



VJAZZ 48  
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# VJAZZ

Proactively Collecting, Archiving and Disseminating Australian Jazz



World Wide Jazz

Denis Farrington

Stomp and Circumstance contin-  
ued

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

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## VJA Fundraiser at the Rosstown Hotel



**THE MOONEE VALLEY JAZZ BAND** really raised the roof at the VJA Fundraiser on Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> August at the Rosstown Hotel. Full of enthusiasm, when this band played hot it was *hot!*

Pianist John Morrison leads this exuberant group with Frank Stewart on reeds, Hugh DeRosario on trombone, Geoff Woods on bass, and Richard Opat on drums.

But while they can beat it out in 4:4 time, their versatile style can be sometimes quite relaxed as in their soothing rendition of *Tin Roof Blues*.

Other numbers which proved popular on the day included *Isle of Capri*, *South Rampart Street Parade*, and *What More Can I Say*. *You Are My Sunshine* elicited a sing-along, and some other popular tunes had a few couples up on the dance floor.

The appreciative audience appeared to really enjoy the day which, with the aid of a raffle and CD sales, raised \$1,500 towards maintaining the Archive.

Special thanks must be paid to Marina Pollard, who organised the event, and to those volunteer archivists whose efforts helped make the day a great success.

### Apology

The Editorial committee was concerned and embarrassed at the number of mistakes in VJAZZ 47, particularly in the article *Petite Fleur* and *A Moi De Payer* written by pianist-journalist Dick Hughes. The spelling of S(i)dney Bechet, and his wife Eli(s)abeth was incorrect throughout the article.

We sincerely apologise to Dick Hughes and we have taken steps to ensure similar mistakes don't happen again.

Please check our web site for the corrected version.

Graeme Bell celebrated his 96th Birthday this year on September 7th.

Our very best wishes Graeme.



### Contents

VJA Fundraiser at the Rosstown Hotel	2
Denis Farrington. A Retrospective	3
From the Archive	3
Deep in the Archive	4
Letters to the Editor	5
Behind the Scenes at the Archive	5
Stomp and Circumstance	6
New VJazz CD from the Victorian jazz Archive	8
The Information Pack	8
Jazzart Collection	9
World Wide Jazz	9
Let's Talk Jazz	10
From the Library	11
Did You Know?	11

#### Front Cover

Background: Lesley McGee

Image: Bill Howard (trombone) An original member of the Red Onion Jazz Band. Photograph taken at the Eureka Jazz Festival 1993. (Jack Ricketts Collection)

# Denis Farrington

## A Retrospective

By Ken Simpson-Bull

WHEN Melbourne's ageless dance-band director Denis Farrington and his orchestra rose from the depths of the stage pit of the fully refurbished Regent Theatre in 1997 it was like stepping back to the 1920s and 30s.

The orchestra (accompanied by Tony Fenelon on the Wurlitzer organ) was there to provide a prelude to a fully restored print of *My Fair Lady* in the way that bands had done in select cinemas up until the late 1940s. Denis, who had performed this act in earlier years, must have felt exuberant. Fortunately he was able to continue to entertain audiences for another ten years until, sadly, he died at age 87.

The Victorian Jazz Archive is privileged to have received some objects of memorabilia from his estate, particularly an immense library of musical arrangements that Denis had used since the beginning of his professional musical career back in the mid-thirties.

Denis Farrington was born in 1920 in Tallangatta in Victoria. His early days were spent on a dairy farm before the family later moved to St. Kilda.

Swimming had always been a great pastime for him—in 1935 he was the Victorian Junior Swimming Champion. In fact his skills in this sport led to selection for the Olympic Games in Berlin. Unfortunately the war put an end to his swimming pursuits.

His other interest was music. He learned to play trumpet, later switching to drums, and moved from a brass band to local dance bands such as The Blue Moon Band and Mary Chuck's.

Denis joined the Army's 20th Light Horse Company and, during World War 2, he entertained the troops, directing a band and participating in fund-raising functions.

Just prior to the war however, Denis had served an apprenticeship as a barber and opened a barber shop in Acland Street St. Kilda. At the war's conclusion he decided that music was to be his only career.

Because of the huge popularity of dancing from the mid 1940s, Denis and his (usually six-piece) band were in great demand and he travelled almost everywhere—particularly throughout the Riverina and the Western District.

The demand for his dance band became so great that he formed another, then another until by 1958 he was actually

*“... actually running 40 bands ...”*

running forty bands. Aware of his personal popularity he would dash around trying to put in an appearance at every event. He played at weddings, birthday parties, social clubs, and charities—he was truly ubiquitous.

Suddenly, in the mid fifties, conventional dance-band music became *passé* as a result of the newly-founded Rock 'n' Roll craze. Television also helped kill off the local suburban dance.

Nevertheless, Denis still found work and was filling engagements right up to the very end. In 1996 he was awarded the Order of Australia medal.

His long career saw him playing at Government House for special occasions, work in television, an association with the Tivoli Theatre, charity drives, orchestrating—there seemed to be nothing he didn't do.

However, one searches hard to find commercial recordings of his performances. His only “starring role” appears to have been on a Lyric CD, when he played drums with Freddy Thomas, Alan Knight, and Patti Lewis. But he was among the personnel at various times in recordings by Ade Monsborough,



**Denis Farrington photographed in 2003**

Cy Watts, Jack Varney, Reg George and others.

Denis was always a generous man. Vlado Gregurek of Vlados, Melbourne's famous steak house said, “I was lucky to come to Melbourne in 1959. Denis had faith in me and gave me 500 bucks, just like that, and said to me just give it back when you're ready.”

When musician Leo Rosner arrived in Australia in 1949 he met Denis Farrington. “Denis really helped me a lot,” he said. “I got lots of work.”

Denis battled prostate cancer for the last few years of his life but remained the cheery soul he had always been. Those who met him will always remember his amiable, ready-to-please personality. He will remain a legend in Melbourne's history.

## FROM THE ARCHIVE

SEVERAL items of significance have been received from the estate of the late Roy Blackston, drummer for many years with the Don Harper band.

**Roy Blackston** was born in Melbourne in 1916, took up drums in high school, and joined the well-known Don Harper orchestra and Don's smaller groups in 1941.

**Don Harper**, born in 1921, also in Melbourne, studied violin from the age of nine and became Australia's leading exponent of the jazz violin (he also played saxophone). He was well-known as band leader at the St. Kilda Town Hall from 1945 until 1955 when he left for England. There he became most successful as a performer and composer.

The Archive has received some early LP recordings of the Harper groups as well as some previously unreleased acetate discs from the 1950s. They make great listening—so much so that it is hoped to produce a CD compilation on the VJazz label for release later in the year.

## Deep in the Archive



**Benny Featherstone Band, Rex Cabaret, 1934.**

Unknown (trombone) Frank Lobb (bass) Mick Gardiner (trumpet) Bill Dardis (piano) Marjorie Stedeford (vocal) Alec Ferrier (drums) Benny Featherstone (leader) Vin McCarthy (alto) unknown (tenor). (Mike Sutcliffe Collection)

### **Geoffrey Benjamin (Benny) Featherstone 30.7.1912 - 6.4.1977**

Benny was born at Brown's Creek near Kingston, Tasmania. A self-taught musician on a range of instruments including trumpet, trombone, saxophone, (alto, soprano, baritone) bass, tuba, drums, piano, tin whistle and washboard.

In 1932 he was billed as *Australia's Louis Armstrong*. Benny met Louis and Duke Ellington during a trip to England in 1933. According to Bruce Johnson in the *The Oxford Companion To Australian Jazz*, "He remains one of the most fascinating and gifted musicians in the history of Australian jazz."

We would be grateful if anyone could identify any of the unknown musicians mentioned.



**Don Rankin Band, Glaciarium, 1939.**

Albert Symons (trumpet) Syd French (tenor) Benny Featherstone (drums) Don Rankin (alto) Bert Cooper (piano).



**Don Rankin Band, 40 Club, 1940.**

Norm Wright (piano) Max Blake (vocal) Don Jordan (bass) Don Rankin (clarinet) Benny Featherstone (drums) Fred Thomas (trumpet) Syd French (tenor) Alan Wood (trumpet) George Dudley (alto) Ken Coburn (trombone).

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

## Letters to the Editor

It was great to see the article on Wes Brown by Ken Simpson-Bull in the last issue. Wes is not only a good bloke, but a very good drummer. His timing is always spot-on, and at 87 he is still playing well, a remarkable effort. I know all about that because I'm 80 myself.

I met Wes for the first time at the Collingwood Town Hall in 1949. My mates and I were music students and we helped to pack the small hall at the rear of the building to listen to the Frank Johnson band, a very exciting band which was kicked along by a great rhythm section led by Wes Brown on drums, Geoff Bland on piano, Jack Connelly on string and brass bass and Bill Tope on banjo.

After a while we got to know the members of the band. I had been playing for about 5 months when I was asked to fill in for Warwick Dyer one Friday night at their other gig at the Masonic Hall. I was very nervous, and Frank had asked me to write down the tunes I could get through. The guys were all very encouraging, Wes and Geoff Kitchen in particular. They were desperate because they couldn't get anyone else.

Wes and I met now and again through the years, but it wasn't until we were playing with the Maple Leaf band in the 80s that we discovered that we had some things in common. We were huge admirers of the Bob Crosby band and the Bobcats and drummer Ray Bauduc. I think the Crosby band was one of the best Dixieland bands of all time—they had great soloists, they sounded great and they swung like mad. We also discovered that Wes knew my cousin, motorbike champ Colin Heaton. I hear that Wes is playing tenor horn in the Stonnington Band and drums with the Stompers. He's like fine wine, improving with age. I last played with Wes on the Maple Leaf reunion day and he's still playing as well as ever, good on ya Wes.

**Harry Price.**

### Email...

Received **VJAZZ 47** on Tuesday and was most impressed with the publication. Yes, I was thoroughly disgusted with the comments of one-less-than-honourable Harry. M. Miller on his comments regarding the alleged use of 'cocaine' by Louis Armstrong.

**Les and Patricia Cooper**

## Behind the Scenes at the Archive

Edited by Mel Forbes

(excerpts from the General Manager's September newsletter to VJA Volunteers)

### Replacement Computer Server

The Victorian Jazz Archive is actually an accredited museum, and its broad variety of functions associated with cataloguing, storage, information sharing and administration are supported by a network of computers. The VJA computer network has grown from 7 computers to over a dozen in the past 5 years, and this, coupled with a vast increase in the amount of information which needs to be processed and stored on-line, has led to the need for an upgrade to the network file server. We purchased and installed a new server in the latter part of September, and we now expect our upgraded network to meet our needs for some years to come.

### New Equipment

Over the past few months VJA's Board of Management has approved the purchase of additional equipment to enhance our operations, including:

Poster frames - size A00 to streamline setting up of exhibitions/displays in the R.D. Marginson Library.

**Zoom H4** digital audio recorder for recording exhibition openings, musician interviews, meetings, group tour musical soirées, impromptu performances in the library, etc.

**Dell Overhead Data Projector** for upgrading our display and training capabilities

**TEAC 32"** flat screen HDMI TV with DVD player for improved display of digital audio-visual material.

**Peavey Public Address system** with two separate speakers on telescopic stands and a boom microphone for inside and outside use.

All of this equipment was funded by grants, or gifts from individuals, and installation was carried out entirely by our Volunteers

### Construction

Some minor building construction work, associated with the Sam Meerkin room, will result in the Archive being closed for normal business for the week of Monday October 18.

A new, electronically-controlled, sliding security gate controlling access to the Archive will be installed during October.

### Strategic Planning

Earlier this year groups of our Volunteers participated in brainstorming sessions which led to clarification of our mission of "Proactively Collecting, Archiving & Disseminating Australian Jazz". As a follow-on, implementation teams associated with the Collecting, Archiving, and Disseminating (Marketing) components of our Mission are now in place, under the

guidance of one of our Volunteers with a career background in process facilitation.

### Donation of Material

The Archive has always relied on donations of material in order to build its collection, and such donations will continue to be of vital importance. We recently received a huge collection of over 2,000 CDs, LP records and books from the late Dr Stephen Rosen.

### Fundraiser

In addition to grants, gifts and recording sales, the VJA derives income from fundraising concerts featuring local jazz bands. Two recent fundraisers, in May and August, brought in around \$5,000. Please help to support your Archive by coming to future VJA fundraisers.

### Personal Thanks from the

#### General Manager

"I would like to pay a tribute to Gretel James who resigned from the Editorial Committee in March this year. Gretel has been a volunteer at the Archive since being invited by my predecessor John Kennedy to take over as secretary in 2001. As well as holding this position she soon took over as newsletter editor and also membership administrator. Gretel had previously been Editor of the Victorian Jazz Club's monthly newsletter publication - a post she held for 12 years and for which she was awarded an Honorary Life Membership of that organization.

Gretel's knowledge of the jazz scene and its people in Melbourne is legendary and she was able to draw on this knowledge for many stories and anecdotes to publish.

On behalf of the Board of Management, and myself in particular, I sincerely thank Gretel for her unswerving and continuing dedication to the Archive and its precepts, and for the enormous amount of work associated with researching and publishing the VJAZZ newsletter for many years - even getting her son Tony to design the current masthead. I believe without those significant middle days of the newsletter the VJA would not be as widely known and respected as it is today, and for this I say a very big thank you to Gretel James. A job well done indeed!

### Annual General Meeting (AGM)

The VJA's **2010 AGM** will be held on **Sunday, 14<sup>th</sup> November** - in the Archive's R.D. Marginson Library commencing at **11:30am**, and will be followed by a BBQ luncheon. As members of the VJA, this is your Archive and I would encourage you to be present if you can possibly do so. The VJA will provide salads and bread only, so please ensure you bring your own meat, etc for cooking on the BBQ - and liquid refreshments. Please also bring tables, chairs, etc. If the weather is inclement, we will use the Library in a similar way to our group visits.

# STOMP and CIRCUMSTANCE

## Graeme Davies' Life in Music

**PART ONE** continued from VJAZZ 47

The 'Regal Jazz Club' was a reasonable success with Kellock on trombone, Davies on clarinet, Hawes on cornet with Peter Hocking drums, who'd sat next to John Hawes at Scotch College well before he took up trumpet. The rest may be lost to history.

The very first practice band met around the corner from my place at pianist Max Reed's place. John would make his way down from Bayswater, drummer Peter Barker's English dad would drive him from origins unknown, and the bass player? Copious cups of tea in china cups were provided by Mrs Reed, we drank beer and sherry in my mum's Austin 10 afterwards. Max and Peter decided to form The Max Reed Trio with Paul Veith on double bass, there were no hard feelings and when we became more successful, the trio played in between our band sets and became quite popular in their own right, Allan Smith having replaced Peter Barker on drums. Max, who always kept his thoughts to himself, sold his MGA and moved to England permanently in the seventies, and disappeared.

John Hawes and I would go to watch his brother Jeff at *The 431 Club* in St Kilda Road on Saturday nights and agreed on two major points, we hated 'two beats to the bar' tubas and that the 'old boys' played too slowly. Things were changing, dancers wanted to do 'The Cakewalk' and their own form of jive. The barn dance was finished we declared. Kellock decided that trombone wasn't for him and finding a suitable player was proving difficult.

I was learning 'ensemble playing' and C Seventh Stomps from Ade Monseborough at Bob Clemens' shop in Little Collins Street where there were plenty of clarinetists, Jeremy Salt and Ray Rickerby amongst them. *Rickerby plays much better than I do*, I thought, and after hearing the amazing Dennis Ball, I switched to Kellock's trombone. Ade continued to teach me 'harmony' but I couldn't relate to lots of his music and still haven't. Years later he heard me playing tenor sax and wandered off shaking his head and saying, "I should've known, I should've known."

Around the same time, in the 80s I think, Frank Traynor took me aside at

Bob Walton's *Dick Whittington Hotel* and told me how much he'd liked my trombone playing. Confusing stuff indeed! Suddenly we had a front line and, with banjoist Peter Ransom, the start of a rhythm section. Drummer David McCallum appeared as did pianist Doug Surman. (*bassists were also hard to find*) so the group started to play in people's homes and at parties. School mate Hamish Hughes had become a radio announcer and was living in Burnie Tasmania so, when we had some initial success, we made him an offer he couldn't refuse. "Come back and we'll buy you a bass and guarantee at least two gigs a week," I offered. The average weekly wage was ten pounds and we were earning twenty four. He agreed.

Ransom had his own musical ideas and stormed out in the middle of our first paying gig. We met Jeff Thomas soon after and the sound we wanted was almost there. The piano had to go! This made the difference, it gave us that pumping English trad sound, the audiences loved it and, from *The Purple Eye* we spread throughout the suburbs like wildfire.

The band supported Sonny Terry and Brownie McGee on their first Australian tour at Melbourne Town Hall. Backstage, Sonny showed me a few of his tricks on blues harmonica and I was hooked for life. I was probably the first recorded blues harp player in town though, being on a jazz LP it wasn't noticed by the fledgling blues fraternity. Years later, in 2009, I started teaching blues harp for the first time, a great learning experience for both me and the students. I've been asked to do it again in 2010. Thanks Sonny.

At this stage I changed day jobs, landing a position in Coburg doing payroll and costing. The company made kitchen sinks and urinals. My boss was Terry Clark, a budding mathematical genius who, at 18, already had a child and could add faster than the office calculator. Amazing!! He also happened to play first rate piano with several of Melbourne's top rock bands, including *Harold Frith's Thunderbirds*. So there we were, each in a leading Melbourne band, Terry with the rockers, me with the jazzers. In fact some of the Saturday night crowd from *The Thunderbird's* at Moonee Ponds Town Hall used to come around the corner to *Jazz Junction (our dance club)*, intent on belting up jazz 'poofahs'. Harold confessed recently that he used to sneak off after some *Thunderbirds* gigs to play jazz with Allan 'Sny' Chambers *Paralytic Seven*. Terry and Harold re-appear later in this story.

There were no night-time drinking venues in those days so we nearly always

carried a couple of hip flasks of brandy, it mixed well with coca-cola and could be consumed on-stage without any problems. Then there was the after-gig pursuit of sustenance usually St Kilda's *Taiping Café* dim sim's, depending on where the gig had been. It was part-owned by jazz clarinetist George Wong Tack. To this day musicians who've moved here from Interstate just don't understand why Melbourne jazz musicians have a life-long fascination for quality dim sims.

The Hawes Band was a feature of the 1963 Melbourne Jazz Convention at Kew which, unbeknown to us, was recorded. A live concert from that Convention is now part of a 42 track double CD "*The Missing Tapes*" released in 2010 which contains everything we recorded.

### PART TWO

Marriage intervened in December 1966 bringing the inevitable joys and heartaches and I retired from music for three years in a bid to go "straight". This was the accepted norm at the time, the assumption being that if you were in a band, then there were girls and ... However the stifled creative urge was making me miserable, moody and a bit lost. By chance I met trumpeter/guitarist Bob Paul one Saturday morning at Northland Shopping Centre. We had a brief chat and exchanged phone numbers. I'd told him I was messing around with an electric bass and playing it along with "*Music to Midnight*", the iconic ABC radio jazz show at the time. Weeks later he arrived at my house very early on a Sunday morning shouting, "How the f..k do I get into this place?" (it was of an unusual design).

Would I do a gig at *The Meadow Inn* Broadmeadows with him and newly arrived Adelaide pianist Kingsley Dignum? I told him I only had my original clarinet and he said, "No good, you need to play saxophone. You can't afford it?" "No," I replied, "got a new baby and my wife's not working!" "No problem," Bob said, "let's go to Brashes, we'll find one, I'll personally guarantee a loan for you." He did! I selected one of two recommended by the erstwhile salesman, probably trumpeter Paddy Fitzallan, and went home with my first tenor saxophone.

"Erhh, there's just one other thing," Bob mumbled, "you gotta sing." *Bloody Hell never done it. Hawes had always done the singing* and now in my mid-twenties I still thought that playing was more important than singing. So, I picked a Bacharach tune, "*What do you do when you fall in Love?*" I spent weeks practicing, did a very shaky version on the night and suddenly found that I liked singing! I owe Bob Paul a huge debt which I can't repay as he was

killed in a bizarre road accident in West Heidelberg around 1972.

### PART THREE

The little band hadn't gotten much work after the initial residency and we'd only stayed in loose contact. I got a surprise call from former *Brian Hanley Chicago Seven* member, Brendan Hanley, who was forming a band called "Phoenix" from the ashes of his *Gingerbread Revue*, of which Hamish Hughes had been a member. Would I join, play tenor sax and sing harmonies? "Course I would. There's only one catch", (yet again) said Brendan. "You'll need to play flute. Still struggling with a one-income household?" "No problem, we'll buy one and you can pay us back from the gigs." Cool! So back to my original sax teacher Alec Doherty to learn flute.

*Phoenix* was a very professional group and I loved singing the harmony stuff. Brendan was doing his folk-rock thing to perfection and we applied to tour Vietnam for The United States Forces. It was looking very likely when Brendan suddenly decided to buy a restaurant, *The Little Reata*. Former *Ram Jam Big Band* trumpeter Mike Edwards joined the group as singer/guitarist with his wife Lorraine as a dancer. We got the contract!

Our electric bassist Gus Rickard successfully took over the business side and drummer Duncan McQueen was a great asset. We advertised and found soul singer Joy Carroll who was so funky we called her 'Max' after Max Merrit. She'd toured Vietnam already for The Australian Forces and was a huge help with all the domestic and bureaucratic stuff and bingo, we had it all!. We took off from the old Essendon Airport straight to Manila and spent a most enjoyable two weeks there waiting for our Vietnamese visas.

Vietnam showed us that we needed to work hard with as much energy as possible, the Americans demanded no less than this. I'd always done the 20 minutes on 10 minutes off sets, the Aussie Union and old time dancing influenced approach, and now a 50-minute set in 85% humidity became *de riguer*. I loved it and I still do a one-hour set to start a gig if I can.

### PART FOUR

Six months later I arrived back, looked at gum trees for a week and then got a call to join Dave Rankin's band at The Lemon Tree. I came up with "The Rank'n'File" name and everybody loved it. There were Tequilas, Pink Champagnes, Estonian Brandy Boosters, Fluffy Ducks and some Very Fluffy Chicks. Tom Cowburn (electric bass) with his fabulous vocals was like a

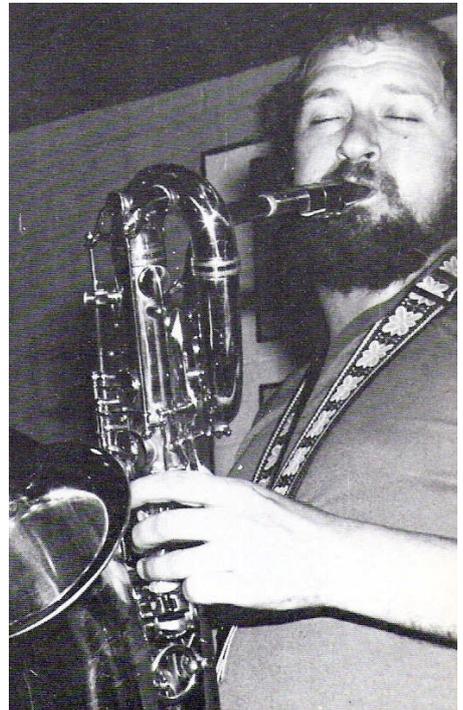
rooster amongst them. I often wonder where they all are now. Master Chef Ian 'Huey' Hewitson, who had just arrived from New Zealand ran the restaurant and plied us with some sensational selections *après* gig. The band comprised Ron Sedgeman piano, Ian Orr trumpet, Glenn Bayliss drums, me on tenor and baritone sax and flute with blues harmonica plus, of course, Rankin on trombone, risqué vocals, narrations and bad jokes. We nearly broke up when Glenn Bayliss' wife won Tattsлото, bought him a new Kingswood wagon, and bugged off. Ian Orr met his future wife Jinx there, my sister Helen met her future husband Peter and I met more than I bargained for!!!

We managed to record an LP at the time, with us on one side and Owen Yateman's band on the other. I'm looking at putting it on CD this year (2010) along with a couple of our singles and some live tapes from a *Rank'n'File Monsalvat* concert in the early 90s, courtesy of Yatey's long-time drummer, Ian Coots. The Lemon Tree gig was Melbourne's first Saturday arvo dedicated funk-jazz venue and rolled along nicely 'til 1975 when the publicans wanted more of the take (you couldn't move in there) and it all came to a sticky end for the *Rank'n'File*. Geelong's Owen Yateman got the gig. "Would I join his band on Saturday afternoons?" 'Course I would and guess what, I've worked out the perfect band name for the band? "*The Big Fat Brarse*". Again they loved the name. In the middle of all this, legendary trumpeter Keith Hounslow asked me to join his *Five Easy Pieces*, a great quintet with Tony Gould piano, Murray Wall double bass, drums tuba and your writer on baritone sax and harmonica.

It looked quite ludicrous, the huge baritone sax beside Keith with his ten inch long pocket trumpet! I used to play *St Thomas* on penny whistle just to even the score. The group played the 1978 Sydney Festival and some other appearances until Keith got 'the call' from Frank Traynor asking him to replace Peter Gaudion who was leaving his Jazz Preachers to buy a pub *The Pink Vic*. End of that story!!!

I was at *The Lemon Tree* until the end of Saturday afternoons in 1980 but continued to play with Owen on Monday nights at Geelong's Valley Inn. Some nights we'd go home aching with laughter as 'Yatey' laid on his special brand of humour sometimes using nicknames to avoid libel and slander 'Captain *Arsepaper*' featured regularly along with asides such as "a small titter ran through the audience... there she goes now" as he cast his gaze at some unfortunate young lady making her way to the loo.

I'd meet guitarist Vince Rusciano on the way to Geelong, in Kensington, jumping into the back seat of his old Mercedes, sleeping 'til we got to Geelong, playing the gig then doing the same on the way back. Exciting company? John Hawes and I were in and out of *The Big Fat Brarse* for almost 25 years. Owen left us in January 1998 at the place he loved most, Torquay Beach.



Graeme Davies 1978

### PART FIVE

Somehow I finished up playing at The Hell's Angels "*Broadford 83*" with a country music band and got spotted by *The Jivers*, a *do-whop-sh-whop* group with two female vocalists, two guitarist/singers plus bass and drums. Would I play tenor with them? "Sure, why not." During the next couple of years I learnt lots about 40s and 50s black music until being a seven-piece group, we fizzled out.

I bought a little beach house at Mogg's Creek and thought, *this is it then, I'll retire from music, too hard, too old, too square. Forget it!!!* The beach house burned down in the 1983 bushfires!

So, back to the big city, I met pianist and gentleman Roger Hudson, joined his band and finished up playing several nights a week at *The Pink Vic* with singer/entertainer Mona Richardson, trumpeter Bobby McGee and drummer John Hennessy, my favourite brush player, until mid '86 when Roger left us far too early, followed mysteriously, not long after, by Mona.

To be continued

## New VJazz CDs

### Jazzart Collection Volumes 1 and 2

#### “The Traditionalists”

THE ARCHIVE has released the first two of its proposed five-volume CD set of the complete **Jazzart** record catalogue. These first two volumes cover the Australian traditional Dixieland-style bands of the period 1948 to 1953.

**Volume 1** features the bands of Len Barnard, the Southern Jazz Group, and Lazy Ade Monsborough. Its 24 tracks, painstakingly restored from the original discs, include such titles as *Mr Jelly Lord*, *1919 March*, *Cushion Foot Stomp*, and *Dixie Jazz-band One Step*.

**Volume 2** is a two-CD set—for the price of one—and features the bands of Cy Watts and Frank Johnson. With a total of 30 tracks this volume includes *Miss Annabelle Lee*, *Mississippi Mud*, *I'm Looking over a Four Leaf Clover*, and *Indiana*.

**The Jazzart Label** was the creation of Melbourne's Bob Clemens who was best known as a music store proprietor and entrepreneur, responsible for organising the famous Melbourne Town Hall Downbeat concerts.

Aware that Australian jazz musicians were not being recorded to any large extent by the big record companies, Bob launched his ambitious and successful recording enterprise. Beginning in February 1948 there were a total of forty-two 78rpm discs and three LPs produced over the following five years. Because of the limited distribution that these discs had, today many are quite rare indeed.

**Soon to follow** the VJA's initial release will be **Volumes 3, 4 and 5** which will feature “**The Progressives**” whose bands include Jack Brokensha, Errol Buddle, Ron Gowan, Bruce Clarke, Don Harper, Rex Stewart, Ron Loughhead, Don Banks and Splinter Reeves.

For anyone wishing to experience or re-live the sounds of (mainly) Melbourne's jazz scene in the late forties—early fifties, then we recommend that you purchase the complete set, or alternatively just choose your favourite.

The CDs may be purchased on-line through the VJA web-site or at the VJA shop at the Archive's Wantirna premises. Telephone purchases can also be arranged.



### The Information Pack

This beautiful information pack about the VJA, designed by our Graphic designer Lesley McGee, is now available for the promotion of VJA activities.

Contact Mavis Pickering for further information.

# JAZZART COLLECTION

## Volume 1 The Traditionalists 1

### CD Reviewed by Ron Jobe

THIS CD from the VJA features the bands of Len Barnard, the Southern Jazz Group, and Lazy Ade Monsborough in the period 1949 to 1953. It is a compilation of traditional Jazz featuring many of our Jazz greats with arrangements as tight as any I have heard.

With front-line musicians of the calibre of Bob Barnard, Titch Bray, Frank Traynor, Dave Dallwitz and Ade Monsborough it's what you would expect. The back-line or engine-room, without individualising, were the cream of their day and hold everything together enthusiastically.

There are 24 toe-tapping tracks ranging from compositions by Clarence Williams, King Oliver, Louis Armstrong, Kid Oliver, Bob Barnard, Dave Dallwitz and Ade Monsborough to classic traditional standards.

Apart from the musical history that is on this disc, Bob Barnard, on his first recording for Jazzart on 24<sup>th</sup> November 1949, celebrated his 16<sup>th</sup> birthday—an auspicious start.

Another bonus on this disc is Len Barnard on piano, a musician like others who had many instruments to their bow.

The last four tracks, recorded in January 1950, the Southern Jazz Group and Ade Monsborough, with Lew Fisher on piano, feature their only contribution to the Jazzart label. "Passion Rag" and "Race Track Rag" were composed by Dave Dallwitz while "Stomp It Around" and "Tell the Boys" were by Ade Monsborough. I would have liked to have heard more of this music.

In all, the disc represents a very pleasurable 77½ minutes of music. Much of the credit for these important historic recordings must go to Bob Clemens who initiated the Jazzart label in February 1948.

The "JAZZART COLLECTION Volume 1 – The Traditionalists 1" is available from the VJA shop or online at their web site.



# WORLD WIDE JAZZ

## by Bill Brown

In 1995 I responded to a letter in the British Jazz magazine "Jazz Journal". This was from a gentleman in the UK who ran a group he called WORLD WIDE JAZZ TAPES (W.W.J.T.). It had been running since the early sixties and involved a sort of *round robin* swapping of Jazz music among like-minded Jazz collectors. The operation originally involved reel-to-reel tapes but in the seventies the advent of cassette no doubt made things easier.

As I was already involved with exchanging music and chat with other fellow devotees, I sent off a sample music/chat tape to Tony the chap in question. I must have passed muster as I was welcomed into the circle. At that time there were about ten or twelve members scattered around the globe. There were six in the UK, one in Canada, one in New Zealand, a couple in the US and one in Thailand, the latter none other than Laurie Gooding, expatriate Australian clarinet player.

### "The Music Goes Round and Round"

When the box came to me there would be, say five or six cassettes. Each member would put their program on one side of a C90 cassette which had their name on it. Next time round you would do your program on the same one erasing the previous program. You could pick any theme, Australian Jazz, piano Jazz, you name it, or you could just go through your collection at random or maybe air some recent purchases, CDs or vinyl. You also listened to the other guys' offerings making appropriate comments discreetly of course. When I did a program of Australian Jazz I think it opened a few ears in the States as they didn't know much about our scene here. When I had listened to everything and contributed my program I'd usually send the box off to Laurie Gooding. He and I exchanged letters and a one-to-one swap idea was mooted; sadly his health wasn't good and it never came to pass.

After a year or so things went into limbo as Tony and another longtime member in the UK died within months of each other. However, Alf, a South African now resident in England, picked up the reins and we were in business again. Quite a few including Laurie dropped out at this juncture but new members joined.

Two boxes were brought into play with one going round the World in clockwise direction the other anti-clockwise so to speak. Thus one comes to me from the UK the other from the US.

There has of course been the occasional hiccup. Sometimes someone will erase the wrong program, wiping out another person's presentation; there have been the inevitable tape snarls etc., but on the whole the operation has run smoothly. Obviously with ten or so people there is a wide diversity of tastes in the music put down but I've learned to have wide ears in Jazz and I think it pays off. There is the odd complaint if somebody's microphone wasn't working well. One chap's voice was so faint that you had to turn up your volume to hear him. But, on the other hand, sometimes you had to adjust the level smartly when the music started or you were blasted out of your chair. Another fellow who loved piano music and put down some great stuff had a turntable with a noticeable rumble; gnashing of teeth all round. Yet another fellow used to forget to turn off or unplug his microphone when he'd played his music. This meant that certain extraneous noises off air were in evidence, e.g. shuffling papers, his creaking chair. As he seemed to have, like me, a small microphone that attaches to your shirt front one could detect the various sounds of his recent meal being digested—off-putting to say the least for a Coleman Hawkins solo, having to compete with meat and two veg on its journey on the duodenal trail. At present there are ten members. A few have died, others dropped out for various reasons, but recently we acquired some new blood. One guy, resident in the Bronx, now concentrates solely on CDs and sold his vinyl collection to the Bix Eiben organization in Germany, a group with which the Archive has been involved.

Throughout the years the friendship and camaraderie in the circle have been constant. I've always found that 'Jazzers' are willing to help and share knowledge of the music with others. Although I have only met two of the fellows in person over those fifteen years, I feel close to them and value their friendship. They were all very supportive from afar during my wife's final illness. There have inevitably been the instances of black humour on occasion. Some time before I joined, the box of cassettes arrived at the home of a collector of note resident in Durban, South Africa, at the time of his death. A suitable card of sympathy was sent from the group with the P.S. "Could we have the box of tapes back?" In the midst of death we are in life or something. Good to see they got their priorities right.

## Let's Talk Jazz

Look who is talking at the opening of the exhibition, *VJA's tribute to the Red Onion Jazz Band* held on Saturday August the seventh.

Ron Holland, Ron Howard, Anne Beilby

Below: Allan Browne, Brett Iggulden

Below opposite: David Gurry, Brett Iggulden, Roger Beilby



Below:  
John Kelly trying out Ade Monsborough's plastic saxophone.



Visiting the exhibition:  
John Pye, John Farmer,  
Lyn Wallis.



## FROM THE LIBRARY

### The Story of the Original Dixieland Jazz Band

By H. O. Brunn

Reviewed by Ken Simpson-Bull

THE VJA is fortunate to have in its library this informative book by H. O. Brunn on the origin and career of the Original Dixieland Jazz Band. Written in 1961 this places it nearer the original events than modern writers and gives a fascinating account of the early days of jazz.

Brunn makes the claim that the ODJB was the first to popularise the then radical new music, the first to increase its spread by means of phonograph records, and were more than entitled to their billing "The Creators of Jazz".

Fine claims indeed. Yet this book incorporates the inputs of leading jazz musicians and historians of the period. Brunn further claims that when the embryo ODJB, not yet known by that name, opened at Schiller's Café in Chicago in March, 1916, a member of the audience yelled, "Jass it up, boys." Brunn continues: Jass was part of the licentious vocabulary of the Chicago under-world which, like many four-letter obscene words, had been applied to anything and everything. The next night the words "Stein's Dixieland Jass Band" were emblazoned across the front of Schiller's Café. Chicagoans then had a word for the yet un-named music that had grown out of ragtime.

This Dixieland band that had come from New Orleans was a group of five white self-taught musicians still experimenting with technique. Their outstanding feature was counterpoint. The cornet played melody but left gaps which were filled by the clarinet and complemented by the trombone. The drums maintained a steady foundation while the piano added the finishing touches.

Nick La Rocca as the cornetist called the shots, determined the melody, the key, the stops and starts, and was thus captain of the band.

Brunn goes on to describe, in well researched detail, the band's instant local success and its path to international fame, as well as its demise by 1925. But details of the unexpected and successful revival of the band in 1936, albeit for only two years, are also covered. Those interested in the early days of jazz will find this book a wealth of information as well as an extremely good read.

The Story of **THE ORIGINAL DIXIELAND JAZZ BAND** is available for study or for loan from the Jilly Ward library at the VJA in Wantirna.

## DID YOU KNOW?

**LENA HORNE**, who passed away this year at age 93, is best remembered by many for her sultry singing, glued to a column, in those glitzy MGM musicals of the 1950s. But did you know that she toured with Noble Sissle's famous band in 1935 and 36, with Charlie Barnet in 1940 and 41, recorded with jazz luminaries like Henry (Red) Allen, J.C. Higginbotham, Benny Carter and Teddy Wilson, and sang with the bands of Duke Ellington and Cab Calloway

**JAZZ MUSICIANS** are often known for their enjoyment of a strong drink or two, but Duke Ellington would never allow any member of his band to drink during a performance.

**Bruce Gray** August 1926 -- May 2010  
Please refer to our web site for the full tribute.

### VJAZZ

No 48 November 2010

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## TOUR GUIDES

Do you have spare time, a pleasant personality, enjoy communicating and meeting people?

The Archive is looking for you to assist us in joining our team of Tour Guides.

A training period of one day a week for six weeks would be required; then one or occasionally two days a month. Join a fun and happy team of volunteers all with the purpose of preserving the history of Jazz.

Direct all interested enquiries to our Tour Guide Co-ordinator :  
Marina Pollard 9781 4972

### Do you want to join a tour of the VJA, and relax with refresh- ments and live Jazz?

You could join the following  
Group Visits booked in between  
October 2010 and June 2011

October 17th Sunday

\* Tour 1.30pm, Music 2.15,  
Afternoon Tea 3pm.

November 19th Friday  
Tour 10 am, Music 10.45,  
Morning Tea 11.30.

November 23rd Tuesday  
Tour 10 am, Music 10.45,  
Morning Tea 11.30.

February 15th Tuesday  
Tour 10am, Music 10.45,  
Morning Tea 11.30

February 22nd Tuesday  
Tour 10am, Music 10.45,  
Morning Tea 11.30

March 2nd Wednesday  
Tour 10am, Music 10.45,  
Morning Tea 11.30

May 26th Thursday  
Tour 1.30pm, Music 2.15,  
Afternoon Tea 3pm.

June 14th Tuesday  
Tour 10.30, Music 11.15,  
Morning Tea 12 noon

\* NB. Time Change

For information and booking  
contact  
Marina 9781 4972

**We welcome New Members:**

Janet Arndt, Nicholas James Aslanides , John Balshaw & Julia Hills, Anta Barabas, Lockie Barker, Alan Burney, Judith Clink, Fred and Dorothy Cornflisz , John & Keith Coster, Russell Daff, John Dowell, Peter Fletcher, Helen & Trevor Frostick, Syahisti & John Goldrich, Cathy Hill, Kenton Johanson, Graham Jordon, Stuart Macpherson, Noel McInnes, Monash University Library, Tim Nikolsky, Barrie Painter, Peter Rae, Rob Reid, Gordon Robert, Jan Salveson, John Seagrave, Ruth Singer, Denis Toner, Wendy Westmore.

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**PLEASE NOTE DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT NEWSLETTER  
 IS JANUARY 6TH 2011**

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