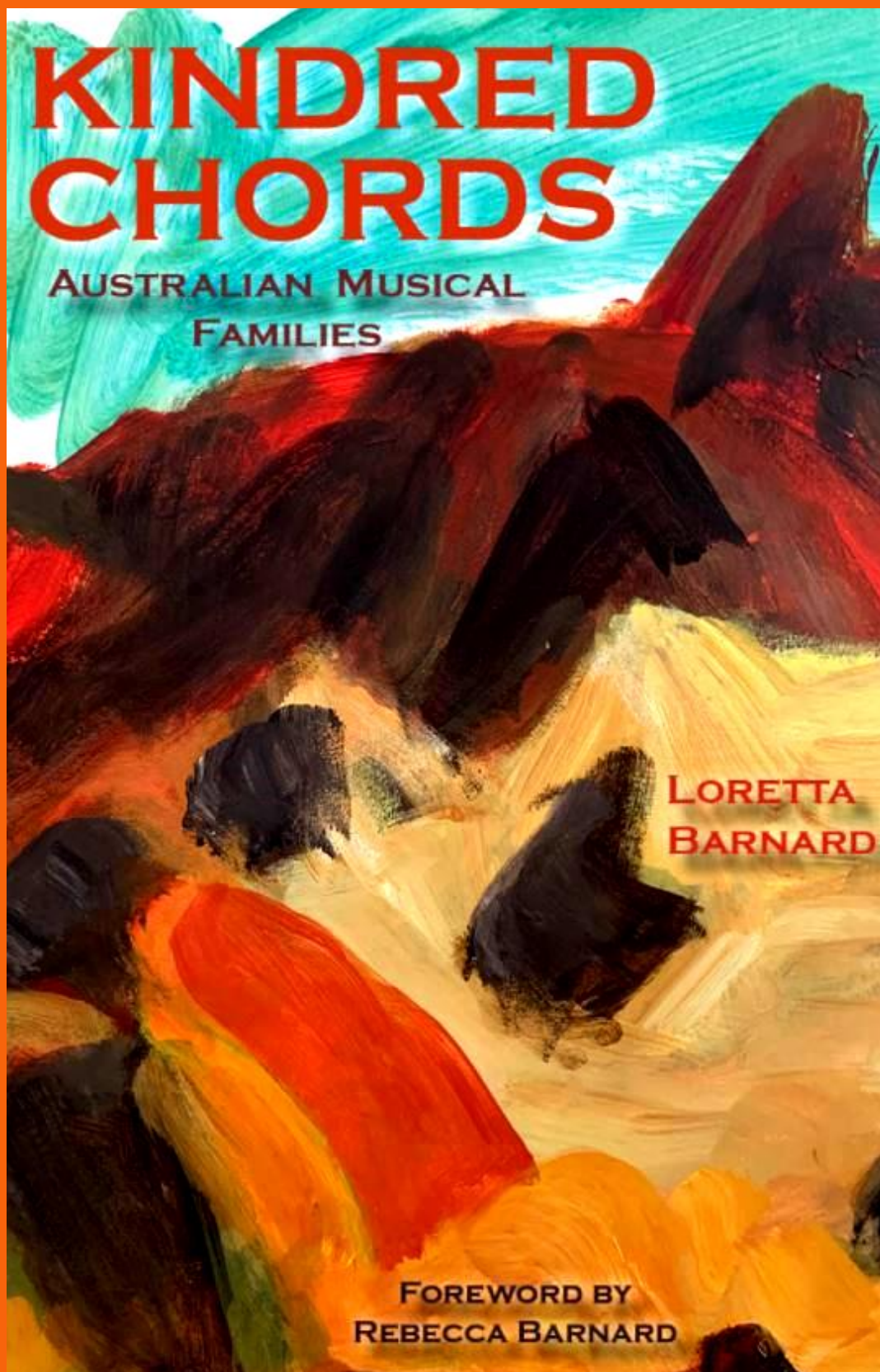


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**PLEASE NOTE THE DEADLINE
FOR THE NEXT MAGAZINE IS
THE END OF JUNE 2021**



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Update on Activities at the Museum

From Dr David Canterford General Manager
Australian Jazz Museum

Although the Museum building has been closed since March last year to protect our volunteers and visitors, a number of key activities have been maintained throughout the pandemic. Production and distribution of several editions of this magazine is a great example of how the Editor and her contributors have successfully worked from home.

Processing of membership applications and renewals have continued without interruption. A new Members' Compilation CD of rare Australian Jazz tracks has been released and is now being sent to new and renewing members. Our online shop is still operating as normal, and you are encouraged to visit our website to browse and purchase. Tax-deductible donations are always welcome.

Transfer of our huge database from The Collecting Bug to a new, world-class, collections management system called EMu has been a significant challenge for our IT specialists. Working in conjunction with members of the collections team this has now been achieved and is accessible through the AJM website.

Remote access to electronic files has been greatly improved since we connected to the NBN. Further improvements to our IT capability should flow from a planned upgrade to our server, partially funded by small grants from our local Federal Member and the Australian Communities Foundation.

The Board of Management acknowledges the commitment of the many volunteers who have worked throughout the past year to maintain AJM operations – whether online from home or on numerous Zoom calls.

With the imminent rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine we are looking forward to the gradual return to on-site activities and once again being able to welcome visitors to the Museum.

RAYMOND ARTHUR PRICE

20 November 1921 – 5 August 1990

By Jack Mitchell OAM



Ray Price in retirement. Painting is by Pat Qua

RAY PRICE was a leading figure in Australian jazz for many years. He was born in Sydney into a musical family. Both parents played semi-professionally, his brother David played trumpet (later with leading palais bands) and his two sisters, Eileen (saxophone) and Doreen (piano), were both professional musicians. Ray started on drums, after a very brief battle with a violin, and all four children played in the Price family orchestra in the early thirties. Ray moved on to the banjo and then in 1937 the guitar. He took lessons from Charlie Lees and by 1938 he was playing guitar with Ron Doyle's orchestra which won the Dance Band competition organised by Music Maker and the Sydney Trocadero. Part of the prize were two appearances at the Trocadero.

About that time Ray commenced working for Frank Johnson's *Tempo* magazine as a reporter and, he later claimed, sub-editor. Whatever, Ray had access to all the night clubs and dance palais where he'd listen to the bands led by such as Frank Coughlan, Maurie Gilman, Frank Scott and Reg Lewis. A free musical education.

This was the middle of the swing era, and although it didn't dominate the dance halls, swing was well featured. Hotter music was heard more consistently in the night clubs and suburban cabarets, but there were no out and out jazz joints as we know them today. Paling's Music House recognised the surge of interest in jazz and made an instrument room available on Friday nights for

jazz musicians to jam away to their hearts content for free. Some musicians arranged similar occasions, usually on Sunday nights when dance palais and theatres were closed.

Most of these were short-lived as musicians enlisted or found casual gigs. In a February 1957 concert programme Ray reminisced re the best known such affair: *During the war Sydney was the scene of many regular jam sessions. The least salubrious of these was run by Harvey X, a genial character and jazz lover, who never seemed to have a regular job. Whether Harvey lived off betting or the black-market, or both, he was nevertheless a likeable fellow, a walking Who's Who of Sydney's shady side with a nose that could smell a jam session a week off.*

The Rockit Club was formed, with Harvey secretary, president and, of course, treasurer. The word "Rockit" referred to the club's theme song "Rockit for Me" which Harvey insisted on singing at the beginning and end of each session. These took place every Sunday night at Rodd Island, several miles up the Parramatta River, transport being provided by an ancient motor launch (with piano). Many players, however, would miss the boat, and to this day, I don't know how they arrived there, later in the evening.

Payment to musicians for these sessions was simple for Harvey. A searing solution of raw alcohol and lemonade, mostly the former, was available to all participating musicians. They all seemed satisfied with this, and Harvey himself, more than satisfied with the takings. Not being partial to Harvey's "Rockit" blend, I instead drove a bargain, after a tremendous amount of Arabic haggling. My services of a Sunday evening therefore cost Harvey one pound of butter. The Rockit Club folded when Harvey found it expedient to disappear from the scene without notice.

On 9 August 1940 Ray enlisted in the Australian Army. He gave his birth date as 20 November 1919, making him out as two years older than he actually was. This was a fairly common practice at the time, allowing young men to enlist before reaching the minimum age or providing the signed parental permission required. Originally based in or near Sydney, Ray was able to sit in with whatever gigs he could find, but served in New Guinea in an ambulance section from June 1942 on when Japanese troops were attempting to capture Port Moresby via the Kokoda Track.

Ray was discharged medically unfit on 16 September 1943. He joined the band at the Booker T. Washington Club for coloured American servicemen. Also

in the band were top musicians such as Jim Somerville, Rolf Pommer and Jack Baines. One American musician who sat in with them was ex Don Redman's outfit, drummer Jesse Martin. Ray said he really fired up the band, even though he played with one stick and one brush. Most unusual.

When that club closed down, as troops moved north Ray enrolled at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, under the government CRT Scheme for returned servicemen, to study the bassoon. After about eighteen months his asthma forced cancellation of the course. During and after that time he was playing at the 2KY Jazz and Swing Club on Sunday nights.

In April 1947 Graeme Bell's Dixieland Band spent a week in Sydney, playing concerts to raise money for their Czechoslovak journey and recording for the Regal Zonophone label. Ray sat in with them at some of their gigs and found the style to his liking. A couple of months later he was invited to join the Port Jackson Jazz Band: he accepted on the spot. The others in the band were Ken Flannery trumpet, Bob Cruickshanks clarinet, Johnny Rich trombone, Jim Somerville piano, Clive Whitcombe drums. Bassist Duke Farrell was often used and Marie Harriott sang with them.

Ray was an asset, not only in the rhythm section but as an organiser and publicist, using skills gained from his stint with *Tempo*. The band organised its own gigs and recording sessions and certainly gained fame in the Sydney jazz world. However, on the 25th of September Ken Flannery set sail for the USA to see and hear the scene there. The PJJB went into recess, but Ray continued his publicity, scoring a two page article, devoted to the PJJB, in the magazine *Glamor*. Ray played guitar with Laurie Howell's band from Melbourne during their visit to Sydney in December. He attended the second Australian Jazz Convention in Melbourne that month: in *Jazz Notes* January 1948 Dave Dallwitz wrote: *Ray Price plays the best rhythm guitar I've heard, as well as being a wonderful soloist.*

Ken returned to Sydney early 1948 and the Port Jackson band got back into action, with Bob Rowan now on trombone. Ray promoted a concert by the band at the Veerbruggen Hall in the Sydney Conservatorium of Music on 2 March. The invasion by jazz into the citadel of classical music was a gift to the local press, resulting in publicity that Ray could not have afforded. The concert was sold out well before the date: Ray booked the Con for two more concerts and tickets for these were selling even before the first concert took place.



**Port Jackson Jazz Band. Battle of the Bands, March 1948
Georgia Lee, Bruce Higginbotham, Ray Price, Bob Cruickshanks,
Ken Flannery, Clive Whitcombe, Bob Rowan, Jimmy Somerville**

The concert was a great success, with the music relayed to speakers outside the Con for the benefit of those fans without tickets. A thirty minute segment was broadcast over the ABC's Swing Session.

Jazz concerts were now IN. Ray took the band to Newcastle for another successful concert and played lunchtime concerts in the Sydney Town Hall. Other promoters saw the opportunity: Kevin Ellerston Jones organised a Battle of the Bands at the Town Hall, which the PJJB won convincingly. Others hired the band for concerts billed as The King of Swing and Jazz Jamboree. The band was also booked to play at surf carnivals. Even without Ray's hustling it seems the newspapers couldn't get by without constant items on the band – and Ray.



**From a Movietone Newsreel: Bob Rowan, Dick Jackson, Ken Flannery,
Clive Whitcombe, Ray Price, Bob Cruickshanks, Bruce Higginbotham,
Jimmy Somerville**

Flushed with success Ray took the band on a tour through country towns to Brisbane. A photograph of this band in Brisbane appears in Ajazz 79, p. 9. The tour was a financial disaster with the band falling apart in Brisbane. Flannery reformed the PJJB in Sydney and Somerville formed his own Jazz Rebels before returning to the PJs in January. Ray Price dropped out of music, taking on labouring jobs to raise money to repay his debts. He then applied to continue the CRTS at the Con, this time studying the string bass. With only three days to practice he passed the entrance qualifying exam. Eighteen months later he had gained his Licentiate of Music from the London College of Music and in June 1950 he

became a member of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. His siblings Doreen and David were also members at that time. It wasn't until August 1952 that Ray came back to jazz. The PJJB had drifted apart so Ray formed his Dixielanders around Flannery and Somerville, with Billy Weston trombone and Dick Jackson clarinet. A photograph of this group appears in Ajazz 79, wrongly identified as the Port Jackson Jazz Band. Ray was of course still with the SSO, and the others had regular jobs so the Dixielanders faded away after a few months, particularly when Somerville started a full time gig at the Roosevelt Club in Kings Cross.

In August 1953 the Sydney Jazz Club appeared on the scene to feature Harry Harman's Paramount Jazz Band on Saturday nights, first at the Real Estate building in Martin Place, then at the Ironworkers in George Street. The club went from strength to strength, and Ray Price would often drop in after playing at the Town Hall with the Symphony. This led to another Dixieland group re-union in 1954 with Flannery and Somerville plus John McCarthy clarinet and Harry Harman tuba. Four tracks by this group can be heard on the double CD AJM 039.

In October 1955 Price reformed the Port Jackson Jazz Band. Flannery, McCarthy, and Harman were joined by Doc Willis on trombone, a relic of the Len Barnard Band which had also disintegrated in Brisbane. Somerville was still unavailable so Dick Hughes filled the piano chair. Bill Cody was the first drummer. It soon became as popular as it had been six or so years before. Ray was still with the Sydney Symphony so the jazz concerts were usually mid-week. Ray was expert at hustling mentions in the press: practically every mention (and there were many) of Ray and/or the band stressed Ray's position with the Sydney Symphony. The PJJB was receiving more press coverage than the Symphony.

The Australian Broadcasting Commission, owners of the SSO, were not amused. Ray was probably the best known member of the Orchestra, which didn't go down well with the others. Also the ABC wasn't keen to see Ray circulating in the Town Hall foyer during intermissions handing out fliers to their patrons advertising concerts by the Port Jackson Jazz Band. In August 1956 Ray received a letter from the ABC Musical Director forbidding Ray from playing jazz in his spare time.

Ray objected strongly, the ABC said playing jazz could affect Ray's playing with the SSO, Ray said it didn't, he was prepared to undergo any musical test. The subsequent verbal hassle between Ray and the ABC filled many columns in the newspapers, which, not only in Sydney, wrote editorials on the matter and printed letters from the public, mainly supporting Ray's position. As always bureaucracy won: on 8 December Ray Price was dismissed from the Sydney Symphony Orchestra.

Ray's income was now dependent upon the



Harry Harman and Ray Price at the Sydney Jazz Club 1955



The Port Jackson Jazz Quartet. L to R: Ray Price, Dick Hughes, John McCarthy and John Costello

scattered jazz concerts, which became less because Flannery was snapped up by Les Welch for his band on recently established television variety shows. Late in the following January Ray was able to bring Bob Barnard from Melbourne for a week of concerts in various locations. With Bob back in Melbourne Ray ran two shows a week until Easter with Ian Cuthbertson from the Paramount band on cornet.

Bob flew to Sydney for a couple of concert 'battles' – the PJJB for jazz, Wally Norman's band for be-bop. Despite these Ray was really struggling financially. He even auditioned again to rejoin the SSO. He passed the test but was not re-employed. He did hear from the ABC: they asked him to remove his string bass from their premises.

His wife Nadine was making and selling pottery and Ray had invented and was selling a violin polish under the Comet brand. He even marketed this as a car polish: Bill Boldiston recalls a demonstration by Ray on an expensive car. Bill's verdict: it was better as a paint stripper.

Semi poverty was finally ended when Ray met Maurie Whitten, the new owner of the Macquarie Hotel on the waterfront of Woolloomooloo. Maurie turned out to be a jazz lover as well as a business man. On 14 June the Ray Price Trio opened at the Macquarie with Bob Barnard on trumpet and Dick Hughes piano and vocals. The trio played Wednesday to Saturday nights and a Saturday afternoon session. Five gigs a week at the same venue! This was the first such residency for a jazz group in Australia and it was an outstanding success. On Saturday afternoons in particular the hall was full of musicians and fans, but the night time sessions were just as well patronised, with stevedores and sailors from the docks across the road mixing with the jazz lovers.

Ray took advantage of the three nights off each week to re-incarnate the PJJB, playing many concerts, appearing on television and recording an LP for Columbia. Another venture was a regular Sunday night gig starting in March 1958 at a roadhouse at Newport. Things were certainly looking up for Ray – and for Jazz.

About June 1956 Bob returned to Melbourne and John McCarthy took his place and Harry Harman was brought in on bass. The pressure of television had eased and Flannery was available again for some outside work. Apart from the Macquarie, Ray featured the seven-piece at Sunday night dances at the Ironworkers, lunch-time concerts at Paling's concert hall and a Saturday night gig at the Trocadero after finishing at the Macquarie.

The ABC had engaged Romanian Constatin Silvestri in June 1959 to conduct the SSO for a season. One night after the Symphony concert at the Town Hall Mr. Silvestri called in at the Macquarie, where he said he liked Australian jazz as well as our beer – both of high quality. Ray made sure the visit was reported in all four Sydney daily newspapers, as well as the maestro's comment: *I have heard jazz bands in many counties, but the Ray Price Band was the best he had heard. Only Negroes could match their spontaneity and freshness.*

Not only that, he thought their music-making was better than the Sydney Symphony's!

That of course was not appreciated by the Symphony musicians who caused that much trouble at rehearsals that his remaining engagements were cancelled and he returned to Europe.

In September 1959 Ray and his group moved to Adam's Hotel in the centre of the CBD. This was an old



Brian Henderson Bandstand compere with Kerrilee Male and Ray Price

and well regarded establishment, somewhat more salubrious than the Macquarie. Trumpeter John Sangster replaced Harman and the quartet was so successful that the management moved the group to a more spacious room on the second floor. Early in 1960 trombonist John Costelloe replaced Sangster. The unusual combination of clarinet, trombone, piano and banjo turned out to be one of our greatest groups.

In April 1960 Ray was appointed musical director of the Empress Ballroom on the top floor of Mark Foy's emporium. This operated during the cooler ballroom season. Ray put in a band led by Harry Harman playing mainly John Sangster arrangements. John was on trumpet, Pat Rose and Sid Powell



A book of matches. One of Ray Price's advertising methods.

saxes, Jimmy Somerville piano and Neil Macbeth drums. When the quartet finished its gig at Adam's they would combine with Harry's group for the rest of the night.

On August the 8th Ray opened a Sunday afternoon jazz club with the seven piece Port Jackson Band in the Ling Nam Chinese restaurant in King Street. When spring sprang in October Ray changed to the evenings – this gig lasted for about two years. That same month the PJJB opened Lee Gordon's International Festival of Jazz at the Sydney Stadium. The band was followed by artists such as Dizzy Gillespie, Coleman Hawkins, Jonah Jones, Teddy Wilson and Dakota Staton. Eric Dunn was right when he wrote in his *Music Maker* page: *Good times seem to be rolling for the groups orbiting around Ray Price.*

About October 1961 Pix magazine issued a 10" LP by the PJJJB – it was available only by mail from the magazine. Who had the original idea for this I don't know but it's certain that Ray had lot to do with it. It sold like the legendary hot cakes. It was quickly followed by a second disc by the PJs, then one by the re-assembled early Graeme Bell Band. The following year Pix issued two LPs by an undeniably all star group that included Ray and Graeme, along with Bob and Len Barnard, Ken Herron, Greg Gibson and Harry Harman.



Col Nolan, Ray Price, Pat Rose and John Sangster

The good times continued, with a couple of Trad Jazz Festivals organised by Ray, until 1962.

CBS released a 45 rpm single by the Quartet (with bassist Wally Wickham added). The tunes were "A moi de payer"

and "Dardenella" and the first title took the disc into the Hit Parade. There was a little tension in the band with leader Ray receiving a higher payment for this than the others. This was a normal arrangement but as Dick Hughes had found the tune and John McCarthy had written the arrangement, it rankled a little. Shortly after, John Costelloe missed a gig without notice and Ray sacked him. McCarthy and Hughes resigned in protest. The break up made the nightly TV news and of course the daily press. Ray also resigned from the Port Jackson Band – the wags immediately dubbed it the Priceless Jazz Band. The two Johns continued with a drummer and Dick as leader.

John Sangster's gig in Kings Cross had just finished so Ray was able to get John, plus Pat Rose and the magnificent pianist Col Nolan on board so he still had a quartet to continue his engagement at Adam's. With the new members the repertoire of the quartet expanded to include tunes by composers outside the strict traditional range. Due to the success of the 45 mentioned CBS gave him a contract, resulting in four LPs and a number of singles over the next four years. The residency at Adam's also lasted four years, the last night being 9 July 1966. During that time Ray took his group to Perth and Adelaide in February 1963.

Given the permanency of the job, changes in personnel were few. Late in 1963 Sangster left to go his own way, being replaced by Cliff Reese, who in turn gave way late 1964 to King Fisher. Early in 1965 Bruce Johnstone took over from Pat Rose and later that year Ray's quarter backed vocalist Kerilee Male singing gospel songs on two EPs also issued by Pix. In December 1965 Keith Jenkins replaced Fisher and early in 1967 Col Nolan left, making way for Dave McRae. Few of Ray's subsequent groups remained that consistent for so long. Graeme Bell and his All Stars had a two year residency at the Chevron Hotel, Kings Cross 1963-1965 but there were few such residencies after that.

Ray started taking casual jobs – one was for the Black and White committee (a charity organisation) at the Chevron Hotel. The lady in charge sent a waiter with drinks for the band, the manager of the Chevron, Christie, said employees couldn't drink during functions. Ray put him in his place, pointing out that they were not employees of the hotel but engaged by the committee who had provided the drinks. Shortly after that Ray signed a contract to play at the Wintergarden in the Hotel Australia. When they turned up to play, they found the manager there was the aforesaid Christie. He called Ray into the office and said the band wouldn't be playing there. Ray pointed out the contract was for six weeks so Christie wrote a cheque for the amount due and the band was paid for six weeks not to play! As Ray wrote: the band was delighted.

Although long-term full time residencies were no longer offered, Ray had all the work he could handle. Listing all the gigs over the following years would be unnecessary and probably impossible to document. He took his group to festivals in Perth and Adelaide: with the support of the NSW Education Department, Ray gave many concerts at schools throughout the state, and the Arts Council sponsored tours around Australia. In 1969 Ray produced a 12" LP *The Jazz Story*. This was related by radio announcer John Moses with Ray's group providing musical examples. I don't know how many were produced but there were three separate pressings and Ray gave copies away freely, especially at school performances. A couple of years later Ray produced a small booklet on jazz and also distributed those widely.

Some of the Arts Council tours are worth mentioning: In July 1971 the group travelled through the Northern Territory and Western Australia for two hectic weeks, taking jazz not only to major centres such as Alice Springs and Darwin but



Col Nolan (p) King Fisher, Bruce Johnstone, Ray Price



Bob Barnard, Ray Price, Dick Hughes – The Macquarie Trio nearly thirty years later

also places such as Bathurst Island, Gove and Derby. In April 1973 they did two weeks in Fiji and in October 1976 five weeks in New Zealand. Always in a new town, Ray would contact the local newspaper and gain some extra publicity with a free article. In NZ he gave the local journalist details of his band members. He mentioned that Chris Qua had been a founder member of the Galapagos Duck – the newspaper described Chris as a citizen of the Galapagos Islands!

With all the work that Ray could hustle he was able to employ many of our best musicians. Apart from those already mentioned we can add such as King Fisher, Bob Barnard, Mike Hallam, Tom Baker, Paul Simpson, Graham Spedding, Jack Ward, Frank Traynor (on piano!), Pat Qua, David Levy, Kate Dunbar and Marion Henderson. There were many others. I know of two who Ray sacked because of their heavy drinking but many others moved on unwilling to spend time away from their families and familiar surroundings. Whatever, the turnover was pretty regular – they were all known as the Ex-Rays.

Ray continued a busy schedule until ill health forced his retirement about 1982. He suffered from asthma all his life and he travelled always with a large assortment of medicines, not always officially prescribed. He was very health conscious and not averse to offering advice to his musicians. This led to Alan Geddes concocting a story in which he said "Ray I've got a sore shoulder, have you anything to treat it?" To which Ray, delving into his box of pharmaceuticals, said, "Of course Alan. Is it the right or left shoulder?"

As I said at the beginning, Ray Price was a major figure in Australian jazz. He provided employment for many dozens of musicians, he entertained Jazz fans around Australia and he worked hard to interest school children in jazz and to encourage those who took up the challenge of joining the profession.

Ray retired due to his health problems in 1982, but occasionally left his beautiful pole house in Port Macquarie to play casual gigs. His final performance was in Queensland with some of his former sidemen, just a few weeks before his death on the 5th August 1990.

Sadly Jack Mitchell passed away as this article was going to print.



The Port Jackson Jazz Band backstage, 1985. Ken Flannery, Jimmy Somerville, Doc Willis, Ron Webber, John McCarthy, Wally Wickham, Ray Price

The Compact Disc that Never Was

Don Burrows Quintet and the Merv Acheson Quartet

By Ken Simpson-Bull

BACK in 2017, the Australian Jazz Museum came into possession of some professionally recorded high quality tapes of Don Burrows and Merv Acheson made in the 1980s that had never been commercially released. After listening to these recordings, it was decided that this material would make an appealing CD for the Museum's Rare Collectible Jazz series.

The recordings were re-mastered for CD and a preliminary cover and liner notes produced. Unfortunately, because of delays, especially in investigating any copyright issues, production of the CD did not go ahead. But all was not lost. In 2019, of the originally intended tracks listed below, number 6 was included in the "Members' Compilation 2019" CD (AJM044), intended tracks 1, 4, and 11 were included in "Members' Compilation 2020" (AJM046), and intended tracks 3 and 8 were included in "Members' Compilation 2021" (AJM047). All of these CDs are still available for members. We may include some of the remaining unreleased tracks in future "Members' Compilation" CDs.

The selection of items for the originally proposed CD (which would have had a playing time of 78 minutes) were to have been as follows:

Don Burrows Quintet Recorded Sydney, June, 1984

Don Burrows –ten, cl; James Morrison –tb, t;
Paul McNamara –p; Alan Turnbull –d; Craig Scott –sb.

1. Have You Met Miss Jones
2. Blue Monk
3. Basin Street Blues

Merv Acheson Quartet Recorded Sydney, circa 1983

Merv Acheson –sax; Ross Collins –p; Kanga Yeoman –sb;
Alan Geddes –d.

4. Sweet Lorraine
5. China Boy
6. Rose Room
7. C Jam Blues
8. Shine
9. Georgia On My Mind
10. My Blue Heaven
11. Outskirts of Town
12. Body and Soul
13. Lester Leaps In

The liner notes for the intended CD were written by Bill Brown in 2017, which we publish here for the first time:

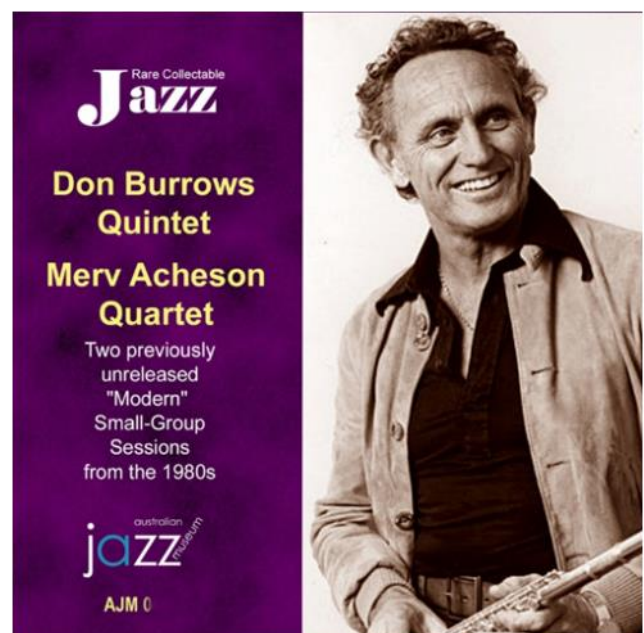
"Over the years a sizable quantity of Australian Jazz of the Traditional/Dixieland school has been released on record. A large amount of this material has had an historical aspect going back to the post World War II period - the Traditional Jazz Revival which of course was an international phenomenon. Local musicians like Graeme and Roger Bell, Bob and Len Barnard, Frank Johnson, Pearce/Pickering and others flew the flag for the early recognition of the music that emanated from New Orleans, Chicago, Kansas City, Harlem, and elsewhere in the first half of the twentieth century. They were rightly lauded but there were other local jazzmen who were involved in slightly later forms of the music—the Swing Era and the later genres of Be-Bop and the Cool School. This CD highlights the activities of two such groups of the latter two genres.

"Multi reed player Don Burrows, who at the time of writing recently celebrated his ninetieth birthday [Don Burrows subsequently died in 2020], played in and led various groups often in the company of guitarist George Golla and percussionist/

arranger the late John Sangster. I recall seeing Don in various surroundings, with French Violinist Stéphane Grappelli, and at the Montsalvat Festival, and on a few occasions at the annual Bob Barnard Parties. However, the stand-out concert for me was at the Melbourne Concert Hall in the mid-eighties with personnel similar to the first three offerings on this CD. This was my introduction to Don's young prodigy, James Morrison. On that evening James amazed the audience with his prowess on the trombone, trumpet and piano. On this CD, recorded in Sydney around the same time, he performs on the two brass instruments sharing the front-line duties with Don's Tenor sax and Clarinet. Paul McNamara has some fine solos on Piano and with Craig Scott on bass and Alan Turnbull on drums to provide a fine rhythmic backing on the three numbers played. The first offering is Richard Rogers' tune "Have You Met Miss Jones"? then a work out on my favourite Thelonious Monk composition "Blue Monk". Finally, an interesting version of Spencer Williams well-known Blues, "Basin Street".

"The other musicians featured on this CD are long-time Sydney reed player the late Merv Acheson. He leads a Quartet in Sydney circa 1983. He is accompanied by Ross Collins on piano, Kanga Yeoman on bass, and Alan Geddes on drums. Merv was a larger than life character about whom lots of off-beat stories abound. He wasn't interested in the early Traditional scene, nor for that matter the later Cool more way-out form of the jazz genre. Essentially a follower of the Swing Era, his tenor Sax playing brought to mind the work of the stalwarts of the pre-bop times—Coleman Hawkins, Lester Young and Ben Webster. The ten tracks here are all well-known standards often in the repertoire of Jazzmen over the years. A nod to Duke Ellington with "C Jam Blues" and recognition of that fine composer much appreciated by jazz musicians Hoagy Carmichael with "Georgia On My Mind". Then, of course, he performs "Body and Soul" immortalised by Hawkins' 1939 version. The final romp is dedicated to Lester Young with "Lester leaps In", based I believe on the chords of the tune "I've Got Rhythm" and first featured by Lester with Count Basie's Kansas City Seven in 1939. So, two fine Australian Jazz groups keeping the jazz flag flying for all time. Enjoy".

Fortunately, members have indeed been able to enjoy at least most of the tracks.



THE MUSIC LIVES ON

By Bill Brown

THAT heading certainly applies to our beloved jazz music. At this time I'm thinking of a brace of worthy Brits who had a big influence on the UK scene and I reckon further afield as time went on. Much has been written about Humphrey Lyttelton 1921-2008. As the coming May would have been his centenary I thought a few words were in order. He had a liking for a broad field of music, his hot trumpet fitted in well with the post-war Revivalist/Traditional movement and his band formed in 1948 flourished in the clubs and on record.

In his recordings his band often would vary the sound, have two clarinets, add an alto sax etc. Sometimes those changes wouldn't please the purist fans who wanted a fixed sound that they thought a Tradition band should adopt. Humph and Graeme Bell's Band from Australia on their second European visit made a few recordings in 1951 using players from both groups. Their repertoire on the records, mostly original tunes, sounded like the Luis Russell Band one of the great pre-war US orchestras. Again the purists were a bit peeved, the band sported a couple of saxophones and used arrangements.

A year or so later, in 1952, Humph's crew entered the studios again this time recording with a group of West Indian musicians then resident in England. Their exotic rhythms and calypso type tunes resembled the repertoire of the New Orleans bands with what the renowned Jelly Roll Morton called 'The Spanish Tinge'.

The musical press referred to those amalgamations with the Australians, and the West Indians as "Humph's Experiments". By the late Fifties as the traditional movement moved into what became the commercial Trad Boom, Humph was now part of a movement called Mainstream, a term emanating from writer/critic Stanley Dance. This embraced a form of small band swing which had been forgotten in the twin movements of the Trad versus Bebop/Cool School. By 1960 as the banjo dominated, Trad ruled the air waves; Humph led an eight piece swing group containing a three sax section. His catholic taste was evident from a handful of LPs I have from that period, "Humph Swings Out" (1956), "Humph Plays Standards" (1959), "Blues In The Night" (1960). In this period Humph recorded about three LPs with the legendary US trumpet man Buck Clayton, his band toured with Buck and the tenor sax man Buddy Tate who like Clayton had been featured with the great Count Basie orchestra.

The band also toured with the great blues shouters Jimmy Rushing and Big



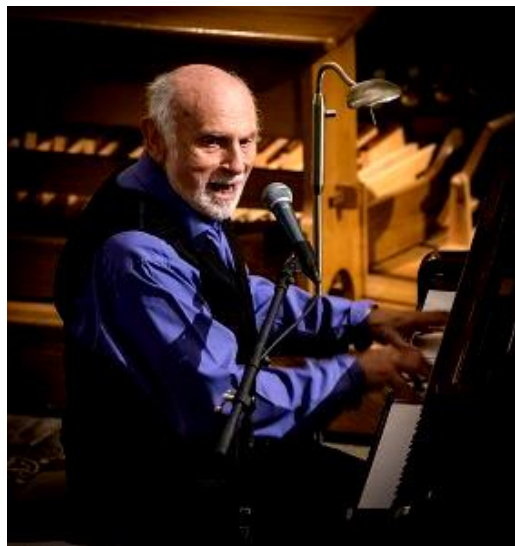
Humphrey Lyttelton

Joe Turner. Over the years Humph also proved to be a fine writer, broadcaster and as Dave Gelly said in his book "An Unholy Row" a National Treasure.

The other gentleman in my thoughts lately was multi-instrumentalist Keith Nichols who died in January aged 75. I first came across him in 1965 when he joined Mike Daniels Delta Jazzman on trombone replacing the long serving Gordon Blundy. A few years later I heard him in an aggregation called the Anglo American Alliance. This group contained two Americans; Dick Sudhalter on cornet and Henry Francis on piano and various UK jazzmen, John R.T. Davies, Saxes, Alan Cooper Clarinet, Nevil Skrimshire guitar plus others.

In the seventies he was in various groups covering a lot of the music of the pre-war period. I have a few recordings of the Midnite Follies Orchestra co-led by Nichols at the piano and reed player Alan Cohen. Keith would sometimes play soprano sax and seemingly accordion. I have a few cassettes taken from tribute concerts his groups made down the years to Louis Armstrong, Bix, King Oliver, and Jelly Roll Morton. Keith was also active on the festival scene especially the annual gig at Newcastle an event that our own man about jazz Michael McQuaid also attends.

So that's it, Humph and Keith gone but their music will always be with us. Keep Swingin'.



Keith Nichols

Images on this page from the World Wide Web

One Hot Summer's Night at Mentone

By Lee Treanor

SOMETIMES you just get nostalgic for "The Good Old Days"; days from a time "before". A time before we had "Acid" or "Meth". A time when we only had grog, and for most of us that was only on Saturday nights. A time when we even tolerated other peoples' "clans". I was only about seventeen but, as a regular Sunday-night attendee at Mentone Life Saving Club I was aware of the tolerance that existed between the "Jazzers" and the "Rockers". A group of this latter clan were regulars at Mentone: They liked Bob Barnard's band and that was all we asked of them. They always arrived half-way through the night; their arrival heralded by the throb of Triumphs or Harleys. Their entrance always turned heads but that was all; we were all there for the music.

I was there with Ian Orr and Kevin Goodey, as usual. It was a night when the Melbourne New Orleans Jazz Band was on-stage for a sit-in; Paul Marks had just finished one of his songs and was standing next to me, just listening to and enjoying the band's performance. We hardly paid any attention to the clatter of boots coming down the stone steps to the door, or to the entrance of eight or nine of these "Bikies", as they were known even then.

A few minutes later, we could hear more throbs outside, then more clattering of boots down the steps, and a second group of Bikies entered.

Mentone Life Saving Club consisted of changing rooms and toilets below, at beach level, with the club room above. There was a set of double doors that opened onto a balcony. This particular night, the heat of the day was still lingering and these doors had been latched open. There was a full moon reflecting on the small waves that lapped gently against the narrow band of sand. People had been standing on the balcony, enjoying the bonus of the view between brackets.

With no preamble that I remember, suddenly there were raised voices inside the hall, then, a scuffle, then some blows were traded.

Paul Marks and I did what musos do when a fight erupts: we moved back against the wall. We watched the fight develop; we remained passive, arms crossed. "Nothing to

do with us". Then Paul said, "I think this has gone on long enough, don't you, Lee? What do you reckon?" "Jeez; I'm staying out of it," I replied.

Now, Paul was a singer, one of a breed not known for involvement in fights. I'd always seen him as a gentle soul: fit and well-built, but a gentle soul none-the-less, but what he did next left me speechless. He said, "Stay here", then he stepped away from the wall, took three or four paces forward, grabbed one of the newcomer-bikies by an arm and a leg, lifted him off the floor and above his head horizontally, walked with him to the balcony and threw him out into the sea water below. Then he walked back into the hall, as calm and unhurried as if he'd just stepped outside to blow his nose. There was complete silence from the audience. The band, however, had kept playing and continued. Everything came back to normal, the bikie's mates scuttled out and back up the steps, got on their bikes and left. Nobody knew if they'd even waited for their wet mate.

Paul came and stood next to me again, and I said, "Jesus, where did you learn how to do that"? He smiled and said, "Well. I was an unarmed combat instructor in the British Army".



The old Mentone Surf Life-Saving Club
Image from baysidenews.com.au



Dancing crowd of the 50s

KINDRED CHORDS. Australian Musical Families.

Loretta Barnard.

Shooting Star Press. 2020. 325 pages with photos. 20 x 13 cm.

BOOK REVIEW By Bill Haesler OAM



OVER the Christmas-New Year break I read Loretta Barnard's wonderful new book *Kindred Chords*. It is a gem and I have no hesitation in recommending it as a "must read" for those of us with a keen interest in Australian music. And it is a worthy addition to *Jottings of a Jazzman: Selected Writings of Len Barnard* (2010) and *Bob Barnard's Jazz Scrapbook* (2012), both of which she edited and produced.

Loretta's intention (as indicated in its Introduction) was for the book to be a part-history, part-biography and part-checklist celebrating Australian musical families from across a broad spectrum comprising classical, rock, pop, country, jazz, electronic, soul, baroque, R&B, world, children's TV and theatre. She selected one family for each of the 27 chapters, some we know, others we don't and, in several cases, bands we have heard of, but not the musicians.

She certainly achieved her goal. It is also the first Australian book of its kind. Using her personal connections Loretta was able to interview many of the musicians, so it is full of tantalizing details and facts. It is not a jazz book or another collection of musical biographies but a fine eclectic collection of intriguing and informative generational stories. Biographies can make boring reading, but not this one. Nor is it a book to be picked up and dipped into. I found it hard to put down as the narrative flows from one diverse group to the other.

On reflection, I can't think of anyone except Loretta Barnard who could conceive and write this unusual book. Being Bob Barnard's daughter she grew up in a close musical family situation. Bob's parents Kath and Jim and brother Len were working musicians. So are Loretta's brothers Tony and Adam, and her cousin Rebecca and her son. Her own two boys, Beau and Casey Golden, are now established professional musicians.

Although Loretta is not a musician she has been contributing website articles on the subject for many years. A talented and diligent researcher with a Master of Arts degree in English Literature, she is an experienced freelance writer and columnist experienced in all aspects of the book publishing industry including contributing as both writer and editor of a range of reference books covering, among other subjects, science, biology, law, archaeology, business, poetry, history, botany, biography and fiction, and as a ghost-writer for several writers. She is the author of *30 Australian Sports Legends* and *Going for Gold*, and co-author of *Aussie! Aussie! Aussie! A Great Big Book of Aussie Legends, Icons and Animals*. Am I impressed and biased? Of course, I have known Loretta from when she was born.

Space does not allow for any comment on the individual essays, apart from my following basic summary of the Contents compiled at the risk of pigeonholing, as some families and musicians developed and crossed musical borders and genres.

Rock. The Easybeats and AC/DC and the Young family; Jimmy Barnes and family; Stonefield: the Findlay sisters.

Classical. The Grigoryan family; Nigel Westlake; Jennifer Eriksson and Siebe Pogson; and the Olding family.

Jazz. Graeme and Roger Bell; the MacRae, Morrison and Falson families; plus the Barnard 'clan'.

Jazz-Fusion. The Veronicas: Lisa and Jessica Origliasso; and the Steele family.

Country. The John Williamson family; the Chambers family; the McClymonts; and Tommy and Phil Emmanuel.

Pop. Patricia (Little Pattie) and Chrissy Amphlett; Angus and Julia Stone.

Indigenous. The Yunupingu family; Jimmy Little and Deborah Cheetham; and the Donovan family.

Theatre and Show biz. The Wiggles and the Field family; the Lamond, Reddy

and Sheldon dynasty.

World. The Tawadros brothers, Joseph and James; and the Martinez family.

Kindred Chords also confirms my own observation from many years ago. Notwithstanding distinct differences in musical styles one fact stands alone. All musicians have the same mysterious love for their chosen craft and talent and have no trouble recognising it in colleagues.

During her interviews, Loretta also came across the inevitable conundrum: is there a family musical gene spanning generations, or are musical skills the result of encouragement within the musical family environment from an early age? Surprisingly, the musicians interviewed for the book were divided on this question.

So far as I can find *Kindred Chords* is not yet available in bookshops, but should be. However, it can be obtained online from *Shooting Star Press* at <https://www.shootingstar.pub> Price; \$39.95 + postage. It is also available as an eBook.

February 2021.



Loretta Barnard

Marie June Francis Gifted Jazz Pianist Remembered

By Ken Simpson-Bull



A young Marie Francis

John, is an award-winning film actor and director.

Marie passed away at age 84 after entering hospital with a serious illness last year. The Jazz Museum would be grateful to receive any recordings, photographs or other memorabilia relating to Marie to ensure an enduring memory of her contribution to jazz.

Marie June Francis is a name which might not be familiar to many outside of Sydney, but Marie, a brilliant jazz pianist who sadly passed away late last year, was at the forefront of the Sydney jazz scene over many years. Her national exposure was mainly on Brian Henderson's *Bandstand Show* in the 1970s and '80s.

Marie, one of seven children, was born in New Zealand where her mother formed a band which included the whole family. It successfully toured New Zealand as the Marie Francis band and became very popular. After she met her well-known singer husband, Ron Polson, she and Ron moved to Sydney where they were well received. "To Each his Own" became one of their popular recorded numbers.

Over the years Marie has composed hundreds of jazz tunes as well as arranging and performing in a male dominated jazz world. She has performed with a variety of jazz musicians at such venues as Sydney's El Rocco, the Don Burrows' Supper Club, French's Tavern and the Manly Leagues club to name a few. Her musical associates included Lauchie Jamieson, Marty Mooney, Joe "Bebop" Lane, Bobby Scott, Alan Turnbull and Ricky May.

Ron and Marie had four children together, the oldest son, Tony, following his mother's tradition by forming a blues band called "The Rhythm Method". Another son,



Marie Francis

Major Source: An obituary by Ron Polson

IN BARBER'S CHAIR

By Bill Brown

THE heading alludes to English trombone player long-time bandleader Chris Barber who died on the 2nd of March 2021 aged 90. It was the title of a recording his band made in the early Sixties. The news of Chris' passing was not unexpected given recent news of his health following his retirement last year. I have quite a lot of his band's output on my shelves; after all I grew up with the likes of Chris, Humphrey Lyttelton, Sandy Brown, Al Fairweather and Alex Welsh through hearing them on the BBC radio (wireless) before I had the financial means to actually become a record collector.

Chris' early two trumpet semi-pro band followed the King Oliver and early Ellington repertoire. Later when he caught up with the likes of Lonnie Donegan, Monty Sunshine, and Ken Colyer etc. he came under the influence of the George Lewis, Bunk Johnson New Orleans sounds. In the sixties he came involved with the bluesmen like Muddy Waters. I think Chris played guitar at this time as did his banjoist Eddie Smith, also Alexis Korner would sit in on guitar. Korner of course was a big influence on the burgeoning UK Pop Blues scene of the time. Monty Sunshine reckoned it was like appearing in the Shadows, a reference to a then topical guitar group. Anyway Monty left the band and formed his own successful band. He was first and foremost a clarinetist and Chris wanted a reed player who would double on saxes. Ian Wheeler joined in 1961 and the sound of the front line would vary accordingly. Ian also played harmonica on the blues material and when blues guitarist John Slaughter joined in 1964 the blues section within the band was complete.

By the Seventies Chris recorded with a few young players who, in my opinion, were Pop musicians and the music didn't enthral me. I still liked the out-and-out jazz material especially Chris' take on Duke Ellington's great compositions. My favourite musician in the band was trumpet man Pat Halcox.

Post 2000 I have a few CDs, DVDs of the Big Band Chris formed. The extra trumpet, trombone and the three reed section enabled the band to use adventurous arrangements and fulfil Chris' love of Duke's output. I saw the band on three occasions in concert; in Liverpool in 1957, at the Royal Festival Hall in London in 1960, when they accompanied Sister Rosetta Tharpe and in Melbourne in 2000. I think Chris' band was in Australia in 1978 but I was on holiday in the UK at the time. So Chris' departure marks the end of an era but as I say, the Music Lives On.



Image from the WorldWideWeb

Jack Mitchell 1926 - 2021



Francis John (Jack) Mitchell, record collector and producer, writer, researcher, discographer, photographer and jazz radio presenter came to jazz music during the 1940s wartime years listening to radio, the 1930s Bob Crosby Bobcats and Muggsy Spanier's Ragtime Band 78rpm records reissued in Australia. Although his family lived in Sydney's suburban Dulwich Hill, Jack was born in nearby Randwick on the 29th May 1926. They moved to Bondi Beach when he was a teenager and went to Randwick Boys' High School until 1941. He continued his education at night school, worked as a film theatre projectionist and became interested in photography. He bought jazz records, the Australian music papers *Tempo* and *Music Maker* and became a member of the Sydney Swing Club in mid 1944, where he discovered and subscribed to the pioneer magazines *Jazz Notes* and *Australian Jazz Quarterly* and became interested in early classic jazz and discography. His first contact with live jazz was the Port Jackson Jazz band in late 1946 and he eagerly joined its inner circle of followers. In April 1947 he assisted the Sydney Swing Club with the functions for the Graeme Bell Dixieland Band during its visit to Sydney to record for Regal Zonophone prior to its adventurous trip to war-torn Czechoslovakia.

Jack studied dentistry at Sydney University from 1948, joined its dramatic and film societies (where he met more jazz enthusiasts) and attended the 3rd Australian Jazz Convention in Melbourne that year. When Jack realised that there was a lack of detailed information regarding his Australian records he decided to research and compile his own discography. As a result Jack Mitchell's *Australian Discography* was edited and published by William H (Bill) Miller as an *Australian Jazz Quarterly* handbook in September 1950.

After graduation in 1952 Jack

worked professionally as a locum in Canberra and Warrawong (a suburb of Wollongong NSW) where he met Janice. They married in 1957 and moved to regional Lithgow NSW in 1958 where Jack became the local dentist; and remained so until retirement in 1991. They became part of the community and raised three children- Penny, David and Beth. Over the years Jack was active in the Apex Club, the camera club, the Lithgow Arts Council and played in the Lithgow Brass Band, all the while maintaining his close association with Australian jazz, the Australian Jazz Convention, the Sydney jazz fraternity, its musicians and bands and the Sydney Jazz Club.

By 1951 Bill Miller had taken a few of us emerging young Melbourne "mouldy figs" under his wing. Bill encouraged our writing and included the articles in *AJQ*, including mine. Because of our common interest in discography Jack and I began corresponding regularly from about 1954. However, I did not meet him personally until the Sydney AJC in 1958. We remained close friends from thereon particularly after our family moved to Sydney in mid 1966.

In 1960 Jack self-published the enlarged second edition of his *Australian Discography* with financial support from the 13th Australian Jazz Convention Committee (Sydney) in September 1960. That year he also met jazz researchers Mike Sutcliffe and Peter Burgess. They formed an informal research group specialising in Australian jazz, its beginnings, history, recordings, discography and contributed individually to Mike's *Australian Jazz and Record Review* magazine. Jack also provided articles on Australian jazz for the Sydney Jazz Club's *Quarterly Rag*, the Victorian Jazz Club's *Jazzline*, the magazine *Jazz*, *Jazz Journal* (England) and the discographical publications *Storyville* (England) and *Matrix* (Australia).

His third updated discography *Australian Jazz On Record 1925-80* was published in 1988 by the Australian Government Publishing Service, followed by *More Australian Jazz On Record* in 1998 funded by the National Film and Sound Archive and *Even More Australian Jazz On Record* in 2002 printed and published by the Victorian Jazz Archive Inc. (now the Australian Jazz Museum). In 2012 he released the combined discographies on CDR and continued to update this now definitive and essential discography of Australian jazz regularly up until the month before he died.

Jack also self-published four books. *Back Together Again – The Story of the Port Jackson Jazz Band* in 1995, *Coggy (a bio-discography of Frank Coughlan)* in 2011 followed by *Blistered Heels* (2015) and *Happy Feet. Dancing & Swinging In Australia In The*

Thirties (2018).

He also produced three special AJazz CDs for the Australian Jazz Museum: *Jazz Masters of the 1940s*; *More Jazz Masters of the 1950s* and *Happy Feet. Australian Swing & Jazz Dance Bands of the 1930s*, in conjunction with his book.

A unique event on Sydney's jazz calendar was the two-week Doubly Gifted Art Exhibition at the Waverley Library at Bondi Junction. It was initiated in 1992 in conjunction with chief librarian and jazz lover Ron Lander to highlight the dual talents of jazz musicians who were also artists. It was an art and jazz success and the following year was expanded to include the Annual Bell Jazz Lecture in recognition of Graeme Bell's significant contribution to jazz, and ran until 2014. Jack and Jan Mitchell attended annually and Jack was invited to give the seventh lecture in the series in September 1999. He chose the subject "Jazzdays" an Australian term similar to "mouldy figs" used to describe the faithful active jazz supporters of our music. Appropriate, as Jack compiled the discography included in Graeme Bell's 1998 autobiography *Australian Jazzman*.

When Lithgow Community Radio EZY-FM 90.5 began broadcasting in 2004 Jack, using records from his vast record collection, was the jazz presenter of its Saturday night 3-hour *Jazz Cabaret* program up until the station voluntarily cancelled its licence in October 2019.

Eventually, national peer recognition for Jack came on Australia Day 2019 and the Australian Honours List when he was awarded a Medal of Australia (OAM) "for services to jazz music". However, ill health struck in early 2020 when Jack was diagnosed with a rare heart condition that required surgery. The successful operation was carried out at Sydney's RPA hospital in October that year, but slowed him down physically. Sadly, he died, peacefully, at Lithgow Hospital on 11 March 2021 with Janice and his large loving family by his side. His funeral was held at Leura Memorial Gardens and Crematorium on 18 March the next week.

Jack Mitchell had a deserved worldwide reputation as a discographer and researcher, and his lifelong contribution to Australian jazz history and documentation of its recordings was considerable and indispensable.

Bill Haesler OAM.

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