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# AJAZZ

Proactively Collecting, Archiving and Disseminating Australian Jazz

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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](mailto:info@ajm.org.au) Web page: [www.ajm.org.au](http://www.ajm.org.au)



**AJAZZ is posted to members four times per year.**

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FOR THE NEXT  
MAGAZINE IS THE END OF  
MARCH 2017**



## Australian Jazz Museum

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These photos show some of the clothing worn by Marina Pollard in jazz street parades that have launched many Jazz Conventions over the years. These parades have their origins in New Orleans funeral processions. Funeral processions that were led by a brass band with followers joining in wearing brightly coloured clothes, decorated hats and carrying parasols and banners.

**December just gone saw the 72<sup>nd</sup> Jazz Convention** held in Ballarat for the third time in succession. The "Bourbon Street Parade" set the tone from the beginning and the convention continued with great music and great fun.

Our thanks go to Marina Pollard for the loan of these fab costumes and to Jill Kellett who shot these wonderful photos.



## Letters to the Editor

### Dear Editor

... by the way, I found the notes that I used for my interview with Neil MacBeth for the Jazz Interview Project, which got a mention in the latest AJAZZ magazine which, might I say, is now equal to any other major magazine that I subscribe to a truly professional production, in content and presentation. I found them during my efforts to help Phil Stanford with his great work on Willie McIntyre's life.

**Graeme Bull**

### Dear Editor

Ken Simpson-Bull's article *The Armed Forces Radio Service Transcription Discs* in AJAZZ76 was both interesting and informative. I was particularly intrigued by the photograph of the AFRS label on Page 5, especially the stamped call letters of the radio station WVTD and the dates.

I had 24 AFRS transcriptions of the Eddie Condon Town Hall Jazz Concert series, and each bore the call letters VOUS (the American Armed Forces radio station at Fort Pepperrell, Newfoundland) and a date (presumably the date the program was broadcast on the station). Incidentally, these dates were useful in establishing the chronology of the recordings.

Logically, the WVTD disc would follow the same pattern. But where was radio station WVTD located? The Internet is a very useful research resource, and a few minutes' sleuthing revealed that WVTD was the American armed forces radio station on Manus Island. Manus is the largest of the Admiralty Islands, a group of eighteen islands, part of Papua New Guinea and located just off-shore to the east.

In 1944 the allied forces defeated the Japanese on Manus and constructed a naval base there. Radio station WVTD was established by the American forces; it provided entertainment and kept the men on the base up to date on the news rebroadcast from short-wave transmission from California, "censored though it may have been". (1)

Nearby is the island of Los Negros, so close that it is now connected by a bridge. It was formerly a Japanese base that was also captured by the allied forces in 1944 and subsequently developed into an important air and sea base. The RAAF participated in the battle with their Kittyhawk and Spitfire fighter planes, and were operating from the air strip only four days after the battle.

The RAAF servicemen stationed on Los Negros listened to WVTD, which they thought of as their local station. For example, at 11:20 am on November 10, 1944, "over the PA system the operator is presenting a program called 'G I Jive', hosted by Jill the 'Jive Girl' and is relayed from the USA via our local radio station WVTD, The Voice of the Admiralties. The swinging jive band hitting the air waves at the moment is Bob Crosby and his Bob Cats, and they are really going to town." (2)

So these AFRS transcriptions were certainly listened to and treasured. But ultimately they were required to be destroyed (or returned). I can attest to two instances.

At radio station CFGB Goose Bay, Labrador, Newfoundland, the station technician was told to take the 16 inch transcriptions to the dump and break them. But these records were made of vinyl, flexible, and difficult to break. So he scored both sides with a nail and threw the records onto the dump.

When an American communications station in northern Newfoundland was being closed down, the commanding officer wanted to donate the remaining consumer goods to the local townspeople as a token of the friendship that had developed. But the Canadian government decreed that as these goods were to be "imported into the country", an import duty would need to be paid. In despair, the officer ordered everything to be taken to the dump and bulldozed into the ground.

But, world-wide, many AFRS transcriptions managed to avoid such a fate and be carried back home. Maybe the nineteen now held by the AJM were "liberated" by one of the RAAF servicemen who appreciated their musical content and valued their historical importance.

(1) Louise DeSalvo, *Chasing Ghosts: A Memoir of a Father, Gone to War*, ISBN 9780823268849.

(2) Arthur Gately, *A Call to Arms: War Service with the RAAF 1942-1946: Diary Notes and Memoirs of Arthur Gately*, ISBN 0 642 26582 8.

**Jack Litchfield Ontario Canada**



## Jazz in the Park

The November weekend (18-19th) 2017 saw James Morrison playing at the **Jazz in the Park** event at Gladstone Park, Balmain, Sydney.

James pretended that he had forgotten his mute and requested a wine glass from the audience.

This photo shows James playing a blues with a wine glass as a mute.

## Nick Polites: a life in jazz



Nick Polites at home in 2017

THE Australian Jazz Convention is the longest running event of its type in the world. Many AJazz readers would have attended the 72<sup>nd</sup> convention in Ballarat at the end of 2017. Nick Polites was a popular performer there appearing with a number of combos.

The event has been held between Christmas and New Year every year since 1946. The inaugural convention was held at the Eureka Hall in North Melbourne. The hall belonged to the Eureka Youth League, the youth arm of the Communist Party of Australia, who saw the jazz scene as an opportunity to recruit young members. This was subsequently reflected in the early Eastern European and China tours of the late Graeme Bell's band. Like Graeme Bell, Nick is one of the few Australian jazzmen to continue performing into his 90s.

In December 1946 a young Nick appeared at the first convention with the Frank "Doc" Willis Band which featured trumpeter Manny Pappas. Nick has subsequently performed at nearly every convention since; with the exception of when he was touring overseas with various bands over the years.

Now ninety years of age, Nick Polites OAM has made an incalculable contribution to Australian jazz culture. Steadfastly true over a lifetime to original classic jazz, he is our ethnic New Orleans keeper of the flame – a living national treasure.

The child of Greek migrants, Nick was born in Mel-

bourne in 1927. His first conscious exposure to music occurred at age 11 in 1938. An Australian Rules Greek-Australian football team-mate Denis Athenis loaned him Louis Armstrong's *Hot Five* and *Hot Seven* recordings. Hearing ten year-old recordings like "West End Blues" for the first time was an epiphany which set the young Nick out on his life journey in the jazz world.

At first, Nick's parents resisted his pleas to purchase him a musical instrument; they were concerned music would be a distraction from his schooling. Eventually, after four years, they relented and in 1942 Nick got his start on a second-hand alto saxophone. Barely able to play, Nick was performing with amateur bands at church dances almost immediately. He puts down his early pre-proficient opportunities to the scarcity of older more accomplished musicians who would have been in military service during the Second World War. But Nick was a natural with a good ear; he learnt fast. Even before acquiring an instrument he had memorized many of the tunes that would become his initial repertoire. By 16, in 1943, Nick had earned enough from these fledgling performances to buy his first clarinet; and he never looked back.

Like the early African-American jazzmen, Nick was entirely unschooled in music. He is entirely self-taught and to this day plays by ear and does not rely on written music at all (he describes himself as a "slow-reader" of sheet music). Today Nick carries thousands of tunes in his head. Nick had his jazz heroes, such as George Lewis, but did not model his playing style on any one of them in particular. Nick developed his own jazz voice informed by the classic Creole-style of clarinet playing. As one reviewer proclaimed, he is "the real deal". New Orleans Creoles were the descendants of mixed French and African-American heritage.

Parental concerns about his academic future were unfounded; Nick went on to graduate from the University of Melbourne with four degrees in Commerce, Languages and Arts; and, later in life, a fourth degree in Social Work. He also quickly moved on to clarinet as his preferred jazz instrument.

At Melbourne University, Nick performed with various amateur campus-based and other semi-professional jazz bands; among them the *Varsity Vipers* and then the Doc Willis and Alan Bradley bands. His big break came in mid-

1951 when he joined a leading professional jazz band – *Frank Johnson's Fabulous Dixielanders*. In Australia, this band was rated second only to Graeme Bell's Sydney-based band; the Dixielanders were Melbourne's preeminent jazz band of that time.

Nick played and recorded with this band until late 1956. In September 1955 the band had a terrible car accident returning to Mel-



A young Nick performing in the late 1940s.

## By Con Pagonis

bourne from a country gig. Band-member “Wocka” Dyer was killed and Nick was laid-up in hospital for two months recovering from a broken neck. The spark went out of the band after that episode. A staunch jazz traditionalist, Nick moved on when the band started becoming more commercially-oriented.

In 1954 Louis Armstrong and his band visited Australia for the first time and the Frank Johnson Band played to greet him on the tarmac of Essendon airport. The entourage were invited back to Nick’s parent’s place for a party that evening at which Louis performed with his band. That evening Nick was invited to play with Louis Armstrong’s world famous *All Stars* band!

After leaving the *Dixielanders*, Nick teamed-up with Llew Hird, and later with English folk-blues vocalist Peter Shiells,



Left: ‘Mookie’ Herrmann, Nick Polites, Graham Bennett, Frank Turville, Willie Watt

and still later with German migrant Mookie Herman on Double Bass. Their appearance at the 1957 Australian Jazz Convention was a filip to their popularity on the jazz scene. With Llew Hird’s departure in March 1958 leadership fell to Nick. They were renamed the *Melbourne New Orleans Jazz Band*.

From September 1961 this band toured extensively in

**“There is no doubt that all the members of the Louisiana Shakers have listened hard and long to the recordings which clearly provide their influence but, despite the nice sound quality, potential purchasers may wish to consider whether this CD adds to the real thing. If I were to suggest a deciding factor, it would be the clarinet playing of Nick Polites. Appearing to be influenced by Albert Burbank and Willie Humphrey, this is good stuff and, while being the outstanding contribution, it is sensitive enough not to spoil the overall ensemble sound”. – Bob Rowbotham’s *Record Review* for The Louisiana Shakers CD, *New Orleans Music*, 1996.**

**“(Frank Johnson’s Fabulous Dixielanders), since the addition of Nick Polites and Frankie Gow, have taken on a new lease of life. Their music has just about everything – vitality, spontaneity, sincerity, understanding, and it swings and rocks like hell. – Tony Standish, *The Southern Rag*, 1953.**

the UK, Ireland and Germany until disbanding in London in April 1963. After a first visit to Greece, Nick embarked on his first of many pilgrimages to New Orleans. On arrival in the Crescent City, Nick made his way to Preservation Hall in the French Quarter and bumped into George Lewis standing in the courtyard of this now iconic venue. They had previously met in London and George said to Nick: “I’m playing tonight, come along and join in”. Thus Nick became a regular at Preservation Hall for three months and then continued with performances there on subsequent visits.

During this time Nick even filled-in for George Lewis in his regular band when George had overseas performance commitments; and when George was in town, he and Nick played clarinet duets. Nick’s “Mediterranean appearance” meant he was presumed by many locals to be of Creole descent; which aided in side-stepping the local segregationist public policy at that time. Nick must have felt he was in jazz heaven! He was playing with his idols: George Lewis, Kid Howard, Jim Robinson, George Guesnon, ‘Slow Drag’ Pavageau, Cie Frazier and Dolly Adamson piano. In subsequent years Nick got to perform with the likes of Dizzy Gillespie, Thelonious Monk, Art Blakey and he befriended iconic performers like Mahalia Jackson.

Nick returned to Melbourne just in time for the 1963 jazz convention at the Kew Civic Centre. Early in 1964, Nick joined the popular Yarra Yarra Jazz Band as their leader for a couple of years; and he re-joined them after a spell. He moved on to team-up with Sydney jazzman Geoff Bull for a playing trip to Europe and his second visit to New Orleans where he was establishing his reputation with African-American players and audiences who continued to presume he was a local Creole. On returning to Melbourne in late 1966 Nick formed his own *New Orleans Stompers* which played for another five years.

Nick continued with various bands through to the formation of the *Louisiana Shakers* in 1994. This band has been a fixture around the Melbourne jazz scene since then and toured extensively around the UK and European times. Nick performed his last gig with them on Christmas

**“The Shakers were doing a whole lot of shakin’, especially Nick Polites, the genius clarinetist whose knee bobbing threatened to wind him up and expel him through the back wall”. — Lyall Corless, *Melbourne Herald-Sun*, 1995.**

Eve 2017. Nick has felt particularly indebted to the late Ashley Keating who led *The Shakers* and organised their overseas tours around the UK and Europe. *The Shakers* have been recognised as one of the true “keepers of the flame” of the authentic ethnic New Orleans jazz style.



At four successive Australian Jazz Conventions from 1957 to 1960 Nick was voted Australia's best jazz clarinet player by fellow musicians and delegates. This discontinued practice was followed with a final convention concert by those voted the cream of all the players.

Nick has written and recorded several jazz compositions: *Green Gate Serenade*, *Nickin' Off* and *Helpin' Hand Rag*. A couple of these were winning tunes at the regular Australian Jazz Convention competition for new compositions. He was also a leader and administrator for Australian jazz. He was President of the 1960 Jazz convention and several subsequently; and a Convention Trustee for several decades. He was a founding member of the Victorian Jazz Club and on its management committee for many years.

On graduating from university in the late 1940s Nick had taken-up the CEO position with his family's confectionery manufacturing business through to its sale in 1971. Fortunately his brother-in-law was able to step in to manage the business when Nick was on tour overseas. After the sale of the family business, Nick moved into the migrant services sector as inaugural Director of the *Australian Greek Welfare Society*. He was a member of the Galbally Committee whose seminal review and recommendations laid the public policy foundations for Australian Multiculturalism. In 1981 he was awarded an OAM recognising his contributions in this field of his endeavours.

In recent times Nick has generously donated thirty albums of memorabilia, many recordings and videos to the Australian Jazz Museum. The museum is working through this wealth of material to ensure it is carefully preserved for posterity.

Looking ahead, Nick has not retired from performing all together. While no longer in a regular band, he will be popping-up from time-to-time as an elder statesman of the Australian jazz scene, as he did at the Ballarat convention last December. At 90 years of age Nick's playing is still hot. It retains a rare authenticity and freshness. *AJazz* readers are encouraged to hear and see this living legend of our Australian jazz community whenever the opportunity arises.



Performing in New Orleans' Preservation Hall, 1963 - left to right: Kid Sheik Colar (*trumpet*), Emanuel Paul (*tenor saxophone*), Andrew Jackson (*drums*), Nick Polites (*clarinet*) and George Guesnon (*banjo*).



Nick's final performance with *The Louisiana Shakers* at The Clyde Hotel in Carlton on Christmas Eve, 2017 (image: George Krupinski).

## Was Bix poisoned by alcohol tainted by the Federal Government?

By Thomas Geyer

(Reprinted from the Iowa Quad City Times with permission)



**In the 1920s the world's two greatest cornet players were undoubtedly Louis Armstrong and Bix Beiderbecke. Louis lived and became famous. Bix died and became immortal. Bix's early death added a romantic flavour to his outstanding documented achievements. He was a brilliant player with an unmistakable purity of tone and his innovative chord progressions helped advance jazz development. He joined the famous Wolverines Orchestra in in Ohio in 1923 and later moved to Chicago. From there he moved to Saint Louis with Frankie Trumbauer. After a stint with the renowned Jean Goldkette Orchestra he joined "King of Jazz" Paul Whiteman in 1927. Considering his short career, he recorded fairly extensively. The Australian Jazz Museum possesses many of his original 78rpm discs.**

**The following article, recently printed in the Quad City Times newspaper, may strike some as a conspiracy theory, but it offers much food for thought about the true cause of Bix's early death.**

... Ken Simpson-Bull

**M**ORE than 80 years after Leon "Bix" Beiderbecke died at the age of 28, a theory about the cornetist's controversial end argues that Bix was the tragic victim of an anti-liquor campaign arranged by the federal government.

The indisputable facts: On Thursday, August 6, 1931, at 9:30 p.m. Bix, the great Davenport cornetist, died in New York City. According to the front-page article of the Davenport Democrat and Leader, a predecessor of the Quad-City Times, the cause of death was pneumonia.

But jazz artist Randall Sandke, who plays cornet and trumpet and who is on the board of the Bix Beiderbecke Museum and Archive, said he has long wondered about the ultimate cause of Bix's death. His research has led him to some fresh conclusions about the case. His findings were laid out in a 2013 essay, "Was Bix Beiderbecke Poisoned by the Federal Government," published in the Journal of Jazz Studies, a periodical from the Institute of Jazz Studies at Rutgers.

"I think Bix has gotten a bad rap," Sandke said in an interview with the Quad-City Times on July 27. "He died, and it was related to his alcoholism." Sandke argues that Bix could have been unlucky enough that night to have imbibed tainted alcohol, as many had during Prohibition, and it could have been the federal government that may have, inadvertently, been a factor in Bix's untimely death.

That Bix drank alcohol heavily has never been a secret. Prohibition did not stop people from drinking alcoholic beverages. In fact, the 18th Amendment never prohibited drinking alcohol, just its manufacture, transportation and sale.

The article as was written: "After one year from the ratification of this article the manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquors within, the importation thereof into, or the exportation thereof from the United States and all territory subject to the jurisdiction thereof for beverage purposes is hereby prohibited."

Bix did not just one day contract pneumonia and die. He had been in declining health since he had a reaction to alcohol the evening of November 30, 1928. Sandke said that he has been interested in Bix since he was a boy of 11 or 12 in Chicago, both reading about him and listening to his music. "In that

era, plenty of his contemporaries were hard drinkers, and they managed to avoid the kind of tragic end he had."

What Sandke thinks is that in Bix's final days, the musician was unlucky enough to have consumed alcohol that was tainted, possibly with methanol, such as wood alcohol, or some other substance. In his article, Sandke turns



to the writing of Deborah Blum, whose 2010 story, "The Chemist's War: The little-told story of how the U.S. Government poisoned alcohol during Prohibition with deadly consequences," published by Slate, explains the government's role in fighting bootleggers.

While consumable alcohol was banned during Prohibition, there remained a need for industrial alcohol. The industrial alcohol, as Blum points out, often was stolen by bootleggers and "resold as drinkable spirits."

What the government did was to order the poisoning of industrial alcohols produced in the United States in the hopes it would scare people into giving up illicit drinking. Instead, by the time Prohibition ended in 1933, Blum says in her essay, "the federal government poisoning program, by some estimates, had killed at least 10,000 people."

Blum writes that while Prohibition went into effect on January 1, 1920, people continued to drink and that by the mid-1920s, the Treasury Department, which oversaw alcohol enforcement, estimated that approximately 60 million gallons of industrial alcohol had



been stolen annually by bootleggers to supply the nation's drinkers.

It was not the government's intent to kill anyone, Blum points out. The idea of "denaturing" industrial alcohol was introduced to the United States in 1906, as it had been a practice in Europe. Chemists employed by the syndicates and bootleggers worked to make the denatured industrial alcohol potable, which made the government create ways to make industrial alcohol more poisonous.

As for Bix, a breakdown on the night of November 30, 1928, in Cleveland, may have been the result of bad alcohol, Sandke said. That night, Sandke believes, Bix passed out on-stage while performing with Paul

Whiteman's orchestra in the New Music Hall in Cleveland. Later, in a fit of delirium, according to trombonist and friend Bill Rank, Bix cracked up and broke up a roomful of furniture at the hotel.

Whiteman called for a doctor and nurse and ordered Bix back to Davenport. Instead, Bix headed to New York, but he was a changed man, Sandke said. The episode left Bix with severe peripheral neuropathy affecting both of his legs and feet as well as chronic pneumonia, which eventually killed him. His kidneys and liver didn't function properly. He suffered from headaches, dizziness, blackouts, memory loss and had to use a cane to get around. Bix was only 26 at the time.

The symptoms are those of someone who has been a victim of alcohol poisoning.

"It seems to me there was a definite break in his life from the time he had that breakdown in Cleveland," Sandke said. "His health never really recovered from that point on. 'If you listen to his music from that point on, he rallies and he records some great stuff. He's not in the studio nearly as often as he had before then because of his physical problem.'"

Despite Bix's drinking, Sandke said, "He was able to really maintain this unbelievably high standard of performing all those years until that night."

On August 9, 1931, radio stations WOC and WHO paid tribute to Bix during a broadcast of the Valley dance, according to the Davenport Democrat and Leader. During the broadcast, pianist Bert Sloan played Bix's composition, "In a Mist," reminding people that Bix also was an accomplished pianist and composer. "I think there is a certain amount of luck of the draw when you're buying any kind of unregulated product," Sandke said. "Some people managed to avoid being seriously affected."

We have been asked to publish the Web site of the Quad City Times: <http://qctimes.com>



## THE DENZA DANCE BAND



COLLECTORS of old "78" records from the 1920s and 30s will be familiar with the *Denza Dance Band* attribution given on many Columbia records of the period. But did you know that such a band never existed. According to discographer, Brian Rust, this name was chosen in 1925 by Herbert Ridout, publicity manager of the Columbia Graphophone Company in London to mask the identities of American Dance bands whose first electric recordings it was decided to issue without previous public announcement of the new recording technique. Some of the bands thus masked included Ted Lewis, Sam Lanin, the Californian Ramblers, Harry Reser, Fred Rich, the Ipana Troubadours, Cass Hagan and many others.



## Tony Loves Bix

### By Bill Brown

southside -1

the best of tony newstead

-a retrospective



*Tony - 100 way for you!*  
Eddie Condon

NDEED he did. Tony Newstead, one of Melbourne's doyens of jazz for many years, counted among his trumpet/cornet influences the bell-like sound of the man from Davenport, Iowa who made such an impression in the early jazz scene in his tragically short life. Tony, who passed away in recent times, lived a long life during which he led various groups in different parts of the globe. His day job (as jazzmen term it) took him to overseas climes and, happily for us, his horn accompanied him. In recent times I have been listening to two LPs he made for the Fat Cat Jazz label in the United States. The LPs

were entitled as above "Tony Loves Bix" and "Bix's Gang Lives" and were recorded at various festivals at Manassas in Virginia in the early seventies. On the Bix Gang session there are three gents on hand who played with the great man in his heyday, trombonists Bill Rank and Spiegel Wilcox and bass saxist Spencer Clark. Naturally the repertoire leans towards the Beiderbecke muse with tunes like *Riverboat Shuffle*, *Since My Best Gal Turned me Down, I'm Comin' Virginia*, et.al. A similar trend is on the other CD which features a pianist called Bob Greene on some tracks. Normally more involved in the classic music of pianist Jelly Roll Morton, he fits in well in the ensembles. Two expatriate Brits are also present, Ray Whittam on bass sax and Graham Stewart on trombone. During the fifties and sixties in the UK Stewart had led his own Seven piece group and been a sideman with Cy Laurie, Ken Colyer and Monty Sunshine. On the Bix Gang LP the only slight low note for me is the vocals of Fat Cat Johnson McCrea. Well, after all, I guess he was running the show and putting out the records.

I don't think Tony recorded whilst in the UK although once when he visited the Museum he told me he had appeared at the Fleet Street Jazz Club in London. Along with people like Kenny Ball. The CD put out by the museum 'Tony Newstead - A Retrospective' includes some of the US tracks mentioned above but also features various recordings done here in Melbourne. Some under his own name and others with Storyville Jazzmen/All Stars on two occasions and a group called the Yacht Club Band. Perhaps there are other sessions lurking somewhere, hopefully they will emerge so we can enjoy more of Tony's hot trumpet. Another chapter in the history of the Good Noise closes but thanks to the wonders of technology the music of those worthies can live on by the pressing of a button or the throwing of a switch. Play That Thing. Onya Tony.

## Honorary Life Membership for Jeff Blades



Congratulations Jeff and well deserved.

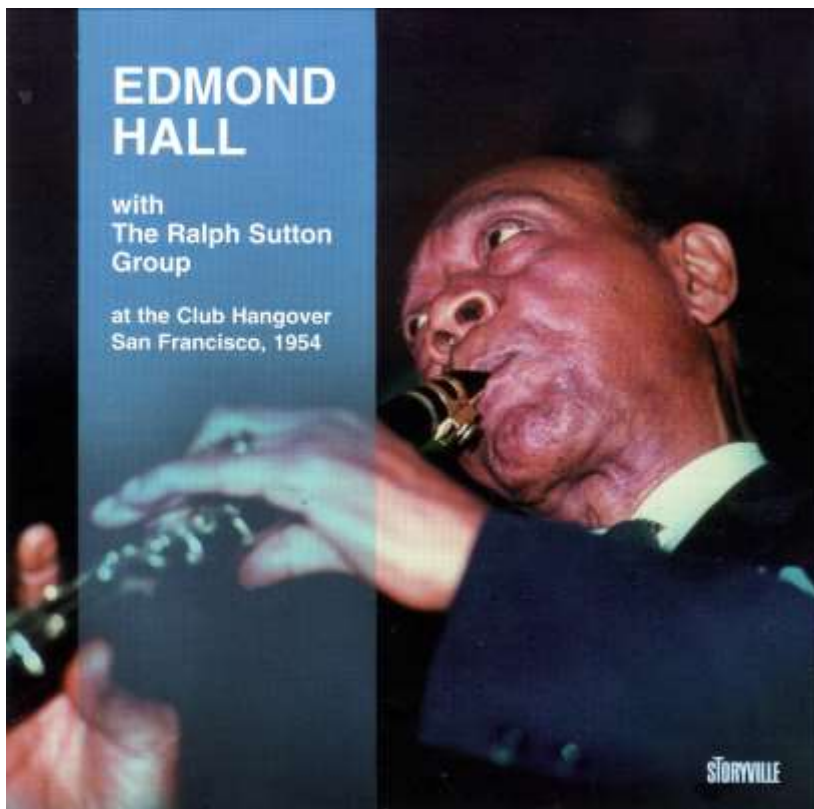
Jeff Blades was there at the making of the Museum. The photo on the left shows Jeff at one of the early meetings in 1998 and below, pulling together the building that became our museum.

Jeff worked tirelessly behind the scenes and on the committee to make the Museum what it is today.



## HALL OF FAME

By Bill Brown



**E**DMOND HALL was a fine Afro-American jazz clarinet player born in New Orleans in 1901. He came from a musical family, his father Edward played in the Onward Brass Band, his younger brother Herb also played clarinet, and like Edmond played in Chicago-style groups like Eddie Condon's and like bands. According to Chilton's Who's Who of Jazz there were two other brothers who were musicians.

Edmond (Ed) played early on in his career with groups led by the likes of Lee Collins, Jack Carey and Buddy Petit in Louisiana Texas and also in Florida. In the Thirties, sometimes doubling on baritone saxophone, he was in groups led by pianist Claude Hopkins and showman/bandleader Lucky Millinder. His jazz career blossomed in the early Forties in groups led by trumpeter Henry 'Red' Allen and former Benny Goodman pianist Teddy Wilson. Around that time he led bands at both Café Society Uptown and Café Society Downtown run by Barney Josephson in New York City. Josephson ran the first racially integrated club; it was at his premises that singer Billie Holiday first sang her controversial song Strange Fruit.

In the Fifties Ed was with Louis Armstrong's All Stars and appeared on many recordings in this group although I did hear that he got bored playing the same tunes night after night. He also

appeared and recorded in the varied group's guitarist, club owner and raconteur Eddie Condon presided over. One tale I heard had racial overtones. Some big company executive wanted the Condon group to do a TV show or film of the band promoting his company. However, they didn't want a Negro in what was otherwise a white band. So Peanuts Hucko replaced Ed but seemingly though he was shown playing clarinet unknown to the businessmen it was Ed's solos that were heard.

Although Hall had the New Orleans background and it showed in his tone, he had a great regard for Benny Good-

### Ain't it funny when you ask for money

man and the swing influence meant that Ed could fit into different surroundings. Around the late Fifties he went to Ghana with the idea of settling there however that was short lived and soon he was back in the US recording and appearing at festivals. In 1960 with trumpeter Sidney DeParis, pianist Hank Duncan and other Americans he appeared in a band led by English trombonist Chris Barber who was on tour in America with his UK band. The

record they made broke new ground for UK musicians recording with Americans. Ed and Barber collaborated again in UK and Europe around 1962 during one of Ed's visits. The late Ian Wheeler, Barber's clarinetist spoke of the buzz he got playing with Ed in a version of High Society.

By the Sixties when the various musicians unions got their acts together lots of US players were familiar sights at various UK jazz spots. Ed was in UK and the Continent again in 1966 and recorded a session in Denmark. In January 1967 he appeared at a concert at Carnegie Hall, and the Globe Festival in Boston, now his home. Sadly, a month later, whilst clearing snow from around his residence, Ed had a fatal heart attack.

I have quite an array of Ed Hall's music on my shelves. Among my favourites are a two CD set on the Blue-note label from 1941, 1943 and 1944. Then another double CD from the Fifties which comprises four LPs plus a few tracks from a session that Ed recorded in Buenos Aires of all places. Stand out for me is the session called *Petite Fleur* where Ed has tracks of him with three piece rhythm and on some tracks trumpet and trombone added. The track *Petite Fleur* is the quartet and Ed pays homage to the composer Sidney Bechet. Ironically at that time 1959 the year Bechet died, that tune was in the hit parade courtesy of a version by British clarinet man Monty Sunshine.

The other album I like from this collection goes under the title of "Rumpus on Rampart Street". Some tracks feature three clarinets, Ed, his brother Herb and that other legendary player Omer V. Simeon. As a contrast there is a set by a group under the leadership of trumpet man Teddy Buckner and a session from Boston with the then new kid on the block, cornetist Ruby Braff. One amusing item from the *Petite Fleur* set is a rare vocal by Ed on a tune called *Sympathy*. The final line has a telling theme about life, "Ain't It Funny When You Ask For Money All You Get Is SYMPATHY". Ed Hall as Sidney Bechet would say "A Great Musicianer".





## Inverloch Jazz Festival's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary March 9-12, 2018

Showcasing all types of Jazz in three convenient, comfortable venues in the heart of the town.



**A concert at  
Foundry 616 in  
Ultimo, Sydney,  
part of the  
Sydney International  
Jazz Festival.**

It was a great concert, featuring one of the world's best drummers, Terri Lyne Carrington from the US, plus leading Sydney player Sandy Evans on saxophone, Ben Hauptmann on guitar, Aron Ottignon on piano and Jonathon Zwartz on bass.

## CDs for Members

THE Australian Jazz Museum is introducing a new procedure for when "free" CDs are issued to members who are renewing their membership. From now on a special "Members' Compilation" CD will be produced on an annual basis containing a selection of rare collectable jazz tracks from our range of AJM CDs. These samplers will be produced exclusively for members and will provide them with the means to more effectively choose one or more of the various CDs in the AJM range. Of course, each sampler CD will in itself provide over 70 minutes of high quality enjoyable jazz.

## Restore My Image

My name is Greg Gardner and I am a Free-Lance Photographer starting a home-based business Restoring and Repairing old and damaged Photographs, and Photographic Collections.

Phone: 0403 960 900  
Email: [pastorgreg88@hotmail.com](mailto:pastorgreg88@hotmail.com)



## Valda Marshall

On Sunday 17 December 2017 musician Valda Marshall celebrated her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday at the **Hero of Waterloo** pub at The Rocks, Sydney. Valda has been playing at the Hero every Sunday afternoon since 1979 and only took three weeks off when she suffered a stroke some time ago.

Valda plays trumpet, alto saxophone and sings and is the star attraction at the Hero every Sunday. For 38 years Valda's band was known as the Old Time jazz band, but now that she has outlived her old-time contemporaries and with younger musicians joining her band, she decided that it should be called The Hero of Waterloo orchestra.

Valda not only plays at the Hero every Sunday afternoon, she also has a gig to play at her local church every Sunday morning. She loves the music of Bing Crosby and Perry Como and enjoys playing their melodies.

She believes the secret to her long life is 'no sex'.

L: Valda seen here against the background of the poster advertising the function at the famous Hero of Waterloo heritage pub in Sydney.

## Have You Ever Wondered About These Song Titles?

**Dogtown Blues** was named after Douglastown in Long Island where the Douglas family had a large number of dogs.

**That Lindy Hop**, was a lively Negro dance originally named after Charles Lindbergh.

**Free Man's Blues** was named by Graeme Bell after his divorce.

**Muskrat Ramble**. A muskrat is a rodent of North America.

**Kickin' the Gong Around**, associated with chewing Chinese opium pellets hence Chinese gongs.

**Blues Kicked the Bucket**. To kick the bucket is to die. A person hanging himself stands on a bucket and kicks it away.

**Twelfth Street Rag** refers to a main thoroughfare in Kansas City, Missouri.

**Sugar Foot Stomp**. Sugar Foot was the name for a good dancer (sweet feet).

**Stomp Off, Let's Go**. A bandleader stomps his foot several times to set the rhythm at the commencement of a number.

**Royal Garden Blues** refers to a famous dance hall in Chicago in the 1920s.

**Maple Leaf Rag** named after the Maple Leaf Club in Sedalia, Missouri where Scott Joplin played.

**Limehouse Blues**. Limehouse was a district in Stepney in London's dock area largely populated by Chinese.

**La Cucaracha** is Spanish for cockroach.

**Jeepers Creepers** was the name of a horse in a Louis Armstrong movie. The term only later meant an exclamation of surprise or a euphemism for Jesus Christ.

**Viper's drag**. A viper is a marijuana smoker.

**Struttin' with Some Barbeque** means dancing with an attractive coloured girl.

**Big Noise from Winnetka** is an important person from Winnetka, a town in Illinois.

**Big Butter and Egg Man** was a nickname for rich farmers who came to Chicago in the 1920s to spend lavishly at bars and night clubs.

*Excerpted from "Tell Your Story" (1976) by Eric Townley.*



## WHY JAZZ IS IMPORTANT IN THIS COUNTRY



*This was a five minute address given by Graeme Bell at the 2007 Bell Awards at BMW Edge, Federation Square, Melbourne and using the themes suggested by the Artistic Director of the Melbourne International Jazz Festival and organizer of the Bell Awards, Albert Dadon.*

**I**n the basket of pure music, jazz occupies a significant compartment. We know its influences and its origins, so I don't need to go into that. It has a colourful history, it hasn't been plucked out of thin air.

It has its roots firmly planted in the soil of human emotions – sorrow, joy, anger, love, ecstasy, passion, warmth etc. – all blended in a mix of sounds we call music. In the lexicon of music, jazz takes its place with Bach, Ravel, Piazzolla – the list goes on. So, if this is anywhere near the truth of the matter, how can it be anything other than of great importance to the cultural life of Australia.

So much in jazz music resonates with the Aussie character. We are a laid back race of kindly larrikins. As in jazz, our quavers are not dotted and we swing through life with an easy rhythm!

### *How can it go forward...*

Let me start by saying that one way is to concentrate on the rich, and in many cases, under-developed and under-exposed talent we already have, right on our doorstep. As English writer Stuart Nicholson, one of the former judges for these Bell Awards said in his book "Jazz has not died, it has just changed its address", meaning, that one will now find heaps of first class jazz outside the U.S.A.

Getting back to the Question 'How can it go forward in Australia', there seems to be little we can do with commercial radio, but the jazz broadcasters on Community Radio should play at least 80% Australian content. Another way to go forward, is to mix it up and to have both classic jazz and contemporary jazz on the same concert platform. This will open the window to the fundamentalists on either side, and reveal to them a different vista which they have avoided like a foreign language!

Way back in the early '50s when my original Melbourne band [which was very traditional] was touring the provinces of Great Britain, we were frequently paired off with contemporary bands such as the Johnny Dankworth Seven or the Kenny Graham Band. We would share the program, and I think this scenario could be well worth trying in Australia. It brings into the performance space, two different audiences, each of whom is thus exposed to a sound on the other side of the coin. Who knows that a previously unforeseen tolerance and respect may develop among the jazz followers who are so often hide-bound in their predilection of one particular sound. I am more than happy to say that this attitude does not exist amongst the professional musicians themselves, who have an all round mutual respect for those who play a different style to the one which they themselves play.

Lastly, I would like to repeat what I think I said last year, and that is that the buck stops with the musician. He must present his music *and communicate* with his audience. Much magic can arise from such a recipe. Apart from all the other benefits, if his audience accepts and embraces him, then he can gently push forward, and hopefully, take them along with him.

**Graeme Bell AO MBE**



### 72nd Jazz Convention

The George Hotel balcony venue.

#### L: Under 25s' Victorian Jazz Workshop

Alec Ferguson, Ashton Vaz, Matthew Chipman, Mollyrose Wilson, Marina Pollard, Bob Boxshall, Luke Drohan, Gian Cannizzaro



## Donations

Collection donations have been gratefully received from Rod Hill, Brian Flormell, Bill Boldiston, Judy Newton, Ron Jobe, Loretta Barnard, Lois Stephenson, David Theak, Newmarket Music, Lynn Williams, Desley Sharpe, Peter Milburn and Veronica Massie, Bob Henderson, Cheryl Kelly

The President of the Peninsula Jazz Club, Harry Daniels, presented a special brace to assist Mathew Chipman to play his Baritone Saxophone. Harry said it was his pleasure to help our young musicians. Mathew plays in the Under 25s' Jazz workshop.



Mollyrose Wilson with her travel double base.

When Mollyrose joined the workshop a travel double base was needed and purchased with monies donated by the Halls Gap Jazz Festival

### Retraction.

Not a drop of ATSI Blood to be Found.

In the article on indigenous Australian Jazz performers (AJazz 76) I incorrectly asserted Georgina de Leon, AKA Lucy Brown, was of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage. I am indebted to Clinton Walker, whose seminal work on native Australian Country Music performers entitled "Buried Country" and whose just - released companion volume "Deadly Woman Blues", alerted me to the error. My ongoing research has confirmed this to be the case. Born in Sydney in 1926, her father was a young Filipino boxer named Gavino de Leon and her mother, Leoncia Baptiste, had Mauritian antecedence.

**Ralph Powell**



## AUSTRALIAN JAZZ CONVENTION ARCHIVE REPORT 2017



Photographic Collage by Ron Jobe

*(Not all subscribers to the Australian Jazz Museum magazine would know about the Australian Jazz Convention (AJC). This event was started in 1946 by musicians for musicians. Here in 2017 it is still happening and in December we celebrated the 72<sup>nd</sup> year of its existence! It is without doubt, the longest running jazz event in the world. As you may note, the word 'convention' is used, and not 'festival'. This is because musicians are the prime factor at their event, with jazz aficionados (delegates) attending also. Musicians and delegates each pay a registration fee to attend. You can also attend on a day—pass basis. The event is held for six days from December 26-31 inclusive.)*

*In 2017 the AJC was held in Ballarat for the third time (in a row).*

**The Australian Jazz Convention (AJC) collection is a discrete collection within the Australian Jazz Museum. The writers handle only this material as they volunteer each week.**

This year our work has moved along quite rapidly thanks to the assistance of Georgia Brown. Georgia is the daughter of the late musician John Brown (banjo/guitar). For a start she is far younger than we are, so we are ahead already! Best of all, Georgia has the knowledge of conventions and she refers to herself as a 'convention brat', being escorted by her father to many AJCs when young. Her contemporaries are Steven Grant, Simon Stribling, Jo Stephenson — you can work out the age.

We are pleased to advise that we are now archiving the 59<sup>th</sup> AJC 2004, Stawell, having dealt with the enormous 50<sup>th</sup> AJC 1995 held at the University of Melbourne. This was a huge AJC with something like 345 bands and 3000 people in attendance. As the volume of material was so vast, once again it was sorted at our home, with Georgia joining us for a lot of hard work and many nice lunches! The load was quite overwhelming at times. It took a lot of concentration as we had many subject areas to cover. It took 13 folders and 6 archive boxes to hold this material which originally was in 6 large cartons!

Another 'progressive' happening is the digitisation program of the reel-to-reel tapes in our possession. There are hundreds, and some are deteriorating. Thanks to the diligence

of the Australian Jazz Museum committee, they successfully gained a grant from the Potter Foundation of \$20,000 for the AJC Archive project. This Grant is dedicated to the restoration and the digitisation of the aforementioned tapes. The work has commenced with the 37<sup>th</sup> AJC 1982, Toowoomba tapes. It is not a cheap exercise and the \$20,000 will not cover the entire task. When the money is almost extinguished, we shall be looking for more assistance to continue and finalise this important project.

The company carrying out this work is Crystal Mastering, Thornbury. Firstly they bake

each reel in ovens to preserve, and then digitise. Crystal carries out a lot of work for the National Library of Victoria, and came highly recommended. Their owner came to the Museum for a discussion with us both plus Georgia and Mel Blachford (AJM). He was very enthusiastic and is keeping the costs as low as possible due to the 'volunteer' status of the AJC and the AJM. He also added that he loves the music he has heard and how enjoyable it has made his daily work.

Georgia has had the task of creating spreadsheets for these reel to reel tapes, adding a museum sticker to accompany EACH reel plus an identifying number. The reels are then handed over to Crystal Mastering for restoration and digitisation. Georgia has put in an enormous amount of work.

Donations this year have been light and are as follows — the late John Brown (VIC) (musician) —badges, programs, acetate of the 20<sup>th</sup> AJC 1965 Sydney, various photographs, guitar, banjo, violin; the late Margaret Moriarty (ACT) — programs and badges (via Ron Cook); Frank Hambridge (VIC) — various badges; Anne Jopling (VIC) — various Convention bags; the late Adrian Ford (NSW) (musician) — LP of the 37<sup>th</sup> AJC 1982 Toowoomba; the late Ken Webber (TAS) (musician)) — 6 cassettes of the 43<sup>rd</sup> AJC 1988, Sydney (with more yet to be sorted.)

Material is always arriving on our desk to deal with immediately, especially if the AJC donation involved has already been archived - and so it goes on.

The work we carry out seems endless, and with some luck the archiving of all Conventions should be completed by 2018. After that, there is then the task of data entering every piece of paper for each AJC. Not many people live until their 150, do they?

**DON ANDERSON OAM (Archivist)**  
**MARGARET ANDERSON (Archivist)**

**Material can be forwarded to me on a pay on delivery basis through Australia Post as below**  
**Don Anderson, 12 Homewood Court, Rosanna 3084, Victoria.**

Email [donmarganderson@bigpond.com](mailto:donmarganderson@bigpond.com),  
or telephone 03 9459 1008 Mobile 0418 529 659

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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.

### DON'T KEEP IT TO YOURSELF

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:

- Go into our website [www.ajm.org.au](http://www.ajm.org.au) then click on Support Us/Become a Member. Click on Join Online. Fill out the online registration form with full details of the recipient. Pay online using Paypal or credit card. They will be sent an email immediately, followed by a membership card and a special AJM CD. You will be sent an email acknowledging your payment
- Go into our website [www.ajm.org.au](http://www.ajm.org.au), then click on Support Us/Become a Member. Click on the link for a Membership Application Form. Print it out, fill it in and send it to us
- Call us on 03 9800 5535 Tuesday or Friday, between 10 am and 3pm.

### We Welcome these New Members:

Peter Duras, Lyn Gramlick, Helen MacDougall, Ian McLachlan, Peter Paterson, Tom Sedunary, Keith Taylor

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

BlueTone Jazz Band, Jeanette Burckhardt, James Dinsdale, Barbara Blair, Michael O'Brien, Peter Oakley

### ONLINE MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

If you are an email user, we prefer you to renew your membership online using the renewal link that is sent to you by email, paying by credit card or Paypal. If you have misplaced that email, or if you prefer not to pay online, you can download a Membership Application/Renewal Form from our website, fill it in and send it to us by post. Simply go into our website [www.ajm.org.au](http://www.ajm.org.au), then click on Support Us/Become a Member. Click on the link for a Membership Application Form.

Alternatively, you can call us on 03 9800 5535 Tuesday or Friday, between 10 am and 3pm.

Don't forget, you receive a special AJM CD free with your renewal.

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