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# VJAZZ

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### Image: Front Cover



Noosa Jazz Festival poster 2009. One of the many posters in VJA's collection.

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### Location

VJA Inc. "Koomba Park"  
15 Mountain Hwy.  
Wantirna  
Mel Ref 63 C8  
Open Tues & Fri, 10am-3pm

## Letters to the Editor

Dear Sir,

Following receipt of your August 13 issue advising of the passing of Geoff Bland, it was my intention to write specifically about this wonderful Jazz pianist and his contribution to Australian Jazz. Time flies and I have now received your November issue highlighting some of Melbourne's venues in the late 40s.

My time with Jazz started in 1949 in the back room of the Collingwood Town Hall with **Frank Johnson and his Fabulous Dixielanders**. My group of seven guys and later some girls visited most venues where Johnson, Bell and Barnard were playing during this era.

However, in 1950 following a tough game of football I was finding it hard to keep up with the Charleston and, although I had not ventured into the main hall of old time, fox trot and modern waltz, it was cooler. My eye caught sight of this lovely girl (there with netball friends) and after a couple of rounds of the main room I talked her into trying the Jazz room. She was soon converted to Jazz and we married in 1953.

During the intervening years we frequented the Maison de Luxe on Sunday afternoons where often you would find Frank Johnson, Bob Barnard, Graeme Bell et al. Sunday nights would be Ernie Bourne, a magnificent pianist, together with Edwin Duff at a St Kilda Coffee House. Other venues would be The Powerhouse, Ormond Hall, Leggett's Ballroom, but our main loyalty was with Frank Johnson and the boys at Collingwood Town Hall. In the early days it was Frank, Geoff Kitchen on clarinet, Geoff Bland on piano, Bill Tope on banjo, "Wocka" Dyer trombone and Wes Brown on drums. Jack Connolly played bass and occasionally "Smacka" Fitzgibbon would sit in. Apart from following Johnson around Melbourne, we were also members of the Jazz Club and attended his 30 minute show on 3UZ.

Having travelled and lived in many parts of Australia, we caught up with Tom Pickering and Ian Pearce in Tasmania, Don Burrows and George Golla in Sydney and, more recently, Bruce Matiske - guitarist, together with our overseas favourites. "Smacka" Fitzgibbon was a favourite of ours. We enjoyed his singing as well as his banjo playing.

At one stage I was promoted to Sales Manager in N/W Victoria which took us away from Melbourne Jazz. But it so happened that one of my representatives was stationed at Charlton, not far from the wheat town of Wycheproof where "Smacka" Fitzgibbon together with his mother had taken over the lease of the Wycheproof Hotel. I am sure the representative did not like it, but I would find any excuse to visit from Mildura where, after dinner, Ma Fitzgibbon would play piano while "Smacka" sang and played banjo.

Knowing our propensity for Jazz, my Sister-in-Law went down to the Jazz Archive at Wantirna with her Probus Group and signed me up. We have really enjoyed your magazine and I have signed up for another year and hope to get to Wantirna on my next visit to Melbourne.

Regards  
Bob Harmer



**Our  
Xmas celebrations  
pg 14**

### DISCLAIMER

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VJA BOARD OF MANAGEMENT



## LOOKING AHEAD: PLANS FOR 2014

### An excerpt from the President's report presented at the AGM

Selecting and implementing a modern Digital Museum Management System and changing our operating name to the **Australian Jazz Museum**, we will be able to:-

- Better describe and promote our comprehensive and unique collection of Australian Jazz.

- Collect, archive and digitise according to Museum standard at Wantirna.

- Create a Virtual Museum with online exhibitions and access to our collection as required.

- Open to the public (online) 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

- Encourage group visits at a time and frequency to suit our limited opening hours.

This approach is achievable at relatively low cost and enables us to compete with much larger centrally located museums and galleries within Australia and Internationally.

Major projects to enable us to achieve the above are as follows:-

- Selection and implementation of a Digital Museum Management System.

- Digitisation of our collection.

- New software and design of our website to accommodate sales and easy access.

- Creation and implementation of the first stage of a master plan for building to ensure we have the space and effective layout to meet our needs.

These projects will provide the foundation for the future security and development of our exceptional collection.

**VJA President Terry Norman**

## Tribute to Gretel James

**O**N behalf of our Board of Management (BoM) and all VJA volunteers, I pay particular tribute to Gretel James who has been VJA Secretary and member of the BoM/Committee for 12 years. Due to poor health reasons, Gretel declined to nominate for any office on the Board for 2014.

Gretel was initially invited to take on the role by John Kennedy OAM (who was our foundation Vice Chairman/Archivist and one of the prime movers in establishing the Archive in 1996), after having been heavily involved for many years as Secretary and Newsletter Editor with the Victorian Jazz Club. Gretel assumed all the administrative duties required as Secretary in the Archive's formative years, and additionally produced all issues of the VJAZZ newsletters in those early days - doing an absolutely sterling job. Her keen knowledge of Australian Jazz performers, aficionados and enthusiasts is quite extraordinary, and these talents will be of much value as she continues to assist the Collections Team, particularly with correctly identifying people in photographs and published articles from time to time.

**Ray Sutton – General Manager**

## Graeme Bell's Artwork

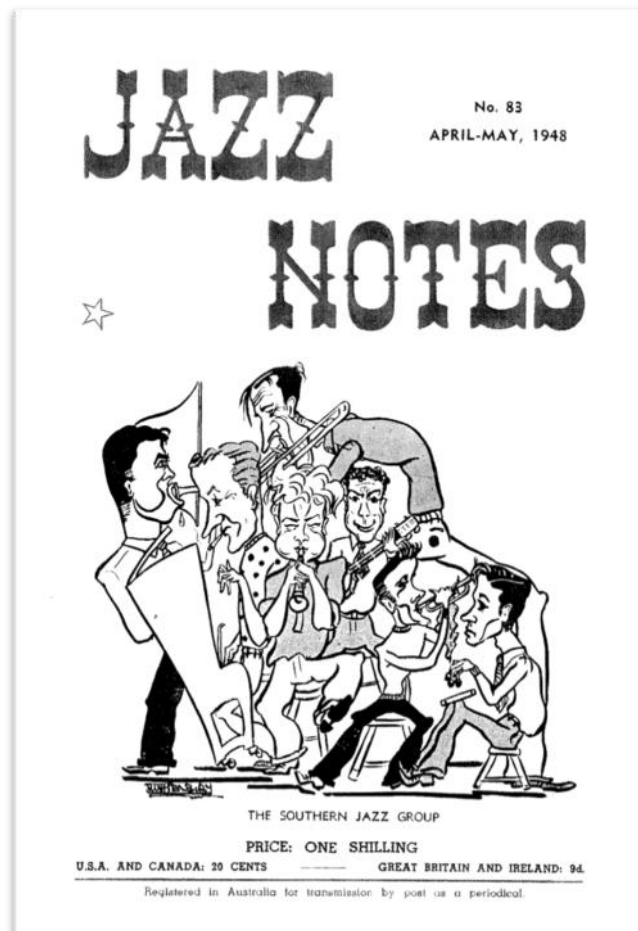


**"Getting It Together" 1992**  
A watercolour and pastel by Graeme Bell was presented to VJA's General Manager Ray Sutton at the AGM by Christina Bell.

## JAZZ NOTES

Australia's first magazine for jazz lovers

By Ken Simpson-Bull



**Jazz Notes**, inaugurated in 1941, was the first Australian periodical dedicated entirely to jazz. Before that, jazz in print had merely been the subject of individual articles in various newspapers and magazines. The earliest writings appeared some time prior to 1918 which is when the first gramophone records of American jazz bands started arriving in this country and some Australian dance bands began emulating them. From this period, up to the commencement of *Jazz Notes*, there were several magazines that regularly featured items about jazz—some edifying and others not. Magazines like *Australasian Band and Orchestra News*, *Australian Band and Dance News*, and *Music Maker* all carried articles on jazz but none was dedicated to the subject.

In 1939, (hot) jazz, as defined by the traditional or Dixieland style, was making something of a comeback among *aficionados* after the hugely popular swing incursion which began around 1934/35. Probably the best known international writer on the subject, Hugues Panassié, found swing music anathema and said so in his published articles.

The creator of *Jazz Notes*, whilst not making quite as strong a statement, certainly made it clear that the magazine was to be an organ for the original style of the *genre*. This was Bill Miller, the same William H. Miller who created the **Ampersand** record label, the first to record the Bell bands, who formed jazz discussion groups around the huge collection of jazz records he had brought back from England in 1938, and the same Bill Miller who scripted a series of radio broadcasts on 3UZ beginning in 1939.

It was from these 3UZ broadcasts that the "Jazz Lovers Society" was formed in January, 1941, and *Jazz Notes* began as the Society's official magazine. Initially a roneoed newsletter, issue No 1 of January 1941, had 18 pages and was priced at five-pence. Advertising in the magazine was encouraged and rates were 13/6d for a full page and 4/- for a half page. The editorial in this first issue is worth reading. Bill Miller wrote:

*When I first conceived the idea of this little sheet, I envisaged its establishment as something of a struggle. On the contrary the response to the preliminary*

*circulars was most encouraging ... I want every reader to feel that "Jazz Notes" is his own sheet, and that he is free to contribute to its columns. One of its main objects is the betterment of jazz understanding in Australia, and this can be best achieved by implanting the idea in every reader's mind that he or she is helping in this object by co-operating in the magazine's construction.*

There remains one point to emphasise. "Jazz Notes" will deal only with "righteous", or "strictly hot" jazz. All other aspects of music, including commercial "swing" will be left to the publications which already cover this field so thoroughly.

The first article in the little magazine (it was "quarto" or 195mm x 260mm in size) was on the subject of the discovery of a rare gramophone record picked up in a furniture store for three-pence. The disc was labelled "Eddie Conlon [sic] and his orchestra". It was a Parlophone issue but with a sticker over the trade name labelled "Capitol". One side was actually Eddie Condon playing "I'm Sorry I Made You Cry" but was made from a different master than the edition put out in the USA. The other side,





Images above: Kate Dunbar and Ade Monsborough

"Indiana", was apparently only released in Australia. The buyer, Keith Holst, had sent the disc to America to be dubbed (and apparently re-issued).

This first magazine's major article was by Bill Miller himself. It was entitled "King of the Riffs" and was a nine-page biography of Wingy Mannone. (The variations in the spelling of Wingy's name were covered in the article.) There was also an item by reed-player Tom Pickering who wrote about "The Hottest Music in the World" and was largely about Louis Armstrong. This first issue concluded with the notification that the "Jazz Lover's Society" was to meet on the third Thursday of each month at 8.20 pm at the 3UZ studios. There was also a reminder of Bill Miller's "Jazz Night" broadcasts every Monday from 10.55 pm to 11.30 pm. Thus the tone was set for the next 10 years of *Jazz Notes*.

Jazz drummer, Ced Pearce, took over editorship in late 1941 but Bill Miller returned in February, 1944 until C. Ian Turner took on the role in February, 1945. In his first editorial Ian Turner explained: *With Bill Miller's absence in*

*the army between 1941 and '43, the editorship was passed over to Cedric Pearce of Hobart, Tasmania, but in [February] 1944, Miller, a civvy once more, took back the responsibility ... I have appointed a panel of four associates, all dyed-in-the-wool jazz lovers ... Lionel Davies, Jim Piesse, Ray Marginson and Bruce Harmsworth.*

On Bill Miller's return in 1944, the magazine progressed to professionally printed form. In that year it was obvious that swing versus jazz was still a hot subject. The release of discs by George Trevare's Jazz Group created discussions about the differences between profes-

sional swing bands and the type of playing being prescribed by the "mouldy fyggies" (or traditionalists). Ade Monsborough wrote that Sydney leaned to swing while Melbourne leaned to "righteous" jazz.

The magazine changed format in January, 1946 to the smaller dimensions of 145mm x 210mm. The price at this time was 1/6d. Hot jazz was now being more often referred to as Dixieland, and rebop (a style not often discussed in the magazine) was renamed bebop.

In April, 1946, the shortage of disc manufacturing materials caused by the war was still evident as outlined in an editorial by C. Ian Turner in issue No 63:

*After months of waiting for the materials situation to ease sufficiently for the pressing of numerous grand sides by Australian Jazzmen, the first disc is now available. Technically, this disc was available last year, but only a handful of pressings were made, and those were reserved, anyway. Now the collector can order a disc that has been discussed so often since it was cut two and*

*a half years ago.*

The recording was sponsored by Bill Miller, who seized on the opportunity of [Max] Kaminsky's short week here to put the Max in the Wax, and two sides from this session introduce Miller's debut into the private label class of "Little" recording companies. His nomenclature "Ampersand" ... is original and that red and white label looks fine. Pressed on vinylite these discs should stand up to the fair amount of playing they deserve.

In April, 1948, John W. Rippin became the editor. (Bill Miller had gone on to create *Australian Jazz Quarterly*.) But the first wave of the trad jazz revival begun in 1939 was declining. This resulted in falling sales and *Jazz Notes* folded in October, 1950 with issue No 103. By the time of this last issue, the magazine had resorted to its original quarto size of 195mm x 260mm.

But a new wave of hot jazz was about to begin, fired by the casual dance scene. Jazz concerts and festivals may have declined but jazz musicians moved to the pubs and clubs where a younger generation of dancers revived the jitterbug and jive. As a result, *Jazz Notes* was restored. This was by record producer and part-time jazz pianist Nevill Sherburn who, in July, 1960, ten years after the "last" issue, produced issue No 104. But sadly the revival didn't last long. Overwhelmed by the hugely popular rock 'n' roll scene, Nevill retired the magazine for good with issue No 113 dated December, 1962.

**Ade Monsborough wrote that Sydney leaned to swing while Melbourne leaned to "righteous" jazz.**

There are thousands of pages contained in the complete run of *Jazz Notes*—more than ten years of social history, a wealth of biographical and discographical information, erudite articles and discussions, a whole world of jazz. It's there for future generations thanks to its hundreds of contributors and the hard work of its production teams. Readers will be pleased to know that the Victorian Jazz Archive has preserved the complete run of the magazine for posterity.

# RESEARCH REVIEW

By John Kennedy

**D**ISCOGRAPHY is the heart and soul of jazz information, whether pertaining to a musician, a band, tunes, an era or labels. The database we use for sound recordings at the Archive is based on discography, as the two go hand in glove. At the moment I am completing a Discography of Frank Traynor, and probably about 70% of the early unissued recordings of Frank's in the Archive are on either acetate disc or tape (reel to reel or cassette). Specifically these comprise of the early recordings of Frank and his Black Bottom Stompers, but, more specifically, the time when he was with Len Barnard's Band.

One big problem we have is the lack of information that accompanies these recordings, because of the fact that there is no external information on the carrier, usually just "Len Barnard Band" and the tunes. Rarely is the personnel of the band listed, plus there is no date or venue given. This means to properly identify musicians, venue, and probable era, some pretty serious listening needs to be done. None of this lack of information is due to the staff at the Archive, be it Collection, Database or Sound people. The Sound staff do not have, or ever had the time to put their thoughts on to the Sound Data Sheets, as a constant flow of material prevents that and especially in the early days of "Acetate Action" there was a big backlog of acetate material. The recent donation of one of the largest collection of jazz records in Australia will keep the Collection Manager and his staff busy for the next twelve months.

To help us get over this lack of information and provide accurate listings to go onto the Archive's database, I spoke at the recent AGM, stating I would like to see us use the expertise of people with knowledge of the early days of Australian jazz from the late 1940s on. In other words, researchers who could be called on to help solve the problems I spoke about above. Most of the time it would involve one or two days a month, maybe only every two or three months. It wouldn't be necessary to be computer literate, just lend us your ears and your wealth of jazz experience. If you are interested in helping out please email me at [jkenn1@bigpond.com](mailto:jkenn1@bigpond.com).

With the Frank Traynor Discography I am trying something new, and because of the large amount of unissued recordings, I am listing all unissued material with the registration number (five numbers on the left of the page) from which entry to the Archive's Database can be made for information on the recordings. The numbers on the right refer to the Preservation CD.

## LEN BARNARD'S DIXIELAND JAZZ BAND

Bob Barnard c, Tich Bray cl, Frank Traynor tb, Greg Clarke p, Peter Cleaver bj, Bill Fredrickson bb, Len Barnard d.

### Melbourne 14 March 1951. Concert

12743	Irish Black Bottom	unissued	PCD053
12743	Big House Blues	unissued	PCD053
12745	Hiawatha	unissued	PCD054
12745	Snake Rag	unissued	PCD054

The Archive encourages use of the Collection to investigate reference material to help to compile a book, thesis, or archive paper. The latter usually contains material sourced almost entirely from the Collection and its database. In the next column I hope to be able to list all the research projects we have, and give you an insight as to what they contain.

Finally, can someone inform me where the venue called "The Squeeze Box" is/was situated. Frank Traynor's Jazz Preachers recorded their LP Roseleaf -2 there.

# News from the Collection:

By Ralph Powell



**A**MONGST the extraordinary collection of material recently donated comes a signed test pressing of the second take of *I'm Just a Vagabond Lover* by Joe Watson & His Green Hill Orchestra (W 144x Melbourne, 17<sup>th</sup> October, 1929). Signatures include those of Don Binney tb; Tiny McMahon ts, cl; Vic Wood sb, bb; Joe Watson t, arr; Arthur Morton as, cl; George McWhinney p; George Dobson t; Les Paine as, cl; Tris Hill bj, g; with Ben Featherstone d; printed in capitals. Note also the stitched edges to the record sleeve.

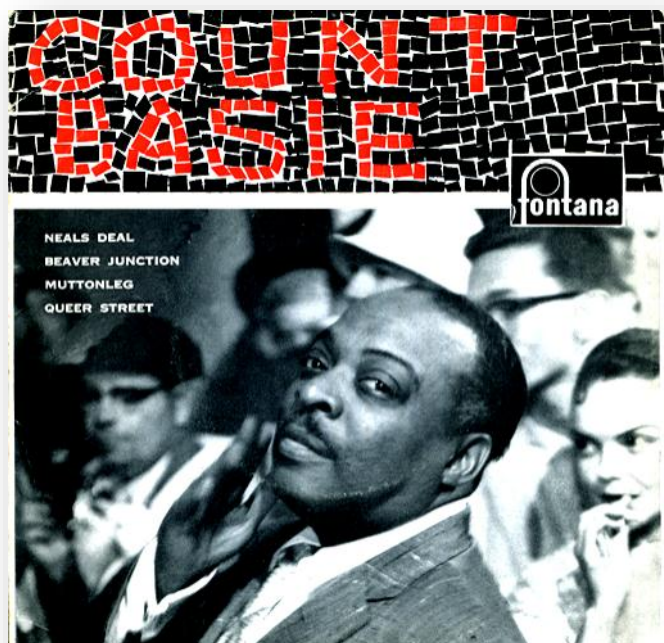
Our thanks to Roger Beilby, Margaret Hendrie, Clint Smith, David Brandt, Chris and Pamela de Cicestr Stuart-Smith, Julien Wilson, Brian Florrimell, Christina Bell, Ron Hayton, Dawn Birken, and Judy Robertson for their donations of new items to the VJA collection.



# BASIE-CALLY SPEAKING.

By Bill Brown

**W**ILLIAM Basie, jazz pianist of note, was born in Red Bank, New Jersey in August 1904. According to John Chilton's 'Who's Who Of Jazz' one of his early influences was Fats Waller. He played initially with various groups gaining experience. Along the way he gained the sobriquet "Count" thereby joining that hallowed clan of "Duke" Ellington, "King of Swing" (Benny Goodman), "Lady Day" (Billie Holiday) and others of their ilk.



I first heard him on record in the Bennie Moten Orchestra, Moten was the pianist leader, but for a time Basie worked in the band when it was under the leadership of Buster Moten, (Bennie's accordion playing brother). In October, 1930 in Kansas City Basie plays piano in the Moten Band's version of *Somebody Stole My Girl* even supplying a vocal which would remain a novelty for him in his subsequent career.

After Bennie Moten's death, the Count assumed leadership of the group which soon gained popularity with the populace of Kansas City which had the reputation of being a 'wide-open' town in the entertainment stakes.

As the Basie Orchestra's fame spread, impresario John Hammond brought them to New York and they were on their way so to speak. Recordings and broadcasts were in abundance and the Count had some fine soloists on hand. On trumpet Buck Clayton, trombone Dicky Wells, in the sax section Herschel Evans and the great Lester Young, a man whose light style of playing influenced so many of the future saxophonists who became big names.

The Count recorded with Benny Goodman's small groups and the band also appeared in various films. When the bubble burst for the Big Bands around the late forties, Count disbanded and from about 1950 led an octet. This group which made some swinging sides such as *The Golden Bullet*, *Bluebeard Blues*, and *These Foolish Things*, contained enterprising players who would star in more modern circles as the years passed: Clark Terry trumpet, Buddy De Franco clarinet, and saxophonists Serge Chaloff, Wardell Gray and Charlie Rouse.

Eventually, however, by 1953 Basie had re-formed a big aggregation and started a series of recordings on the emerging long-play format. There were the sets called the **Dance Sessions**, *April In Paris*, and the wonderful *Atomic Mr. Basie*.

This latter LP had tunes devised by Neal Hefti who had also written material for the Woody Herman Orchestra. A few of the tunes, *Lil Darlin'*, *Whirlybird*, *The Kid From Red Bank*, and *Splanky* (one of Basie's nicknames) all became jazz standards. The album was popular although a few critics deemed the cover depicting an atomic explosion somewhat tasteless.

The early band had been blessed by the great blues shout-er Jimmy Rushing. The mid-fifties one had Joe Williams. And he was featured on some recordings: *Every Day I Get The Blues*, *The Comeback*, *All Right Okay You Win* all received sympathetic air time on the 'wireless' in those halcyon pre Pop days.

The Count was, I suppose, a minimalist pianist. A few tinkling notes from him at the beginning of a track, then the band would come in with a wallop. Sometimes he switched to organ and that added to the blues feel of the rhythm, indeed his rhythm section was always the mainstay of his team. In the early period it was known as the 'All American' section. With Basie there was bassist Walter Page, drummer Jo Jones and the rock steady rhythm guitar man, Freddie Green. Apart from the initial year or so of the band 1936/37 when Claude Williams was on guitar, Freddie became the lynchpin of the section up till Basie's death in 1984.

The sound of that rhythm section had a profound influence in the many mainstream recordings that flourished in that fifties period. Humphrey Lyttelton, British trumpet man, said in a review that the Basie sound had spread like a potent dye throughout the jazz scene. His guitar man, Fred Legon, left his band and wasn't replaced. When asked why Humph, never short of a quip, said that he couldn't get Freddie Green to join his band.

In the sixties Basie appeared with various entertainers like Frank Sinatra and Tony Bennett and did an LP of James Bond themes and a Beatles Bag. However, for me, I listen mostly to the early band or the mid-fifties tracks. I always think of the Count's statement at the end of the track *April In Paris* "One more time" then "One more – once". Couldn't agree more.



## Graham Coyle: The Final Bow



Rex Green and Graham Coyle. Apex Antics 1952

### From John Roberts

As an impecunious student in the late 1950s I used to hitch-hike on trucks from Sydney to Melbourne, to play at the "Wild Colonial Club", Lorne, and the Melbourne Jazz Club. It was at Lorne that I first met Graham Coyle. We also did morning fitness runs in the bush together. I stayed at his folks' place at Ormond, and after a gig at Balwyn, I recall that we went to hear him play the organ in the empty Dendy Theatre, Brighton, to which he had a door key.

At a Jazz Convention at Cootamundra NSW, I recall sharing a large flask of Drambuie with Graham, succeeded by friendly tussling on the floor of the Railway Hotel to sniff the last dregs! Ever enthusiastic and up to devilment, at the Ballarat Convention in 1969, without warning, Graham might grab the steering wheel of my Kombi van to veer us off the

road, or into other traffic, if I was not careful. At other times, during my cornet solo, he might suddenly change piano key into say, F# or B natural, leaving me floundering and inadequate - just because he could!

I lost track of him during his Canberra years, although I had lived and played there earlier in the 1960s. But on his (and my) relocation to Melbourne in the 1990s we renewed the friendship, and Wendy and I frequented parties at his home at Elsternwick at which were such legends as Roger Bell, Tony Newstead, Lou Silbereisen, etc.

In later years, up towards Graham's demise in 2013, we (Wendy and I) went to his and Carol's birthday parties and luncheons at their new abode in East Brighton. On trumpet (or bass saxophone at Grampians Jazz Fest), I played a few more gigs with Graham (and Tony Newstead), and I drove Graham to frequent jam or rehearsal sessions at Bill Kerr's, or luncheons at John Tucker's place in Brighton.

Graham was THE great pianist of Australian traditional jazz; ever polished, tasteful, masterful and experienced. While he himself was self-effacing, his skills were much appreciated by fellow musicians. He was ever positive, enthusiastic and cheerful, while given to occasional devilry and hilarity.

He died on November 17, 2013, at the age of 81, to the heartfelt sorrow of family and friends. At his funeral and wake (yesterday, November 25, 2013), the church and the wake were packed, and family and friends from far and wide played jazz and celebrated the fruitful and joyous life Graham gave them.

Postscript:

Another memory: We had been to a jazz party at Don Hall's (drummer) place at Box Hill. Driving back to play our gig at Lorne in Graham's Holden car were myself (John Roberts) next to Graham in the front seat, and Willie Watt, (banjo) and Paul Marks (singer and guitar) in the back seat. Will, Paul and I were continuing the party spirit by passing around a bottle of "Boronia" Marsala All'Uovo (I remember it well; Graham was not sharing it, but was entering into the lively spirit of the journey. Passing through a major intersection in south Geelong, Graham blared the car horn, and powered on. Immediately a motorcycle policeman gave pursuit and pulled the car over:

"Show your licence, driver!" Graham complied.

"Graham Coyle, eh?" "Yes, officer".

"Are you a musician?" "Yes, officer".

"Are you the Graham Coyle who played piano at the Policemens' Ball in Warrnambool last year?" "Yes, Officer".

"Drive on, driver, and don't sound your horn through intersections!"

This is a true story.

### From Sandra Leaman

Early 1960s - Sunday arvo at Coyles ... (or was it Saturdays?). Graham owned the set of Jelly Roll Morton "Library of Congress" records, and several of us from the then Melbourne Jazz Club would descend on Graham and Carol (at their first home in Elsternwick) to hear selected tracks of those wonderful Jelly Roll Morton musical memoirs and then discuss Jelly's various styles of playing. We were being "educated".

Late 1968/Early 1969 - The Coyles were moving to Canberra. Graham had planned on trading in his old piano for a "nice new one" to take to Canberra, but fell in love with, and privately bought, a lovely old Rönisch instead. He'd offered his old one to the local school, church, scouts, anybody who could use it, but at the time they all had pianos and didn't need another one. They were due to move in a couple of weeks, so my (then) husband asked him how much he wanted for it "because



## Graham Coyle

Sandra has always wanted to learn to play piano" and Graham said, "Oh, just bring around a carton of Courage beer" (Courage Breweries had recently started brewing in Melbourne). So we did, AND we helped him drink it too as I recall, and I ended up with Graham's piano. Subsequently, each time they came down to Melbourne on holiday, there was always a BBQ at our place and Graham would spend time re-acquainting himself with his childhood piano! (PS: I did take lessons for about 18 months but when the going got tough I just didn't try hard enough; by that time I realised that I was never going to sound like Fats Waller!)

1980 – Graham and Carol returned to Melbourne to live and I moved to New Zealand very soon after. On subsequent visits to Melbourne with my (now) husband there would always be some "catch up" time at their place – the four of us would sit around in the living room catching up with our news with Graham at the piano playing in the background while we chatted.



**Graham on piano at St Silas Hall**

Thanks Graham for some lovely memories. It has been a privilege and pleasure to have you as a friend.

### From Harry Price

I met Graham for the first time in 1950. He was 18 and I was 20. Graham was in a band called "The Blackbottom Stompers" led by Frank Traynor, and I was leading a band called "The Melbourines". We did a two band job in a hall in Elsternwick.

During the 1950s, Graham played with the Len Barnard Band, and after the ill-fated tour of the Eastern States, joined Alan Lee's Quartet which enriched his style with more progressive ideas.

We both joined Kenn Jones Powerhouse Band in 1958, and Graham also joined the Melbourne Jazz Club House band.

He left the band for a brief period in 1960 and sailed to Europe on the Greek Liner "Patris" playing in a small group led by Frank Johnson.

He returned, married Carol and rejoined the Powerhouse Band. We had several girl vocalists including Gaynor Bunning, Bev Hay, Helen Reddy and a few others. Graham had no trouble accompanying them all.

His style was influenced by Jelly Roll Morton, Fats Waller, Earl Hines, but his blending of all these greats gave him a great style of his own.

Graham played and recorded with many bands and combos over the years including Hotter than Six, in which he went to the Sacramento Dixieland Jubilee, Kyat's Khorset with Tommy Carter and old mate Fred Parkes, with the great trombonist Bill Howard and Nina Ferro vocals.

He recorded many times with Ade Monsborough, Neville Stribling and Bob Barnard, and also a great C.D. of piano solos in 1998.

We had great fun and good times in the Melbourne Jazz Repertory Co. started by Alan Leake and Roger Hudson in 1985. We toured Queensland twice with "The Louis Armstrong Show with Bob Barnard" and "The Swinging Years" in the early nineties with Ian Orr and Lachie Thompson, with Bev Sheehan, Carol Harris and Dave Hetherington.

Over the years I have played with Graham many times, once at the Manresa Hall for the Musicians' Benefit Fund with our two families band: Graham, his daughter Jane vocals, son Paul, trumpet, my sons Robert vocals and harmonica, and Steven on drums, with Peter Grey on bass.

From the sixties onwards there were great parties to go to – mainly once a year – started by Bill and Julie Linton, then Gavan and Patsy Gow, and finally the Coyles. These were musicians and wives parties and apart from catching up with people you hadn't seen for a while, the music was always good.

The "girls" like my wife Thelma, Sue Newstead and Carol Coyle, started a tennis club.

My late wife Thelma contracted cancer in 1991, after 2 years she was very ill and she organised her own funeral. When I asked her would she like a band, she said "No, just get Graham to play some good tunes." Graham certainly did.

"Coyley" as he was affectionately known, was a great pianist, great family man and a great bloke.

Australian Jazz has lost a great player. Well Played "Coyley".

### From Kenn Jones

#### EULOGY FOR GRAHAM COYLE

A eulogy for Graham Coyle. A pianist up there with the best of them with an extensive jazz knowledge, a successful career at senior level with decades in the Commonwealth Public Service, an exemplary and dearly loved family man, a good friend for well over half a century - my God, where do you start?!

I guess a good starting point would be around about 1953 shortly after he returned from a couple of years living and working in Shepparton. I was playing at the time in a quartet with Fred Parkes with the not very original appellation of 'The Rhythm Kings', playing at 50-50 dances in the Gardenvale and Brighton areas of suburban Melbourne. Our pianist decided to take the obligatory trip to the United Kingdom and Fred told me he had discovered a replacement in the form of a guy from Ormond who was about our age and, amongst other things, had been playing in a band with his saxophone-playing dad Frank and also

with various other groups favouring traditional jazz. We decided to give him a try-out in the lounge room at Fred's parents' house. When he sat down and played, Fred looked at me, I looked at Fred and we both thought - 'he's too good for us!' However, fortunately for us, Graham decided to give it a go and that was the start of a long and enjoyable relationship.

In his early days he performed with Frank Traynor, Max Collie and many more. He was a member of the Len Barnard band at the highly successful dance at the Mentone Life Saving Club. Subsequent to that he went on the ill-fated Barnard band Australian tour. Graham was passionately fond of Jelly Roll Morton's playing, a piano style extremely difficult to emulate and he played such compositions as 'The Pearls' far better than I have heard from anyone else. He also was a consummate performer of the works of Scott Joplin. I believe that special mention should be made of 'The Naked Dance' recording by the Len Barnard band in which Graham's playing can only be described as truly outstanding.

In the mid 1950s I formed one of the earliest eight-piece jazz groups in Melbourne with Graham at the keyboard and this was a precursor to the very successful group which started the Sunday night dance at Powerhouse Rowing Club in 1958. Graham was the obvious choice on piano and he remained there until he decided to travel overseas about four years later. Finding a replacement was not any easy task and when he finally returned to Melbourne I was glad to welcome him back into the band.

Like all the rest of us, Graham had his wild moments as a young man but we all sure had a lot of fun without getting into too much trouble and, with a mutual love of jazz managed, at times, to produce some memorable music. At one stage Graham was transferred in his job to Canberra where he made his mark with the likes of Greg Gibson and, sometimes, the Fortified Few.

He performed a lot with Bob Barnard and was chosen to tour overseas with Bob's group. Graham's contribution to Australian jazz was so impressive that it is very difficult to do it justice in a brief comment such as this. He will be sorely missed by everyone associated with him.



Graham (p) Bob Barnard (t) Len Barnard (d) Peter Cleaver (bj)

### From Bill Haesler

The first thing we noticed when Graham Coyle joined Melbourne's jazz scene in 1950, was his smile, then his enthusiasm - and that he was a wonderful pianist. He came from a musical family. His mother Vera played piano and his father Frank played violin, alto sax, clarinet, banjo and double bass. Graham took to piano at age four, studied it under the watchful eyes of the Presentation nuns from six and three years of classical music training developed his natural jazz talent. From 1946 to 1949 he worked alongside his father in Dick Tillney's Town Toppers Dance Band for local weddings, dances and social functions.

Graham came to jazz via his older brother Bernard's Fats Waller records and listening to Bernard's mate and next door neighbour Frank Traynor practising piano. He attended St. Kilda Christian Brothers College whose alumni included jazz personalities, Frank Traynor, Dick Hughes and Norman Linehan.

In December 1949 Graham joined trombonist Frank Traynor, clarinetist John Wolfe, Peter Cleaver on banjo and drummer Don Bentley in Martin Finn's Black Bottom Stompers, another neighbour who played cornet. They rehearsed regularly and had about six jobs in the year he was with them. Frank and Peter then joined Len Barnard's Jazz Band while Graham filled in occasionally with Tony Newstead's South Side Gang and appeared with it at the 5th Australian Jazz Convention in Sydney in 1950.

This memorably unique period in Melbourne boasted the Graeme Bell, Tony Newstead, Frank Johnson and Len Barnard bands with countless individual jazz musicians, the annual Jazz Convention, the Southern Jazz Society and its characters, jazz venues, concerts galore and house parties every weekend (or so it seemed) including some unforgettable events at the Coyle family home in Stewart Street, Ormond.

In January 1951 Graham, a Titles Office trainee left to work as a surveyor in the Victorian country town Shepparton where he met a mentor, Tasmanian pioneer jazz pianist Rex Green. On his return to Melbourne and its booming jazz scene in March 1953, he joined Len Barnard's Jazz Band for its legendary Mentone Life Saving Club Sunday night job and worked 50-50 dances with a quartet that included future jazz stars Fred Parkes and Kenn Jones.

When Frank Traynor and pianist Greg Clarke left the Barnard Band in late October 1953, Len brought in Ade Monsbrough and Graham in time for its second Parlophone record session in Sydney. Graham remained with the group until it disbanded in Brisbane in August 1953 following a disastrous Eastern Australian tour, but continued to record with Len's groups for Swaggie until March 1973. Ever a musical innovator he explored jazz and teamed up with vibes player Alan Lee in 1959. For two years the quartet played at Jazz Centre 44 and concerts and appeared at the 1960 Jazz Convention in Melbourne where it shocked jazz conservatives with 'modern' renditions of Jelly Roll Morton compositions.

Graham was a founder member of the house band when the Melbourne Jazz Club opened in June 1958 and remained



with it until venturing overseas on the SS *Patris* in March 1961 with musician mates, Ian Orr, Frank Turville, Ross Fusedale and Mal McGilvray. Graham's seven-month trip included Greece, France, Britain, New York, New Orleans and San Francisco. It was an introduction to the British Trad scene and the real thing listening to US jazz giants from Woody Herman, Maynard Ferguson and Eddie 'Lockjaw' Davis to Ruby Braff, Wilber DeParis and Pee Wee Russell to the New Orleans pioneers George Lewis, Kid Thomas, Louis Nelson and Sharkey Bonano and the West Coast revivalists Turk Murphy, Bob Helm and Pete Clute. He flew home in September 1961 to retake his piano stool from Rex Green in the Melbourne Jazz Club Band. The next month Len Barnard's Famous Jazz Band recorded its now popular classic *Naked Dance* LP for Telefil (reissued on Swaggie and a Bill Armstrong Collection CD).

In December 1962 Graham married Carol Nugent, whom he had met during those wonderful Melbourne Jazz Club daze. In addition to the Club (1958-68) Graham also worked with Max Collie's Jazz Kings (1958), the Alan Lee Quartet (1959-61), Sunday nights from 1958 to 1963 at the Albert Park Sailing Club with Kenn Jones' Powerhouse Crew and Frank Traynor's Jazz Preachers (1961-67).

During this time he also held down important day jobs having joined the Commonwealth public service in 1953. On being posted to the Department of Supply in Canberra in 1969 he soon became an integral part of its jazz family. He joined the Fortified Few (1970-72 & 1981), formed Mood Indigo with clarinettist Greg Gibson and held a long solo residency at the Canberra Press Club from 1976 to 1981. For thirteen years Yarralumla was home to Graham, Carol and the five children. He travelled widely to jazz jobs, Jazz Conventions, festivals and concerts and in September 1980 toured the UK, Ireland, Yugoslavia and Poland with Bob Barnard's Jazz Band.

The Coyles returned to Melbourne in 1982 where Graham joined Alan Leake's Storyville Jazzmen. He returned to Kenn Jones' Powerhouse in 1984, was with Beverley Sheehan's Swing Shift in 1985 and freelanced.

Following his retirement as Director of Public Relations for the Department of Defence in August 1987 Graham finally became a fulltime professional musician playing daily at the Old Melbourne Inn for six months. He worked with the Cairo Club Orchestra, was a member of The Jazz Repertory Company in 1990, played with the Australian Radio Rhythm Orchestra, worked long residencies with Khyat's Khortet and Hotter Than Six (later known as the Fireworks Jazz Band) and made annual trips with it to the US, Europe and Japan. Graham retired reluctantly in 2005 but, notwithstanding ill health, he and Carol continued to travel overseas.

I once wrote, "When the definitive history of Australian jazz is written it will show Graham Coyle to be one of Australia's greatest jazz pianists."

The definite history has yet to be written, but I am right. He was.

© 2013. Bill Haesler OAM.

Graham Coyle, (b. Ormond, Vic. 10 August 1932 - d. Melbourne, Vic. 17 November 2013.)



**Graham Coyle**  
**50th Australian Jazz**  
**Convention**  
**Melbourne University**  
**1995**

## DON'T KEEP IT TO YOURSELF

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

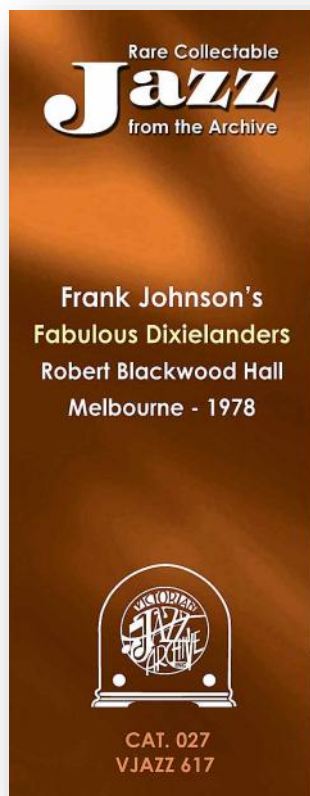
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## Frank Johnson's Fabulous Dixielanders

### Robert Blackwood Hall Concert - Melbourne 1978



**T**HE Victorian Jazz Archive is proud to announce the issue on the latest VJAZZ CD of this previously unreleased performance by the "Fabulous Dixielanders". It represents the only known professional stereo recording of Frank Johnson during this period of his career, with the band sounding as good as ever.

Trumpeter Frank Johnson, leader of the Fabulous Dixielanders, assembled a talented group of Melbourne jazz musicians for this performance in the Robert Blackwood Hall at the Monash University in 1978. It is one of several lunchtime jazz concerts featuring various bands held at this venue during the 1970s. (A Graeme Bell concert from the same year and venue is available on the CD, VJAZZ 017.)

Frank Johnson's Fabulous Dixielanders came to fame in the late 1940s and this recording, made some thirty years later, features five of the original band members (Johnson, Kitchen, Evans, Bland, and Brown). John Tucker, Ron Williamson and Peter Cleaver, who also play on this recording, joined the Fabulous Dixielanders in the 1950s. Please see the article below by John Tucker.

There is also another track added as a bonus featuring John Tucker's Yacht Club Jazz Band consisting of most of the same personnel, but without Frank. Tony Newstead replaces Ken Evans, Tony Orr replaces Peter Cleaver and Allan Browne replaces Wes Brown. This is the unissued non-vocal alternate version of a track that was released on VJAZZ 021.

Tracks include *Hindustan*, *Basin Street Blues*, *I Want a Little Girl*, *Sugar*, *Doin' the New Lowdown*, *Big Butter and Egg Man*, *Piano Boogie*, *Sweet Patootie*, *Canal Street Blues*, and *If I Could Be With You One Hour Tonight*.

The Victorian Jazz Archive is very proud of both the performance and sound quality of this CD (VJAZZ 027) which can be purchased from the Archive Shop, by phone on (03) 9800 5535, or on line at [www.vicjazzarchive.org.au](http://www.vicjazzarchive.org.au).

## Personnel Changes in the 1950s

### By John Tucker

THE personnel of the "Fabulous Dixielanders" in 1950 consisted of Frank, trumpet; Warwick Dyer, trombone; Geoff Kitchen, clarinet; Geoff Bland, piano; Bill Tope, banjo; Jack Connelly, bass; and Wes Brown, drums.

Early in 1951 Geoff Bland left the band, followed by Geoff Kitchen. Johnny Shaw came in on piano, and Frank asked Johnny McCarthy to join. McCarthy was a clarinet player who came down from Sydney and, I believe, didn't like Melbourne and only stayed four or five weeks.

Frank then offered me the gig, which was a huge step-up from Max Collie. This was reported in the Southern Jazz Newsletter of May, 1951. The band was then Johnson, Dyer, myself, Brown, Connelly, Tope, and Shaw.

Around January or February, 1952 my daytime job took me to Wellington, New Zealand for two or three years. Nick Polites took my place; hence I missed most of the recording dates. After Warwick Dyer died, Frank Traynor came in on trombone.

I returned to Australia around 1955 and Ken Herron came over from Tasmania. He and I then joined Frank, replacing Polites and Traynor, and Frank Gow came in on piano. Tope and Connelly had both left but Brown was still on drums. Ron Williamson joined on Sousa and string bass, and Peter Cleaver on banjo and guitar.

Barry Markby replaced Brown on drums and this band (Johnson, Herron, Tucker, Gow, Cleaver, Williamson, and Markby) was together for about a year, then Charlie Blott replaced Markby. This band we called the 431 Band.

## Correction

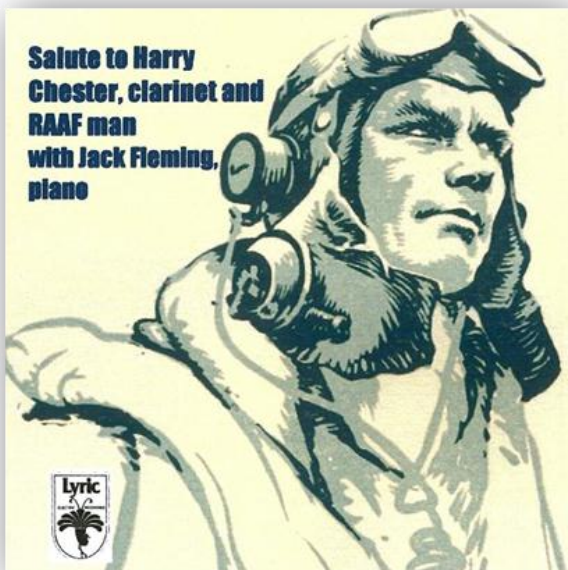
IN our last issue the gremlins got in the works and changed two two-letter words in a sentence, giving it the completely wrong context in John Tucker's excellent article about the origins of the 431 Club.

The sentence in question should have read: **"In later life, John Hilf became a virtuoso on the washboard, most notably as the powerhouse of the rhythm section in Judy Taylor's and Bill Kerr's Wombat Jazz Band."**



# TWO OF A KIND

By Ralph Powell



**R**OGER Beilby has alerted me to a remarkable similarity between the poignant story of George Fong and that of another young jazzman, Leonard Harry Chester. A clarinet player, Harry, having enlisted on 5 November 1943, died in a wartime plane accident on Morotai Island, Indonesia on February 17<sup>th</sup>, 1945 "his true measure as a jazz musician never to be realised."<sup>1</sup>

Fortunately, Harry recorded some tracks on a set of glass substrate acetate discs in 1943 which his sister Winifred had retained and, in 2003, Geoffery Orr of the Lyric label produced a 4-track set with Jack Fleming accompanying on piano. Glass discs were used during World War II in order to conserve aluminium.

The Archive has a copy of this CD generously donated by Geoffery.

Harry Chester was born to Simon and Sarah Chester on July 21<sup>st</sup>, 1925. Growing up in the St Kilda Jewish community, he attended St. Kilda Park Primary and Elwood Central Schools before graduating from High School in 1942 with the intention of becoming an aeronautical engineer. A contemporary of Ray Marginson, he attended Melbourne High between 1939 and 1942, was a school prefect - a high honour, featured in House Chorals, was an athlete and keen baseball player. Harry featured in the school team becoming its Captain and, in 1941, won the Speech Night Prize for Baseball.

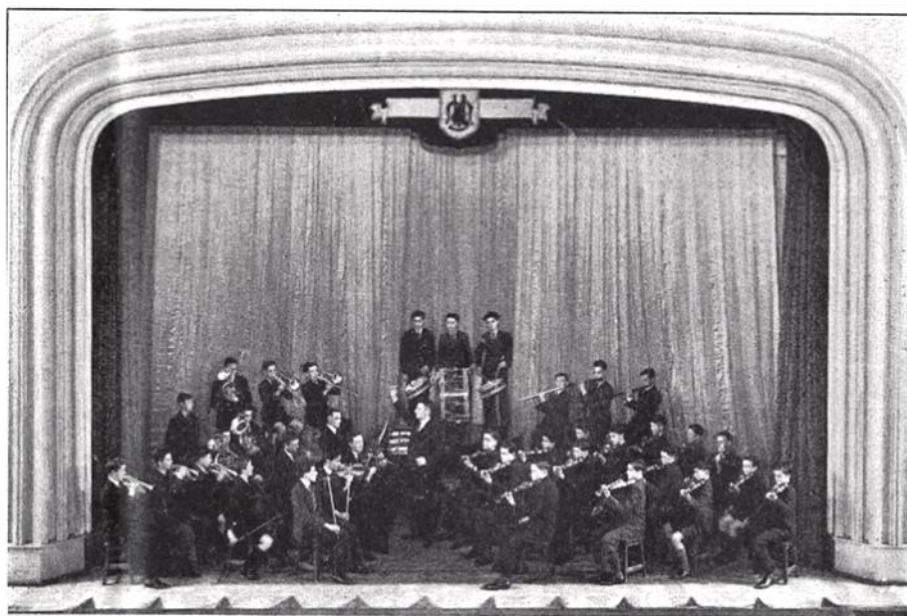
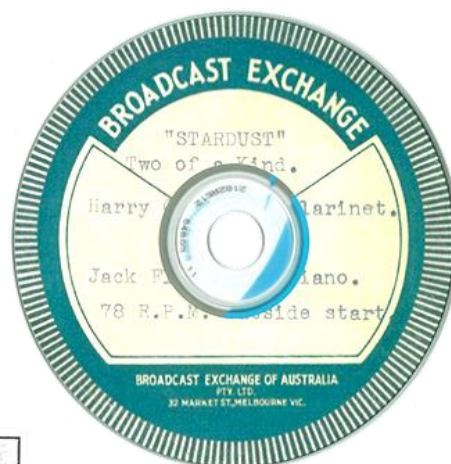
He played piano as a child becoming "fascinated with the clarinet, and the jazz scene during his teen years. He formed a small group playing at school socials, dances etc. The years 1939-41 saw Harry playing in the School orchestra every Monday morning. Harry frequently visited The Galleon Coffee Lounge on Acland Street, St. Kilda,"<sup>2</sup> located four doors from Denis Farrington's Barber Shop, "and occasionally sat in for 'jam' sessions with regular musicians."<sup>3</sup>

Benny Goodman and Artie Shaw were Harry's inspirations - his choice of tracks reflecting this: *Lady Be Good*; *Body and Soul*; *Stardust*; *Tea for Two*.

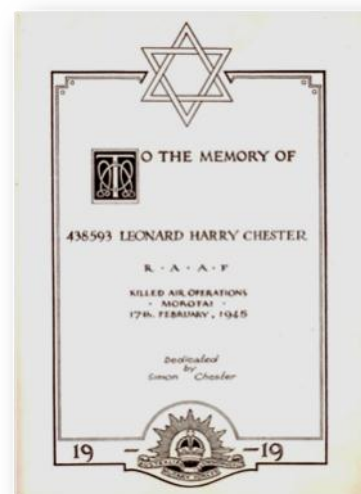
The sub-title to this CD? "Two Of A Kind". Appropriate considering the parallels with George Fong.

References:

1, 2, 3 - CD sleeve notes



Melbourne High School Orchestra, Unicorn, 1940





## Celebrations all round at the VJA



Ray Marginson celebrates his 90th Birthday. Seen here cutting his magnificent cake.

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY RAY**



Kim Harris and Barrie Boyes providing the music.



**VJA Volunteer Staff enjoying Christmas dinner at the Archive**





## Get ready for the UNESCO International Jazz Day celebrations

"ONE of the greatest cultural expressions of the 20th century, jazz is already capturing the spirit of the 21st. In times of change and uncertainty, we need the power of jazz more than ever before to bring people together and to strengthen respect for shared values." **Irina Bokova, Director General of UNESCO**



Jazz draws roots from a great mix of peoples and cultures—from Africa, Europe, and the Caribbean. Nurtured in the United States, it is now woven into the fabric of every society, played across the world, enjoyed everywhere. This diversity makes jazz a powerful force for dialogue and understanding and continues today as a force for social transformation, because it tells a story of freedom that all people share.

In November 2011, the UNESCO General Conference proclaimed 30 April as "International Jazz Day". The Day is intended to raise awareness in the international community of the virtues of jazz as an educational tool, and a force for peace, unity, dialogue and enhanced cooperation among people.

On this day across the world jazz events are taking place to highlight the role of jazz in society. Governments, civil society organizations, educational institutions, and private citizens currently engaged in the promotion of jazz music take the opportunity to highlight the importance of jazz. International Jazz Day is seen as the moment for all of us to express our passion for peace and UNESCO invites everyone to join in.

In December 2012, the United Nations General Assembly formally welcomed the decision by the UNESCO General Conference to proclaim April 30 as International Jazz Day. The United Nations and UNESCO now both recognize International Jazz Day on their official calendars.

In 2012 Paris was chosen to launch International Jazz Day and in 2013 Istanbul played host to the International Jazz Day Global Concert featuring performances by stellar musicians from around the world including Australian saxophonist, Dale Barlow.

On April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2014 The Victorian Jazz Archive together with Knox City Council, The New Melbourne Jazz Band and The Syncopators is celebrating International Jazz Day. This is a unique opportunity to participate in an amazing global event and to hear two of Australia's top Traditional Jazz Bands on the one billing.



Join in the International Jazz Day celebrations at the Knox Community Arts Centre on the corner of Mountain Highway and Scoresby Road, Bayswater, at 7.30 pm on April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2014. Telephone 03 9729 7287. Tickets \$30.



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

BlueTone Jazz Band, Delwyn H Carlyon, Heather Heywood, John Kennedy OAM, Ian MacKenzie, James MacMillan, Quentin H Miller, Wal & Jill Mobilia, Mario Proto, Doug Unmack, John & Joan Wardlaw.

### We want to recognize some wonderful donations to our Collection:

Jazzbeat Magazines 2001-2007; Frank Traynor's T-shirt; A Graeme Bell scrapbook, Jazz Australia No 1; musical drum skulls and stand, Jazz Festival T-shirts, posters and programs; records; CDs, including three from the Dubbo Jazz Festival program; photographs and reel to reel tapes.



## We Thank You

Thanks to the two gentleman on the right, John Thrum and Steve Bartley, we have an outdoor area to be proud of. They have worked tirelessly at the VJA cementing, paving and building to create a pleasant outdoor area for a spot of lunch.



### ONLINE MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

We're pleased to announce that membership renewals can now be done online, by credit card, Paypal, or by direct deposit to the Victorian Jazz Archive. Your renewal notice will give you full details. Alternatively, for credit-card or Paypal payments, go into the Membership page on our website at <http://www.vicjazzarchive.org.au> and find the payment option at the lower right-hand corner of the page.

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 Australian Jazz Convention Trustees, 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.