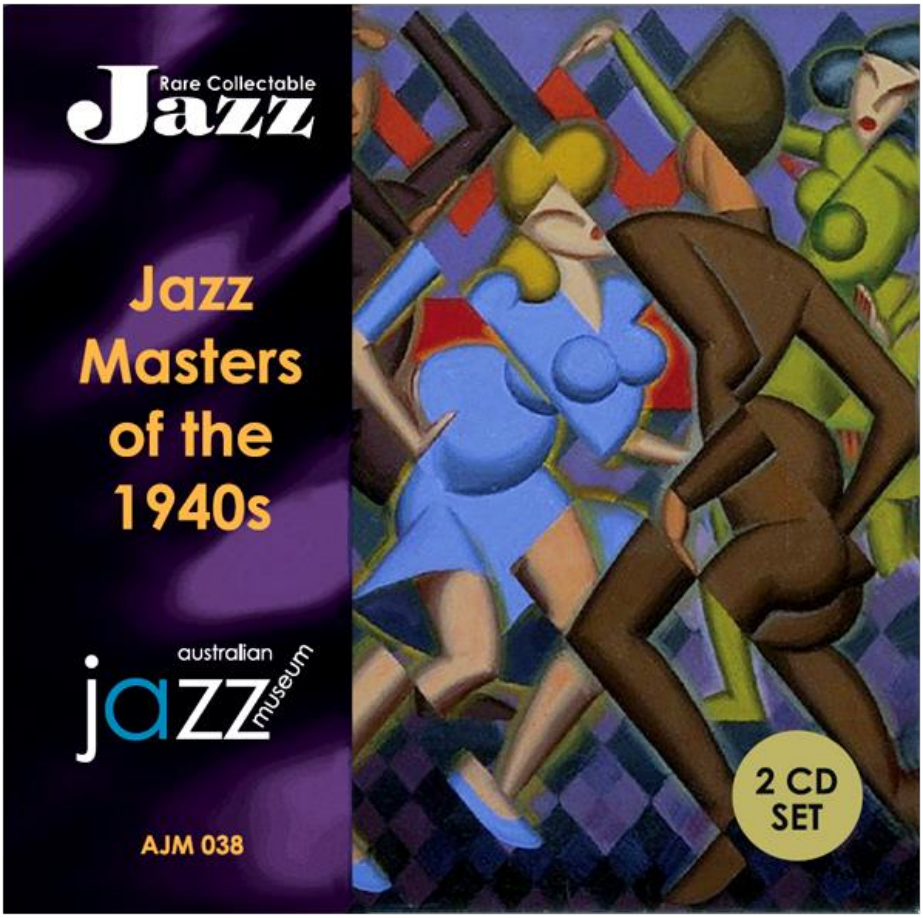
New AJM Double-CD
Jazz Masters of the 1940s

THE Australian Jazz Museum has just released a double CD set of selected jazz performances of the 1940s highlighting the talents of the jazz musicians of that era. The '40s is a period that covers the swing era, the Dixieland revival, the introduction of Bebop and the recognition of mainstream jazz in its own right. Collecting records of any type during the first half of this decade was difficult due to the wartime priorities and shortages. Collecting issued jazz records by *Australian* musicians wasn't an option—the international record companies had no interest in recording local jazz at that time.

Most surviving performances of that period were private recordings by musicians and their fans, and were in smaller studios which usually lacked both the facilities and the expertise of the major companies. The music was usually recorded onto acetate coated aluminium discs, although as the war demand increased, the aluminium base was replaced by steel or even glass. The cost of the blanks was not inconsiderable so the commercial companies' routine of recording two or three takes of each number and choosing the best for release was rarely adopted. They truly were "one offs". Unfortunately, the acetate material itself was soft, easily worn or damaged and it rendered many discs worthless after being played with the heavy pickups and steel needles of the time.

The bands represented in this collection, some of them forgotten today, include Reg Lewis' Jive Kings, The Johnny Tozer Swing band, The Four Spirits of Rhythm, Wally Portingale, George Trevare's Jazz Group, The Dixie Sextet, The Port Jackson Jazz Band, Ron Falson, Graeme Bell (with some never-before-heard recordings), The Steely City Seven (from Newcastle), Jimmy Hogan, a couple of Frank Johnson tracks privately recorded in Sydney, plus several other groups.

The selection of items and the extensive insert notes have been provided by Jazz historian and discographer, Jack Mitchell. The total playing time of this two-CD set (AJM 038) is a generous 150 minutes and is available from the Museum shop or on-line at www.ajm.org.au . The cost is only $25. Less if you are a member!



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This QR code can be captured with a scanner app on a smartphone camera and allows you to access the basic information about our museum such as where to find us, our contact details and the museum opening hours.

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If you're enjoying the benefits of membership of the Australian Jazz Museum, you might want to spread the word around. A gift of membership, for a friend or loved one, would be a terrific way to do it. There are a few options:

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Call us on +61 3 9800 5535 Tuesday or Friday, between 10 am and 3pm.
Go into our website www.ajm.org.au then click on Membership. At lower right, click to download a Membership/ Renewal form.

We Welcome these New Members:

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