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John Huf on
Sousaphone
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Don Burrows Seen here with Graeme Bell

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“SOPHISTICATED SWING” – THE BIG BAND from LATROBE VALLEY

By Anton Fullerton

It probably all started around 1980 when a dynamic fella named John Teychenne rang a bunch of musicians playing in bands and some “brass band guys” to get a big band together. There were auditions for the Daryl Somers’ talent show called Starquest airing on regional TV across Victoria. We worked on one chart - “Theme from Exodus”, and played it with as much expression as possible with a jazz-rock feel. The highlight was John conducting the band while playing the most exuberant congas you have ever seen. We won the Gippsland audition entitling us to travel to BTV6 Studios in Ballarat to appear on TV. We practised up “Music to Watch Girls Go By” for the performance. On the day of the show which was recorded live to air, 15 of us travelled by hired bus from Gippsland to Ballarat. It was a hot day and we were excited on our adventure and ended up half drunk by the time we reached Melbourne. We found a Teychenne relative’s house for a toilet break but there was no-one home so we all lined the back fences to water the plants. We continued on to Ballarat, found our motel for the night and finished off what beer was left in the eskies. Our performance wasn’t musically proficient enough to win but the exuberance of the band and especially our conductor/conga player John, was probably good live TV. We were beaten by a French horn player playing “You’re a Lady”.

Not long after John’s sister took over as MD. As a classical violinist she had written a couple of arrangements for big band. A revised line-up

of local musicians and music teachers got together for rehearsals including Richard Teychenne on bass, Steve Schultz on drums, Anton Fullerton on piano and Jack Jones (later of Southern Sons fame) on guitar. Eugenie was surprised to see the rhythm section pouring glasses of scotch before the first chart was handed out. Apparently they didn’t drink alcohol at rehearsals with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra. We all had a laugh and then got down to the business learning several hours’ worth of material. Due to commitments in Melbourne, Eugenie left as MD and Peter Cavanagh who ran concert and jazz bands at St Paul’s Catholic College took up the post. Richard Teychenne took on the role as manager of the band.

Our first shows included a sandwich board advertising the band that we had a local sign writer put together. Unfortunately he could not spell so until we could afford a new one, we went under the name of SOPHISTATED SWING. (Not so sophisticated, is it?)

Playing big band swing music was something of a rarity in a regional area of Victoria but all the musicians took to it like a duck to water, even the younger ones. There is something special about multiple harmonies and contrapuntal rhythms from brass, reeds and rhythm section that we were not used to hearing from modern media. Consequently the band gained a following of fans that would patronise the festivals and local hotels when we played.

Unfortunately hotels and young

musicians don’t always mix. I remember a hotel in Churchill wanted the band to play to boost their Sunday lunch numbers. They offered a door deal plus free drinks (anything we wanted). There were a lot of spirits drunk that day and by the start of the second set, many of the band members were playing by ear because their eyes couldn’t focus on the charts anymore. That was a good lesson for us and although it was a great, dynamic and fun gig, we learned how alcohol and music should not go together.

Peter Cavanagh moved on and around 1990 we picked up a new music director- saxophonist Laurie Parr. Laurie was a serious musician who brought a lot of discipline to the band’s collective technique. His vast experience brought him respect from all and he raised the musicianship immensely. Laurie was also into modern jazz and one year he decided to put several numbers into an afternoon’s performance at a local annual Jazz Festival. We had played at this festival many times before, to a warm response, but ‘modern jazz’ was taking things too far! We received a letter from the Festival Committee some weeks later asking us to either avoid playing the modern stuff and return to more traditional forms of jazz or not re-apply for the following year’s festival. It is true we did not play “When the Saints” once during any of our sets.

Laurie, a little despondent, moved on and an ex-navy trombonist, Brad Cruickshank, took on the role as MD. We con-

tinued to rehearse and perform regularly. We were offered a variety of rehearsal spaces as we had a good standing in the Latrobe Valley community. If ever a vacancy appeared in one of the chairs, it was filled immediately by an old hand, new to the area or a young up-and-coming muso from one of the college bands.

With Brad Cruickshank as MD, the band continued to improve and took on festivals and concerts further afield. We were regulars at Merimbula Jazz Festival, made appearances at Wangaratta Jazz Festival and the Victorian Jazz Club, as well as playing balls, concerts and dances.



SOPHISTICATED SWING BIG BAND

Left Back: Anton Fullerton (Piano), Andrew Jack, Paul Richardson, Paul Berger, David Mowat, Bradley Cruickshank, Alex Wilson, Ray Williams, Steve Schulz (Drums).
Seated: Richard Teychenne, Maria DeMarco, Ian Christenson, David Steele, Graham Ingleton, Brett Lee

One year we augmented our Merimbula festival with an afternoon performance at the newly created fun park Magic Mountain nearby. The band had free access to the rides which included the 900 metre toboggan down the mountain. It was great fun but there were many spills from the band members being overly competitive for speed. I don't know how we didn't break an arm or two.

By this stage we had moved through many casual uniforms but by 1993 we were kitted out with Sophisticated Swing jackets giving us an air of formality. We looked good.

Around this time we began rehearsing at the Churchill campus of Monash University. The heads of the university were impressed by some gigs we did for them and offered to sponsor the band. We then became our alter-ego 'The Monash Gippsland Big Band'. We were still able to perform under our old name for certain bookings but were quite happy to perform as Monash Big Band for festivals and some corporate gigs.

Brad was quite keen on taking the band to Melbourne and performing regularly in town. We were good enough, but Melbourne was a 2 hour drive from home and many of the musicians had regular weekend gigs in other bands. So a decision had to be made as to whether individuals gave up their reception and cabaret bands to reach for

the big time. This created an ideological split in the band. Those that wanted to stay based in the Latrobe Valley formed a new big band called 'Out of the Blue Orchestra' and continued for many years. Sophisticated Swing also continued for several years although it was a hybrid of South Gippsland and Central Gippsland, making it difficult for logistics of rehearsals etc.

Sophisticated Swing was a vehicle for jazz players from a regional area to develop their reading and performance skills. It was both an encouraging and challenging environment that kept the players keen. We would have had over 100 players spending some time in the band and that has led to lifetime friendships. What a blast!

SOME SOPHISTICATED SWING RECOLLECTIONS

by DAVID MOWAT

My first interaction with Sophisticated Swing was as an audience member in the prestigious setting of Hamer Hall in Melbourne, I believe in 1986. There was some sort of Gippsland Music celebration that was also involving the school at which my wife taught. Being a classically trained tuba player, Big Band Swing was not central to my world, but at the time I thought that this would be fun to play in!

A couple of year's later (c. 1988), Paul Berger and I were invited along to a rehearsal as there were a couple of trumpet vacancies. Our first rehearsal was a disaster as we couldn't locate the venue in the industrial back-blocks of Morwell. After some clarification we arrived the following week, and immediately made to feel welcome. It transpired that I stayed with Sophisticated Swing for 13 years, up until my return to Melbourne.

Performances in my early days seemed to be confined to playing mainly swing standards in the park in Traralgon on a summer Sunday afternoon, a gig at the Glenmaggie Caravan Park and a trip to the fabulous Merimbula Jazz festival. By this time I was playing in the trombone section (along with Alex Wilson and Ronny Hoimeyer) to resolve an imbalance of too many trumpeters and not enough trombonists. Then in Nov. 1991 we were given the opportunity under the leadership of Laurie Parr (of ABC Showband fame) to perform at the Wangaratta Jazz Festival. Laurie was slightly hard of hearing, and insisted on calling the drummer of the time, Justin O'Dowd (son of the affable multi-instrumentalist and former band member, Paddy O'Dowd), 'Dustin'.

The Wangaratta gig required a new lead trombonist, so Bradley Cruickshank joined the band. The gig was a success, although I do recall being very cramped for space for one of our gigs in a pub, and being very concerned about my trombone slide being dangerously close to messing with Laurie's hair!

The number of gigs seemed to increase, and with the departure of Laurie the position of MD was offered to Brad Cruickshank, who by this stage had contributed several of his own arrangements to the band's repertoire. Brad's vision for the band required a philosophical change from the players in that he wanted to chase more

Friday and Saturday night gigs – this was put to a vote, which narrowly fell on the side requiring the members to make Sophisticated Swing the top priority when it came to making oneself available. Given that for some of the more active members this meant potentially giving up a source of income from small group gigs, there was an unfortunate need for some long standing and very competent musicians to leave Sophisticated Swing. Fortunately for them they were able to form an alternative big band known as 'Out of the Blue'.

With a rebuild which included recruiting advanced high school students (mainly from Trafalgar High School), the band steadily returned to the high standard for which it was renowned. Pleasingly many of the students that were brought through the band continued with music in their adult lives – including Alison Landmeter (nee Turner), David Watson, Lucas Millar and Michelle Gracie.

Gigs started to increase in frequency. At one stage we seemingly had a gig every week or two resulting in a tighter sounding band. These gigs ranged in location (mainly Gippsland and Melbourne) and in type- from weddings, parties, town balls, corporate gigs and festivals. With each gig, the repertoire consolidated and expanded such that we had over 100 charts regularly being performed. Brad moved the repertoire towards party style songs that everyone seemed to know, but we maintained our connection with Big Band music. One big gig included engaging TV personality and amazing saxophonist Wilbur Wilde who was a drawcard for a self-promoted



In the last 15 months, Sophisticated Swing has grown into a dynamic band providing exceptional entertainment throughout Victoria. The Band is experienced in performing to large audiences at functions ranging from outdoor events to formal balls.

The energetic band is drawn together by the common desire to perform a diverse repertoire, which caters for a wide range of musical tastes resulting in outstanding responses from our audiences. This CD is a salute to the continuing growth of the band. You're CELEBRATING time... Woo Hoo!

CREDITS
Produced by Bradley Cruickshank.
Recorded, Engineered & Mastered by Jason Bond of Studio International, 1040 York St., 5th Melbourne.
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Bradley Cruickshank for his vision, persistence and drive.

For Bookings, phone: 07 509 818 or 0501 740 600.

SOPHISTICATED Swing

| | | | |
|---|---|--|---|
| <p>San Christensen Marty Cruickshank* Graham Ingkham Michelle Gracie* Zoe Carr Craig Marlowe* Damian Blizard Sam Geller Josh Wetherill*</p> | <p>Alto Sax / Clarinet Tenor Sax Saxophone Baritone Sax Trumpet Trumpet Trumpet Trumpet</p> | <p>Dave Durrant Sam Jones* Paul Lyle Mark Dury Louise Miller* Bradley Cruickshank* David Mowat Brian Gill Glen Barry</p> | <p>Vocals Piano Bass Drums Guitar Trombone Trombone Trombone Trombone</p> |
|---|---|--|---|

* Indicates Rising Stars



major concert in Leongatha. This also had Latino dancers and music and was a huge success.

Our first CD was recorded over a weekend in the Trafalgar High School library. The final mixdown lacked the adjustments we requested (such as the guitar intro to 'Fly Me to the Moon' to be louder) but overall we were very excited about the recordings. Most of the solos and particularly Ian Christensen's alto sax solos were single takes. The CD was used for further promotional work and was sold at gigs.

The eventual but slow demise of the band was due to Brad taking on a cruise ship job for an unknown duration of time. For a while we limped on without him, and this was soon followed by my own departure from Gippsland in 2002 to take up a new music teaching position in Melbourne. My wife and I were honoured to have most of the band reform for our 40th birthday party in 2003, which included Brad. The band performed as if it had never stopped! It was a very special part of my life in Gippsland and added to my skill sets that contributed to my attaining my teaching position at Wesley College.

FOOTNOTE:

As well as spawning 'Out of the Blue Orchestra', 'Sophisticated Swing' has contributed to the formation of the 'Streeton Court Big Band' (currently playing at the 2020 Inverloch Jazz Festival) and the 'Hip Pockets' from Traralgon, a popular R&B band with horn section.

David Steele, Editor

Enough Moonlight to See By

By Lee Treanor

IT'S 1961. The Yarra Yarra New Orleans Jazz Band is on top of the world; well, the world as we knew it. We were the house band at Kew Civic Centre, with crowds of up to fifteen-hundred fans each Saturday night. To put that into perspective, a really well-known jazz club might get one or two hundred. Thursday nights were given to rehearsals. On Sundays we played at Jazz Centre 44, opposite Luna Park, where we might have 'crowds' of, oh, 30 to 40. On Fridays we played at the Anglican Church Hall on Punt and Toorak Roads. We paid the rent and split what was left. That was good money. And then, we'd even been in Moomba parades.

We played a mixture of jazz standards from the 30s to the 50s. There were wartime melodies and some of the days' popular radio hits as well as gospels, ragtime tunes adapted from their original piano format, raunchy blues and tales of broken hearts. We also had a good repertoire of marches, courtesy of several of us having our musical upbringing in Brass Bands. We had a repertoire of over four hundred tunes and we'd play thirty-five to forty of them over a three-hour session.

Oh, and did I mention we had one of the best vocalists in Melbourne, Judy Jacques, who at just seventeen was perfect for the younger set?

One glorious Saturday Summer night, after we'd packed up our instruments, waved goodbye to the stragglers and polished off a beer or two, we headed off in convoy towards our homes. It wasn't unusual, on Saturday nights, to be headed to a party, but on this night there didn't appear to be anything on the go which probably led to the idea that led on to this memory.

As we came over the Swan Street Bridge, a comment was made that we'd never been invited to play at The Myer Music Bowl. Well, we couldn't let the chance go by. There we were, with the Bowl right in front of us, almost no traffic so parking wasn't a problem. We tumbled out of our cars, grabbed our instruments, including the string bass and a snare drum, and casually walked up the path to a point where we could look down on the Bowl.

Oh, Boy! Shining in the moon glow below us The Bowl, nestled in manicured lawns that rose up towards Government House to the right, and the verdant edges of the Botanic Gardens to the left, presented us with a perfect picture. With an unspoken 'Let's Do It' we continued on and, unchallenged, mounted the steps to the stage.

Out came the instruments from their cases, tuning was checked, and a title selected. Maurice tapped us in: **Bugle-**

Boy March. Well. It's a march, so we marched, as anybody would, in single file, behind our leader. Off to the right-hand corner of the stage, a neat about-turn, off to the left-hand corner. Another turn. There's something about playing in the open air at night: the sound is pristine, bell-like, and at that time way back then – there's no competing background noise. The notes seem to float and hang there.

Oh, wait, there is another sound: solid, steady footsteps. Coming towards us down the path, the one to the right of the stage. In that beautiful moon-glow we clearly see Mister Plod advancing. Furtively we watch as those footsteps continue. One by one we each stop playing, all, that is, except Maurice, who is trying not to giggle. I'd never thought of it before, but it must be quite hard to play if you're giggling. Mister Plod, with his steady footsteps, walks over until he's facing us exactly in the centre, and says, 'Piss off; you're disturbin' the Governor's sleep'. He turns on his heels and with the same steady beat walks off and disappears as, with much giggling from all of us, we pack up and leave.

Most likely, it would never have happened if we didn't have enough moonlight to see by. So it's not really our fault, is it?



The Weintraubs

Germany's Eminent Jazz Band of the 1930s that Settled in Australia

By Ken Simpson-Bull



W EINTRAUBS SYNCOPATORS were a group of internationally celebrated musicians of the 1930s. They were formed in Berlin by pianist Stefan Weintraub and saxophonist/clarinetist Horst Graff in 1924 as a Jazz Band playing for dancing but which eventually developed into an entertain-

ment act. The members of the band, following one or two early changes, consisted of Stefan Weintraub, Heinz Barger, Emanuel Frischer (later known as Manny Fisher), Ady Frischer (aka Fisher—who was added later), Horst Graff, John Kaiser (aka Kay), Cyril Schulvater, and Leo Weiss. In 1927 the famous pianist and arranger Friedrich Hollander took over leadership for a while and Stefan Weintraub moved to drums. They made their first commercial recordings the next year.

At their peak, beginning around 1928, Weintraubs Syncopators were recognised as the premiere hot jazz band in Germany. In fact, they were considered so important that the band was featured on-screen in the classic 1930 movie starring Marlene Dietrich, "The Blue Angel". (Friedrich Hollander wrote the film score and was music director.) They were described as a well-honed cabaret act with a captivating repertoire of hot jazz and novelty comedy songs which was made possible by the high level of their musicianship — they played collectively more than 30 instruments.

In March, 1933 the Weintraubs

commenced a tour of several European countries. Because of Jewish persecution back in Germany, the group decided that they would leave the country permanently (all but one member of the band were Jewish), so the Weintraubs quit Berlin and continued on with European touring. Heinz Barger, the group's manager, secured a two-month tour of Russia where they were greeted by wildly enthusiastic crowds eager to hear the latest American-style jazz. The Russian tour eventually lasted around 18 months, and when it came to an end the Weintraubs went to play in Manchuria, then in Shanghai, and then in Japan. It was in Japan that, in 1936, they secured a recording contract and made some further records.

By this time it was obvious that they could not possibly go back to Germany — as well as more-intense Jewish persecution, the Nazi regime was against "degenerative black American Jazz", and so, in 1937, as a continuation of their touring, they travelled to Australia via the Philippines and Indonesia.

The Australian Musicians Union was strictly opposed to foreign musicians being given local employment, mainly due to the fact that so many Australian players were still out of work following the Great Depression and because of the paucity of work that the introduction of sound motion pictures had had on relinquishing the need for cinema musicians. Nevertheless, the Weintraubs *did* find work, in Sydney at the city's leading nightclub, Prince's in Martin Place. Their employment was only grudgingly tolerated by the Union on the condition that Prince's also employed a Union-approved Australian band. Although the AMU demanded that the band is used as a variety act only, photos and other evidence indicate that they did indeed play for dancers.





Friedrich Hollander, Paul Aronovici, John Kay, Horst Graff, Ansko Bruinier, Stefan Weintraub, c.1929

One of the frequent visitors to this night-spot was the future Prime Minister, Robert Menzies MP. Band member Manny Fisher's family were trapped in Berlin, but were able to get permission to come to Australia thanks to Menzies obtaining exit visas for them. The visas apparently arrived in Berlin on the day after the infamous *Kristallnacht*, November 1938. At this stage, Emanuel's brother, Ady, who had been playing double bass in another German jazz band which had ended up in Beirut, arrived in Sydney and became the last new member of the Weintraub Syncopators. During this period the Weintraubs also completed a successful tour of New Zealand.

Once war was declared in September 1939, Australia, along with its Commonwealth allies, interned many German Jews in the misguided belief that they were enemy aliens. What seems somewhat ludicrous today is the suspicion by the Australian Security Officers that radio broadcasts that the band were making may have included secret musical codes to be used against the Allies. Another area of investigation was the band's possible espionage activities while in the Soviet Union based on an unsubstantiated source. None of these suspicions ever came to fruition.

Of the members of the Weintraubs who were initially interned, Manny Fisher and two others in the band were quickly released because they had never been German citizens. However, because of the internment, and the continuing harassment by the AMU, by 1942 the band had effectively broken

up. Those of the band who had been "permanently" interned were, a little later, also released. Some of the band members actually joined the Australian armed forces. Stefan Weintraub and Horst Graff found employment for a while at another top Sydney night-spot, Romano's, working with two other Jewish refugees as a continental quartet.

By the end of the war, a few members of the Weintraubs, by now all residents in Australia, were playing as individuals, but the band itself was no more. John Kay found work as an arranger for a radio network and later formed the Mercury Theatre with actor Peter Finch. Leo Weiss changed his name to White and recorded a number of 78s in the late 1940s with some of the original band; however, none of these recordings could be described as jazz.

Most of the original band members married and raised children. Manny Fisher successfully went into business but returned briefly to music in the late 1950s, composing and arranging. He died just short of his 93rd birthday. (Readers who remember the "sip-sip-sip" violin notes used in the "Bonnington's Irish Moss" radio commercials may be interested to know that they were played by Fisher.) The Weintraubs' original creator, Stefan Weintraub, working as a mechanic in Sydney, died in 1981 with his band all but forgotten. As unlikely as it seems, of the best pre-war jazz band in Germany, all (but one) of them young Jews, completely survived the war – and in Australia.

Unfortunately, the Australian Jazz

Museum does not possess any of the band's original 78rpm recordings; however it does have in its collection two CDs, produced by Geoffrey Orr, of various numbers played by the band. None of the tracks on these CDs however, really demonstrates any of the hot jazz for which the Weintraubs were renowned. Likewise, of the few recordings that can be accessed on YouTube, there is little that could be described as hot jazz. Certainly, Brian Rust, in his discography "Jazz Records", does not give the Weintraubs a listing, which implies that none of their recordings illustrate their famed hot jazz style. Nevertheless, one can see and hear a little of their special jazzy appeal on-line in a 1929 movie clip at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZnNeiwNtEXU>

Further reading on the Weintraubs: *"Silences and Secrets", a book by Kay Dreyfus (The Jazz Museum is fortunate to have Ms Dreyfus's research material for this book.); and "The Vanished Musicians", a book by Albrecht Dümmling.*

A Trumpet for all Seasons

By Bill Brown



Keith Hounslow (t) Jack Parks (tb) 1949

In recent times news emerged that trumpet player Keith Hounslow a dedicated jazzier had died aged ninety one. Keith was a man for all seasons in as much as his tastes in jazz were quite wide. Emerging in the post war revival movement he went on to perform in various genres of the music.

When mentioning his passing on the 3CR, jazz program presenter Roger Beilby referred to a six CD set that Keith put out sometime in the nineties. I have that set and have been listening to the contents in recent days.

The first two CDs have Keith talking of his time in the jazz world in various Australian locations and the musicians and other characters he came across. Other people enter the conversation including broadcaster Ian Neil. Keith explains how he never became a professional musician as such, always having a day job, postman, truck driver,

salesman eventually getting into advertising and film making.

CD numbers three to six feature musical items of Keith recorded with different groups. Settings with members of the Frank Johnson band and other Melbourne entities. He was listed as leader with the titles of His All Stars or Jazz Hounds. In 1949 former Duke Ellington cornet player Rex Stewart visited Australia and toured with the Graeme Bell Band. Keith was the baggage handler on the tour and learned from Rex at first hand. He is on a four trumpet version of Put on Your Old Grey Bonnet along with Rex, Roger Bell and Ade Monsborough. Aspects of Rex's trumpet style was absorbed by Keith in his future works. In the early fifties he was in Adelaide and recorded with bandleader/composer Dave Dallwitz' Band.

That material was of course in the Traditional mould, but Keith also recorded with sax player Splinter Reeves and other players more into more Swing orientated material that was to be called Mainstream (a term coined by UK critic Stanley Dance). By the latter part of the fifties Keith had moved further forward appearing in a group led by sax player Brian Brown a man definitely involved in the 'Modern' scene. Their records of the time included such Bebop titles as **Oleo, Walkin'**, and **Milestones**.

From time to time Keith did record with more traditional ensembles like the Datsun Dixielanders and he had a lengthy spell with trombonist band leader Frank Traynor. Then there was a duo with pianist Tony Gould. Despite that activity Keith was critical of certain aspects of the 'Trad' scene especially the use of the banjo. Okay in folk music Keith opined but a drawback in a jazz setting. Naturally this and other statements put him at odds with some of his former fellow musos. No doubt some of the tradsters were critical of some of the esoteric output of MCJAD, the duo Keith had with Tony Gould. Anyhow, Keith was always his own man and I con-

fess I always liked his work on his pocket trumpet and Flugel Horn. His vocals were quite pleasant. So I rate the six CD collection a success and essential listening for any genuine jazz scholar.

I have two other CDs of Keith when he lived in New South Wales and had a Quartet with guitar, bass and drums with tenor sax added on occasion. Recorded in Sydney when I think Keith was a resident in Kiama in the eighties. The sessions featured a cross section of his repertoire, traditional standards like **St James Infirmary, Revolutionary Blues, Struttin' With Some Barbecue** and more modern pieces like **Milestones** and **Bohemia After Dark**. I only saw Keith once in the flesh, so to speak, at the Rosstown Hotel in Melbourne. He sat in with David Ward's Waterfront café Band around about 2004/5. Afterwards I spoke with him. He wasn't happy about his playing. A bit rusty he said.

The late Tom Wanliss carried out a lot of interviews of musicians for the Jazz Museum. I remember his one with Keith. Another Melbourne doyen of the trumpet Tony Newstead was with Tom and he remarked emphatically that Keith Hounslow was one of Australia's best trumpet players. I agree. Vale Keith.



Left: Keith 'Honk' Atkins (cl), John Sangster (t), Keith Hounslow (t), John McCarthy (sax). Australian Jazz Convention, 1948.



Keith Hounslow's Jazzmakers.
Left back row: Deiter Vogt (b), Keith Hounslow (pt), Paul Williams (ts), front: Grahame Conlon (g), Jimmy Shaw (d).
Photo courtesy of Grahame Conlon

Vale Don Burrows

By Ken Simpson-Bull

AUSTRALIAN Jazz lost one of its great doyens when Don Burrows AO MBE passed away on the 12th March, 2020, at age 91. He had been at the forefront of Australian jazz for more than sixty years playing clarinet and alto and baritone saxophones as well as flute and piccolo. He was also a composer and arranger.

Donald Vernon Burrows was born in Boorowa, New South Wales on the 8th August 1928. Both his mother and father played musical instruments and had their own band which played for local dances. Don started playing flute at Bondi High School and by 1940 he was the captain of the Metropolitan Schools Flute Band. Around this time he commenced study at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music.

He took up the clarinet and became so skilled that he was appointed principal clarinetist with the Australian Broadcasting Commission's Symphony Orchestra. He also performed with the ABC Dance Band. In 1942, Don appeared on The Youth Show (a Macquarie Radio program), and in 1944 he was invited to play and record with George Trevare's Australians. Don became widely known in jazz circles, playing in dance halls, nightclubs, and radio bands.

He travelled overseas in the 1950s visiting and performing in Canada, the USA and the UK. On his return to Sydney he continued his session work and performances in nightclubs. In 1958 he formed the Australian All Stars and in 1960 began a long musical association with guitarist George Golla. During the next two decades Don became one of the best-known jazz musicians in Australia.

By the 1970s he was playing at the Sydney Wentworth Hotel supper club where he had a residency of six years. He had another long residency at the Hotel Regent where he had the supper-club room named after him.

In 1972 he became the first Australian to perform at the Montreux Jazz Festival and at the Newport Jazz Festival. It was around this time that Don received the first gold record for an Australian jazz musician for his record "Just the Be-

ginning".

In 1973 he started a jazz studies programme at the New South Wales Conservatorium of Music and in 1980 was appointed its first jazz director. As such he undertook educational tours to schools around Australia.

On television he had his own show "The Don Burrows Collection" which ran for six years. It was during the 80s that he began performing with up-and-coming multi-instrumentalist James Morrison.

Don toured extensively both in Australia and worldwide and performed with many artists including Dizzy Gillespie, Cleo Laine, Mel Tormé, Frank Sinatra, Nat King Cole, Tony Bennett, Oscar Peterson, and Stephane Grappelli. He also performed to classical music audiences touring with Musica Viva and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation concert series.

During his long career, Don received many honours which included the MBE (Member of the British Empire) in 1973, and an OA (Officer of the Order of Australia) in 1987. He was also made a life member of the New South Wales Conservatorium of Music and received several Honorary Doctorates.

Don eventually retired to the south coast of Victoria but sadly, in his later years, developed dementia. His long-time friend, James Morrison and James's wife, Judi, became Don's legal guardians, bringing him back to a nursing home in northern Sydney, where they organised care for Don until his passing.

Don will be well remembered particularly by his many recordings and his stage, radio and TV performances. Vale Don Burrows.



Don Burrows (L) with long-time friend and colleague James Morrison.

From the Deep End by Hilton Vermaas

Featuring: John Huf

By way of introduction.

There is no shortage of articles, stories, interviews and books on the front line players in jazz bands – but not a lot on the back line. A few drummers, pianists and guitarist's names have become known, but the deep end remains relatively anonymous with a few exceptions.

I got to playing double bass pretty late in life, and since then I have been amazed and delighted and awed by what happens in that department. Invariably at festivals and concerts it is the double bass (or electric bass) that grabs my attention, and the players have always been accessible and happy to chat about what they do. They all seem to be unassuming and humble, steeped in the history of what they do, and endlessly inventive while remaining steadfast.

It is these people that I would like you to get to know, their journey, their experiences and their views on music.

Hilton Vermaas

(no apologies for my bias in favour of the deep end)



JOHN plays Double Bass, Electric Upright Bass, and Sousaphone (and has played several other instruments over the years); he is also known for being the driving force of the Port Fairy Jazz Festival. I had sent John details of what I would be asking/wanting to find out about when we met up. Within a day he had thought about those things and sent me his thoughts/responses (that reaction is an indication of why the Port Fairy Jazz Festival is so well organised). I so enjoyed reading his responses and so, rather than reword/rework them; here they are for your enjoyment, too.

His start in music, what instrument, teacher(s)?

Being brought up as the sixth kid on a country farm with musical instruments all around me, I spent two primary school years learning piano with Miss Dark. As a chronic asthmatic my doctor advised me to start swimming or play a brass instrument. Swimming sounded a

bit life threatening so I joined the high school brass band on trombone under Eric Beale. I talked dad into buying me a second hand trumpet and started my first old time dance band at 13. At that time, I was introduced to one of those thick music books with single line melody and the chord above the staff.

What was particularly special about this book was that it had a chart of the 187 basic chords at the back of the book. That was to become the most important information sheet of my musical life as it gave me the mathematical formulae for the whole world of chords, the heart of the back line.

His move to the Deep End

At the end of my high school years being a big kid, I moved onto a Bb tuba. My mate Phil Alstin played drums in the brass band and also in the Grange Burn Jazz Band, which included performances at Channel O on Gordon Boyd's Showcase.

The Bb Helicon bass (owned by the jazz band) player of the 1960s moved on to play in a pub band. The trombone player in the Jazz band moved onto bass and Phil introduced me as the new trombone player. After one rehearsal, I told the band I could play bass better than the old trombone player and suggested he go back to trombone. From then on I played Helicon bass for the Grange Burn Jazz Band for the next few decades.

As the Helicon needed substantial repair, I bought the bass off the band and had it repaired. The Helicon bass was extremely heavy and resulted in many chiropractic visits. After about twenty years I bought a second hand brass Conn Sousaphone.

As I aged, even that became too heavy, and I transferred to a second hand fibreglass King Sousaphone. As the sousaphone is not the sexiest instrument for many tunes, I tried my hand on a ¾ size acoustic upright. While playing this at Barham, Leon Heale approached me and graciously suggested some physical improvement and wrote me a number of instructions to help me on my

way. I discovered that carting a sousaphone and acoustic upright bass to gigs was worse than being a drummer. I discovered E.U.B.'s that is, Electric Upright Bases, same string length as a ¾ bass but fits across the back seat of a car. A couple of lessons with Zac Barter got me started in the right direction.

When asked about influences...

Jazz was never my thing; I played it because I was about the only tuba player in town. It was the Beatles, Melanie Safka, Peter Allan and Captain Matchbox that turned me on. However, over the years I have been seduced in by the Syncopators, Tuba Skinny and so on.

Preferred music styles, why

I am a lover of many styles from Baroque to Folk. Music is food for the soul and the food changes with the mood.

A brief history of his playing journey

In the early 90s during my four year stint as the convenor of the Grampians Jazz Festival, I was playing with the Grange Burn Jazz Band (based in Hamilton) and the Sea Side Stompers (based in Portland). At the 1992 Grampians Jazz Festival, a pick up band was put together. This turned out to be the first performance of what became known as the Hot 'B' Hines Jazz Band. Nearly three decades later the backbone and trumpet leader remains the same. I have also had the pleasure of being a member of Russ Sheridan's Ragtime Rollers until his sudden death at the Merimbula Jazz Festival.

Practice routine(s), gig preparation

The sousaphone mouthpiece is a most forgiving piece of equipment, so practice is typically the days before gigs and includes some lines from the 'Arban' Cornet Method tutor. The string bass however, requires a bit more regular work. An APP called Chordify has made practice more pleasurable as you can enter any tune and the YouTube comes up along with the Chord chart and off you go. The freedom of the variety of tunes available is much more motivating

than playing bass lines alone.

Iron the black shirt, service the Sou-sa, check the batteries in the E.U.B., then fill up with petrol for the long drive. A two-hour drive is a close gig.

The role of the bottom end in a jazz ensemble

Playing in a jazz ensemble is a team effort, not a competition. Blowing over one another and competing only results in a fruit salad, the one nobody wants to hear. Less is more. I see the role of the 'deep end' is to embellish, subtly embellish the front line, improve its overall outcome, fill in those little gaps and make the front line look even better.

For example, a good drummer is one you barely notice. Obviously, the 'deep end' is to provide the basic building blocks to which the front line can add its flair and colour and create the total beautiful outcome. This does not mean that the back line is subservient, it needs to be creative too, but it is not the primary creator of the flair and colour. It's a team effort with different roles.

The other key element is remembering, 'you are in the entertaining business', not in the jazz playing business per-sae. The audience wants to be entertained and connect to the band. Connecting to an audience can mean, simply smiling, a vocal, a story in the gaps, interacting, acting, acting up, fun stuff.

The 'deep end' definitely has a role in ensuring it is entertaining. My experience going to Port Fairy Folk Festivals is quality musicianship and without vocal, smiles or stories is a wet blanket on the audience. A lesser act musically, with a story, smiles and humour will win every time.

Thoughts on current status of music

I like music with colourful chords (more than three and certainly more than one). I don't consider a production which is essentially a monotone voice or just a rhythm, very appealing.

New music which avoids these traps is fine. Music that 'lasts the distance' is the test of good music and examples of this, in my lifetime, are the Beatles and ABBA. There are some great songs being written which you occasionally see on 'The Voice'. Sadly, I fear that the business model of today's new music and that of the musicians, is an extremely difficult one. I, as a very basic hack musician, could fund myself during my education era. I could not make it in today's economic model (even before COVID-19). Bottom line, it's now a very tough environment for artists.

Advice for the next generation of musos (and even current)

Pursue your dream, but get the skills for a sound bread and butter day job to feed your musical aspiration. For me after my education years, I treated playing purely as a hobby. Now I have the pleasure of convening the Port Fairy Jazz Festival in my retirement from my day job i.e. find your niche in the music world, it is very satisfying.



New Harlem Jazz Band – A Tribute

A New Double-CD from the Australian Jazz Museum

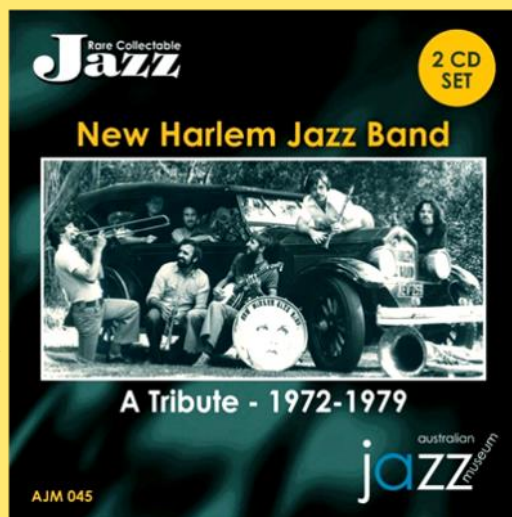
THE New Harlem Jazz Band was a very popular Melbourne Trad (Dixieland) group in the 1970s and beyond. They were formed by trumpeter/cornetist Ian Smith in 1968. The band had residencies at venues such as Athol's Abbey, Smacka's Place, Alexanders, and the Railway Hotel in Windsor as well as performing at concerts with visiting celebrity Turk Murphy and with the Storyville Band.

The Australian Jazz Museum has just released a double-CD containing no fewer than 47 tracks of their performances from 1972 to 1979. These items, taken from LPs that were issued during this period, have been remastered for issue on CD for the very first time.

The personnel on the first recording presented on these CDs consists of Ian Smith, trumpet and cornet; Chris Ludowyk, trombone; Ian Fleming, clarinet; Doug Rawson, piano; Chris Farley, banjo; Bill Morris, tuba; and Richard Opat, drums. Musicians in later sessions include Bob Gilbert, Neil Orchard, Cam Crofts, Maurice Dann, Bob Wood, Sandro Donati, Alex Frame and vocalist Pippa Wilson.

Tunes featured include "Magnolia's Wedding Day", "The Rich Maharajah of Magador", "At the Codfish Ball", "Never Swat a Fly", "Bandanna Babies", "Birmingham Bertha", "Sugarfoot Stomp", and "Egyptian Ella". The total playing time is a very generous 2 hours and 37 minutes.

The cost is only \$25 (members receive a discount). Purchase may be made by visiting the Museum's retail shop in Wantirna, on-line at www.ajm.org.au or by phone on 9800 5535.



POSTCARDS TO SHIRL AND DICK

By Ron Pollard

THE recent purchase of a postcard on ebay took me into the jazz centric world of two people who virtually dedicated their adult lives to traditional jazz. The front of this innocent looking postcard illustrated a 1976 menu from the basement restaurant Soup Plus once situated at 383 George Street, Sydney, which I had occasionally visited in the early 1970's. The food was good, reasonably priced and, as the name suggests, was centred on providing many varieties of soup. A soup oriented menu was available at lunchtime with the added bonus of a solo jazz performer playing in the background. The evening menu was more extensive, and for \$5.50 you could have a four course meal and sit back and listen to some great jazz provided by well-known contemporary Australian jazz bands.

The back of the postcard noted the addressee as "Mr and Mrs R.[Richard] House, 54 Railway Crescent, Moorabbin, Victoria 3189" and was postmarked 20 July 1977. The message started with "Dear Shirl and Dick" and mentioned "Chez New Orleans, Little Bourke Street, Melbourne" - probably a jazz venue: "J.D." refers to James Dupree, owner of Soup Plus: "Smacka" would have been Melbourne's King of Jazz Smacka Fitzgibbon, jazz musician and restaurateur. "Bob Barnard" is a well known jazz trumpeter now in his mid-eighties. It was signed "Graeme", and that rang a bell (no pun intended as later explained).

My attention caught, I decided to see if any other postcards on this subject were available on ebay, and looked at the site of the seller from whom I had just purchased the card. Sure enough, several postcards with a jazz theme and addressed to Dick and Shirl House appeared, all at very reasonable prices, so I quickly added them to my "basket."

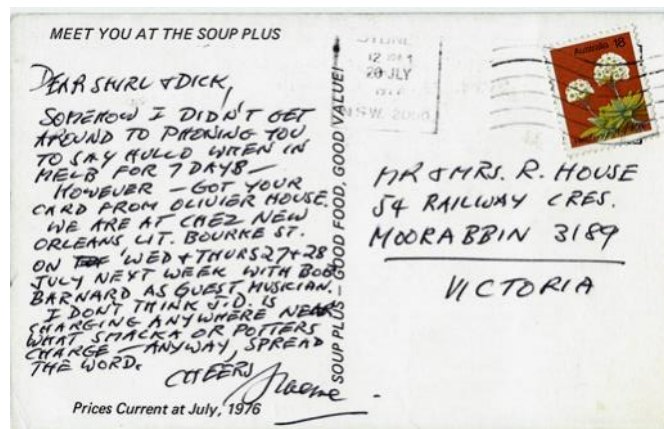
One of these postcards illustrated a poster promoting the 1981 ABC Queensland State Tour of the Graeme Bell All Stars band. The card was addressed to Shirl House and, again, signed "Graeme." This time the sender identified himself as Graeme Bell, noting his address as 22 Cross Street, Waverley, an eastern suburb of Sydney. He can be seen on the poster mid-bottom row. I had struck oil!

Graeme Bell was a musical pioneer and one of Australia's leading traditional jazz performers, and often called the Father of Australian Jazz. He was born in Richmond, Victoria in 1922, played piano and formed the Graeme Bell Jazz Band, which toured Europe in 1948. He is often credited with starting the traditional jazz revival in Britain during the fifties and sixties, when British bands, including Humphrey Lyttelton, Chris Barber and Ken Colyer, became popular. Bell returned to Australia in 1957 and moved to Sydney in 1962, forming a new band, the Graeme Bell All Stars, that performed at the Chevron Hotel, Kings Cross, Sydney. He was still playing into his 90's and died in 2012 aged 97.

For the uninitiated, traditional jazz is a form of ensemble improvised music that evolved around the early 1900's. The music basically developed around New Orleans



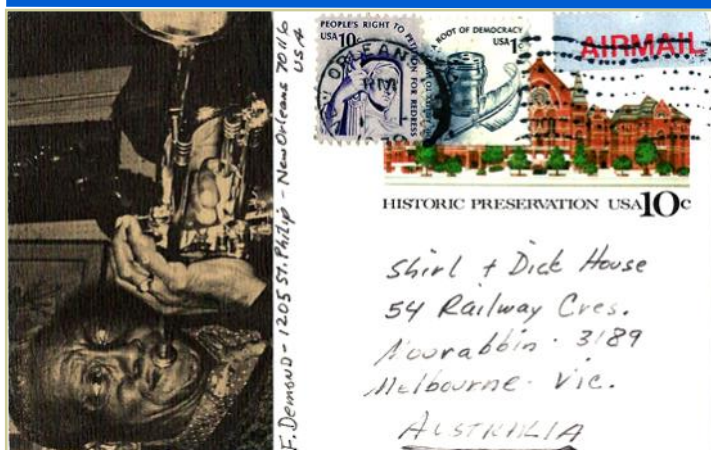
A postcard of the basement jazz restaurant Soup Plus menu showing prices at July 1976 (Pub. Soup Plus)



The Soup Plus card is addressed to Mr. & Mrs R.House (Dick and Shirl) and signed by "Graeme."

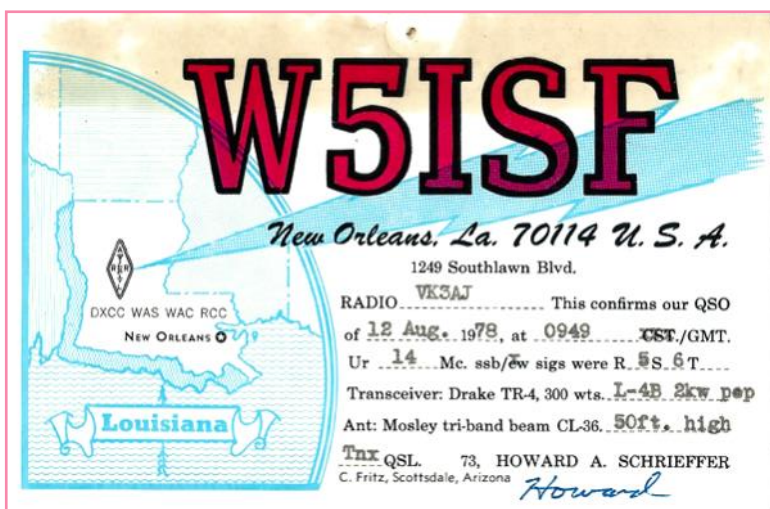


A postcard promoting the 1981 ABC Queensland State Tour of the Graeme Bell All Stars Jazz Band sent by Graeme Bell to Shirl House December 1981 - Graeme can be seen centre front row. The note "F.E.I.P MUSIC BOWL JAN.10" indicated that Bell would be performing at Melbourne's Myer Music Bowl on that date (Pub. ABC)



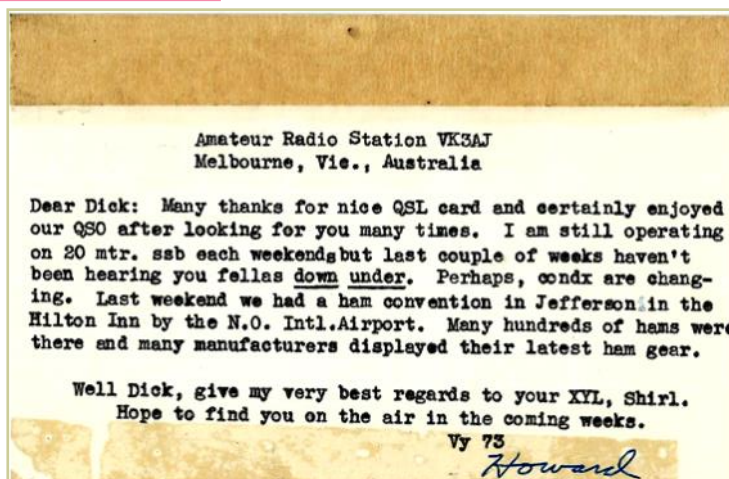
This postcard was sent to Dick and Shirl by Frank Demond, trombonist in the Preservation Hall Jazz band, on 27.Sept.1979, thanking them for photographs sent to him of the band (Pub. Anon)

Another postcard from Frank Demond to Dick and Shirl, with Frank telling them how well a PHJB concert held at the Festival hall, London, was received by the fans. It was "A smash Unbelievable Riotous standing ovations." Posted 25.October 1980 (Pub. Anon)



A QSL card sent to Dick House (VK3AJ) from Howard Schrieffer (W5ISF) in New Orleans confirming radio contact on 12.August 1978. Short wave radio technical information is noted

On the back is a message to Dick House from Howard Schrieffer. He ends the message by sending his very best regards to Shirl



ans, specifically in a section known as Storyville, a district set up to contain prostitution, drinking and gambling, establishments where bands were employed to entertain their clients. Jazz has its roots in many other types of musical expression - folk music, gospel singing, marching and funeral bands, etc. - and was originally a form of black American self expression following emancipation after the American Civil War. The basic seven piece line-up for New Orleans bands was a front line of trumpet/cornet, clarinet, trombone, backed by a piano, bass, drums and banjo/guitar. A tuba occasionally replaced the bass.

But I digress Looking through the other postcards that I had purchased, Dick and Shirl appeared to have had good connections with the jazz fraternity in New Orleans, which they visited seventeen times between 1977 and 1997. They collected records, posters, illuminated beer signs, photos, autographs and anything related to traditional jazz. A photo of their home, published in the Moorabbin Standard in 1992, shows wall to wall jazz memorabilia, including a table lamp made from a clarinet! They even built an extra room onto their home to accommodate the collection: this became known as the Preservation House, a shrine to traditional jazz. Now that's serious collecting!

Dick worked for the Victorian State Electricity Commission (in the radio section?) and was an amateur short wave radio enthusiast with call sign VK3AJ, which enabled him to keep in touch with friends in New Orleans. He was a keen photographer and documented the local jazz scene and that of New Orleans. From comments on several postcards, he sent photos to the musicians. Some of his photos were used to illustrate Graeme Bell's autobiography and at least one of his photos was used to illustrate a record sleeve.

During their regular trips to New Orleans, they would visit Preservation Hall, which was set up in the 1961 to provide a nightly jazz venue. Dick would stay behind after the last set had finished, stacking chairs and sweeping the floor.

Dick and Shirl married in 1953. They had four children. Their love of life and jazz came to an end in 1997, when Shirl passed away in New Zealand as they were returning to Australia from a visit to New Orleans. Dick never recovered from her death: he died in 2008 aged 84.

It is interesting where the finding of one postcard can take you, especially if you read the message on the back. Who would believe where a postcard menu would take you? An article recently published in a British newspaper commented that reading the back of a postcard was tantamount to grubbing around in someone's garbage bin and should not be encouraged. What a lot we would miss if we didn't read the sender's messages, surely the soul of the postcard and the sender.

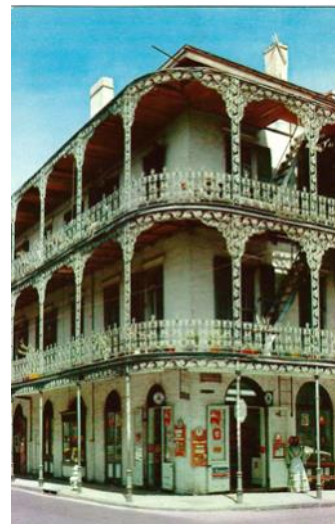
PS: Back to where we started! Soup Plus in George Street closed down and reopened at 1. Margaret Street, Sydney. This too has now gone, another piece of Sydney's history lost to the archives and Sydney's bland modern architecture.

PPS: I wonder what happened to the rest of Dick and Shirl's huge collection of jazz memorabilia. Anyone know?

(Many thanks to Ralph Powell, a member of the Australian Jazz Museum's Collections and Research Team, for providing additional background information on Dick and Shirl House. The AJM is situated in Wantirna, Victoria. More information can be found on www.ajm.org.au) +



The Kid Thomas Band playing at Preservation Hall, 726 St. Peter Street, in New Orleans' French Quarter. A notice in the background states that requests for traditional jazz numbers cost \$1, others \$2 and \$5 for The Saints (When the Saints Go Marching In). A similar, but later, postcard shows the cost have doubled to \$2, \$5 and \$10 respectively! (Pub. Grant Robertson, New Orleans: posted 8. January 1983)



The lace balconies in Royal Street are typical in the New Orleans' French Quarter (Pub. Grant Robertson, New Orleans)

Below: The New Orleans Jazz Club - one of the many jazz clubs that Dick and Shirl belonged to. Posted 1. April 1981.

South Bay New Orleans Jazz Club, Los Angeles, California

New Orleans Jazz Club
4017 Magazine Street
NEW ORLEANS, LA 70118

NEW ORLEANS ANNUAL JAZZ PARTY, Monday, May 4, will showcase three bands: our own Bud Brown's Delta Kings; Norway's Small Sand Trad Band and the Magnolia Jazz Band; in Lakes' Place (the home of the Dukes of Dixieland), Monteleone Hotel, 12:30-4:30PM. (Note: no food allowed on premises). Donation \$7.00 and tickets may be bought from NOJC, Attn: Mary Barrett, 103 Verret St., N.O., LA 70114 enclosing a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Also on sale at Werlein's, 605 Canal St., and DeVille's, 132 Carondelet St. Wear your NOJC button!

Jam Session is Sunday, April 26, Landmark Hotel, 1-5PM.

Shirl Arlt
Secretary

SOUTH BAY NEW ORLEANS JAZZ CLUB WILL MEET ON
SUNDAY, JUNE 14 - 2 to 7 PM - WESTCHESTER
EL SEGUNDO MOOSE HALL!! FEATURE BAND THIS MONTH
WILL APPEAR AT 2:30 PM - DANNY DAVIS AND HIS
JAZZ FORUM L.A.!! GREAT GROUP THAT YOU WON'T
WANT TO MISS!! "PAPA JAC" & "MAMA JO" ASSUNTO
WILL BE ON HAND FOR THE DAY'S FESTIVITIES!!
SEE Y'ALL THERE!!

"X" on address label means DUES IS OVERDUE! Send
Check payable SBNOJC to Anita Gold, Treas. -
9415 Via Patricia, Burbank, CA 91504 - NOW!!
Check "Blue Note" Dues for amount due. THANKS!

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- Go into our website www.ajm.org.au, then click on Support Us/Become a Member. Click on the link for a Membership Application Form. Print it out, fill it in and send it to us
- Call us on 03 9800 5535 Tuesday or Friday, between 10 am and 3pm.

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