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Nick celebrates his 90th pg 11

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From The Collection



Ken Webber's son Steve has provided the following information about his father who was a Tasmanian jazz enthusiast. His family recently donated his extensive collection to the Museum adding immensely to our Australian and International collections.

Dad was a great enthusiast of traditional jazz, and had a vast knowledge of that genre. According to Dad's brother, Daryl, Dad started his musical career learning the cornet under the watchful eye of his uncle Lou Coventry MBE the well known bandmaster at Latrobe in Tasmania.

As he became proficient with the cornet he developed an interest in Jazz. He studied this style of music as well as he could during and after WWII and began collecting records. This became his lifelong passion. He became knowledgeable enough to ring up the radio station and correct the presenter when they erred on some jazz topic. He was able to identify local drummers just through hearing them play.

As his musical career progressed he mastered the bagpipes, guitar, trombone and recorder. He had a good ear and a fine sense of rhythm. He helped many people with his knowledge and understanding of jazz

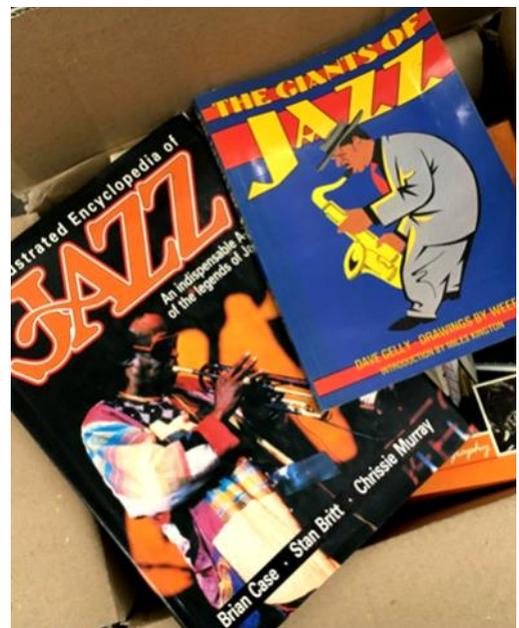
Dad knew lots of jazz people and was a regular at jazz conventions, and a regular visitor at Forbes. He was on the organising committee when the Jazz Convention was held in Hobart in 1971. Dad played cornet and trombone in brass bands in Latrobe and New Norfolk Tasmania; and in the 1950's played bagpipes with the Hobart Highland Pipe Band.

Dad also knew Tom Pickering and Ian Pearce as well as many other jazz performers.

Myself and all Dad's relatives hope that his unusual collection will encourage others to learn about early jazz and its performers.

Kenneth Edward Webber Tasmanian Jazz enthusiast

2 March 1929 - 15 Sept 2016



Our thanks to the following donors:

Geoff Asher, Moira Barker, Bev Eldridge, Karen Jackson, Graeme Kniese, Michael McQuaid, John Metcalf, Paul Mobilia, Tom Vincent.

Blues Lyrics as Reflection of Social Events and Mores

In the February edition of *Ajazz 73* (pp. 6-7) in the last paragraph of my article I wrote that jug band recordings whilst possibly not being 'mainstream' Jazz, were important because the material in them "...preserves many aspects of the roots of jazz through the story telling of the blues...". Some would argue that analysis spoils the enjoyment of music, for instance pulling apart perhaps the most famous opening trumpet notes of any jazz recording - and possibly what follows to the end of the recording - Armstrong's 1928 Hot Five recording of Oliver's *West End Blues*. In his book: *Louis Armstrong's Hot Five and Seven Recordings* (Oxford Studies in Recorded Jazz 2011) Brian Harker devotes a whole chapter (6) to this recording. In this context of analysis of jazz and the blues, what is to be gained by examining the lyrics of early blues recordings? The answer is that the "story telling of the blues" gives an interesting view of the social and to some extent geographical conditions that make up the 'story' and this is intrinsically interesting. Secondly, it could be construed as recorded history, just as any jazz recordings are in the context of their times.

In the sleeve notes to the double disk recordings: *"The Story of the Blues"* compiled by Paul Oliver (CBS S2VL 1001 [1972]). Oliver writes of the "twelve-bar, three-line structure of the blues." as its essential format. Encapsulated within this format is the 'story' in the form of the verse(es), in the same way that the 'story' is encapsulated into the format of the limerick where the first and second lines rhyme, the third and fourth lines rhyme and the last line rhymes with the first. Of limericks, it has been written: *"What could only be circulated privately, too indecent for mainstream taste, springs out perhaps ten years later into public view as moods and perceptions change."* This is also true of the blues.

In the notes that accompany the CD: *Raunchy Business: Hot Nuts & Lollypops* (Columbia 1991 CK46783) Paul Oliver writes:

"As music that been expressive of much of the African-American experience in this century [20th] blues has no parallel. There are blues about work and unemployment, blues about railroads and migration, blues about sickness, about disasters, about war... there's a remarkably high proportion of blues about sex."

As an example of this Track 6 on this CD, Lucille Bogan's "Shave 'Em Dry" from 1935 is positively pornographic and has the power – even today – to shock the unwary! (She was not the first to record it; it was recorded before the 30s by Papa Charlie Jackson and James "Boodle It" Wiggins and it was around vaudeville and tent shows even earlier. Many of the songs of this genre were recorded in a bowdlerised form, such as Charley Patton's *Shake It And Break It*.) Other tracks on this CD where the title is an indicator of the content are, for example 2: *"My Stove's In Good Condition"*; Barrel House Annie's *If It Don't Fit Don't Force It* (8) and Bo Carter's: *Banana In Your Fruit Basket* (12).

Not all of these blues recordings from the 20s and 30s were as blatantly sexual as *Shave 'Em Dry*. (Another example is Lil Johnson's: *My Stove's In Good Condition*. Sometime they were subtler (!) and it was left to the listener's imagination as in this latter rendition. Another is this one. In March 1929 Cleophus Gibson (Cleo) recorded two sides for *Okeh* records, one of which was *"I've Got Ford Engine Movements In My Hips"*. After an introduction, we get:

*I got Ford engine movements in my hips
Ten thousand miles guarantee
A Ford is a car everybody wants to ride
Jump in, you will see
You can all have a Rolls Royce
A Packard and such
Take a Ford engine boys
To do your stuff
I've got Ford engine movements in my hips
Ten thousand miles guarantee
I say, ten thousand miles guarantee.*

Another example of events identified in blues lyrics (and not mentioned by Oliver) is 'geographical' events which had devastating effects at local level, such that it was sung about. For instance, on Christmas Day 1926 the Cumberland River which flows through Nashville, Tennessee flooded to the extent that it rose to a record 17 metres above its normal level. The song was written on that day by Bessie Smith in response to the flood which had massive local effects. It is said that she wrote it out of sympathy for the devastation that it caused. Its verses are in effect a potted history of the event. (She recorded it in February, 1927.) For instance:

*When it rained five days and the sky turned dark as night (x2)
Then trouble's takin' place in the lowlands at night
When it thunders and lightnin' and the wind begins to blow (x2)
There's thousands of people 'ain't got no place to go
And I went and stood up on some high old lonesome hill (x2)*

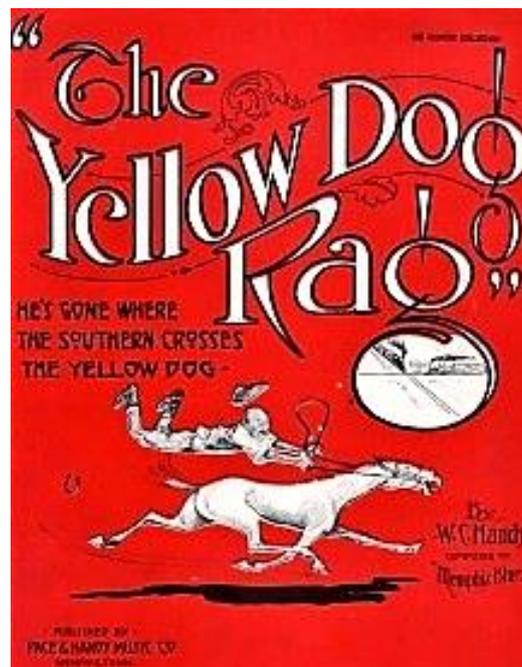
By Peter Baddeley

*Then looked down on the house where I used to live
Backwater blues done called me to pack my things and go (x2)
'Cause my house fell down and I can't live there no more ...*

The subject of this article is worthy of a book, but the final example of both unhappiness (feeling 'blue') geography and railways (and innuendo) in the blues is W.C. Handy's *Yellow Dog Blues* (originally *Yellow Dog Rag* written in 1914). The origin of 'Yellow Dog' in this context is itself of interest. The above-mentioned Paul Oliver is on record as stating that in Rome, Mississippi "they declared that it was named after a mongrel hound that noisily greeted every train as it passed through." Others have argued that the Yazoo-Delta Railroad was a branch line between Moorhead and Ruleville, Mississippi. W.C. Handy wrote that locals assigned the words "Yellow Dog" to the letters Y.D. on the yellow freight trains which they saw passing on this line. The crossing - the lines at right-angles to each other - was at Moorhead. Handy wrote and Bessie sang:

*Ever since Miss Susie Johnson
Lost her jockey Lee
There has been much excitement
And more to be
You can hear her moanin'
Moanin' night and morn
She's wonderin' where her
Easy rider's gone
Cablegrams goes off in inquiry
Telegrams goes off in sympathy
Letters came from down in Bam
Everywhere that Uncle Sam
Is the ruler of delivery
All day the phone rings, but it's not for me
At last good tidings fill our hearts with glee
And this message came all the way from Tennessee
Dear Sue, your easy rider struck this burg today
On a southbound rattler beside the Pullman car
I seen him there and he was on the hog
I said easy rider's got to stay away
So he had to vamp it but the hike ain't far
He's gone where the Southern cross the Yellow Dog*

And then there was *Cocaine Habit Blues*, but that's another story: "... hey, hey, have another whiff on me..."



What is Jazz

JAZZ is many things to different people. The famous Louis Armstrong quote, “if you gotta ask, then you ain’t got it!” is a good starting point. But a group of jazz musicians who were frequenters of Ronnie Scott’s in London, interviewed by Kitty Grim, gave their own favourite definition.

Duke Ellington: We’ve all worked and fought under the banner of jazz for many years. But the word itself has no meaning.

Dizzy Gillespie: Well, you know what that word meant? Where did it start? In the warehouses of New Orleans (they say, don’t believe it). It’s probably because of that word that Americans don’t take the *music* seriously. Too late now to bother *me*. They can call it what they want to as far as I’m concerned ... Jazz identifies itself.

Charles Mingus: Jazz to me is my experiences and I play them ... I don’t think what a person knows and feels can be written down. And listen to the music.

Horace Silver: The word jazz to me has a very humane vibration. Jazz brings people together from all walks of life, from all races, from all countries. The word jazz needs no altering. It’s the people’s perception of the word that needs altering.

Billy Harper: People have conceived of the word jazz as being less than it *is*. The music I am thinking of is so much above any *label*, that puts a damper on the value of music. *All* the words limit it.

Mike Gibbs: The word is becoming inadequate for the music. *Jazz is what jazz musicians play.*

Roy Eldridge: A silly word? Well, they call me Little Jazz, I don’t think that’s silly.

Evan Parker: Labels start to be like ... *prisons*.

Colin Hodgkinson: I only object to labels if it puts people off coming to see you.

Beaver Harris: I don’t mind the word jazz at all. Not at all.

Quentin Jackson: It’s the feeling that makes a jazz musician – the feeling plus improvisation. You don’t need other rules, not *today*.

Billy Higgins: As soon as they think it’s here, it’s there. What more can you say about jazz? Nothing. The music says it all.

Jo Jones: We’re alive. You can’t write it down. You have to be the living proof.

Billy Harper: You’re in touch with the infinite. Sounds funny, doesn’t it? But that is what it is. *You* become the instrument.

Don Ellis: So basically, just about everything I have or am comes from the music.

Johnny Griffin: Jazz for me is life.

Roswell Rudd: I thought life was improvisation, all over.

Stan Tracey: As many as there are people you’d get as many versions of what jazz is about, and they’re all going to be wrong.

Evan Parker: It’s an attitude you bring with you to every situation.

Ruby Braff: Jazz is a very small minor art.

Joe Pass: Jazz is passed on from hand to mouth, from contact, sound absorbed by contact. It’s something you breathe in. You only learn it by doing it.

Woody Herman: Jazz can’t really be taught, but instrumental techniques can be taught. You can’t teach but you can help. You can pass on the wisdom.

Roy Eldridge: You can’t teach nobody jazz. That’s something that has to be within you, know what I mean?

Johnny Griffin: You catch jazz. You don’t learn it.

Archie Shepp: This is why Duke Ellington did not receive the Pulitzer Prize.

Bud Freeman: And I know what Dizzy meant when he said, “Jazz is too good for Americans”. Americans rejected it because they took the attitude that any idiot can play jazz ... associated it with warehouses ... many still feel this way ... until Benny Goodman.

Andrew Cyrille: ... the greatest communication is music ... it’s beyond words, and it’s beyond *double entendre* and it’s beyond smiles ... beyond politics. That’s what makes it great.

From the book “**Jazz at Ronnie Scott’s**” by Kitty Grime. (Available from the AJM library.)

The First Hundred Years Part two.

By Bill Brown

THE Forties were a real melting pot for the Jazz Scene. The Swing era was grinding to a close. On one side the new contemporary, bebop or rebop was emerging. Players like trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie, Alto Sax Man Charlie 'Bird' Parker and pianist Thelonious Monk were pushing this new music. Some of the big bands adopted this phenomenon albeit reluctantly. Benny Goodman had a few boppers in his band but tended to leave them to it whilst he sat out, coming back later to play his own thing. Woody Herman on the other hand welcomed the new changes and his various Herds had numerous players who followed the new trends although Woody's own playing tended to display the influences of Ellingtonians' Johnny Hodges on his alto sax and Barney Bigard on clarinet.

At the same time on the US jazz scene another movement was afoot. A move backwards to the early days of the jazz of the twenties. The Black bands of King Oliver, Jelly Roll Morton, the recordings of the Louis Armstrong, his Hot Five, Hot Seven, the music of Sidney Bechet, Clarence Williams, blues singers like Ma Rainey and Bessie Smith. In San Francisco Lew Watters band set the ball rolling. The two strains of jazz of course were quite separate. However the two strains were picked up not only in the US but Worldwide.

In Britain the Revival as it was known regarding the old music, was nurtured by a group known as George Webb' Dixielanders, then a band led by trumpeter Humphrey Lyttelton. They followed one strand of the early jazz, trumpet man Freddie Randall and his band nodded in the direction of the early white jazzmen like trumpeter Muggsy Spanier or guitarist Eddie Condon. At the same time British players of a more modern persuasion were swotting up on the records of the aforementioned Gillespie and Parker. Musicians such as Johnny Dankworth and Ronnie Scott did trips as band players on the transatlantic passenger liners. Thus in their time off in the US they could listen to their heroes in the flesh as it were, absorbing the nuances of this 'new' music. Carlo Kraemer, a drummer had a studio in the basement of his London residence. He recorded quite a few of those aspiring Boppers and released the results on his Esquire label.

Meanwhile the Traditional side of things in the UK and Europe really spread like wildfire. Humphrey Lyttelton led the charge closely followed by the Christie Brothers, Mike Daniels and the purist Crane River Band, who based

their jazz on the musicians who hadn't decamped to Chicago and had remained in New Orleans. Graeme Bell's Australian Band embarked on two European tours in that immediate Post War period and through their efforts the audiences were encouraged to dance as well as sitting listening intently. This activity continues up to the present day. The craze for hot music was equally fervent across the English Channel. In France there was the bands of Claude Luter and Andre Reweliotty among others. In Holland there was the famous Dutch Swing College Band which actually formed whilst the country was under German occupation. It thrives to this day, recently releasing a CD of compositions penned by the late Jazz loving musician who happened to be the King of Thailand.

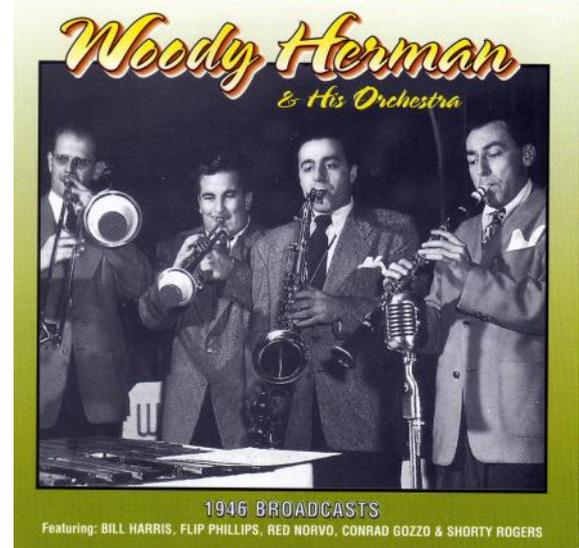
Of course most of the influences in the music stemmed from America. The Bebop abated somewhat and most of the Modern musicians played a more ethereal style called Cool Jazz as the fifties progressed... Stan Getz was one of the best in this style although a few others also followed the light sound of the former Count Basie tenor sax man Lester Young. On the West Coast of America which had become famous for the lusty sounds of the Revivalists Lew Watters, Turk Murphy etc. by the mid-fifties another sound had emerged the cool music of baritone saxist Gerry Mulligan, altoist Bud Shank and trumpeter Shorty Rogers, a refugee from the mammoth Stan Kenton Orchestra the chief purveyor of the dreaded Progressive jazz.

Around that mid-fifties time another field of the Good Noise was emerging. This was dubbed Mainstream jazz by the English critic/writer Stanley Dance. In the States again I think organised by critic John Hammond a series of Jam Sessions were recorded led by former Count Basie trumpet man Buck Clayton.

Those groups featured players from the Swing period who had fallen between the stools of Trad or Modern. Also in-

cluded were a few newer arrivals on the scene like the ebullient cornet man Ruby Braff.

From what I gather there was a broad field of the music here in Australia. The solid foundations of the early bands, Graeme Bell, Frank Johnson, the Barnards, etc. Pearce/Pickering had set the example for the newer emerging Red Onions, Yarra Yarra band, etc. Recent CDs put out by the Jazz Museum illustrate the activities on a few fronts. For instance the "Jazz Masters of the Forties" shows the emergence of more contemporary sounds. So the melting pot of the music had come a long way from the ODJB of 1917. Some changes alas were afoot in the 'Swinging 60s' which had an impact on the scene, ancient and modern. Watch this space.



LOST CHORDS

A Book by Richard M Sudhalter

THIS is the best book on jazz that I've read for quite some time. It's an 800-page tome largely based on the mistaken assumption that jazz is a purely negro invention and development. Thoroughly researched and meticulously written, its author, Richard Sudhalter, (himself a jazz trumpeter) has unearthed the often unrecognised influence that white musicians had on the early development of ragtime and jazz. He specifically covers in detail the white contribution, without malice or rancour, during the period between 1915 and 1945.

Early in the book the word "jazz" itself is defined. Often the subject of much controversy, Sudhalter quotes historian Dick Holbrook who spent many years researching the origins of the word and publishing his findings in *Storyville* magazine and others. Among his conclusions:

1. The word "jazz" seems to have been used, with or without explicit sexual connotations, in the San Francisco area well before the end of the nineteenth century. Actor William Demarest, growing up as a young musician, heard it there around 1908 as an exhortation to play with more energy. It was from Demarest, appearing in a New Orleans vaudeville theatre in 1913, that musician Ray Lopez said he first heard it.

2. A March 3, 1906, sports item in the San Francisco Bulletin refers to a promising baseball player as *very much to the jazz*. Its meaning, as explained by the author, is "somewhere between pep and enthusiasm", and it turns up increasingly in such sports feature stories.

3. Bert Kelly, Chicago banjoist, bandleader, and later club owner, also reported hearing it in turn-of-the-century San Francisco. An April 5, 1913, a Bulletin article by Ernest J. Hopkins, under the headline "In Praise of Jazz," devoted nineteen column inches to this "futurist word which has just joined the language." By that time, according to many of Holbrook's sources, "jazz" was in common use throughout California, Arizona, and New Mexico and as far east as New England.

4. Young white toughs in the notorious "Irish Channel" section of New Orleans were using the word early in the century as synonym for sexual intercourse. Some brothels in that city were referred to as "jays'n houses".

5. Frederick Starr stated that the word comes from the new testament "Jezebel" used in the late 19th century as a synonym for prostitute. New Orleans usage shortened it to jazzbel or

jazz belle and hence jazzbo or jazz beau for pimps.

6. The word surfaced in Chicago around late 1914 and was widely documented at that time. Thus it can be concluded that the word jazz or jass was in common use by 1915. (Australian historian Jack Mitchell has determined that "jazz" first appeared in print in Australia on 15th September, 1917, in the Sydney *Mirror* in a review of a movie "An Even Break" which mentioned that a jazz band appeared in one scene.)

White ragtime musicians had been performing in New Orleans since the earliest days of the 20th century. Sudhalter chronicles Tom Brown's five-piece ragtime band which, by 1915, was doing pretty well providing music for dances at Tulane University, at stately homes, at prestigious locations like the Young Men's Gymnastic Club, picnics, parties, and even occasionally in "the district", known to posterity as Storyville, the home of brothels, bars, and various nocturnal amusements.

Ray Lopez (not to be confused with later band leader Vincent) was the band's cornetist and manager.

Original Dixieland Jazz Band, who were first to record jazz—this was in 1917, and it was these recordings that brought them great popularity. But Sudhalter provides evidence that the wild frenetic whooping sounds of this band on those first Victor recordings did not represent the sound of the music being played by jazz musicians in the various venues of New Orleans and Chicago. Regrettably, these recordings caused other young players to copy these new sounds with bands of their own. Countless "fives" (cornet, clarinet, trombone, piano and drums) both white and black tried to emulate the ODJB examples.

Once when asked why the ODJB played their tunes so fast, journalist Rudi Blesh said, "They didn't. When they went into the recording studio they were given a choice: cut one chorus or play the whole thing faster". In the dance halls, the tempo was determined by the dance steps that were current at the time. An average number might last four minutes or more, often determined by the crowd's mounting intensity level and its effect on the band's personnel. And the



Chicago's first white jazz band: Tom Brown's "Band from Dixieland"
— in vaudeville garb, 1915

Ray arranged a six-weeks' renewable contract job with Gorham Theatrical Agents in Chicago who would feature the band at Lamb's Café. Thus, on 13th May, 1915, Tom Brown's Band opened in Chicago, the first white band to bring New Orleans music to that city.

It was another white group, the

bands often played soft, something not practical on the scratchy 78s of the period where the band had to crowd around a recording-horn in the studio. Thus, these early records do not actually represent the true sound of a band's night-to-night performance, something not really possible until the advent of tape and LP recording in the

Reviewed by Ken Simpson-Bull

1950s. These points that Sudhalter raises are not often examined.

New Orleans was not a typical city of the South. Its history of French and Spanish rule and its seaport dealing with Caribbean and South American trading set it apart. Racial and ethnic ghettos were almost unknown. Black and white working people lived in the same street and sometimes under the same roof in double-occupancy cottages. Black and white musicians were well aware of one another. On the shores of Lake Pontchartrain black and white bands competed. The resort at Milneberg was a typical location. (Hence the tune "Milneberg Joys".)

In 1924, the Okeh record company set up a mobile recording studio in New Orleans and recorded non-stop over the weekend of March 15. They recorded five bands, four of them white. It would be easy to read meaning into this fact, but Okeh were looking for organised bands, well known or regularly employed. Besides, many of the city's best black bands were absent in other cities—Joe Oliver, Louis Armstrong, Kid Ory, Jelly Roll Morton, the Dodds brothers, Jimmy Noone and others. These Okeh recordings are important however, insofar as they present real New Orleans music *in situ*.

“shot or clubbed to death eleven of the original nineteen”

Still in New Orleans, Sudhalter raises the question of how much influence the large Sicilian population of that city had on the early development of Jazz. There were around 20,000 Italian migrants in New Orleans by the end of the nineteenth century, mainly Sicilians. The fear of the Mafia was everywhere. In October of 1890, a popular police officer was shot dead over the investigation of various factions. Nineteen Italians were rounded up but only nine were tried. In the public outrage, a crowd marched on the New Orleans prison and shot or clubbed to death eleven of the original nineteen arrested. The Sicilian population became a hated underclass, but nevertheless, a large number of Sicilian names ranks greatly in the list of New Orleans jazzmen. Jazz aficionados will recognise the names of LaRocca, Roppolo, Almerico,



Two major white jazz influences: Bobby Hackett and Jack Teagarden

Giardino, Bonano, Prima, Loycano, Manone, Federico, Cordilla, Parenti, Pecora, Sbarbaro and others.

Eventually all of New Orleans' jazz greats, both white and black, migrated northwards. However, Sudhalter singles out an example of one who stayed—clarinettist Raymond Burke. Virtually unknown, his first recordings were not made until 1949 after which time he recorded regularly. What was heard in 1949 was a pure New Orleans style, unaffected by the huge influence that Benny Goodman had produced over the intervening years. Burke had fused the Creole and the white disciplines which Sudhalter describes as the “complete” of New Orleans jazz styles.

Sudhalter then devotes the larger part of his book to “The sophisticates”: Miff Mole, Red Nichols and his circle, and Adrian Rollini and the California Ramblers. “The Hot Linage”: Bud Freeman, and Dixieland. “The Big Bands”: Jean Goldkette, Ben Pollack, Casa Loma, the Dorseys, and Bob Crosby. “Individual Voices”: Bix Beiderbecke, Frank Trumbauer, Jack Purvis, and Bunny Berrigan. “The Big Bands”: Benny Goodman, and Artie Shaw. “The Fine Art of *Sui Generis*”: Bobby Hackett, Red Norvo, Pee Wee

Russell and Jack Teagarden. Of course these are not the only bands scrutinised and discussed—there are many more.

Sudhalter finally concludes that, beyond dispute, white musicians have been an integral force in jazz from its earliest days. Much “received” history has promulgated a distorted version of the facts, above all, that jazz was exclusively a black cultural preserve. If jazz, with its traditions—white and black, African and European, regional and international is to survive as a creative entity, then there must be real pluralism and shared involvement. Then there will just be—jazz!

Altogether, Sudhalter's book is full of revelations and intriguing conjecture that make for enthralling reading. Although published in 1999, the book is readily available on-line or it can be read in-house at the Jazz Museum.

Richard M Sudhalter = LOST CHORDS – Oxford University Press - 1999

Cyril Bevan and the Janet Seidel Trio By Norman Nicholls



Cyril playing with the Janet Seidel Trio at the Orpheum Cinema, Cremorne,



Well-known English drummer Cyril Bevan has recently been in Australia playing drums with the Janet Seidel Trio on her Australian tour of March and April which covered venues in Sydney, Nambucca Heads and the Central Coast of NSW, as well as a grand finale of two concerts at the Melbourne Recital Hall. All were received with great enthusiasm and acclaim.

Cyril was invited to play with Janet when her trio toured England, Scotland and Wales last year, a tour which was highly successful. This visit was the 54th trip Cyril has made to Australia and at age 87 he feels it could well be his last. But who knows? Cyril finds it hard to put the sticks away and turn down an offer to play.

While in Sydney Cyril had a reunion with two old friends, leading trumpet player Billy Burton and noted vocalist Marie Wilson. Bill in his 85th year plays with his band at the Lane Cove Country Club every Friday night. In the 1970s he fronted a fine big band at the then famous Silver Spade supporting famous international super stars. Marie is still fulfilling top gigs in and around Sydney.



The reunion of Cyril, Bill and Marie, as mentioned in the story (taken in a cafe with an artwork behind, in case you are wondering about the naked man!)



Nick Polites at Ninety

By Con Pagonis



THE Victorian Jazz Club celebrated this remarkable man and iconic jazz musician at the East Malvern RSL on the evening of Wednesday 19 July with a sold out *Louisiana Shakers* performance marking Nick Polites's recent 90th Birthday. The personal highlight for me was Nick's rendition in Greek of "Varka Yiallo". This tune was performed by Frank Johnson's Dixielanders at my parent's wedding on 1 October 1950; just a few months before Nick joined that band. There is a Dixielanders recording of it with Nick, Frank and Smacka Fitzgibbon on vocals – *all singing in Greek!*

On the afternoon of Nick's actual birthday – Sunday 2 July – we saw him performing with *The Louisiana Shakers* at Carlton's Clyde Hotel, as he regularly does. Again, it was a crowded house of family, friends and fans. Guest musicians stood in for regular band members, with celebratory speeches, birthday cake and much accolade.

While I have only developed a much-valued friendship with Nick over the past decade or so; our families were always well-known to each other; Nick's mother and my maternal grandmother were displaced persons in the aftermath of the First World War; both from the same provincial township in what is now Turkey.

Nick's jazz journey commenced with an epiphany nearly eighty years ago. In 1938, as an 11 year old boy, a footy team-mate loaned him some jazz records, and said "listen to these". Once Nick started listening to tunes like Louis Armstrong's "West End Blues" he was besotted and knew his future would be as a jazz musician. A short decade or so later, in 1951, Nick commenced a stellar performing and recording career with Frank Johnson's Dixielanders; and has continued performing and recording right through to his current band *The Louisiana Shakers*.

Over his jazz journey, Nick toured extensively in the UK and Europe; and of course was regularly in New Orleans from the early 1960s. He was embraced by the jazz community in New Orleans performing in iconic venues such as Preservation Hall in the French Quarter. An ultimate accolade was befriending, performing with and even standing in for his idol, New Orleans clarinettist George Lewis (1900-1968).



In his "other lives", Nick was a scholar, a confectionery manufacturer, and inaugural Director of the *Australian Greek Welfare Society*. For the most part he kept his life in the jazz world separate, but I did come across a pertinent cross-over. In Nick's music career scrapbooks there are a couple of press clippings from the New Orleans *Times-Picayune*. This newspaper reported on Nick's initiative to put together a group of local musicians to perform for residents at a New Orleans home for the elderly, to their great delight!

Nick recently donated thirty volumes of his music career scrapbook memorabilia, going back seventy years, to the Australian Jazz Museum. We are currently working through each volume, page-by-page, to digitalise each album so that we can make them accessible to members on-line. Older albums are quite fragile, and all the albums will deteriorate further with age; so we are considering options for how best to preserve the contents for posterity.



RUTH KATHLEEN 'KATE' DUNBAR (1923 - 2017)



THE unexpected death of singer Kate Dunbar, who died peacefully at home in Stanmore, NSW on Monday 10th July 2017 has saddened the jazz community. Ruth Kathleen Dunbar, née Kelly, was born in Manchester, England on 13 May 1923 to an English mother and Australian ex-serviceman father and came to Sydney in about 1928.

Attracted to music at a young age she studied piano privately and singing from age 16 at the NSW Conservatorium of Music until her marriage to Eric Dunbar, who introduced her to jazz and vintage cars. Kate joined the Sydney Jazz Club in 1953 and sang with the Paramount Jazz Band, performed at the Australian Jazz Convention at Cootumundra in 1955, played guitar with Pat Qua's all-women group in 1957 and worked with the Ray Price quartet at Adams Tavern and the Australia Hotel (1958-early 60s). She later featured with the Black Opal Jazz Band, Graeme Bell's All Stars (including TV and radio) and Frank Traynor's Jazz Preachers, appeared at jazz festivals and performed regularly at concerts, the annual Jazz Convention and recorded under her own name with the Paramount Jazz Band for Swaggie, with Ray Price for PIX Records and CBS, Graeme Bell, the Eclipse Alley Five and Roger Janes' Band.

Kate's long association with the SJC committee began in 1958. She was its Quarterly Rag editor (1959-1968), President from 1984 to 1998, a committee member into the new century and edited the monthly Newsletter up until last year. She retired briefly from active participation in jazz in 1973, but returned refreshed in the early 1980s as vocalist with Ted Sly's East Coast Jazz Band. From November 1984 she was a jazz presenter on radio 2RDJ

FM for many years and served on other committees including the Jazz Educators' Association, the Jazz In Australia website and helped organise the yearly Doubly Gifted art exhibition and its associated Bell Jazz Lectures at Waverley Library (1992-2014). Kate established her Singers' Workshop in 1987 and through it, and private mentoring, encouraged numerous, now



**L. Kate Dunbar
née Kelly**



**R. Shirley Pa-
drotta and
Kate Kelly.
Australian
Amateur Hour
compered by
Dick
Fair.**

popular, professional Sydney girl singers, issued LPs featuring local singers, and CDs for the SJC. In addition to her honorary jazz activities Kate also ran a successful secretarial business and an art gallery.

Unsurprisingly, in June 1994 Kate was awarded a well-deserved Medal of the Order of Australia [OAM] in recognition of her service to music, particularly Australian jazz, and to the community, which she continued selflessly into her 90s. Kate Dunbar was a remarkably energetic, talented much-loved lady and a tireless worker for jazz in Sydney for nearly 65 years.

Bill Haesler OAM.

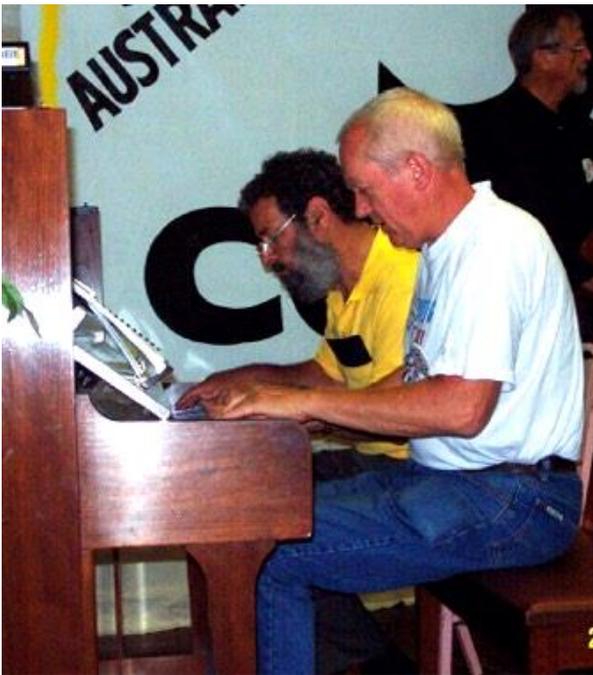


**Kate Dunbar
and Carol Ralph
Merimbula 2009**



Kate's 90th and Jack Wiard's 70th Birthday celebrations

ADRIAN FORD (1940 - 2017)



THE jovial Adrian Ford (who played piano, trombone, clarinet, cornet and was a talented composer and arranger) died at The Parkview Nursing Home, Five Dock NSW on Wednesday, 5th July 2017 following his long illness. He was born in Sydney on 26 April 1940. He studied piano for two years with a local piano school from the age of nine, came to jazz in 1957 listening to the Paramount Jazz Band at the Sydney Jazz Club, was a graduate of its 1960s musicians' workshop and took up trombone and clarinet.

He joined the Jazz Pirates in 1962, worked with Geoff Bull's Olympia Jazz Band during 1962-69, the Big Apple Union blues band, the York Gospel Singers in 1966 and toured Europe, Canada and the US with the Melbourne-based Yarra Yarra Jazz Band from 1970 to 1971. On his return to Sydney Adrian joined Chris Williams' Jazz Band (later to become the Unity Jazz Band) and was co-founder of the Bill Haesler Washboard Band in November 1971. He toured Australia with the Yarras and New Orleans trumpet player Alvin Alcorn in April 1973 and, over the years, freelanced everywhere on piano, trombone and clarinet.

An annual Australian Jazz Convention regular, Adrian had a composer's flair and won its Original Competition in 1974 and 1975 and again in 1982, 2008 and 2010. He formed the Charleston Chasers in 1976, his Big Band in 1976 and, among others, worked with Nick Boston's New Orleans Jazz Band (1982), the Purple Grape Quartet (1988), Jiri Kripac's Hot Buns (1992-93), Bill Dudley's New Orleanians and Squeak and Squawk. He was a familiar face at jazz concerts, jazz festivals and local and interstate

jazz clubs, recorded as a soloist, with the bands he worked with, and others, and was a director of the Professional Musicians' Club from 1976 until 2015.

Adrian became ill following a mild stroke in November 2013 and was reluctantly forced into musical retirement.

Bill Haesler OAM.



Adrian Ford Big Band



Adrian on the Trombone



Adrian on the clarinet

Dr. Noel Cass



At N. Follett's 7.86

Memorial Day for Dr Noel Cass on Sunday 21st May 2017 at Mt. Martha.

The Music of Noel with particular reference to the "Jazz Doctors" by John Andrews.

I first met Noel at the Peter Mac-Callum Clinic (PMC) in the early 60s when he was providing anaesthetics for the new hyperbaric oxygen trials and I was working as a radiotherapist.

At a PMC function Noel was talking to my wife Iris and said he was interested in forming a jazz group. She told him I played drums and that is how we started a long friendship and musical

association which continued until very recent times.

Noel was a great pianist, who could play in any key, companion and a terrific finder of excellent gigs which we soon began playing regularly.

His contacts were extraordinarily wide from Dame Elizabeth Murdoch, High Court Judges, Presidents of Medical Colleges and numerous sports clubs, particularly Golf, Sailing, Tennis and Skiing through to Probus clubs and with many people of influence in the community hence the wide variety of venues in which we played.

Noel was always so easy and fun to play with and was never rattled by any situation of which there were many and all were handled with grace and a great sense of humour.

A personal example was at the Merimbula Jazz Festival when I tripped up walking up towards the stage as we were the next band on. There was considerable bleeding from my nose and I was slightly dazed and Ezra Kowadlo who was playing trombone with us said, "He won't be able to play with us, look at his nose" to which Noel replied, "Don't worry. He'll be ok and he doesn't play drums with his nose anyway" and all went well with the band.

On another occasion a very, fashionable Black Tie wedding, one of the front line had a farewell party that afternoon and arrived on time with his instrument but having left behind his evening dress jacket.

"Ok" said Noel, summing up the situation. "We'll all take our jackets off" and we played in white shirts and bow

ties with no problems.

Early players in the band. Doug Lampard, banjo Max Wearne, on trumpet then David Goldsworthy. Tim Shaw then Garry Richardson on clarinet. Gray Wooley and then Rod Neil on trombone who continued in that chair. Trusting my memory on player's names and apologies for anyone who has been missed.

Later players included Bob Less on Clarinet and then Fred Sommerville who continued on. Clint Smith played banjo followed by Norm Follett for many years and later Jimmy Mills and John Packham regularly played banjo with the Jazz Doctors at Festivals

Many others played at various times including Ray Oliphant, Don Duncan, Dave Patten, David Seyer, Janet Arndt, Richard Desmond, Cliff Restarick and more recently Danny Kennedy and Ron Hayton. There were also a wide variety of other musicians who played with the Jazz Doctors, originally called Doctors Jazz in the earlier days when the band consisted of three medical specialists and two Non-medical doctors both professors in their field at university.

Many would have played with Noel in the various other groups he has played in, such as the Mountain Valley Band of Denis Cox, The Ugliers Jazz band of Naham Warhaft, various bands fronted by Ray Oliphant, the big Dixieland Band at Halls Gap organised by Michael Cousins and Ron Hayton and my group, Bayside Swing. None of us played with him however when he sat in on piano at Federation Hall in New Orleans.

I was extremely fortunate to play with Noel's band for most of its gigs on drums, sometimes also with vocals from the 60s to its final blow in January 2017 at a Hawthorn U3A event, so Noel put up with me for all those years and we had wonderful times at them as well as elsewhere.

Some of the regular Jazz Doctors gigs included:

Jazz Festivals particularly Merimbula, Halls Gap and Inverloch.

Cruden Farm followed by dinner with Dame Elizabeth Murdoch.

Kooyong Tennis Club particularly at Wimbledon time and other tennis clubs such as the "Fireballs".

Cranbourne Gardens for the friends of the gardens. A cap with the Gardens logo presented to the band members.

Mt. Martha Sailing Club, particularly on New Year's Eve which were hilarious events.

Royal Children's Hospital Friday Residents Club where Noel worked for many years.

Royal Melbourne Hospital Functions



Cruden Farm 3.81 a

N Cass (p), N Follett (bj), D Patton (t), F Sommerville (cl), R Neil (tb), A Stott (bb).

where I was working.
 Monash Staff functions.
 Golf Clubs particularly Frankston.
 Royal Children's Hospital Ski Club, both in Melbourne and at the Mt. Buller lodge.
 Kinglake Raspberry Farm.
 Medical College meetings, particularly the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons. A medal being presented to band members.
 The Organ Club.

Other gigs include:

Many weddings including one in the Great Hall of the Art Gallery.

Function at Government House.
 Ripponlea.
 Many Probuc Club dinners and meetings.
 Melbourne Cup events both at race tracks and in other venues.
 Many other events such as an annual meeting of the Australian and New Zealand Society of Nuclear Medicine in Melbourne and at one of the National Conference of Medical Association for the Prevention of War at Lorne.

This Memorial Day for Noel brings the closure of a very important part of my life both musical and social for Noel is irreplaceable.



Noel and friends entertaining at an earlier Mt Martha BBQ



Noel and friends



KJAM (Keeping Jazz Alive Movement) at the Mt Martha Memorial Day Sunday 21st May 2017

Noel's family would like to continue the long standing tradition at Mt Martha. The next date is planned for Sunday 12th November 2017, 1.00 pm music starts.

Material collected By John Thrum

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This QR code can be captured with a scanner app on a smartphone camera and allows you to access the basic information about our museum such as where to find us, our contact details and the museum opening hours.

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Email us at memberships@ajm.org.au with details of the new member, plus the name of the complimentary Ajazz CD you want them to receive – make your choice using the “Shop” catalogue on our website. Then make a payment of \$50 (includes \$5 mailing fee) to our bank account BSB 633000, Account 121694434
Call us on +61 3 9800 5535 Tuesday or Friday, between 10 am and 3pm.
Go into our website www.ajm.org.au then click on Membership. At lower right, click to download a Membership/Renewal form.

We Welcome these New Members:

Peter Baddeley, Mark Bailey, Diana Caddy, Beverley Eldridge, Leslie Fisher, Victor Gleeson, Ian & Susan Goodier, Paul Griffins, Dale Hembrow, Keith Hughes, Mel Lichtfield, Eric Myers, Amew Negri, Jennifer Salisbury, Robert Scurry, Angela Spencer, Ranko Vranesevic.

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

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