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Proactively Collecting, Archiving and Disseminating Australian Jazz

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PLEASE NOTE THE DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT MAGAZINE IS THE MIDDLE OF MARCH 2021

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Does the Jazz Museum's Collection Include Rock 'n' Roll?

By Ken Simpson-Bull

WE are occasionally asked this question by visitors to the Jazz Museum. Rock and Roll can generally be defined as hard-edged music performed mostly with electric guitars, saxophones, bass, and drums and usually with lyrics sung by a vocalist. Rock's origins can be traced to the early 1950s when two popular styles of the day, country music and blues, morphed into a new sound with a steady pounding drumbeat. Bill Haley's well-known performance of "Rock Around the Clock" is a good example of its early style. (It is interesting that the theme used for this number was based on an early jazz tune from around 1917 called "Joe Avery's Piece".)

Jazz music, however, can be defined as that which was originated by African-American bands in the southern United States in the early 20th century and whose two main ingredients are syncopation and improvisation with the inclusion of the later developments of swing, big band-jazz and modern-jazz.

In the 1950s and '60s when Rock overtook Jazz as the preferred popular music of young people, especially at dances, a number of jazz musicians defected (if that is not too strong a word) to Rock bands. After all, musicians had to make a living!

Nevertheless, whilst the Australian Jazz Museum encompasses everything to do with jazz, by definition it does not perceive Rock 'n' Roll to be jazz and thus does not include this type of music in its collection. (There are a few exceptions, such as the "Sydney Jazz Rock Band" and the "Thump'n Jump'n Jazz-rock Show" where Jazz and Rock appear to morph.)

However, Rock enthusiasts will be pleased to know that there *is* a collection of Rock Music in Melbourne. This is located within "The Australian Music Vault" at the Victorian Arts Centre in St Kilda Road.

Interestingly, the words rock and roll were originally applied to *jazz* music back in 1930 with the tune "Rocking and Rolling" recorded by Robinson's Knights of Rest, and a 1934 Boswell Sisters' recording entitled "Rock and Roll". Neither of these recordings is related to the modern definition of Rock.

93-year-old Melbourne-born Jazz legend Nick Polites gave a rare public performance

Christmas Eve shoppers at Ivanhoe Mall treated to classic jazz.

Now retired, 93-year-old Melbourne-born Jazz legend Nick Polites OAM gave a rare public performance on the morning of Christmas Eve outside the Degani Café in Ivanhoe Mall. He was accompanied by banjoist Tony Orr, who now plays in Nick's old band – *The Louisiana Shakers*.

The event came about when Degani proprietor Peter Katsaitis heard Nick performing outdoors some years ago. He was out walking and followed the sound of the music until he found Nick. They formed a bond once they realised that Peter was from the same small Greek Island as Nick's father – Lefkada – in the Adriatic sea.

As a teenager, Nick's father departed his island home in 1898 and made his way down to South Africa where, on the advice of Australian soldiers fighting in the Boer War, he sailed on to Australia in the early 1900s.

Peter had completed a renovation of the *Degani Café* at the beginning of 2020 and Nick had offered to come out of retirement to perform at the re-opening – but the pandemic lockdowns kicked-in and so the event could not proceed as planned. Hence the recent Christmas Eve performance.

Nick's old band (now with Tony Orr on banjo) –*The Louisiana Shakers* – resumed regular Sunday afternoon performances at the Clyde Hotel in Elgin Street Carlton on January 31st 2021.

Con Pagonis

The Saxophone and Jazz

By Ken Simpson-Bull

"Big Eye" Louis Nelson Delille tenor sax, and Fred Keppard trombone, Kansas City, December 4th 1916.

BACK in November 2011, in issue No 52 of the Museum's magazine Vjazz, there was a short filler under the heading of "Did You Know?" which stated:-

Although the Saxophone was invented in 1846, it was absent from early jazz orchestras. Its use within jazz bands did not begin until about 1920, a time when New Orleans had practically ceased to be the world's jazz centre. For that reason, no definitive "New Orleans style" exists in which the saxophone plays a part.

Although the source of the statement was not given, it actually came from a reputable book "The Real Jazz" written in the 1930s by noted French Jazz critic and writer Hugues Panassié (1912–74).

A response came from the Jazz Museum's own jazz exponent Eric Brown who informed us that saxophone players had indeed been used in many New Orleans bands ever since their introduction in the 1920s. Eric also provided dates from the early 1920s of known New Orleans Jazz saxophonists such as Sam Morgan, Lorenzo Tio Jr, Earl Fouche, Paul Barnes and Leon Rappolo.

However, it was pointed out to Eric that he had not presented evidence of saxophone use in New Orleans *before* 1920, the year that Panassié had stated in his book as being the cut-off date for definitive New Orleans jazz. Eric very quickly came up with some important additional material which established conclusively that Panassié was wrong, and provided a photo of "Big Eye" Louis Nelson playing tenor sax with the Original Creole Band in New Orleans in 1916, and another of James Palao with tenor sax who played with the same band in 1917.

During the revival in Australia in the 1940s and '50s of traditional-jazz, much invective was written and spoken by the "mouldy figs" about the inappropriateness of using the saxophone in traditional-style bands. (Mouldy figs, or figges, were fans who believed only in the "true" or Dixieland style of jazz.) It is now clear that this attitude was based on either a very narrow definition of New Orleans-style jazz or else on their personal preference for the instrumental make-up of a band. So, what is it about the saxophone which has created so much controversy? Let's look at some facts.

Born in Belgium, Adolphe Sax studied music at the Royal Conservatory of Brussels, after which, in 1842, he relocated permanently to Paris and began working on an innovative set of musical instruments to aid his parents who made conventional instruments. His first important invention was an improvement of the bass clarinet, which he patented at the age of 24. This was followed by the saxhorn which laid the groundwork for the modern euphonium. The use of saxhorns spread rapidly and their valves were accepted as state-of-the-art in their time and remain largely unchanged today.

Around this time he developed the instrument for which he is best known, the saxophone, which he patented on 28th June 1846. The saxophone was invented for use in both orchestras and military bands and Adolphe designed (on paper at least) a full range from sopranino to subcontra bass.

Composer Hector Berlioz wrote favourably of the new instrument but, despite his support, saxophones never generally became standard orchestral instruments at the time. However, their ability to play technical passages easily like woodwinds and also loudly like brass instruments led to their being widely included in military bands.

Rival instrument makers ignored the legitimacy of Sax's patents and were sued by him for patent infringements. These legal battles continued for over 20 years and Sax was eventually driven to bankruptcy. He died in poverty in Paris in 1894.

By the late nineteenth century, saxophones were now commonplace throughout the USA, largely in brass bands and symphony orchestras. For example, John Philip Sousa used them in his military band music from around 1893. So-called Polka bands, which also included saxophones in their instrumentation, were introduced in the 1840s by migrants from Europe and were quite popular in some parts of the USA.

The late 19th century also saw the emergence of Ragtime, which was a distinctly American musical style descended from jigs and the music played by marching bands. Ragtime has been expressed as a synthesis of African syncopation and European classical music.

Some early piano rags are entitled marches, and the words "jig" and "rag" were often used interchangeably. In 1895, African-American entertainer Ernest Hogan composed two of the earliest sheet music rags, one of which "All Coons Look Alike to Me" eventually sold a million copies. The other was called "La Pas Ma La", which was also a hit, and in 1899 Scott Joplin's famous "Maple Leaf Rag" was published.

By the start of the 20th century, ragtime had become widely popular throughout North America and was listened to, danced to, performed, and written about by people of many cultures. The enduringly popular "Alexander's Ragtime Band" was composed in 1911. Two of the best known ragtime-playing brass bands known to use saxophones were those led by W. C. Handy and James R. Europe. Europe led a popular Infantry Regiment Band which popularized ragtime in France during its 1918 tour.

Just exactly when Ragtime morphed into jazz is not known for sure, almost certainly before 1910, although not at the time known by that name. We do know that legendary jazz musician Buddy Bolden was playing (trumpet) in bands from 1900. Nevertheless, historians have not identified any written accounts of the saxophone being used in a jazz band before 1910 and, unfortunately, the first actual recording of jazz as played in its city of origin, New Orleans, was not until 1917. However, it is obvious that when jazz appeared, the players used the instruments that were already there, and the saxophone was amongst them.

The rise of dance bands in the 1920s following from the popularity of jazz gave a boost to the use of the saxophone as a jazz instrument. Rudy Wiedoeft, who recorded with the Frisco Jazz Band as early as 1917, became the best-known individual saxophone stylist and virtuoso during this period leading to a "saxophone craze" of the 1920s. The Fletcher Henderson Orchestra, formed

in 1923, featured arrangements to back up improvisation, bringing the first elements of jazz to the big-band format. Duke Ellington's Orchestra and Jean Goldkette's Victor Recording Orchestra featured jazz solos with saxophones, and the association of saxophones with jazz reached its peak with the swing music of the 1930s. But we've passed our target; it seems that the mouldy figs of the 1940s may have been somewhat misguided.

There is a variety of ten different types of saxophone but only five are used in jazz bands. These are the Soprano (B□), Alto (E□),Tenor (B□), C-melody (C), Baritone (E□), and Bass (B□), each covering a different range of the musical scale. The bass saxophone is little-used these days; it was fairly common for orchestral bass rhythm in the days of acoustic recording (before electrical c.1925) in place of the tuba which did not record well. The C-melody sax is also seldom heard since the days of its once-time exponent Frank Trumbauer.

Although competent musicians can play all types of saxophone, over the years various well-known performers have specialised in one particular type. A selection of some of the most influential are listed below:

Sidney Bechet (1897–1959) actually started out as a clarinettist. While in his early 20s, he switched to soprano saxophone and went on to become world famous. He managed to produce a particular reed sound which made his performances uniquely recognisable.

Adrian Rollini (1903–1956) was an early exponent of the bass sax, and is best known for his work with the California Ramblers in the 1920s.

Coleman Hawkins (1904–1969) was one of the dominant players of the 1930s and began his career with the Fletcher Henderson's band. In 1939, he formed a nine-piece big band and recorded "Body & Soul" which made him a household name.


Colman Hawkins

Benny Carter (1907–2003) His main instrument was the alto sax, but he was also adept on the trumpet and clarinet. He made his recording debut in 1928 but by the 1930s he was leading his own swing band. He was a master of the swinging saxophone.

Lester Young (1909–1959) is considered one of the most influential tenor saxophone players in history, whose style of playing transitioned from the loud hot sound of the big bands to the cooler, more intimate sound of the 1950s.

Ben Webster (1909–1973) was best known for his work with the Duke Ellington Orchestra from the mid-1930s into the late-1940s on the tenor sax, a style he adopted from Coleman Hawkins.

Charlie Parker (1920–1955) started playing alto sax when he was eleven years old. Throughout his career until his death in 1955, he would have an inestimable influence on jazz improvisation, not just on the saxophone but across all other instruments. It is claimed that no saxophonist yet has eclipsed him in terms of importance.


Charlie Parker

Zoot Sims (1925–1985) took Lester Young's sleek and mellow approach to jazz and fused it with the style of hard bop. He played in many big bands including those of Artie Shaw, Stan Kenton and Buddy Rich.

John Coltrane (1926–1967) worked in the bebop and hard bop idioms early in his career. He was at the forefront of free jazz and is considered among the most influential and inventive players of the 1950s and 1960s.

Stan Getz (1927–1991) Originating in Philadelphia, Getz became the pre-eminent tenor saxophonist of the US West Coast cool school scene of the 1950s.

Don Burrows, (1928–2020) Australia's own, performed internationally and excelled in alto and baritone sax among other instruments.

Sonny Rollins (born in 1930) played tenor sax. In 1948 he began a series of recording gigs that included dates with Babs Gonzales, Bud Powell, J.J. Johnson, Miles Davis and the Rolling Stones. He has been called "the greatest living improviser".

Wayne Shorter (born in 1933) joined Miles Davis's jazz quintet as a tenor saxophonist in 1964, leaving in 1970 on the soprano.

Before concluding the subject of the saxophone, it is interesting to comment on the "plastic" instrument. Although saxophones are traditionally manufactured from brass, one of the gems in the Australian Jazz Museum's collection is a white plastic Grafton saxophone, given to Ade Monsbourgh during the Graeme Bell band's second tour to Europe in 1951–1952. Other famous musicians who owned and played them include Charlie Parker, Ornette Coleman, and John Dankworth.

The decision to manufacture a saxophone from plastic was based upon the relative cheapness of the material. It was first offered for sale to the public in 1950 in England at a price of 55 pounds, about half the cost of a conventional saxophone at the time. The instrument has a plastic body, bell and key guards made from a compound developed by ICI, a brass neck and a mechanism which incorporates a unique springing system. Only about 3000 were ever made.


Phil Noy, restorer of Ade Monsbourgh's plastic saxophone at the Australian Jazz Museum.

FOR THE LOVE OF MIKE

By Billl Brown

THE above title is often used to accompany an exasperated request or to express dismay but in this context it is a compliment to a worthy member of the jazz fraternity one Michael McQuaid. Michael is a multi instrumentalist and composer who has made a name for himself in the Australia jazz scene over the past twenty or so years. For the past couple of years he has been based in the UK and has impressed the jazzers there also. I have seen his name mentioned a few times in Just Jazz, a UK magazine I subscribe to. He leads a band called the Vitality Five and has also appeared in other groups especially at various festivals particularly an annual event held at Newcastle.

In recent times I was fortunate to attend a concert in Melbourne that featured Michael with his Late Hour Boys, a band he has led over the years. This event occurred during his annual return to Australia on a family visit. It was a great evening of hot swinging jazz. Repertoire of the group included early Louis Armstrong tunes “Weary Blues”, “Put ‘Em Down Blues”, Earl Hines “My Monday Date” and a few Chicago washboard tracks like “Candy Lips” and “Washboard Wiggles”. Also of course living up to their name there was a nod in Ade Monsbourgh’s direction with “All Steamed Up”, “Euroa” and “Kelly’s Deal”. As I write this article I’m listening to a CD of Mike’s trio recorded in London on January 2017. It’s called “Diaspora” and contains two of Michael’s compositions “Diaspora” and “Black Spur”. To illustrate Michael’s broad approach to the music I can dip into my collection and listen to different CDs involving our hero. One set of the aforementioned Late Hour Boys, another of his big band The Red Hot Rhythmakers. “Diaspora” and Michael appear on a session under guitar man John Scurry’s name. This album is called Reverse Swing and comprises tunes written by Scurry. So what’s not to like? For the record the line-up in the recent concert was – Michael McQuaid, Jason Downes clarinet and saxes, Rob Moffatt trombone, John Scurry banjo and guitar, Richard Mander bass and sousaphone, Sandra Talty drums and vocals and Ian Smith washboard and trumpet and vocals. Great stuff.

The Shock of Louis Armstrong's Sound

By Lee Treanor

IT’S April, 1956 and three lads, Ian Orr, Kevin Goodie and me: each of us in our mid-teens and not long out of school, were quite excited: Bill Haesler, an avid collector and well respected aficionado of the Melbourne jazz scene had arranged to spirit us into Louis Armstrong's upcoming concert at The Palais, in St. Kilda. Bill was Ian Orr's brother-in-law. It was through him that the three of us, all neighbours and budding musos had been welcomed into the fold at the Bob Barnard Band's Sunday night gig at the Mentone Lifesaving Club. There, we'd been thrilled to be invited on-stage to sit in occasionally: a chance to be mentored by mature musos with well-justified reputations which lasted them the rest of their lives. Bob Barnard played a strong lead that carried unmistakeable influences of Louis' style, so we were only too happy to accept Bill's plan. The plan rested on the fact that the Barnard band was to be the opening act in the concert. Oh, Boy. The best local band (in our opinion) and Louis Armstrong's All Stars. Bliss!

Comes the night: Bill shepherds us to the stage-door entrance, down the Luna Park side of The Palais, Inside, we noticed an open doorway to the dressing rooms. Bill took us up a staircase to our right, which led directly to the stage This afforded us copious heavy stage drapes to hide behind but from which we each had unimpeded views of the stage The Barnard band was already playing and we three settled into enjoying the concert. We were simultaneously aware of the 'feeling' of the audience - ‘the vibes’ we might say today. Each of the Barnard numbers was warmly applauded, including individual solos by Graeme Coyle, Frank Traynor, Freddie Parkes as well as Bob, of course. We were also aware of the rising expectation that every number brought us nearer to the appearance of The All Stars.

Then, without any forewarning, we, but not the audience, or the on-stage band, heard an outburst of music: a single scale on a trumpet from the dressing rooms beneath us. Louis, waring up. 'Shit!', I exclaimed. Quite loudly, apparently, as each and every muso on the stage momentarily stopped playing and looked at us: looked at me. It was not only the volume of the trumpet, it was also the purity of the tone. My standard of volume and tone up till then had been Bob Barnard. He remains one of my favourites to this day, despite my (later) involvement in the "New Orleans" style of jazz - often referred to, derisively, as 'Underground Music', i.e. it sounds as if they're all playing underground. As the Barnard Band finished their part of the concert and trooped of the stage I was met with a quizzical look from each; I could only shrug and look embarrassed and contrite.

Louis and The All Stars ascended from the dressing rooms and went on stage to rapturous applause. They played as the well-oiled machine that they were. I had plenty of time to get used to that volume and tone but, somehow their presence was anti-climactic. I was no doubt still deeply embarrassed as I stood silently in the wings, but I somehow thought that, overall, the Barnard Band had been more exciting and, somehow, better. I had no hesitation in returning to the Mentone Lifesaving Club the following Sunday night.

ADRIAN FORD – A RAGTIME WEB PAGE AND BIOGRAPHY

By Michael Mathew

The web page project

MY Sydney based colleague David Beattie (Ragtime Dave) was fond of Adrian Ford's ragtime compositions and through his friendship with Adrian secured renditions of many of his known 32 ragtime compositions. Very few of these have been commercially recorded and David and I thought that Adrian deserved to be recognised and that these compositions should be made available for the public to hear. And so we set out to produce a web page. Thanks to computers and the internet it has not been an issue that I am in Melbourne, David and our great helper Bill Haesler OAM are in Sydney and our webmaster is in Canberra.

Anyone who has tried such an exercise will know the difficulties. They start with, "Is that tune sufficiently syncopated to be deemed to be ragtime?" and go through to trying to find sheet music where we did not have it already (and The Australian Jazz Museum had none) onto who could we get to record those tunes for which we had the sheet music but no private recording by Adrian. We were very pleased that Steve Grant offered to do this for the three tunes involved. Without the help of Bill Haesler OAM we would never have managed to create the Discography on the web page. It lists 28 recordings on which Adrian is known to have played.

What we present now to the public is a web page (accessed via ragtimecompendium.tripod.com) with some biographic material on Adrian, a discography, a list of 32 known compositions (and dates where we know them) and links to mp3 renditions for 22 of them. Most of the renditions are by Adrian but three have been recorded specifically for this project by Steve Grant. Ten tunes elude us in that we have not as yet found anyone who has the sheet music for them and certainly we can't find renditions of them, but we hope that interested jazzophiles may have relevant material which will let us augment the web page.

Readers may ask why just Adrian's ragtime tunes. The basic reason for this is that both David and I are passionate about ragtime, with David being a major contributor to my web based A RAGTIME COMPENDIUM – an index of known ragtime tunes, with an emphasis on pre-1970 compositions, when sheet music, piano rolls and records whether 78/45/33$^{1/3}$ were commonplace. Other reasons would be that David knew of all these tunes and had the sheet music and renditions for about two-thirds, that all of Adrian's compositions would be a much harder task and that we considered Adrian's ragtime pieces to be his better compositions.

The Biographical Notes

Jazzman Adrian de Brabander Ford was born in Sydney on 26 April 1940. He was the second of three brothers. He began piano at the age of eight, studying for two years at a local piano school from the age of nine. His teacher gave him a love of Fats Waller and taught via the Shefte Method, both of which influenced his approach to stride and syncopation.

He came into jazz in 1957 as a teenager, listening to the Paramount Jazz Band at the Sydney Jazz Club. He was a graduate of the SJC's 1960s musician's workshop, and took up trombone and clarinet. He later also took up cornet, and taught clarinet. Adrian was left-handed, which we suggest may explain his solid left hand on the piano – ideal for stride and handy for ragtime.

Adrian joined the Jazz Pirates in 1962, worked with Geoff Bull's Olympia Jazz Band during 1965-69, Graeme Bell All Stars, the Big Apple Union blues band, and with various rock groups.

He formed the York Gospel Singers in 1966 specifically to perform gospel music and used singers Allison McCullum, Jeannie Lewis, John Bates, Bob Coneroy and John Dawe. The York group appeared as the support group for a Sydney Town Hall concert featuring US blues singers Sonny Terry and Brownie McGee and were a hit at the 1966 Australian Jazz Convention in Melbourne.

He toured Europe, Canada and the US with Maurie Garbutt's Melbourne-based Yarra Yarra New Orleans Jazz Band from 1969 to 1971. He was offered some jazz jobs, in Paris, London, etc. and was asked if he would be keen to join up with the late great band lead leader and legend in the UK, Ken Colyer, but decided the bottom half of the globe offered a better lifestyle.

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, having played with Bill since 1969. He toured Australia with the Yarra Yarra New Orleans Jazz Band and New Orleans trumpet player Alvin Alcorn in April 1973 and, over the years, freelanced at a vast number of venues on piano, trombone and clarinet.

An annual Australian Jazz Convention regular, Adrian had a composer's flair and won its Original Tunes Competition on five occasions. 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 Orleans and was a founder of 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. Adrian was a Director of the Professional Musicians' Club from 1976 until 2015.

Adrian worked in the paymaster's office at Cockatoo Island for many years. On retrenchment he worked as a house painter, learnt the trade and ran his own business up until about 2013. He married twice, first to Claire, a French girl whom he met in Paris during the 1969-71 Yarra Yarra Band tour and we understand they married in Germany. She returned with him to Australia and they lived in Balmain. When the marriage broke up years later she returned to Paris. Adrian moved to Balmain and married Maggie early in the 1990s knowing she had MS. Maggie died in 2019.

Adrian became ill following a mild stroke in November 2013 and was reluctantly forced into musical retirement. He died at The Parkview Nursing Home, Five Dock NSW on Wednesday, 5th July 2017 following his long illness.

MENA PEARSON – A BURST OF SONG

By Bob Edwards and Mel Forbes

IT'S early 1945 in Sydney, and 20-year-old Mena Pearson has been working as a clerk for saxophonist David Samuel, who offers correspondence courses in musical theory from an office in Castlereagh Street. This is a dream job for young Mena, who loves jazz and swing, and anything to do with the world of popular music. A workmate has invited her to a dance where there'll be a big band featuring pianist Les Welch, who is a friend of Mena's workmate. The dance is to be held at White City Stadium, on the edge of Darlinghurst and Paddington, a fundraiser for the Miss Australia competition. Interestingly, Miss Australia had been suspended after the 1937 competition, probably due to failure to secure an ongoing corporate or charity partner, and was re-introduced in 1945 as the War was starting to wind down.

Mena and her friend are dancing at the front of the hall quite close to the band, and Mena is absorbed in the moment, singing along with the band loudly enough to be heard by pianist Welch. Later that evening her workmate introduces her to Welch, and having been impressed by her voice, he later contacts her and invites her to sing with his band. Mena jumps at the opportunity, and by August of that year has quit her City job and started her singing career.

Mena was to go on to become one of the better-known band singers of her era in Sydney during her brief career, earning praise as "Easily the best vocalist in Sydney" in Music Maker magazine, in February 1947.

As a child, Mena loved to sing. Her paternal grandmother was a piano teacher, her mother played piano and her father also loved to sing. The family would go to Circular Quay on a Sunday (pre-Sydney Harbour Bridge) to see the trade ships moored. Mena as a four-year old would sit on her father's shoulder and sing her then favourite song. "I'm knee deep in daisies, I'm knee deep in love"! Except her version was "I'm niddip in daisies".

At the end of her kindergarten year, her teacher said she would really miss Mena's singing. Her singing trajectory continued, and in December 1941 at 17 she was a finalist in the Blues contest run by Sydney radio station 2UE.
Mena's first appearances were with Les Welch's band in performances at university dances, but she soon became known and was invited to sing with a variety of groups, both large and small.

First Finalists For "Blues" Honors

The popular music scene in Sydney in the post-war years was rich and varied. The Swing craze had hit Australia in the mid-1930s, and in addition to imported US recordings a number of local bands played in the style, notably the Frank Coughlan band who became the house band at the Trocadero ballroom. Bands such as his in turn spun off musicians who went on to form their own dance bands. While many local musicians signed on for the war effort during WW2, those who remained were kept in constant employment by the continuing demand for the diversion of dances, while at the same time visits by bands catering to the huge number of US troops passing through Sydney augmented and stimulated the local music scene.

After the cessation of hostilities, many musicians returned from military service and soon found work catering to music lovers and dancers. It was also around this time that a resurgence of interest in small-ensemble jazz in the style of early-30s American ensembles such as Condon, Teagarden, Goodman et al, which had surfaced around 1940 but been interrupted by war, gathered pace to become the first Australian Trad Jazz wave.

Dance bands, and indeed bands of all sorts, found a ready audience in the post-war years, before television arrived to confine families to their living rooms. Returned servicemen and women flocked back to dances featuring big-bands, usually with one or more featured vocalists, and they were now joined by wartime teens emerging into early adulthood. As early as December 1945, a Music Maker Magazine listing of where Sydney bands were playing, included 18 night clubs, halls and restaurants, and 5 radio stations.

There's a very early recording of Mena with Kevin Ryder's orchestra featuring a young Don Burrows, singing "On the Sunny Side of the Street". Very few recordings of Mena survive, and their quality has deteriorated, but they still convey an idea of what she sounded like. In this slow-paced version, her voice is precise and controlled, with a mature sense of phrasing.

In rehearsal

By 1947 Mena was getting gigs with a number of bands all over Sydney, at venues ranging from nightclubs to large ballrooms – places such as the California Coffee Shop in King's Cross, the Bondi Pavilion, Romano's, Park View, Bondi Esplanade, the State Ballroom and the sumptuous Trocadero – all long gone now. In addition to the clubs there were also regular performances at Town Halls and – a now-forgotten institution of those times – radio-station auditoriums.

1947 was also the year that Mena married Harry Berry, a talented and respected trumpeter and trombonist, and leader of a popular band. The local music press kept track of the blossoming relationship in the typical chatty fashion of the day:

> The HARRY BERRY-MENA PEARSON double going very strongly these days. Harry's car has a permanent parking spot outside the Pearson domicile, so they say! . . .

Berry nurtured a number of musicians who went on to achieve fame in their own right, including John Bates, Terry Fowler, Dave Panichi (who referred to him as the James Morrison of his era), Peter Di Losa and Chris Qua (of Galapagos Duck fame).

Harry and Mena married in June 1947.

● *Top-line vocalist, Mena Pearson, is to hear wedding bells when she says "Yes," to orchestra leader, Harry Berry, in June.*

An innovation of the time was a series of events dubbed the "Battle of the Bands" at the Sydney Town Hall, whose promoter brought together a number of bands representing the competing genres of big-band Swing, smaller trad ensembles, bop, and very small groups playing jazz classics and ballads. These were in concert format, rather than being dances supported by live-band music. Mena appeared with the Gus Mersey Quintet at one such event in 1947 singing "All of Me". To watch her in action is to be swept away by her sense of fun and enjoyment, embodied by her huge grin as she hits the last note of the song.

Another Battle of the Bands performance was with a small group, the Enzo Toppano trio, in 1948 where she delivered a polished performance of "Sweet Lorraine".

In those pre-TV/pre-internet times radio was the primary source of weeknight entertainment. A number of radio stations regularly broadcast live and recorded jazz and swing music. Some sported sizable auditoriums which functioned as performance venues in their own right. Mena had a notable radio presence. She did some shows for radio 2GB Sports Show from their auditorium with the Bela Kanitz Trio and once from the Trocadero with a small group from the Trocadero band of Frank Coughlan. For the ABC she did broadcasts with the Harbour City Six in what they called "Swing Sessions", and on one occasion sang with Graeme Bell's Australia Jazz band at an ABC concert in the Sydney Town Hall. Mena also did a regular spot for a while for "The All Time Hit Parade" conducted by Humphrey Bishop each Thursday at 8.30 pm on radio 2CH.

Mena and Harry's first child Louella was born in February 1950. She briefly returned to singing and in August 1950 performed at the "Jazz Jamboree" at Sydney Town Hall as "Mena Pearson and her Blue Boys". Husband Harry was on the same bill that night, with his Harry Berry Orchestra. In a September 1 review of that event, by Wally Norman: *"Mena Pearson (Mrs Harry Berry) was a luscious eyeful in a close-fitting, sensuous, flame-coloured gown, and voice to match".*

By that stage, with a babe in arms and having reached the pinnacle as a singer, Mena decided that it was time to retire properly so that she could focus on raising a family. Anna and Malcolm were born in the next few years and Mena settled into family life in their home at Dulwich Hill. Lucky kids! Mum was always singing around the house, and as youngsters the girls would join her in trio performances at get-togethers with musician friends.

Mena will turn 97 this year. She's happily ensconced at the Uniting Village Hostel in Salamander Bay NSW and she still loves to sing to this day! On her 96th birthday last August, a Zoom party was arranged with family members due to COVID lockdown. It was her first encounter with Zoom, and she lapped it up, entertaining her family and hostel staff by singing her signature song "Sunny Side of the Street", to everyone's delight. She still has a sunny disposition and is loved by all who know her.

Mena on her 95th birthday

Acknowledgements:

Thanks to Mel Blachford, Bill Haesler, Jack Mitchell, Ralph Powell, and Mena's daughter Anna for advice and supporting information.

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GONE TO GLORY Ross Fusedale 1927 - 2020

UNFORTUNATELY, mainly older Sydney jazz people will remember Ross Fusedale, who was a stalwart of our music from the early 1940s. A quiet and gentle man he was a fine but self-effacing musician with a keen sense of humour and was an important part of it for most of his life. Not a luminary but a peer to most of them.

Ross John Fusedale, (Stomp, Stonk, Flossie) was born in Sydney NSW on 20 December 1927, played clarinet, alto and soprano saxophones and lived with his parents in Bexley. It was obvious that he had musical training, but never mentioned it. For all his outgoing zaniness Ross was a private person. He contributed articles and letters to the news and music papers and a member of the Sydney Swing Music Club and its involvement when the Graeme Bell Dixieland Band came to Sydney in April 1947 for a concert to raise funds for its legendary trip to Czechoslovakia and record at Homebush for Regal Zonophone. I suspect that Ross attended the 2nd annual Australian Jazz Convention in December 1947, but was certainly at the third in 1948, where a humorous 'incident' was immortalised by trombonist Warwick 'Wocka' Dyer with the lyrics of "Wet Coat Blues" performed by Frank Johnson's Dixielanders at the Prahran Town Hall venue and recorded later in the week by Warwick Dyer's Stompers. It is now available on an Australian Jazz Museum CD (VJAZZ 019).

An avid jazz record collector, Ross imported records from overseas and was also, briefly, a record producer when he issued two Zenith 10" 78s made in Melbourne in 1948 by the Yarra City Stompers and John Sangster's Jazz Six. When his day job as an ABC reporter required Ross to move to Melbourne in March 1949 he passed ownership of Zenith to Norman Linehan, another Sydney jazz personality who had just established his Elmar jazz record company. Sales for both labels were low and Ross and Norm exited the record game.

Ross immediately settled into the Melbourne inner jazz circle with the Bells, Tony Newstead, Frank Johnson and Len Barnard bands and their followers. This was when I met him and we formed a lifelong friendship. They were amazing days. Ross rented a little bungalow behind a house in St Kilda that contained a bed, wardrobe, table, his Garrard record player on a big cardboard box, amplifier, loudspeaker and his records; and the scene of numerous memorable record sessions. He had a great collection and introduced us to the Bunk Johnson American Music records and the famous 1943 George Lewis Climax recording session. He worked with John Sangster groups, was a member of the popular but short-lived Steamboat Stompers and attended the 6th AJC at Norwood, Adelaide SA with the Kazoo Moaners. He worked at the Hobohemian Club (Middle Park Life Saving Club) with Alan Lee (vibes), Brian Brown (reeds) Len Barnard (piano), John Allen (bass) and Frank May (drums) in 1956 and freelanced.

He was also a regular at the early-1950s legendary Alan Watson parties at the large family mansion in Rockley Road, South Yarra, most of which I missed because of my day job. Alan's deceased parents had owned a very successful wine merchant business and the cellar was full. Gradually, Watson's became a defacto boarding house for itinerant musicians and characters and Alan always had a full set of musical instruments ready for rehearsing and playing sessions. By contemporary reports they were almost continuous and John Sangster in his 1988 autobiography *Seeing The Rafters* refers to it as The Party for it ran for several years.

When writer-enthusiast Tony Standish put together Bob Barnard's Allfrey Street Stompers for a recording session in 1952 he handpicked the group. Bob (cornet), Ross Fusedale (alto sax), Wocka Dyer (piano & vocal) and Len Barnard (drums) but when Tony raised enough to release it as a 10" LP Ross reluctantly vetoed the idea. He did not consider his playing good enough and a second session was arranged with Nick Polites as his replacement. It sold well and is also on an AJAZZ CD. Therefore, Ross never recorded, apart from the voice introduction to the Len Barnard band's "Big Fat Ma And Skinny Pa" on a Jazzart LP. A great loss as Ross was certainly much better than he imagined. Which is why he was nicknamed 'Stomp'.

During this period Ross maintained a professional day job as a journalist with the ABC. When the Graeme Bell Australian Jazz Band returned from its second trip to Britain and Europe in June 1952 it made a widely publicised interstate ABC concert tour in May-July 1952 before disbanding and Ross was its assistant tour manager. Based on this experience he then became the band manager for Len Barnard's Jazz Band from 1952 until 1955.

In March 1961 Graham Coyle organised one of the initial groups of jazz musicians to be given free passage for entertaining passengers to Europe aboard the Greek ship Patris that comprised Ian Orr (trumpet), Ross (alto sax), Graham Coyle (keyboard), Frank Turville (banjo & cornet) and Mal McGillivray (drums). On arrival in London Ross took what jobs were available before finding a lucrative position with the BBC and remained there until 1964, by which time he had given up playing jazz but not his love or support for it. Following his return to Melbourne he worked with the large advertising agency McCann Erikson, then rejoined the ABC and its news team at Radio Australia, bought a house in East Malvern and supported jazz gigs and events. He remained with the ABC until mandatory retirement in 1992.

Apart from jazz, Ross was also an avid weekend fossicker on Victoria's old goldfields, with modest success and some exciting finds. He also made regular visits to Sydney to see his ageing parents and also caught up with Jess and me, and Sydney jazz and its musicians.

Ross was a familiar face on the Melbourne jazz scene until early 2015 when vascular dementia prevented him from living alone and he was admitted to the Alfred Hospital, then the Caulfield Hospital for treatment and observation. He was transferred to Bupa Aged Care in Windsor in September 2015 where he spent his last five years. In 2017, a trio of his close mates led by Ian Smith (trumpet), John Cox (banjo) and Peter Grey (string bass) played there for his 90th birthday.

Sadly, Ross faded away and died peacefully on 16th October 2020. Due to COVID-19 restrictions he was cremated privately. It is proposed that a memorial function for Ross will be held in about six months where his friends can celebrate his commitment to jazz.

Bill Haesler OAM. November 2020.

READY EDDIE

By Bill Brown

THE above reference relates to one gentleman born Albert Edwin Condon in Goodland Indiana in 1905. As Eddie Condon he became known as one of jazz music's personalities, leading bands and organising and taking part in sessions in clubs, concert halls and on radio, film and TV. Not a front-line player, brass, reeds, in fact, he started off playing ukulele, appearing on banjo in his early recordings, with the McKenzie, Condon Chicagoans, and his own quartet. He got involved with a bunch of other white musicians that were known as the Austin High School Band – Jimmy McPartland on trumpet, reed players, Frank Teschmaker and Bud Freeman, Jim Lanigan, bass, and Gene Krupa, drums. They and others like the legendary Bix Beiderbecke, created what became known as Chicago jazz. All those white players witnessed at first hand the playing of the African American groups in Chicago led by the likes of Louis Armstrong, King Oliver and Jelly Roll Morton among others. Condon took part in a multi–racial recording in 1932 under the leadership of a singer called Billy Banks. Pianist Fats Waller was on some of those tracks and there is a funny story about Eddie and Fats that they both liked a drink and they spent the evening together, supposedly keeping the other in good shape for the recording the next day. What's that they say about the blind leading the blind?

By the mid-thirties Eddie was really only playing guitar rather than the banjo, and he was getting use to leading bands and mixing with some great players like Trombonist Jack Teagarden, clarinet man Pee Wee Russell and trumpet players like Bobby Hackett and Muggsy Spanier. In the late thirties his band was resident at Nick's Club in Greenwich Village. He also signed up with Commodore records. From 1945 he ran a club of his own at a few locations until the sixties.

In 1957 he led a band on a UK tour. From memory it was a bit of a curate's egg. Clarinettist Bob Wilber was I think a sober chap but the other six band members liked a taste, as they say. George Melly's book "Owning Up" talks of the bands' boozing and the fact that some of the UK musicians joined in meant that a few of them were under the weather for their gigs afterwards. The other thing was that Eddie was used to chatting to the punters at his club. In the UK concerts he'd chat to the musicians, laying aside his guitar. Apparently at the Glasgow concert a worthy member of the audience shouted out "Play the Guitar." It's not known if he added an adjective to the sentence or called Eddie Jimmy. Sadly I missed that concert due to having an appointment with a surgeon's scalpel. However, despite the bad publicity I think the Condon visit, like the Louis Armstrong visit of the year before, gave a boost to the UK scene. A few other US players visited that year, singers Big Bill Broonzy, Brother John Sellars, Sister Rosetta Tharpe, New Orleans Clarinet man, George Lewis and in the autumn a sextet co-led by Jack Teagarden and pianist Earl Hines. I had the good fortune of seeing them in concert in Liverpool.

As my record collection grew I acquired some of the series of concert broadcasts that Eddie hosted in the period 1944/45 mainly for the US troops serving overseas. With a basic line-up of Bobby Hackett, Max Kaminski, Pee Wee Russell Ernie Carceres and occasional guests they did tributes to various US giants of the musical world, Fats Waller, Bix, Hoagy Carmichael, Gershwin and others.

Of course the other weapon in the Condon armoury was his being always ready with a quip. In the thirties he was put out by something French critic Hugues Panassié said about jazz.. He had organised a recording with Sidney Bechet and Mezz Mezzrow. Eddie said, "That French Guy. I wouldn't tell him how to jump on a grape." On another occasion, his wife Phyllis worried about Eddie's drinking compiled a list of musicians who had died from alcohol excess. Eddie looked at the list, shook his head and said, "They must have sounded lousy, they haven't got a drummer." That sounds strange I would have thought that his mate drummer, Dave Tough, would have been present. Another time a very serious young student approached Eddie and asked "Mr Condon what are the two important things that a jazz musician must know?" Eddie said, "Well, first when the band is on the stand, shoes must be worn at all times, and if a musician falls off the stand he must get back unaided."

Eddie Condon kept playing at festivals etc. until 1971. He toured Australia with a fine group in I think 1964/65. I missed out again as I didn't arrive in Gods Own until 1966. However, I have a recording that group made in Japan during that tour.

By 1973 Eddie was very ill and died that year. Not long before he expired, reed player, Bob Wilber and pianist, Ralph Sutton, visited him in hospital. Sitting by his bed they made their presence known to the patient who was asleep. Eddie stirred and opened his eyes. He smiled and said "Hey fellers, you know this oblivion thing ain't bad." Eddie ready with a quip at the end.

Congratulations to our Collections Manager Mel Blachford OAM

Mel accompanied by his family met and accepted his award from the Governor of Victoria The Honourable Linda Dessau AC on the 10th December.

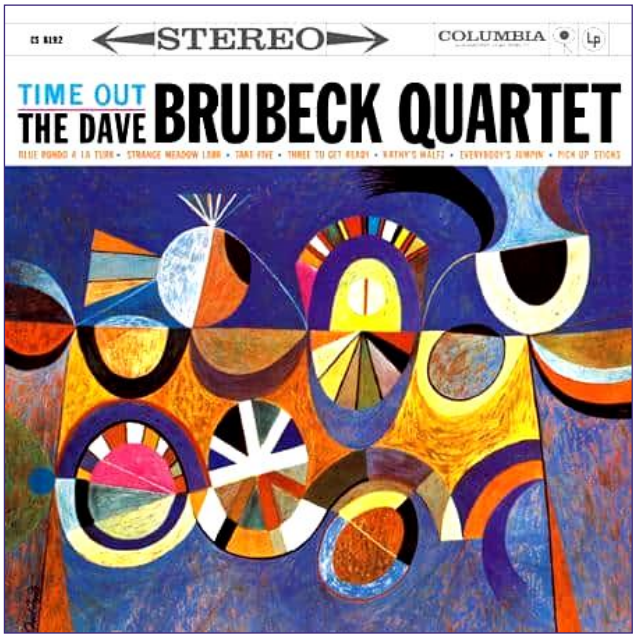
Mel received the Medal for the Order of Australia in the Queen's Birthday honours last year. This was awarded to Mel "For service to the pharmacy profession and to jazz music."

My Jazz Odyssey

by Eric Myers

I was born in Newcastle, New South Wales in 1945, but grew up in Singleton, a small town in the Hunter Valley. Studying classical piano as a child, my connection with jazz during those years was tenuous. My teacher, a nun at the local Convent, would teach me stride piano, courtesy of the Art Shefte method but – significantly - only at the end of each year, after the classical exams were over. Jazz was then thought to be a trivial pursuit - for fun only - while classical music was regarded as Serious Music – a view which, in certain circles, I'm sorry to say, still survives to this day.

In the late 50s, aged about 13, I visited my uncle and his family in Sydney, and my cousin played me the Dave Brubeck Quartet album *Time Out*, which I found fascinating. For a number of years therefore my idea of jazz was limited to this Quartet, and particularly to the alto saxophone of Paul Desmond. As with many seminal adolescent experiences I often think of Desmond as my first love. In later years I bought the sequel *Time Further Out* and other Brubeck albums, which reinforced my interest in this sort of music.



A major seminal jazz experience occurred in 1962, when I arrived, aged 16, to attend the University of Sydney. During Orientation Week a sign "Free Lunchtime Jazz Concert" drew me to the Wallace Theatre, where I expected to hear something like the Brubeck quartet. The reality was a rude awakening: the Port Jackson Jazz Band, with Ray Price (banjo), Ken Flannery (trumpet), John McCarthy (clarinet), John Costelloe (trombone), Wally Wickham (bass), Alan Geddes (drums) and Dick Hughes (piano). I had never heard anything like this music and, needless to say, found one hour of it completely riveting. Only later did I discover that this was "traditional jazz" while the Brubeck Quartet was "modern jazz" (or, to be more accurate, a particular modern style called "West Coast").

The Port Jackson Jazz Band with the personnel I heard in 1962, other than Ray Price who had died by the time this photo was taken, and trombonist Doc Willis, instead of John Costelloe.

Over the next 15 years or so my relationship to jazz was fleeting. Stuck in a suburban house, concentrating on my university studies, I became a member of what was then the Australian Record Club, and devoured most of the late 50s Miles Davis LPs and Brubeck albums. But it was only after I began as a professional pianist, working in bands in the licensed clubs during the late 60s, that I came into contact with Sydney's army of talented jazz musicians. Having never spent any time seriously studying jazz, I could not be regarded as a jazz pianist in any sense, although I would play spirited solos; I now shudder to think how they must have sounded. My expertise was based on being able to read music at sight, courtesy of my classical training. With 1,000 licensed clubs in Sydney in the 60s and 70s, most of them employing live musicians to play dance music and back cabaret artists, work was

plentiful and lucrative.

Many fine jazz musicians came through the club band I led over 20 years. They included Mick Kenny (trumpet), Herbie Cannon (trombone), Barry Woods (drums), Bobby Scott (double bass/vocals) Miroslav Bukovsky (trumpet), Joe André (alto saxophone/vocals), Ned Sutherland (guitar), Ken James, (saxophones & flute), Bill Motzing (trombone), John Pochée (drums), Bob McIvor (trombone), Ned Sutherland (guitar), Phil Treloar (drums). During the last manifestation of my club band in the early 80s, it included great musicians such as John Morrison (drums), Charlie Munro (saxophones & clarinet), Marie Wilson (vocals) and Dick Montz (trumpet). Like many club musicians during these years, I also had a lucrative business writing charts for cabaret artists.

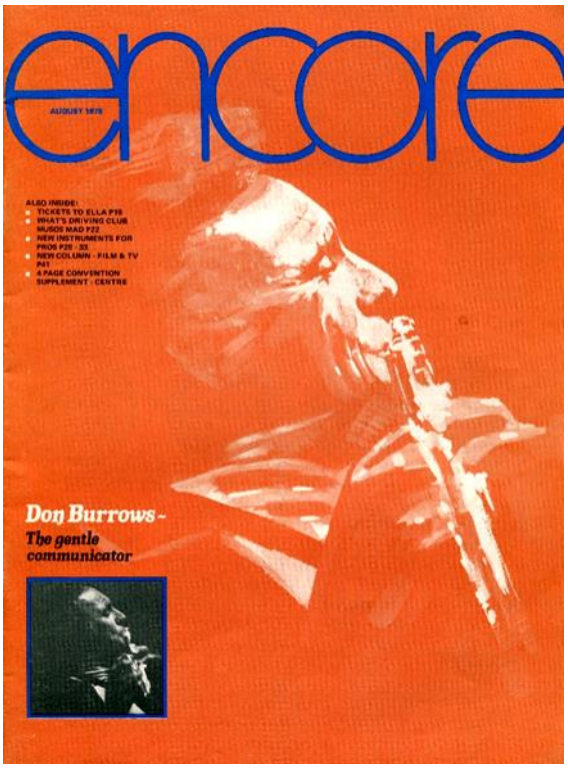
A shot of the front-line at Cronulla-Sutherland Leagues Club in the early 70s: L-R, Bill Motzing (trombone), Miroslav Bukovsky (flugelhorn), Ken James (tenor saxophone).

In the mid-70s my friend, comedian, Dave Burke started a monthly magazine for the entertainment industry called *Encore*. At some point in time he asked me to write something on conditions in the clubs for professional musicians. This led to a series of articles called "Musicians and the Clubs", which Dave ran in *Encore* over several months. This was a real turning point for me. I discovered, in my early 30s, that I enjoyed being essentially a freelance journalist. After doing music only - non-stop for many years - I found it refreshing to be doing something different and stimulating, an activity which I could pursue simultaneously while still being active as a professional pianist and arranger.

Once writing for *Encore* it wasn't far to reviewing musical performances and - dare I say it - posing as a music critic. By 1976 Andrew L Urban and his wife, the singer Margaret Keller, had bought *Encore* from Dave Burke. One day Andrew said: "We've got two complimentary tickets for the Roberta Flack concert at the Hordern Pavilion next week. Would you like to go?" I said yes of course. There was a catch, however; I had to write a review for the magazine. I said I'd have no idea what to write, but Andrew advised: just write anything intelligent about the music you hear. This I did, and enjoyed it. Andrew was happy with my contributions, and this led to my reviewing jazz performances and writing feature articles on jazz musicians for *Encore*.

When in 1977 I told Andrew that my partner Margaret Sullivan and I were relocating to England he said, "How would you like to be *Encore*'s London correspondent?" This was the furthest thing from my mind, and felt it far-fetched, but it turned out to be a great idea. The first thing I did after we hit London was contact Ronnie Scott at his jazz club in Soho, and do an interview with him, which was later published in *Encore*. Ronnie invited Margaret and I to attend the club as his guests. This was a revelation. In this way I discovered the freebie. Whenever there were major concerts on in London, I would contact the promoters or publicists, who had complimentary tickets available for the press. When I told them I was the London correspondent for *Encore* magazine in Sydney, Australia, they would shower me with free tickets.

Returning to Australia in 1978 after 12 months away, I resumed working for *Encore*, and became its music editor in August 1978. I had become increasingly interested in writing on jazz, and one of my first major articles, in the August 1978 edition, was a cover story on the country's most well-known jazz musician: "Don Burrows: The Gentle Communicator". I was then able to branch out to other publications. For some time, for example, I was the jazz records reviewer for the Australian *Penthouse Magazine*.



The cover of Encore magazine, August, 1978 edition.

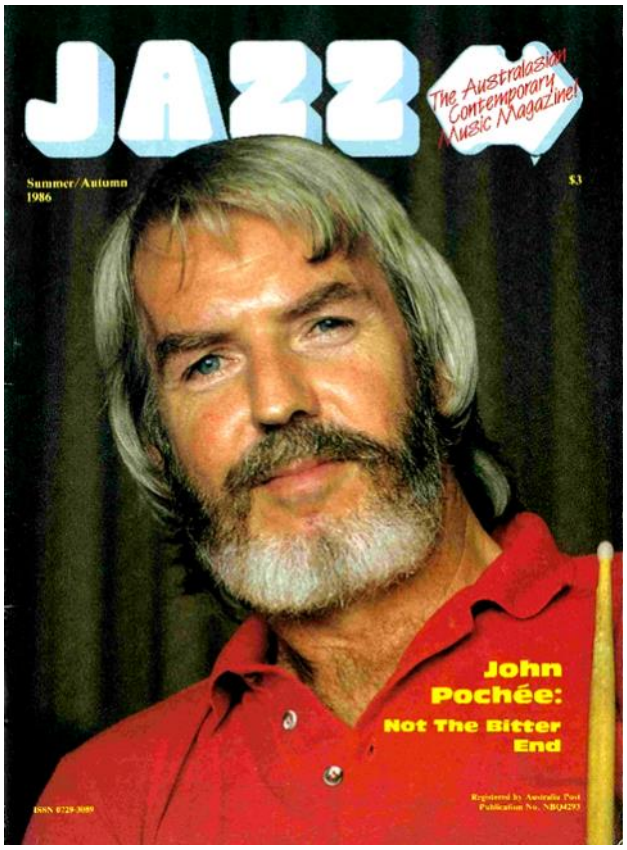
In late 1979 I did a profile of the promoter Horst Liepolt, then the most significant non-musician in the Australian jazz world. This was shortly before Horst left for New York, where he became highly prominent in the NY jazz scene. My article on him was published in *Encore*. In early 1980 Horst recommended me to the new arts editor of the *Sydney Morning Herald (SMH)* Richard Coleman, who was then looking for a jazz critic. Until then, occasional pieces on jazz had appeared in the *SMH* but they had never had a specialist jazz critic. I was the first, and commenced in 1980. There were a number of distinguished critics then writing for the *SMH*, notably H G (Harry) Kippax (theatre) and Roger Covell (classical music). So, with very minor credentials, I arrived into exalted company.

In 1983 I went on to *The Australian* where I was their jazz critic until late 1987, working for the legendary arts editor Maria Prerauer (nicknamed Maria Piranha).

Meanwhile, in early 1981 the entrepreneur Peter Brendlé had started *Jazz: The Australasian Contemporary Music Magazine* (which everyone called *Jazz Magazine*). I contributed various articles during its first year. Towards the end of 1981 I was talking to Peter, who was manager of the then young and up-and-coming musician James Morrison. Peter said he simply did not have the time to deal with publishing a bi-monthly magazine, and was thinking of selling it. On a whim I offered him $1.00 for the magazine, an offer he accepted. I published and edited *Jazz Magazine* for about five years, until 1986. My partner Margaret Sullivan did the graphic design, while I was the editor and sold the advertising. So it was a family project, put together in one of the rooms in our Leichhardt house.

The magazine did not make a great profit, but neither did it lose money. Advertising revenue was able to cover costs and payment of modest fees to contributors and photographers. However, editions became intermittent as I got busier with my day job. I ceased publishing *Jazz Magazine* in 1986 because I no longer had time to devote to it. At this time I also resigned from *The Australian* because, by 1987, I was the CEO of a jazz organisation, the Jazz Co-ordination Association of NSW (JCANSW), funded by Federal and State governments, and held the full-time position of National Jazz Co-ordinator from 1986. Running an organisation dedicated to supporting jazz musicians, I felt increasingly there was a conflict of interest in simultaneously being active as a critic.

The most satisfying aspect of the jazz co-ordination job was producing the bi-monthly newsletter *JazzChord* which, on the advice of my management committee, was first published in magazine form in January, 1993. It was full of invaluable news and information, directly relevant to the jazz community. I wrote prolifically for *JazzChord*, as well as doing the editing and graphic design. Looking back now at the 53 editions that were published in magazine form, I see an invaluable documentation of what was happening in the Australian jazz world during the decade of the 90s.



Jazz Magazine, Summer/Autumn, 1986 edition, with drummer John Pochée on the cover.

As the JCANSW did not survive my resignation in 2002, *JazzChord* went down with the ship. Unfortunately this meant that the jazz community lost, not only the one organisation that could act as a lobbying force on a national level, but also the one indispensable organ of communication that had united the Australian jazz community for a decade.

During the decade after 2002, I concentrated on running a business until I retired in 2015. Noticing that reviews of jazz performances were absent from the daily Arts page of *The Australian,* I offered my services as a reviewer to the then arts editor Ashleigh Wilson. Accordingly I began writing performance reviews and feature articles for *The Australian* in September, 2015. As from September, 2017, I succeeded the late John McBeath, writing jazz album reviews for the *Weekend Australian's* MUSIC REVIEWS page.

Also, as from mid-2017, I began my own website www.ericmyersjazz.com, primarily concerned with documenting the history of Australian jazz..

While I have used the term "critic" a number of times above, it is the case that I've never thought of myself as a critic in the great tradition of a writer such as say Whitney Balliett. What unites my activities in jazz for so long in the Australian context has been the desire to document the exploits of our jazz artists and act as a publicist for their music.

It has always irked me that the majority of great jazz musicians who provided the music that has immensely enriched my life – both here in Australia and overseas – have been so poorly rewarded.

My thanks to Ralph Powell, the Australian Jazz Museum's Collections and Research Officer, for inviting me to write this piece.

***Eric Myers has been listening to jazz for 60 years, and writing on it for 40 years. He was the inaugural jazz critic for the *Sydney Morning Herald* 1980-1982, then jazz critic with *The Australian* newspaper, 1983-1987. He was publisher & editor of the Australian *Jazz Magazine* 1981-1986, and a government-funded Jazz Co-ordinator from 1983-2002. He returned to writing on jazz for *The Australian* in 2015.**

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