



VJAZZ 30 MAY 2006

# VJAZZ

## General Manager's Message

Hello everyone,

Following on from comments in the January newsletter, we've conducted our first 'jazz talk' with a service club in our endeavours to 'spread the jazz gospel' and broaden our membership base. Three more talks are being planned during the next few weeks. Results are very promising with two Corporate and six Individual Memberships to date.

Most of you will be aware the Archive became an Accredited Museum almost three years ago – after a tremendous amount of preliminary work by Dr. Ray Marginson AM, John Kennedy OAM and other senior executives. The period of accreditation is for three years, and it was with a little apprehension that we embarked on a re-accreditation phase early in March this year. The application questionnaire, this time, seeks much more information compared with what was previously requested. Once again John Kennedy has led the team and kept them very busy fleshing out the details needed to ensure compliance with document submission by the end of May. You may be interested to know that since accreditation in 2003, we have made external and internal building improvements valued in excess of \$30,000, with most of this expenditure being funded by donations and grants. A recent addition to the furniture in the Library is the purchase of 50 folding padded chairs, courtesy of a sale of all the furniture used in the Commonwealth Games recently held in Melbourne.

Have you seen our current exhibition in the Library? "Gems From The Archive" features some rare items indeed. It's scheduled to finish at the end of May 2006, so if you haven't managed to view it to date, please consider a visit to Wantirna during our open days to enjoy the display, and have a cuppa and biscuit whilst chatting to some of our musicians and volunteers.

Ray Sutton – General Manager

## THE VICTORIAN JAZZ ARCHIVE ANNOUNCES

### A NEW EXHIBITION

### "BILARM - SWAGGIE RECORDINGS"

**Highlighting contributions of Bill Armstrong and Nevill Sherburn  
to the recording of Australian Jazz**

**COMMENCING TUESDAY 20<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2006  
and running**

**UNTIL TUESDAY 30<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2007**

**The exhibition will consist of photographs, posters,  
record covers and a wide range of old and new recording equipment.**

**For further details phone (03) 9800 5535**

**Email:- [info@vicjazzarchive.org.au](mailto:info@vicjazzarchive.org.au)**

**Web page:- [www.vicjazzarchive.org.au](http://www.vicjazzarchive.org.au)**

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE VICTORIAN JAZZ ARCHIVE INC. PATRON: WILLIAM H. MILLER M.A., B.C.L.

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EDITOR: Gretel James

## VISIT TO THE ARCHIVE BY PROF. TERRY MARTIN OF CHICAGO JAZZ ARCHIVE AND THE CHICAGO INSTITUTE OF JAZZ.

On Friday 17<sup>th</sup> February, Professor Terry Martin, on one of his annual visits to Australia, addressed the Archive volunteers to give an insight into how things are done at the Chicago Jazz Archive. Terry, who is Adelaide-born, comes home each year to visit his ageing mother, and usually calls in and spends some time at the VJA. He has a vast collection of Australian jazz which he is eager to incorporate in the Chicago Jazz Archive. He has joined the VJA as a Life Member, and is keen to witness the progress of our Archive.

He spoke for over half an hour on the history of the Chicago Jazz Archive, and these are some of the points he made in his speech.

John Steiner was the first member and originator of the Jazz Archive in 1960. It didn't proceed very well and was reformed in the 1970's. The Chicago Institute of Jazz is responsible for organizing the Chicago Jazz Festival, educational performances in schools, Concerts in the Parks and for recording all Institute events. The Institute does not have its own building and its material is incorporated in the Library of the University of Chicago. This is not ideal as library material is for public lending, whereas the archive material is for preservation.

The Jazz Archive is run by a committee, with Don de Michael, the Editor of "Downbeat" magazine, at the head, and he has contributed a lot of material. The late John Steiner Collection contains unique material, which apart from recordings and reel-to-reel tapes, includes old tape recorders and many items the Archive is unable to place because of a shortage of space.

The Chicago Jazz Archive is moving to a Special Collections Division, and will come under the University of Chicago Library Archive Collection. The present Library Curator is very good, but all will depend on future personnel as to how it can operate. They do get grants for the Oral History Program, but corporate sponsorship is very hard to acquire. Problems also arise when recording jazz concerts, as many young musicians are not keen to have their music recorded. Miles Davis would not let them (but they did), and of course they cannot play it.

Terry's final observation that there are not many black musicians still playing traditional jazz, is not surprising.

The Victorian Jazz Archive wishes to thank Terry for his very informative talk. He is envious of the fact we have control of our storage spaces and the building.

The New South Wales Jazz Archive inc. has produced a booklet entitled "The Len Barnard Story 1929-1980" as a tribute to Len. It has a limited edition of 200 copies, each individually numbered, which can be obtained from the NSWJA, PO Box 1570, Rozelle, N.S.W. 2039 for \$6 a copy including postage.

*Copy of letter from Graeme Bell AO, MBE. to Dr. Ray Marginson AM*

*Dear Ray,*

*You and your 'team' have done a truly excellent job with the production of the Bell Brothers' Early Years. Quite astounding. Only a person such as yourself would have given thought to preserving those early formative years of which so many people are completely dismissive.*

*In fact it is this CD which has thrown the whole thing into perspective for me. When one is young and too close to the subject, a carefree waive of the hand and 'see you at the pub' would have, maybe, been my reaction years ago. But as a more mature 'old geezer' I see things differently.*

*We were neophytes filled with curiosity. "Where did it all come from?", "Why don't the Palais dance musicians know?", "What's it all about?", "Get me that 78 and let me hear it" etc. A world of wonders of which nobody could speak its name. So the USA exported it. BUT, without even trying, we put our Aussie stamp on it more than anyone had done previously. And that OZ patriotism evinced itself right from the outset with OZ compositions used in practically every recording session.*

*Sure, the musicianship is 'early days' but the joyous self-discovery bursts forth in all its guileless fearlessness.*

*Congratulations Ray and many thanks.*

*Graeme*

.....

Although these thanks are addressed to me, everyone at the Archive knows these CD's would never have been possible without the long hours devoted to producing listenable tracks by David Ward and the great discographical work and production by John Kennedy.

*R.D.M.*

**Congratulations**  
to Graeme on being awarded the  
**2006 J.C. WILLIAMSON AWARD**

for his outstanding contribution to the Australian Live Performance Industry. He follows in the footsteps of Dame Joan Sutherland, John Farnham, Googie Withers and Edna Egeley.

## PROMOTIONS REPORT

### ALAN CLARK

## A BIG THANK YOU

In our previous newsletter we appealed to members and volunteers to assist us to purchase a Yamaha piano for use at the Archive. The response was magnificent and our idea of offering the eighty-eight keys at \$50 each clearly had appeal for lots of our wonderful supporters. We now have a shiny black upright Yamaha in pride of place in the Archive library, and it has received great reviews from our resident pianists. The youngsters from our student workshops are also most appreciative. Craig Johnston of Keyboard Corner in Boronia, was instrumental in organizing an irresistible deal, and he assures us he will do his very best to assist our members with advice and service if you are contemplating the purchase of an instrument of any type. (His address and phone number are on the last page of this newsletter).

We are in the process of inscribing donors' names on a separate keyboard, which was generously donated by Yamaha Music Australia Pty.Ltd. This engraved keyboard will be displayed adjacent to the 'real thing' and will be prominently featured for all to see.

### GREAT NEWS FOR MEMBERS OLD AND NEW

The V.J.A. recognizes that the strength and durability of the organization relies heavily on the support of a strong membership base. For this reason we have introduced a number of initiatives to literally make ourselves irresistible to potential members and existing members alike. For instance, when you receive your individual or family membership renewal, you will be invited to accept one of our V.J.A. series Jazz CD's absolutely free of charge. At the moment there are ten titles to choose from. This range is being expanded. These are the CD's that normally retail for \$25 each through the Archive shop.

This offer is twofold: it is a genuine attempt to reward you, our faithful members who continue to support our work year after year; and clearly our volunteers enjoy the incentive they are able to offer to prospective members when visiting the Archive.

There are many more benefits to talk about plus some exciting promotions coming up. There's a ripper planned for the future so please watch this space in subsequent issues. I just know you will want to get involved.

Thanks again on behalf of the hard-working crew at the Archive.

Next time you visit the Archive, have a look at the model keyboard to see if you recognise any of the generous donors' names.

Look at page 6 in this issue to see if you have won a prize in the Piano Keys Lucky Dip draw.

*Alan Clark*

## INCREASE IN SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Since our inception in 1996 we have managed to keep our subscription rates at their original level. With escalating costs for printing and postage, we have now had to increase these. However, you will see from the enclosed membership renewal form that your individual or family subscription (Victorian) also entitles you to one free VJAZZ CD or, in the case of Corporate or Life Memberships, you are entitled to five CD's.

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### Edited CD Review of VJAZZ 2005 by Ron Jobe

#### Downbeat Concert No. 55, Melbourne Town Hall 27 June 1960

Featuring:

Len Barnard's Jazz Band, Frank Traynor's Jazz Preachers, Graeme Bell's Australian Jazz Band, Melbourne New Orleans Jazz Band, Brian Hanley's Chicago Seven and Dick Tattam's 431 Jazz Band.

19 Tracks, 72 min, 53 sec.

CD Programming — John Kennedy

Sound Restoration & Mastering — David Ward

One of the advantages of having been a jazz buff in Melbourne around the early 1950s through to 1968, was being able to attend Bob Clemens' Downbeat jazz concerts held at venues such as the Melbourne Town Hall, Wirth's Circus, Show Grounds and the Exhibition Building, almost every week. This compilation from one concert is a wonderful example of what we were able to listen to at that time.

The first seven numbers feature the Len Barnard Band with tracks such as *Mahogany Hall Stomp*, *Downbeat Blues*, *Original Dixieland One Step*, *Potato Head Blues*, *Pontchartrain* and *Ice Cream*. As a bonus, Fred Parkes on clarinet, works with the rhythm section on *Shine*. An impressive selection.

Frank Traynor's team takes the next mini segment with *Heebie Jeebies* and *Get Out Of Here*. Then Graham Coyle does a melodic interpretation of *Solitude*; always classy.

Graeme Bell's AJB teases us with an inspiring trio of numbers consisting of their intro theme of *Georgia Camp Meeting*, then *Shake It And Break It* and finally *Sister Kate* with a vocal by Roger. His mike had a failure but his vocal is picked up by the rest of the sound system — no problems; the audience loved it.

We are given 1 minute and 32 seconds of rhythm with Bud Baker on guitar and Lou Silbereisen on string bass playing *Guitar Blues* — a brief but enjoyable interlude.

We get a change of style with the Melbourne New Orleans JB. They also get three tracks, consisting of *Dauphine Street Blues*, *Steamboat Stomp* and the classic *Just a Little While to Stay Here* where Frank Turville and the boys vocalise it out.

To tag off this concert, we have Brian Hanley's Chicago Seven with a smooth *Milenberg Joys* plus Dick Tattam's 431 JB on *The Jazz Band Ball*. What a finish!

This CD will bring back many special memories for those who were able to attend these concerts, but for those who didn't or couldn't, it shows the magic music that was around at that time. Very special.

Available from the Archive Shop—see Catalogue for details.

## WAS SKIFFLE PIFFLE?

'SKIFFLE IS PIFFLE'. That statement was the heading of an article in the British music paper 'The Melody Maker' sometime in 1957. The subject was the result of a wave of folksy blues sweeping the country at that time. The origin of this phenomenon was the record of 'Rock Island Line' by Lonnie Donegan. A modest guitar, bass, washboard combination backing Lonnie's rather frantic vocal, it had merely been a track on Chris Barber's Jazz Band's 1954 LP 'New Orleans Joys'. Some eighteen months later, it was aired on a record program run by Jack Payne, erstwhile thirties band leader, by then a disc jockey [although they weren't called that in 1956]. This tune took off and within months Donegan had left the band [he was the banjo player] and followed his star on the concert halls, variety shows and a tour of the US.

Although I wasn't that enamoured of his singing, his love and knowledge of the great American blues folk tradition was never in doubt and had a bearing on the general scene that was to emerge by the late fifties. Also, his light airy banjo was an asset to the sprightly music of the early Barber recordings.

Both Donegan and Barber had been members of a cooperative band led by trumpeter Ken Colyer. He had instigated those 'skiffle' interludes into the usual band sessions, usually comprising a couple of guitars, bass and washboard with vocals by Colyer and Donegan. From memory, the article referred to, had been written by guitarist and blues authority Alexis Korner. He had appeared on some of the Colyer Skiffle recordings, but there had been a falling out as he reckoned there was too much vocalizing on them, and the original skiffle had been more instrumental music by the likes of a pianist called Dan Burley.

At that time, Korner played acoustic guitar and was a fan of Big Bill Broonzy. However by the sixties he had 'gone electric' and had a band based on the style of Muddy Waters. Their activities at venues like London's Marquee Club encouraged such as the Rolling Stones, Manfred Mann, Eric Clapton etc. to get into the blues scene.

By 1957, the skiffle scene had burgeoned out of the limited traditional jazz world into the then emerging pop scene. Groups of young hopefuls comprising three chord guitar players, assorted scrapers and rattlers, and often a home made tea chest bass, appeared from under every bush. Some recorded and appeared in concerts. Often the more successful would hire a jazz guitar player to take care of the solo work. Perhaps those worthies may choose to forget that part of their career.

Like a lot of pop fads, within a year or so the bubble had burst. Some of the participants moved into the folk scene, then coming through with the Weavers etc. or the electric blues groups based on the aforementioned Muddy Waters and people like Jimmy Cotton. Donegan and some other players appeared in pantomime and other stage productions [Stars of Stage, Screen and Labour Exchange as Spike Milligan might say]. Yet another group fell through the floor, their moment of glory over.

Barber dropped skiffle from his concerts and went on to finer things, incorporating the blues and later forms of music in his repertoire. Colyer continued to feature it in his performances, and in his gruff way said that he had invented it in Soho in 1953. A group from Manchester, the Tasse Alley Washboard Band [part of the Smokey City Stompers] claimed they played that sort of stuff in 1950. And so it went on, helping to fill the pages of the Musical Press.

In retrospect it certainly had a lasting effect on 'Do It Yourself' music-making. The sight of guitar-wielding young men became the norm. Indeed most of the names that emerged in the years following the 'skiffle' happening, [a good few are still with us] had their baptism in a skiffle group. Certainly Lennon in the Quarrymen and Clapton to name but two. Is there a connection with what now constitutes instant stardom in the 'Music Business' with those fumbling but generally harmless musical activities of half a century ago? Perhaps drawing a long bow to make a link, but if the banal sounds emanating from a session of The Australian Idol [Idle?] has a connection with those heady days of the trad clubs and frothy coffee then 'Skiffle Was Indeed Piffle'.

*Bill Brown*

We have received a letter from our sister organisation the **South Australian Jazz Archive Inc.** with whom we are affiliated. Like us, they welcome new members. For the next year they will continue on their successful path with more issues of **Back Beat**, another one or two functions to honour South Australian jazz greats, and more CDs, including an occasional release featuring those musicians who are just starting to make jazz history in their state. They can be contacted by phone (08) 8326 3795, email: [dlanod@aandr.com.au](mailto:dlanod@aandr.com.au) or you can look at their website: [www.jazz.adelaide.onau.net/sajazz\\_archive.htm](http://www.jazz.adelaide.onau.net/sajazz_archive.htm).

## RECENT DONATIONS

Donations are progressing apace with some sorting to be done. With 2 or 3 more volunteers to assist we should shorten the backlog considerably.

As from June, we will have a new Collection Manager, Mel Blachford, to do all the hard work (reports, donations, sorting) and I will be able to assist him.

Donations from 20th March - Friday 14th April, 2006  
Rebecca Barnard has given us her late father Len's washboard. Margaret Cleaver also gave us a collection of 45 rpm and 12 inch records which are still being processed. A very large jazz-related book donation from John Giltinen of Eastern FM 98.1 was sent in from the station. This was part of the late George Smith's collection. (George was the presenter of the Saturday 'Midnight to Dawn' program.) Ted Egan sent 3 sheets of photos on computer paper (per Jim Mills). Tom Wanliss brought in several jazz interview tapes. Judy Gaudion gave us 4 photos of well-known identity and guitar player, the late Mary Croagh. Tom Wanliss gave us a taped interview that Jane Shoebridge had recorded with Penny Eames. Michael McQuaid donated a copy of his latest CD of the Red Hot Rhythmakers 'Rhythm of the Day'. Margot Chalk donated several cassettes. Tom Wanliss and David Ward gave us 10 CD's of the Jazz Piano lunches at the Rosstown Hotel, and Diana Allen gave us a large box containing photos, CDs and newspaper cuttings.

*Ric Church*

Here is another contribution from Jack Mitchell which he wrote originally for the SJC's QUARTERLY RAG in 1963. He has added to it with extra information that's come to light, including photostats of contemporary Ballarat newspapers from the files of the Ballarat Historical Society, provided by Herb Jennings.

## JAZZ BAND CONTEST

FOR GROUPS OF NOT LESS THAN FIVE NOR  
MORE THAN TEN PERFORMERS

**FIRST PRIZE:** 35 pounds,  
and a gold medal for each performer  
(Gift of Allan & Co. Pty. Ltd.)

**SECOND PRIZE:** 15 pounds

Interested? Thinking of entering your group? Well you're just a little late.

The above is part of an advertisement that appeared in "The Australian Band and Orchestra News" for April, 1926. That's right, 1926. A news item in the same issue claims it to be the first contest of its kind in Australia, and who knows, they might be right.

In the brass band field, the SOUTH STREET COMPETITIONS held at Ballarat each October were even then well and truly established and indeed of world repute. In 1926, the organisers decided to run two other competitions in conjunction; a contest for orchestras and the competition for jazz bands, as advertised above. So highly regarded were these South Street Competitions, that Boosey and Hawkes were sending a representative out from London; unfortunately that year the long established brass band competition had to be cancelled for lack of entrants, but the jazz band contest remained on the agenda! Surely a breakthrough as important as the first use of the Con.! For a jazz concert!

The jazz band section was suggested by Melbourne business man Mr A. G. Barlow who donated 35 pounds towards the prize money. Obviously one jazz dag prepared to put his money where his heart was.

Eight groups entered the contest, all from Victoria (interstate travel wasn't undertaken quite so lightly in those days) but when the curtain went up only five groups faced the judge, Bert Howell. The contest was held on the night of Saturday, October 2nd, before an audience estimated at between 4000 & 5000 people. Eat your heart out, today's bandleaders!

Bert Howell was a schooled musician—a violinist, who formed his own SOCIETY JAZZ BAND in Melbourne in 1918. At the time of the contest, he was musical director at the Victory Theatre, St Kilda and in the forties led the orchestra at the Prince Edwards Theatre, Sydney. He awarded first prize to the NEW MASONIC ORCHESTRA directed by Horace Esmond, with Hamilton Johnson's Monte Carlo Orchestra second and Edward Lee and His Orchestra third. The Collegians Dance Orchestra was given an honourable mention.

Before announcing the awards, Mr Howell gave a short address in which he stated that jazz had come to stay and he hoped "the start that had been made tonight would be followed up until Australian jazz bands could command the recognition that was given to American bands today".

The personnel of this successful New Masonic Orchestra is surely worthy of recording for posterity, so here it is: Len Smith (tpt); Horace Esmond (tbn, leader); Phil Fryer (clt, Eb sax, Bb sop); J. Harney (clt, Bb sax, Bb sop); R. Thompson (p); Erle Smith (bj); E. Ellis (imperialphone!); Theo White (d).

For the contest, each group had to play a waltz, a foxtrot and a 'hot' number. The judge had these comments to make of the winning group 'Trumpet out of time in the stop chorus' - must have been in the waltz! 'Sopranos out of tune' - this was before the days of the 'near enough for jazz' gag. 'Hot number very good'. Edward Lee's group was commended for an excellent showing, despite a lack of brass instruments in the band — what price the Late Hour Boys?

Unfortunately, no gramophone records are known to exist of these particular early Australian groups but it would be unwise to dismiss them as worthless. No doubt they would sound rather corny to our enlightened ears today, but don't most of the American white groups of the twenties? The few records which do exist of Australian groups of this era show them to be equal to most of the American groups. Not those from New Orleans and Chicago, of course. Probably the smaller local combinations would have been 'jazzier' than the commercially successful groups.

Australian musicians have naturally been influenced by recordings and obviously you can't be influenced by a recording you have never heard. At the time the above-mentioned advertisement appeared, no Louis Armstrong record had been released in Australia. The Red Hot Peppers and the Chicagoans had yet to record. Jazz records available in Australia then were nearly all white "New York" style — Original Memphis Five, Mound City Blue Blowers, California Ramblers and so on. American groups led by Frank Ellis, Ray Tellier and Carol Loughner had been imported to play in Sydney and Melbourne dance halls — the predominate influence — if not the only one — must have been WHITE. So who are we to sneer if the locals didn't play New Orleans style in 1926—they had never heard of it.

There are many who still deny that any jazz musicians existed in Australia then at all. Yet, play the Palais Royal Californians' Columbia recording of "That Certain Party" unannounced and see how many experts attribute the Coughlan — Pettifer chase chorus to Mole — Rollini. This side was cut in Sydney about July, 1926 and is only one of some twenty or thirty sides cut before 1930 which demonstrate that jazz was far from unknown in this country then. If the locals played dance as well as jazz music, so what?

JAZZ BAND CONTEST Cont'd from page 5)

Nobody told them they shouldn't. And haven't you heard some of our top jazz groups play waltzes, or barn dances? I have.

In July, 1926, a Melbourne music firm is quoted as saying that there are 1600 jazz bands in Australia.

Now that sounds like a case of lumping all types of dance bands under the general heading of 'jazz', and that of course is still done by some people even today. But it is obvious that among those 1600 groups there must have been many trying to sound like Bix or Nicols, Mole or Dorsey; anxious to throw away the arrangements and strict tempos and blow as the mood took them. Australian jazz began earlier than most people realise.

To get back to Ballarat, the contest was held again the following year, but this time was listed as "Dance Orchestral Content". However a newspaper report shows that most people still regarded it as a 'jazz band' contest.

Again eight bands nominated and this time six groups fronted for the judge. Placed first was Hamilton Johnson, second Ed Lee and third George McWhinney's Caroline Band. The Erica Dance Band, led by Don Rankin, received an honourable mention. Of the winning band Howell remarked: "Ensemble playing very fine—trombone 'hot' chorus fine, trumpet 'hot' breaks etc. excellent.

The personnel of Hamilton Johnson's winning group was George Harrop trumpet, Don Binney trombone, Len Johnson & Arthur Gange reeds, Ham Johnson piano, Alf Bullen banjo, Stan Fry sousaphone and Bob Taylor drums. Many of these names remained prominent in the music world for years to come. Mention should be made of the young trombonist G. C. Turner who played in the Collegians Band in the first contest—later well known in Sydney & Auckland, as well as Melbourne as "Dutchy" Turner.

In 1928 only four bands entered, with Les James' Orchestra placed first, The Austral Orpheans conducted by R. Ballard was second.

The dance band contest seems not to have been held in 1929, probably because of the dwindling number of entrants. It was replaced by concert party/minstrel acts!

Nonetheless, jazz had a foothold in Australia. As in America, the early thirties were not as exciting musically, but with the surge of swing, people began to take a new interest in rhythm. Swing and jazz record clubs were formed where fans gathered to listen to records that EMI wouldn't issue. Frank Coughlan used to feature a dixie group for a bracket or two at the Troc. The stage was set and eventually the actors appeared; the Bells and Ade, Pickering, Dallwitz, Parkes and Flannery.

Look at 'em doing it now!

*Jack Mitchell*

**THE WINNERS OF THE PIANO KEYS LUCKY DIP DRAW FOR \$50 VOUCHERS FOR THE ARCHIVE SHOP ARE:**

No. 314	Tom Lucas
320	John Walker
324	Jean Leake
333	Frank Webster
338	Clinton Daley
352	Nicholas Blaich
358	John Yeatman
361	Jack Ricketts
367	Maggie Fitzgibbon
371	Graeme Hughes

Congratulations. We look forward to seeing you when you call to collect your prize.

**SHOP TALK**

Since the enclosed catalogue went to press we have had a couple of additions as listed below:

172	Carol Ralph - "Swinging Jazz Portrait	...	...	...	...	...	\$25.00
184	Milano Jazz Gang - "Lord You Made The Night Too Long"	...	...	...	...	...	\$25.00
236	Little Tabasco & Friends - "Foolin' Ourselves"	...	...	...	...	...	\$25.00
245	The Jazz Factory - Noosa - "All Steamed Up"	...	...	...	...	...	\$25.00
246	The Jazz Factory - Noosa - "Getting Off The Ground	...	...	...	...	...	\$25.00
248	Jazz Ramblers - "Barham Connection"	...	...	...	...	...	\$20.00
249	The High Society Jazz Band - "Daily Jazz"	...	...	...	...	...	\$20.00

THE VICTORIAN JAZZ ARCHIVE (located in Koomba Park, 15 Mountain Highway, Wantirna, Melway 63 C8)  
IS OPEN EACH TUES & FRI 10.00 AM—3.00 PM OR BY APPOINTMENT

The Victorian Jazz Archive wishes to acknowledge the support of the following organisations: The State of Victoria through the Department of Premier and Cabinet and Arts Victoria, Parks Victoria, The Ian Potter Foundation, The Myer Foundation, The Pratt Foundation, The Trust Company of Australia, The Helen McPherson Trust, Diana Allen of Jazz Australia and The Estates of the late Don Boardman and Ron Halstead.

The Archive gratefully acknowledges the financial support given to the VJA Capital Fund by Dame Elisabeth Murdoch, A.C., D.B.E.,

## FROM THE ARCHIVE

From time to time we hope to bring you copies of articles from our repository. The following is from the sizeable C. Ian Turner collection which we thought would make interesting reading.

### JAZZ NOTES by CYRIL WATTS

First met up with Haydn Britten approx. 1931. Haydn played ukulele (home made), also kazoo, whilst I vamped on piano. Our first introduction to the real jazz came from George Wallace (the comedian), who lent me a stack of discs, comprising tracks of Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Fats Waller, Cab Calloway and a few odd hot discs, names of which I can't remember. Haydn and I used to study a lot of coloured music and were ridiculed quite often by many people who thought we were mad. Our next step towards listening to jazz was a Sunday afternoon at an amateur radio station in East Richmond by the call sign of 3CB owned by Bill Sievers. I met Johnnie Parker here and began doing casual gigs almost immediately. Haydn bought an alto sax and we had many good nights together. It was Johnnie Parker who discovered Tommy Crowe and dragged me out to hear this terrific tenor sax player. It was a Sunday afternoon, and I can honestly say that at 6 o'clock that night, after such a session, our nerves had just about collapsed. Well, with this guy Crowe and Haydn on saxes, and Parker on drums, myself on ivories, we sent the jazz along in first class style. One particular job we did was at Donnybrook local hall one Sunday night. If only they'd had a recording outfit on the job. I must introduce another outstanding personality who was very instrumental in bringing my jazz education to a higher level. A non-player, by the name of Arthur (Louis) Houghton who really collected jazz discs. I call him a non-player despite the efforts to play a trombone (which was mine once) and a cornet which proved to be difficult. We met up with Val Healy about this time, and he also played sax, so with a sax trio and a two-piece rhythm section we proceeded to play at a dance at the memorial hall Albert Park, which was promoted by an old friend of mine! The band really rocked and the 'after beaters' had a picnic in all four corners of the hall, but the crowd never seemed to be thick enough to pay the band more than a couple of bob each, after expenses were met!! However, we all enjoyed it and some good jazz came out in those days. Val was the only guy who read music, and we more or less tried very hard to read also. Doug Elliott 'discovered' our band and filled us with promises of radio work and 'big time' and we accepted him as self-appointed leader?? He wielded the baton every Sunday morn at 3AW when we rehearsed and fronted the band at a few jobs we took on, but not being a musician of any description, he got on our nerves and we broke off from the j..k! Harry Meeking was playing bass with us at the time, and Harry's musical qualities were very high. Although I had known Jack Varney for some years, it was only at this stage that he did any playing with us. Another very good alto player of the gut-bucket variety was Alan Cliff, who played at various times with me. This guy was really one of the best alto men around this place and he had an 'attack' style with the fierousness (sic) of Don Redman etc. with continuous 8 in the bar phrases.

I met Don Roberts about this time and although the general opinion of Don was pretty high, I never placed it anywhere near Haydn, Alan or Crowe, at the time, but the present day Roberts on clarinet ranks just a shadow beneath Crowe I think. In those days I began to make an attempt at reading music and I used to 'ear-punish' all other non-readers to learn to read with me. The guy that really got his nose to the grindstone, about this reading, was Crowe. He and I used to sit in my studio, night after night, tenor and piano, and plough through all sorts of crotchets and quavers. After a couple of hours solid study, we just couldn't help breaking down and Tom would say 'Something slow in Ab minor' and then the jazz would arrive by the cartload!! I can honestly say that Crowe tried very hard, and found the way very hard too. On one occasion when he was playing at the 40 Club, I understand on good authority that the entire band of Jim Davidson (then on tour for the ABC) paid a visit to hear the great Crowe. The last job I played with Tom Crowe was just before I left for Sydney April 1939. Wally Norman was playing trumpet and trom and was really good, although strictly white style, similar to Berrigan. I next saw Crowe when he was with Jay Whidden at the Palais, St Kilda approx 1941. This proves that he successfully mastered the music profession both from an artistic and commercial point of view, When I went to Sydney, I didn't touch the ivories for 11 months, never heard a disk, and just about went the nearest to losing all traces and connections to music. There were numerous reasons for this lapse, and it certainly wont stop suddenly again like that!! When I returned to Melbourne I found it hard to trace anybody, the war having collected Parker, Crowe, and many others for overseas service. This reminds me that, since being in the service, I've met quite a number of very promising jazz men, also a number of good general musicians, to say nothing of some record collections. As the years progress, say the last 5 years, I have noticed that the interested people in jazz are becoming more numerous and the keenness increasing fast.

*Cy Watts*

## NEW MEMBERS

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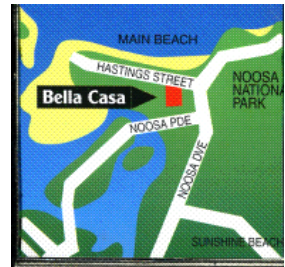
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