



VJAZZ 37
February 2008



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From the General Manager

On behalf of the dedicated team of volunteers at the Archive, I extend a very happy and prosperous New Year to everyone – as we look forward to another busy and productive year in 2008.

As summarized in the October Newsletter, the Archive had a very challenging and exiting but extremely rewarding 2007. This was capped off magnificently in November with two substantial financial donations, one from Maggie Fitzgibbon acknowledging the Archive's work and in appreciation of the Fitzgibbon Dynasty exhibition. The other was from the Ward McKenzie food processing company and Jilly Ward in remembrance of the late David Ward (our former Sound Engineer) and his long-time association with VJA. Our sincere appreciation is extended to Maggie Fitzgibbon and Jilly Ward for these magnificent gestures. The funds have been reserved for a capital building program, which we hope to commence during 2008-09.

One of my favourite local community radio stations is Radio Eastern 98.1FM based in Croydon, an outer eastern suburb of Melbourne. The station plays plenty of my type of music and comedy. Station announcer Bob Toll hosts one of its several jazz programs. Recently, VJAZZ volunteer Peter Edwards joined Bob as a guest announcer for two hours (this was his third time on this station with Bob). Peter, a "lover" of jazz from way back, is now in his seventh decade of collecting and listening to jazz music. He has a very relaxed "on-air" style and his extensive knowledge is evident from the way he introduces and talks about the various artists and tracks being played. Once a month, Peter is also involved with Bill Livingstone who hosts a weekly jazz program on another local community radio station now located in Box Hill, namely Boroondara Radio 94.1FM. Peter has an artistic flair and for the past 3 years has organized an annual rolling display of jazz-related material throughout 15 libraries in the area. He was the principal architect in setting-out the Archive's Fitzgibbon Dynasty exhibition, and together with Graeme Gaulway, looks after our extensive collection of jazz-related booklets, magazines and newspaper clippings. This mention of Peter not only pays tribute to him but simply illustrates the extraordinary breadth of talent that many of our volunteers possess – and for which the Archive's Board of Management is eternally grateful. Well done Peter.

Last year it was Forest Hill Chase Regional Shopping Centre. This year it's The Town Hall Gallery (at the rear of the Hawthorn Town Hall) in the City of Boroondara. Commencing February 6th 2008 we will have our "Jazz Spans the Decades" Travelling Exhibition on display for almost three weeks in this venue. Many of the items acknowledge jazz musicians who lived or still reside in the City and surrounding suburbs. These include Graeme & Roger Bell, Ade Monsborough, Brian Brown, Keith Hounslow, etc. On behalf of the Archive's Board of Management, I invite you to visit the Gallery and peruse what we have on display. You will also have an opportunity to purchase some CDs that we have for sale.

From 6th—23rd February on Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays & Saturdays 12 noon to 5.00 p.m.

Ray Sutton

"THE FITZGIBBON DYNASTY"

We are honouring the Fitzgibbon family who are arguably one of Australia's most prominent families in entertainment circles including music and stage. Their contribution to Australian jazz is both significant and exciting.

We are featuring three generations of this talented family including Minnie, Maggie, Graham "Smacka", Nichaud, Mark and Andrew.

Smacka Fitzgibbon became a jazz icon performing for and presenting his talent to enthusiastic audiences between 1949 and 1979.

The exhibition opened on Tuesday, October 23rd 2007 and will run until the end of May 2008, and is open from 10.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m. Tuesdays and Fridays. Guided group tours on other days by special appointment.

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QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE VICTORIAN JAZZ ARCHIVE INC. PATRON: WILLIAM H. MILLER M.A., B.C.L. (Oxon.)
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Ph (03) 9800 5535 email: info@vicjazzarchive.org.au. Web page: www.vicjazzarchive.org.au

Do you know about our regular library displays? These just do not happen by themselves. They are due entirely to the hard work of Peter Edwards. Pop in and have a look when we are in your area.

VICTORIAN JAZZ ARCHIVE INC
LIBRARY DISPLAY SCHEDULE 2008

JANUARY	VERMONT SOUTH	8/01/08	-	29/01/08
FEBRUARY	CROYDON	1/02/08	-	17/2/08
"	HAWTHORN ART GALLERY	6/02/08	-	23/2/08
MARCH	BELGRAVE	1/03/08	-	31/03/08
"	OAKLEIGH	1/03/08	-	31/03/08
APRIL	BOX HILL	1/04/08	-	30/04/08
MAY	WHEELERS HILL	1/05/08	-	31/05/08
JUNE	MT. WAVERLEY	1/06/08	-	30/06/08
"	BORONIA	1/06/08	-	30/06/08
JULY	FERNTREE GULLY	30/06/08	-	28/07/08
"	ROWVILLE	1/07/08	-	31/07/08
AUGUST	BLACKBURN STH	1/08/08	-	31/08/08
SEPTEMBER	BOX HILL	1/09/08	-	30/09/08
OCTOBER	GLEN WAVERLEY	1/10/08	-	31/10/08
"	NUNAWADING	1/10/08	-	28/10/08
NOVEMBER	RINGWOOD	1/11/08	-	30/11/08
DECEMBER	FREE			

Letters to the Editor:

Congratulations to Bill Brown on his article "A Gruesome Twosome" about George Melly and Mick Mulligan which appeared in VJAZZ 36 October 2007. Being a friend of George Melly and John Chilton I was a bit disappointed no mention was made of Melly and Mulligan's Australian connection. Englishman Paul Simpson was clarinettist with Mick Mulligan's Band in the 50's before coming to Sydney in the 70's joining bands like Ray Price, Geoff Gilbert and the Charlestown Strutters. He died there in 1993. During the 1950's Tasmanian Ian Pearce moved to England where he played trombone and piano with Mulligan's Band, recording with them for Tempo in 1952. He returned to Australia in 1955 joining Tom Pickering's Band and is now one of our finest pianists.

Sydney bassist Barry Dillon moved to England in the 1960's where he became a founder member of John Chilton's Feetwarmers. He toured Australia with them several times, later dying of cancer in Sydney. George Melly and the John Chilton Feetwarmers toured Australia in 1982, '83 & '90. Australian pianist Collin "Tucker" Bates had been a member from its early days, but did not come on the 1982 tour. He rejoined in 1983, leaving in 1990 to return to his hometown Sydney where he died in 1991.

Chuck Smith was the drummer with John Chilton until he left during the 1990 tour, emigrating to Melbourne, where his brother Brian lived. Brian was also a drummer so you could imagine the noise level in the Smith household during their early days. Chuck joined the New Melbourne Jazz Band and was with them from 1990 to 1995 featuring on several CDs and cassettes. He returned to England where he has been ever since.

I hope this article will show "The Gruesome Twosome" were not just from England, but had a genuine connection to Australia.

Eric J Brown

15th January '08

We welcome Letters to the Editor. Please let us know what you would like to read in the newsletter—or better still, send in an article.

STONNINGTON JAZZ 2008

May 15 to May 25
100% Australian Jazz

Full programme released February 2008 and will be included in May newsletter

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The Victorian Jazz Archive wishes to acknowledge the support of the following organisations: The State of Victoria through the Department of Premier and Cabinet and Arts Victoria, Parks Victoria, The Ian Potter Foundation, The Myer Foundation, The Pratt Foundation, The Trust Company of Australia, The Helen McPherson Smith Trust, Diana Allen of Jazz Australia, The Estates of the late Don Boardman, Ron Halstead and David Ward and Ward McKenzie Pty Ltd. The Archive gratefully acknowledges the financial support given to the VJA Capital Fund by Dame Elisabeth Murdoch, A.C., D.B.E.

CORPORATE SPONSORS AND OTHER THINGS

From Alan Clark

One way or another it's fair to say the Victorian Jazz Archive has enjoyed a wonderful year in relation to our financial circumstances. **Positive outcomes to our requests for various grants along with extremely generous donations from members and supporters have all contributed to the end result. That's the good news!** On the other side of the coin the collection is growing at such a rate we are rapidly approaching the situation where we will be hard pressed to contain it within our existing museum.

Hence our desire **"and intention"** to construct a further facility adjacent to the current structure which will allow a complete re-arrangement of archive operations. Our executive team has contributed an enormous amount of time and effort to reach the stage where we have tacit approval to proceed from the appropriate authorities. You can guess what I'm about to say. **How the devil are we going to find \$200,000 plus in a big hurry? The answer is not 100% clear but we will certainly be presenting a submission to the Victorian Government and we will be looking for generous benefactors who would appreciate their family names or their business name featured prominently on the newly constructed facility.** Stay tuned for further developments.

One of our successful fund-raising ventures has been to increase the number of individual memberships, the proceeds of which provide funds for ongoing expenditure. On another level the introduction of Corporate Sponsorship is proving beneficial in more ways than one.

Our first commercial sponsor was Craig Johnston of Keyboard Corner in Boronia and this relationship has proved conclusively the value of the win – win philosophy by encouraging alliances. On the one hand we have received generous financial support from Craig and significantly it also **enabled us to purchase our superb Yamaha piano at a price we could not otherwise have afforded.** From Craig's point of view many of our members and their friends have purchased musical instruments and music from his Boronia store. So Craig has an ongoing win too. And guess what – so do our members who do business with Craig because of his excellent service and range of instruments, not to mention the **generous discounts** they enjoy as a result of our relationship.

Our second sponsor is the Bendigo Community Bank at The Mall in Wantirna. Manager Steve Wright is delighted to have us on board to bolster his expanding business in the financial sector. Whilst it's early days we can tell you that when our new building becomes a reality, Steve has expressed his desire to sponsor a room or two within the complex. He's talking the possibility of a substantial sum when the time arrives. If you as a member would like this to happen you could help us immensely by going along and opening an account, however small, to display our support in return. Just be sure to tell him and his lovely staff of ladies where you came from.

The most recent addition to our corporate supporters is Cooper Newman Real Estate Agents of Burwood. Greg Cooper and his partner John Newman toured the archive pre Christmas and were so impressed they agreed immediately to accept a 12 month Corporate Sponsorship. But that's not all – **fairy tales do come true** – they asked about pressing needs and we mentioned the desirability of having a sponsor for the publication of the newsletter. And yes folks – **you will receive your next 12 months of this publication courtesy of Cooper Newman Real Estate.** And let's be serious! Wouldn't it be great if the same arrangement could continue next year? It's really pretty simple – My thinking is that if we support them they will support us. If you are thinking of making a move or need advice on any aspect of your Real Estate please put Greg and John on your list for a chat. They are involved in both Residential and Commercial activity and are specialists in the area of Retirement Village living. They are both involved in lots of community work as well as conducting their busy agency in Burwood. Greg and John would be delighted to hear from you and I'll give you a personal guarantee you won't receive any pressure or stress from a consultation with either of them.

Thank you for digesting such a long report - I hope you noticed that not once have I asked you to actually donate or participate in any fund raising on a personal level. (I must admit it was tempting not to attempt a tiny request for a bit of your hard earned.) The moral of the manuscript you have just digested couldn't be more emphatic.

Please consider doing something to support our sponsors and we will reap wonderful benefits for the archive in return.

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PLEASE NOTE DEADLINE FOR COPY FOR THE NEXT NEWSLETTER
IS 16TH APRIL 2008

KNOCKIN' A JUG **an occasional column**

This archiving caper certainly gets into your bloodstream, or at least helps to change the way you see the rest of the world.

Take Friday 6th June 2008 for example. It will mark the 50th anniversary of the opening night of the long defunct Melbourne Jazz Club. The Club's opening coincided with the resurgence of interest in traditional jazz by the general public in Melbourne.

Then, and on following Friday nights, many friendships were formed which have endured over the years to the present day, some even leading to marriage or divorce, the formation of bands and overseas trips which would never otherwise have occurred.

The Club was a huge success from its inception, supported by hundreds of jazz dags digging the music of the house band "Frank Traynor's Jazz Preachers". Sit-ins were welcomed, and many young muso's gained confidence in their craft from this experience. Female vocalists included Helen Violaris, Judy Durham, Judy Jacques and Elvie Simmons.

It is worth remembering that these were the days of 6 o'clock closing and there were no facilities available (or expected) for the serving of food or drink other than "Coke" on ice provided by the ladies of the committee, yet all venues were full to the gunnels, with standing room only.

Dancers were in the minority, and relegated, quite rightly, to the back of the hall. There was no banal chatter and no knitting—just loads of atmosphere. To gain entrance to this inner sanctum however, you first had to pass muster with "The Fat Man" on the door.

If the hall was set up early enough, Frank could be coaxed to play "Honky Tonk Train" on the piano. This would go on for about ten minutes in his edgy nervous style. It was "a gasser", as we used to say.

Then there was Nevill Sherburn in his grey coat, selling or swapping all those wonderful records and books to a discerning clientele who couldn't get enough of "it".

From an archival point of view, it should be noted that in about 1960 the M.J.C. provided improvisation workshops for budding jazz musicians, run by Frank Traynor and Nick Polites. Several of today's prominent players attended these workshops. I collected the money each Friday night. Dear reader, this is not an attempt to write the history of the Melbourne Jazz Club which is being addressed by others more competent than myself. Rather it is a snapshot of the local jazz scene in the late 50's and early 60's before popular music was hijacked by the Rock Scene.

It is also a reminder that time is on the wing. For this reason Marg and I intend to celebrate on Friday 6th June with lunch at the "Rosstown" on the day.

Those of you still casting a shadow with similar memories are invited to join us. We can perpetuate myths or just tell lies. Who will know the difference—and who cares?

Here is a blast from the past with characters from that era, many of whom are no longer with us. My apologies for errors or omissions.

Auntie's (plural of Auntie) nice looking sheilas
Auntie Sunday Bum
Auntie & Uncle Noble
Beagle—Bent—Big Black Sandra—Big Bob Brown—Big

Frog & Little Frog—Boardy.

Darkie

Eric Cohen

Fuse Box

Gypsy

Juicy Dacks

K.C.—Kuzz

Lou Lou

Miss Masonite—Mookie—Moose

Olive Oil

Rave Dagtin

Sny—Superman

The Bear—The Brain—The Bug—The Cow—The Doctor—The Dunga Duchess—The Fat Man (mentioned previously) - The Petal—The Pixie—The Prawn—The Scrag—Zeke.

I'll book a table or tables? for a trip down memory lane. Phone me on 9801 5007 if you want to be in on it.

Jeff Blades.

VALE

DERYCK 'KANGA' BENTLEY **13 August 1925—21 January 2008**

Deryck was one of the real gentlemen of Australian Jazz and will be greatly missed.

Born in Adelaide he originally learned piano. Discovering jazz from films he started to play trumpet in 1943. He joined the Lew Fisher Band on second trumpet soon switching to trombone.

Just after marrying Pat he joined the Bell Band for their second tour of England and Europe in 1951. They were extremely popular and toured Germany with blues singer Big Bill Broonzy, doing a concert in Dusseldorf. Unknown to them it was recorded and fortunately it has been released since then as it features the Bell Band at its very top.

The Bells did a concert at Festival Hall in London in front of Princess Elizabeth. Here she was introduced to Graeme and Mel Langdon. On returning to Australia and an A.B.C. tour Deryck left the band back in Adelaide and returned to pharmacy and later ran the American Health Studios.

In the early 1970's Dave Dallwitz, Tas Brown and Deryck decided to return to jazz and form a band. This was very successful and through Terry Martin (a VJA member) it journeyed to Chicago playing in front of a crowd of 100,000.

Deryck joined the Dreamland Cafe Band, then the Jazz Ramblers. There followed an excellent two-trumpet band, The Golden Gate Jazz Orchestra, which toured various states.

In more recent years he played in Chris Kelsey's Hot Foot Five at Port Willunga which featured Gail Kingston on vocals. When Deryck got sick Gail took over and he did the occasional sit-in.

Our thoughts, particularly mine, go out to Pat and the family.

Eric J Brown

31 January 2008

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PERTH JAZZ
SOCIETY'S
TRIBUTE TO
PADDY FITZALLAN
HYDE PARK
HOTEL 20/8/2007

Patrick "Paddy" Fitzallan was a well known identity around the Melbourne music scene in the post war years as a musician and band leader. He featured on many occasions in the Downbeat Jazz Concerts presented at the Melbourne Town Hall in that era. Paddy also put together many of the bands that accompanied visiting American artists including Louis, Frank Sinatra, Nat King Cole, Ella and Buddy Rich to name a few. I can still remember as a teenager attending the Gene Krupa concert at the Melbourne Stadium in 1954 where Paddy was a member of the accompanying Downbeat Big Band and did a feature solo with the band on "I Can't Get Started". I think that many of the Melbourne dance patrons of the era attributed that tune to Paddy rather than Bunny Berrigan. Paddy did a lot of the TV and session work in Melbourne in the late 50's and 60's.

Over the years Paddy also managed the musical instrument departments at many of Melbourne's music stores and was responsible for a couple of my early instrument purchases.

Paddy later moved to Sydney and Brisbane and finally Perth in the late 1980's. I had the pleasure of meeting up with Paddy again in October 1989 whilst on a work assignment in Perth for my "day gig" employer. Paddy was leading an excellent mainstream group at the "Nooky", a pub in the Perth suburb of Innaloo. Over the next few years I was a regular visitor to Perth and always managed to spend time with Paddy during those visits and have maintained regular contact with him ever since.

On August 20, 2007 well known ex Melbourne tenor player Graham Lyall and Perth trumpet player Matt Jodrell organized a tribute night at the Perth Jazz Society for 82 year old Paddy in recognition of his contribution to jazz and music in that city. I found out about this via an email from an elated and stunned Paddy and decided it was time to deliver on my annual threat to fly to Perth to catch up with him.

That night at the Perth Jazz Society was one of the most memorable sessions I have attended. The knock-out modern group consisted of:

Matt Jodrell – Trumpet / Flugel
James Sanders – Tenor
Konrad Paszkudski – Piano
Paul Pooley – Bass
Ben VanderWal – Drums

(Unfortunately Graham was indisposed that night and was ably replaced at the last minute by James Sanders)

The program consisted of two sets.

The first being:

Tribute – an original by Matt Jodrell
All The Things You Are
Shiny Stockings
The Nearness Of You
St Lois Blues.

Cottontail – The group was augmented by trumpet players Ricki Malley and Callum G'Froerer.

Paddy joined the group for the second set:

Take The A Train
Strutting With Some B.B.Q
S'Wonderful
I Could Write A Book
Big Butter And Egg Man
The Blues

I think I could sum up the night by quoting a closing comment from Matt Jodrell "He still has chops to burn and is still kicking my a..."

The next night I was able to visit The WA Jazz Club and catch up with ex Melbourne trombone player Herman Scheidler who was leading his excellent Powerhouse Jazz Band.

As a bit of trivia, James Sanders had been playing in Melbourne and a few years back, played in the salsa group at my daughter's wedding. At the time I was very impressed with his tenor playing and asked him about his musical background. He said he came from Perth and had been taught by a sax player over there that I probably had never heard of – Graham Lyall. We had a bit of a laugh at that at Paddy's tribute night.

Graeme Gaulway

RECENT CASH DONATIONS

Department for Victorian Communities, Killara Group, Roger Boyes, Joy Youlden-Connor, Victorian Jazz Workshops, Melbourne Tramways Band, Maggie Fitzgibbon OAM, Ward, McKenzie Pty Ltd., Cooper Newman Real Estate, Blackburn Branch Country Women's Association, Monica & Royston Coldicott, Templestowe Probus Club, Anonymous.

NEW MEMBERS

Allyson Anthonisz & Ian Rogers (f), Margaret Barker, Peter Barker, Anne Beilby, Dr Noel Cass, Max Clark, Ron Clarke, Norman & Mary Gome (f), Don Hall, Rod Harding, Robert Howey, John James Mervyn & Judy Kennedy (f), Charles Kovess, R. M. Matthews, Dick & Margaret Menting (f), Valerie Morland, Lex Pollard, Kevin Schneider, Graham & Elizabeth Syme (f), Bill & Margaret Thomson (f), Jack West, Cooper Newman Real Estate (Corporate Membership).

We welcome you all.

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This following article is reprinted with the kind permission of the Weekend Australian Review Magazine of September 8-9 2007.

THE FORUM

John McBeath on the persistence of jazz

An old joke among jazz musicians has you armed and pursued in a forest. You have one bullet remaining when you are confronted by two musicians who are out to get you, a very good drummer and an excellent banjo player. Who to shoot with your last bullet? The drummer, for the excellent banjoist must be an illusion.

It's unlikely this joke is told by traditional jazz artists, who often use banjos in their bands. Although trad is the music that first springs to mind for many people on hearing the word jazz, it's difficult to see it having a burgeoning future. Trad musicians and their audiences are ageing, while younger people perceive the style as dated.

A case in point was last year's 61st annual Australian Jazz Convention, a traditional jazzfest where, with few exceptions, the players and audiences were all grey heads. It was as if an electronic screening device at the gates had rejected anyone under 60.

So, is jazz dead?

Considering the paucity of media exposure for the music, it wouldn't be surprising if the jazz body were already on the coroner's slab; it isn't, although some parts are wizened and others have dropped off entirely. Although it's hard to imagine a revival of boogie-woogie piano for example, its predecessor, ragtime, has enjoyed a couple of comebacks, including young Melbourne pianist Ben Winkelman's 2005 release of a contemporary styled ragtime CD.

However, some people are convinced the best jazz has already been played. Do those same people also believe the best books have already been written or the best paintings painted?

Predictions of the demise of any jazz category are always fallible.

The popularity of big band swing went into a seemingly terminal decline during the 1960s but has recently undergone a resurgence. New big bands are appearing in all Australian capital cities, along with a revival of interest in swing dancing among young people. That these bands often play original compositions by their many younger band members, graduates in jazz studies at Australian conservatoriums, is a tribute to the success of these institutions.

Indeed, those former students who are not contributing to the reinvigoration of jazz in Australia are likely to be found performing from bases overseas.

Jazz critics in the US, Britain and Europe acknowledge that new music of global significance is coming from Australian players, an unthinkable judgment just a decade ago.

Because of the scarcity of jazz on radio, where many listeners first hear new material, younger audiences are unlikely to gain an introduction to the jazz world via broadcasts. Nationally there are just three jazz programs weekly on ABC Radio plus a scattering of variable quality broadcasts on a handful of community stations. There is no jazz played on Australian commercial radio and free-to-air television is a jazz wasteland.

Does anyone care? Well, several leading jazz festivals—Wangaratta, Melbourne International, Manly, Stonnington—

and dozens of smaller regional events attract healthy attendances. Presumably most of these attending care about the music's growth and continuation. Despite the difficulties, several advanced Australian contemporary groups have attracted youthful cult audiences.

Although the rise of digital downloads has reduced the market for CDs, jazz DVD sales are increasing and stores report that stocking fewer CDs across more jazz categories is the key to success. Retailers also point out that digital music compression, typically one-tenth of an original sound file, means an unacceptable decrease in quality for many.

But the question remains: Are there sufficient audience numbers for the waxing wave of young Australian jazz talent?

Probably not, without a lot more exposure for the genre.

Would not just a small fraction of pop rock's marketing expenditure invested in promoting jazz attract new enthusiasts.

Original contemporary music of world standard is being played and recorded in Australia at an unprecedented rate, and a swag of independent labels releases a wide range of local jazz. Such small recording companies as Jazzhead, Jazz grove, Birdland, Rufus, Newmarket and others battle to overcome public apathy and make profits. Administrators of jazz festivals have similar problems, arguing that the ingredients for success are a program of knockout performers, a huge marketing budget and a firm expectation of zero profitability.

It's at the cutting edge where the most interesting music is happening, especially since the retreat of US hegemony and the rise of local influences in Australia and elsewhere. Modern Australian players are producing adventurous work that may reference pop, rock, rap, classical, world and other music. Earlier the cross-fertilisation mostly went the other way, from jazz into other genres: think of rhythm and blues, its descendant rock 'n' roll and their indebtedness to jazz.

The lifeblood of jazz has always been innovation, and pioneering jazz works embrace the use of electronic and unusual instrumentation. Last year's national Freedman Jazz Fellowship went to a brilliant trio of tenor sax, piano accordion and guitar. French horns and bass clarinets have reappeared; new instruments have evolved; scratch DJs have been introduced and all manner of unorthodox sounds incorporated, from prepared piano to partially dismantled trumpet.

Meanwhile, superlative, original contemporary music is being performed and recorded by advanced young jazz musicians and vocalists in every state, most of it undiscovered, unacknowledged and unappreciated by most Australians, for whom jazz is dead.

But those of us who live for the music know how joyful, uplifting, restorative, addictive and alive it is. There are few sounds more inspiring in all of music than a top jazz soloist standing up and improvising on a theme, spreading fire throughout the room or embarking on a lyrical musical journey, perhaps cloaking everyone in a delicious melancholy.

Its instant composition means anything could happen. Could we yet see the banjo leading an avant-garde, post-bop group?

Somehow I think not, but anything's possible in jazz. That's a big part of its attraction.

John McBeath

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2nd BEV SHEEHAN
3rd PETER EDWARDS (VJA)
4th MAX CHADWICK

**DON'T JUST TELL YOUR FRIENDS -
TELL EVERYBODY!****RANDOM RAMBLINGS**

As I languished in the torpor following the gastronomic excesses of the 'festive' season I realized I needed a morale-boosting tonic. Thus I rang the 'Hello Central' number and enjoyed what the good Doctor prescribed. As it happened the New Year ushered three new CDs into my Canterbury Archive. All three lifted the spirits as they all displayed jazz from that wonderful uncluttered period that existed between the two World Wars; uncluttered in the sense that they were content to be straight-ahead swinging jazz designed to entertain and not aiming at any 'isms' or attempting to re-create previous styles or invoke new avenues of the music that would frighten the horses in the purist stable; free in fact of the 'trad' versus 'modern' bias that blighted post World War II jazz, designating some fine musicians to the scrapheap as they fell through the stylistic cracks so to speak.

The first one was 'Bill Coleman In Paris'. He was a black [oops-African American] trumpet man who in his early career had played with the Luis Russell Band and with Fats Waller. In the late thirties he was in Paris with the Willie Lewis Band. It was at this time that the tracks on this CD were made. The Gallic influence abounds, how else as the guitar chair is often occupied by Django Reinhardt or his brother Joseph or Roger Chaput, Oscar Aleman [who I believe hailed from Argentina] are also on guitar on some tracks. Most are under Bill's leadership, other groups led by French tenor sax man Alix Combelle or reed player Eddie Brunner. The tracks made under the name of

trombonist Dicky Wells sporting the three trumpet team of Coleman, Shad Collins and Bill Dillard [a visitor to our shores twice in the eighties] are my favourites. They have been in my collection in various forms since the sixties.

The second CD features the American clarinet player Danny Polo. Again it highlights tracks recorded in the UK and in Paris in the late thirties. In London the session also features a Scottish contingent, trumpeter Tommy McQuater, trombonist George Chisholm and pianist Eddie Macauley. In Paris Alix Combelle and Oscar Aleman re-appear. American pianists Una Mae Carlisle and Garland Wilson are also to hand. Polo had an interesting career. At various times he was in a band led by Claude Thornhill one of the free thinkers who had a broad view on jazz styles. For instance at one time I believe Danny shared the sax section with Lee Konitz, one the 'modern cool' players. However, the tracks here are hot and swinging. During his stay in Britain Polo was a member of the Ambrose Orchestra.

The third CD spotlights another clarinet man, a son of New Orleans Tony Parenti. The recordings in question actually took place in the fifties, made for the Jazztone label. However the style and the content of the music to my mind fills the bill of that thirties period. With Henry Allen, Tyree Glenn, Hank Duncan, Milt Hinton and George Wettling on hand how could it be otherwise. The Jazztone label had lots of gems. it was a bit obscure as far as the UK was concerned. At the time I don't think the LPs were issued there. I recall an article dealing with the Jazztone issues appearing in the UK Jazz Journal magazine. Over the years I managed to obtain some of them. Tony also had a varied career popping up all over the place. He was in the clarinet chair of Eddie Condon's band when he opened his club in 1945. In the early fifties he was in Florida as a member of Preacher Rollo's Five Saints. He also recorded some ragtime sessions with people like Wild Bill Davison and Ralph Sutton. So all in all the three CDs I mentioned started the year off in good style helping me forget all the hassles abounding in what is laughingly called 'the real world'. Before the euphoria wears off and my ramblings become too random I'll sip a red and have a lie down until next time.

Addendum - In the article in the last newsletter 'Gruesome Twosome' dealing with the mayhem of the Mulligan/Melly duo, I neglected to mention the Australian connection therein. That marvellous piano man from the Apple Isle, Ian Pearce was in the band in the early fifties, first on trombone then on piano. His then nickname of 'Wylie' is mentioned in one of George's anecdotes. In the later group when George was in John Chilton's Feetwarmers two other Australians, pianist Collin 'Tucker' Bates and bassist Barry Dillon had spells in the band. Sadly both of those gents left us sometime ago so perhaps they and 'Goodtime George' are still performing in the celestial Feetwarmers aloft.

*Bill Brown***SHOP TALK— WHAT'S NEW?**

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