



VJAZZ 52  
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# VJAZZ

Proactively Collecting, Archiving and Disseminating Australian Jazz



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### Front Cover Images

1&2.Pippa Wilson at the Archive.  
 3.Left to Right: David Ward (tbn), Tony Newstead (tp), Don Reid (perc.), Willie McIntyre (p) Ray Simpson (gtr) George Tack (cl), Keith Cox (sb).  
 4.Moonee Valley Jazz Band at the Rosstown Fundraiser.

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 Open Tues & Fri, 10am-3pm



**Pippa Wilson at the Archive**

### Group Visits and Live Music at the Archive.

GROUP visits are promotional opportunities offered to organisations such as Probus Clubs, VIEW Clubs and Church Groups etc. The Victorian Jazz Archive offer a comprehensive tour of the Archive treasures followed by a presentation of jazz by a live band, topped off with morning or afternoon tea. A minimum of 20 guests are required (if 20 are not available, then groups may be combined). All this is provided at a cost of \$15 per person. A recent photo shows Pippa Wilson and her band playing for the Maroondah Daylight Lodge group on the 17<sup>th</sup> August. For further information, please contact **Marina Pollard, visitor services, on 9781 4972.**

### Thank You John Kennedy

SEVERAL months ago we advertised for a high quality Cassette Tape Deck to replace our ageing machine in the Sound Room. We had several offers for which we are most grateful, but a semi-professional Nakamichi deck donated by our own John Kennedy is now in use for the transfer of cassette tapes to archive-quality CDs. Because cassette tapes deteriorate over time, transfer to a more permanent medium is essential, thus future copies will now be of the highest possible quality.

### We Welcome these New Members:

Bairnsdale Secondary College, John Barker, Judith Batchelder, Richard Bearder, Holly Brick, Graeme Davies, Richard Desmond, Bruce Haley, Robert Hermanus, Richard Hubner, Jeff Hughes, Cheryl Hunt, Jazz Club of WA, Florence Kelsall, Dorothy Kirwin, Richard Linton, Brian Murphy, Norma Murphy, Martin Owens, Neil Pirie, Ruth Ruskin, Dawn Shoppee, Bradley Stow, Grahame and Judith Taylor, Curt and Dee Tebbutt, David Watson, Geoff Willis.

### We would like to thank the following for their generous donations

Bairnsdale Secondary College, Maggie Beare, BlueTone Jazz Band, Alan Burney, Errol Broadhurst, Coffee Off Course of Course, Brian Coote, Hilary Dosser, Leigh Jowett, Frank Killeen, Dr Allen & Mrs Leonard, Dr Ray Marginson AM, David McDowell, Keith Pocknee, Dawn Shoppee, Robert Standing, Victorian Jazz Workshops, Ronald Wakeham

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**VJA BOARD OF MANAGEMENT**

**Pat Thompson by Gretel James See page 8**



**IMPORTANT SWAGGIES wanted - refer to the back of the address sheet**

# THE THREE TENORS

By Bill Brown

THE above title is not a reference to the trio of gents who usually wear that sobriquet, Carreras, Domingo and that other big bloke. No, this title refers to the three tenor sax men who personify the Classic Jazz muse that unfolded in the years prior to World War 2. **Coleman Hawkins, Lester Young and Ben Webster** were colossuses who strode the jazz scene strutting their stuff from that period on, influencing a whole host of players along the way.

On record, I first heard Hawkins [Hawk] with the **Fletcher Henderson Orchestra** in a session circa 1924 where he was burbling along on the ponderous bass sax. In the sixties when an unwitting critic raised this fact with Hawk he suffered a short sharp rejoinder indicating that the great man stood by his years of prowess on the tenor sax as his meaningful contribution to things. He blossomed in that great Henderson band and by the late thirties was THE tenor sax king. By the end of the thirties he had appeared on a few notable recordings including some made during a European sojourn. There, with other visiting American jazzmen, he appeared on sessions with the gypsy guitar maestro Django Reinhardt.

## Hawkins recorded *Body and Soul*

In 1939 Hawkins recorded the tune *Body And Soul* and his version became the yardstick for all future renditions of this fine Johnny Green opus. Hawkins (his nick name was 'Bean') never stood still. His full rich sound seemed to acquire a harder edge in the forties and he wasn't afraid to mix it with the then emerging Bebop musicians, sometimes outdoing their more modern sounds. This is evident in a four CD set of Hawk's music on the Properbox label entitled '**The Bebop Years**'

He recorded prolifically through the fifties and sixties and continued touring the world until shortly before his death in 1969.

Lester Young emerged in the great Count Basie band of the late thirties. His version of *Lady Be Good*, from the band's recording that came to be known as the 'Jones/Smith' session, was ground breaking; quite the opposite to Hawk's lush tone. Lester's was light and feathery, almost sounding like the alto sax at times. He, too, had a spell in the Henderson band but he didn't fit in there. Perhaps they were more used to the Hawkins' sound. However, 'Prez' (short for president—a name bestowed on him by his dear friend, singer Billie Holiday) found his spiritual

home with the Basie crew with their blues drenched sound from Kansas City.

As well as appearing with that band over many years he recorded with other stars of the period often in the groups backing Billie Holiday under the leadership of pianist Teddy Wilson. Another of those Properbox Four CDs sets highlights Lester's versatility in numerous settings. A few newer sax players modelled their styles on Hawk but I reckon more of the modern exponents found Young's lighter sound more to their liking. I'm thinking here mainly of the exponents of the '**Cool School**' like Stan Getz and Al Cohn, to name a couple. His tenure in the army in World War 2 and his increased

to her friend playing in what must have been one of his last performances as he died, as did Billie, in 1959.

Our third hero is Ben Webster. He starred briefly in the thirties and then later for a longer period with the **Duke Ellington Orchestra** after spells with Blanche Calloway and her brother Cab's bands. He also recorded with Bennie Moten's band but his best recordings were with the Duke, *Cottontail* being one of his specialties. Indeed, the recordings of that early forties' band that featured Ben is often rated as his best perhaps rivalled by, but quite different from, the twenties 'stomp' outfit.

After Ellington, Webster (nickname "Frog") appeared in different settings and combinations. He shared a big tone similar to Hawkins' tone, but could display a soft, almost romantic approach on ballads. From all accounts he was not 'Gentle Ben' in his private life,



drinking meant, by the fifties, he was a shadow of his former self but still turned in good performances with the likes of Teddy Wilson. In 1957 he took part with some of his contemporaries (including Hawkins and Webster) from earlier times, in a US television show called 'The Sound Of Jazz'. On a video of this show I saw Lester. He only has one solo spot. It occurs in an all star accompaniment to Billie Holiday's *Fine And Mellow*. It would have to be one of jazz's most poignant experiences to watch Billie's expression as she listens

especially whilst in his 'cups'. He toured extensively recording all the while. He settled in Europe in the sixties, dying in Amsterdam in 1973.

Despite the vagaries of a jazz musician's life those 'Three Amigos' put down on record some great music for posterity and our enjoyment.

So, whilst the Three Tenors title no doubt means a lot to opera and classical music lovers (like my late wife), for me, in my dusty music room, Bean, Prez and Frog reign supreme.

I rest my case.

# What is an Acetate?

By Ken Simpson-Bull

READERS OF this magazine will no doubt have heard of the term “acetate recording” or just simply “acetate”, but how many know *exactly* what an acetate really is? Well, here is the *long* answer:

Tape recording, either in the form of the compact cassette or reel-to-reel, seems to have been around for a long time. In fact, although the principle of magnetic recording (which is what we generally mean by tape recording) was demonstrated at the end of the nineteenth century (by Valdemar Poulsen), a practical system for the tape recording of sound did not become available until the early 1940s. That was in Germany during the war, so the rest of the world didn't see tape recorders until the late 1940s. Before that, virtually all sound recording systems used discs—gramophone records!

The recording of sound mechanically onto disc (or originally cylinder) also dates back to the end of the nineteenth century but, unlike magnetic recording, disc recording with which we are familiar in the form of 78 rpm shellac records or the later vinyl microgroove discs, was practical from the beginning.

Originally, records were recorded acoustically, that is the pressure of a sound wave via a recording horn was sufficient to emboss the spiral groove being cut by the recording stylus. On replay the embossed groove, via a replay stylus, caused the vibration of a diaphragm which recreated the original sound wave.

In 1925, after the application of electrical recording, the whole process was done electrically using a microphone in the recording stage and a loudspeaker for replay, resulting in much improved sound quality and volume.

## Recording onto Hard Wax

For many years the disc upon which the original recording was made was usually composed of hard wax. The recording stylus actually cut a path through the wax in the same way that you may have seen a lathe-tool cut through steel, or whatever, on a machine lathe. Although the resulting record could be played back with a suitable replay stylus, the embossed groove in the wax, being quite fragile, was very likely to be damaged. So to eliminate damage to the wax recording and to be able to create many copies of this original record, a moulding process was applied. In basic terms a mould was made from the original record. This was metallised to create a “stamper” which could be used to press out records made of shellac (or vinyl) which were sturdy enough to re-

sist any wear caused by the replay stylus.

Towards the end of the 1920s a substitute for wax blanks upon which the master was cut (the “master” being the original recording) was developed. This consisted of an aluminium disc completely coated with a layer of cellulose acetate, a product derived from cotton. This layer had similar properties to wax but was slightly more robust and the disc less fragile. In full, the name would have been a “cellulose acetate recording blank” but this was abbreviated to “acetate”. Readers who wanted a short answer can stop reading now, but there is more.

## An Acetate is not Acetate

Research soon showed that another member of the cellulose family of chemicals was more suitable for the job than cellulose acetate. This was cellulose nitrate. In fact the coating on recording blanks is actually nitro-cellulose lacquer plasticised with castor oil. However, the abbreviation “acetate recording” stuck, and to this day cellulose nitrate discs are still called acetates.

Cellulose acetate was non-flammable but cellulose nitrate burns intensely. This is not a problem with the disc itself because the aluminium base (other base materials are sometimes used) conducts heat away from any source of flame. But when the recording stylus cuts the groove, a fine thread of the lacquer is thrown off (similar to the swarf from a machine lathe) which itself can burn with great intensity. The writer once cut discs for the ABC and can attest to the excellent flares and smoke

bombs which can be constructed from this flammable swarf.

During the Second World War, when aluminium was reserved for aircraft production, substrates of glass, steel, or fibre were sometimes used in place of aluminium. Discs with a glass base are obviously extremely fragile and must be handled with great care.

## Problems

The original use for acetates was for the production of a master for subsequent moulding and the creation of stampers for the manufacture of commercial gramophone records. It was found however that these master discs could be played many times without serious damage if a light-weight pickup was used. Hence, they soon found use for home recording where the complex and expensive process of moulding and stamping was not practical. Up until the late 1940s, and even into the 50s, acetates were extensively used for home and non-commercial recording.

The Victorian Jazz Archive has a fairly large collection of acetate recordings, most of them of a non-commercial nature, containing many unique and rare jazz performances. But acetates have many problems: Before the advent of high-compliance, ultra-lightweight pickups which didn't arrive until the early 1950s, many rare acetates were played on unsuitable equipment which, in many cases, has caused irrevocable damage to the grooves.

Another problem is that the lacquer coating is not stable, most notably the plasticiser dries out and causes the coating to shrink. Because the aluminium



A disintegrating acetate, with sections of the coating peeled off.

base cannot shrink, the coating cracks, initially causing lots of clicks and pops on replay, but it eventually peels off the base making the record completely unplayable.

As the coating breaks down chemically a third problem occurs, namely the production of palmitic and stearic acid which leaves a deposit on the disc which must be removed with an ammonium based cleaner. The presence of moisture accelerates the problem. As can be seen the Archive has the responsibility of transferring rare acetate recordings into a more permanent format before they are lost forever.

### A Word on Transcriptions

When synchronised sound was first added to movies in the 1920s, the sound-on-disc process was commonly adopted because, at the time, it gave better sound quality than the early optical soundtracks. The discs that carried the sound were of 16 inches diameter and revolved at 33½ rpm so that they could hold around 15 minutes of program material. Radio stations were quick to see the advantage of a disc playing for 15 minutes per side for the recording of plays and variety shows. (The then existing 78s were limited to five minutes per side.) The radio industry called these 16 inch discs "transcriptions", or sometimes "E.Ts" for Electrical Transcriptions. Because microgroove recording was not practical at that time, the size of the grooves was the same as for 78s, that is, "coarse groove". When LP microgroove records arrived around 1950, transcriptions continued using coarse grooves until they were finally superseded by the end of the 1950s.

The Archive has a number of these transcriptions in its collection, some of which have been pressed in vinyl, but also many acetate recordings which, like their smaller diameter counterparts, are in great need of preservation. Readers will be pleased to know that, soon after the Jazz Archive was established, one of its high priority tasks was the transfer of important acetates to preservation quality CDs for long-term storage.

## Tony Standish Newsletter S&C #29

KARL EMIL KNUDSEN, of Denmark's Storyville Records, wrote recently about a project for a series of CDs that will highlight the best of traditional jazz recordings from around the world, spanning the period 1947 to the present day. Could I help with an Australian segment?

To that end I grabbed my copies of Jack Mitchell's "Australian Jazz on Record" and "More Australian Jazz on Record." I'd jotted down a few names – Len and Bob Barnard, Graeme Bell, *The Port Jackson Band*, *Tony Newstead*, *Southern Jazz Group*, *Yarra Yarra Jazz Band*, *Geoff Bull*, *Melbourne New Orleans Jazz Band*, *Frank Traynor* – and proceeded to check out their recorded works. Well, I can only express extreme amazement at the sheer volume of recordings that have been made of Australian jazz. I use Jack's excellent books all the time for reference purposes, but had never perused them with the idea of assessing quantity before. There is certainly no shortage of documentation of jazz in this country.

However, even though the quantity is there, the availability is not. Hardly any of this vast library of music can be accessed, let alone purchased. Of course, the material is not commercially viable – the market for old recordings of Len Barnard, Jack Brokensha, Splinter Reeves, Tom Pickering or the *Memphis Jazz Group* is tiny. The only way it can be made available to enthusiasts and/or scholars is for the Jazz Archive people to build a reference collection – get the originals, get them onto an archival format, then bung them out on CD for the good of the nation.

### BLAME IT ON THE BLUE - ARSED FLY

This issue was meant to carry an exhaustive look at the result of our invitation to list your "Twenty Best" jazz records. But due to the fact that I've been rushing about like the above mentioned fly, I've not got around to it. Suffice to say that the response was in excess of expectations – over thirty replies were received. Others wrote lamenting their ability to make a choice, some thought the whole idea was a bit daft, and a number indicated a reluctance to broadcast their preferences for all to behold. This last is an interesting stance, a relic of Victorian times, when it was not the

done thing to ask someone how much they earned a week, or how they voted in an election. It's a bit like going to the footy and not wearing your team colours.

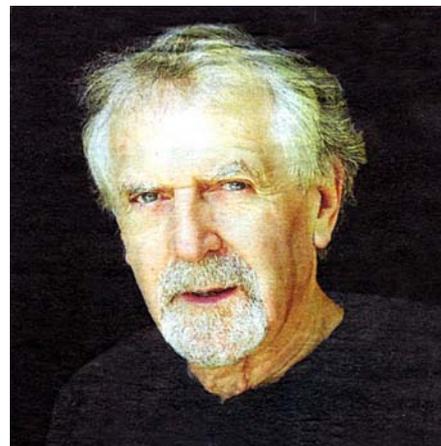
Anyway, the response was heartening, and we'll come back to it in a future newsletter. One observation: we're a broad minded bunch. Selections ranged from Miles Davis (mainly the Gil Evans charts) back to the Oliver band. The most frequently listed record "*Potato Head Blues*" by the *Louis Armstrong Hot Seven*, which appeared on seven of the thirty submissions. Four people, led by the ever-observant Peter Hunt of Casino, pointed out that I'd omitted number 9 on the form.

Blame it on the fly.

### Award Winning Pianist represented in latest Vjazz CD release

THE Victorian Jazz Archive has just released its latest CD: *The Jack Varney Quintette – Melbourne 1970*. With Jack Varney on vibes, Len Barnard on drums, Fred Parkes on clarinet, Derek Capewell on bass, and Tony Gould on piano, this talented group pays a visit to Benny Goodman territory. Whether intended or not, the session creates a fine emulation of the popular Goodman small-group recordings of the 1930s and 40s.

The timing of this release is fortuitous because Tony Gould has recently been inducted into the Hall of Fame at the Australian Jazz Bell Awards. These awards recognize excellence in the performance, recording and presentation of jazz in Australia. Tony, who counts a Ph.D. from Latrobe University and an Order of Australia among his many achievements and honors, is noted as a pianist, composer, educator, music critic, arranger, and music administrator, and has performed with many luminaries of the Australian and international music scene.



Tony Gould: Image from the Age newspaper 16/05/09

### VJA's AGM

Sunday Nov 13th 11 o'clock

To improve our communication we would welcome your email address.

Please send it to:

info@vicjazzarchive.org.au

## The full restoration of Ade Monsborough's plastic Grafton alto Saxophone

By Mel Blachford

ONE of the gems in the Victorian Jazz Archive collection is a white plastic Grafton saxophone, serial number 10147, given to Ade Monsborough during the Graeme Bell band's second tour to Europe and UK in 1951-1952. Other famous musicians who received and played them include Charlie Parker, Ornette Coleman, and John Dankworth.

### A short history of the "Grafton".

The instrument was developed by Hector Sommaruga, an Italian living in London. It takes its name from the street (Grafton Way) where his shop was initially located in the late 1940s. The decision to manufacture a saxophone from plastic was based upon the relative cheapness of the material rather than an improvement in tonal characteristics. The instrument was designed to have a plastic body, bell and key guards made from a compound developed by ICI, a brass neck and a mechanism which incorporated a unique springing system. Many of the posts for attaching the mechanism were cast as part of the body. It was first offered for sale to the public in 1950, at a price of 55 pounds, about half the cost of a conventional saxophone at the time.



ADE MONSBOURGH-ROGER BELL-LOU SILBEREISEN  
PIXIE ROBERTS



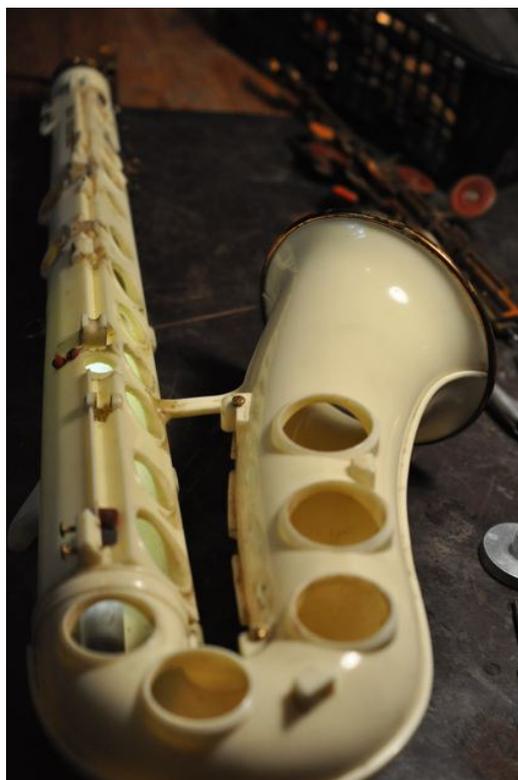
**Saxophone with the upper stack of keys and pads removed.**

Grafton saxophones have a very distinctive appearance due to their 1950s Italian style. The mechanical action has an unusual "spongy" feel to it without the quick, "snappy", positive feel of other more conventional saxophone actions. The basic problem is that they are brittle, as the plastics of the time are nowhere as robust as the injection moulded plastics used in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. As a result, any component parts made of plastic can easily crack, fracture or snap off during normal use. Not only do Graftons use a non-standard spring mechanism to operate the action, but spare parts are unavailable. Only about 3000 were ever made between 1950 and 1962 although more were made from parts still on hand until the factory was sold and scrapped in 1967. The serial numbers ran from 10001 to 13082. There are very few instruments still in perfect playing condition left today.

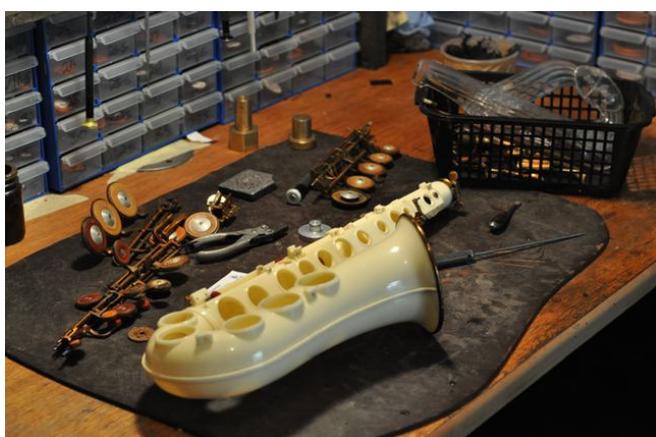
Not surprisingly, Graftons are challenging and expensive to overhaul or repair when compared to saxophones made entirely of metal. The ability to undertake a full restoration came about by a chance conversation with a VJA member who generously offered to fund the cost. The bigger challenge was to find a repairer who would tackle the difficult task of full restoration. The internet site Wikipedia, under Grafton Saxophone, provides a link to give some idea of the complex job repairing this instrument involves, with an article by Stephen Howard Woodwind titled "Naked Grafton". Michael McQuaid recommended Phil Noy, a jazz reed man himself, and a qualified repairer of wind instruments, to undertake the task. It took Phil over 30 hours to complete. Photographs were taken at all stages of repair in order that there would be no doubt about where all the pieces went.



**Keys and pads.**



**The body of the saxophone**



**Saxophone fully dismantled.**



**Saxophone showing clear plastic key guards.**



**Finally finished after 30 hours of Phil Noy's work**

Taking a complex and unique instrument apart had many challenges. It involved making by hand new springs (of different sizes), finding suitable felt for the keys and repairing cracks using modern dental acrylics. Without Phil's skill and dedication this restoration could never have been undertaken.

The restored Grafton is proudly on display at the Victorian Jazz Archive in Wantirna and serves as a reminder of a unique Australian jazz musician Adrian Monsborough. Writing in the Oxford Companion to Australian Jazz, Bruce Johnson said that Monsborough, also known as "The Father" or "Lazy Ade", was "one of the most original and influential jazz musicians Australia has produced. His distinctive approach, both in terms of timing, harmonic line and, especially on alto, his timbre, is central to what is widely if controversially regarded as the 'Australian' or 'Melbourne' jazz style". Johnson also said that Monsborough has been copied "more productively than any other Australian jazz musician, including by overseas musicians". In 2003, Monsborough won the Graeme Bell Career Achievement Award at the inaugural Australian Jazz Awards.

**Ade Monsborough: Born 1917. AO 1992. Died 2006.**

## Tributes

### “MADAM” PAT THOMPSON by Gretel James

It's over – the Pat Lady has sung her last song. Pat passed away peacefully in her own bed with her family around her on 26<sup>th</sup> July aged 88. For many years she had suffered with terrible pain, but once she got behind the microphone you would never know, except that for many years she had sat on that famous stool – the one that was made to exact size in chocolate for her Farewell Concert in December 2009. As always, the crowds lined up in St Kilda Road – everybody was wanting to be present at what would in fact be her last concert. The Spiegeltent was absolutely full to capacity to hear Pat along with her regular band, and other invited musicians give those present a night to remember. Such was the charisma of *Madam Pat*. Everywhere she went she was adored by her audiences whether she was singing those sentimental songs like *Boulevard of Broken Dreams* or the raunchy old songs of Bessie Smith or Ma Rainey – *Kitchen Man* and *If I Can't Sell It* being two of her favourites. She sang about the oppressed, like the coloured people in America, with great feeling and compassion.

As most of her adoring fans know, she started performing at the tender age of seven. Music was a large part of Pat's family life, mainly led by her mother, Kitty Brand, on the piano. There was not a rich life in monetary terms, but Pat's childhood was happy. She told the story of how, when everything else had to go they managed to hold on to the piano by hiding it in the coal shed. This was the beginning of her musical career, from dancing on the tables at the Beaumaris Hotel with her sister when their father was employed there as a chef, to later joining her parents for five years in a touring show.

Pat married her sweetheart Jim Thompson and had two children, Cate and James. There were both good and rough times but the worst was when Jim was killed in a motor accident. Pat continued to work as cook until she started her new career as an entertainer, in her words, more so than a singer.

We all know the story of how trumpeter Jiri Kripac got Pat up on to the stage at Narooma Bowling Club in 1981 to sing *Frankie and Johnnie*, and as they say, the rest is history. Pat loved writing to newspapers, radio stations, anywhere she could have her say. She was a regular on the ABC talk-in programmes in the early hours. She was just “Pat from Bermagui”. She greatly admired Quentin Bryce, the Governor-General, and wrote to her to comment on a speech she had heard her deliver at a school. Next thing, a hand-written invitation from the G-G arrived inviting her to afternoon tea. Pat thought there could be hundreds there for a public gathering. But no, the Governor-General greeted her at the lift and took her into her private study for a 3-hour chat and afternoon tea. She even wanted a copy of her book. Pat said she would send it in a plain brown wrapper because of its title!

For those who have internet I suggest you look up “Madam Pat Thompson” and enjoy the eight-part documentary made by Bill Brown for the ABC. If you can get hold of her book “She's a Fat Tart Ain't She”, you will understand why she endeared herself to everyone who met her.

Pat became one of my dearest friends, and like so many, I will miss her terribly. Our sympathy goes out to Cate and James and their families, and her many friends. There was no funeral but a celebration party will be held in Melbourne later in the year.

### Mike Montgomery

We note the passing of a kindred spirit in Mike Montgomery, who was a noted American jazz researcher, collector of piano rolls, and jazz/blues pianist. Mike was also the founder of the ***Boll Weevil Jass Band***, based in Ann Arbor, Michigan. The band specialized in traditional New Orleans jazz and spent the decade of 1955-64 mainly in the Michigan university scene. They continued to do occasional gigs from the mid-60s, with a number of personnel changes, for many years.

Montgomery had a vast collection of recordings and jazz-related information, with sufficient depth to constitute definitive musicological resources covering a variety of noted jazz and blues musicians. He was in demand as a lecturer and information resource for learned institutions, scholars and record companies. He willingly shared his passion for jazz and was a generous and interested conversationalist.

### Ottillie Patterson

Ottillie Patterson, one of the world's great female blues/gospel singers, died recently aged 79. Born of an Irish father and Latvian mother, Patterson was gifted with a deep and soulful voice startlingly reminiscent of the black blues divas.

It was as an art student in Belfast that Patterson was first introduced to jazz and blues by a fellow student, and started singing blues in a band ultimately known as the ***Muskrat Ramblers***. While on holiday in London in her early 20s Patterson went to hear Ken Colyer's band and succeeded in convincing the band to let her on stage to sing. And then, within days, she joined the Chris Barber band and spent the rest of her holiday singing with them.

A year or so later, having returned to Ireland and now a young teacher, Patterson received the invitation to join the Barber band, and toured with them for the next 10 years. She later married Barber; the union lasting 24 years.

Forced by ill health to give up her place in the band, Patterson returned to touring occasionally, until retirement in 1991.

For a sample of Ottillie Patterson at her finest, type this into your browser and enjoy:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TTkYHpb6dz8&feature=related>

### Ian Wheeler

Another musician with a link to the Barber band, reeds player Ian Wheeler, died recently at the age of 80. Wheeler started out in jazz as a guitarist in Charlie Connor's band, then taught himself clarinet and changed over to being a clarinetist. After a brief stint heading his own ***River City Jazz Band*** and a couple of years with the ***Delta Band***, Wheeler joined the celebrated Ken Colyer band, where he honed his skills as a clarinetist in the New Orleans style. Six years later, Wheeler left to form a band with trumpeter Ken Sims, but later the same year joined the Chris Barber band. There he stayed for seven years, adding soprano and alto sax and blues harmonica to his instrumental achievements.

After leaving the Barber band, Wheeler ran a scuba business for almost a decade, with various musical ventures on the side. Then, in 1979, he re-joined the Barber band, where he stayed for a further 20 years.

Wheeler will be remembered as one of the finest reed players in British Traditional Jazz.

## From the Publications Vault

Among the oldest publications in our vaults is the August 1924 issue of an erudite American magazine called "Etude". From a period that's usually described as the "Flapper Era" or the "Jazz Age", is an article in this issue headed "Where the Etude Stands on Jazz". It's worth a read:

"THE EDITOR has no illusions on Jazz. We hold a very definite and distinct opinion of the origin, the position and the future of Jazz.

The Etude reflects action in the music world. It is a mirror of contemporary musical educational effort. We, therefore, do most emphatically *not* endorse Jazz, merely by discussing it.

Jazz, like much of the thematic material glorified by the great masters of the past, has come largely from the humblest origin. In its original form it has no place in musical education and deserves none. It will have to be transmogrified many times before it can present its credentials for the "Valhalla of Music".

In musical education Jazz has been an accursed annoyance to teachers for years. Possibly the teachers are, themselves, somewhat to blame for this. Young people demand interesting, inspiring music. Many of the Jazz pieces they have played are infinitely more difficult to execute than the sober music their teachers have given them. If the teacher had recognized the wholesome appetite of youth for fun and had given interesting, sprightly music instead of preaching against the evils of Jazz, the nuisance might have been averted.

As it is, the young pupil who attempts to play much of the "raw" jazz of the day wastes time with common, cheap, trite tunes badly arranged. The pupil plays carelessly and "sloppily." These traits, once rooted, are very difficult to pull out. This is the chief evil of Jazz in musical education.

On the other hand, the melodic and rhythmic inventive skill of many of the composers of Jazz, such men as Berlin, Confrey, Gershwin and Cohan, is extraordinary. Passing through the skilled hands of such orchestral leaders of high-class Jazz orchestras conducted by Paul Whiteman, Isham Jones, Waring and others, the effects have been such that serious musicians such as John Alden Carpenter, Percy Grainger and Leopold Stokowski, have predicted that Jazz will have an immense influence upon musical composition, not only of America, but also of the world.

Because The Etude knows that its very large audience of wide-awake readers desires to keep informed upon all sides of leading musical questions, it presents in this midsummer issue the most important opinions upon the subject yet published. We have thus taken up the "Jazzmania" and dismiss it with this issue. But who knows, the weeds of Jazz may be Burbanked into orchestral symphonies by leading American composers in another decade?

We do desire, however, to call our readers' attention to the remarkable improvement that has come in the manufacture of wind instruments of all kinds and to the opportunities which are presented for teaching these instruments. Jazz called the attention of the public to many of these instruments, but their higher possibilities are unlimited, and thousands of students are now studying wind instruments who only a few years ago would never have thought of them."

### Did You Know?

ALTHOUGH the saxophone was invented in 1844, it was absent from early jazz orchestras. Its use within jazz bands did not begin until about 1920, a time when New Orleans had practically ceased to be the world's jazz centre. For that reason no definitive "New Orleans style" exists in which the saxophone plays a part.

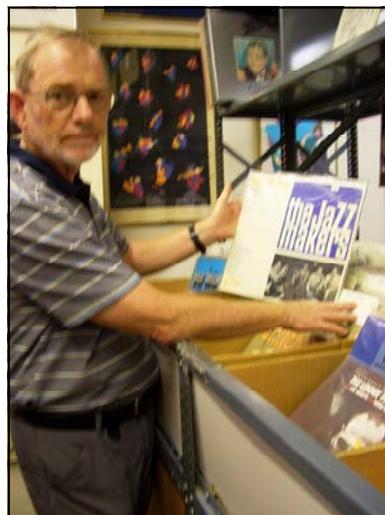


## A Visit to the Jazz Record Center - New York

By  
Ralph Powell

A QUIET street in New York's Chelsea district conceals an extraordinary oasis of Jazz - the Jazz Record Center - an unpretentious shop located behind a large metal fire door in room 804 of the Capitol Building.

Its unassuming exterior masks an Aladdin's cave of jazz materials—rare and out-of-print jazz records, LPs, old acetates, tapes, videos, 78s, CDs, and DVDs together with posters, books, prints, calendars, magazines, postcards, T-shirts, ephemera and Jazz memorabilia. Even the odd laser disc.



Ralph located an *Aussie Swaggie* in the British bin.

The brainchild of Fred Cohen, the Jazz Record Center began in 1983, reviving the name of a defunct jazz icon of the same name which had been operated by "Big" Joe Clauberg, from 1938 until the 1960s.

From an initial collection of 100 records the Jazz Record Center has grown massively to its current assortment of materials which number in the thousands.

A must for any Jazz enthusiast to visit and pick up a gem when visiting New York or on-line; it even boasted a copy of Swaggie S1290 *Backroom Joys* amongst its Traditional Jazz items although your less-than-impartial writer quietly shifted it from "British" where it had been located to its rightful "Australian" spot in recognition of the significant Australian jazz artists performing on the record.

Take a tour of the store at:-

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0T8814JApq>

## Jazz Memories of the USA

### Tony Newstead—Part 2

IT WAS 1970; over a decade since I had spent six weeks in New York after a year studying in Europe. Although I made several business trips to the States during the sixties the most I was able to stay in any one city was a couple of days, but now I was returning for a three year posting with the World Bank in Washington D.C., as part of a small group advising on Bank loans for telecommunication in developing countries.

We were installed in a very pleasant apartment just off Connecticut Avenue, near the Park Sheraton Hotel and close to the 16<sup>th</sup> St. bridge, since renamed Duke Ellington bridge. While much of Washington is visually delightful, "the District" (ie. D.C.) was not judged to be a particular safe area and most of the Bank people opted to live in the nearby States of Maryland or Virginia. But we never encountered any problems and frequently walked at night a kilometre down to Dupont Circle, an open area where street guitarists and assorted percussionists—black and white—would play the blues and Latin rhythms, encouraged by student and hippy groups through the frequently acrid, bluish smoke haze! Perhaps it is different now; the last time I was there a few years ago there were more street beggars than street musos.

Our security was greatly reinforced by the presence, just outside our apartment block, of a windowless panel van with cables attached and an exotic array of antennas on the roof. It was an FBI unit, with advanced surveillance gear permanently trained on the third floor of the Park Sheraton, the abode of Spiro Agnew, Vice-President to Richard Nixon.

Not too far away in Georgetown, the University centre and home to most of the embassies, diplomats and senior State department folk. The shopping strip has a unique ambience, with smart boutiques and up-market food places – one modestly proclaiming "the world's best cheese-cake"! Yet finding decent bread was near impossible.

Also in Georgetown is one of America's oldest Jazz places, "Blues Alley", a bar and night club which featured typically weekly stints by some of the best New York, Washington and travelling musicians. It was owned by Tommy Gwaltney, one of the family purveyors of Gwaltney Hams, a top

brand seller in U.S.A. His inclinations however were more in musical directions so he took up clarinet and bought the place! Tommy is a fine jazzman who played for several years with Bobby Hackett's band at the Gotham Hotel in New York and can be heard on the Hackett LP, "Gotham Jazz Scene".

After hearing Tommy performing at Blues Alley I struck up a conversation with him and that was my initial conduit into the Washington jazz scene. He was also playing with a quartet Friday and Saturday nights in the downstairs bar at Park Sheraton, about two minutes walk from our place, and invited me to come along one night and sit in. He had John Eaton on the piano, Van Perry bass, and Skip Tomlinson drums and, every so often, Steve Jordan on guitar. Steve had a long stint with Benny Goodman in the big band heyday and was currently doing solo guitar and vocal spots at Blues Alley. During my time in Washington I was lucky enough to do numerous gigs with these and other guys at the Park Sheraton, Georgetown University, Blues Alley and other club venues in D.C. and neighbouring states.

One of the first gigs stands out in my memory, not for the music particularly but for our first encounter with the winter hazards of snow. It was a New Year's eve party at the Manassas Country Club in the hills of North Virginia. It was to start at 9pm and we set out at 7, which should have given plenty of time. But things started to look bad shortly after we crossed the state border, with snow drifts building up on the highway. Despite slowing to a fast walk, the car was hard to control and soon our Mustang slid gracefully sideways off the road into a three foot snow bank. No damage, but

stranded motorists have been known to freeze to death.

Fortunately there were others in similar predicaments nearby and with mutual help we managed to get back on the road. We finally arrived at the venue after eleven, to find that only four of the seven piece group had made it, plus about fifteen guests. So the festivities resembled a small select party, with a vast over supply of food and liquor! We played through until dawn, to find our cars with roofs barely visible in six feet of snow. The snow plough was duly summoned and led the way, clearing a path down the mountain and back onto the highway.

Amongst the musical highlights of my Washington stay were appearances at the 1972 and '73 annual Manassas Jazz Festivals. These were held over three days in mid-December by jazz entrepreneur, bon vivant, well-to-do accountant and would-be vocalist Johnson (Fat Cat) McRee. Johnson had good connections with many top musicians including Bobby Hackett, Wild Bill Davidson and most of the Eddie Condon alumni and New York mainstainers. The public performances were recorded and selections issued on his "Fat Cat" specialist jazz label. As well as the D.C. musicians mentioned, I played with a variety of pick-up groups that included variously, Art Hodes, Willie "The Lion" Smith, Maxine Sullivan, Joe Maryani (clarinet with the final Louis' All-star group) Danny Barker (guitar) and "Speigle" Wilcox, one of the few surviving members of the Bix Beiderbeck recordings. Some of these Manassas sessions were issued on "Tony Loves Bix" (Fat Cat LP127) and several other Fat Cat sides.



Left to Right: David Ward (tbn), Don Reid (perc.), Tony Newstead (tp), Keith Cox (sb), Willie McIntyre (p), George Tack (cl), Ray Simpson (gtr). ABC Studios Melbourne. Photo from the of the Mike Sutcliffe collection.

## THE GRAEME BELL ALL STARS

IN 1962 Graeme Bell had been leading a number of traditional Dixieland groups for more than two decades with names such as *The Dixieland Six*, *Graeme Bell's Dixieland Band*, *Graeme Bell and his Australian Jazz Band*, et al. But in that year he formed a new group, the *All Stars*.

*The All Stars* initially featured Bob Barnard, Norm Wyatt, Laurie Gooding, Harry Harman, John Allen and Alan Geddes. Even more than the others this band proved a great success, and after four years of touring and fixed engagements (with various personnel changes) the band broke up in 1966.

Graeme then visited England, playing with the *Terry Lightfoot Band*, and on his return to Australia he created a band for the club circuit. But in 1973 he formed a new *All Stars* group which, by 1978, consisted of David Ridyard on clarinet, Russell Smith on cornet, John Colborne-Veel on trombone, Kipper Kearsley on bass, Ken Harrison on drums and of course Graeme Bell on piano.

This band, based in Sydney, often visited Melbourne, and on one particular occasion during 1978 played a lunch-time concert at the Robert Blackwood Hall at the Monash University. This event was professionally recorded by one Graham Fettling who has presented the Victorian Jazz Archive with the original 15 inches-per-second stereo tapes.

With the permission of Graeme Bell himself, a CD of the performance in sparkling high fidelity stereo has been released on the VJAZZ label and is now available from the retail shop at the Archive's premises in Wantirna or on-line through the web site. Tracks include *South*, *Pineapple Rag*, *Doctor Jazz*, *Undecided*, *Memphis Blues*, and many others.

**"Graeme Bell's All Stars Robert Blackwood Hall Concert"**  
Cat. No 490 VJAZZ 017

### Moonee Valley Jazz Band at VJA Fundraiser.



The Victorian Jazz Archive was privileged to feature the *Moonee Valley Jazz Band* at the Rosstown Hotel, Sunday July 31<sup>st</sup> 2011. The fundraiser was a great success both financially and socially. The MVJB played to their usual high standard, with John Morrison in the driving seat on the piano. The band was comprised of; John Morrison (p), leader Graham White (tp), Frank Stewart (rds), Hugh De Rosayro (tb

Rare Collectable  
**Jazz**  
from the Archive

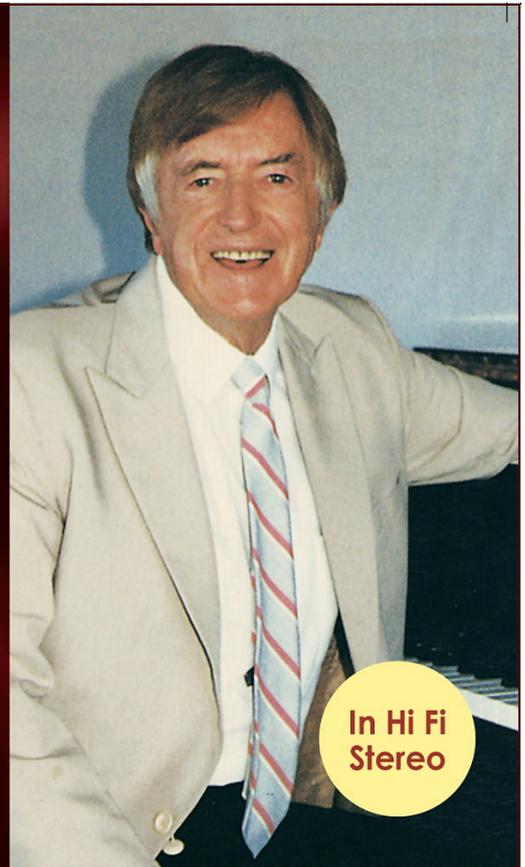
### Graeme Bell's All Stars

Robert Blackwood  
Hall Concert

Melbourne 1978



CAT. 490  
VJAZZ 017



and vocals), Alex Wilson (b), Richard Opat (d). The enthusiastic audience were proud recipients of many door and raffle prizes. Arrangements are well in hand preparing for our next fundraiser on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> October, which promises to be a great afternoon featuring the *Peninsular Rhythm Kings*. See you there.

**Marina Pollard. Visitor Services.**

### Beginners Seminar, Victorian Jazz Archive

Seminars are being held for instrumental music students who have been playing for about 12 months, and who would like to reach a standard where they can participate in the under 25's Jazz Improvisation Workshop.



**Students with tutor Ron Trigg.**

The Croydon Secondary College was the first school to participate in the course, followed by six students from the Healesville High School. Since then, the two schools have combined to do a more intensive course.

The success of the seminars can be gauged by the keen enthusiasm shown by the students, and the fact that they will all be taking part in the 2012, Under 25's Jazz Improvisation Workshop. (See enclosed flyer).

**Marina Pollard Workshop Co ordinator**



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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.