

<http://researchspace.auckland.ac.nz>

*ResearchSpace@Auckland*

### **Copyright Statement**

The digital copy of this thesis is protected by the Copyright Act 1994 (New Zealand).

This thesis may be consulted by you, provided you comply with the provisions of the Act and the following conditions of use:

- Any use you make of these documents or images must be for research or private study purposes only, and you may not make them available to any other person.
- Authors control the copyright of their thesis. You will recognise the author's right to be identified as the author of this thesis, and due acknowledgement will be made to the author where appropriate.
- You will obtain the author's permission before publishing any material from their thesis.

To request permissions please use the Feedback form on our webpage.

<http://researchspace.auckland.ac.nz/feedback>

### **General copyright and disclaimer**

In addition to the above conditions, authors give their consent for the digital copy of their work to be used subject to the conditions specified on the [Library Thesis Consent Form](#) and [Deposit Licence](#).

# **"Any rags, any jazz, any boppers today?"**

---

**Jazz in New Zealand 1920-1955**

**Aleisha Ward**

*A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Music, The University of Auckland, 2012.*



## **Abstract**

This thesis explores the history of jazz in New Zealand from the 1920s to the mid-1950s, surrounding a central theme examining how New Zealanders acquired and responded to jazz. I describe how jazz, as music, dance, and popular culture, was brought to New Zealand during the period 1920–1955. In particular I uncover and describe the roles that the jazz cultures of the United States of America, Great Britain, and Australia played in influencing the development of jazz in New Zealand.

I identify physical media showing New Zealanders' responses to jazz during this period. Responses to the physical media reflect how New Zealanders interpreted and defined jazz, and how those responses changed across the period. In association with the media, I detail aspects of material culture relating to jazz in New Zealand, and placing jazz within a social context.

I propose a model of 'recontextualisation', the change in a practice when it is removed from one cultural context and place to another, to explain the relationships between New Zealand and foreign responses to jazz. In particular, I identify the unique ways in which New Zealanders participated in the continuous recreation of their own jazz culture.

## **Acknowledgements**

My thanks to all the people who helped me with this research. In particular, I wish to thank my supervisors Dr. Greg Booth, and Dr. Nancy November for their support, and encouragement over this journey. Thanks also to the many participants in this research who willingly gave of their time to share their history and their stories with a young researcher.

Thanks must also go to the researchers on the Jazz–Research List who helped with the many odd and interesting questions that came up over the course of my research.

I am indebted to the staff at Alexander Turnbull, Hocken, Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin City Libraries. Also to the staff at Archives New Zealand, Auckland War Memorial Museum Library, and, last but not least, staff at the University of Auckland Special Collections, my colleagues at the Music and Dance Library, and especially to my manager Philippa Mckeown–Green for being able to put up with the random questions, and other vagaries of having a PhD student on staff!

Finally thanks must go to all the people in my life that kept me sane and whole during this process, especially my father, my friends, and to Daniel whose unceasing encouragement and support I could not have done without.

## Table of Contents

### PART ONE: ...AND ALL THAT JAZZ

<b>1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>11</b>
1.1	INTRODUCTION .....	11
1.2	THESIS STRUCTURE.....	12
1.3	METHODOLOGY, SOURCES AND LITERATURE .....	12
	<i>Sources.....</i>	<i>13</i>
	<i>Literature .....</i>	<i>15</i>
1.4	KEY CONCEPTS.....	17
	<i>Globalisation.....</i>	<i>17</i>
	<i>Localisation.....</i>	<i>18</i>
	<i>Creation of Culture and Tradition.....</i>	<i>20</i>
	<i>The Theories of Theodor Adorno and the Culture Industry.....</i>	<i>21</i>
1.5	NEW ZEALAND: INTERACTIONS AND CULTURE 1920–1955 .....	25
1.6	MUSICAL PROFESSIONALISM AND ECONOMIC REALITY .....	29
1.7	RELATED TERMS AND USAGE IN NEW ZEALAND .....	31
	<i>Music related terms.....</i>	<i>31</i>
	<i>Showmanship .....</i>	<i>34</i>
	<i>Jam Session.....</i>	<i>34</i>
	<i>Cabaret.....</i>	<i>34</i>
	<i>Dance and Jazz Clubs.....</i>	<i>35</i>
	<i>Other usages of the term jazz.....</i>	<i>36</i>
<b>2</b>	<b>ACQUIRING JAZZ .....</b>	<b>37</b>
2.1	INTRODUCTION .....	37
	<i>Chapter Outline .....</i>	<i>38</i>
2.2	SHEET MUSIC.....	39
2.3	RECORDINGS.....	41
	<i>1920s .....</i>	<i>41</i>
	<i>1930–1945.....</i>	<i>42</i>
	<i>1945–1955.....</i>	<i>44</i>
2.4	TOURS AND VAUDEVILLE .....	45
	<i>1920s.....</i>	<i>45</i>
	<i>1930s.....</i>	<i>47</i>
	<i>World War Two .....</i>	<i>48</i>
	<i>Post–War Decade .....</i>	<i>48</i>
2.5	DANCE .....	49
	<i>1920s.....</i>	<i>49</i>
	<i>1930s.....</i>	<i>52</i>
2.6	RADIO.....	54
	<i>1920s.....</i>	<i>55</i>
	<i>1930s.....</i>	<i>56</i>
	<i>World War Two: .....</i>	<i>57</i>
	<i>1945–1955.....</i>	<i>58</i>
2.5	CONCLUSION .....	59
	<i>Chronological Overview of the Construction of Jazz in New Zealand:.....</i>	<i>59</i>
	<b>PART TWO: BIRTH OF A JAZZ SCENE .....</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>CREATING THE NEW ZEALAND JAZZ SCENE: DISSEMINATION AND INFLUENCES .....</b>	<b>64</b>
3.1	INTRODUCTION: "ANZAC, HOLLYWOOD, AND HOME" .....	64
3.2	JAZZ AGE .....	67
	<i>Jazz in Print.....</i>	<i>67</i>
	<i>Ship Musicians and the Southern Dixieland Band .....</i>	<i>70</i>
	<i>Linn Smith's Royal Jazz Band and Bert Ralton's Savoy Havana Band .....</i>	<i>73</i>

<i>The Broadcasting of Jazz</i> .....	78
3.3 DEPRESSION YEARS .....	82
<i>Jazz in Print during the Depression</i> .....	82
<i>Tours During the Depression</i> .....	85
3.4 EARLY SWING ERA.....	88
<i>Jazz in Print</i> .....	89
<i>Musicians and Tours in the Swing Era</i> .....	92
<i>Broadcasting</i> .....	98
3.5 CONCLUSION.....	101
<b>4 CREATING THE JAZZ SCENE: RESPONSES .....</b>	<b>104</b>
4.1 INTRODUCTION.....	104
4.2 THE JAZZ AGE.....	107
<i>Jazz in Print</i> .....	107
<i>The Musicians</i> .....	112
<i>The Bands:</i> .....	115
<i>Repertoire and sound of early jazz bands:</i> .....	117
<i>Fans</i> .....	121
<i>Venues</i> .....	123
4.3 DEPRESSION YEARS .....	125
<i>Print</i> .....	125
<i>Venues</i> .....	127
<i>Musicians</i> .....	130
4.4 EARLY SWING ERA.....	134
<i>Print</i> .....	135
<i>Musicians</i> .....	135
<i>Fans</i> .....	138
4.5 CONCLUSION.....	142
<b>PART THREE: WORLD WAR TWO.....</b>	<b>144</b>
<b>5 WORLD WAR TWO AND EFFECTS ON THE LOCAL JAZZ SCENE .....</b>	<b>145</b>
5.1 INTRODUCTION.....	145
<i>New Zealand at War:</i> .....	146
<i>Chapter Overview:</i> .....	147
5.2 ENLISTMENT AND CONSCRIPTION: JAZZ ON THE BATTLEFIELD .....	148
<i>Royal New Zealand Air Force Central Band:</i> .....	148
<i>Jim Warren's experiences</i> .....	153
<i>Ken Avery's experiences</i> .....	154
5.3 THE KIWI CONCERT PARTY.....	156
<i>First Party: 1941–1943 Middle East– North Africa</i> .....	157
<i>Interlude from War: Furlough Leave and Tour 1943</i> .....	160
<i>Second Party: 1944–1945 Italy</i> .....	163
<i>Pacific Concert Party: 1943–1945</i> .....	166
5.4 THE JAZZ SCENE ON THE HOME FRONT .....	167
<i>Centennial Exhibition</i> .....	168
<i>Disruptions to Bands and Venues</i> .....	169
<i>Rationing and Restrictions</i> .....	171
<i>Positive consequences of the war period</i> .....	172
<i>Female Musicians</i> .....	173
5.5 BROADCASTING DURING THE WAR .....	174
<i>Problems in broadcasting arising from the war</i> .....	174
<i>How broadcasting was changed due to the war</i> .....	175
5.6 CONCLUSION.....	179
<b>6 THE AMERICAN INVASION 1942–1945: INTERACTION AND RESPONSE .....</b>	<b>182</b>
6.1 INTRODUCTION: THE YANKS ARE COMING! .....	182

<i>Chapter Overview</i> .....	184
6.2 SOCIAL INTERACTIONS BETWEEN AMERICAN SERVICEMEN AND NEW ZEALANDERS .....	184
<i>Tensions and conflict</i> .....	185
<i>Dancing at military camps</i> .....	187
<i>Dancing at service clubs</i> .....	188
<i>Dancing and music at civilian venues</i> .....	189
<i>Major venues in Auckland</i> .....	190
<i>Major venues in Wellington</i> .....	194
6.3 BANDS WITH THE TROOPS .....	197
<i>Marine Corps and Naval Bands</i> .....	198
<i>United States Army Bands: The 290th Army Band</i> .....	198
<i>Bands of the 43rd and 25th Army Divisions</i> .....	199
<i>New Zealand reactions to American forces jazz bands</i> .....	201
6.4 FAMOUS TOURS: ARTIE SHAW AND CLAUDE THORNHILL .....	203
<i>Artie Shaw</i> .....	203
<i>Claude Thornhill</i> .....	208
6.5 RADIO BROADCASTING: THE AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY BROADCASTING SERVICE .....	210
6.6 CONCLUSION .....	213
<b>PART FOUR: THE POST-WAR DECADE</b> .....	<b>217</b>
<b>7 THE POST-WAR DECADE: DEVELOPMENTS AND TRANSITIONS</b> .....	<b>218</b>
7.1 INTRODUCTION .....	218
7.2 AFTER EFFECTS OF THE AMERICAN RESIDENCY .....	220
<i>Americans Farewell</i> .....	220
<i>Long term effects of the Americans' residency on jazz</i> .....	222
7.3 INTRODUCTION OF BEBOP TO NEW ZEALAND .....	223
7.4 FAN ACTIVITIES .....	228
<i>Jazz and Swing Clubs</i> .....	229
<i>Fan Publications</i> .....	231
7.5 JAZZ IN THE BROADCASTING AND RECORDING INDUSTRIES .....	235
<i>The Radio Dance Band System</i> .....	235
<i>Other Studio Jazz Groups</i> .....	237
<i>The New Zealand Recording Industry and Broadcasting</i> .....	237
<i>Radio Bands and Recording Artists</i> .....	239
7.6 NEW ZEALAND JAZZ CONCERTS .....	241
7.7 THE MID-CENTURY JAZZ TOURS AND INTERACTIONS WITH NEW ZEALAND JAZZ MUSICIANS .....	246
<i>The Big Show featuring Nat 'King' Cole</i> .....	246
<i>The Show of Shows with Buddy de Franco</i> .....	249
<i>Ted Heath Big Band</i> .....	251
7.8 CONCLUSION .....	253
<b>8 CONCLUSIONS</b> .....	<b>257</b>
8.1 SUMMARY OF RESEARCH .....	257
8.2 MAJOR CHANGES IN NEW ZEALAND JAZZ .....	259
8.3 DID JAZZ GAIN A NEW ZEALAND IDENTITY? .....	263
<b>9 APPENDIX: BAND PERSONNEL CHARTS</b> .....	<b>267</b>
9.1 CHAPTER 3 CREATING THE NEW ZEALAND JAZZ SCENE: DISSEMINATION AND INFLUENCES .....	267
9.2 CHAPTER 4 CREATING THE NEW ZEALAND JAZZ SCENE: RESPONSES .....	268
9.3 CHAPTER 5 WORLD WAR TWO AND EFFECTS ON THE LOCAL JAZZ SCENE .....	270
9.4 CHAPTER 6 THE AMERICAN INVASION 1942-1945: INTERACTION AND RESPONSE .....	272
9.5 CHAPTER 7 THE POST-WAR DECADE: DEVELOPMENTS AND TRANSITIONS .....	272
<b>10 APPENDIX: SELECTED PHOTOGRAPHS OF MUSICIANS AND BANDS</b> .....	<b>273</b>
<b>11 BIBLIOGRAPHY</b> .....	<b>279</b>
11.1 BOOKS, JOURNALS AND THESES .....	279



11.2	ARCHIVAL SOURCES .....	285
11.3	PERIODICALS .....	285
11.4	INTERVIEWS AND COMMUNICATIONS .....	286

## Table of Figures

FIGURE 1: SAVOY HAVANA BAND TIMELINE .....	75
FIGURE 2: TUT COLTMAN BAND DEPRESSION TIMELINE.....	85
FIGURE 3: THEO WALTERS BAND TIMELINE.....	93
FIGURE 4: TUT COLTMAN BAND SWING ERA TIMELINE.....	95
FIGURE 5: AMERICANADIANS TIMELINE .....	96
FIGURE 6: KIWI CONCERT PARTY 1941-1943 TIMELINE .....	157
FIGURE 7: KIWI CONCERT PARTY 1944-1945 TIMELINE .....	163
FIGURE 8: ARTIE SHAW BAND TIMELINE.....	203

## **Abbreviations**

**2NZE** Second New Zealand Expeditionary Force

**AEBS** American Expeditionary Broadcasting Service

**AES** American Expeditionary Station

**AFRS** Armed Forces Radio Service (USA)

**AFM** American Federation of Musicians

**AMM** Australian Music Maker and Dance Band News

**ANZAC** Australia New Zealand Army Corps

**ANZUS** Australia New Zealand United States

**AS** Auckland Star

**ATL** Alexander Turnbull Library

**CP** Press (Christchurch)

**D** Dominion

**DHJA** Dennis Huggard Jazz Archive

**EMI** Electrical and Musical Industries Limited

**EP** (Evening Post)

**HMV** His Master's Voice

**JATP** Jazz at the Philharmonic

**NBS** National Broadcasting Service

**NCBS** National Commercial Broadcasting Service

**NZBB** New Zealand Broadcasting Board

**NZBS** New Zealand Broadcasting Service

**NZH** New Zealand Herald

**NZL** New Zealand Listener

**NZMU** New Zealand Musicians' Union

**NZRR** New Zealand Radio Record and Electric Home Journal

**NZT** New Zealand Truth

**NZWW** New Zealand Women's Weekly

**ODJB** Original Dixieland Jazz Band

**ODT** Otago Daily Times

**RBC** Radio Broadcasting Company

**RNZAF** Royal New Zealand Air Force

**RSA** Returned Soldiers Association

**TANZA** To Assist New Zealand Musicians

**USO** United Service Organizations

**WC** Wanganui Chronicle



# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Introduction

This thesis examines how jazz was imported to New Zealand, and how New Zealanders adapted it to local society through the avenues of culture, technologies, media and the music industry, and the role of the audience for jazz across the period 1920–1955. It is important to consider the contexts surrounding jazz as it was imported and disseminated to New Zealanders because it situates jazz in the wider society and culture. By examining jazz in New Zealand through these avenues, I have described jazz in terms that went beyond the music and explained how jazz fit into New Zealand society during this period.

Academic research into jazz is a relatively new area (approximately thirty years). In New Zealand it has only been within the past decade that researchers have begun to look into aspects of jazz in the New Zealand context. When I began work on this thesis, very little scholarly research had been done on jazz in New Zealand, and none had been on jazz before the 1960s.

The lack of research into jazz was a large gap in the history of music in New Zealand. Until recently the scholarly research has focused primarily on art music to the exclusion of other music genres. I felt that it was important to attempt to fill this gap primarily because jazz was a rich and important repertoire, and culture in its own right. I also felt that jazz was an important field of study in order to understand the history of music in New Zealand, and more generally, because jazz musicians and fans interacted extensively with other aspects of music in New Zealand, especially during the period that I chose to study.

I was personally motivated to research jazz history, and New Zealand jazz history, by my teachers and mentors Bernie Allen, Frank Gibson Junior, and Wayne Senior at the University of Auckland jazz studies programme. Innocuous, passing remarks about how they began performing jazz in the 1950s combined with a research project, in which I focused on the American influence on New Zealand jazz during World War Two, piqued my interest and started me down this path.

The period spanning the 1920s to mid–1950s interested me because it encompasses a multitude of social/cultural issues, musical, and music industry developments and changes. Many issues, such as the development of broadcasting and recording, the effects of the Depression and World War Two, and the changing nature of popular music, had a direct bearing on the dissemination of, and influence on, jazz in New Zealand. These developments and changes affected the development of jazz in New Zealand and its adaptation to New Zealand culture across the course of this period.

## **1.2 Thesis structure**

This thesis has an overarching structure of four parts. Part One, *And All that Jazz: Theoretical Underpinnings* consists of Chapters One and Two and covers topics across the entire period 1920–1955. Chapter One examines various topics surrounding the story of jazz in New Zealand that had direct and indirect influences on the ways that jazz was adapted to the local conditions. Chapter Two examines the methods and media that New Zealanders used to acquire jazz across the entire period 1920–1955.

Part Two: *Birth of a Jazz Scene* consists of Chapters Three and Four, which examine the beginnings of a jazz scene in New Zealand during the post–World War One period. Chapter Three examines the importation of jazz to New Zealand, and the influence of jazz on New Zealanders, during the period 1920–1939. Chapter Four examines the same period through the lens of the local responses of New Zealanders to jazz.

Part Three: *World War Two* includes Chapters Five and Six. Chapter Five discusses the activities of New Zealand jazz musicians during the war, both on the home front, and in overseas service. Chapter Six examines the impacts of the American troop residency 1942–1945 on the New Zealand jazz scene.

Part Four: *The Post–War Decade*, consists of Chapter Seven, and examines developments on the New Zealand jazz scene during the decade 1945–1955. This chapter interweaves local and international developments, and interactions and responses to those developments during this decade.

In each of these chronological sections I have chosen to discuss the development of jazz by topic (among them, fans, musicians, and representations through the media). I chose to structure the thesis in this manner because it was the best compromise between comprehensibility of the topic and readability.

## **1.3 Methodology, Sources and Literature**

My methodological approach in this thesis is primarily ethnographic in that I am taking, as Anthony Seeger so eloquently states:

a descriptive approach to music going beyond the writing down of sounds to the writing down of how sounds are conceived, made, appreciated and influence other individuals, groups and social and musical processes.<sup>1</sup>

This descriptive approach is ideal as I am focusing on an historic period. As ethnographic research involves a number of different methodological approaches, I will briefly outline here the ones that were most used in my research.

## Sources

In taking an historical ethnographic approach to this research I followed two broad lines of enquiry: archival research and oral history. Archival research is considered the backbone of most historical research and, in terms of historical jazz research, has a great deal to offer the researcher. Archival research offers information on the wider culture as well as the music, which helps to situate jazz in the context of not only jazz culture, but also the national culture of the period.

By placing jazz in the context of New Zealand culture, we can see where jazz was positioned in New Zealand society, and how jazz was adapted to fit the local social conditions. In taking this approach I took broad surveys of the main daily and weekly newspapers in New Zealand (such as *The New Zealand Herald* or *New Zealand Truth*), and radio entertainment magazines: *The New Zealand Radio Record and Electric Home Journal* and its descendent *The New Zealand Listener*. In addition to these publications, I also consulted a wide variety of general popular publications, including *New Zealand Women's Weekly*, and *Te Ao Hou*, for profiles on individual musicians and other jazz related material.

I also extensively consulted music trade magazines, both generalised and jazz specific publications. Of particular use in my research were the Australian trade magazines *Australian Music Maker and Dance Band News*, and *Tempo*. These magazines were marketed to musicians and devoted fans of jazz/dance music, and were the periodicals that would be consulted for the latest information on jazz both in the United States and in Australasia. Importantly for research on jazz in New Zealand, both magazines had columns devoted to the jazz activities of their New Zealand counterparts. Aside from news items from across Australia and New Zealand, both *Music Maker* and *Tempo* would regularly contain articles on musical trends, technique, arranging, and performance practice.

---

<sup>1</sup> Anthony Seeger, 'Ethnography of Music', in Helen Myers ed. *The Norton/Grove Handbooks in Music: Ethnomusicology, An Introduction*, New York: Norton, 1992, 89.



Although New Zealand had few long-term music publications, the choral and classical music publication *Music in New Zealand* during the 1920s and 1930s, and the art, literature and music publication *Music Ho!* in the 1940s, offered occasional snapshots of the local art music scene's reactions to, and views on, jazz. The other two New Zealand music periodicals that I consulted were also the only examples of local jazz journalism. *Swing!* and *Jukebox: New Zealand's Swing Magazine*, were both published by fans in the 1940s. Neither had big publication runs, and only survived for a year each, 1941–1942 and 1946–1947 respectively. Most of the content in these magazines was New Zealand related, with only a few non-New Zealand related items such as reviews of mostly American or British jazz records.

In addition to published resources I extensively consulted several archives and collections, in particular the Dennis Huggard Jazz Archive at the Alexander Turnbull Library. I also utilised the Ken Avery Papers at Otago University's Hocken Library; papers relating to the Royal New Zealand Air Force Bands, and the Kiwi Concert Party deposited at Archives New Zealand, and at the Auckland War Memorial Museum Library. As well as these publicly available collections I was given access to the 'Frank Gibson Sr. Scrapbooks' by his son, drummer Frank Gibson Jr. Finally, I made extensive use of the heritage collections at the Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin city libraries.

My second line of enquiry, oral history, is equally important as archival research in jazz research for many reasons. There is a great deal of information that is not available from archival sources, and oral history allows the researcher to access information that is not obvious or physically collectable: that which is stored in people's memories. In the context of New Zealand, oral history was vital to my method as there has been little research done on jazz in New Zealand until very recently.

The people I interviewed had either first- or second-hand knowledge of the period, and jazz culture, including personalities, venues, social interactions and economic information surrounding the job of being a musician. For the most part they were what might be described as second and third generation jazz musicians active from the 1930s onwards. Two jazz musicians I interviewed were the sons of musicians active during the period that my research covers, which gave an interesting perspective and insight into the personal life of jazz musicians, and how one could be raised in the business.

There was a wide variety of experiences with regards to how and when they started to play jazz, and with their careers as jazz musicians. There was a wide variety of life experiences among

participants. My oldest participant began performing in the 1930s, experienced the Great Depression as a teenager, and served in World War Two for an extended period, and my youngest participant (a child prodigy) was born after the end of World War Two. This wide range of ages and life experiences added interesting dynamics to each participant's perspectives of the jazz scene throughout the period I researched.

## Literature

There is little literature about music in New Zealand, and even less that relates to jazz and the period that I examine in this thesis. In addition the majority of the sources I have used in this thesis are from archival sources, popular print media, or from oral histories. For this reason I have not included a formal literature review here, but rather a brief overview of music literature that I have consulted in the course of researching and constructing this thesis.

Literature about music in New Zealand, especially popular music is, to be frank, sparse. During the course of my research I consulted general, ethnographic and the few specifically jazz/popular music writings (related to the period covered in this thesis) that I could find. Of particular use was J.M. Thomson's *The Oxford History of New Zealand Music*, which, despite its focus on art music, gave me a number of good insights into the use of music in the theatre and on radio, as well as early recording and publishing. Also of general use was Allan Thomas's *Music in New Zealand: A Reader from the 1940s*, and his ethnographic study of music in Taranaki, *Music is Where you Find it: Music in the Town of Hawera 1946, An Historical Ethnography*. These two books included small mentions about jazz and dance music, and with the latter informing my concepts of musical ethnography in a New Zealand setting.

Three memoirs by New Zealand music personages were helpful in either giving me leads on information, or confirming information: Arthur Pearce's biography by saxophonist Laurie Lewis, *Arthur and the Nights at the Turntable: The Life and Times of a Jazz Broadcaster*, Terry Vaughn's memoir of his time with the Kiwi Concert Party *Whistle as You Go: The Story of the Kiwi Concert Party and Terry Vaughn*, and Doug Caldwell's *My Life in the Key of Jazz*. These books gave me insights into not only the individual's experiences but also the construction of the dance/jazz scene in New Zealand, and in the case of Vaughn's memoir, into the structure, travels, and performances of the Kiwi Concert Party.

With regards to general histories of jazz/popular music in New Zealand for the period that I examined there are only two: Chris Bourke's *Blue Smoke: The Lost Dawn of Popular Music in New Zealand 1918–1965*, and the Richard Hardie and Allan Thomas edited *Jazz Aotearoa: Notes*

*Towards a New Zealand History*. Bourke's book, as the first history of New Zealand popular music that covers much of the same period that I do in this thesis, was particularly useful for the interviews with musicians that he had included, especially of people who had passed away just prior, or during the early stages of my research. The Hardie/Thomas volume was of less use, however, as it only included one essay about jazz during the period that I examined. This essay, by John Whiteoak, was about the early New Zealand jazz scene from a Australian perspective, and was excerpted from his book on Australian improvised music, *Playing Ad Lib: Improvisatory Music in Australia 1836–1970*.

I also examined writings about jazz in other countries, in particular Australia and Britain, but also France, India and South Africa. The writings on jazz in Australia were, naturally, the most useful in the research of this thesis. Of particular use were John Whiteoak's abovementioned book *Playing Ad Lib*, Andrew Bisset's seminal *Black Roots, White Flowers: A History of Jazz in Australia*, and Bruce Johnson's books *The Oxford Companion to Australian Jazz*, and, *The Inaudible Music: Jazz, Gender, and Australian Modernity*. These books were particularly helpful in identifying musicians who played in both Australia and New Zealand, and the mobility of the jazz/dance scene between the two countries. They were also useful in understanding the construction of the jazz scene in Australia, and how it was similar, and differed from what was happening in New Zealand. In addition Johnson's book *The Inaudible Music* was also beneficial in my understanding of the construction of modernity in the Antipodes. However I also had to be careful when it came to discussions of race and gender as the issues were very different in Australia than what was occurring in New Zealand during the same period.

The above caveat also had to be applied to the jazz histories from Britain, France, India, and South Africa. I needed to be aware that race and gender issues, and also issues of colonialism, and social structures were exceedingly different in these countries than to New Zealand. Also different were the ideologies and influences surrounding jazz in these countries. In spite of these caveats I found Catherine Parsonage's *The Evolution of Jazz in Britain 1880–1935*, Hilary Moore's *Inside British Jazz: Crossing Borders of Race Nation and Class*, and George McKay's *Circular Breathing: The Cultural Politics of Jazz in Britain* illuminating in their differing approaches to examining jazz in Britain in the period pre–1950. Also interesting was how the British jazz scene was constructed, its involvement in the recording industry, and how this had an effect on jazz in New Zealand.

For histories about jazz in France, India and South Africa, again the issues and ideologies involved were vastly different from what was occurring in New Zealand during the same period. However, Christopher Ballantine's *Marabi Nights: Early South African Jazz and Vaudeville*

(recently revised and republished as *Marabi Nights: Jazz 'Race' and Society in Early Apartheid South Africa*, 2012), Bradley Shope's 'Anglo-Indian Identity, Knowledge and Power: Western Ballroom Music in Lucknow' and 'They Treat Us White Folks Fine: African American Musicians and the Popular Music Terrain in Late-Colonial India', Matthew F. Jordan's *Le Jazz: Jazz and French Cultural Identity*, and Jeffrey H. Jackson's *Making Jazz French: Music and Modern Life in Interwar Paris*, were all beneficial in understanding the different cultural developments of jazz, and the factors that influenced that development. These histories were also useful in understanding the differing constructions of modernity, and how this concept sat within different cultures and societies.

### **1.4 Key Concepts**

In the course of this thesis I have implicitly and explicitly used three interlinked key theoretical concepts, which underpin the importation and development of jazz in New Zealand: globalisation, localisation (specifically the concepts of decontextualisation and recontextualisation), and creation of culture/tradition.

#### **Globalisation**

The concept of globalisation is an important one for discussing the history of jazz in New Zealand and is used implicitly throughout this thesis in discussions of importation and dissemination. In this thesis I use Timothy Taylor's definition of globalisation as the interconnectedness between nation states and cultures through the means of technology, which increases the flow of ideas between countries and cultures.<sup>2</sup> This definition arises from the work in the early 1990s by scholars in a variety of fields examining the flow and networks of artefacts and ideas between cultures and nations.<sup>3</sup> For music this definition of globalisation may be refined through developments in the music industry, including relevant technologies such as recording and broadcasting as being an integral part of the music culture and, as musicologist Alexandros Baltzis terms it, the "social system" (the reciprocal relationships, if you will) of the music industry.<sup>4</sup>

For the purposes of this thesis the concept of globalisation is viewed primarily through technological globalisation. Technological globalisation is perhaps the ultimate bedrock of jazz studies because jazz developed and was made popular at the dawn of the audio and visual

---

<sup>2</sup> Timothy D. Taylor, *Beyond Exoticism: Western Music and the World*, Duke University Press, 114-115.

<sup>3</sup> See also, the work of Arjun Appadurai, Anthony Giddons, Paul Hirst and Grahame Thompson, and John Tomlinson (listed in the bibliography).

<sup>4</sup> Alexandros G. Baltzis, 'Globalisation and Musical Culture', *Acta Musicologica*, 77/1 2005, 141.

technology era. The technologies of recording, broadcasting, and film made the spread of jazz considerably quicker than was conceivable prior to the twentieth century.<sup>5</sup> This is especially important for jazz in New Zealand as the technological artefacts had a more immediate impact on New Zealand audiences and musicians than live performances of jazz, because records and radio broadcasts moved quicker than tours by musicians. While this happened to a certain extent everywhere that jazz was imported to, in New Zealand the technological artefacts took on great importance in influencing timbre and performances practices because there were few tours of bands.

This is not to say that the interpersonal connections through live performance were unimportant; they were, in fact, vitally important. However the fact remains that for the first fifteen or so years of the period I cover, there were very few tours by jazz musicians from other countries, and New Zealand musicians' influences came primarily through records and radio broadcasts, which will be discussed in Chapter Four in particular.

## Localisation

Moving from globalisation to localisation of a culture is a long process with a number of steps along the way. Localisation in music implies a specific local sound and identity, what musicologist Wai-Chung Ho describes as an "empowerment of local forces and the (re)emergence of local music cultures."<sup>6</sup> A *specific* local jazz sound and identity had yet to truly emerge in New Zealand by the end of the period that I examine in this thesis (1955), however the concepts of decontextualisation and recontextualisation are useful in articulating the localising process of jazz to New Zealand culture.

For this purpose I used anthropologists Richard Bauman and Charles L. Briggs' model of *decontextualisation* and *recontextualisation* in which the material is *decontextualised* (at least in part) from its original cultural and/or physical source and *recontextualised* into a new culture.<sup>7</sup> Although Bauman and Briggs were applying this model to oral performance (poetry, histories, epics, and so on) their ideas are easily applicable to how music, especially jazz, can move and change within or between cultures. In their article 'Poetics and Performance as Critical Perspectives on Language and Social Life' Bauman and Briggs propose a series of steps in which the performer

<sup>5</sup> Russell Sanjek, *American Popular Music and its Business: The First Four Hundred Years Vol. III From 1900 to 1984*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1988, 3-91.

<sup>6</sup> Wai-Chung Ho, 'Between Globalisation and Localisation: A Study of Hong Kong Popular Music', *Popular Music*, 22/2 (2003), 143

<sup>7</sup> Richard Bauman and Charles Briggs, 'Poetics and Performance as Critical Perspectives on Language and Social Life' in *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 19 (1990), pp. 59-88.

takes an active role in renegotiating a cultural artefact and repositioning it in some way: adapted to a new culture, a new generation, a different audience.<sup>8</sup> The aspects they proposed in this negotiation (contextualisation [centering/situation], entextualisation [changing the setting/situation], decontextualisation [decentering/removal from situation], and recontextualisation [recentering/new situation]) appear to be at once conscious and unconscious (or perhaps intentional and unintentional) steps taken by performers in the creation of their work. The authors point out that texts may continuously be recontextualised both within and without culture, and is an extension of the natural process of storytelling.<sup>9</sup> To turn this to music, this describes perfectly what jazz musicians do when they perform through the use of improvisation, creating/composing a new melody over existing harmonics, or new harmonies to a melody, through incorporating other cultures folk music into jazz, or vice versa, and many other possibilities.

In the case of jazz in New Zealand, New Zealanders were at both a physical and cultural distance from the jazz that they were acquiring from the United States of America, Great Britain, and Australia. Jazz was decontextualised from its cultural origins as it was imported into New Zealand, making New Zealanders only partially informed about the original musical and cultural contexts. Because of this partial information, New Zealanders then began to create alternate models of jazz, recontextualising it to the situation and sensibilities of New Zealand culture and society.

Decontextualisation and recontextualisation were common processes in jazz throughout the entire period examined in this thesis. This is demonstrated by how New Zealand jazz musicians took music and the concepts of jazz in other countries and adapted them for use in New Zealand. The specifics of such processes are particularly discussed in Chapter Four, but as a brief example might include taking a local popular song and "jazzing" it through the use of syncopation, improvisation and special effects, or taking a jazz song (or a song considered to be jazz by New Zealanders) and interpreting it through local conceptions of jazz.

They may also be thought of as the first steps towards a localisation of jazz. While true localisation (i.e. creating a *specifically local* sound) does not occur during the period that I examine in this thesis, the initial steps of decontextualisation and recontextualisation underpinned, and informed the ways in which jazz developed, and was situated in New Zealand society.

---

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> *ibid.* 72-78.

## Creation of Culture and Tradition

Jazz is more than just a musical genre it is also a culture and this thesis investigates the culture surrounding the music as much as the music itself. In this thesis I take concepts from historian Eric Hobsbawm that underpin my discussion of jazz in New Zealand, particularly how jazz got here and who (musicians, fans and general public) was important to the development of a localised culture and tradition of jazz.

The New Zealand jazz culture is what might be described as an acquired culture during the period that I covered in this thesis. An acquired culture is one that is not (or has not yet) become a native (sub)culture of a particular time or place.<sup>10</sup> The acquisition of culture and tradition is, according to Eric Hobsbawm, one of the most common processes in human history.<sup>11</sup> Much like the recontextualisation processes in storytelling that Bauman and Briggs describe in their work, the creation of tradition and culture appears to be necessary to human nature. The concept of acquiring culture describes what happened with the importation of jazz to New Zealand, and the processes that continued across the period 1920–1955.

The creation of a New Zealand jazz culture falls in Hobsbawm's category of the establishment of a group for social cohesion, an also what he categorises as groups whose main purpose is socialisation within a certain set of belief or value systems.<sup>12</sup> Within that social cohesion is "a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition".<sup>13</sup> These two ideas encapsulate what happened around the importation of jazz music to New Zealand, and was established as a part of the musical landscape.

As will be expanded on in Chapters Four, Five, and Seven the process of the creation of a New Zealand jazz culture was a part (or perhaps a result) of the processes and concepts discussed in this section. The processes of globalisation, decontextualisation and recontextualisation were all important aspects of how a New Zealand jazz culture was created or constructed. In turn the creation of a local jazz culture created a support network for jazz in New Zealand and helped it to thrive within the context of the broader New Zealand culture.

---

<sup>10</sup> Roger Scruton, *Modern Culture*, London: Continuum (2nd ed) 2005, 3, 149-150.

<sup>11</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, *Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, 1-3, 4-9.

<sup>12</sup> Hobsbawm, *Invention of Tradition*, 9

<sup>13</sup> *ibid*, 1

## The Theories of Theodor Adorno and the Culture Industry

The theories of mass culture, the culture industry and related theories idealised by Theodor Adorno are not used in this thesis. However, because there are aspects of the culture industry that are implicit through the use of globalisation, and in the creation of cultures/traditions they do have a slight bearing on this topic. For this reason I have included this section to briefly outline the theories and provide an explanation as to why I do not believe that they are appropriate to use in the context of this thesis.

Out of the rise of the technological globalisation of culture, critical theorists Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer created a theory for this mass cultural movement, particularly of popular culture, which they termed the culture industry. The essence of this theory is that culture has become homogenised and, within popular culture especially, the sources of individualised expression are essentially a charade of individuality rather than an authentic consideration.<sup>14</sup>

I use the concept of the culture industry in this thesis inasmuch as it has links with the concept of globalisation. New Zealand, during the period discussed in this thesis, was primarily an importer of popular culture, particularly from Great Britain, the United States of America, and Australia. The idea of homogeneity and the flow of mass culture possibly had less of an impact in New Zealand because of its size and its relationships with these countries. Therefore, it appears to me that there were too many different influences at work to allow for the creation of central homogeneity of the kind described by Adorno and Horkheimer in their original essay.

However there are possibly some further links in Adorno's consideration of mass culture as opposed to the culture industry in his reconsideration of the idea (published posthumously in 1975), because mass culture implies that there is some responsibility by the masses for what they consume.<sup>15</sup> Unfortunately this idea is one that Adorno does not appear to have pursued very far in the course of his work, especially that of popular music. Nonetheless, this construct resonates in my approach to the history of jazz in New Zealand as the audience did make choices in what they wanted to dance and listen to.

In 1936 and 1941 Theodor Adorno published two articles that relate directly to the topic of this thesis: 'On Jazz' and 'On Popular Music'. It is not my purpose to provide an in depth critique of these articles as many other scholars have made admirable arguments both for and against Adorno's

---

<sup>14</sup> Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. John Cumming, New York: Herder and Herder, 1969, 120-167

<sup>15</sup> Adorno 'Culture Industry Reconsidered', trans. Anson G. Rabinbach, *New German Critique* 6/1975, 12



theories and critiques, but rather briefly to outline his concepts and explain why they do not fit with my approach in this thesis.<sup>16</sup> Both 'On Jazz' and 'On Popular Music' are very specific to Adorno's personal values and tastes in music and they are also very context specific. Although these two articles were written while Adorno was exiled from Germany, I believe that they could not help but be informed by the interwar nationalism that was prevalent in Germany, and by the early influence of Adolf Hitler on German culture, as well as Adorno's own preferences and prejudices about music. None of these are necessarily bad, but they did inform Adorno's conceptions, and do need to be remembered when dealing with New Zealand and with what was perceived to be jazz in New Zealand during the period 1920–1955.

In the article 'On Jazz' Adorno grapples with a working definition of jazz as a genre, and its origins and development to this point (1936). He does this through an approach that combines the musical and philosophical/sociological. As mentioned above, this definition is informed by his on views on music, and by his time and space as a German exile, but also by his philosophical ideas with an emphasis on 'false' and 'authentic' (or 'true') needs and the fetish-commodity.<sup>17</sup>

In the course of working on a definition of jazz Adorno makes note of several musical factors, including African origins and improvisation, both of which he dismisses as of little importance to the genre. Why he dismisses these factors is a matter for debate among Adorno critics with theories ranging from European superiority to not willing to admit some part of jazz might be an 'authentic' music rather than a commodity.<sup>18</sup> Instead he prefers to emphasise those musical aspects that closely align with his personal preferences (and also dislikes) in music. For example, Adorno makes note (with some praise) of the links between Duke Ellington and Debussy and Delius, two composers whom Adorno appears to have admired.<sup>19</sup>

Adorno's main issue with jazz is with how it was a commodity rather than 'authentic' music. This concern appears to arise through his beliefs about authentic culture (made by the people)

---

<sup>16</sup> See, for example, James Buhler, 'Frankfurt School Blues' in Berthold Hoekner ed. *Apparitions: New Perspectives on Adorno and Twentieth Century Music*, New York: Routledge 2006 103-130; Bernard Gendron, 'Theodor Adorno Meets the Cadillacs' in Tania Modleski ed. *Studies in Entertainment: Critical Approaches to Mass Culture*, Bloomington IN: Indiana University Press, 1986, 18-36; and Robert W. Witkin, *Adorno on Music*, London: Routledge, 1998.

<sup>17</sup> Theodor Adorno, 'On Jazz' in Richard Leppert ed. *Essays on Music, Theodor W. Adorno*, trans. Susan H. Gillespie, Berkeley CA: University of California Press, 2002, 470-495; Dominic Strinati, *An Introduction to Theories of Popular Culture*, London: Routledge, 1995, 79-80.

<sup>18</sup> Witkin, *Adorno on Music*, 161-166; Buhler 'Frankfurt School Blues', in Hoekner *Apparitions*, 115-122.

<sup>19</sup> Adorno, 'On Jazz', 483.

versus mass/artificial culture (made by corporations to pacify the masses).<sup>20</sup> In jazz Adorno sees primarily the commodity, rather than any attempt at authentic culture, but he also believes that jazz is (essentially) pretending to be authentic. This parade of authenticity seems to be Adorno's primary concern, because he believes that the audience will be fooled by this charade, rather than striving to understand and partake in an authentic music.<sup>21</sup>

In contrast to 'On Jazz', in 'On Popular Music' Adorno more clearly states what he believes to be the essential elements of popular music, including improvisation, and citing jazz musicians as examples of popular music.<sup>22</sup> This raises a question about how he differentiates popular music and jazz, but with five years between the two articles. It is likely that his conceptions on jazz have changed. In essence, 'On Popular Music' is very similar to 'On Jazz'; Adorno reiterates many of the same concerns about commodity and authenticity, and emphasises links to the musical ideals that he likes and dislikes. As with 'On Jazz', Adorno compares popular music, both musically and in terms of function, to what he chooses to call 'serious music' and generally finds popular music lacking.<sup>23</sup>

In 'On Popular Music' Adorno has clearer ideas about how popular music fulfils the commodity function of mass culture, with several sections focused on different aspects of commodity through the music, such as glamour and what he describes as 'baby-talk'.<sup>24</sup> Further he more clearly articulates how he views the audience for popular music and the roles that they play in mass culture. However his conclusions are very similar to those in 'On Jazz' with his concern about the charade of authentic culture and the effect (moral or otherwise) that this charade may have on the audience.

In both of these articles Adorno writes about how he conceives the audience, but it is clear from his writing that he did not observe an actual audience or have any interactions within that world. The audience he describes has been created through his philosophical ideals and the theoretical inversion of those ideals. In other words this is the audience that, under the influence of mass culture, becomes regressive, passive, and unable to discriminate. According to theorist Dominic Strinati this lack of empiricism is a salient factor in the Frankfurt School theories, and can make for a potential flaw in utilising Adorno's theories outside the philosophical sphere.<sup>25</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup> Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 120-167.

<sup>21</sup> Adorno, 'On Jazz', Leppert ed. *Essays on Music*, 478-492.

<sup>22</sup> Adorno, 'On Popular Music', Leppert ed. *Essays on Music*, 439-446.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid 447-452.

<sup>25</sup> Dominic Strinati, *An Introduction to the Theories of Popular Culture*, 74-75, 78-81.

Although Adorno in these two articles confronts many of the same issues in defining jazz and popular music as I do in this thesis, there are essential differences in situation and context, which I have found to be inappropriate for the approach I have taken here. It is interesting that in both of these articles Adorno's underlying assumption is that not only should jazz and popular music be measured by the same standards of western art music, but, more specifically, by the music that Adorno himself holds in esteem.<sup>26</sup> This attitude, in my opinion, undermines his arguments because he does not (and chooses not to) understand the roles that popular music can play in people's lives. There is another problem with this assumption and that is the question about whether it is actually appropriate to use the 'classical music' measure against all other music? While there are certain musical-theoretical similarities between art music and popular music (core and periphery/central musical form and peripheral musical ideas which provide the 'difference') the roles of each in the twentieth century are radically different from each other, serving different purposes in society.

In the case of this thesis, I have two particular problems in applying Adorno's ideas about jazz and popular music to the context of New Zealand. First is Adorno's dismissal of the audience as passive and inconsequential. In this thesis, the audience plays a vital role in all aspects of jazz in New Zealand, from importation to construction and support of a local jazz culture and tradition. I have found that the audience for jazz in New Zealand was not passive and was vitally engaged with the 'who', 'what', and 'how' of jazz not just in New Zealand, but globally as well.

Second, Adorno's perceptions of jazz and popular music were informed by his time and place. He wrote these articles during a period when jazz, and much popular music, was banned from Germany because it was written and/or performed by Jews, people of African or gypsy origin, or by homosexuals. He also wrote them during a period in which he was living in exile from Germany, first in Great Britain, and then in the United States.<sup>27</sup> This is particularly pertinent for 'On Jazz' as Britain was experiencing many racial, cultural and class tensions during the late 1930s, which likely affected Adorno's perceptions of jazz.<sup>28</sup> It is also possible that the jazz that Adorno heard (if indeed he did listen to jazz), was very different from the music that was being imported to New Zealand. In

---

<sup>26</sup> As an aside it is interesting to note that Adorno levelled similar critiques on the music of Schoenberg and Stravinsky to that of jazz and popular music.

<sup>27</sup> It should be noted that until the start of World War Two Adorno was able to make regular visits to Germany, but he was not allowed to teach as the Nazi Party had revoked his licence. Stefan Müller-Doohm, *Adorno, a Biography*, trans. Rodney Livingstone, Cambridge: Polity, 2005, 173-186.

<sup>28</sup> Stefan Müller-Doohm *Adorno*, 198-203; Hilary Moore, *Inside British Jazz: Crossing Borders of Race, Nation and Class*, Aldershot, GB: Ashgate, 2007, 17-36.

essence, the possible and potential conceptions of jazz were dramatically different (one might say dialectically opposed) between Adorno's world and the world that the New Zealand jazz audience inhabited.

### **1.5 New Zealand: Interactions and Culture 1920–1955<sup>29</sup>**

As this thesis focuses primarily on how jazz was imported and situated itself in New Zealand during the period 1920–1955, a concise discussion of issues affecting New Zealand is necessary to understand the society into which jazz was being imported. In this section I will briefly examine New Zealand's changing relationships with Australia, the United States of America and Great Britain during the period and how these affected New Zealand culture.

During the early twentieth century New Zealand was a small dominion at the edge of Great Britain's empire, but despite its size and relative isolation from Britain it was not disconnected from the rest of the empire and the world. Through steam-powered travel and telecommunication technologies New Zealand was connected not only to Great Britain, but also Australia and the United States, among other countries. These technologies allowed people, cultural ideas, and consumer items to travel back and forth with increasing ease. Although Britain was the "mother" country, economic common sense dictated that New Zealand needed to build lasting relationships with its two nearest culturally Western neighbours, Australia and the United States of America.

One of the important effects that this trio of socio-economic links had on New Zealand was to create a cultural pastiche in which the artefacts of imported culture held the dominant position, although it is unclear which, if any, culture might be pre-eminent, what film critic Gordon Mirams described as "ANZAC, Hollywood, and Home".<sup>30</sup> Another important effect, which is pertinent to this thesis, is how this trio of cultural relationships affected to how jazz was imported and was perceived in New Zealand across the period 1920–1955. This effect is considered throughout this thesis, and is particularly discussed in chapters Three and Six.

New Zealand was an enthusiastic importer of consumer items of all descriptions, including popular culture, during the early and mid-twentieth century, and New Zealanders were eager to

---

<sup>29</sup> Adapted from my paper "'ANZAC, Hollywood and Home': Constructing a New Zealand Jazz Culture', in Henry Johnson ed. *Many Voices: Music and National Identity in Aotearoa/New Zealand*, Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars, 2010, 93-102.

<sup>30</sup> Miles Fairburn, 'Is there a Good Case for New Zealand Exceptionalism?' in Tony Ballantyne and Brian Moloughney eds. *Imagining New Zealand's Pasts*, Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2006, 146; Gordon Mirams, *Speaking Candidly: Films and people in New Zealand*, Hamilton: Paul's Book Arcade, 1945, 125.

access the latest trends, fashions and technologies.<sup>31</sup> New Zealanders were influenced by the sights, sounds, and speech patterns inherent in vaudeville, music hall, operetta, popular music, film, and other entertainments that arrived through the importation of popular culture from Britain, Australia, and the United States. Vaudeville acts; opera/operetta, and theatre companies from Britain, the United States and Australia toured the combined New Zealand/Australia theatre circuits. Touring companies would often present material that had been premiered in Europe, Britain, and America in the previous one or two years.<sup>32</sup> The advent of films also had a significant impact on New Zealanders exposure to foreign sights, sounds, and concepts, perhaps more so than other forms of entertainment as films gave audiences more immediate insights into other cultures and ideas.<sup>33</sup>

The roles that each country played in New Zealand's psyche changed significantly over the course of the first half of the twentieth century, and many of these changes were a result of international, events such as the Great Depression and World War Two, rather than those of a domestic kind. These events, especially World War Two, and the changing dynamics between New Zealand and the United States, Britain and Australia, had significant impacts not only on the general culture of New Zealand but also on the reception of jazz and the development of a localised jazz culture.

Great Britain was at one extreme of these changes, as the cultural orientation and hegemony of New Zealand culture slowly, incrementally, shifted away from viewing Britain as "home" both culturally and politically. The change in New Zealand's relationship with Britain became noticeable at the end of World War One when New Zealand signed the Treaty of Versailles as a sovereign nation, rather than as a dominion of Britain.<sup>34</sup> This shift was also engendered by New Zealand's contact with other cultures and countries, particularly Australia and the United States, and the result of this contact could be seen across aspects of New Zealand culture, from political thought through to entertainment.<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>31</sup> For further discussion on importation trends and access, see the work of Peter Gibbons listed in the bibliography.

<sup>32</sup> For example, J.C Williamson Company staged the first legitimate production of Gilbert and Sullivan's *HMS Pinafore* in 1879-1880 (touring both Australia, and New Zealand), just 18 months after its premiere in London, and at approximately the same time as the New York premiere. Michael and Joan Tallis, *The Silent Showman: Sir George Tallis, the man behind the world's largest entertainment organisation of the 1920s*, Adelaide: Wakefield Press, 1999, 21.

<sup>33</sup> N. Elliot, "Anzac, Hollywood and Home": Cinemas and Film-Going in Auckland 1909-1939.' MA thesis, University of Auckland, 1989, 64-65.

<sup>34</sup> Michael King, *The Penguin History of New Zealand*, Auckland: Penguin Books, 2003, 305.

<sup>35</sup> Peter Gibbons, 'The Far Side of the Search for Identity', *New Zealand Journal of History* 37,1 (2003), 44.

While Britain remained an important part of New Zealand political and cultural identity during the period 1920–1955, its distance from New Zealand meant that trends (especially in popular culture) might change before a product could reach New Zealand.<sup>36</sup> Physical distance was, of course, not the only reason for New Zealand's political and cultural distancing from Britain. Historians also cite factors such as the imperial prerogatives system (including monopolies of business in New Zealand), and the Britain enforced combined Australia/New Zealand financial system as contributing to wariness towards and a desire to distance New Zealand from Britain's government and business.<sup>37</sup>

By the end of World War Two New Zealand was looking more to the Pacific region for cultural and political influences, especially from the United States of America. This was particularly true of popular culture: the dominant imports of records and films were rapidly becoming (or had already become) American made and produced.<sup>38</sup> The milkbar, the jukebox, swing, rhythm and blues and Hollywood icons had supplanted older British icons, especially among young adults.

From 1920 through to the beginnings of the Pacific War in 1942, the United States of America was a convenient large-scale trading partner, one that was geographically closer than Britain.<sup>39</sup> However any other official relationship through politics was almost nonexistent until World War Two.<sup>40</sup> While the economic relationship may have been a matter of convenience, New Zealanders by the 1920s were enamoured of American popular literature, music and dance, and especially of Hollywood films.<sup>41</sup>

Although the New Zealand press touted the line of New Zealand's allegiance to all things British, American popular culture became increasingly dominant in New Zealand across the period 1920–1955.<sup>42</sup> The dominance of American popular culture can be linked to the development of technologies such as film, radio broadcasting, and records, which supplanted the old system of

---

<sup>36</sup> James Belich, *Paradise Reforged: A History of the New Zealanders from the 1880s to the Year 2000*, Auckland: Penguin, 2001, 245-247.

<sup>37</sup> Phillipa Mein Smith, *A Concise History of New Zealand*, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2005, 151, 159-166; Keith Sinclair, *A History of New Zealand*, Auckland: Penguin, 1991, 246-248. See also Keith Sinclair ed. *The Oxford Illustrated History of New Zealand*, Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1996, particularly Erik Olssen 'Depression and War', 219-220; Malcolm McKinnon 'New Zealand and the World', 242-266.

<sup>38</sup> Miles Fairburn, 'Is there a Case', 155.

<sup>39</sup> Keith Sinclair, *A History of New Zealand* rev. ed. Auckland: Penguin, 1991, 361-362; M.P. Lissington, *New Zealand and the United States 1840–1944*, Wellington: A. Shearer, 1972, 6-12.

<sup>40</sup> M.P. Lissington, *New Zealand and the United States 1840–1944*, 12-23.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid*, 11; Miles Fairburn, 'Is there a Case', 155.

<sup>42</sup> Lissington, *New Zealand and the United States 1840–1944*, 11-12.

vaudeville circuits and touring shows, and allowed audiences greater choice in their entertainment. American popular culture became so popular in New Zealand during this period that officials of various sorts (dance hall managers, broadcasting committees, record importers, *et cetera*) tried to ban American products in order to preserve the British influence.<sup>43</sup>

By the end of the Second World War New Zealanders had begun to view the United States as a strong power. Now New Zealand embraced a political and cultural relationship as well as being an importer of American products. This shift in relationship dynamics was due, essentially, to the role that the United States Expeditionary Forces played in the Pacific war, and in New Zealand (which will be detailed in Chapter Six).<sup>44</sup> The political, interpersonal and cultural exchanges that occurred during 1942–1945 prompted New Zealanders from the government downwards to consider the United States as an important ally.<sup>45</sup> The development of the American/New Zealand relationship, and eventual American hegemony of New Zealand culture was also due to New Zealanders continuing to be enthusiastic importers of the products of the American entertainment industry (see Chapter Three in particular).

In contrast to the above two nations, Australia's relationship with New Zealand was not one of political colonialism or cultural hegemony instead the relationship suggests the analogy of siblings. In fact historians Philippa Mein Smith, Peter Hempenstall, and Shaun Goldfinch have stated that like siblings "New Zealand and Australia were very good at ignoring each other during the 20th century."<sup>46</sup> However, no matter how much ignored, the relationship was there, but it was not the one of mateship and camaraderie that is so often described.

Despite the myth of ANZAC, born in the trenches of World War One, New Zealand and Australia actually began to distance themselves from each other at this point and both continued to look to Britain rather than to each other in the interwar period, and the majority of the political interaction was with Britain as a mediating force.<sup>47</sup> Britain as mediator allowed both countries to continue to politically ignore each other to a greater or lesser degree, although during the period

---

<sup>43</sup> James Belich, *Paradise Reforged*: 251-254; Patrick Day, *The Radio Years: A History of Broadcasting in New Zealand vol. 1*, Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1994, 164-165; Miles Fairburn, 'Is there a Case' 156-158.

<sup>44</sup> Denys Bevan, *United States Forces in New Zealand, 1942 – 1945*, Alexandra NZ: Macpherson Publishing, 1992, 52, 94.

<sup>45</sup> Mein Smith, *Concise History*, 170-176; Sinclair, *A History*, 283-284; Lissington, 97-99.

<sup>46</sup> Philippa Mein Smith, Peter Hempenstall, Shaun Goldfinch, *Remaking the Tasman World*, Christchurch: Canterbury University Press, 2008, 13.

<sup>47</sup> *ibid.* 19, 22, 29-30, 103-104.

1920-1955, there were many times when neither country could afford to ignore the other. While formal official contact was slight however, informal contact flourished.

Throughout the period 1920–1955 people, ideas, and innovations flowed continuously between New Zealand and Australia. Although it appears that formal government-to-government contact was slight, social, health and educational policies and innovations were shared between the two countries. Popular culture also flowed easily between the two countries with vaudevillian and theatrical performers, musicians of all genres and popular culture products such as radio plays, moving with ease and regularity between the two countries. The development of a commercial recording industry in Australia in the mid–1920s also increased the flow of musicians between New Zealand and Australia as New Zealand musicians would cross the Tasman to record.<sup>48</sup>

The changing relationships between New Zealand, Australia, Great Britain and the United States, and the influence of popular culture from those countries on New Zealanders, were vital to the importation and reception of jazz in New Zealand. This pastiche of cultural influences also helped form many of the local conceptions of jazz and how it was performed in New Zealand. In turn, the interpretation of jazz through the influences of popular culture from the United States, Britain and Australia helped to form the beginnings of a localised identity and culture for jazz.

## **1.6 Musical Professionalism and Economic Reality**

During the period that I discuss in this thesis, jazz musicians were very rarely full-time professional musicians. Most had a day job of some description in order to pay the bills. This was often more necessity than choice however, as the average gig did not pay very much per night.

In this thesis I examine a wide range of musicians. However it should be noted that I have only include musicians who were influential in a number of ways and usually across two or more decades. In addition, they were musicians on whom I could access *verifiable* information. There were a great many very interesting musicians whom I could not include because they did not meet these criteria.

Trumpeter Vern Wilson recalled in an oral history interview with Patricia French that when he performed at Auckland's Dixieland Cabaret in the 1920s that band members would be paid approximately £1.0.0 per night (with a maximum of six nights a week). For the 1920s this was considered this to be a very good wage. Naturally, the wages for gigs varied across venues with some, like the Dixieland, known as being generous employers, while others (such as some

---

<sup>48</sup> Ibid 25-29, 62-74.



organisation dances) were considered parsimonious.<sup>49</sup> However, to put this wage into perspective the approximate *minimum* wage for male New Zealanders in 1925 was £220 per annum.<sup>50</sup>

The wages a musician earned also varied with time. Wilson recalled that during the Depression years, at many venues musicians were lucky if they made 10 shillings a night, and while the Dixieland Cabaret did not drop the musician's wages per night, they did reduce the nights per week that they opened.<sup>51</sup> To give some more context; the approximate *minimum* full-time wage for male New Zealanders in 1933 had reduced to £190.<sup>52</sup>

These types of wages occurred across the period 1920–1955. According to drummer Frank Gibson Senior's gig diary, which he kept from July 1945 until October 1947, the average wage was between £1.0.0 and £2.0.0 per night, with occasional special event gigs (for a ball, or where they were expected to play for a floor show, or if they were being paid to travel) between £3.0.0 and £4.0.0.<sup>53</sup>

While theoretically a musician could earn above minimum wage if they worked six nights per week for every week of the year, most do not appear to have chosen to take that risk. The majority of musicians discussed in this thesis had a day job of some description. Many worked in the music industry in some other capacity, such as teaching, in retail, or in the technical side of broadcasting, however, others, such as Vern Wilson who worked in a tyre factory, worked in all manner of other jobs to provide a steady wage. Even those employed on the liners and steamers were employed as stewards and waiters as well as musicians.

The fact that most New Zealand musicians had a day job does not detract from their professionalism as musicians. The musicians examined in this thesis almost always considered themselves as professionals regardless of their economic circumstances. While they might have a day job to pay the bills, their career was as a musician. They used their behaviour on the bandstand, and their commitment to musical learning and improvement as musicians, arrangers and composers as the basis for their professionalism. It is this definition of professionalism that I will use

---

<sup>49</sup> Vern Wilson, oral history by Patricia French 3/8/1984 Auckland City Library 90-OH-007-1-10; also Dance Band Diary, Dance Band Record (Financial), Compiled by Ted Lonergan, DHJA MS-Papers -9163-05.

<sup>50</sup> Keith Rankin 'Unemployment in New Zealand at the Peak of the Great Depression' conference paper 1994 Conference of the Economic History Association of Australia and New Zealand.

<sup>51</sup> Vern Wilson, oral history.

<sup>52</sup> Keith Rankin 'Unemployment in New Zealand at the Peak of the Great Depression' conference paper 1994 Conference of the Economic History Association of Australia and New Zealand.

<sup>53</sup> Frank Gibson Senior, Gig Diary.

throughout this thesis. It should also be noted that outside of the touring bands (such as those discussed in Chapter Three) or World War Two, it is implied that the musicians discussed here all had day jobs, unless I explicitly state otherwise.

### **1.7 Related Terms and Usage in New Zealand**

In New Zealand there were a number of terms related to jazz that had subtly different meanings than in other jazz cultures. These terms were very commonly used by musicians, fans and by the popular press, and many of the differences in definition occur with the interpretations by the press, and occasionally by fans and musicians. I use these terms frequently throughout this thesis with reference to musicians, fans and press. Because of this, some clarification for the reader may be of use. While several of these terms are directly related to music there are some that are only peripherally related to jazz music, and some that relate more to the non-music jazz culture of the 1920s.

#### **Music related terms**

##### **Jazz:**

In terms of jazz as music, New Zealand jazz musicians did not construct the genre differently from jazz musicians in other countries, in particular the United States, across the period 1920–1955. The ideas that applied to jazz in the United States (such as syncopation, improvisation, contrapuntal lines, and in the 1920s, special effects) all applied in the New Zealand context to a greater or lesser degree. However, a jazz band, in the New Zealand context, did not have to use all of these, but including some of these ideas is what differentiated a jazz band from any other style of band across the period 1920–1955.<sup>54</sup>

In New Zealand there were several terms that were used to describe not only the music jazz, but also the bands that played it: jazz band/orchestra, novelty band/orchestra, and dance band/orchestra. While these terms are used in other parts of the world (particularly in the 1920s), the terms survived in New Zealand until the middle of the century, and all were interchangeable. In fact many bands in New Zealand would have multiple names, and would change them depending on the type of gig they were playing. For example the Walter Smith band in Auckland was variously known as Walter Smith's Jazz (or Jass) Band, Novelty Band, or Dance Band, and he often placed the word 'Aloha' in there, particularly if he was using the 'Novelty' tag, but it also appeared

---

<sup>54</sup> 'Jazz' in *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy.auckland.ac.nz/subscriber/article/grove/music/45011> (accessed March 7, 2012).

when he was performing under the jazz band heading. Whether or not the bands that used multiple titles had explicitly different repertoire lists for each band type is unknown, but it is possible that they had different types of arrangements for their repertoire depending on the gig type, for example excluding improvisation if it was a genteel dance, or emphasising it if it was a jazz dance.

It is also important to note that among New Zealand musicians the term 'jazz musician' was not commonly used until the later 1950s, before that the majority of jazz musicians described themselves as 'dance musicians', they played in 'dance bands' and performed 'dance music'.<sup>55</sup> This did not mean, however, that they were ignorant of the differences between jazz and dance music. Some musicians, such as bassist Desmond 'Spike' Donovan, were at pains to educate people of the differences, but rather it was a natural consequence of dances being the majority of the gigs that jazz musicians played in New Zealand.<sup>56</sup> The term 'jazz', however, was used by the press, in both advertising and reports, to describe the music that they played and the style of band that they were, and fans also differentiated between 'jazz' and 'dance' music.<sup>57</sup>

Other musical terms:

Other terms associated with jazz music such as 'hot,' 'sweet,' 'crooning,' and 'swing' were also regularly used in association with jazz. These terms were used indiscriminately by the popular press, musicians and fans in New Zealand and as such have a variety of interpretations attached to them.

'Hot' was a term that was used across the research period in relation to several aspects of jazz. Firstly there was the general style of 'hot' jazz, which was not limited to any one period. This style in New Zealand was thought to be music that was, as jazz broadcaster Arthur Pearce stated, "snappy and stimulating."<sup>58</sup> There was an implication in press reports that a hot jazz band would include improvisation, but it was rarely explicitly stated. Secondly it was used in a more specific sense that related more directly to hot jazz in the United States, with a blues based repertoire, improvisation, and a certain mix of instruments in the band.<sup>59</sup> 'Hot' was also used in the popular

---

<sup>55</sup> Dale Alderton (2002), Johnny Williams (2003), Jim Warren (2009) interview with Aleisha Ward; communication with Bernie Allen, Dr Lyn Christie, Dennis Huggard.

<sup>56</sup> Dennis Huggard ed. *The Thoughts of Musician Desmond 'Spike' Donovan*, New Zealand Series Booklet Number Five, 1998, 26.

<sup>57</sup> 'Women's Corner' *Press* (Christchurch) 19/7/1921, 2; 'Dancing' [advertisements] EP 17/1/1928, 2.

<sup>58</sup> 'Dancing Time, When the Music is Playing' NZRR 11/8/1933, 12-13.

<sup>59</sup> See for example the review of Linn Smith's Royal Jazz Band, in 'Kid Boots' AS 29/10/1925, 12.

press in a more general sense, especially in the 1920s, meaning a good jazz band, in particular one that used novelty effects, and may have used improvisation.<sup>60</sup>

'Sweet' was essentially the opposite of 'hot,' particularly used in the 1920s and 1930s to mean a light, melodious style of jazz, which was particularly used for dancing. Later it became synonymous with commercial music, particularly in the swing style.<sup>61</sup> Fans of 'hot' music often used 'sweet' as a derogatory term, to imply that the music was not jazz, but popular music.<sup>62</sup> The New Zealand popular press interpreted the term 'sweet' in a generally positive manner, it was mostly used to describe an enjoyable band that played the latest music. In particular the term was applied to female musicians, and it was commonly used to describe their performances into the 1950s.<sup>63</sup>

'Crooning' was a distinctly American, predominantly male vocal style that evolved in the late 1920s and early 1930s, which involved a particular soft vocal timbre and an intimate microphone style. The rise of the style is especially linked to the rise in popularity of radio, and was aimed primarily at female listeners.<sup>64</sup> The style gained a modicum of popularity in New Zealand during the 1930s, but it does not appear to hold the same fascination for listeners in New Zealand as it did in the United States. However, crooning as a female vocal style became quite popular with New Zealand dance bands of that same period, and many of the girl vocalists ('croonettes') became known for their crooning (sometimes called 'sweet swing') style.<sup>65</sup>

The final term in this list, 'swing,' had several different meanings attached to it in New Zealand. The first, and most commonly used interpretation of the word was to describe syncopation used by a jazz band.<sup>66</sup> The second interpretation was to describe the music style of the 1930s and 1940s, which New Zealand swing fans argued was the 'real jazz.'<sup>67</sup> This interpretation was rubbished first by Dixieland, and later, bebop fans who thought that swing was commercial music

---

<sup>60</sup> See for example, the advertisement for the Dixieland Cabaret Internationals, AS 15/10/1925, 22, also the cabaret notes in 'Especially for Women' AS 11/10/1937, 12.

<sup>61</sup> 'Paradise for the Swing Fan: In Bob Bothamley's Little Room' NZL 28/11/1943, 12

<sup>62</sup> 'Radio Show', *Jukebox: New Zealand's Swing Magazine*, December 1946, 5.

<sup>63</sup> Bourke, 131-138.

<sup>64</sup> Timothy Taylor, 'Music and the rise of radio in twenties America: technological imperialism, socialization, and the transformation of intimacy' in Paul D. Greene and Thomas Porcello eds. *Wired for sound: Engineering and technologies in sonic cultures*, Middletown, Conn: Wesleyan University Press, 2005, 261.

<sup>65</sup> Bourke 106-107, 136-137.

<sup>66</sup> See for example cabaret notes in 'Especially for Women', AS 29/3/1937, 10; 'Women's World' NZH 7/6/1937, 3.

<sup>67</sup> Cav Nichol 'Was Swing Ever Really Alive?' *Jukebox*, January/February 1947, 4-5.

with no relation to jazz whatsoever. The third most common interpretation of 'swing' in relation to jazz in New Zealand was as both a dance style (1930s and 1940s), and as simply a way of describing a joyful crowd of dancers.<sup>68</sup>

## Showmanship

Throughout this thesis I discuss New Zealand jazz musicians acquiring the skills of showmanship through a variety of methods and media. The broadest definition of showmanship is "the ability to present something (especially theatrical shows) in an attractive manner."<sup>69</sup> This encompasses what New Zealand musicians were learning: how to present themselves, and the music that they were performing in a manner attractive to the audience. The exact details of that showmanship change in differing situations and venues, for example showmanship to a vaudeville jazz band would be vastly different to a cabaret jazz band's definition, but both were attempting to attract and engage the audience.

## Jam Session

Jam sessions in NZ appear to have had at least two meanings during the period under investigation. While the concept of musicians gathering together after hours to play and socialise certainly occurred in New Zealand the structure and concepts appear to fall in line with the accepted definition, there is another usage of the term that is less common in the global sense.<sup>70</sup> During the 1940s there were reports of 'official jam sessions', 'at home's' or 'open houses' in local jazz magazines *Jukebox* and *Swing!* These "official jam sessions" were described as being organised by an individual (usually held in that person's home), and with an invited audience of fans.<sup>71</sup>

## Cabaret

In New Zealand the term cabaret during the 1920s–1950s had multiple applications. In the more exclusive (and physically permanent) venues a cabaret in the New Zealand experience appears to have been a cross between a dance hall and the standard definition of cabaret.<sup>72</sup> Refreshments

<sup>68</sup> See for example cabaret notes in 'Women's World NZH 3/7/1939, 3.

<sup>69</sup> Definition of 'Showmanship, wordnetweb.princeton.edu/perl/webwn (accessed 1/4/2012)

<sup>70</sup> Gunther Schuller. "Jam session." In *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy.auckland.ac.nz/subscriber/article/grove/music/14117> (accessed July 17, 2011).

<sup>71</sup> *Swing!* February 1942, 1/6, 2-4; June 1942, 1/10, 6; July 1942, 1/11, 1; August 1942, 1/12, 5; *Jukebox*, November 1946, 11,15,17; December 1946, 2-3, 9-10.

<sup>72</sup> *Oxford English Dictionary* defines 'cabaret' as "A restaurant or night-club in which entertainment is provided as an accompaniment to a meal; also, the entertainment so provided, a floor-show" "cabaret, n.1". OED Online. December 2011. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.auckland.ac.nz/view/Entry/25710?rskey=Bg4diw&result=1&isAdv>

were available for patrons: during the day, lunch or afternoon tea, and in the evening supper, and all drinks were non-alcoholic. There was usually some type of floorshow, or dance exhibition (though this does not appear to have been standard across all venues) performed by volunteers (often the students of a dance teacher associated with the venue) or professional performers, but the focus was more on the patrons dancing.<sup>73</sup> In other venues, for example cabarets held in halls or club-rooms, a cabaret was far more like a dance hall than the standard definition of a cabaret. There may, or may not, have been tables for patrons to sit at, and there may or may not be a floor show or exhibition of some description, although exhibitions do appear to have been quite common.<sup>74</sup> Another variation on this is the cabaret evening. A cabaret evening would be held in a hall, which had been decorated in 'cabaret style' for the evening: usually involving wall decorations and tables and chairs surrounding a dance floor. Cabaret evenings would be organised as a cabaret with a floorshow, or exhibition acts (usually dancing, but occasionally singing or acting of some kind), supper, and dancing for the patrons.<sup>75</sup>

### Dance and Jazz Clubs

Dance and cabaret clubs appear in New Zealand mostly in the 1920s. What they were, however, is actually very hard to say. In newspaper reports about their activities, the structure and the purpose of these clubs appears to have been taken for granted. Dance clubs appear to have been organisations that held and taught dances, but there was often a philanthropic aspect to the club organisation as many of the dances that were run by clubs were to raise money for various charities.<sup>76</sup>

The term 'jazz club', particularly in the 1920s, also related to dance rather than music. For example the Christchurch Jazz Club, formed in 1921, was for fans of jazz dancing, rather than the music specifically.<sup>77</sup> In fact the term jazz club in relation to music appears to have only taken hold

---

anced=true (accessed March 06, 2012). See also, Klaus Wachsmann and Patrick O'Connor. "Cabaret." In *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy.auckland.ac.nz/subscriber/article/grove/music/04505> (accessed April 1, 2012)

<sup>73</sup> See, 'For Women' AS 29/4/1922 16; 7/8/1926 20; 'Women's Corner' CP 9/1/1928, 2; 'Floor Show At Majestic' EP 29/10/1935, 4.

<sup>74</sup> 'Amusements' Supper Dance [Advertisement] NZH 1/6/1921, 14; 'Women's Corner' CP 20/2/1928, 2; 'Dancing' Town Hall Dance [Advertisement] ODT 1/5/1937, 26.

<sup>75</sup> 'Amusements' Jazz Cabaret AS 1/1/1921, 6; 'Women's Corner' CP 25/2/1927 2; 'Topics for Women' EP 5/10/1935, 18.

<sup>76</sup> 'Women's Corner' CP 9/2/1925, 2; 'Women's World' NZH 25/7/1930, 5.

<sup>77</sup> 'Women's Corner' CP 11/4/1921, 2.

in New Zealand since the 1950s. Before that clubs that would listen to jazz music were called modern music (or modern dance music) rhythm, or swing clubs.<sup>78</sup>

### **Other usages of the term jazz**

Other meanings of the word 'jazz' were especially prevalent in the 1920s and early 1930s, during a period in which the word jazz was a fashionable term globally to apply to nearly everything. Cultural definitions of jazz are as important as the musical meanings in understanding the roles that jazz played in New Zealand society.

During the 1920s the New Zealand media, became fascinated with the word 'jazz', and its variants, 'jazzy' and 'jazzing'. These three terms were used to describe not only music and dance, but also emotions (particularly excitement), events, consumer items, and much more. In advertising 'jazz might' refer to the music or dance, or it might refer to some aspect of the product that was being advertised.<sup>79</sup>

Advertising also used 'jazz' and 'jazzy' to describe emotional qualities: if one suffered from "jazzy nerves" 'Marshall's Fosporine' would soothe them.<sup>80</sup> If one had experienced too much jazz (dancing/fun/excitement) during the winter, resulting in colds or flu, 'Woods Peppermint Cure' would get you back on your feet.<sup>81</sup> In many cases, advertisers of health and beauty related products would emphasise both the negative and the positive of jazz and jazzing (music and dance) to sell their products to the supposedly-fixated public.

By the early 1930s these non-musical meanings of 'jazz' appear to have disappeared from New Zealand colloquial ideas and speech. In the mid 1930s, jazz was superseded by swing as the popular culture phenomenon of the moment and advertisers found new buzz-words with which to associate their products.

---

<sup>78</sup> 'American Swing Club' [Advertisement]AS 22/7/1939, 21; *Jukebox: New Zealand's Swing Magazine*, October 1946, 1,6,15.

<sup>79</sup> 'Jazz Straws' [advertisement] EP 28/7/1920, 9; 'Jazz Voiles' [advertisement] D 26/10/1920, 5.

<sup>80</sup> 'The Universal Jazz' Marshall's Fosporine [advertisement] NZH 6/1/1922, 8.

<sup>81</sup> 'Woods Peppermint Cure' [advertisement]NZH 11/5/1922, 5.

## 2 Acquiring Jazz

### 2.1 Introduction

The acquisition of jazz in New Zealand occurred through a combination of external cultural influences, industrial importation practices and several different media. These factors were inextricably linked together in the in the global culture industry that had originated at the turn of the twentieth century. The industry of culture (not of be confused with Adorno and Horheimer's theory of the culture industry) was a result of the increasing popularisation and commodification of art, literature, dance, and, in particular, music, and also the new technologies of film and audio recording/reproduction.<sup>82</sup> This broad industry played an important role in the dissemination of jazz and it affected how jazz was imported into New Zealand, and what jazz was imported. This in turn affected how jazz was perceived by New Zealanders, how musicians were introduced to jazz, and how it was adapted to the local culture.

The music industry in New Zealand has had very little research done on it, particularly the era pre-1960, and rarely does the research done discuss how the local industry was tied to the transnational (later global) music industry.<sup>83</sup> That being said however, the New Zealand music industry did have strong links with transnational music industries because for much of the period 1920-1955 New Zealand was primarily an importer of products.<sup>84</sup>

From what I have been able to discover through my research it appears that local music production remained mostly within New Zealand and Australia. New Zealand musicians would travel overseas, but rarely did sheet music (of which there was a burgeoning New Zealand publishing industry), or records (which until 1948 were primarily recorded in Australia) travel any further than the Australian market. This meant that there was a greater influence of outside music on New Zealand audiences than the reverse.

An excellent example of this influence is demonstrated through radio in three ways. First, the majority of music broadcast on New Zealand was records from outside of New Zealand (both in terms of the music and the production). Second, the model of New Zealand radio appears to reflect influences from the British Broadcasting Company (later Corporation) and various American and

---

<sup>82</sup> Timothy D. Taylor, *Beyond Exoticism: Western Music and the World*, London: Duke University Press, 2007, 75-76, 81-83.

<sup>83</sup> See for example the work of Roy Shuker, Michael Flint, and Tony Mitchell (listed in the bibliography).

<sup>84</sup> Miles Fairburn, 'Is There a Good Case for New Zealand Exceptionalism?' in Tony Ballantyne and Brian Moloughney eds. *Disputed Histories: Imagining New Zealand's Pasts*, Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 2006, 150-151, 155-158.



Australian broadcasting models (this will be expanded on in section 2.6) Finally, the popularity of the activity of listening to foreign broadcasts (commonly known as DX-ing) also provided strong outside influences on New Zealand audiences (and musicians) musical tastes.

All of these things point to the fact that New Zealand was a minor player in an international music industry in terms of production and influencing music performance and production in other countries. Its primary function within the wider transnational music industry during the period 1920–1955 was to import music and musical products from instruments, radios and gramophones to sheet music and records.

In the case of jazz, it was imported into New Zealand both formally and informally through the media of records and sheet music, and later radio. Through acts on the vaudeville circuit, and later individual tours by bands, but also through cruise ship musicians. It was also imported through films and dancing, through New Zealanders visiting other countries and reporting on what they heard and saw, and by visitors to New Zealand.

Crucially, the cultural influences, people and organisations involved in this importation originated in Great Britain, the United States of America, and Australia: New Zealand's 'mother country,' and its two closest western neighbours. As explained in the previous chapter New Zealand was inextricably linked to these three countries through economic, political and cultural ties, which made them important influences on New Zealand's culture.<sup>85</sup> These influences affected what jazz was imported, where it was imported from and how it was imported.

The acquisition of jazz in New Zealand arose not only through formal (global industry) and informal (travellers) importation, cultural influences and musical practices, but also through the reception of jazz by people in New Zealand society, and their preconceived ideas about jazz.<sup>86</sup> The contexts and subjectivity of these receptions, and the ideologies behind them, meant that jazz as it was conceived of in New Zealand was quite different from how it was conceived of in other countries, particularly the United States of America.

## Chapter Outline

This chapter examines the acquisition of jazz by New Zealanders through media and cultural interactions. All sections examine the methods of importation and the construction of jazz in New Zealand chronologically across the period 1920–1955. Sections 2.2 and 2.3 examine the importation

---

<sup>85</sup> Fairburn, 155-158.

<sup>86</sup> Robin Brown, 'The Globalization of Jazz,' in M.I. Franklin ed. *Resounding International Relations: On Music, Culture and Politics*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, 92.

of sheet music and recordings respectively. The focus in both these sections is on the 'who' and 'how' of the importation through official channels, but also other methods that musicians and collectors used to acquire sheet music and recordings. In section 2.3 I will also briefly touch on the importance of the Australian recording industry to New Zealand musicians in the years before New Zealand had its own commercial recording industry.

In sections 2.4 and 2.5, I focus on the human agency of the importation of jazz through tours, vaudeville, and the activity of social dancing. Section 2.4 surveys jazz on the vaudeville circuits, and individual band tours across the period. The impact of those tours on the New Zealand jazz scene on the importation and local performance practices are the particular focus of this section. Section 2.5 focuses on jazz in social dance, and is closely related to the vaudeville aspects as many jazz dances that became popular as social dances often made their first appearance on the vaudeville, and later, revue circuits. Social dance relates closely to the construction of jazz (music) in New Zealand as the primary venue for jazz musicians to perform until the later 1940s was at social dances.

Following the section on dancing is the medium that knits all these other media and cultural influences together: radio. In section 2.6 I will briefly examine jazz on the New Zealand radio network, and some of the controversies therein. This will be further discussed throughout the thesis in different contexts, but here I examine the use of live musicians and recordings of jazz, and how the radio audience responded to each and the quality controls that developed over time.

## **2.2 Sheet Music**

Sheet music was an important medium for the importation of jazz into New Zealand across the period 1920–1955. It was especially important for musicians wanting to learn jazz in New Zealand, particularly during the early 1920s when access to records was unreliable, but it remained important across the entire period. The methods for importing sheet music to New Zealand changed very little across the period 1920–1955. Importing jazz through sheet music (primarily song sheets) to New Zealand occurred through two main avenues: importation directly from publishing companies, and via agents or licensee's for publishing companies.

Direct importation from publishing companies in the United States or Great Britain made up only a small proportion of the sheet music importation to New Zealand. Very few of the music publishing companies had distribution branches in New Zealand, and most appear to have preferred to work through licensed agents. Music retailers Arthur Eady, Lewis Eady, and Chas. Begg and Co held New Zealand licences for a few companies such as Boosey and Hawkes (both Eady's) and Sam

Fox Music (Begg's), but the majority of sheet music was imported via Australian agents J. Albert and Son, and Allans Music, or from the Australian distribution centres for companies such as Chappell Music.<sup>87</sup>

Australian music publishing agents for sheet music were vital to the importation of sheet music to New Zealand, and also the mediation of British and American culture in New Zealand across the period 1920–1955. Both J Albert and Son, and Allans Music were agents for many of the worlds biggest music publishing companies, with access to the widest variety of music. J Albert and Son also had a distribution centre in Wellington from the 1920s, which simplified their operation, and gave them more direct access to the New Zealand market.<sup>88</sup> The arrangement of selling to New Zealand via Australian agents meant that a selection of music was chosen by the parent company (such as Boosey and Hawkes or Sam Fox) to be made available to the Australia–Pacific region, and then sent to the publishing agents in that region for sale. The catalogue was then sent to the New Zealand companies that the agent's had arrangements with, and the companies would make selections for their stock.<sup>89</sup> In addition to the catalogue selections that were made available to the New Zealand market, J Albert and Son and Allans also created albums that had focused topics as dance music, comic songs, songs from a particular country/publisher/composer, or based on a performers repertoire. These albums were available throughout Australia and New Zealand, and were very popular among musicians and the general public alike.<sup>90</sup>

For musicians there were at least three other ways to acquire jazz sheet music, in particular stock band arrangements rather than song sheets. The first was via some of the music trade magazine, such as *Australian Music Maker and Dance Band News*, which included orchestrations, and which were readily available in local newsagents and music retailers. These arrangements were simple and flexible, able to be used by many different combinations of instruments. The second method was to order mail–order music from a publishing catalogue. This method was often the most expensive as many companies would require a minimum amount for purchase before they were willing to ship it to New Zealand, although musicians would often gather together to make

---

<sup>87</sup> Communication with Elizabeth Nichol 30/6/2011

<sup>88</sup> Jane Albert, *House of Hits: The Great Untold Story of Australia's First Family of Music*, Prahan, Vic: Hardie Grant, 2010, 64.

<sup>89</sup> Albert 65-66.

<sup>90</sup> Albert 19-20, 40, 72, 146-147.

such purchases.<sup>91</sup> The final method was through the musicians who performed on the cruise ships around the Pacific (including ports in the United States), or out to Great Britain.

This last was perhaps the most favoured method for New Zealand musicians as cruise ship musicians, such as Ted 'Chips' Healy, whose activities are discussed in Chapters Two and Three, would regularly attend dances when they were at various ports, thereby finding out what the latest songs were, buy song sheets, arrangements and/or recordings of these songs to bring back to their friends and colleagues in New Zealand.<sup>92</sup> According to Vern Wilson, this type of arrangement was very beneficial as local musicians were not only given sheet music or recordings, but also heard from the ship musicians what was happening on the British or, American dance music scenes, what styles and songs were popular, and how musicians were playing those songs.<sup>93</sup>

### 2.3 Recordings

Records were equally important, and complementary to, sheet music in the importation of jazz into New Zealand. As a major commodity in the global culture industry and one of the first examples of mass-mediated culture, records revolutionised how musicians learned music, and how audiences and fans listened to and collected music.<sup>94</sup> For jazz musicians, records were a way to aurally absorb performance practices that could not be adequately represented on the page, such as syncopation.

#### 1920s

From the 1920s through to the late 1940s there were two recording companies that controlled most of the record importation into New Zealand: Gramophone Company, which traded in New Zealand as His Masters Voice [HMV], and Decca Gramophone Company (not to be confused with their American subsidiary Decca Records Inc.).<sup>95</sup> Other companies, such as Brunswick and Columbia Records also had distribution agents or centres in New Zealand, but although they were significant participators they had a considerably smaller portion of the market in comparison to HMV (NZ), or Decca.

---

<sup>91</sup> Calder Prescott interview with Aleisha Ward, (2010); Elsie Doyle oral history interview by Patricia French 13/12/1984 Auckland Central City Library 90-OH-001/1-3

<sup>92</sup> Chris Bourke, *Blue Smoke: The Lost Dawn of New Zealand Popular Music 1918–1964*, Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2010, 51-52.

<sup>93</sup> Vern Wilson oral history interview by Patricia French, 3/8/1984 Auckland City Library, 90-OH-007/1-10.

<sup>94</sup> Brown 'Globalization,' 89-90.

<sup>95</sup> According to recording industry historian Bruce Anderson, HMV NZ Ltd was incorporated on 10/5/1926. Anderson, *The Story of the New Zealand Recording Industry*, George Jeffrey: Wellington, 1984, 30.

Columbia has a special significance to jazz history, as it was the record label for the first jazz band to record: the Original Dixieland Jazz Band [ODJB]. By the time Columbia exported the ODJB recordings to New Zealand (circa 1922), they were a huge hit in both the United States and Great Britain through their live performances and recordings, and Columbia expected that the recordings would have the same impact on New Zealand audiences. However, they were not the hit they had been in the United States or Britain, in fact they were very nearly the opposite, with the agents, A.H. Nathan's, having to throw away most of the copies that had been imported as they were unable to sell them because "customers recoiled from this first impact of the hideous noises from New Orleans."<sup>96</sup>

The exponential growth to the recording industry in the early 1920s also meant an increase in record company agencies in New Zealand, with the majority of companies having local agents by the mid-1920s. With the establishment of record pressing plants in Australia by Columbia Records in 1924 and Gramophone Co, in 1926, the length of time that it took records to be imported was reduced. These pressing plants simplified the methods of exporting records to the Pacific, and essentially created the backbone of the Australian recording industry.<sup>97</sup>

New Zealand did not have a commercial recording industry until 1948, so the Australian recording industry became important to New Zealand musicians who wanted to record commercially from the 1920s until the late 1940s.<sup>98</sup> Australia was also the logical place for New Zealand jazz musicians to go to expand their musical horizons and record. As the Australian Musicians' Union required a minimum residency period before being allowed to join the union and work as a musician in Australia, these residencies were usually at least a year, and quite often more, allowing New Zealand musicians to integrate into the Australian scene.<sup>99</sup>

### 1930–1945

The Great Depression and World War Two both had significant impacts on the importation of records into New Zealand. During the Depression the ongoing cost of records and gramophone parts became uneconomic in comparison to radio, which had only the initial outlay for the radio,

---

<sup>96</sup>Bourke, 11.

<sup>97</sup>Bryan Staff and Sheran Ashley, *For the Record: A History of the Recording Industry in New Zealand*, Auckland: David Bateman, 2002, 26.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid, 40-43.

<sup>99</sup> Chris Bourke, 25, 80, 86-87, 183-185; Andrew Bisset, *Black Roots White Flowers: A History of Jazz in Australia*, Sydney: ABC, 1987, 48-49, 60; NZH 3 March 1979, 2.

and a small annual licensing fee. Due to these ongoing expenses the sale of records in New Zealand fell dramatically and it became increasingly difficult for retailers to move stock.<sup>100</sup>

The amalgamation of Gramophone Co. with Columbia Graphophone Co. (UK) to create Electrical and Musical Industries Limited [EMI] in 1931, was a significant event for the New Zealand retail record industry. EMI's subsequent 1935 deal with rival company Decca to press and distribute all of Decca's records (both British and American catalogues) for Australasia was also significant. These events paved the way for a monopoly of the New Zealand record market. Similar deals with sections of RCA Victor, and US Columbia in the late 1930s allowed for a complete monopoly of the New Zealand market by the early 1940s.<sup>101</sup>

For New Zealand music retailers these events had an enormous impact on acquiring discs. By the early 1940s EMI/HMV (NZ) controlled over 90% of the New Zealand record retail market. That this situation occurred was entirely due to New Zealand's trading laws during this period. A combination of Imperial Preference, which favoured British companies and products and a lack of anti-trust laws combined to allow HMV (NZ) to punish retailers for acquiring discs from other (non EMI) labels, or from other places.<sup>102</sup>

The difficulties that arose for record importation and retailing in New Zealand during the 1930s continued through World War Two. The recording industries in the United States and Great Britain had begun to recover from the Depression; however the outbreak of the Second World War, and the American Federation of Musicians [AFM] strike in the early 1940s had far-reaching impacts.<sup>103</sup>

The restrictions placed on aluminium and shellac greatly restricted the manufacture of records globally, and the AFM strikes restricted the production of records in the United States and Great Britain, and many other countries.<sup>104</sup> In addition to these problems were the dangers to shipping routes due to war action. All these factors combined to make shipments of records to New

---

<sup>100</sup> Russell Sanjek, *American Popular Music and its Business: The First Four Hundred Years Volume III From 1900 to 1984*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1988 72, 117-122; Laurie Lewis, *Arthur and the Nights at the Turntable: The Life and Times of a Jazz Broadcaster*, London: Excalibur, 1996, 44.

<sup>101</sup> Sanjek, 118-119; Staff and Ashley, 32-34, 49; Bourke, 155.

<sup>102</sup> Staff and Ashley, 44, Bourke 155

<sup>103</sup> Sanjek, 215-221

<sup>104</sup> Staff and Ashley 35, 37; Sanjek, 215-221.

Zealand infrequent and small during the war. The lack of new records forced many retailers, such as Alfred Marbeck to obtain a second-hand dealers licence so they could remain in business.<sup>105</sup>

### 1945-1955

In the immediate post-war years the monopoly by HMV (NZ) continued to dominate imports of records to New Zealand. In 1948 they made a decision to stop supplying unaffiliated stores where they did not have a distributor, such as in New Plymouth or Dannevirke. This decision was the catalyst for the creation of the New Zealand commercial recording industry. It spurred Radio Corp (who owned some of the stores in question) to form a recording label of their own to supply their stores with records. Their label, To Assist New Zealand Artists [TANZA], placed an emphasis on recording New Zealand musicians and their Columbus Stores an emphasis on retailing New Zealand recordings.<sup>106</sup>

This turned out to be the first chink in the HMV (NZ) monopoly, but did not stop them from pressuring retailers with the threat of non-supply if they stocked discs from other labels, including TANZA. The tactic back-fired when the New Zealand Musicians Union began fielding complaints from its members about HMV's behaviour. Once the wider public knew about the tactics of HMV the people, and importantly the press and politicians rallied to the cause and began to put pressure on HMV to relent.<sup>107</sup>

The final break in the EMI monopoly on New Zealand came in the early 1950s. An American anti-trust suit forced the two branches of Columbia Records (the British which was a part of EMI, and the American, which was supposedly not), to legally separate, which meant that EMI lost a large portion of its American catalogue. In 1952 Columbia ceased being internationally distributed by EMI with Phillips Electrical Industries becoming the new distributor of Columbia records in New Zealand.<sup>108</sup>

By the end of the period that I have researched (1955) local companies such as Radio Corp/TANZA and Stebbing Brothers Ltd, as well as international companies such as Phillips Electrical, and G.A, Woller and Pye, had all made significant inroads in opening up New Zealand record retailing and supporting the fledgling recording industry.<sup>109</sup>

---

<sup>105</sup> Bourke, 108.

<sup>106</sup> Bourke 155; Staff and Ashley 40.

<sup>107</sup> Bourke 164-166

<sup>108</sup> Staff and Ashley 49-50; Peter Martland, *Since Records Began: EMI the First 100 Years*, London: Batsford, 1997, 155, 157; Sanjek 233, 243-244.

<sup>109</sup> Staff and Ashley, 50-56.

## 2.4 Tours and Vaudeville

Jazz bands, touring on the vaudeville circuits or on an individual basis, were very important to the importation and acceptance of jazz in New Zealand. Vaudeville circuits were vital in the dissemination of all culture in New Zealand as their variety-style shows embraced many different styles of music, dancing, and acting. The circuits gave New Zealanders opportunities to see musicians, singers, actors and other entertainers that would not have occurred outside these circuits because the cost of touring New Zealand was prohibitive to individual acts.

### 1920s

During the 1920s the majority of jazz bands that toured New Zealand were part of the J.C. Williamson or Fuller vaudeville circuits. Both companies were based in Australia, and New Zealand was one section of their Pacific-Asia circuit. Both Fullers and J.C. Williamson sent out talent scouts across Britain and the United States to find the best, brightest, most fashionable, and most commercially appealing acts. The acts gathered for the circuits ranged from opera and ballet stars (Nellie Melba, Fyodor Chaliapin, and Anna Pavlova all toured on the J.C. Williamson circuit), to male and female impersonators, dancers, comedians, and musicians, including jazz bands such as Bert Ralton's World Famous Savoy Havana Band, who will be discussed in Chapter Two.

The type of show produced varied widely from traditional vaudeville or music hall variety through to musical revues, full operas, plays, and pantomimes. The vaudeville or music hall shows possibly presented the most British or American cultural tropes, as the format allowed for more individual scope as opposed to the other formats, which were constrained by a story or a set of ideas.<sup>110</sup> The tours of Australia/New Zealand were long— six months to a year or more— allowing for extended or return seasons for many of the name acts, particularly if they were popular with the audiences.

Jazz bands involved in the vaudeville circuits ranged from bands with a comic or novelty bent— playing on the idea of jazz as a strange and alien music, or making a comedic sketch out of the music— through to bands that, while they clearly had a stage performance designed around their repertoire, were not presenting jazz as a weird foreign music for the sake of humour.<sup>111</sup> The majority of the bands that toured on the circuits were not often known in New Zealand before their tour, with a few exceptions such as the Havana band. By the end of the tour, however, they would have built an audience and popularity base.

---

<sup>110</sup> Michael Tallis and Joan Tallis, *The Silent Showman: Sir George Tallis, the Man Behind the World's Largest Entertainment Organisation of the 1920s*, Kent Town: Wakefield, 1999, 178-179.

<sup>111</sup> Bisset, 4-5, 22-26.



The majority of the jazz bands on the vaudeville circuits would only tour New Zealand once, although some, such as Australian Linn Smith's jazz bands would tour repeatedly. Many of the bands that participated in one-off tours were American, or British and ranged from comic novelty through to "real jazz bands."<sup>112</sup> These bands, such as the Versatile Three (an African American vocal trio), Six Brown Brothers, and Harry Santry and his World Famous Orchestra were mostly unknown to New Zealand audiences at the time of their tours, but all had established fan bases in other countries, before touring New Zealand.

The impact of many of the vaudeville circuit jazz bands on New Zealand audiences is largely unknown. The press reports and reviews of jazz bands in vaudeville shows were largely complimentary, but vague. Such reports usually commented on the stage antics of the band, but would say little about the music that they played except to mention syncopation and whether they were a 'real' jazz band or not. What constituted a 'real' jazz band is never mentioned directly by the journalist, but rather seems to have been implied by the adjectives (such as 'jazzy', 'hot', 'exciting', or 'fascinating') that the writer used to describe the band.<sup>113</sup>

Australian jazz bands more frequently toured New Zealand on the vaudeville circuits. Linn Smith's Royal Jazz Band and Tom Katz Saxophone Band, in particular, made regular tours. Linn Smith's jazz band first toured New Zealand in 1923 on the Fullers circuit. In Australia they had a reputation for being the first local band able to compare to the American bands that dominated the Australian jazz scene in the early 1920s.<sup>114</sup> As well as playing as Linn Smith's Royal Jazz Band in the vaudeville shows on both Fullers and J.C. Williamson circuits they put their reputation to good use when they appeared in the revues *Good Morning Dearie*, and *Kid Boots* produced by J.C. Williamson in New Zealand. Advertised as playing "the real thing, seductive jazz," the Linn Smith Band had a significant impact on New Zealand jazz through their repeated tours and through alumni Dave Meredith and Tut Coltman who would lead important bands in New Zealand during the late 1920s and 1930s.<sup>115</sup>

---

<sup>112</sup> Bisset, 9-11; John Whiteoak, *Playing Ad Lib: Improvisatory Music in Australia 1836-1970*, Strawberry Hills, NSW: Currency, 1999, 170-173

<sup>113</sup> See for example, 'Havana Band' AS 8/12/1924, 9; 'Kid Boots' AS 29/10/1925, 12; 'Empress Theatre' EP 31/1/1925, 9; 'Women's Corner' CP 19/7/1921.

<sup>114</sup> Bisset, 25.

<sup>115</sup> Bisset, 15; 'His Majesty's Theatre,' EP 29/12/1928, 5.

The Tom Katz Saxophone Band was formed by Will Quintrell, leader of the Tivoli Theatre Orchestra in 1927, and initially led by Tivoli saxophonist Sam Babicci.<sup>116</sup> This saxophone ensemble, although not strictly a jazz band, included a substantial amount of jazz into their repertoire; they were also possibly one of the last bands to perform in blackface in New Zealand.<sup>117</sup> The Tom Katz band were well received during their tour of New Zealand and were lauded for their virtuosic performances as well as their stage antics. In their non–vaudeville appearances, sans–blackface, the band was even more musically intimidating, demonstrating their technical prowess and wide ranging repertoire.<sup>118</sup>

In the reporting of all types of jazz bands on the vaudeville circuits there was an emphasis (sometimes stated, sometimes implied) on the music being exotic, cosmopolitan, and foreign. This last not necessarily defined as being American, or British, or even African, but all of those and none. The idea of jazz as foreign and exotic and/or primitive permeated most journalistic perceptions of jazz, and informed their reviews of the bands.

The late 1920s and early 1930s can be seen as a transitional period for tours of jazz bands. These years saw the decline of the vaudeville entertainment in favour for film. During this period jazz bands touring New Zealand would combine vaudeville contracts with venue residences and one–night stands across New Zealand. These bands, such as Dave Meredith and His Melody Five, used the popularity that they had gained on the vaudeville circuits to create a wider audience on the New Zealand dance and theatre scenes. In turn, these bands influenced the performance practices of New Zealand jazz musicians, particularly in terms of musical technique, performing with virtuosic flair, and showmanship, creating a presence for the band.<sup>119</sup>

### 1930s

During the 1930s the vaudeville circuit in New Zealand slowly disappeared as many theatres converted to cinema facilities. This changed the nature of tours for jazz bands. Rather than being employed for a particular circuit, jazz bands, such as those led by Tut Coltman and Theo Walters began to tour New Zealand on an individual basis. These tours were often longer than the vaudeville circuits, playing small towns, as well as the main centres, and often combined long

---

<sup>116</sup> It appears that while Quintrell came up with the idea of the Tom Katz, being a brass player (trumpet and trombone) he never played with them.

<sup>117</sup> Bisset 52.

<sup>118</sup> Bourke 39.

<sup>119</sup> Bisset, 22-26; Bourke, 22-24.

venue residencies into the tour. Because of the extended nature of these types of tours, there were personnel changes as original members left, and were replaced by New Zealanders.<sup>120</sup>

Bands that toured on this basis became the main influences and training ground for New Zealand musicians and arrangers in the early swing era as all of them had long term residencies and tours, which involved a number of local musicians. The arranging techniques and performance practices that these bands utilised were adopted by New Zealand jazz musicians and used in writing for and performing with band, both local and visiting, throughout the swing era.<sup>121</sup>

## World War Two

World War Two impacted on this type of touring, with many touring bands breaking up and the musicians returning to their home countries. Other bands, such as the Theo Walters Band were forced to disband due to enlistment and conscription lotteries.<sup>122</sup> International tours all but stopped during the war years with a few exceptions that occurred during the residency of the United States armed forces in New Zealand. These events will be discussed further in Chapter's Four and Five.

Within a year of New Zealand being designated as a training, rest and rehabilitation base for American troops in 1942, tours sponsored by the United Service Organizations [USO] began to include New Zealand on their Pacific circuit. There were many types of entertainments on these tours, including jazz bands. Two bands in particular made an impact on the New Zealand jazz scene: the Artie Shaw band, which toured in 1943, and the Claude Thornhill Band in 1944.<sup>123</sup>

## Post-War Decade

In the post-war years there were no tours by jazz bands until 1955. In 1955 promoters began to bring package tours to New Zealand. These tours were usually very short, often only a few days, and were usually scheduled around slightly longer Australian tours. These types of tours signalled a new era in tours by jazz bands in New Zealand. Some tours involved local musicians in the performance, while others did not. The off-stage interactions between touring musicians and locals were also different from pre-war tours. In part because the limited time that touring bands had in any given town encouraged organised activities such as jam sessions rather than less formal activities.

---

<sup>120</sup> DHJA Artist Files: Tut Coltman (MS-Papers-9018-09) and Theo Walters (MS-Papers-9018-48), ATL.

<sup>121</sup> Bourke, 86, 92-93.

<sup>122</sup> DHJA Artist Files Sammy Lee (MS-Papers-9018-26) and Theo Walters (MS-Papers-9018-48), ATL.

<sup>123</sup> Denys Bevan, *United States Forces in New Zealand 1942-1945*, Alexandra NZ: Macpherson, 1992, 356-357, 361-362.

## 2.5 Dance

Dancing and music have been linked for centuries, and jazz and dancing were no exception. From the earliest years of jazz there were specific dances, and dance styles, associated with the music. These dances were another method of importing jazz into New Zealand, and were often associated with certain songs or types of songs when first introduced.

Dancing was an important social activity in New Zealand, during the 1920s and 1930s especially as it was one of the main avenues for meeting people, and in particular meeting potential spouses. Many jazz fans, particularly during 1920s, were introduced to jazz through learning the latest social dances, either formally through dance classes, or informally trying to learn what was seen on the stage, screen, or in a magazine.<sup>124</sup>

### 1920s

There were a number of dances that were linked with jazz in the 1920s. The one and two-step dances that were the basis of all the 'animal' dances such as the Turkey Trot and the Bunny Hug were intimately associated with jazz dancing during this decade, as was the other, far more enduring, 'animal' dance the Foxtrot.

The one and two-step dances were both relatively easy to execute by anyone. The one-step dances were essentially walking dances; moving forward or back for a certain number of steps in each pattern, with pivots, hesitations, and dips as required by each individual dance.<sup>125</sup> The two-step dances were similar, but the each forward or back step included a chassé (three changes of weight between each foot). The main difference between one step and two step dances was the tempo of the music. The two-step dances could only be comfortably danced at a medium tempo, because of the chassés, whereas the one-step dances, with their simpler steps, could be done at a much faster tempo.<sup>126</sup>

The foxtrot was reportedly invented by American vaudeville dancer, Harry Fox as part of his act in the early 1910s, and was turned into a social dance by American dance teacher Oscar Duryea in 1913. A dance that could either be progressive around the room, or on the spot, the foxtrot was the first modern ballroom dance to alternate between slow and quick steps, and was extremely versatile fitting with most styles of dance music, including jazz.

<sup>124</sup> Lewis, 31-32; 'Dancing Taught by Radio' NZRR 11/11/1927, 16.

<sup>125</sup> [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/musdi:@field\(DOCID+@lit\(M0975\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/musdi:@field(DOCID+@lit(M0975))) accessed 28 June 2011.

<sup>126</sup> Ralph G. Giordano, *Social Dancing in America, A History and Reference: Volume Two Lindy Hop to Hip Hop 1901–2000*, Westport: Greenwood, 2007, 6,11-12.

By the mid-1920s there were two main versions of the foxtrot: the slow foxtrot and the quick, or jazz foxtrot. The slow foxtrot was the standard version, which had originated in the 1910s, but the fast or jazz foxtrot, while retaining many of the same patterns, also added chassés, gallops, and syncopations, and became known in the late 1920s as the quickstep.<sup>127</sup>

What the specific dance, called the 'jazz', actually entailed is harder to say. I have found one description in *The Handbook of Ball-room Dancing* of what is described as "the straight jazz," but whether this was the *only* version is unknown. This dance is described as a three-step and could be danced to one-step, valse or foxtrot music. It featured many of the variations found in the one and two-step dances, but the essential difference was the basic combination of 'short, short, long,' which is shared by the foxtrot. This appears to be an amalgamation of pieces of different dances, with combinations from one/two-step and foxtrot.<sup>128</sup>

The jazz style of dancing is easier to define. According to New Zealand dance historian Georgina White the jazz style of dancing in New Zealand was defined by partners dancing closer together (closer than was considered socially acceptable), with smaller and often bouncy steps, and was often considered free-style rather than a set sequence dance. The tempo that one 'jazzed' to was often quick, and the music was modern, with an emphasis on ragtime, proto-jazz and the latest dance and novelty hits.<sup>129</sup> While the jazz as a specific dance only appears to have been popular in the first few years of the 1920s, the jazz dance style lasted through into the early 1930s when the Great Depression caused changes in fashions for music and dance and the term disappeared from use.

These dances were introduced to New Zealand through a variety of methods. The first method was through dance teachers, such as Theodore Trezise, and Phyllis Bates, who would make regular trips to Britain and the United States to study and learn the latest ballroom dances. When they returned to New Zealand they would teach the dances to New Zealanders. As many of the latest dances were danced to the latest music, the teachers would also ensure that they had the appropriate music for their students to learn to. Jazz disc jockey Arthur Pearce recalled that he first heard the Original Dixieland Jazz band in a dance class circa 1922, which was his first introduction

---

<sup>127</sup> *ibid.* 46.

<sup>128</sup> Paymaster-Commander A. M. Cree, R.N, *The Handbook of Ball-room Dancing*, New York: John Lane, 1920. [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/musdi:@field\(DOCID+@lit\(M05124\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/musdi:@field(DOCID+@lit(M05124))) accessed 24 February 2011

<sup>129</sup> Georgina White, *Light Fantastic: Dance Floor Courtship in New Zealand* Auckland: HarperCollins, 2007, 49-62.

to jazz.<sup>130</sup> In addition to teaching dance, teachers would also hold studio dances, or hire cabarets to both demonstrate the new dances, and to allow their students practice at dancing in a social context.<sup>131</sup>

The second method of importing these dances was through the vaudeville circuit. Included in many of the acts that toured were novelty dance acts that would often base their act on the latest dance fashion. While many acts were probably of a comic bent, some acts were demonstrative, giving a staged presentation to the social dances that were currently in vogue, or at the cutting edge of dance styles. Dance acts were often more utilised in revue shows than in vaudeville shows, where the latest dance craze could be incorporated into the plot line of the show, and displayed within a context (usually something to do with jazz in the 1920s).<sup>132</sup>

The third method of introducing jazz dances to New Zealanders was through film. In early 1920 a silent film entitled *Jazzmania* was released in New Zealand, which, according to the description in the New Zealand Herald demonstrated the steps of 'the jazz'.<sup>133</sup> Later in 1920 the famed dance duo Irene and Vernon Castle's film *The Whirl of Life* also purports to demonstrate 'the jazz'.<sup>134</sup> These films may not have started the jazz craze in New Zealand, but they appear to have boosted it, if the frequent mentions of 'the jazz' in advertisements for cabarets and dance halls are any indicator.

By the mid 1920s the frequent mentions of jazz dancing in the New Zealand press make it appear that everyone was dancing, and dancing to jazz. In the middle of the decade a new American dance was taking New Zealand's dance floors by storm: the Charleston.<sup>135</sup> The Charleston was introduced to New Zealand by a variety of means, including the aforementioned methods of dancers/dance teachers, vaudeville and film, prominently an instruction film by American dancer Arthur Murray. However, there was also a demonstration by the New York Ritz Dance Orchestra, with accompanying exhibition dancers, at the Auckland Town Hall on July 24 1926.<sup>136</sup> The Orchestra, and dancers, only played a few shows in Auckland, but it appears to have been enough to

---

<sup>130</sup> Laurie Lewis 31-32.

<sup>131</sup> White 61-62; EP 'Miss Phyllis Bates' 1/11/1924, 4.

<sup>132</sup> 'His Majesty's Theatre', EP 1/4/1922, 3; 6/11/1926, 13; 'J.C. Williamson Vaudeville' 14/2/1925, 9.

<sup>133</sup> 'Jazzmania' NZH 24/1/1920 supplement, 4.

<sup>134</sup> 'The Whirl of Life' ODT 13/10/1920, 1,2.

<sup>135</sup> White, 49-51, 58.

<sup>136</sup> 'Famous Ritz Orchestra' AS 21/7/1926, 22; 'Ritz Orchestra' AS 24/7/1926, 14.

trigger a craze, with Charleston contests becoming a feature of the dance scene by the middle of August.<sup>137</sup>

The dance that became synonymous with flappers was quite unlike the other dances that had been imported from the United States, involving criss-crossing of knees and arms, the swinging of arms, the kicking up of legs, and even jumps. It was a dance that could be done as a pair, or on one's own, and was very fast-paced. The favoured type of music for dancing the Charleston was jaunty, bouncy, and up-tempo: such as *Yes Sir, That's My Baby*, *Sweet Georgia Brown*, or *Five Foot Two With Eyes of Blue*.<sup>138</sup> The Charleston was a fairly short-lived dance fashion in New Zealand, lasting only about three years, fading from usage before the end of the 1920s. While New Zealand did experience some of the other American dance crazes such as the Yale Blues and the Black Bottom, none of them gained the popularity that the Charleston did or the staying power of the one and two-steps or the foxtrot. At the end of the decade the foxtrot reigned supreme on New Zealand dance floors, with the one and two-step close behind as favourite dances.<sup>139</sup>

### 1930s

The Depression of the 1930s diminished the popularity of jazz related dances for several years, with the exception of the foxtrot and some of the more sedate one and two-step dances. It was not until the late 1930s and the beginning of the swing era that new dances associated with jazz began to appear on the New Zealand jazz scene. The main dances associated with swing music and which were popular in New Zealand until the late 1940s were the lindy hop and the jitterbug.

The lindy hop and jitterbug were essentially the same dance, which developed in the United States during the early 1930s, with jitterbug becoming the generic term for both and also other swing style dances of this period. While the basic steps are the same, the main difference is in the basic count: the lindy hop had an eight-count (steps) swing step and the jitterbug had a six count. There were also differences in dance tempo and performance practice. The lindy hop, as a social dance, was danced to slow, medium and medium-fast paced swing songs, and was a smooth rotational improvised dance that in the early years generally stayed on the ground. Aerial features, such as lifts, throws and flips, and also kicks and dips became a part of the dance in the later 1930s, but were often discouraged in cabarets and dance halls because of the issues of safety and modesty.<sup>140</sup> Jitterbugging was to lindy hop what the quickstep was to foxtrot: a dance of the same

---

<sup>137</sup> White, 58.

<sup>138</sup> Giordano, 53-56.

<sup>139</sup> White, 49.

<sup>140</sup> Giordano 89-92.

origins, which had been modified to be danced at much quicker tempos. The jitterbug had the same basic swing steps, kicks and aerial work that the lindy hop did in a six-count rhythm, but it was danced at twice or three times the tempo.<sup>141</sup>

It is unknown when swing dancing was imported into New Zealand. While there are mentions of lindy hop and jitterbugging in the New Zealand press from late 1936 these were reports from other countries, particularly the United States. An early reference to swing dancing locally, however, was in the *Evening Post* July 1937 when Miss Gwenethe Walshe began teaching the 'swingstep' at her dance studio in Wellington. Miss Walshe had just returned from London where she had been studying with a number of dance teachers learning the latest dances, including the 'swingstep,' which was the basic sequence of the lindy hop.<sup>142</sup>

Influencing the local dancers were the many films that had scenes with swing dancing in them, such as 1937s *Swing Time*; *College Swing*, and *Radio City Revels*, which screened in New Zealand in late 1938, or *Hold that Co-Ed*, and *I am the Law* in early 1939.<sup>143</sup> Another influence on swing dancing in New Zealand was the American show *Hollywood Hotel Revue*, which toured in 1939 and included scenes with swing dancing, danced by "America's Greatest Colour Swing Dancers."<sup>144</sup> While the company was in Wellington the swing dancers attended the local swing clubs' dance, one of whom gave a short talk about swing dancing and praised the efforts of the swing clubs' members.<sup>145</sup>

By August 1939 swing dancing was at the least a familiar dance style for New Zealand social dancers as the *Auckland Star* advertised a jitterbugging contest ("to find Auckland's champion 'swing dancers'") held at the New Dixieland Cabaret in Auckland on August 17.<sup>146</sup> These advertisements were also the first specific references to jitterbug in New Zealand. Both the lindy hop and the jitterbug became very popular in New Zealand in the years leading up to World War Two. During the war years, particularly while the American troops were in residence, swing dancing became the hip thing to do.<sup>147</sup> So popular did the jitterbug become that many cabarets

---

<sup>141</sup> Giordano 91-92.

<sup>142</sup> 'A Dancer Abroad' EP 5/7/1936, 16; 'School of Ballroom Dance' EP 17/7/1937, 5, 'Studio Dance' EP 19/7/1937, 14.

<sup>143</sup> <http://www.streetswing.com/swg1mov.htm> accessed 14 July 2011; EP 8/8/1938, 2; 16/8/1938, 2; 6/1/1939, 2; 8/3/1939, 2.

<sup>144</sup> 'Hollywood Hotel Revue' EP 6 May 1939, 5.

<sup>145</sup> 'Second Dance' EP 15/5/1939, 14.

<sup>146</sup> 'Jitterbug contest' AS 14 August 1939, 16.

<sup>147</sup> Harry Bioletti, *The Yanks are Coming: The American Invasion of New Zealand 1942–1944*, Auckland: Century Hutchinson 1989, 64; White, 108-110.



banned the dancing of it completely, even to the point of denying jitterbugs entry onto the premises.<sup>148</sup> Some cabarets and dance halls did not go so far, but there were often signs requesting that ladies refrain from jitterbugging if they were wearing full skirts.<sup>149</sup>

The end of the war in 1945 also saw a change in dance music and styles. Jazz, and jitterbugging lost its dominant position in favour of 'strict tempo' music and dance. Jazz began to move away from being dance music, and although people did continue to dance to jazz, 1945 marks a separation between jazz and dance.

## 2.6 Radio

From its earliest experiments until 1925 radio broadcasting in New Zealand was mostly private commercial or hobby stations with only small amounts of government oversight and licensing. In 1925 broadcasting in New Zealand came under total state regulation and programming became coordinated on the national level. The structure of New Zealand radio when it first came under government control was formed of ministry oversight via the Radio Broadcasting Company (which controlled the main stations in New Zealand) with various committees for programming and station management, but each station was relatively autonomous within the restrictions of programme coordination.<sup>150</sup> Music was the basis of most stations' programming, but they all had a balance of varied programming including educational lectures, plays, children's programming, religious services, news and current affairs.<sup>151</sup>

The model of radio in New Zealand appears to have been a mixture of British, American and Australian models both in terms of behind the scenes structure and on-air presentation and purpose. According to historian Patrick Day there were strong influences from the British Broadcasting Company (later Corporation) [BBC], particularly in terms of presentation and purpose. New Zealand radio reflected the 'anonymous' presenter policy of the BBC, and sections of New Zealand broadcasting management were heavily influenced by John Reith's ideals regarding radio being a tool for education rather than entertainment (this will be expanded on in Chapter Three in particular).<sup>152</sup> However, the programming of New Zealand radio reflected influences from the models used by some of the American and Australian stations (who were primarily private companies). These influences mostly reflected the entertainment side of radio, and importantly the

<sup>148</sup> See for example dance advertisement in EP 16/5/1942, 2; 27/2/1943, 2

<sup>149</sup> Bioletti, 64

<sup>150</sup> Patrick Day, *The Radio Years: A History of Broadcasting in New Zealand Vol. 1*, Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1994, 1-5, 63-105.

<sup>151</sup> Patrick Day, *The Radio Years*, 1-3, 73-75.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid 86-93.

necessity for a broad range of entertainment genres. Interestingly, these influences occurred despite the fact that the various controllers of New Zealand radio attempted on numerous occasions to restrict or ban American and Australian material of varying sorts.<sup>153</sup>

In the early years of organised broadcasting (1925–1928) most of the music broadcast was live within the studio, or relayed from other venues via phone lines, rather than records. It is unknown when recordings started to be regularly used in broadcasting, but when the first nation-wide publication of radio programming, *The New Zealand Radio Record and Electric Home Journal* [NZRR], began publishing in July 1927, radio stations were definitely using records as small part of their musical broadcasting material. It was not until September 1928, however, that records became a significant part of stations' musical programming.<sup>154</sup>

Throughout the period that I have researched, there was an ongoing debate over the purpose of broadcasting in New Zealand. Was it there to educate or entertain? This debate is particularly important to the broadcasting of jazz on New Zealand radio, as music was the catalyst, and central to this debate.

Patrick Day states in the Introduction to *The Radio Years: A History of Broadcasting in New Zealand Volume One*:

It was argued that broadcasters had a duty to both music and to the cultural enhancement of the audience to concentrate on established classical music rather than on contemporary popular songs. To educate the audience in the appreciation of classical repertoire meant the deliberate neglect of contemporary music. This was never accepted by the general New Zealand audience.<sup>155</sup>

Not all broadcasting officials agreed with this assessment. Some officials believed that radio was there to entertain as much as educate, and that the audience should enjoy a variety of programming, including the latest popular music.

## 1920s

Broadcasting jazz appears to have been quite controversial. Part of the controversy was bound up in the education/entertainment debate, and what types of music were acceptable to broadcast. Another part of the controversy was because jazz was not only a foreign music, but also an exotic, primitive, and alien one. It was unlike any music heard in New Zealand, and it was a phenomenon. As one of the most popular music's in New Zealand during the 1920s, jazz bore the

---

<sup>153</sup> Ibid 164-166

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.86-88, 317.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid. 2.

brunt of criticism from both station officials and from the section of the general public that did not like, or approve of jazz.

From the early issues of NZRR there were letters to the editor complaining about either too much, or not enough, jazz on the radio, and further letters regarding the quality (or lack thereof) of jazz that was broadcast. These complaints were just as much as result of the Radio Broadcasting Company [RBC] trying to accommodate listeners' tastes, as they were a result on each writer's personal ideas of the purpose of radio, and their own musical tastes.<sup>156</sup>

Throughout the 1920s the majority of jazz broadcast on New Zealand radio was live broadcasts, mostly from venue relays. The broadcast of jazz recordings in the late 1920s was relatively rare and certainly not a daily occurrence. When jazz records were broadcast, the majority of them were from the 'society' jazz bands, such as Paul Whiteman, or Jack Hylton, rather than the Original Dixieland Jazz Band, or other 'hot' jazz groups. What was common to both live broadcasts and records was the time of night that jazz was broadcast. During the 1920s jazz was rarely broadcast before 9.30 at night, and never earlier than 8pm.<sup>157</sup>

### 1930s

In the early 1930s the use of records as broadcast material was considered normal, but the debate over what types of music were acceptable for broadcast continued. Part of this debate was the clash between popular and classical music, but another part was a cultural clash between British and American recordings, especially of popular music.<sup>158</sup>

New Zealand radio programming in the 1930s indicates a marked preference for British programmes and music, although not to the exclusion of American or Australian programmes and music. American and Australian music, including jazz, was actually needed by New Zealand radio programmers to fill up space in the programming.

The New Zealand Broadcasting Board [NZBB] (which replaced the RBC) had decided in the early 1930s to place an emphasis on quality programmes and music rather than quantity. Because of this decision there was a finite quantity of local or British produced material that was considered to meet the current standards, there was the need for American and Australian programmes and music. There was one attempt to remove American music from New Zealand radio

---

<sup>156</sup> See for example, Letters to the Editor columns NZRR 2/9/1927, 13, 30/12/1927, 15; Day, 86.

<sup>157</sup> See for example, NZRR programme details for the weeks of 23/9/1927, 18/2/1928, 27/8/1929.

<sup>158</sup> Day 88-89; see also James Belich, *Paradise Reforged: A History of the New Zealanders from the 1880s to the Year 2000*, Auckland: Penguin, 2001, 252-253.

programming in April 1934, but the outcry by the public was so great that the NZBB quickly reversed this decision.<sup>159</sup>

While jazz was needed to at least fill in space in the programming, many of the higher officials of the New Zealand Broadcasting Board did not like this fact. A very few mid level officials, such as programme director of dance music Bob Bothamley, championed the cause of jazz on the radio. They emphasised that not everyone who listened to the radio wished to be educated, but would rather listen to it for entertainment.

A musician, and jazz fan from the early 1920s, Bothamley was hired by the National Broadcasting Service [NBS] in 1937 to manage the broadcasting of dance music on New Zealand radio. He was instrumental in increasing the amount of jazz that was broadcast on New Zealand radio, and in promoting jazz programmes such as *Rhythm on Record*. As part of his job as programme director of dance music, Bothamley was in charge of importing all the jazz and dance music records that were broadcast on New Zealand radio. As such, he took on the role as tastemaker for the jazz that was broadcast and as a jazz fan himself he took this role very seriously. His selections would be made in consultation some of the jazz-oriented dance music compères such as Arthur Pearce, and later Cav Nichol, and John Good, who were all extremely knowledgeable about jazz, and in particular American jazz. While the NBS demanded a certain amount of British records be purchased Bothamley and the above-mentioned compères all favoured American jazz over British, and efforts were made to acquire the best American jazz that was available on record.<sup>160</sup>

### **World War Two:**

World War Two saw the Broadcasting Board make several changes to music programming. Some changes were necessary due to the restrictions of war, such as aluminium and shellac shortages, as mentioned in section 1.3, while others surrounded the possibility of treasonous activities.<sup>161</sup> These changes impacted on the jazz that was broadcast from records only lightly as by this point the NBS had an extensive jazz collection in its record library thanks to the efforts of Bob Bothamley, and many of the compères used their private collections to give variety to their programmes.<sup>162</sup>

When the American troops arrived in New Zealand in 1942 the broadcasting executive decided that they should increase the amount of American programming on New Zealand radio, in

---

<sup>159</sup> Day, 164-165.

<sup>160</sup> Bourke, 72-74, Lewis, 46, 83-84.

<sup>161</sup> Day, 266-268.

<sup>162</sup> Lewis, 99, 142-145.

order to give the visitors a taste of home. While the majority of this programming was informational, some of it was musical, and a portion of that was jazz, particularly the latest swing hits. Some of these programmes were rebroadcasts from the continental United States and New Zealanders enjoyed the new 'American' programming as much as the visiting troops did.<sup>163</sup>

In 1944 the American presence on New Zealand radio was taken a step further when the American Expeditionary Broadcasting Service [AEBS] requested the use of a radio station in Auckland, the NZBB agreed and loaned them station 1ZM, which operated out of the 1YA building on Shortland Street. Station 1ZM was officially ceded to AEBS control on April 12 1944. The American Expeditionary Service [AES] Auckland will be examined in depth in Chapter Five, but in brief, while there was little difference in programming type from New Zealand stations, AES Auckland was a marked contrast to New Zealand controlled stations. AES Auckland had access to a wider variety of musical material, especially American jazz.<sup>164</sup> They also had a different presenting style, which was a dramatic contrast to the formality of New Zealand broadcasting, even the on commercial stations. When AEBS returned 1ZM to New Zealand control on December 17 1944, many listeners were very disappointed, as they had come to enjoy the American style of broadcasting and content such as the US hit parades and Make Believe Ballroom.<sup>165</sup>

### 1945–1955

The post-war decade saw changes to the broadcasting system, with the amalgamation of NBS and the National Commercial Broadcasting Service to form the New Zealand Broadcasting Service [NZBS] in 1946.<sup>166</sup> This reorganisation impacted on both the broadcast of local live jazz, (which will be discussed in Chapter Six) and of jazz records.

In the post-war decade, the broadcast of jazz recordings gradually widened to include some more of the cutting edge swing, and eventually (in the jazz programmes) bebop, and Dixieland revival.<sup>167</sup>

In mid 1950 NZBS decided to follow the British Broadcasting Corporation in dividing stations into programming types: light, middlebrow and 'third'.<sup>168</sup> The YA stations were to offer the widest variety of programming, from news to religion to popular music. The YC stations were to offer, "sustained quality programmes of all kinds," with classical music, radio dramas and

<sup>163</sup> Day, 270.

<sup>164</sup> Dale Alderton interview with Aleisha Ward 15/7/2002; Denys Bevan, 359.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid, also Bioletti, 60, and Bourke 118-119.

<sup>166</sup> Day, 283.

<sup>167</sup> NZL programming 24–30 June 1946; 11–17 August 1947.

<sup>168</sup> Patrick Day 308.

educational lectures being their focus.<sup>169</sup> The YD stations were a "non-commercial light programme," with popular music, serials/dramas, as well as news weather and sports broadcasting, and the ZB stations were the commercial light programme.<sup>170</sup>

Even with these changes one edict did remain: the appropriate times to broadcast jazz. In a memo to the 2YA station manager in November 1950 regarding the breakfast session (7.00–9.00am) the head of NZBS, William Yates, stated that: "All swing and blatant dance recordings and sentimental crooners should be excluded from this session."<sup>171</sup>

While Yates banned jazz from the breakfast session, jazz was no longer confined to late evening programming. Soon jazz was being broadcast throughout the evening programmes and occasionally during the day.<sup>172</sup> The course set up by Bob Bothamley in the late 1930s for jazz continued to dominate what, and how, jazz was broadcast on New Zealand radio. The Bothamley influence on the broadcast of jazz on New Zealand radio continued throughout the 1950s.

## 2.5 Conclusion

The acquisition and construction of jazz in New Zealand was influenced by many factors both cultural and industrial. These cultural and industrial factors originated with transnational companies and musicians from (primarily) the United States of America, Great Britain and Australia. These three countries were the most important influences on the importation and construction of jazz in New Zealand and on how it was positioned in New Zealand's world. This chapter examined these influences through the importation of sheet music records and radio, and the cultural activities of dance and touring bands and demonstrated how the influences ebbed and flowed through each media and activity.

### **Chronological Overview of the Construction of Jazz in New Zealand:**

During the 1920s jazz in New Zealand was constructed as many things. In relation to music and dance it was a 'weird' foreign music, an example of the cosmopolitan exotic other, although not necessarily an *American* other, and it was a fun novelty music or an up-tempo dance. These constructions arose from the context in which jazz was performed: vaudeville stage, cabaret or record and later radio. These different contexts both informed perceptions of the New Zealand audience and were informed by the audiences pre-existing perceptions.

---

<sup>169</sup> Ibid.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid, 309.

<sup>172</sup> NZL programming 9–15 October 1950; 2–8 July 1951; 14–20 April 1952.

In learning and performing jazz musicians in New Zealand relied on sheet music, records, touring or cruise ship musicians, and short wave radio to inform them of the latest trends occurring in Australia, Great Britain, and especially the United States. The construction of jazz by New Zealand musicians in the 1920s appears to have been as broad and complex as stated above: some played on the exotic elements, some on novelty and some on dance music, or a combination of all three. For many of the early jazz musicians combining all of these elements appears to have been the most common option as it allowed them to cater to audiences' differing ideas of jazz during this decade.

The first half of the 1930s was a transitional period for jazz in New Zealand. With the depression, and the advent of sound in film, the music industry was restructured as a result of the drop in vaudeville shows, and the necessity of pit orchestras for films. Jazz music, too was restructured, with 1920s jazz now considered old fashioned, and not complimenting the mood of the Depression years (conspicuous consumption versus frugality, excitement versus nostalgia). Although jazz was still popular in some areas, enough that jazz bands that had toured on the vaudeville circuit now toured on an individual basis, it was not until the beginning of the swing era in 1936 that jazz, in the form of swing, was once again a popular dance music.

By the early 1930s radio had moved from hobbyists' obsession to regular family entertainment. Despite the faction of audience and broadcasting officials who did not want jazz to be a part of the programming, jazz was integral as a necessary option for filling in hours of programming. The combination of local live broadcasts from cabarets or in the studio and jazz records from Australia, Great Britain or the United States, helped to broaden the audience for the local jazz scene, and in contrast to the records helped fans and musicians to position New Zealand jazz in relation to other jazz scenes through what they heard over the radio.

The beginning of the swing era in 1936 heralded the end of the transitional phase in the New Zealand jazz scene, and the beginning of a different approach to jazz. Swing returned to the optimism of the 1920s, with a different sound and different dances. The methods of importing of swing remained similar, with individual tours replacing vaudeville, as did the essentials of its construction in New Zealand, although there was less focus on the exotic aspects. It remained cosmopolitan, but it became solidly American. Swing, as a dance music, remained popular into the 1950s in New Zealand, and also remained popular as a listening music. The residence of American troops in New Zealand from 1942 to early 1945 assisted the popularity of swing, which, in the post-war years, would act as a framework for nostalgia.

World War Two, and the post-war years to 1955, saw many changes in the New Zealand cultural landscape. The political and economic effects of war had ramifications on the jazz scene, both in the difficulty of importing music, and in the constant upheaval from enlistment/conscription and rationing for civilians. The abovementioned residence of American troops in New Zealand offered many sectors of the community a boost, both economically and culturally. The influence of Americans on New Zealanders also impacted on the construction of jazz during those years.

The construction of jazz in New Zealand dramatically changed in the post-war decade. While jazz, in particular swing, remained popular for dancing, there was a general shift away from dancing to jazz to listening to it. The importation of bebop to New Zealand in the mid 1940s and the revival of the Dixieland style, as well as the jazz concerts of the early 1950s all pulled jazz away from the realm of dancing, and changed audiences' perceptions of the purpose of jazz.

The acquisition and construction of jazz in New Zealand was also affected during this decade by developments in the local music industry. The most important of these were the creation of a commercial recording industry, the reorganisation of radio stations and the establishment of radio bands. The collapse of the HMV monopoly on record importation and the resulting changes in importation policy and practice also were important factors in altering of construction and position.

In his groundbreaking 1945 study of New Zealanders and moviegoing, Gordon Mirams stated: "If ever a national post-mortem is performed on us, I think there are three words written on New Zealand's heart—ANZAC, HOLLYWOOD, and HOME. But only a very rash prophet would venture to suggest which word will be carved the deepest."<sup>173</sup> This quote reflects the intertwining and importance of the roles that the cultures of Australia, the United States, and Great Britain (the Anzac, Hollywood and Home of the quote) played in the lives of New Zealanders to the middle of the twentieth century. It also reflects the importance that these three cultures had in the acquisition and construction of jazz in New Zealand during the same period.

In Chapter Three I will examine the dissemination of jazz to New Zealanders in the period 1920–1939. This chapter will focus on the influences that jazz had on New Zealanders, where those influences came from, and how they affected the development of a New Zealand jazz scene.

---

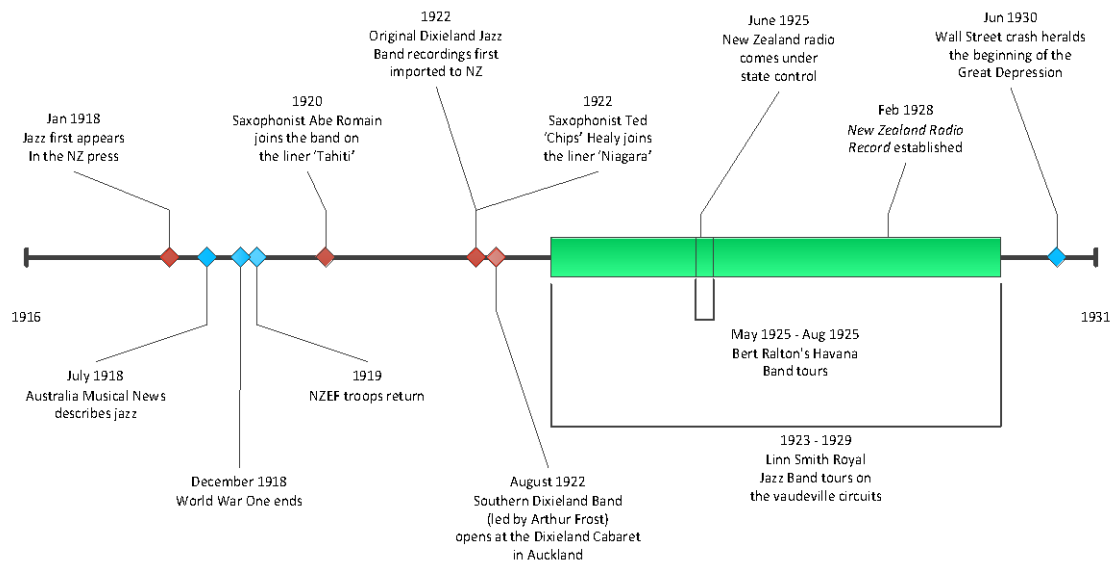
<sup>173</sup> Gordon Mirams, *Speaking Candidly: Films and people in New Zealand* Hamilton: Paul's Book Arcade, 1945, 125.





## **Part Two: Birth of a Jazz Scene**

---



### 3 Creating the New Zealand Jazz Scene: Dissemination and Influences

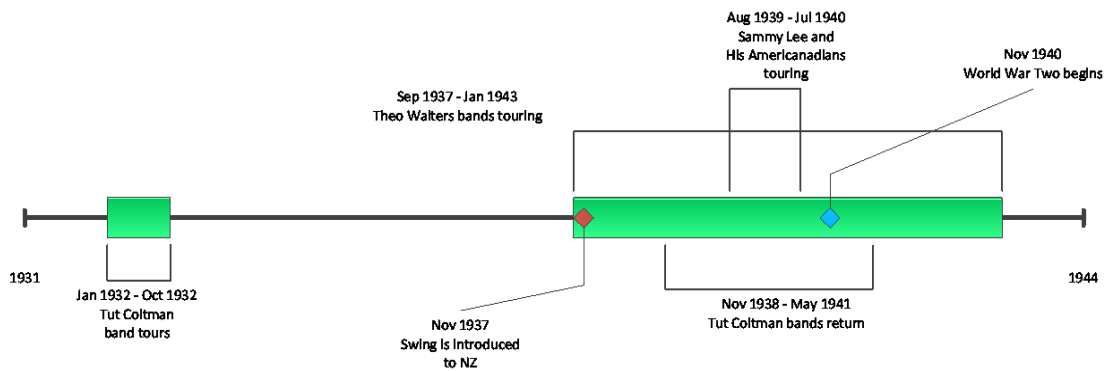
#### 3.1 Introduction: "ANZAC, Hollywood, and Home"

It has been said that "music, like a virus, respects no borders."<sup>1</sup> This is especially true of jazz, which in the second decade of the twentieth century spread to as many, or more, countries than the Spanish influenza pandemic. To continue the analogy, the rise of jazz possibly caused as much havoc, albeit musical, as the influenza pandemic did with the influence of the new media of recordings and broadcasting, enabling the rapid global spread of jazz.

In New Zealand jazz arrived on the heels of returning soldiers from World War One, their experiences with the incipient jazz style in Paris and London were the first interactions that New Zealanders had with jazz. In New Zealand though, jazz arrived through several different avenues. From printed media and recordings, to the experiences of people travelling to or from New Zealand, jazz was read, heard and talked about in many different contexts. Whether New Zealanders wanted to or not, they were about to participate in the first post-war international music phenomenon.

This chapter deals with the globalisation of the music industry and the effects that this globalisation had on the New Zealand entertainment industry. Specifically this chapter investigates the dissemination of jazz to New Zealand, and the influence of American, British and Australian jazz on New Zealanders (and the New Zealand jazz scene) during the interwar period. There were myriad avenues for the dissemination of jazz in New Zealand during this period; the frameworks of the main ones were briefly discussed in the previous chapter. In this chapter I will focus on

<sup>1</sup> Chris Bourke, *Blue Smoke: The Lost Dawn of New Zealand Popular Music 1918–1964*, Auckland University Press: Auckland, 2010, 4.



dissemination of jazz and international influences that occurred through the popular press, musicians, and broadcasting.

These modes (popular press, musicians and broadcasting) were important to the burgeoning globalisation of the music industry because they increased the flow of information between cultures and countries.<sup>2</sup> In the case of jazz in New Zealand these three modes were important to the importation of jazz because they were methods by which information could move quickly (especially in terms of keeping up with the latest hits), and as such they had a strong influence on New Zealand musicians and jazz fans. The popular press (including music press) influenced how the New Zealand jazz audience, and general public thought about jazz, while musicians and broadcasting influenced how New Zealanders heard jazz, and in which contexts they heard jazz. It should be noted that I have deliberately not included records as a separate section outside broadcasting here, as there is little verifiable information about which jazz records were imported and none about which records were popular during this period.

I have divided this chapter into three chronological sections: The Jazz Age (1920-1929), The Depression (1930-1935), and The Early Swing Era (1936-1939). These three periods represent distinct cultural and musical situations. I chose this division because the end of the jazz age/beginning of the Great Depression, and the beginning of the swing era represent relatively clear demarcations, musically speaking within the interwar period.

It is important to understand that these three sections deal with radically different cultural issues and situations. The relief that occurred with the end of World War One caused a widespread international trend for conspicuous consumption, especially in fashion, entertainment, and technology.<sup>3</sup> In 1920s New Zealand conspicuous consumption was visible on many levels, but

<sup>2</sup> Timothy Taylor, *Beyond Exoticism: Western Music and the World*, London: Duke University Press, 2007, 114-115.

<sup>3</sup> Peter Gibbons, 'The Far Side of the Search for Identity: Reconsidering New Zealand History,' in *New Zealand Journal of History*, 37/1 (2003), 42; Jean Gordon and Jan McArthur, 'American

particularly so in the realm of public dancing, with the rise of cabaret and other fashionable venues. The old adage of 'to see and be seen' was the motto of the 'fashionable modern set', and dancing, and other fashionable activities, was regularly commented on in the women's columns in the daily newspapers.<sup>4</sup> The trend for conspicuous consumption ended dramatically with the New York Stock Market at the end of October 1929, which plunged the world into depression.<sup>5</sup>

The Depression caused dramatic changes in societies around the globe. In New Zealand the Depression was felt deeply, with approximately thirty to forty percent of the male workforce (women were not counted in employment statistics) unemployed.<sup>6</sup> On the entertainment scene, this statistic was visible in the closure of venues, and the introduction of 'talkies' (films with sound), which created mass unemployment for musicians.<sup>7</sup>

If the first half of the 1930s was focused on the struggle of bringing the global economy back into balance, the second half of the decade was focused continuing that climb. In histories of New Zealand 1935 is generally given as the turning point between Depression and recovery. This was in part due to the beginning of economic recovery, but also because of the election of the first Labour government in November 1935, which in turn created the social security system, and other programmes that helped improve the lives of Depression stricken New Zealanders.<sup>8</sup>

1936–1939 encapsulated global economic recovery, but also burgeoning political conflicts around the globe. The New Zealand government became concerned about Great Britain's foreign policies, especially Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain's appeasement of Adolf Hitler during this period. The New Zealand government was especially concerned that if there were another war in Europe, whether a British fleet would be able to secure the Pacific region.<sup>9</sup>

These different social, economic, and political situations influenced how New Zealand interacted with other countries, and how New Zealanders responded to the abovementioned situations. These issues also affected how jazz was disseminated in New Zealand. In turn, the

---

Women and Domestic Consumption 1800–1920: Four Interpretive Themes,' in *Journal of American Culture* 8/3 (2004), 35-36.

<sup>4</sup> John Griffiths, 'Popular Culture and Modernity: Dancing in New Zealand Society 1920–1945,' in *Journal of Social History*, Spring 2008, 611, 615-618.

<sup>5</sup> Keith Sinclair, *A History of New Zealand* rev. ed. Auckland: Penguin 2000, 263.

<sup>6</sup> Philippa Mein Smith, *A Concise History of New Zealand* Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2005, 151.

<sup>7</sup> John Mansfield Thompson, *The Oxford History of New Zealand Music*, Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1991, 161-162.

<sup>8</sup> Mein Smith, 154-160.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, 159-160.

abovementioned situations influenced how New Zealanders responded to jazz, and the position of jazz in the New Zealand music and entertainment industries.

In this chapter I examine with two very distinct styles of jazz during the interwar period: 1920s Jazz (now known as Dixieland or traditional jazz) and late 1930s swing. These two styles also throw up some very distinct issues about dissemination, technology and performance practices. Between these two radically different styles of jazz were the Depression years. The Depression caused a change in musical and dances tastes, away from the 'whiz-bang' up-tempo jazz of the 1920s to more sentimental music. Away from the novelty one-step dances, towards the more traditional waltzes, valettas, and 'old time' dances. However, this does not mean that jazz disappeared from the New Zealand music scene, because, as we shall see, New Zealand audiences liked their music "gingery" and "snappy and stimulating."<sup>10</sup>

### 3.2 Jazz Age

Jazz appeared seemingly out of nowhere near the end of World War One. By the time the New Zealand Expeditionary Force troops arrived home in 1919 the word jazz was being heard in several contexts, mostly around music and dance. As I stated in Chapter Two, no one seemed to know what this thing called jazz was. Was it a dance? Music? Was it a way of behaving? Was it, perhaps, all of these, or something else entirely? However it might be defined, from its first appearances in the collective consciousness of New Zealand circa 1917 it was increasingly clear that this thing called 'jazz,' whatever it was, was very different.

#### Jazz in Print

Jazz entered New Zealand through several different media, but for the majority of New Zealanders their first encounter would likely have been through a newspaper or a magazine. The term 'jazz' appeared in New Zealand popular press from circa late 1917. The earliest mention of jazz that I have found in the New Zealand press was a description of the film *An Even Break*, which included a scene with a jazz band.<sup>11</sup> These early reports, mostly wires from Great Britain or the United States were vague and contradictory, and probably confusing to the local reader.<sup>12</sup> What was this 'jazz'? It appeared in sport, in music, dance, theatre, and film, and in society columns, but no one seemed to be willing to define it.

---

<sup>10</sup> 'Dancing Time' NZRR 11/8/1933, 12-13.

<sup>11</sup> 'An Even Break' [advertisement] EP 1/12/1917, 10.

<sup>12</sup> See for example: 'The Lorgnette,' *Observer*, 26/10/19186; 'Jazz, The New Noise that Makes People Gay,' *Poverty Bay Herald*, 11/1/1919 4; 'Women in Print,' EP 13/1/1919, 9.

In the 1920s the popular press was filled with mentions of 'jazz', and it was associated with myriad ideas from music and dance to fashion and advertising. In this section I will explore some aspects of jazz music as they appeared in the New Zealand popular press. The popular press and the multiple representations of jazz therein were important as they all informed and influenced New Zealanders perceptions of jazz.

Reports in the New Zealand press, from other press agencies or from travellers, often described jazz in terms of noise. For example from the *Wanganui Chronicle* July 11 1919: "collections of instruments best calculated to emit excruciating noises, and the closer those noises resembled a mixture of tin cans and motor horns, the better the result." This quote, while seemingly censorious of jazz, is in fact the opposite within the context of the article, which is enthusiastically promoting jazz as the latest fashion in Sydney.<sup>13</sup>

An important part of the essential identity of jazz in New Zealand at this point (1919) can be seen here not in terms of African American influences, blues, ragtime or improvisation, but in terms of noise. To be specific, it was the noise of modern life, which was filled with new sounds from technological developments. Frequently mentioned are sounds such as the above-mentioned "blare of motor horns," but also "the buzzing rattle of a machine gun, only not so musical," and "the noise of a gas engine choking in its death throes, and endless and pointless uproar."<sup>14</sup> These descriptions, in all their variations, along with allusions to tin cans, breaking bottles, and various other examples of violent noise, aptly encapsulate they types of noises associated with jazz in the late 1910s and early 1920s. These descriptions can be taken equally as commenting on the newness of jazz, and how it was associated with modernity, and on the perception of jazz music.

The concept of 'noise' was an important influence on early New Zealand jazz musicians, which will be examined in Chapter Four. Briefly however, 'noise' became a significant ingredient in the make up of early jazz bands in New Zealand, in part because of the types of articles I quoted above.<sup>15</sup> The concept of 'noise' also became an important element of New Zealand jazz audiences expectations regarding what jazz bands *should* sound like.

Another essential ingredient of jazz was speed: the general pace of life in the post World War One world was supposedly faster than before. This alludes again to the motor vehicle, and

---

<sup>13</sup> 'Jazz and Jag' *Wanganui Chronicle* 11/7/1919, 7.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, also; 'A Jazz Band' *Colonialist*, 14/7/1919, 7; 'High Spirits' *NZ Truth*, 29/4/1922, 1.

<sup>15</sup> Henry Shirley, *Just a Bloody Piano Player*, Price: Auckland 1971, 53.

other modern technologies, which sped up day-to-day activities. However, it also alludes to personal behaviour and the quality of excitement, particularly nervous excitement.<sup>16</sup>

The idea of the noise and speed of modern life was central to the perception of jazz in New Zealand throughout the 1920s. These were strongly adhered to by musicians, particularly in the early 1920s, but these tropes continued to influence the performance of jazz throughout the decade. However these stylistic devices were not limited to the music and dance, and these ideas of noise and speed crossed over into local responses via advertising and performance, and even influenced the moral evangelism movement's antagonism towards jazz.

The ideas of exoticism and primitivism became a fashionable part of jazz globally from about the mid 1920s. However, both of these terms were proverbial double-edged swords, as they could be used equally in celebration or in attack.<sup>17</sup> These tropes appear to have been only lightly covered in the New Zealand popular press, and mostly in the negative light. The most common example in the popular press were the commentaries by famous conductors and composers, such as Sir Henry Coward, lambasting jazz as a debased music with primitive, savage origins.<sup>18</sup>

It is important to iterate that the perception of jazz as an exotic other or primitive during the 1920s was not necessarily linked to a specific culture or country. Above all it was not necessarily perceived as an *American or African* otherness. The attachment of specific cultural identities in the New Zealand popular press occurred later during this period in the 1930s.

During the 1920s, especially the first half of the decade, press reports were often the first interaction New Zealanders had with jazz, and the above-mentioned tropes. This is important because the different ways that jazz was presented helped form New Zealanders perceptions of jazz. Further, the presentation of jazz in the popular press fuelled both the jazz craze and the controversy.

In addition to jazz tropes, the idea of a jazz band and its instrumentation was another prominent aspect of jazz in the popular press. Full instrumentation was only occasionally mentioned, with journalists preferring to select and describe particular instruments. The saxophone was usually mentioned, as were other prominent 'jazz' instruments such as clarinet, trombone, or drums. The reference to particular instruments in articles appears to be directly proportional to the strange sounds that musicians could produce from them. In the case of the trombone it was usually

---

<sup>16</sup> 'The Jazz,' WC 27/5/1919, 2; 'The Rush of Modern Life', *Ellsmere Guardian*, 8/9/1925, 4; 'Do We Live Too Fast?' *Ellsmere Guardian*, 22/9/1925, 6.

<sup>17</sup> Lewis Porter, *Jazz: A Century of Change – Readings and New Essays*, Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Thomson, 2004, chapter 5.

<sup>18</sup> 'Growth of Music,' EP, 7/10/1924, 8; 'Another Attack on Jazz' CP 22/9/1927, 8.



effects relating to the use of mutes to create animal or voice like sounds. The clarinet was described similarly, including one article where it was compared to the yelping of a dog choking on a bone.<sup>19</sup> With drums the references usually mentioned the oddities, such as pan lids, that drummers incorporated into playing.<sup>20</sup>

The instrumentation and personnel of the early jazz bands found in these press reports are important for two reasons. First, they demonstrate how a jazz band was conceptualised in terms of instruments during this time. Secondly, these reports would have been one of the main resources for incipient jazz bands in New Zealand to discover what instruments were associated with a jazz band overseas.

Articles and information on jazz occurred in several different places in the New Zealand press. General articles could be published in a number of different columns, but especially the entertainment, radio, music, and women's columns. The women's columns were also where much of the local jazz activity was reported on. This was because jazz was central to a number of social activities, such as attending dances or cabarets, which were an essential subject for women's columns. This spread of jazz across different columns was common throughout the interwar period, and through into the 1950s.

The 1920s started a discourse about jazz in the New Zealand popular press beginning with the early imagery associated with the music. The early imagery of jazz would prove to be influential on both New Zealand musicians and the audience during the 1920s guiding individual and collective responses (which will be examined in Chapter Four), which in turn would situate jazz within New Zealand society.

The image of jazz in the popular press during the 1920s was one of ambiguity. It was considered good and bad; fashionable, but not sensible, primitive, but sophisticated and it was, at the least, morally questionable. At its essence, however, the representation of jazz in the New Zealand popular press was one of modernity with all the positive and negative associations that that term implied during the 1920s.

### **Ship Musicians and the Southern Dixieland Band**

Interactions with foreign jazz musicians were an important factor for the dissemination of jazz in New Zealand across the period researched in this thesis. However, during the 1920s they

---

<sup>19</sup> 'A Jazz Band' *Colonialist*, 14/7/1919, 7.

<sup>20</sup> 'Jazz and Jag' *WC*, 11/7/1919, 7; 'A Jazz Band' *Colonialist*, 14/7/1919, 7; 'High Spirits' *NZ Truth*, 29/4/1922, 1.

were especially important as they helped to stimulate the formation of a jazz scene in New Zealand. They also influenced New Zealanders' perceptions of how jazz should sound, and the performance practices associated with it. The musicians and bands discussed in this section were all highly influential to the development of the nascent jazz scene in New Zealand as direct influences through performance or as informants on jazz scenes in other countries, particularly Australia and the United States.

There were two main paths for interaction with foreign jazz musicians during this period. The first was through New Zealand musicians working on cruise liners. Many New Zealand musicians worked on the liners in these years. Working the liners was considered a 'poor' man's Overseas Experience, but for the musicians that worked the liners it was often a professional turning point.<sup>21</sup>

Two such musicians were Abe Romain and Ted 'Chips' Healy. Romain (born Adrian August Bussy de Saint-Romain in 1905) took a post on the liner *Tahiti* after finishing his vaudeville contract with J.C Williamson circa 1919. The *Tahiti* regularly sailed between Wellington and San Francisco, stopping at various Pacific islands along the way. While in port in San Francisco, Romain went to dances and heard the local jazz bands playing, and purchased the latest jazz records.<sup>22</sup> However, it is unknown if Romain reported to his compatriots back in New Zealand about the music that he heard. Romain only returned briefly to New Zealand after leaving the *Tahiti*, before emigrating to Australia in the early 1920s. He would return to New Zealand only on band tours and the occasional holiday.<sup>23</sup>

In 1922 Healy joined the band on the cruise liner *Niagara*, travelling around the Pacific Ocean, including the entire Pacific coast of the United States and up to Vancouver, Canada. On his travels he paid close attention to any jazz bands he heard in each port of call, and would buy jazz records and sheet music. According to Vern Wilson, on his visits to Auckland Healy would tell his fellow musicians about the music he heard and would bring them packages of sheet music and recordings.<sup>24</sup> Although Healy himself rarely mentioned his experiences hearing jazz bands in the ports that he called at, according to Vern Wilson he was able to give New Zealand jazz musicians detailed reports on what he was hearing overseas, and knew what the local musicians wanted to

---

<sup>21</sup> Henry Shirley, *Just a Bloody Piano Player*, Auckland: Price, 1971, 57-61.

<sup>22</sup> Andrew Bisset, *Black Roots, White Flowers: A History of Jazz in Australia*, Sydney: ABC, 1987, 49.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> Vern Wilson Oral History by Patricia French Auckland City Library 90-OH-007-1-10

hear about.<sup>25</sup> In addition these experiences would help form him as a musician and bandleader giving him knowledge of different performance practices (including leadership styles), and repertoire.<sup>26</sup>

Healy was, of course, not the only musician to service New Zealand jazz musicians in this way. Others, including Henry Shirley, and British pianist Edgar Bendall (who would immigrate to New Zealand in the mid-1920s), would also report to their fellow musicians with the latest in sheet music, recordings and notes about jazz bands in all the countries that they visited in on their travels.<sup>27</sup>

Nor were musicians the only ones that New Zealand musicians had arrangements with. Many musicians, and jazz fans, made contact with other crew-members on the liners and charged them with acquiring the latest records, sheet music and music trade magazines. It appears that this was *the* way that serious jazz fans acquired records and so on to feed their obsession during this decade.<sup>28</sup> For musicians this arrangement assisted their self-education about jazz.

The second path of interaction was through foreign jazz bands coming to New Zealand. While the majority of these bands came to New Zealand on the vaudeville circuits, not all were part of the circuits. Here I shall examine the influence of the Southern Dixieland Band on the New Zealand, specifically Auckland, embryonic jazz scene.

The Southern Dixieland Band, led by Arthur Frost, played an important role in influencing and interacting with Auckland musicians in the early 1920s. It was possibly the first (mostly) foreign band to have a significant role in any of the jazz scenes in New Zealand. Unlike bands touring on the vaudeville circuits, which only toured for short periods of time, the Southern Dixieland Band played a significant role on the Auckland jazz scene for approximately a year.

Violinist/pianist Arthur Frost was a musical director at the Sydney and Melbourne Tivoli Theatres' when he was invited in 1922 by Dr. Frederick Raynor, owner of the soon to be opened Dixieland Cabaret in Auckland, to organise and lead a band for the opening season. Frost agreed, and organised a five-piece band consisting of saxophone, trumpet, trombone, drums, and piano, to

---

<sup>25</sup> Vern Wilson, oral history.

<sup>26</sup> Marcia Russell 'Band on the Air' *New Zealand Listener* 11/9/1982, 22.

<sup>27</sup> Shirley, 59-61, *Auckland Star*, 'Long-time dance pianist dies,' 17/8/1977, 3.

<sup>28</sup> Laurie Lewis, *Arthur and the Nights at the Turntable: The Life and Times of a Jazz Broadcaster*, London: Excaliber, 1996, 39.

come from Australia with him.<sup>29</sup> For some reason, the trumpeter that Frost had engaged was unable to come to New Zealand and so he hired eighteen-year-old Auckland trumpeter Vern Wilson to replace his original choice.

The Southern Dixieland Band opened the Dixieland Cabaret on April 11 1922 receiving rapturous reviews from the commentators of newspapers entertainment and women's columns. According to the *New Zealand Herald's* entertainment reporter the band was "beyond criticism as a jazz orchestra" at the opening, while *New Zealand Truth's* 'Lady Chain' editor described the band as "perfectly delightful."<sup>30</sup> According to Wilson, the opening of the Dixieland, and the Southern Dixieland Band really helped to popularise jazz in Auckland.<sup>31</sup>

It is unknown exactly how long the Frost band remained at the Dixieland, but their residence appears to have had quite an impact on the Auckland jazz scene. Newspapers hailed the band as being talented and professional, and praised them for their repertoire, which included "the latest and most distinctive in jazz music."<sup>32</sup> From the reviews of the band in the press it appears that the Southern Dixieland Band was playing quite a different style of jazz from the other jazz bands in Auckland. Contemporary responses from musicians outside of the band are unknown, although Wilson later stated that he thought that the Southern Dixieland Band was the first *real* jazz band to perform in New Zealand.<sup>33</sup>

### **Linn Smith's Royal Jazz Band and Bert Ralton's Savoy Havana Band**

As stated in Chapter Two, vaudeville was an important avenue through which the model of jazz played by foreign musicians to influenced New Zealand musicians. During the 1920s there were two significant bands on the circuits that visited New Zealand: Australian Linn Smith's Royal Jazz Band, and Briton Bert Ralton and his World Famous Savoy Havana Band. Both of these bands performed primarily on the vaudeville circuits in New Zealand, Smith on both the Fullers and J.C. Williamson circuits, and Ralton on the J.C. Williamson circuit.

According to Australian press, Linn Smith was one of the first Australian musicians to be able to challenge the American domination of Australian jazz scene in the early 1920s.<sup>34</sup> In Australia Linn Smith's Royal Jazz Band was considered on a par with the American jazz bands on

<sup>29</sup> 'Dixieland Cabaret' [advertisement] NZH 5/4/1922 10; Vern Wilson Oral History Interview by Patricia French Auckland City Library, ACL #90-OH-007-1-10 1984.

<sup>30</sup> 'Dixieland Cabaret' NZH 12/4/1922, 9; 'Dixieland Cabaret' NZT 29/4/1922, 2.

<sup>31</sup> Vern Wilson, Oral Hist; DHJA MS-Papers-9018-49; NZH, 12/4/1922, 9.

<sup>32</sup> 'Dixieland Cabaret' NZ Ob. 30/9/1922, 12.

<sup>33</sup> Vern Wilson, oral history

<sup>34</sup> Bisset, 23.

the Australian scene playing "the real thing...stimulating, seductive jazz."<sup>35</sup> His Royal Jazz Band made their first appearance in New Zealand as part of Fullers Vaudeville in late 1923, and this debut was considered a great success by the local press.<sup>36</sup> This tour would be the first of many throughout the 1920s, with the band appearing in vaudeville and revue shows on both circuits until approximately 1929.

One of Smith's contemporaries, Australian jazz brass player and bandleader Frank Coughlan, described the band's vaudeville acts as being "the epitome of jazz," which was "the popular music of the day jazzed up."<sup>37</sup> According to John Whiteoak this was jazz in the ODJB tradition, where the 'jazz' came primarily from instrumental effects, and secondarily from improvisation.<sup>38</sup>

As neither Smith on piano, nor his drummer, could read music the bands' act apparently changed infrequently. New Zealand saxophonist Abe Romain, who joined Smith in the late 1920s, stated that the act was developed around a 'loop' score: a descriptive score that had a sequence of short musical sections, which could be reorganised at will during the course of a performance.<sup>39</sup> Because of the use of such a score, and the infrequency of change, Smith's musicians were able, over time, to add embellishments to the arrangements and to hone and perfect their improvisations within the act.

The Linn Smith Band was widely admired in the press for their showmanship, and for their ability to create wild improvisations, while retaining the tempo and melody of the music they were playing.<sup>40</sup> However, the press reaction was not uniformly positive with some reviewers longing for "the real cornet and trombone tone, instead of the muted 'squeak' and the lugubrious saxophones."<sup>41</sup>

According to reports in the press, the Smith band was enormously popular with New Zealand audiences. However, it is unknown how much interaction they had with local musicians. Chris Bourke states that they made a "lasting impact on the dance scene," but does not discuss *how* the band affected the scene.<sup>42</sup> The fact that the band toured New Zealand repeatedly meant that there were many opportunities for musicians to hear about them and their performances, but no

---

<sup>35</sup> Bourke 21.

<sup>36</sup> Bourke 22.

<sup>37</sup> Frank Coughlin quoted in John Whiteoak, 182.

<sup>38</sup> Whiteoak 182.

<sup>39</sup> Bruce Johnson, *The Inaudible Music: Jazz, Gender and Australian Modernity*, Strawberry Hills NSW: Currency, 2000, 47; Whiteoak, 183,

<sup>40</sup> *NZ Theatre and Motion Picture*, January 1925; *NZ Observer*, 24/11/1923, 12.

<sup>41</sup> 'His Majesty's Theatre', D 5/6/1928, 3.

<sup>42</sup> Bourke, 21.

contemporary reports from musicians remain extant. It is my belief that because of the press coverage and popularity of Linn Smith's Royal Jazz Band New Zealand jazz musicians would have been interested in their repertoire and the performance practices. In particular, the connotations in their publicity that they played in the manner of an American jazz band would have created considerable interest among musicians.

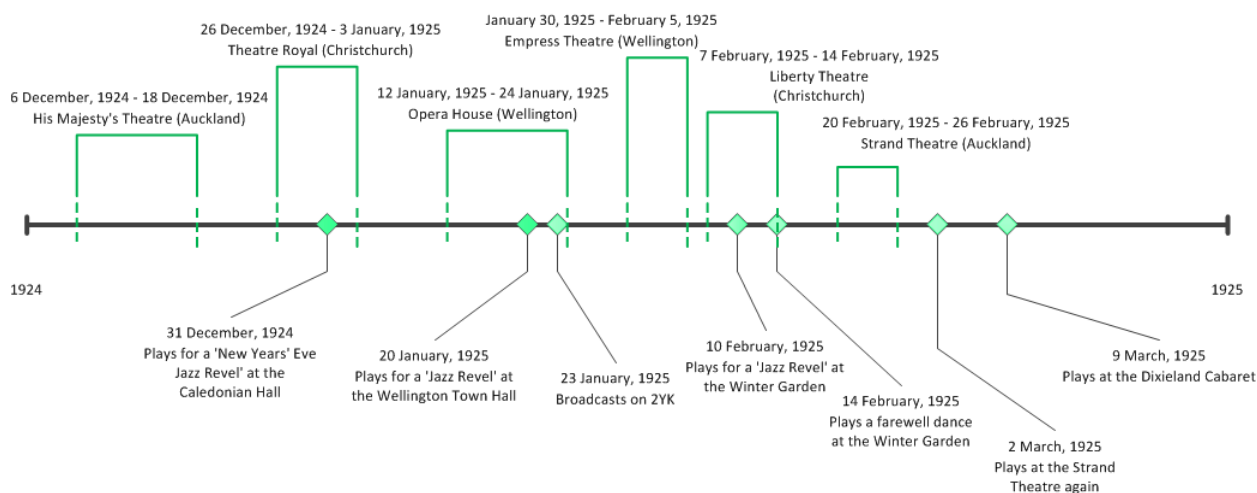


Figure 1: Savoy Havana Band timeline

The first big international jazz tour that New Zealand experienced was by Bert Ralton and his World Famous Savoy Havana Band from London (see Appendix: Selected Photographs for a picture). Bert Ralton was an American saxophonist who formed the Havana band at the Savoy Hotel in 1921. The Savoy Havana Band was formed primarily of British and American musicians, who were all reputed to have extensive international experience.<sup>43</sup> Although officially a part of the J.C. Williamson Super-Vaudeville, they were clearly at the top of the bill as one of the top bands based at the Savoy Hotel in London, and a favourite of the Prince of Wales.<sup>44</sup> Bert Ralton's World Famous Savoy Havana Band arrived in New Zealand at the beginning of December 1924, after an extensive tour of Australia.<sup>45</sup>

As can be seen by the timeline above, the tour of New Zealand by the Ralton band ran from December 6 1924 to March 3 1925. The first part of the tour, between December and mid-January was as part of the J.C. Williamson circuit and covered theatres in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch. As noted in the timeline, from January 25 the Ralton band left the vaudeville tour to play at cinemas, with the occasional cabaret engagement. The press coverage for the vaudeville tour was extensive, with pre-coverage lauding the band beginning from December 1. The press previews

<sup>43</sup> Bisset, 21, 22.

<sup>44</sup> 'Savoy Havana Band' NZH 2/12/1924, 12; 4/12 1924 12.

<sup>45</sup> 'Savoy Havana Band' AS 4/12/1924, 12.

copiously quoted from British and Australian press reports, celebrating the abilities of the band, and leader Bert Ralton, especially.<sup>46</sup>

Once the tour began in Auckland the press were extravagant in their praise. Initial reviews were not merely glowing but presented the Savoy Havana Band as the premier dance band of the day. These superlatives continued throughout the band's tour, occasionally going as far as stating that they were "the world's greatest jazz band," and Bert Ralton as the "most truly musical of all dance leaders."<sup>47</sup>

The press also emphasised the dance qualities of the band, with one review calling it "dance music in excelsis."<sup>48</sup> In addition to the unreserved praise, reviews often mentioned the repertoire for different performances, with the dance style mentioned first (one-step, fox-trot, waltz and so on), and then the song title. These mentions indicate that the repertoire was a mixture of popular songs, folk melodies and even light classical repertoire.<sup>49</sup>

Outside of the vaudeville tour the Havana Band played for several dances, mostly in Wellington and Christchurch, which were as well received as their stage shows. The first was a 'Jazz Revel' on New Years Eve at Christchurch's Caledonian Hall. This dance was billed as a unique "opportunity of dancing for five hours to the wonderful music of Bert Ralton's band."<sup>50</sup> This revel was such a success that another one was organised for January 2 with the band arriving to play for the dance immediately after the final curtain at the Theatre Royal.<sup>51</sup> These revels were organised by the Havana bands managers, and they were the first opportunity that their fans had to dance to them, and appear to have been very popular, as the dancers are reported to have demanded double and triple encores on nearly every song.<sup>52</sup>

Several more dances were organised throughout the course of the tour, but in one they also shared the bandstand with a local jazz band. For their Christchurch farewell dance on February 13 1925 the Havana Band shared the stage at the Winter Garden with the local jazz band Bailey's Orchestra. The Havana Band played from 8pm to 9.30pm, then took an hour break while Bailey's Orchestra played for the crowds. They then returned at 10.30pm and played through until 2am.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>46</sup> 'Savoy Havana Band' AS 4/12/1924, 12, 16, 8/12/1924, 9; NZH 2/12/1924, 12, 6/12/1924, 3, 14.

<sup>47</sup> 'Savoy Havana Band' AS 4/12/1924, NZH 4/12 and 6/12 1924

<sup>48</sup> 'Savoy Havana Band' NZH 8/12/1924

<sup>49</sup> 'Savoy Havana Band' AS 16/12/1924, 16; 'Savoy Havana Band' NZH 8/12/1924, 11.

<sup>50</sup> 'Havana Band Season' CP 30/12/1924, 12.

<sup>51</sup> 'Havana Band Revel' CP 2/1/1925, 2

<sup>52</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> 'Savoy Havana Band' CP 12/2/1925, 1.

When the vaudeville show closed at the Wellington Opera House on January 24 1925, the Havana band left the circuit to play several engagements at cinemas in Wellington, Christchurch, and finally Auckland. These engagements featured the Havana Band as interval entertainment twice a day (matinee and evening performances). The reviews for their sets were, again, uniformly positive, and note that despite performing encores, the band always left the patrons wanting more.<sup>54</sup> The reviews also note that the repertoire was a range of "splendid jazz numbers ranging from the more popular melodies to the syncopations of classical music."<sup>55</sup>

The extravagance of praise by the New Zealand press was due, in part, to the celebrity of the band. In 1924 the Havana Band was at its most prominent. It was, as mentioned above, a favourite band of the Prince of Wales, and a band at the famous Savoy Hotel in London. These two things, in themselves, garnered the Havana band acclamation in the press. The band had also released a number of highly popular records, which made them a familiar name, and sound to social dancers.<sup>56</sup> Another part of the praise was due to their musical ability and showmanship. Examination of the reviews outside of the extravagant praise indicates that they were an excellent band, with a fantastic stage presence and a wide repertoire.<sup>57</sup>

By the time the Havana Band finished their tour with a dance at the Dixieland Cabaret in Auckland on March 3 1925, the band had given Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch the widest exposure to jazz thus far, and the band was even written about in towns that they did not visit, such as Dunedin.<sup>58</sup> The Havana band also made a unique contribution to New Zealand music history after returning to Britain with the popular Maori song *Pokarekare Ana* appearing in their *Maori-Hula Medley* circa 1925.<sup>59</sup> This piece is interesting as it is perhaps the first time that a Maori song, sung in te reo Maori, was used in a jazz type context. Certainly it was the first time that a Maori song was recorded in a jazz context, although within the medley *Pokarekare Ana* was presented 'straight' with no attempt to syncopate or use any instrumental effect, which might constitute jazz.

The inclusion of *Pokarekare Ana* in the *Maori-Hula Medley* is interesting partly because it is indicative of a certain level of interaction between Ralton and at least one person who could accurately pronounce the Maori lyrics. While not perfect, Ralton's pronunciation of the lyrics is

<sup>54</sup> 'Savoy Havana Band' EP 31/1/1925, 13; 'Havana Band' D 2/2/1925, 12

<sup>55</sup> 'Havana Band' D 2/2/1925, 12

<sup>56</sup> 'Savoy Havana Band' NZH 6/12/1924, 14.

<sup>57</sup> See for example, 'Savoy Havana Band' NZH 8/12/1924, 11; 'Havana Band' CP 27/12/1924, 12; 'Havana Band' D 13/1/1935, 4; NZT 'Havana Band' 10/1/1925, 2.

<sup>58</sup> ODT 5/2/1925, 12.

<sup>59</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l3PYa3xBpio> accessed 17/11/2011; 'The Show's the Thing; Dance Music,' NZT 17/11/1927, 2.



reasonably accurate for the period. What this potentially implies is that Ralton was interested in New Zealand compositions, and felt that it could be popular outside of New Zealand. The inclusion of a New Zealand song in his recorded repertoire could also have been an attempt to increase his popularity in New Zealand. As Ralton died less than two years after his New Zealand tour it is unknown what more, if anything, he might have attempted with New Zealand music.

The interactions that New Zealand audience and musicians had with the Smith and Ralton bands influenced the perception of jazz during the 1920s. Although it is unknown exactly how these bands influenced jazz musicians it is likely that their performance practices and showmanship (as noted in Chapter One, the way these bands presented themselves on stage) had an impact on the New Zealand jazz scene. By the middle of the decade New Zealand jazz bands were reportedly utilising more showmanship in their performances, a trait that I believe is a result of being influenced by the Smith and Ralton bands.

Both of these bands were important to the wider recognition and popularity of jazz in New Zealand during the 1920s. Their tours generated a great deal of press interest, which would have assisted not only with publicity, but also recognition among the general public as well as jazz fans. The recognition would have helped jazz gain a foothold in New Zealand society in two ways: firstly the presentation of the bands in the press would have directed the general public's (potentially positive, and accepting) responses to not only these bands, but other jazz bands as well. Secondly by presenting these bands in a positive light the press were promoting the acceptance of jazz as popular music, one that was 'safe' and without morality problems.

### **The Broadcasting of Jazz**

Although radio stations, both private and state run, had been active throughout most of the 1920s, published information about the programming was scattered throughout various periodicals. The programming information in these publications was often irregular with inconsistent or conflicting information. Occasionally there was only a block outline (for example 9.0 to 9.25 Dance Music), with no detail of genre included. The first national broadcasting journal was *The New Zealand Radio Record and Electric Home Journal*, which was established in July 1927. For this reason, I have decided to focus jazz programming from 1927. While the beginning of a centralised publication did not end the publication of broadcasting information and issues in other publications, it placed these other publications within a framework of terminology and mutual understanding within the world of broadcasting.

As mentioned in Chapter Two, the broadcasting of jazz on New Zealand radio was quite controversial as a part of the ongoing debate surrounding the purpose of radio, and what constituted quality music. This debate has been extensively examined in Patrick Day's history of New Zealand broadcasting, *The Radio Years: A History of Broadcasting in New Zealand, Volume One*, but for clarity I shall outline the debate here in broad terms in relation to how it directly impacted on the broadcast of jazz.<sup>60</sup>

This debate was argued in two overlapping spheres: that of the audience and that of the broadcasting officials. At the centre of this debate were the questions: what was the purpose of radio? Was it there to educate or entertain the audience? The first position has been dubbed by broadcasting commentators and historians 'Reithian standards' after John Reith the first director-general of the British Broadcasting Company (a predecessor of the British Broadcasting Corporation).<sup>61</sup> Reith's view was that the radio was there to educate, inform, and improve the audience through high quality lectures/news programmes, radio dramatisations of classic plays, and presenting the best music, with a preference for classical music. The programming should also be entertaining, but within the parameters of what Reith regarded as 'quality.'

The second position focused on what was popular and what material would gain the largest audiences. Broadcasting officials and commentators that followed this position also advocated variety, and the broadest possible definitions of genres to entice the audience to listen to more of the programme. Advocates of this position focused less on quality, and more on continuously finding new repertoire to engage the audience. The idea was to entertain all of the audience and not attempt to force 'improvement' on any listener.<sup>62</sup> This debate continued throughout the period that I have researched in different guises, but the central issues remained the same.

As music provided the bedrock of New Zealand radio programming the debate over 'quality' versus 'popularity' was highly visible, especially in the attitudes and responses towards popular music, particularly jazz. In *The Radio Years* Day states: "Music was the basis of radio programming. It was made available to the bulk of the population for hours daily, in a way which few people had previously been able to experience."<sup>63</sup>

---

<sup>60</sup> Patrick Day, *The Radio Years: A History of Broadcasting in New Zealand, Volume One*, Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1994.

<sup>61</sup> Day, 90.

<sup>62</sup> James Nott, *Music For the People: Music and Dance in Interwar Britain*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2002, 63-64; Day 86-90.

<sup>63</sup> Day, 2.

'Quality' music was equated with 'good' music, not just in the technical sense, but also a quasi-moralistic or spiritual sense. The majority of classical music automatically fell under the banner of 'quality' in that it was supposedly uplifting to the listener and improved their taste. Some of this repertoire would also be considered popular, but the term 'popular' in early and mid-twentieth century New Zealand was often derogatory. Popular music was often equated with 'bad' music in the eyes of broadcasting officials and certain sections of the public, as it was seen to pander to the uneducated. This attitude was constantly expressed in the letters to the editor columns with 'quality' music aficionados stating that the 'popular rubbish' should be removed from the airwaves.<sup>64</sup>

Popular music fans, which included jazz fans, were quick to point out that not *all* popular music was bad in a spiritual or moral sense. Nor was it always bad in a musical sense. However, fans of popular music would admit that the choice of popular music records for broadcast was quite often haphazard.<sup>65</sup>

To a certain extent the debate between 'quality' and 'popular' was a reflection of New Zealanders (including broadcast officials) connection with Britain, and their ideas about United States. There is a sense that British music was considered 'better' than American music, simply because it came from Britain. By extension, anything approved of by the British Broadcasting Corporation, or other tastemakers was automatically considered 'quality' music.<sup>66</sup>

Naturally, everyone, audiences, committees, and broadcast staff, had their own ideas about which material was appropriate for broadcast, and what they wanted to be broadcast. Just as naturally, the wishes of one sector were completely contradicted by the wishes of another. Certain complaints (usually too much/too little) became common fodder for the letter to the editor columns of various publications, especially surrounding jazz. Everyone who wrote about jazz in the letters to the editor had their own conception of what jazz was, some of which had been gained through listening to the radio.<sup>67</sup>

In the first year of the *Radio Record* it appears that very few records of any musical genre were used for broadcast. The majority of broadcast material was performed live either in the studio or via phone relay from an external venue. This was a holdover from when performers were eager

---

<sup>64</sup> Day, 76 ; Letters to the Editor, NZRR 5/10/1928, 30; 12/10/1928, 25.

<sup>65</sup> Letters to editor, 'Gramophone Records' NZRR 31/8/1929, 'Proportion of Jazz' NZRR 5/10/1928, 30; EP letters to editor 'Popular Music,' 5/4/1928; Day 112-113.

<sup>66</sup> Day, 88-90; NZRR 'Radio Reforging Ties' 30/11/1928 10.

<sup>67</sup> Bourke, 30, 37-39, 67-68.

to perform on the radio for the sheer novelty of the experience. While the novelty for the performers (who were mostly unpaid), wore off fairly quickly, the RBC continued with this policy, as it was far cheaper than paying broadcasting rights for records.<sup>68</sup> However it is possible, in fact likely, that jazz/dance records were broadcast, but it went unmentioned in the *Radio Record*. There were many sections of dance programming that simply stated 'Dance Programme' and nothing more about what type of broadcast it was (relay, in studio, or records).<sup>69</sup>

In September 1928 New Zealand radio began to utilise records as broadcast material more regularly. Initially the regular broadcast of recorded material took the form of 'Gramophone recitals'. These recitals were usually of a particular genre and all from the same recording label, for example HMV or Brunswick.<sup>70</sup>

Although the majority of jazz broadcast remained live, and mostly cabaret relays, recordings began to play an important role. From 1929 the jazz recordings that appear to have been preferred for broadcast from this point were ones by sophisticated 'society' jazz bands (bands that performed in 'society' venues such as the Savoy Hotel, London), such as Paul Whiteman, Art Hickman, Nat Shilkret, and Jack Hylton. These four bands, especially Jack Hylton and Paul Whiteman remained the most popular jazz bands for broadcast into the mid-1930s. This suggests that although there may have been an official preference towards British records, there was a balance between British and American records in the late 1920s with a potential ratio of up to thirty percent American recordings.<sup>71</sup>

The influence of radio on the New Zealand public, and especially on the music scene, is not to be underestimated. In these early years radio was a novelty but it was also educational as people could hear many different types of music throughout the day. For musicians, globally, broadcasting was a way to expand their audience beyond the hall, cabaret, or studio, and also to inspire and influence incipient musicians. The influence of radio on New Zealand musicians and jazz fans would continue to grow through the 1930s. For the local jazz community it strongly contributed to individual's interactions with foreign jazz, which in turn influenced the local scene through repertoire, styles, and sounds.

---

<sup>68</sup> Day, 73-77

<sup>69</sup> See for example, NZRR 6/7/1928, 11

<sup>70</sup> See for example, NZRR 7/9/1928, programmes for the week 10-15 September 1928.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid, see for example the programmes for 31/5/1929.

### 3.3 Depression Years

The Depression years were something of a transitional period for jazz. The fashion for jazz had faded with the 1929 Wall Street Crash, and globally the trends in popular music were towards sweet and sentimental rather than hot and wild. In New Zealand the music and dance scene also followed these trends to a degree, though as jazz commentator Arthur Pearce said in 1933 New Zealanders still seemed to enjoy "snappy and stimulating" music.<sup>72</sup>

Although I do not know why New Zealanders continued to enjoy the "snappy and stimulating" music of jazz, it continued to be discussed in different forums, and performed in many of the cabarets and dance halls throughout New Zealand during the first half of the 1930s. I speculate that the continued popularity of jazz in New Zealand was in part a way of clinging to the better times of the 1920s, but also it may have been that the popular music of the early 1930s did not appeal to those people who were fans of jazz beyond the fact that it was popular music. So, although jazz may have been experiencing a down turn in its audience, it was not dead, nor dying as so many commentators hoped.<sup>73</sup>

#### Jazz in Print during the Depression

Although jazz was no longer *the* popular music during the Depression years, it did not disappear. In the New Zealand popular press jazz remained present as a global phenomenon. In fact, the debates over the origins and quality of jazz appear to intensify during the Depression years. Between 1930 and 1935 there were numerous articles in the New Zealand popular press promoting or condemning jazz *specifically* as a musical genre. Dance only rarely appears in connection with jazz during these years, and the extra-musical representations of jazz had all but disappeared from the press by 1930.

This change was important to the positioning of jazz within New Zealand culture. As a specific musical genre jazz became easier to define in the press. From this point jazz was identifiable as a musical genre, and the discourse surrounding jazz in the early 1930s would continue to refine the definition of jazz as music. In this section I will examine the debates surrounding jazz in the popular press, with an accent on the elite arts establishment's reconsiderations about jazz and its origins. I chose to examine the Depression era's media responses to jazz from this perspective because it provides an alternate perspective than from the devout fan of jazz.

---

<sup>72</sup> 'Dancing Time' NZRR, 11/8/1933, 12-13.

<sup>73</sup> 'Sweet Tunes Oust Jazz' EP, 20/12/1930, 9.

Interestingly the debate about the quality of jazz (essentially was it good or bad music) was not delineated along classical/popular music lines. There were many classical musicians/composers/commentators who openly rejoiced at the possible demise of jazz, and hoped that it signified a return to 'better' music.<sup>74</sup> However, there were also a number of classical musicians and composers, such as Australian composer Percy Grainger, and Russian violinist Mischa Elman, who not only enjoyed jazz, but also actively promoted it in press interviews as a modern music to compete with art music of the same period.<sup>75</sup>

Grainger's views that jazz was descended from the same ideas that formed classical music, and was essentially another facet of art music caused much consternation among the classical music world, and earned him much ridicule and condemnation. Grainger did not allow the ridicule to prevent him from continuing his crusade to have the classical establishment view jazz as something more than rubbish. His focus in taking on this crusade was as part of his promotion of Australians creating their own art forms, without feeling that they needed to pander to the ideologies of European artistic standards.<sup>76</sup>

While Grainger was not the only person from the elite arts establishment to promote jazz he was one of the more vocal, and being Australian, there was a certain kinship with New Zealand. Throughout the early 1930s there were a number of articles in the New Zealand press that covered Grainger's lectures and views, and the reactions to his statements with great interest. Grainger's views on jazz were much discussed in the New Zealand press, with regards to the local music scene, with as much approval and condemnation as other countries.<sup>77</sup>

Aspects of the history of jazz were also debated in the press from a variety of different sources. There were many articles devoted to attempting to shed light on the mysterious background of jazz and related topics. Among the articles on the history of jazz were ones that examined its African–American, and African ancestry in great detail. One article in the *Evening Post*, from 1930 and taken from the *Melbourne Argus*, expounded on the origin and significance of the tom–tom drum to jazz tracing the instruments journey from Ethiopia to America, specifically Memphis, Tennessee. The significance of Memphis is revealed later in the article when the author relates it to W.C. Handy's *Memphis Blues*. While the article is certainly fanciful, it does bear a certain relationship to the accepted facts of jazz history at this time, and more importantly it would have

---

<sup>74</sup> 'Music in England' EP 6/1/1930, 11; 'American Visitors' EP 27/2/1935, 11

<sup>75</sup> 'Fond of Saxophones, A Violinist's Confession' EP 23/4/1930, 13; 'Music as a Mental Diet' EP 14/9/1933, 21.

<sup>76</sup> 'Grainger Incident' EP 10/9/1935, 4.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

had a significant impact on New Zealand jazz fans, as little had been published about the history of jazz as yet.<sup>78</sup>

At the opposite end of the spectrum is an article proclaiming Ludwig van Beethoven as the father of jazz. The article is based on a theory advanced by Beethoven biographer Robert Haven Schauffler, who believed that the scherzo movement of the B flat quartet (opus unidentified) had all the same components as jazz of the 1920s:

One need only substitute for the first violin a saxophone with an effective caterwaul; add a myriad-minded drummer equipped with one-half of the items in the catalogue of Messrs. Sears Robuck and Co.; daub the classical beauty of the original with a vermilion splotch or two of cave-man war paint; cease abruptly three measures from the end—and behold, music worthy of the proudest and loftiest traditions of the Great White Way.<sup>79</sup>

It was not uncommon during this period for sections of the musical community to credit classical musicians or composers for the creation of jazz. This article is an excellent example of elite arts establishment claiming jazz that was occurring globally during the late 1920s and early 1930s.<sup>80</sup> This article goes beyond general claims, however, by giving a specific example of music as the ultimate ancestor of jazz.

For all that sections of the elite arts establishment disparaged jazz, other sections could see merit in jazz. However, there was an insistence by this section of the establishment that jazz *must* be descended from art music. This signifies that the jazz-positive section of the elite establishment clearly felt that there artistic merit in the music, which was not found in most forms of popular, or even folk music. Why jazz *had* to be closely related to classical music is an intriguing attitude, and demonstrates an underlying assumption that for music to be of any artistic merit it had to belong to the tradition of western European art music.<sup>81</sup>

Although the above examples may seem far-fetched, they demonstrate the two ends of the spectrum those articles on the history of jazz in the New Zealand popular press took in the early 1930s. As early examples of jazz history these and other articles would have influenced how the

---

<sup>78</sup> 'The Jungle Tom-Tom, the wild ancestor of jazz' EP 22/11/1930, 25. The first books about jazz and jazz history in English were not published until the later 1930s.

<sup>79</sup> 'Beethoven, the Father of Jazz' EP 22/10/1932, 18.

<sup>80</sup> Rodger Prior Dodge, *Hot Jazz and Jazz Dance* New York: Oxford University Press, 1995, 44-74.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

general public, as well as jazz fans, perceived jazz and its formation. As such they are important for their influence over the construction of the New Zealand jazz community.

The discourse surrounding jazz in the New Zealand popular press during the first half of the 1930s can be seen as educational. Articles about jazz, whether positive or negative, asked the reader to engage intellectually with jazz, and to develop opinions regarding history, form, and style. The articles and interviews discussed above also ask the reader to engage with the authors' or subjects' ideologies regarding jazz. Each article accentuated one or more particular points, whether it was historical, musical, or cultural, and again, the reader was encouraged to engage and develop their own opinion regarding the ideologies that were presented.

### Tours During the Depression

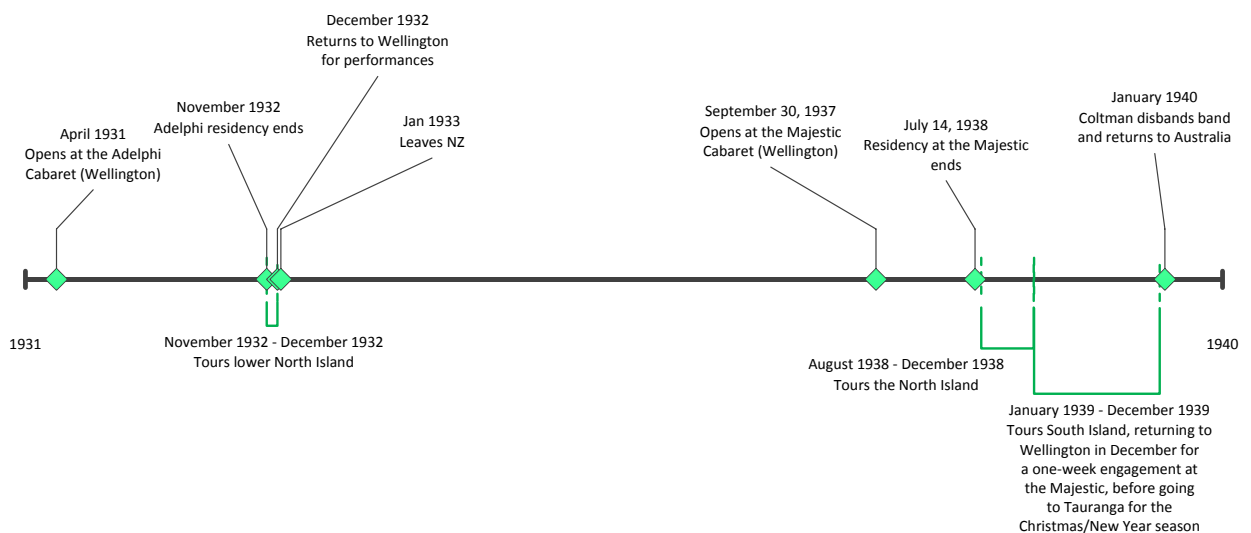


Figure 2: Tut Coltman Band Depression timeline

During the Depression there were fewer musical tours either on or off the (slowly dying) vaudeville circuits. During this period there was only one major tour by a foreign jazz band to New Zealand, the Tut Coltman Royal Dance Band from Sydney. Tut Coltman's band debuted in New Zealand at the Adelphi Cabaret, Wellington, during Easter weekend 1931, marking the beginning of an eighteen-month residency. While this was the first time trumpeter Coltman had led a band in New Zealand he had played frequently with Linn Smith's Jazz Band when it was touring on the Fullers vaudeville circuit in the late 1920s, and was already known to the jazz audience in New Zealand.<sup>82</sup> The band initially consisted of Australian musicians that Coltman had bought with him,

<sup>82</sup> 'Linn Smith Royal Jazz Band' EP 29/12/1928, 5.



but over the eighteen months some of the original members left and were replaced by New Zealand musicians Alan Brown on drums, and Tommy Stratton, and later, Syd French on saxophones.<sup>83</sup>

During their residency at the Adelphi, the Coltman band performed a number of other gigs. Many of these gigs were for commercial, charity, or private balls, such as the Unemployment Benefit's Cinderella Ball, but they also performed on stage for theatrical events. One such was the J.C. Williamson Christmas film programme, performing in the interval as Tut Coltman's Royal Melodians.<sup>84</sup>

As can be seen in the timeline above, after the end of the Adelphi residency in November 1932, Coltman took his band on a short tour of the lower North Island, going as far north as New Plymouth on the west coast and Napier on the east coast.<sup>85</sup> The band returned to Wellington in December 1932 for a short Christmas/New Years engagement at The Ritz (a cabaret in Wellington) before Coltman returned to Australia.

Little is known about the original Coltman band or their interactions with New Zealand jazz musicians during this tour. The band appears to have been very popular in the Wellington area, although, despite frequent notes, there was little detail in New Zealand press coverage. However, the Coltman band's activities were also covered in the New Zealand columns in *Australian Music Maker and Dance Band News*. While these notes were brief they indicate small aspects of the residency and tour such as changes in musicians and social activities within the band and with local musicians.<sup>86</sup>

The influence of Coltman on the Wellington jazz/dance band scene was due to his residency at the Adelphi Cabaret. This residency gave Coltman, and his original band the opportunity to integrate into the Wellington jazz community. This integration meant that Coltman and his musicians were able to interact with local jazz musicians socially, and eventually professionally.<sup>87</sup>

### **Broadcasting Jazz During the Depression**

In the 1930s the debate over 'quality' versus 'popular' continued, and the schism between the two factions directly affected the programming of radio in New Zealand. This debate was most noticeable when the New Zealand Broadcasting Board [NZBB] attempted to exclude American programmes and recordings in favour for British ones in early 1934. Many listeners objected

---

<sup>83</sup> Tut Coltman File AMM Aug. 1932 DHJA MS-Papers-9018-09.

<sup>84</sup> Tut Coltman file DHJA MS-Papers-9018- EP 'Grand Opera House' 28/12/1931, 2.

<sup>85</sup> AMM Nov. 1932, Bourke, 80.

<sup>86</sup> Tut Coltman file DHJA MS-Papers-9018-09

<sup>87</sup> *ibid.*

vigorously to this move, as did the programming departments for radio stations on the grounds that this handicapped their work making it harder to fill hours. The audience objected because they enjoyed the variety that the American programming gave them. In April 1934 the executive committee of the NZBB realised that they had been somewhat hasty in their decision and returned American programmes and music to the airwaves, where they were later joined by Australian programming. It was clear that while a portion of the audience followed the Reithian ideas of broadcasting an influential portion did not and wanted to be entertained, even if it was not the 'best' music (*i.e.* on their own terms).<sup>88</sup>

In 1930 and 1931 the jazz records broadcast were primarily from society dance orchestras. The records chosen were of mostly British bands, especially those led by Jack Hylton and Fred Elizalde, and other Savoy Hotel Bands. American bands were not entirely excluded, but they were fewer, with bands such as Paul Whiteman's Orchestra, the California Ramblers and McKinney's Cotton Pickers being among the favourite American bands for broadcast.<sup>89</sup>

From circa 1932 it became a common practice for *Radio Record* to detail all recordings used for the 'Dinner' and 'Concert Music' programme's, but to simply state 'Dance Music,' or occasionally, the barely more explicit 'Modern Dance Music,' for the dance sessions.<sup>90</sup> Neither did they state whether it was recordings or a relay broadcast. This practice also extended to the programme listings from Australian stations. This makes it difficult to know what jazz recordings were being used for broadcast during these years. That there was jazz broadcast is indisputable as there were many letters to the editor (often complaints) in the *Radio Record* about the jazz being broadcast, or not being broadcast.<sup>91</sup> Advertising within the publication promoting the broadcast of "hot jazz" with "the latest recordings by America's biggest dance bands" indicated that jazz, both British and American was reasonably prominent on New Zealand radio.<sup>92</sup>

Another important method for New Zealand jazz musicians and fans to hear the latest jazz was to listen to jazz broadcasts from other countries via short wave radio. The activity of searching through the wavelengths for jazz became quite popular among fans and musicians. In the 1930s the band waves were as yet uncluttered and it was relatively easy to tune into stations in Australia, Asia (especially Hong Kong, Manila and Japan, which all had English language stations), or the west

---

<sup>88</sup> Day, 164-165.

<sup>89</sup> See for example programming NZRR 2/5/1930. 18-20.

<sup>90</sup> See, for example, NZRR May 5 1933 programme listings for the week May 7-13.

<sup>91</sup> Letters to the editor, NZRR various dates, but especially 11/8/1933, 14; 20/4/1934, 6; 1/6/1934, 7.

<sup>92</sup> 'Hot Jazz' [advertisement] NZRR 15/9/1933, 8.

coast of North America. Dedicated DXers (Distance Transmission hobbyists), as short-wave enthusiasts were known, would often write to the *Radio Record* to tell them, and by extension the audience, what stations they managed to synchronise with. The *Radio Record* also had a regular column about short-wave radio, how to search and notes on reception from various countries. Apparently if the weather was fine (both around New Zealand and across the United States), it was often possible to listen to stations across the entire American continent including New York City.

Many jazz fans/musicians were enthusiastic about trying to find jazz broadcasts, and many would devote hours to listening to broadcasts from other countries in order to keep up with the latest bands, timbres and repertoire. For example, bandleader Epi Shalfoon recalled listening late at night to Australian and American broadcasts of jazz while he was boarding at Auckland Grammar School, which led him to become vitally interested in blues based jazz.<sup>93</sup> Taranaki saxophonist Len Barton was another dedicated DXer who would regularly tune into KGO Oakland to listen to their studio dance band. He quickly discovered that when he sat in with bands that he knew the latest hits, while his compatriots did not.<sup>94</sup> This knowledge gave him an advantage in getting gigs, particularly as a substitute as he would not have to be taught this repertoire.

Broadcasting became an important education tool for musicians and fans alike. The listening activities detailed above were important for moulding New Zealand jazz musicians and fans perceptions about jazz: what it sounded like, how it changed, and who performed it. They were particularly important for musicians who wanted to be on top of the very latest repertoire from other countries, especially the United States. Broadcasting also helped musicians emulate their peers in other countries, and for deciding how they wanted the jazz they played to sound.

The radio enhanced musicians and listeners sense of jazz as an immediate and, importantly, modern art form, one that could be adapted to the New Zealand context. Through the selective radio listening activities of musicians and fans we can see how both began to build a local jazz repertoire of pieces, timbres and ideals that fitted the New Zealand contexts for jazz. Arising from this repertoire building we can also see the beginnings of a jazz culture in New Zealand.

### **3.4 Early Swing Era**

Swing arrived in New Zealand with the title song from the film *The Music Goes Round*. The film was very popular, but it was the title song (performed by Tommy Dorsey and his Clambake Seven) that caught the ears of the New Zealand press and public. The song debuted on station 2YA

---

<sup>93</sup> Reo Sheirtcliff, 'Dancing in the Dark' *Music in New Zealand*, 1990/10, 40.

<sup>94</sup> Bourke, 67.

April 3 1936, and the press notices stated that it was introducing "a new tempo called 'Swing Rhythm.'"<sup>95</sup>

During the latter half of the 1930s New Zealand jazz musicians became increasingly fascinated with this new style of jazz from the United States called swing. Unlike the earlier style of jazz, where bands learnt on the bandstand swing was heavily influenced by bands who toured New Zealand extensively, in particular, Australian Theo Walters Personality Band, Tut Coltman's Swingstars, and American Sammy Lee and his World Famous Americanadians, whose activities will be examined in the subsection 'Musicians and Tours in the Swing Era.'

### **Jazz in Print**

The discourse about jazz in the New Zealand popular press continued through latter half of the 1930s with swing appearing in the media as the latest development in 'hot rhythm' and jazz. In the early swing era (to 1939) there were few attempts in the New Zealand popular press to define what swing was. For the most part it was simply presented as the newest style of jazz music and dance. Note that the purely musical discourse of the early 1930s had been expanded in the later 1930s to include dance once again as an interconnected part of jazz. The majority of references to swing in the late 1930s were reviews of films and shows, in particular *Funz A-Poppin'* and the *Hollywood Hotel Revue*, which included swing bands and dancing. Music columns also interacted with swing, usually in the form of reviews for records, but a few expanded beyond reviews to discuss the history and practice of jazz.

By 1936 the Wellington newspaper, *Dominion*, had a regular music column titled 'Rhythm—The New Vogue,' which focused on developments in jazz, especially the new style of swing. In each column the author, who wrote under the pseudonym 'Swing Bass,' usually focused on three aspects surrounding jazz. Please note that while I do not know the identity or gender of the author, 'Swing Bass,' I will occasionally refer to 'Swing Bass' by male pronouns for sake of simplicity.

'Swing Bass' explained different aspects of jazz music: history, compositional practices, performance practices, and so on. He examined important jazz events in America and Britain, and also discussed historically important jazz compositions, such as *Rhapsody in Blue*, or *Tiger Rag*. Finally, Swing Bass reviewed the latest records, and made listening suggestions to his readers.

---

<sup>95</sup> 'The Music Goes Round' EP 26/3/1936, 21; 'New Rhythmainia from America' NZRR 3/4/1936, 20.

Occasionally Swing Bass would add to these facets by examining a particular band, which could be from America or Britain, but was more often Australian.<sup>96</sup>

Through his columns, Swing Bass demonstrated a considerable knowledge of jazz, in particular the new swing style. With the combination of history and listening suggestions, Swing Bass actively encouraged his readers to listen to and learn about jazz. This encouragement made 'Rhythm—The New Vogue' an important column for the introduction of readers to jazz and swing, but it was also of educational value for existing jazz fans, and musicians, by engaging them in the discourse and encouraging them to expand their knowledge.

Although there were few attempts in the press to define swing there are two articles from Wellington's *Evening Post* in 1937 that stand out, as contrasting views on how swing fit into jazz. The first from August 26 appeared in the 'Wireless World' column. Entitled 'Hot Rhythm,' the article explained that swing was developed from a split in jazz. This schism was presented along racial and commercial lines. The reasoning for the racial schism was, according to the author's sources, due to the fact that although "the African savage in his primal state was willing to dance until he fell exhausted to the ground," his "European or American counterpart" [*i.e.* white] found that "a maximum of about eight minutes followed by four minutes rest was sufficient stimulation for Western sensory systems."<sup>97</sup>

This difference in sensibilities apparently led to two different types of jazz. The jazz that was developed for the white audience was shorter in length, slower in tempo and rhythmically smoother. This music, according to the article, became modern commercial dance music. The jazz that developed for black audiences was 'hotter,' faster in tempo, with more syncopation, and had more extended forms.<sup>98</sup>

The new swing music was purported to have arisen out of the original hot jazz, favoured by African American's who "found that the anaemic versions of jazz were totally unsuitable."<sup>99</sup> This rejection of the smoother 'white' jazz led to Harlem bands' development musical and instrumental techniques that could be utilised in hot jazz, which eventually led to swing. The developments by African American musicians led to the two types of swing: the "commercial dance music such as

---

<sup>96</sup> See, for example, 'Rhythm—The New Vogue' columns in the *Dominion* on July 4, 18 and 25, and November 7 and 14 1936.

<sup>97</sup> 'Hot Rhythm' EP 26/8/1937, 28.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>99</sup> *ibid.*

may be heard...from most broadcasting stations," and what is described in the article as "hot dance."<sup>100</sup>

The author's reasoning in defining jazz and explaining this specific perception of its history is to give the novice jazz fan, or new listener some context about jazz in general, and swing in particular. This article can be seen as a beginners guide to swing, and how it related to the jazz related dance music that the general public was already familiar with. In August 1937 (when this article was published) swing was relatively new phenomenon in New Zealand, and while dedicated jazz (music and dance) fans and musicians knew about it, the general public were just discovering it.

The article then continues with suggestions for novice listeners of swing, recommending recordings by Duke Ellington, Benny Carter and Don Redman, as they provide the best examples of "modern hot music." It concludes with ideas on how the novice listener can navigate their initial interactions with jazz fanatics and with the recommendation of a particular variety album of jazz.<sup>101</sup>

The second article from 30 December 1937, contrasts with the above mentioned article by proposing that swing has always been a part of jazz, and is in fact not a new or different style of jazz at all. Appearing in the 'Stage and Screen' column, this article, entitled 'Swing, Then and Now,' was taken from commentary in the *New York Herald-Tribune*. The unnamed correspondent in the original article stated that swing was simply the improvisation within jazz, and that it always had been. It is unknown whether the correspondent provided evidence of this in the original article, but none is given here. It was the correspondent's belief that the term 'swing' was simply a (successful) marketing ploy for a part of jazz that had been there since the earliest days of jazz.<sup>102</sup> The question of why the correspondent regarded swing as a marketing ploy is an intriguing one. From the way that the article is presented it is clear that the original correspondent was at the least a jazz aficionado, and had had knowledge of the development of the jazz scene in New York. Unfortunately, as the article (as presented in the *Evening Post*) is short, there is no expansion on their statement about swing as a marketing ploy rather than as a new style of jazz. However, given the negative statements surrounding swing (the correspondent termed it "mob-madness"), I believe that correspondent was reacting to the status of swing as a phenomenon, and the notoriety that it had already acquired in the United States.<sup>103</sup>

---

<sup>100</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>101</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>102</sup> "'Swing' Then and Now' EP 30/12/1937, 14.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*

What is interesting about these two articles is the contrast in, firstly, where they appeared in the *Evening Post*. The first article appeared in 'Wireless World,' the radio and broadcasting column, but the second appeared in 'Stage and Screen,' the film and theatrical column. In 1937 there was no consistent column, or section under which articles of jazz/swing fell. As the *Evening Post* did not have a regular music column in 1937, this implies that the editors had conflicting ideas about what swing was primarily related to.

Secondly, with the articles themselves, there is a contrast in the definitions, which may have impacted on the perception of swing in New Zealand. In the first article the author creates a lineage for swing, emphasising the separate 'black' and 'white' strands, and relating swing back to this lineage. The second article emphasises the close similarities of swing to rag-time and early jazz, and concludes that 'swing' was a marketing ploy rather than a new music. These differences imply that, although swing was regarded as music and dance, there were contrasting opinions on where it came from, and how it was formed.

These early articles on swing in the New Zealand press indicate a variety of knowledge and interpretations surrounding this new style of jazz. These variations were a natural result of often having to rely on second- and third-hand information. Unlike the perceptions of the earlier style of jazz, however, there was less contradictory information in the New Zealand press about what swing was, it was clearly music and dance, and related to jazz. This means that, although there were still inherent contradictions in the presentation of swing to the readership it was less than the confusion during the 1920s with jazz. Further, the presentation of swing in the popular press in the late 1930s remained an important avenue for creating the local perceptions of swing.

That swing was regarded as a phenomenon in the popular press was also indisputable. There was little in the New Zealand press about the sparking of the swing craze in the United States in 1935, however articles about swing from 1936 imply that it was already a phenomenon overseas. The significance of this for New Zealand's interaction with the jazz world lay in the way the local press presented swing. Since swing had developed into a phenomenon *before* coming to the notice of the New Zealand popular press it had already achieved a certain notoriety globally. This in turn meant that the press were able to trade on that notoriety in presenting swing as the latest fashion in jazz and dancing.

### **Musicians and Tours in the Swing Era**

In the period 1936–1939 swing was disseminated and influenced by the tours of a number of swing bands. While some were involved in revue shows such as *Hollywood Hotel Revue*, and

*Funz-a-Poppin'*, others toured performing in dance venues and on the radio. As mentioned in the introduction of this section there were three bands that were particularly important to the importation and conceptions of swing in New Zealand in the early swing era: Theo Walters Personality Band, Tut Coltman's Swingstars and Sammy Lee and his World Famous Americanadians. This section focuses on the activities of these three bands and how they influenced the New Zealand jazz scene.

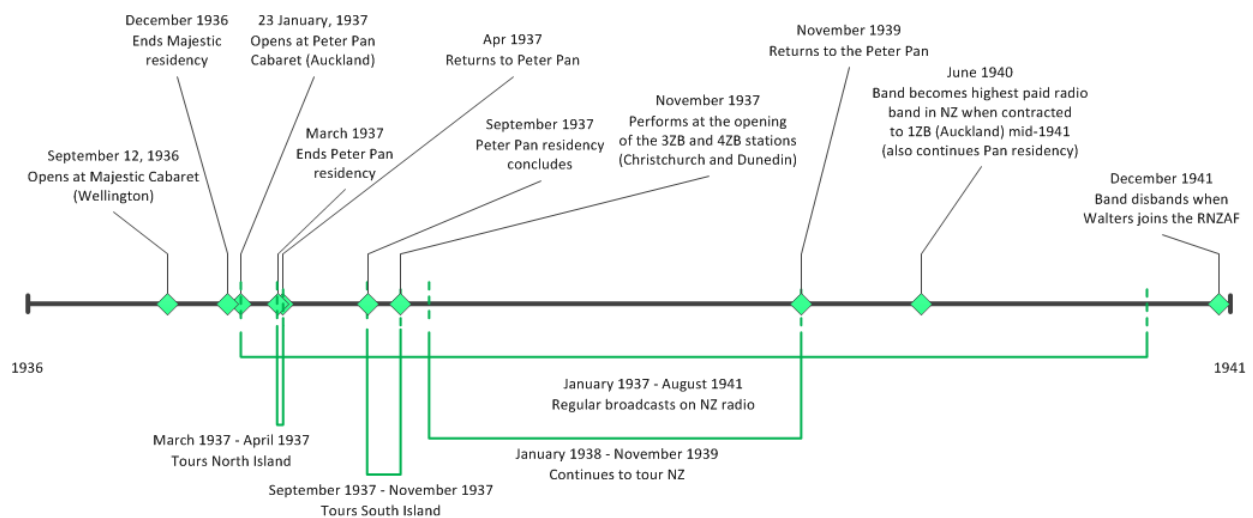


Figure 3: Theo Walters Band timeline

In September 1936 the Theo Walters Personality Band made their New Zealand debut at the Majestic Cabaret (see Appendix: Selected Photographs for a picture). Australian saxophonist Theo Walters, like Tut Coltman, was an important influence on New Zealand jazz, and the introduction of swing. As noted in the timeline above, the quintet of Australian musicians resided at the Majestic September through December 1936, and was very popular with Wellington musicians and the dancing public. A fan of the new swing style of jazz, Walters helped to introduce that style, particularly as performed by Benny Goodman, to New Zealand audiences.<sup>104</sup> In early 1937 the Walters band departed for Auckland and a residence at the Peter Pan Cabaret, while the house band of the Peter Pan, led by Lauri Paddi went to the Majestic until the end of September 1937.<sup>105</sup>

Theo Walters and his Velvet Rhythm Band (the Personality Band title returned later in 1937) debuted at the Peter Pan Cabaret on January 23 1937 for a three-month residency.<sup>106</sup> By the time they debuted at the Peter Pan the personnel of the band had changed, and expanded. As the original members returned to Australia, Walters replaced them with New Zealand musicians, and

<sup>104</sup> 'N.Z. Grabs One of Australia's Ace Melody Makers' NZRR, 2/10/1936, 17.

<sup>105</sup> AMM March, April, October 1937. Theo Walters File DHJA MS-Papers-9018-48.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.



began expanding the band. By mid-1937 the band was an octet, with three saxophones, two trumpets and a rhythm section.

The Auckland correspondent for *Australian Music Maker* stated that the band would be "of educational value" for the local jazz scene.<sup>107</sup> The band was known for being instrumentally versatile with all the musicians fluent in more than one instrument, and for their showmanship. The band not only impressed the musical community, but also the dancing/cabaret going community as well. The newspaper reports in the women's columns indicate that they were extremely impressed by the band calling them "masters of syncopated rhythm," and praising their swing arrangements and musical versatility.<sup>108</sup> Their repertoire, as published in the reports appears to have covered popular music from ragtime through to the latest swing hits.<sup>109</sup>

The Walters band would tour New Zealand venues between late 1937 and 1939 (see the timeline at the start of this section) splitting their performances between cabaret and other dance venues, and broadcasting work. They would return to Auckland, and the Peter Pan Cabaret in late 1939. Between 1939 and 1941 the band would split its time between the Peter Pan, and performing on Auckland radio. In mid-1941 Walters would negotiate the most expensive radio contract for his band to become the 1ZB studio band. The band (by this time a sixteen piece big band) would remain at both the Peter Pan and 1ZB until it disbanded in late 1941 when Walters joined the Royal New Zealand Air Force.

As stated above, the Auckland columnist for *Australian Music Maker* believed that the Walters band would be educational for New Zealand musicians. And it does appear to have been the case. The influence of the Walters Band on New Zealand jazz musicians was primarily in the area of showmanship.<sup>110</sup> Not only did the band provide excellent swing music for patrons to dance to, but they also created skits and sketches to perform for the patrons during breaks in the dancing (some including, or based on music, some acting). The sketches the band performed proved to be very popular with venue patrons, who reputedly clustered around the stage during the sketches.<sup>111</sup> The bands' routines were also popular with venue managers, because the band was bringing in record patronage.<sup>112</sup> These aspects of heightening their appeal to both patrons and venue managers

<sup>107</sup> Theo Walters File, DHJA MS-Papers-9018-48.

<sup>108</sup> 'Topics for Women' AS 1/2/1937, 11; 8/2/1937, 10.

<sup>109</sup> 'Topics for Women' AS 8/2/1937, 10.

<sup>110</sup> AMM Oct 1937 Theo Walters File DHJA MS-Papers-9018-48.

<sup>111</sup> AMM Sept. 1937 Theo Walters File DHJA MS-Papers-9018-48.

<sup>112</sup> AMM January 1938 Theo Walter File DHJA MS-Papers-9018-48.

bought home to New Zealand musicians, who were reportedly not very 'show' conscious, how effective showmanship could be, and how it could become part of a bands identity.<sup>113</sup>

Aside from showmanship The Walters band was educational to New Zealand musicians by introducing swing to the jazz scene. As mentioned above, although only a quintet when they first arrived to New Zealand they quickly became known for their swing arrangements, which were heavily influenced by Benny Goodman's swing style.<sup>114</sup> Walters' promotion of the swing style encouraged New Zealand bands to follow suit, and by the middle of 1937 there were a number of swing bands around New Zealand.<sup>115</sup>

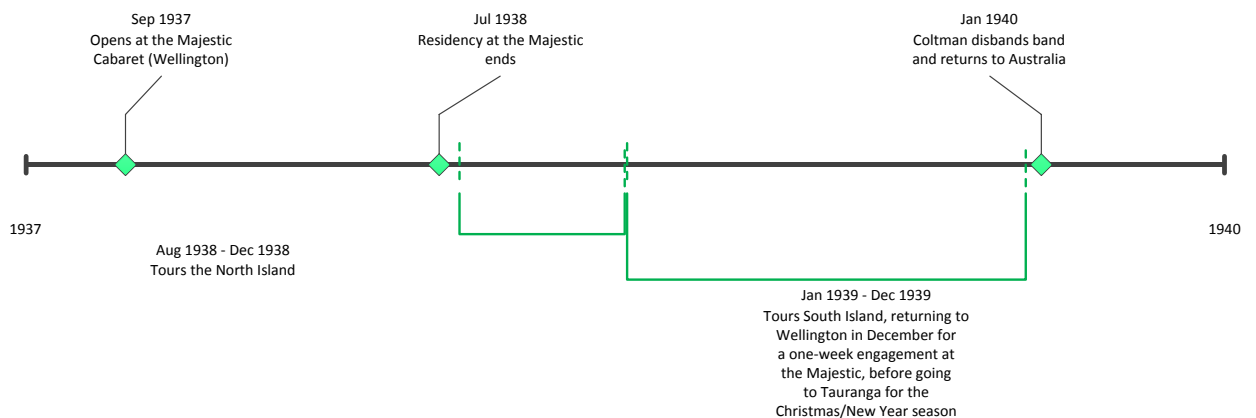


Figure 4: Tut Coltman Band Swing Era timeline

September 30 1937 saw the return of the Tut Coltman band to the Wellington jazz scene.<sup>116</sup> This was something of a triumphal return for Coltman as his band had become extremely popular there when they had resided at the Adelphi Cabaret in 1931 and 1932. The Coltman band resided at the Majestic Cabaret in Wellington from October 1937 to July 1938 (as noted in the timeline above). A mix of Australian and New Zealand musicians the Coltman band quickly proved itself to be popular among dancers and musicians, and Coltman was noted for encouraging the arranging abilities of his musicians.<sup>117</sup> By the end of bands' residence the Coltman band featured many of the best Wellington jazz musicians, including Bob Girvan (saxophone) and Alan Brown on drums, and was considered a first class band by the Wellington correspondent to *Australian Music Maker*.<sup>118</sup>

<sup>113</sup> AMM January 1938 Theo Walters File DHJA MS-Papers-9018-48.

<sup>114</sup> 'N.Z. Grabs One of Australia's Ace Melody Makers' NZRR2/10/1936, 17.

<sup>115</sup> AMM May 1937, Civic Wintergarden File MS-Papers-9018-53; AMM Nov. 1937, Peter Pan File MMS- Papers-9018-57.

<sup>116</sup> Majestic Cabaret [advertisement] EP 30/9/1937, 4.

<sup>117</sup> AMM January 1938 Tut Coltman File DHJA MS-Papers-9018-09.

<sup>118</sup> AMM May 1938 Tut Coltman File DHJA MS-Papers-9018-09.

The Coltman band concluded their contract at the Majestic in early July 1938 to be replaced by another overseas band: Sammy Lee and His Americanadians.

In August 1938 Tut Coltman and his Swingstars, which now mostly consisted of New Zealand musicians, embarked on a tour of New Zealand. As can be seen in the timeline above, the band started by touring the lower North Island, until October, before moving on to the middle North Island then onto the upper North Island in late 1938, before heading back down to Mount Maunganui and Tauranga for Christmas and New Year gigs. Most of these gigs were one-night stands in small towns, with occasionally longer engagements (two or three nights) in larger towns. In 1939 Coltman took the band down to the South Island, again touring mostly small towns, before taking a residency at Frascati's (a restaurant/cabaret), in Christchurch in mid 1939.<sup>119</sup> The Coltman band remained in Christchurch, except for summer engagements in Mount Maunganui, until Coltman decided to return to Australia early in the war.<sup>120</sup>

Coltman's influence on the New Zealand jazz scene was primarily in bringing swing to the masses. Of all the bands mentioned in this section, the Coltman Band toured the most extensively, and took swing out of the urban environment. *Music Maker* praised Coltman for including small towns on his tours and taking the time to introduce swing to the locals and making it accessible to a wider audience (rather than just to jazz fans).<sup>121</sup>

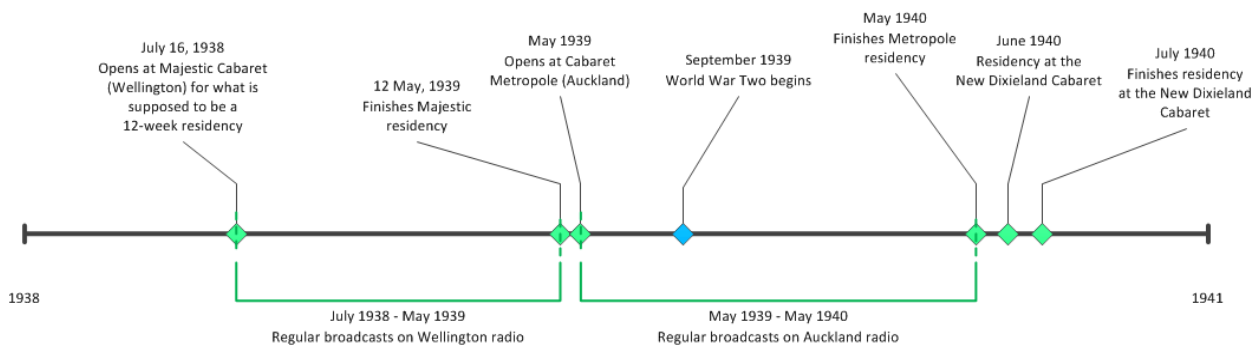


Figure 5: Americanadians timeline

Sammy Lee and His World Famous Americanadians arrived in Wellington in July 1938 and took over the residence at the Majestic Cabaret (see timeline above) from July 1938 until early May 1939. This was the first time that New Zealand had experienced a American style swing big band, and they made an enormous impact on the Wellington scene. Wellingtonians were astounded by the sound of the band, in particular the brass and rhythm sections, and also their repertoire of the latest

<sup>119</sup> AMM, April, June 1939.

<sup>120</sup> AMM February 1940; Tempo February/March 1940.

<sup>121</sup> AMM April 1939.

American swing hits.<sup>122</sup> They were also impressed by their flair, performance style, and versatility, as they created sophisticated floorshows as well as playing for dancing.<sup>123</sup> By the time they left for a residence at the recently opened Cabaret Metropole in Auckland in May 1939, they were easily the most popular band in Wellington and every jazz musician wanting to sit in with them.

During their residence at the Cabaret Metropole the Americanadians equally impressed Auckland audiences and the local musicians. Trumpeter Jimmy Warren, who went to many of their Auckland gigs, recalled that none of the local musicians had ever heard anything like the sound of the Americanadians, and that the brass "could really blow!"<sup>124</sup> In general, New Zealand jazz musicians were very impressed by the Americanadians, and they attempted to emulate the bands' big, shimmery sound. They were also impressed by the bands' showmanship and the way that Lee led the band from the background, emphasising the talents of his musicians.<sup>125</sup>

The bands of Walters, Coltman and Lee strongly influenced New Zealand jazz in a number of ways. As original personnel left the groups they were replaced by New Zealand musicians and became excellent venues for education in technique, performance practices, and arranging. For other musicians, these bands provided models that they could emulate, not only in terms of sound, as mentioned above, but in general showmanship and other performance practices such as improvisation.

All three bands were known for their showmanship and many of the press notes and reviews focus on the flair and style of the bands, and say little or nothing about what music they played. Whatever the bands actually sounded like, the showmanship of these bands had a profound affect on New Zealand musicians' perceptions of how to perform swing.

These three bands were also important in establishing swing as the newest form of jazz and dance music in New Zealand. Their strong presence physically, in the press, and on the radio (which will be discussed below) meant that all three bands were considered to be the backbone of the swing scene, especially in Auckland, Wellington, and Christchurch, but also further afield in the provinces. Their presence added impetus to incipient swing bands in New Zealand, and they provided much needed competition for established jazz bands to improve their performance.

---

<sup>122</sup> 'Majestic Cabaret' [advertisement] EP 9/7/1938, 6; AMM January 1939; Jim Warren interview with Aleisha Ward (2009).

<sup>123</sup> Bourke, 92.

<sup>124</sup> Jim Warren interview with Aleisha Ward (2009).

<sup>125</sup> Bourke, 92.

## Broadcasting

The broadcasting of jazz recordings in the early swing era gradually became more inclusive. This inclusiveness was assisted by the appointment of jazz fan and former musician Bob Bothamley to the position of Programme Organiser for Dance Music and Jazz Broadcasts at the National Broadcasting Service [NBS].<sup>126</sup> The position was created to coordinate the relay broadcasts and recordings of all dance music across the NBS stations (the YA designations).

As the programming organiser for dance music *and* jazz, a significant part of Bothamley's role at NBS was the importation of jazz recordings. The NBS had standing orders with a number of record labels around the world, and head office in Wellington received new releases usually within two or three weeks of a records release date in Britain or the United States.<sup>127</sup>

The radio audience also heard foreign jazz in a live, local, context with the relay broadcasts of the Walters, Coltman and Lee bands from various venues around New Zealand. Both Walters and Coltman toured the country extensively in the late 1930s and were broadcast from venues in both the main centres and smaller towns. Lee, however, was based first in Wellington and then Auckland.

All three of these bands made their first New Zealand swing era broadcasts relayed from the Majestic Cabaret in Wellington on station 2YA. Both jazz fans and general listeners enthusiastically received the relay broadcasts by all of these bands. The bands' relay broadcasts were praised by listeners in letters to the editor, and in the New Zealand columns of the *Australia Music Maker* to be musically and technically excellent. In these letters the writers often compared the relays by the Coltman, Walters and Lee bands to local bands relay broadcasts, with the local bands usually bearing the brunt of listener criticism.<sup>128</sup> The criticism was often because the local bands were less experienced in broadcasting and, except for vocalists, they were not used to dealing with microphones. Nor were they experienced in gauging the balance between instruments, except for in a wholly live setting. However there was also occasional musical criticism aimed at local bands for unimaginative arrangements or issues with musical technique.<sup>129</sup>

In addition to their regular Wednesday night relay broadcasts from the Majestic, the Americanadians and Tut Coltman's Swing Stars both performed in studio for vaudeville/light entertainment programmes. The Americanadians were part of 2YAs *Sunshine Show* on 2YA and

---

<sup>126</sup> Lewis, 83.

<sup>127</sup> 'In Bob Bothamley's Room' NZL, 28/11/1941, 12.

<sup>128</sup> 'Sammy Lee' NZRR 17/2/1939, 24; AMM January, March 1939.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

2YC, while the Swing Stars were involved with 2YDs *Revueville and Rhythm*. Both of these shows appear to have been a mix revue or vaudeville style entertainment with interludes by a jazz band.<sup>130</sup> Although little is known about the format of these shows, and how large a role either of these bands played in them they would have had the effect of bringing both of these bands to a wider audience.

Both the Walters and Lee bands spent a significant amount of time residing at Auckland's Peter Pan and Cabaret Metropole respectively in the late 1930s (see Figure 3 and Figure 5). As part of their engagement contract both bands broadcast via relay regularly on Auckland's 1ZB (Walters) and 1YA (Lee) stations. These broadcasts received a great deal of attention in Auckland and as with their Majestic broadcasts were very well received by fans and the general audience alike.<sup>131</sup>

The *Radio Record* appears to have had a close connection to the Walters Band as the publication wrote about the band in detail. Unlike the bands of Coltman and Lee, *Radio Record* wrote about the Walters bands' first broadcasts on 2YA and 1ZB. In addition to this there were items that mentioned when they were moving from Wellington to Auckland, where they would be playing and on when their next broadcast would be.<sup>132</sup> This publicity was valuable to all parties concerned, and brought the band to the forefront of the radio audiences' consciousness.

As mentioned in the section above, these three bands strongly influenced New Zealand jazz, and their radio work extended this influence. Commentators of jazz in New Zealand often remarked on the excellent microphone technique that these bands had on relay broadcasts, especially in comparison to New Zealand bands. While this was more a matter of practice, and becoming used to utilising microphones, it was a way that the Walters, Coltman and Lee bands stood out from New Zealand bands, and which made local musicians take notice.<sup>133</sup>

The broadcast of swing records possibly began around the middle of 1936. By December 1936, swing records had a definite presence on New Zealand stations. However the trend for stating 'dance music,' for all of the dance music sessions (be they old-time or swing) continued in the *Radio Record* throughout the rest of the 1930s. There were two exceptions to this: the 'artist hour' programmes and the ten to fifteen minute *Jazz Virtuosi* programmes.

---

<sup>130</sup> 'Radio Listings' EP 22/11/1937, 4; 17/11/1938, 28.

<sup>131</sup> 'Theo Walters from 1ZB on Friday' NZRR 22/1/1937, 8; AMM November 1937, September 1939.

<sup>132</sup> New Zealand Grabs on of Australia;s Ace Melody Makers' NZRR 2/10/1936, 17; 'Moving On' 15/1/1937, 18; 'Theo Walters' NZRR 22/1/1937, 8.

<sup>133</sup> AMM December 1936, January 1938, September 1939.

The 'artist hours,' were an hour devoted to the recordings of a specific artist, for example Bob Crosby.<sup>134</sup> The *Jazz Virtuosi* programmes were similar, but on a smaller scale, usually fifteen to twenty minutes. Most of these programmes were devoted to a single artist, such as Red Nicholls, but occasionally the programmers would choose to focus on a broader topic, such as British musicians.<sup>135</sup> Both of these programmes presented what was essentially a concentrated dose of a specific artist. For jazz fans these programmes would have been important, as they did not have to listen to other styles of dance music, as they did in the dance music programmes, to hear jazz.

In 1937 The *Radio Record* debuted a column on jazz called 'Tempo di Jazz.' This column was primarily about British jazz, and mostly about the older style of jazz. The column took the form of what might be called musical gossip: small two or three sentence items about a particular musician or band, recordings and tours.<sup>136</sup> The column appears to have lasted little over a year, and while only slightly informative it would have helped readers, who were not necessarily jazz fanatics, connect with the wider jazz world, and perhaps to become jazz fanatics in the end.

The main point of dissemination of foreign jazz on New Zealand radio in the late 1930s was through the Friday night Modern Dance Music session on Wellington's 2YA. From July 1937 this session was hosted by jazz fanatic Arthur Pearce (for picture see Appendix: Selected Photographs), who was already well-known in jazz circles for his knowledge of jazz, especially American jazz. Under his auspices the Modern Dance Music session soon began playing more swing and other hot jazz (as opposed to light or commercial jazz) records. Over the last years of the 1930s the session evolved into an hour of jazz recordings, the majority of which were American recordings.

By the end of the decade the programme, now known as *Rhythm on Record*, was the programme to listen to if you were a jazz fan or musician as Pearce not only had the latest jazz recordings, but also less known recordings and artists that were harder to acquire in New Zealand.<sup>137</sup> Musicians and fans from this era credit Pearce, known on air as Turntable, for their knowledge of the minutiae of jazz, especially American jazz. The effect that Pearce had on the audience is evident in several tales of *Rhythm on Record* fans being in the United States and being

---

<sup>134</sup> NZRR various dates late 1936 early 1937. Early December 1936 programming had jazz artist hours that included the Fats Waller Hour on December 1 and the Tommy Dorsey Hour on December 3 1936 10-11pm (both on 1YA). This continued through into 1937, an also to other stations, for example 2YA 13 January 1937 10-11pm an Hour with the Bob Crosby Orchestra.

<sup>135</sup> See for example, July 2 1937, p. 37 1YA programming for Tuesday July 6.

<sup>136</sup> See for example, 'Tempo di Jazz' NZRR 16/10/1936, p.10 and 15/1/1937, p.10.

<sup>137</sup> Lewis, 76-78, 117-118.

able to stun American jazz aficionados with their intimate knowledge of American jazz.<sup>138</sup> *Rhythm on Record* was the most influential programme in bringing New Zealand audiences foreign, particularly American, jazz. It was the most focused and knowledgeable jazz programme on New Zealand radio during the late 1930s. Pearce was insistent that there was an audible difference between dance music and jazz, and British and American jazz, and he would regularly present these differences to the audience.<sup>139</sup>

Pearce's passion for jazz shone through in the efforts he made in sourcing records and their accompanying information (side personnel, composition information, *et cetera*). His passion for educating the audience about jazz was aptly demonstrated through the political battles he fought to keep *Rhythm on Record* at the same time each week, and in convincing station and National Broadcasting Service officials to allow him a freer hand with music selection.<sup>140</sup>

The broadcast of jazz in the late 1930s continued the (possibly unintended) educational aspects that musicians and fans had begun to use in the early 1930s. In the later 1930s however, there were more local broadcasts (both of records, and live bands either in studio or via relay) that would help them extend their knowledge of jazz. For musicians the broadcasts continued, and expanded the development local repertoire and the incipient localised jazz culture.

### 3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has focused on the dissemination of jazz in New Zealand and the influences that overseas jazz had on New Zealanders during the interwar period. I started this chapter with the quote "music, like a virus, respects no borders."<sup>141</sup> However, like the influenza virus, while the spread of jazz appeared to be random there were underlying patterns of contact through people who acted as (witting or unwitting) agents for this musical 'pathogen'. The modes of dissemination and influences focused on in this chapter were via the popular press, musicians and broadcasting. These mediums for the dissemination of jazz in New Zealanders focused primarily on the ways that jazz was presented to New Zealanders. The presentation of jazz played a primary role in the perception and acceptance of jazz in the musical and general community during the period 1920–1939.

In the press journalists and commentators became the unconscious agents of jazz discourse, from the earliest years of the phenomenon. They presented the imagery and what they perceived as the defining stylistic and historical aspects of jazz to their readers ecumenically. This encouraged

---

<sup>138</sup> Lewis, 119.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid 83-84.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid, 101-103.

<sup>141</sup> Bourke, 4.



the readers to engage with the presentation of jazz, to form their own opinions about jazz, and perhaps to respond in the same format through letters to the editor, or commentator columns.

Musicians touring New Zealand, and New Zealand musicians witnessing jazz in other countries were the clearest and most obvious examples of the dissemination and influences of jazz on New Zealanders. Musicians brought their own histories, tropes, showmanship, and performance practices of jazz with them, providing a physical influence that print media could not. The witnessing of a performance could explain aspects of jazz that no amount of reading could adequately describe or explain.

The influence of foreign musicians on the New Zealand jazz scene, while myriad, tended to focus most on the educational aspects of music such as technical aspects and stylistic practices. Musicians reported being impressed and influenced by different aspects of musicians and bands' performances. From projection and microphone technique, to musical technique and showmanship, New Zealand musicians studied the bands that toured in order to advance their own performances. However, bands from overseas were also agents for developing the local repertoire because they influenced the popularity of certain types or specific songs. They also influenced local arranging styles and general approaches to jazz, which in turn helped to shape the local jazz culture, particularly on the part of the musicians.

The dissemination and influence of jazz via broadcasting occurred on two main levels: the philosophical debate about the purpose of broadcasting, and day-to-day programming. These interacted with New Zealanders in two different spheres: broadcasting staff/officials and the audience. The dissemination of jazz and the interactive audience spheres were closely interlinked creating far-reaching influences across the New Zealand audience and broadcasting hierarchy.

The impacts of the philosophical debate and day-to-day programming on jazz in New Zealand were clear from the earliest days of organised broadcasting. The schism between 'quality' and 'popular' as applied firstly to whether jazz should be broadcast at all, and secondly to what jazz (black/white, British/American/local) constituted appropriate broadcast material, was a defining interaction between factions of the audience and broadcasting officials throughout the interwar period.

This debate widened the discourse surrounding jazz that had begun in the newspapers. Through *New Zealand Radio Record* radio journalists, commentators and the readers were able to engage in the philosophical debate about the place of jazz in broadcasting. They also engaged in the

discourse surrounding the imagery and defining aspects of jazz, and how it should, or should not be presented in the medium of broadcasting.

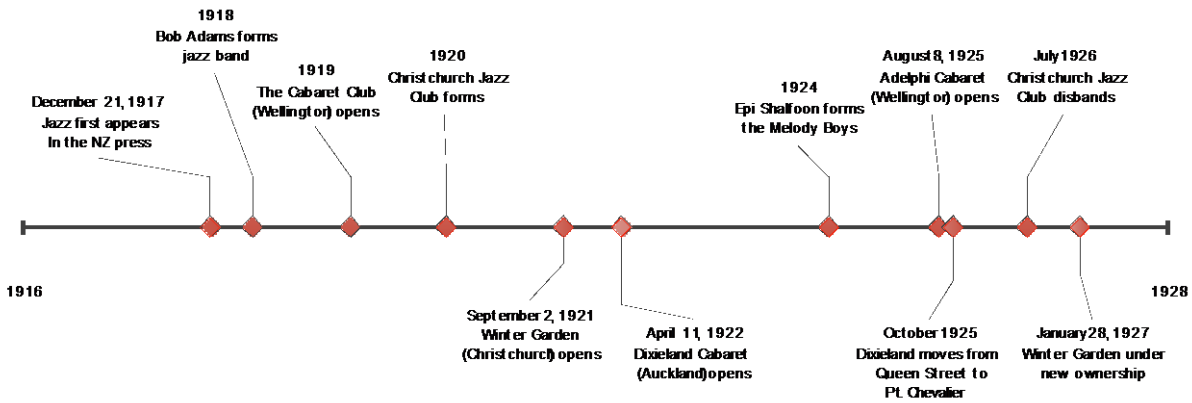
At another level we also have the interactions between New Zealanders and foreign radio, with the popularity of short-wave or DXing activities. This allowed jazz fans to listen to jazz from another country without the interference of local broadcasting issues. This activity impacted quite profoundly on jazz listeners, with fans and musicians often reporting how what they heard inspired them.<sup>142</sup> The effects from this activity will be examined further in Chapter Four.

Programming officials, hosts, and other broadcasting staff, both in New Zealand and overseas, were unwittingly engaged in the development of a local jazz repertoire, performances practices and culture. Fans and musicians actively sought out jazz that was presented on the airwaves in order to learn about new artists, new or different repertoire, and stylistic developments. Musicians took what they heard on the radio and incorporated it into their own performances, thereby spreading to other (local) musicians and fans.

The interactions that New Zealanders experienced with the international jazz world in the period 1920–1939 influenced them in a wide variety of ways. The effects that New Zealanders experienced were important to how they responded to these interactions, and interpreted jazz in a local context. In the following chapter I re-examine this period focusing on the local responses to the dissemination and influences discussed in this chapter, and how New Zealand musicians went about creating the local jazz scene and community.

---

<sup>142</sup> Calder Prescott, interview with Aleisha Ward (2010); Reo Sheirtcliff int. re Epi Shalfoon in Epi Shalfoon file DHJA MS-Papers-9018-41; Bourke, 67.



## 4 Creating the Jazz Scene: Responses

### 4.1 Introduction

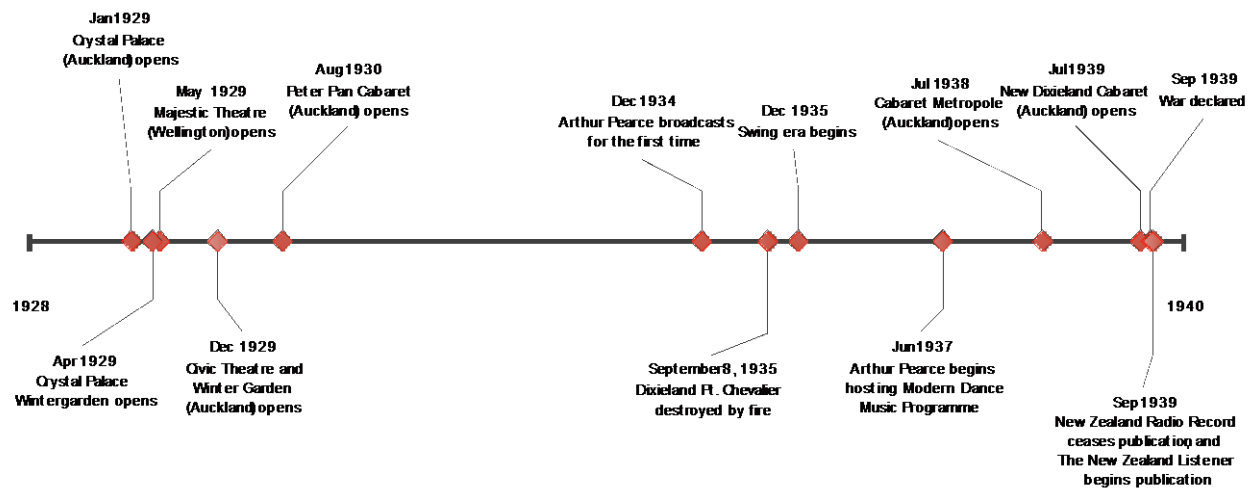
If, as I quoted in the previous chapter, "music is like a virus," the interesting aspect of this "virus" is that the 'symptoms' differ from country to country.<sup>1</sup> The 'symptoms' I am referring to here are the ideologies and contexts that are attached to the music in each country. In New Zealand, the ideologies surrounding jazz, such as modernism, and its racial and sexual identities were imported along with the music. However, the local contexts for jazz caused the attached ideologies to mutate to adapt to the local conditions.

In this chapter the concept of recontextualisation (and the beginnings of localisation) comes to the foreground to explain how New Zealanders responded to jazz and transmuted that response within the context of New Zealand culture. As I detailed in Chapter One, the model of recontextualisation that I use in this thesis is based on the model conceived by Richard Bauman and Charles Briggs in their work on the performance of oral folklore.<sup>2</sup> This model has two parts: the first is the decontextualisation material or culture from the original source. For jazz this would be the importation of jazz to New Zealand from another country (such as the United States), but it is jazz that has been disconnected from its original framework and context. The second part of the model is the recontextualisation of that material within a new cultural framework, in this case situating jazz within the culture and society of New Zealand.

As mentioned briefly in Chapters One and Two, New Zealand's history, and cultural relationships with other ethnicities within New Zealand, were wholly different from those in the United States, and reasonably different from those in Britain or Australia, despite the closer links to the latter two countries to this time. These differences affected the importation of, and interaction

<sup>1</sup> Chris Bourke, *Blue Smoke: The Lost Dawn of New Zealand Popular Music 1918–1964*, Auckland University Press: Auckland, 2010, 4.

<sup>2</sup> Richard Bauman and Charles L. Briggs 'Poetics and Performance as Critical Perspectives on Language and Social Life' *Annual Review of Anthropology* 19 (1990) 59-88.



with, jazz in the period 1920–1939 as New Zealanders only had a limited comprehension of the ideologies that surrounded jazz from those three countries, reflecting the theoretical concept of decontextualisation.

Although New Zealanders could, perhaps, intellectually understand some of the cultural aspects that surrounded jazz, for example the tensions between African–Americans and white Americans, because of the difference in cultural experiences they had no way of incorporating those experiences, and interpreting them through jazz. This brings us to the second part of the Bauman–Briggs model: recontextualisation. Because New Zealanders could only partially interpret the ideologies that affected the creation of jazz in the United States, Britain, or Australia they responded to the jazz that they heard and recontextualised it by creating their own models through the cultural and musical information that they could understand.

The recontextualisation of jazz is the main theme in this chapter. I investigate some of the ways that New Zealanders reflected and responded to jazz within the local jazz scene. I examine reflections and responses that occurred within the popular press on two different levels: that of the local jazz scene, and jazz in the abstract within a localised context. I will also discuss the activities of musicians and fans, and the establishing of jazz venues, on the New Zealand scene, and how they reflect and respond to jazz activities in other countries.

The recontextualisation of jazz in New Zealand is discussed through the ways that musicians and fans responded to different aspects of jazz influences from overseas. From the perspective of the audience the responses that I examine here include the creation of fan organisations and venues, how they were integrated into the jazz scene, and how they were accepted in wider society. The responses of the musicians to outside influences examined here include varying aspects of performance and stylistic practices, and repertoire.

Arising from the recontextualisation of jazz in New Zealand are the changing ideas about jazz in New Zealand across 1920–1939. This is at once a reflection of overseas influences and New Zealanders developing concepts of jazz. This is evidenced in the changing concepts of jazz in the press, especially the definition(s) of jazz, and the way that journalists reported on it, and also in the developments of a vocabulary for describing jazz music. The developing concepts of jazz are also demonstrated through the musicians' stylistic and performance practices, with references to influences by foreign musicians.

As with the previous chapter I have divided this chapter into three chronological sections: The Jazz Age (1920-1929), The Depression (1930-1935), and The Early Swing Era (1936-1939). These three periods deal with intrinsically different cultural issues and situations. The Jazz Age reflected the relief that peace had been re-established, which in turn promoted the dance and jazz crazes, new ideals in modernity, and new technologies. The Great Depression of the 1930s forced New Zealanders to abandon the lifestyle ideals of the 1920s, and focused their lifestyles on 'making ends meet,' and 'making do.' Finally, the second half of the 1930s, the early swing era, continued New Zealand society's climb out of economic depression. New Zealanders gained a renewed sense of optimism, and a return to some of the lifestyle ideals that had been favoured in the 1920s. The different situations in these three periods impacted how New Zealanders reflected and responded to global issues and outside influences.

Again, I wish to restate from Chapter Three that I am dealing with two very distinct styles of jazz: 1920s jazz (now known as Dixieland or traditional jazz) and late 1930s swing. These two styles each have distinct issues surrounding dissemination, technology and performance practices in each of the periods that they rose to prominence in. Between these two styles is the second section of this chapter, focussing on the Depression. This section represents a musical and cultural transitional period between the first and third sections of the Jazz Age and the Swing Era.

Throughout this chapter I have focused a great deal on Epi Shalfoon and his Melody Boys. The reason behind this focus is that much useful material was written about the band from their formation in 1924 through several iterations of the band until Shalfoon's death in 1953. After his death his daughter Reo, who sang with the band in the 1940s and 1950s, also wrote some detailed accounts of the bands' formation, gigs, repertoire and performance practices. Taken together, these accounts form the most complete picture of any jazz band in New Zealand during the interwar period. These accounts are also representative of a jazz band during this period that did not permanently reside at a cabaret. In addition, Epi Shalfoon was one of the most influential musicians

from this period as he actively encouraged and mentored numerous musicians across his professional life, and whose influence was felt long after his death.

## 4.2 The Jazz Age

As noted in the previous chapter, jazz appeared in New Zealand seemingly out of nowhere near the end of World War One. By 1920 jazz was definitely increasing in popularity, although no one seemed able to define what exactly it was. The press, musicians, incipient fans, and moral evangelists, all had ideas from what they had seen, read, or heard but they all responded in different manners, depending on their own perceptions of jazz.

### Jazz in Print

#### Jazz: Advertising

Although jazz as music is the primary focus of this thesis, it is important to understand that there were other, extra-musical contexts associated with the concept of jazz in New Zealand. During the 1920s, especially, jazz was also used in wide variety of extra-musical circumstances. These extra-musical considerations are vital to the understanding of how the local media constructed jazz for consumption, and in turn how the general public perceived jazz in New Zealand. As discussed in Chapter's Two and Three the term jazz was applied to everything from fashion to politics, advertising to moral evangelism, and was used in both positive and negative contexts. While many of the extra-musical representations of jazz referred to jazz music and dance they were often referred to from outside of these activities. This was particularly true of advertising, but also appeared in the morality crusades.<sup>3</sup>

Advertisements that used 'jazz' as a touchstone concept were wide and varied, everything from hair products to alarm clocks. They often used the terms 'jazz' and 'jazzy' to describe emotional qualities or fashionable items that the consumer simply must have. The conceptualisations of jazz in these types of advertisements were, at least in part, based on imported ideologies of jazz from other countries. When advertisements referred to the activities of jazz there was often an emphasis on the physical effects and negative consequences of 'jazzing': sore feet,

---

<sup>3</sup> For a discussion of the morality crusades in 1920s New Zealand see John Griffiths 'Popular Culture and Modernity: Dancing in New Zealand Society 1920–1945', *Journal of Social History*, 2008 (spring), 611-632; Tobias Harper "'Amen, Amen!'" Christianity, Society and Visions of the Future in 1920s New Zealand', *New Zealand Journal of History*, 2008, 42/2 133-153.

messy hair, or perspiration— in an effort to sell products that would remedy these conditions to the supposedly jazz—obsessed public.<sup>4</sup>

At the very core of jazz in advertising was the concept of excitement. This conceptualisation arose out of the association of jazz with dance, fun, and conviviality. The advertisements that utilised jazz and as part of their marketing were marketing excitement as much as jazz itself. For example, advertisements for Woods Peppermint Cure (a cold elixir) routinely contained references to jazz and jazz—as—excitement.<sup>5</sup> These advertisements, in the form of poems, appear to have been designed to entice consumers with the positive/exciting aspects of jazz ("take me where the jazz bands jazzle, swing me in the shimmie shake" and "seeking the scenes where the arc-lights glare") to sell a cure for the negative aspects (catching a cold or influenza).<sup>6</sup> Woods, and other companies, routinely used the idea of jazz—as—excitement (and the consequences thereof) to market their products to consumers.

The conceptualisations of jazz also extended to fashion. During the 1920s jazz was apparently an integral part of the fashion world for both men and women, although women's fashion received more press coverage. Women's columns routinely mention such things as jazz fans, hats, baskets and prints. Women were assured that these were the latest in these items and to be fashionable they needed to have them.<sup>7</sup> With regards to fans and hats, jazz appears to refer to the style and construction of the product, and with 'jazz print's' on fabric, this appears to refer to particular patterns that were new, fashionable and different from common prints— for example abstract rather than floral.<sup>8</sup> The few press references to men's fashion referred to jazz ties, handkerchiefs, waistcoats and shoes.<sup>9</sup> As with women's fashion trends, much of the 'jazz' in these items appears to have been related to construction, pattern, style or fabric print.

#### Jazz: Morality

Jazz was also something more than music and dance: it was the epitome of excitement and modernity. Both of these ideas, and other surrounding jazz as it was imported to New Zealand were

---

<sup>4</sup> See for example: 'Woods Peppermint Cure' NZH 11/5/1922,4; 'For Women' 14/4/1923, 4 (supplement); 'Tiz' [advertisement] CP 27/10/1920, 3.

<sup>5</sup> 'Woods' NZH 11/5/1922, 4.

<sup>6</sup> *ibid* also 'Woods' *Kaipara and Waitemata Echo*, 1/9/1921, 2.

<sup>7</sup> 'Women's Corner' CP 14/12/1920, 2; 'Jazz Fashions Catering for Restless People' *Poverty Bay Herald*, 6/3/1920, 5.

<sup>8</sup> 'Jazz Straws' EP 28/7/1920, 9; 'Jazz Voiles' D 26/10/1920, 5; 'Jazz Baskets' ODT 8/3/1926, 9.

<sup>9</sup> 'Jazz handkerchiefs' EP 29/11/1924, 14; 'Jazz Waistcoats' EP 20/4/1926; 'Jazz Shoes' NZT 24/5/1924, 14.

considered dangerous by moral crusaders.<sup>10</sup> However, the morality crusades and resulting panics that raged in New Zealand throughout the 1920s were never about jazz specifically, although jazz did serve as a focus point. Rather, jazz was symbolic of modern evils, in particular, *imported* modern evils, especially modern social dancing, and by extension, commercial dance venues, especially the cabaret. While much of the essential argument was based in jazz as music and dance, the perceived dangers of these activities were expanded to become the monsters under the bed—imaginary and larger than life.

The evangelism movement in New Zealand had its roots in the nineteenth century, with many different foci over the years.<sup>11</sup> By the 1920s possibly the most prominent focus of the crusade was on social dancing in commercial venues. A great part of the outcry against dancing involved the potential for premarital, or extramarital sex, as enabled by the newly formed practice of 'cutting in,' and the possible availability of alcohol, or, to a lesser extent, drugs.<sup>12</sup>

The morality panics primarily focused the behaviour of young women. Young women were considered to have a weaker moral fibre, and were easily swayed by anything new, modern, or illicit, unless they were properly protected from evil by their parents and brothers. During the 1920s the tabloid *New Zealand Truth* was filled with lurid tales of girls and young women "falling from grace" at dance halls.<sup>13</sup>

Throughout the 1920s there were a multitude of scandal—mongering articles about the effects of cabarets on the nebulous morals of young flappers, particularly in *Truth*, but scandal—mongering was not the only part of the morality crusade.<sup>14</sup> Less lurid than the *Truth* articles, but still provoking moral panic, were the articles and opinion pieces in the daily newspapers that decried the supposed deviancy that regularly occurred in commercial dance halls. These articles vigorously championed sobriety, modest behaviour and dress, and campaigned against the evils of modern living, in particular, modern dancing in commercial dance venues.<sup>15</sup> The tour by Salvation Army General Bramwell Booth in 1924 that damned all styles of dancing as being sinful and physically dangerous added impetus to organisations such as the Women's Christian Temperance

---

<sup>10</sup> Griffiths, John 'Popular Culture' 619- 622.

<sup>11</sup> Belich 157-160.

<sup>12</sup> Griffiths, John 'Popular Culture' 619- 622; Georgina White, 55

<sup>13</sup> See for example: 'The Gordian Knot' NZT, 2/12/1922, 2, 'Old Beans and Young Minxes' NZT, 13/9/1924, 7 'Rebel Against Restraint' NZT 3/10/1925, 9, 'Decadent Christianity' NZT 18/11/1926, 6.

<sup>14</sup> 'Christchurchiana' NZT 31/1/1920, 2; 'Mixing Champagne and Cocktails in Cabaret "Cuddle Cubicles"' NZT 5/8/1926, 7.

<sup>15</sup> 'Jazz Condemned' NZH 20/5/1922, 2; 'The Road to Hell' EP 5/6/1923, 7, 'Modern Morals, EP29/11/1926, 9.



Union to campaign against the evils of modern living and spawned a number of articles and opinion pieces in support of General Booth's (and his brothers' General's Herbert, and Ballington Booth) views.<sup>16</sup> While these articles did not focus as *Truth* did on the 'downfall from grace,' they certainly played on the fear that young people, especially young women, would descend into sexual promiscuity, and criminal deviancy, without proper guidance.

The extra-musical representations of jazz in the New Zealand popular press reflected the myriad ways that jazz was viewed in New Zealand during the 1920s. Local and international conceptions of jazz were often presented within New Zealand publications as dichotomies of good and bad, healthy and unhealthy. These dichotomies surrounding jazz also conveyed a tension between modernity and previously accepted social values. These dichotomies would filter through to the entertainment scene in a variety of ways from restrictions on cabaret and dance hall operating hours and regulations, to the decisions of cabarets or dance halls to ban certain dances (and thus certain repertoire).<sup>17</sup>

#### Jazz: Music

During the 1920s the majority of press reports on local jazz activities were found in the women's or entertainments columns. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the reporting of jazz in the women's columns was usually a part of dance/cabaret reports, which focused more often on what ladies were wearing, and the venue decorations rather than the band that provided the music. In the entertainments columns, the acknowledgement of jazz was usually as a part of vaudeville/revue entertainment or dances, but, as with the women's columns, with limited information about the band or music.

If the band was mentioned at all, it was usually the name of the bandleader, or the band name only, without reference to personnel or instrumentation. Occasionally there were vague references to the size of the group. For example, photographer/pianist Havelock Willyams (also spelled Williams) led a jazz band in Christchurch in the early 1920s, and in an item for the Christchurch Jazz Club dance in the *Press*, his band was noted to consist of eight musicians.<sup>18</sup>

However, when the journalist did report more about the band, it was often very informative. An excellent example of this is the advertisement of a new dance in Christchurch organised by banjo player Louis Bloy. Bloy was a renowned string teacher (banjo and mandolin in particular) in

<sup>16</sup> See for example: 'General Booth' EP 6/5/1924, 2.

<sup>17</sup> CP Letters to the editor regarding dance hall hours 20/2/1928-25/2/1928, 11; NZT 'Mixing Champagne and Cocktails in Cabaret "Cuddle Cubicles" 5/8/1926, 7.

<sup>18</sup> 'Women's Corner' Jazz Club CP 16/4/1921, 2.

Christchurch, and formed and directed several banjo orchestras and dance bands around the Canterbury region from the early 1900s. From mid-1921 Bloy, was known on the Christchurch dance scene for arranging and managing regular jazz dances at several venues, including the Returned Soldiers' Association [RSA] Club.<sup>19</sup> On previewing the first dance at the RSA Club the *Press Women's Corner* columnist wrote:

The feature of the dance will be the orchestra, which will be run on the same lines as the leading American, Continental, and Australian Jazz bands. The violin is dispensed with, the lead being taken by the banjo, with the trombone, cornet, and clarinet supporting. Drums will be used for soft effects, and Mr Robert Kirk will direct from the piano. This instrumentation has proved the most successful with lovers of Jazz dancing, and with Mr Bloy playing the banjo, should prove a great attraction.<sup>20</sup>

The descriptions in the press about the sound of local jazz bands were, as with band descriptions, rather brief, and often generic. Usually the descriptions of sound and repertoire relied on adjectives and superlatives to convey some sort of impression of jazz to the reader. Although little is known about how these bands sounded, dance and event reports in women's and entertainment columns frequently mention the syncopation, modernity, and jazz effects of the bands, using such terms as 'bright,' 'up beat,' 'hot,' 'sweet,' and 'novel' to describe the band's performance, sound, and their repertoire.<sup>21</sup> Such terms were common in the popular press during the 1920s. However what impression they conveyed to the reader, and whether the reader interpreted this terminology in the same way as the journalist, is unknown.

Importantly, what these and other descriptions of jazz bands convey to a twenty-first century audience is how similar, or different New Zealand jazz bands were in comparison well-known bands of this period in other countries, especially the United States. The instrumentation noted for the bands above does appear to be very similar, with a few variations. There appears to be more use of violin and banjo in New Zealand jazz bands than in American jazz bands of the same period, but these two instruments appear to have been quite popular in Australian and British jazz

---

<sup>19</sup> Although RSA now stands for Returned Services Association, the Association's original title was the Returned Soldiers Association, [http://www.rsa.org.nz/remem/rsa\\_hist\\_90years.html#1](http://www.rsa.org.nz/remem/rsa_hist_90years.html#1) (accessed 2/4/2012)

<sup>20</sup> 'Women's Corner' CP 7/7/1921, 2.

<sup>21</sup> See for example 'Dixieland Cabaret' NZH 12/4/1922, 8; 'Entertainments' NZH1/5/1922,7; 'Entertainments' 3/2/1927, 7; 'Amusement' [Ritz Dance Orchestra] AS 22/7/1926, 8; 24/7/1926, 14; D 'Women's World 17/12/1920, 4; 'Women's Corner' CP 24/6/1921, 2.

bands. The clarinet on the other hand, appears to be less popular in New Zealand jazz bands than in those of Australia, Britain or the United States.<sup>22</sup>

These variations are important because they demonstrate part of the way jazz bands and music were conceptualised in New Zealand during this time. It is clear that while it was similar to jazz in other countries, it was not identical in terms of sound. Different combinations of instruments, and numbers of instruments created subtly different timbres, which affected how the audience thought of jazz, and what they thought constituted jazz.

## The Musicians

In his memoir, *Just a Bloody Piano Player*, Henry Shirley noted that in the early 1920s "no one in Auckland really knew what jazz sounded like, but according to reports the drummer had to make a din like all hell let loose."<sup>23</sup> In the pioneering years of the early 1920s discovering jazz was relatively easy, but figuring out how to play it was probably quite the opposite. I was unable to discover how exactly early jazz musicians in New Zealand learned how to play jazz is, unfortunately, but learn they did. By 1923 there were a number of prominent jazz bands on the New Zealand jazz scene, and plenty of venues for them to play in as well.

The musicians discussed in this section represent just a small proportion of backgrounds that New Zealand musicians came from during the 1920s. However, they represent the musicians that I was able to uncover verifiable information on who were also influential on the incipient jazz scene. Jazz musicians in 1920s New Zealand do not appear to have had any ideas about who could, or could not, play or understand jazz. The lack of boundaries or notions surrounding proper class, gender or ethnicity for jazz musicians is one that continues to occur across the entire era 1920–1955. Musicians appear to have crossed all of these boundaries, without any impositions on who could or could not perform jazz. Many of the pioneers either came from musical families, or were encouraged by their families to make music their career.

Percussionist Bob Adams (1899–1981) was one that came from a musical family. Both of Adams' parents were musicians, as were all his siblings, and Adams' first professional musical job at age 14 was playing in the cinema orchestra at the Princess Theatre.<sup>24</sup> Adams was also responsible for forming what was New Zealand's first known jazz band circa 1918. As will be discussed further

---

<sup>22</sup> See descriptions of bands in: 'Jazz: The Creation of Jazz' and 'Jazz: The Dissemination from New Orleans' in *New Grove Dictionary of Jazz*; Catherine Parsonage, *The Evolution of Jazz in Britain 1880–1935*, 114-115, 117-119; Andrew Bisset, 9-12.

<sup>23</sup> Henry Shirley, *Just A Bloody Piano Player*, Price: Auckland, 1971, 53.

<sup>24</sup> Sandra Potter 'Man Who Formed Auckland's First Jazz Band' NZWW 15/11/1971, 19.

in the following section, Adams quickly became known around Auckland for his novelty saxophone, his extensive percussion, and for playing at the few (but increasing) high-class gigs, such as the Vice-Regal Balls held by then Governor-General Lord Jellicoe.<sup>25</sup>

Others whose families encouraged them to make music their career included Abe Romain and Walter Smith. For violinist/saxophonist Abe Romain's (born Adrian August Bussy de Saint-Romain in Wellington, 1905) French-Mauritian father becoming a musician was considered to be a good profession. After leaving school in his early teens, Romain got a gig playing with a show on the New Zealand section of the J.C. Williamson vaudeville circuit (circa 1918), and was introduced to the latest dance music styles, including jazz, by a girlfriend.<sup>26</sup> Romain would not remain in New Zealand, but rather he gained employment on the cruise ships, and would only return for visits to let his former compatriots know about the latest in jazz from the places he travelled (see Chapter Three, 3.2 Ship Musicians), before emigrating first to Australia and later to England where he played with the Jack Hylton Band.<sup>27</sup>

In contrast multi-instrumentalist Walter Smith began his musical career overseas and would return to New Zealand as a professional musician. Smith perhaps has the most intriguing background of these pioneer jazz musicians. Born in 1883 at Nuhaka in the Hawkes Bay into the Ngati Kahungunu iwi, Smith left New Zealand in 1893 with his aunt as part of a Mormon missionary group to the United States of America. Smith lived in the United States, mostly in Utah and California, until 1913. While there Smith began to pursue music seriously, learning several instruments and studying at the Mormon college Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah. After leaving Brigham Young, he joined Ed Montgomery's Royal Hawaiian Quintette touring the continental United States. About 1910 he formed his own Hawaiian group, the Hawaii-Maorian Quintette, and toured the United States until the Church recalled him to New Zealand in 1913.<sup>28</sup> It is unknown whether Smith became familiar with the ragtime and blues styles during this time, but it seems likely that he heard these styles while touring, and possibly associated with musicians in these genres.

By 1920 Smith had moved to Auckland and established himself as a music teacher and bandleader on the incipient Auckland jazz scene. He was known for his mentorship of young musicians, and his advocacy of women performers: his nieces Dina and Marjorie were prominent

---

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, and Owen Shaw 'A Pioneer Among the Music Makers' NZH, 13/5/1981, sect. 2, p. 1.

<sup>26</sup> Bourke, 25.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Chris Bourke, *Blue Smoke*, 12; DHJA Walter Smith File MS-Papers-9018-42.

members of his Aloha Jazz band as well as other bands during the 1920s. He also became known as something of an impresario as he ran a stable of bands whose repertoire ranged from classical to jazz to novelty music.<sup>29</sup>

During the pioneering years of jazz in New Zealand, musician's perceptions of jazz relied on what they had read, what they had heard (on records, broadcasts, or live), and the sheet music that they acquired. Their responses to jazz were formed from the understanding that they had gathered through these media. To paraphrase the Henry Shirley quote from above, no one in New Zealand during the early 1920s really knew what jazz was supposed to sound like.<sup>30</sup>

By the mid 1920s there were several interrelated avenues for musicians and the audience to discover jazz. As the dance craze continued, many (including soon to be jazz broadcaster Arthur Pearce) were introduced to jazz through dances and dance classes, but also the new technology of wireless broadcasting, which could bring jazz to the masses. Closely connected to both of these activities, and another avenue for discovery, were records. Vaudeville continued to play an important role for people being introduced to jazz, as did other entertainments such as carnivals and fetes where jazz bands were a novelty feature. Two musicians that discovered jazz in the early and mid-1920s through these means were Epi Shalfoon, and Elsie Nixon.

Epi Shalfoon was born Gareeb Stephen Shalfoon (13 August 1904–23 May 1953) at Opotiki on the East Coast of the North Island to a Maori mother (from Te Whakatohea hapu) and Syrian father. He learned piano from an early age and continued with his music studies when he boarded at Auckland Grammar School. Shalfoon discovered jazz circa 1920 while listening to short wave broadcasts, from several countries, but especially the United States. According to his daughter Reo, Shalfoon was particularly attracted to blues-based jazz.<sup>31</sup>

At about the same time that Shalfoon became interested in jazz he began to play piano for local dances, both solo and as part of a band. However, it is unknown whether he began playing jazz on these early gigs. Shortly after beginning his dance music career, Shalfoon also taught himself to play saxophone and clarinet. His decision to learn saxophone and clarinet was to give himself more scope as a musician, and the ability to fill in if there were a shortage of front-line musicians.<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>29</sup> DHJA Walter Smith File MS-Papers-9018-42.

<sup>30</sup> Shirley, 53.

<sup>31</sup> Reo Sheirtcliff, 'Dancing in the Dark' *Music in New Zealand*, 1990/10, 40.

<sup>32</sup> Reo Sheirtcliff, int. Epi Shalfoon File, DHJA MS-Papers-9018-41.

Elsie Nixon of Auckland (7 June 1913–1996) learned piano from a young age, after being inspired by her aunt, renowned pianist Dame Hilda Ross. Her brother Arthur (born 1910) was also musically inclined and learned banjo and guitar from Walter Smith. Through Arthur's lessons with Walter Smith, Elsie came to know Smith's nieces Dinah and Marjorie Greening (both of whom would become professional musicians), and would later have a close musical association with Dinah.<sup>33</sup> At some point during his childhood, Arthur also decided to learn saxophone. After the family fortunes forced the sale of Elsie's beloved piano and put an end to the siblings' music lessons during their adolescence, Arthur taught her the saxophone.

One of her father's many businesses was a tearooms and open air cabaret at the bottom of their section in Mission Bay. During the cabaret season (being open air, it only operated in summer), Arthur Nixon (on alto saxophone) and pianist Roy Handlen would play for the dancers. While Elsie stated that she was too shy at first, soon she too was joining them on the C melody saxophone. This was her first foray into dance music, but it was not until her father's next venture that she really became interested in jazz.

Nixon's father, Richard Nixon, opened the Pig and Whistle tearooms and cabaret in Mission Bay circa 1927. The Pig and Whistle was similar to his previous business: tearooms with a cabaret attached, though this one was covered and could operate throughout the year. As a feature Nixon's father installed a gramophone and had records playing continuously. One of Elsie's duties was to go to Lewis Eady's music store every week to select new records. On her visits she met jazz pianist Alice 'Al' Clarke who worked in the record department, and would save the latest jazz releases for Nixon to choose from. This duty and burgeoning friendship combined to pique Elsie's interest in jazz.<sup>34</sup>

### **The Bands:**

Once New Zealand musicians discovered jazz, bands quickly began to form. Little is known about any of the early jazz bands in New Zealand as only a few popular press articles were ever written about either. There was also little information about their performance activities in any of the archival sources that I consulted. The Bob Adams and Walter Smith bands (see Appendix: Selected Photographs for pictures) were both based in Auckland, and performed mostly within the boundaries of the city, only occasionally venturing out into the suburbs for gigs. The gigs the bands played at were mostly dances, and the venues were all-encompassing, from community halls to sophisticated ballrooms, and for Adams the above mentioned Vice-Regal Balls. There were no

---

<sup>33</sup> Elsie Doyle (née Nixon) oral history by Patricia French, Auckland City Library 90-OH-001/1-3.

<sup>34</sup> Elsie Doyle, née Nixon Oral History, Auckland City Library 90-OH-001/1-3.

known relay broadcasts from this period, nor live in the studio; broadcasting gigs for bands would not be possible until the commercial use of electric microphones in the mid-1920s. Similar stories regarding gigs can also be told about the Charles Dalton band in Wellington or the Havelock Williams and Louis Bloy bands in Christchurch.<sup>35</sup> It is only known that these bands were active on the various scenes, and very occasionally who the band personnel were, but few other details.

Although the specifics of the very early bands have been lost to time, what the information available can tell us is that jazz became popular quickly enough to give several bands in each town opportunities to perform what they thought was jazz to varied audiences. This is an important factor in the acceptance of jazz as a popular music in New Zealand. It is also an important factor in the local adaptation of jazz: if, as Henry Shirley stated, no one knew what jazz was supposed to sound like, it makes it likely that there were some potentially truly local jazz sounds during the 1920s. While this is a supposition and speculative, it seems plausible to me that there was, at the least, the potential for a New Zealand jazz sound to occur during this decade.

Although the majority of jazz bands based themselves in a town, and played directly in, and around, that town, others, such as Epi Shalfoon and his Melody Boys (see Appendix: Selected Photographs for picture) chose to travel ever-increasing distances to perform jazz. Shalfoon formed the Melody Boys (the name he would use for all of his bands) in 1924, and from this date rarely ever played as a sideman, preferring instead to lead and manage his own band. Between 1924 and 1928 the Melody Boys were based in Opotiki, and mainly played gigs in the Bay of Plenty, Poverty Bay and Rotorua regions.<sup>36</sup> While possibly not the first travelling jazz band in New Zealand, the Melody Boys were perhaps the first to be based in a small rural town, and possibly had the largest region to travel. They quickly became known as a top jazz band in the region.<sup>37</sup>

In 1929 Shalfoon moved his base of operations to Rotorua where he opened a music store called the Melody Shop. The operation of this business does not appear to have had a negative impact on his band or the travelling that they did for gigs. The Melody Boys not only continued their travels, but they actually increased their travel range, playing gigs as far north as Auckland and as far south as Wellington. The gigs that they played were mostly dances, and ranged from the

---

<sup>35</sup> See for example advertisements for the following bands: Walter Smith, AS 3/10/1925, 13; NZH 4/12/1924, 16; Bob Adams, AS 5/9/1921, 12; Charles Dalton, EP 7/5/1927, 5, 14/4/1928, 5; Havelock Williams, CP 12/7/1921, 1, 30/8/1922, 2; Louis Bloy, CP 7/7/1921, 1, 9/8/1921, 2.

<sup>36</sup> Music in NZ 'Dancing in the Dark' Reo, 10/1990, 40.

<sup>37</sup> *ibid.*

small town Saturday night dance in the local hall, to debutante and charity balls in large towns and cities.<sup>38</sup>

The main result of all this travelling was that the band became very well known across the North Island. Most of the musicians and bands mentioned thus far had only a limited presence outside of their local scene. Bands only infrequently advertised themselves during the 1920s, and much of their profile was created through word of mouth or mentions in the women's columns reports on dances. This wider exposure was a great advantage to Epi Shalfoon's Melody Boys, but Shalfoon also actively advertised his band across the entirety of the North Island rather than relying on word of mouth, or the possibility of a mention in a newspaper report. In this, Shalfoon proved himself to be an entrepreneur and businessman as much as a musician.

An important part of Shalfoon's (and the other bands discussed in this section) popularity was the sound of the band, and the repertoire that they played. These were the main reasons that people would enjoy certain bands. In the following section I discuss the sound of the 1920s jazz band, and the repertoire that they performed.

### **Repertoire and sound of early jazz bands:**

It is important to know that the jazz repertoire in New Zealand during the 1920s was not a set of specific pieces. Any up-tempo popular music, especially if it had been written for dancing, could be turned into jazz by the use of 'jazz effects,' syncopation, and/or improvisation. Henry Shirley, who played piano with the Bob Adams Jazz Band for one gig, recalled that the band's repertoire specialised in foxtrots and one-steps in what he described as the "How ya gonna keep 'em down on the farm" variety.<sup>39</sup>

The lack of boundaries for repertoire meant that the early 1920s were a time of potential recontextualisation, and localisation of the music that bands played. The use of *any* up-tempo popular dance music potentially means that they were playing music not just from the United States or Britain, but also from Australia, or even other countries, such as France. This also means that when performing the music from other countries New Zealand musicians were potentially giving it a more Kiwi 'accent'.

Importantly, the lack of boundaries means that there is also the possibility that bands were performing music written by New Zealand composers. This is by no means certain, but I suspect that if the repertoire of 1920s jazz bands in New Zealand include popular music from other

---

<sup>38</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> Shirley, 53.



countries, that local popular music was also included in the repertoire. This lack of boundaries also played a part in the development of a (very loose) repertoire. This was not so much a repertoire specific songs, but rather of song types. As described above the music was up-tempo, it was popular, and it was for dancing. To become part of the New Zealand jazz repertoire, the music must fit all three of those characteristics.

With the repertoire for jazz in the early 1920s encompassed nearly all of popular music, the sound of jazz, or rather how New Zealand musicians conceptualised the sound of jazz, appears to have been important for defining a jazz band during this period. The actual sound of New Zealand jazz in these years, if it was recorded, has, unfortunately, been lost, and we must rely on written descriptions to piece together what it might be. Instrumentation and instrumental roles were an important part of the conception and actuality of the sound of a jazz band in New Zealand.

There were four aspects to the New Zealand sound and style of jazz in the 1920s: rhythm, 'jazz effects,' improvisation and instrumentation. I will first examine the aspects of rhythm, effects and improvisation, before discussing instrumentation. The essential part of jazz rhythm was syncopation. Without syncopation a dance band could not pretend to be at all jazzy. While the New Zealand press clearly knew very little about jazz in the early 1920s, they did know that syncopation was the core difference rhythmically, and commented on that aspect of jazz. Journalists rarely attempted to describe the rhythms that jazz bands, except for using the term 'syncopation' with an adjective before or after the term to describe the syncopation (such as 'bright', or 'novel').

The term 'jazz effects' was popular in the New Zealand press during the 1920s. This term appears to have encompassed a variety of different musical techniques incorporating embouchure movements and the use of mutes for wind and brass instruments, plucking and bowing for strings and a wide range of cymbals, gongs, blocks, sticks, and mallets for the drummer. It could also refer to aspects of harmonisation and counter melody (not necessarily improvisation). The sounds that the musicians produced through these techniques were described in the press in a number of different ways, often with the terms 'primitive' and 'noise' inserted into the description. While these terms appear to be negative, they were often compliments, as it appears that this is what the press (and audience) thought that jazz was supposed to be.

The language used to describe jazz effects and rhythm in the New Zealand press was a part of the local ideology that developed around jazz during the 1920s. As discussed in Chapter Three, the sound based terminology used to describe jazz in international articles within New Zealand publications was varied, but had a common link with the sounds (and noises) of modernity. The

descriptions of sound, in terms such as 'tin cans,' 'motor horns,' or 'squawk,' as discussed in Chapter Two, were common in the international articles published in New Zealand, but do not appear to be as common in the reporting of local jazz.

Reports of local jazz activity mostly used language that was more generalised, but as mentioned above with terms such as 'noise' or 'primitive' attached to them, for example 'bright noise.' The language commonly used for both sound and rhythm relating to jazz in the press was often defined in positive terms: 'bright,' 'gay,' 'stimulating,' 'novel,' and 'jaunty.' This style of language was commonly found in both the entertainment and women's columns, which were the main columns that jazz activity was reported in. The use of such terminology in reports was the local popular press reflecting the style of terminology and reporting of jazz in foreign publications.

Improvisation in the modern sense (multiple chorus solos) does not appear to have been considered an essential part of jazz during these early years. Rather, it appears that if any improvisation was used, it was more in embellishing the melody line or short four or eight measure "hot breaks."<sup>40</sup> Improvisation was rarely mentioned in press reports, either in the descriptions of jazz, or in reports of local jazz activity. However, I do not know whether many New Zealand journalists were familiar with the idea of improvisation or would have recognised improvisation in a performance. There is also the idea that during this period improvisation was not a necessary staple of a jazz band. When improvisation was mentioned in the reports journalists primarily used the term 'hot breaks' to indicate that there was improvisation, and that they had recognised that fact.

Oral history interviews with brass player Vern Wilson, and saxophonist Elsie Doyle (née Nixon) both mention improvisation as a significant part of jazz bands in the 1920s. In the interviews, they both stated that bands could have musicians that didn't improvise, but the bands were better if the musicians could do so. The amount, and type of improvisation used (solos versus improvised counter melodies or harmonies) depended on the band and gig. Who took the solos depended on the instrumentation and personnel of the band, but Wilson particularly recalled brass musicians taking on a great deal of the improvisation, while Doyle recalled pianists in particular.<sup>41</sup>

Bob Adams, described the music that his band played as "biff, bang, wallop," noting that in playing like this "the dancers were in their element."<sup>42</sup> Bassist Desmond 'Spike' Donovan stated in

---

<sup>40</sup> John Whiteoak, 194, 197-213.

<sup>41</sup> Vern Wilson Oral History 90-OH-007-1-10; Elsie Doyle Oral History 90-OH-001/1-3.

<sup>42</sup> Sandra Potter, 'The Man Who Formed Auckland's First Jazz Band' NZWW 1971, 19.

his memoirs in the 1980s that "like most of the original jazz bands they [the Bob Adams Jazz Band] went in heavily for noise – and rather coarse noises at that."<sup>43</sup>

Although Donovan stated that the Bob Adams Jazz Band "went in ... for noise," he also noted that the band was technically very good, and that Adams, in particular, was an extremely versatile percussionist.<sup>44</sup> The schism between "noise" and musical technique appears to indicate that the Bob Adams Jazz Band used "noise" as an effect to make the music that they played 'jazzy.' By this I mean that if the Bob Adams Jazz Band was technically capable of performing jazz repertoire without extraneous, uncontrolled noise, then the 'noises' that they produced were done so with a specific purpose in mind. In this case it seems that they were using 'noise' as a jazz trope for the benefit of the audience's idea of jazz.

Shirley recalled on the one gig that he played with the Bob Adams Jazz Band that Adams set himself up, with a variety of percussion, in the middle of the stage with the rest of the band surrounding him. He further noted that within the structure of the band the trombone and piano handled most of the improvisation in their repertoire, although he does not state whether he improvised when he played with them.<sup>45</sup>

The fact that the trombone took most of the solos is a contrast to how the instrument was viewed in Australian jazz bands at the same time. Dave Meredith, trombonist with Linn Smith's Royal Jazz band during this period, recalled that until 1922 or 1923 the trombone was usually pushed to the background, except when a prominent bass line or effect, such as 'turkey gobbling,' was required.<sup>46</sup>

Although there is no evidence to explain the difference between New Zealand and Australian approaches to the use of trombone within jazz band, I conjecture that the reason has two interrelating aspects. The first aspect is that New Zealand and Australian bands had subtly different preferences in instrumentation, such as those explored in Chapter Three. The second aspect is possibly due to differences in the conception of jazz, and each country's recontextualisations of it. In the Australian jazz scene the 1920s were marked by the influence of the numerous American bands that were touring or resident in Australia.<sup>47</sup>

---

<sup>43</sup> Sandra Potter, 'The Man Who Formed Auckland's First Jazz Band' NZWW 15/11/1971, 19; Dennis O. Huggard compiled *Thoughts of Musician Desmond 'Spike' Donovan*, 47.

<sup>44</sup> *Thoughts of Musician*, 49.

<sup>45</sup> Shirley, 53.

<sup>46</sup> Bisset, 15.

<sup>47</sup> Bisset 15, 19-35.

In contrast with Australian bands in the early jazz bands in New Zealand the duties of improvisation and 'effects' appear to have been fairly equally handled by all musicians/instruments. This of course depended on individuals differing abilities and comfortableness at improvising in public. However, although it appears that there were some musicians who became known as specialists in 'effects' or improvisation, they were not relegated to only that speciality.<sup>48</sup>

The repertoire and sound of early jazz bands, and the discourse associated with jazz, were a direct reflection of how New Zealand jazz musicians deciphered meaning out of second-hand reports and what they heard live and on record. This reflection was created out of a mixture of influences, from Australia, the United States and Great Britain, as well as from within New Zealand. Jazz from outside and within New Zealand was heard about, and heard in, nearly equal proportions. New Zealand musicians responded to influences from Australia, the United States, Britain, and from within New Zealand by interpreting and reinterpreting how jazz was 'supposed' to sound.<sup>49</sup>

## Fans

Fan organisations played a very important role in the acceptance of jazz in New Zealand society, and the development of jazz as music in New Zealand. These organisations involved both music and dance and, from the very early 1920s, promoted and supported the jazz scene in many different ways. The earliest clubs in New Zealand, such as the Christchurch Jazz Club, Parisian Dance Club, and various cabaret clubs that championed jazz, were possibly responses to similar dance and popular music clubs overseas, especially in Britain and Europe.<sup>50</sup> During the 1920s jazz was first and foremost dance music and the early examples of jazz clubs in New Zealand reflect this with their focus on dancing rather than listening to jazz. One of the earliest jazz clubs formed in New Zealand was the Christchurch Jazz Club, which was the proprietor of the earliest dedicated jazz venue in New Zealand: The Winter Garden (established 1921).

The Christchurch Jazz Club was founded circa 1920, and by their second dance season (which commenced April 1921), they appear to have been well known on the social scene for their dances, and for the bands that they employed for these dances.<sup>51</sup> Little is known about the aims or structure of their organisation, but it appears that they had a committee that organised dances, and

---

<sup>48</sup> Spike Donovan, *Thoughts*, 49-51; Elsie Doyle Oral History OH-90-001/1-3.

<sup>49</sup> Aleisha Ward, 'ANZAC, Hollywood and Home' in Henry Johnson ed. *Many Voices; Music and National Identity in Aotearoa/New Zealand*, Newcastle, U.K.: Cambridge Scholars 2010, 93-102.

<sup>50</sup> Jody Blake, *Le Tumulte Noir: Modernist Art and Popular Entertainment in Jazz Age Paris*, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999 65-66, 113-114.

<sup>51</sup> 'Women's Corner CP 11/4/1921, 2; 16/4/1921, 2.

that members paid a subscription to the club, but it is unknown what privileges this subscription bought. What is known is that the dances that the club organised usually donated profits to charities in the Christchurch area.<sup>52</sup>

Through the dances they organised, both before and after the opening of the Winter Garden, the Christchurch Jazz Club actively supported and promoted local jazz bands. As they often had three or four dances every week the club hired a number of different bands to play. Until the club's demise in 1926 they hired a mix of established and up-and-coming jazz bands for their dances. The bands usually garnered positive reviews in the press (which regularly reported on the jazz club's activities), which increased the bands profiles on the Christchurch scene, which in turn meant that other venues and organisations hired them.<sup>53</sup> Whether or not it was their stated aim to promote local bands (rather than jazz dancing) many of the bands that came to prominence in Christchurch in the early and mid-1920s did so because of the support by the Christchurch Jazz Club.

There was a plethora of jazz clubs that operated along similar lines in all the main centres of New Zealand during the 1920s. While no other club appears to have operated their own (somewhat) commercial venue, clubs in Auckland, Wellington and Dunedin utilised community venues for their dances. The fans in these clubs were, for the most part, dedicated dancers, and their ideas about what jazz should be were bound up in dance. To them, the music was there to serve the dancing. This meant that the clubs would promote a certain style of jazz that focused on the best tempos and rhythms for dancing, and only short 'hot breaks' (improvisation) through their favoured bands. Before the decade was over however, most of the jazz clubs that were born out of jazz dance had ended their activities and the craze for jazz dancing was also on the decline.

These clubs were important to the development of jazz in New Zealand in three ways. First the jazz clubs supported and promoted jazz, and particularly local jazz bands through their dances, and the hiring of local bands to play for said dances. Secondly through their promotion of jazz, clubs unconsciously promoted a jazz ideology based around their particular conception of jazz as a dance music, which as noted above focused on several specific musical aesthetics that related to jazz as dance music, and also jazz as a dance style. Lastly as clubs were based around jazz dancing they required venues in which to dance, thereby supporting the rise in the cabaret, and other commercial dance venues where they did not have their own space in which to dance. This last supported jazz, in the same way as the first point: by the engagement of local jazz bands to perform for club dances.

---

<sup>52</sup>'Women's Corner' CP various dates 1921-1926, 2.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

## Venues

The explosion of the craze for dancing in the 1920s was the impetus of the establishment of many dance venues throughout New Zealand. In all the main centres clubs and 'cabarets' (in reality mostly sophisticated dance halls rather than cabarets) were opened to cater for the hundreds of dancing fans. It should be noted that the venues for dancing (and jazz) were geographically spread across the central city and surrounding to outer suburbs in each of the main centres. This was common throughout New Zealand during the interwar period, and in turn meant that patrons' would rarely attend more than one venue in the course of an evening.

Connected with the dance craze was the burgeoning phenomenon of jazz. While there were many commercial venues for dancing that included jazz on a regular basis, there were two that were specifically opened because of, and for, jazz during the 1920s: Christchurch's Winter Garden and Auckland's Dixieland Cabaret.

As mentioned above, the Christchurch Jazz Club established the Winter Garden in 1921 in order to have a "quality jazzing venue."<sup>54</sup> It quickly became the hub of jazz activity in Christchurch, and playing at The Winter Garden became known as one of the most prestigious gigs for musicians. The opening season (September through to December) saw Havelock Williams' jazz band as the main house band.

The Winter Garden was not originally a commercial venue: it did not have regular public opening hours initially, and outside of the club's dances catered mostly to private functions. This would change in the 1922 and the venue was opened for public dancing two or three nights a week, but it was more of a dance hall than a cabaret in that it did not have floor shows, or any other entertainment for the patrons.<sup>55</sup> When the Christchurch Jazz club ceased in July 1926, all assets, including the Winter Garden were sold and the proceeds given to charity. In November the last public dance was held at The Winter Garden, though private functions continued through to the end of the year when the venue was handed over to the new owners P. Burke and Co. and it was closed for a short period (approximately three weeks) for renovation. It reopened early in January 1927 with Charles Aves Cabaret Orchestra in residence.

From its reopening in 1927, the Winter Garden became one of the most prominent cabarets in Christchurch. As a commercial venue it catered for a variety of dance styles, but in keeping with its origins, the Winter Garden remained the best-known jazz venue in Christchurch. From about 1928 the Winter Garden was known as one of the most prestigious gigs in Christchurch for jazz

---

<sup>54</sup> 'Winter Garden' CP 3/69/1921, 2.

<sup>55</sup> 'Women's Corner' CP various dates 1921–1926, 2.

musicians as the new management had quickly gained a reputation (which would last into the 1950s) of hiring the best jazz bands in town to play there.<sup>56</sup>

Auckland was not far behind in having a dedicated jazz venue: the Dixieland Cabaret opened on April 11 1922.<sup>57</sup> Situated at the corner of Queen and Waverly Streets it quickly became *the* place to jazz in Auckland. Opened by Canadian dentist/businessman/financier Dr. Frederick Raynor and his heiress wife Ethel, the Dixieland Cabaret evolved out of their own desires that Auckland have a sophisticated jazz cabaret. This was a reflection of their background and their experiences in exclusive cabarets around the world as much as the desire for their new home-town to have at least one cosmopolitan venue, such as they had experienced in New York or Paris.

The Raynors spared no expense in fittings and decorations for the Dixieland Cabaret. *The New Zealand Herald* review of the opening night dedicated an entire paragraph to interior decoration, mentioning specifically a dance floor of 3000 square feet, electric chandeliers, lamps on each table, the opulence of the furnishings and carpets, and in particular, the raised lounge area where chaperones, or those not wishing to dance, could observe "the gay throng below."<sup>58</sup>

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the first house band for the Dixieland was imported from Australia. The decision by the Raynors and the venue manager Del Foster to import a jazz band from Australia rather than use a local band can be viewed as a response to the Raynors' own experiences both within New Zealand and overseas. Their desire to have a sophisticated venue in Auckland required that they acquire the 'best' of appointments for their cabaret, including musicians. Although there were a number of jazz bands in Auckland by early 1922 the quality of these bands apparently did not meet the Raynors (or their manager Del Foster's) requirements for the Dixieland.

From circa mid-1923, however, the house bands, the Dixie Five, and later the Dixieland Internationals (see Appendix: Selected Photographs for a picture), were composed primarily of local musicians. This move implies that the management of the Dixieland thought that New Zealand jazz musicians were now of a standard to perform there. Although the Dixieland house bands were rarely mentioned in the Auckland press there does not appear to have been any negative reports about the standard of the locally created band compared to the Southern Dixieland Band.

---

<sup>56</sup> Doug Caldwell interview with Aleisha Ward (2010); Doug Caldwell *My Life in Jazz* 64, 66-69.

<sup>57</sup> 'Dixieland Cabaret' AS 12/4/1922, 10.

<sup>58</sup> 'Dixieland Cabaret NZH 12/4/1922, 10.

In October 1925 the Dixieland moved from its premises on Queen Street to larger premises on the waterfront in the suburb of Pt. Chevalier. The second incarnation of the Dixieland Cabaret was reportedly just as lavish as the original Dixieland, but much larger: Dixieland Pt. Chevalier could accommodate up to six hundred patrons and the dance floor had been increased to 3600 square feet. The house band consisted of mostly New Zealand musicians, and was again called the Dixieland Internationals. As with the early bands, little was written about the personnel or their sound and style. However, press reports do include mention of the hot qualities (syncopation, improvisation, *et cetera*) of the music they played, and how good they were as an accompaniment for dancing.

These and other venues became the backbone of the burgeoning jazz scene in New Zealand. They were places of employment for incipient jazz musicians, and places for jazz fans to gather to dance, and maybe to listen, to locally created jazz. The dancing venues for jazz would increase in importance during the 1930s to become the centre of the jazz scene in New Zealand, and cementing, at least for a time, jazz as dance music.

Jazz had many definitions and perceptions during the 1920s, both musical and extra-musical. It was also a controversial phenomenon garnering both praise and censure from many different sections of society. However, the excitement of the jazz phenomenon plunged globally with the United States stock market crash on October 29, 1929. The crash signalled a dramatic turning point in musical tastes, which would dramatically affect the New Zealand jazz scene for the next six years.

### **4.3 Depression Years**

The Depression years had a major impact on the jazz scene both musically and financially. In the first two years of the Depression there was a change in taste to sentimental and nostalgic styles and as a result jazz was viewed as out of touch, too decadent, cacophonous and old fashioned. Bands had to make changes to their repertoire to stay with the times. 'Crooning', associated with sweet style jazz, became the style to play. However, this style does not appear to have completely taken over the scene in New Zealand, as, according to Arthur Pearce, New Zealand audiences still liked their music "gingery."<sup>59</sup>

### **Print**

By the end of the 1920s the extra-musical meanings of 'jazz' had disappeared from the press. From 1930 onward the use of the term 'jazz' in the New Zealand popular press only referred

---

<sup>59</sup> NZRR 'Dancing Time' 11/8/1933, 13.



to music and dance. This shift was most likely a reflection of the end of the global jazz phenomenon, which desisted in the use of the term 'jazz' as a fashionable term for advertisers, or as a descriptive term for exciting events. This change also affected the perceptions of jazz in New Zealand, as it too became more confined to music and dance.

The New Zealand popular press rarely mentioned jazz in a local context during the Depression years. This appears to have been due to a combination of the change of musical and dance tastes, and the idea that jazz was now outmoded, and old-fashioned. The change in musical and dance tastes reflected the social mood of the Depression years, with an accent on the sentimental and sweet in music, and waltzes and 'old-time' dances instead of novelty dances. Jazz, as music and dance (with the exception of the foxtrot), became unfashionable in tandem with this shift. However, despite the lack of press notice, it is important to realise that jazz did continue to be performed in New Zealand during the first half of the 1930s.

What references there were to jazz in the media were most often about jazz overseas, or in abstract terms contemplating what jazz was, and how it fit into the wider musical landscape (particularly letters to the editor). In a local context, jazz was most often referred to in relation to dances, either live or via the radio. The majority of these references were brief statements that a jazz band (or somebody's jazz band) would perform, or had performed, at a certain venue or dance.<sup>60</sup> However, these statements are still important to the perception and construction of jazz in New Zealand during the Depression years and will be considered briefly below.

The local responses to jazz in the abstract (and very occasionally in a local context) were to be found in both letters to the editor and opinion pieces. The responses ranged from disgust over 'that rubbish' to whole-hearted support for the genre. There was no reasoned debate between these positions as to the good or bad of jazz. The reasoning behind either extreme position usually boiled down to 'this is what I like/believe,' even when the commentary was being made by professionals within the music industry.<sup>61</sup>

The *New Zealand Radio Record* was more adept than the general press at writing about jazz in a local context, including more personnel and musical detail, although the majority of local references were usually brief. However, when local jazz was discussed in an article format we can begin to see a divergence between current American and New Zealand tastes. For example 'Dancing Time' on August 11 1933 discussed the current soft, sweet jazz that was popular in the United

---

<sup>60</sup> EP 'Here and There' 24/7/1930, 13; ODT, 7/7/33, 11.

<sup>61</sup> See for example: CP 'Attack on Jazz' 13/3/1928, 2; NZRR letters to the editor, 11/8/1933, 14.

States and the fact that audiences (and bands) in New Zealand found it too cloying.<sup>62</sup> Such divergences are interesting in that they hint at the potential for localisation, as local bands would, of course, respond to, and need to meet, New Zealand tastes (and more broadly perceptions) in jazz.

Local responses to jazz in the abstract, overseas, and local contexts in the *Radio Record* ranged from abhorrence to adoration, especially in the letters to the editor. However, unlike the popular media, here there is a measure of reasoned debate with people supporting either pro or con positions occasionally articulating why they believe that jazz was bad or good, and why it should, or should not be broadcast on the radio.<sup>63</sup> Such debate is an indication of interest, but beyond that it is an indication that the audience wanted to discuss the 'what', 'why', and 'how' of jazz, and taking an active part in the development of a local jazz community and culture. These discussions would be furthered through fan organisations later in the decade, and will be examined in section 4.4.

## Venues

The late 1920s dance venues boom in New Zealand was strongly affected by the advent of the Great Depression in late 1929. Dance venues in New Zealand were spread across towns and surrounding suburbs, which meant that New Zealanders rarely attended more than one venue in an evening. With the cost of a night out 'on the town' becoming increasingly unaffordable many venues had to close or limit their public hours. These changes naturally affected the dancing scene, which was the base for many dance/jazz musicians, and also affected the continuing development of the local jazz scene.

By 1930 few venues were opened as 'dedicated jazz venues' as there had been in the 1920s.<sup>64</sup> However, there were a number of cabarets that opened which would become known among fans and musicians as jazz venues. In 1929, just prior to the Depression, three cabarets opened which would evolve into venues that, by the swing era, were known for the jazz the house bands performed.

Unlike the other venues discussed in this chapter, these three were all integrated parts of the film theatres of the same names. The first theatre to open was the Crystal Palace in Mt Eden, Auckland on January 26 1929, but the dance hall, known originally as the Crystal Winter Garden did not open until April 13 of the same year.<sup>65</sup> The bands that played at the Crystal Palace during the period to 1935 were many and varied, as they were engaged by the various organisations that

---

<sup>62</sup> NZRR 'Dancing Time' 11/8/1933, 12-13.

<sup>63</sup> NZRR letters to the editor 20/4/1934, 6, 13/1/1939 and 27/1/1939, 6.

<sup>64</sup> 'Winter Garden' CP 3/9/1921, 2.

<sup>65</sup> 'Crystal Palace Wintergarden' AS 13/4/1929, 17.

hired the venue, as well as by theatre management for public nights. While the bands that were engaged were not always jazz bands, there appears to have been enough that it began to be advertised as a jazz venue.<sup>66</sup>

The Majestic Cabaret was the next of the three theatres/cabarets to open on May 13 1929. The cabaret was initially a lounge where refreshments would be served throughout the day and evening, and while they would have informal after theatre supper and dancing (initially two public evenings a week), they were *not* a cabaret.<sup>67</sup>

The evolution from a Lounge with informal dancing to a cabaret appears to have occurred over the first three or four years of its operation. By the middle of 1931 the Majestic Lounge had a resident band led by Frank Crowther, and by the middle of 1932 the Majestic Lounge/Cabaret was used for cabaret evenings hosted by people or organisations that had hired the venue, but the public evenings run by the theatre management appear to have remained the informal dancing and suppers as originally advertised in 1929.<sup>68</sup>

The beginning of 1933 saw both new management and a new band led by violinist Dennis Collinson, a former member of the Crowther band.<sup>69</sup> The Majestic Lounge and Cabaret as it was now known expanded on the earlier activities by having dancing every afternoon and evening, and by holding regular public cabaret evenings.<sup>70</sup> Over the next two years the Majestic Cabaret would have a number of resident bands. However, little was ever mentioned in the newspapers about these bands, except that they played the latest dance music.

The Civic Theatre and Wintergarden opened on December 20 1929, and unlike the bands at the Crystal Palace and Majestic Theatre, the house band played for both theatre and cabaret, with the cabaret band being a unit within the full theatre orchestra. For the first eighteen months the band was led by Australian based American Ted Henkel, and featured Australian and New Zealand musicians, including Ted 'Chips' Healy on saxophone.<sup>71</sup> After Henkel left the Civic, Healy took over the leadership of the Civic band, leading it on and off for nearly twenty years.

Despite the Civic opening at the beginning of the Great Depression the Wintergarden venue quickly became popular with both the casual after-film dancers and the dedicated cabaret goers.

---

<sup>66</sup> 'Crystal Palace' [advertisement] AS 4/5/1929, 24.

<sup>67</sup> 'Majestic Theatre Opening' EP 11/5/1929, 14.

<sup>68</sup> 'Majestic Lounge' EP 10/10/1931 7; 10/9/1932, 6; 22/11/1932, 4; AMM Sept. 1932.

<sup>69</sup> 'Majestic Lounge' EP 29/12/1932, 2; 22/2/1933, 2; AMM February 1933.

<sup>70</sup> 'Majestic Cabaret' EP 22/4/1933, 2, 1/5/1933, 15, 13/5/1933, 2.

<sup>71</sup> Bourke 47, 52.

Built in the atmospheric style, the Civic Theatre and Wintergarden was luxurious, elegant, sophisticated and incredibly exotic with its mix of Indian, Middle Eastern and Asian decorations. On opening, it was considered the most sophisticated and sumptuous cabaret in Auckland, and would remain the most exotic theatre and cabaret venue in New Zealand through this era and into the modern day.

The Crystal Palace, Civic, and Majestic Theatre/Cabaret complexes can be viewed as a response, not to jazz, but to the global cinema boom of the late 1920s. The fact that these three venues quickly became known as good venues to hear and dance to jazz was due to a coincidence of several smaller decisions by their respective owners/managers. These decisions included having a cabaret/lounge venue as part of the theatre, then further deciding the tone of the venue and whether to have a house band or not. All three managements devised ways of enticing patrons to go down to the cabarets below the theatres rather than leaving directly after the film including having the band perform in the theatre at the close of the film, or designing the foyers to allow patrons to catch a glimpse of the cabaret/lounge. These, and other, decisions all impacted on the prosperity of jazz at the venue, which resulted in jazz playing an important role in these venues, and the venues playing an important role in the jazz scene.

In addition to these venues, there were a number of clubs and cabarets that opened during the Depression years. However the majority of them only operated for a short span of time before closing. There was one venue, however, that would open during the Depression and become one of the most prominent cabarets in New Zealand, and one of the best known jazz venues of the middle twentieth century: The Peter Pan Cabaret.

The Peter Pan Cabaret was opened on August 21 1930 in the Campbell Buildings on the corner of Lorne and Rutland Streets in the Auckland central business district. This would be the first large stand-alone cabaret (unlike the Civic Wintergarden) to be opened in the central city since the Dixieland Cabaret moved from their Queen Street site in 1925. One of the Peter Pan's unique features was the bandstand, which was originally situated in the middle of the dance floor so that there would be "uniform volume of sound."<sup>72</sup>

The cabaret quickly became popular on the Auckland scene, and gained a reputation for having excellent dance bands, whose personnel were the best musicians in Auckland. Among musicians this was considered a top job, both in terms of reputation, but also financially as the

---

<sup>72</sup> 'Peter Pan' NZH 19/8/1930, 13.

managers wanted steady bands to play long residencies, and were willing to pay much better than the union rate to get top calibre musicians.<sup>73</sup>

For musicians during a period where many cabarets, clubs and other venues were closing, or at least limiting their hours, these, and other venues provided regular (if small) sources of income. This was important during the Depression, because it could prevent musicians from having to rely on the unemployment benefit and relief work schemes.<sup>74</sup> As a side note, not all musicians were in such fortunate positions as those at the Peter Pan or other cabarets. Bassist Desmond 'Spike' Donovan was one jazz musician that was unable to get enough gigs (and was not considered to be a good enough musician for the cabaret bands) to provide for himself (it is unknown if he had, or had lost, a day job), and had to sign up for the relief work scheme, until he was able to find a job at Horotu Freezing Works. This necessary move "punched a hole in [his] musical career" and it was not until after World War Two that he was able to return to music.<sup>75</sup>

The venues that jazz musicians played in during the Depression often had demands that went beyond playing jazz: bands might be called to play for a floor show, to play 'straight' for an afternoon tea session, or at the cinemas to play an introduction or entr'acte for a film. Musicians had to be able to switch up styles "at the twitch of their leader's coat-tails," but in the difficult years of the Depression versatility was a small price for regular income.<sup>76</sup> This versatility however, would become useful, and even vital over the next fifteen years in both the defence bands/concert parties during the war and broadcasting, which will be explored in the next three chapters.

## Musicians

By the start of the Depression, New Zealand musicians had developed a definition of jazz, based in the principles of fast tempos, syncopation and (limited) improvisation applied to current popular music. This definition was a reflection of the global trends in jazz with the 'noise' of the early jazz bands in the 1920s being discarded, along with many of the 'jazz effects'.<sup>77</sup> The emphasis was still on music for dancing, so a certain strictness of tempo prevailed with musicians having to utilise syncopation and improvisation within the stricture.<sup>78</sup>

---

<sup>73</sup> Bourke, 55.

<sup>74</sup> Mein-Smith, 151-152.

<sup>75</sup> Desmond 'Spike' Donovan, compiled by Dennis Huggard, *The Thoughts of Musician Desmond 'Spike' Donovan*, 2009, 15.

<sup>76</sup> Cliff Russell *Tempo* June 1955, 23.

<sup>77</sup> Bruce Johnson, *Oxford Companion to Australian Jazz*, 14-16.

<sup>78</sup> John Whiteoak, *Playing Ad Lib*, 218-222.

For potential jazz fans and musicians in New Zealand there were avenues to being introduced to, and becoming interested in jazz. From the jazz bands performing locally to radio (both local and international) and talkie films. Radio was now a common home entertainment, and while, as trumpeter Jim Warren stated: "they [radio] didn't go overboard [with jazz]," they did broadcast "some jazzy music."<sup>79</sup> Jazz from overseas could also be heard on the radio by searching through air-waves for stations in Australia, Asia, North America, and further a field as discussed in the previous chapter.<sup>80</sup> The new talkie films also began to play a part in introducing New Zealanders to jazz with a number of films incorporating jazz into their soundtracks, or even jazz bands on screen.

Globally, the jazz/dance scene struggled under the effects of the Depression. In New Zealand the closure of venues meant there were fewer possible gigs, and there was greater competition through out of work theatre (both cinema and live) musicians, and from Australian musicians. However a number of bands managed to survive these lean years by charging well below union rates, and by broadening their repertoire to appeal to a wider range or audience tastes.<sup>81</sup> Among the bands to survive were Epi Shalfoon and his Melody Boys. While they might not have been typical of jazz bands during the Depression, I decided to use them as my main example in this section because they played in many different situations in many towns making use of their musical and business versatility to survive, and even thrive during these lean years.

The 1930s were a period of consolidation for Epi Shalfoon's Melody Boys, extending their contacts around the North Island, playing for all manner of gigs from carnivals to debutante balls, stretching from Auckland to Wellington. From early on in his band-leading career Shalfoon decided that his band should play without sheet music if at all possible. However, sheet music was available for the musicians to use if necessary (especially in the case of substitutes). This decision appears to have led to the myth that the Melody Boys were a 'lug' band (*i.e.* that they played by ear and could not read music). The decision to play without reference to sheet music was, according to his daughter Reo, because Shalfoon wanted the band to connect with, and concentrate on, the audience/dancers. Shalfoon believed that allowing his musicians to have constant reference to sheet music they would use it as a barrier between them and the audience/dancers. He further believed

---

<sup>79</sup> Jim Warren interview with Aleisha Ward (2009).

<sup>80</sup> Day, 130-131; 'Radio Record Time Chart' (for DX activities) NZRR 26/8/1927, 5.

<sup>81</sup> Bourke, 49-51.

that the removal of sheet music and music stands helped create a more relaxed and intimate atmosphere for both musicians and patrons.<sup>82</sup>

On dance gigs Shalfoon emphasised the importance of the dancers to his musicians, as they were the ones who paid the bands wages, by ensuring that the band perform at correct dancing tempos.<sup>83</sup> To ensure the tempos of the Melody Boys repertoire were good for dancing he would check on them by dancing at least once during every gig.<sup>84</sup> As with the majority of New Zealand jazz musicians of this era, rhythm more than anything else was the most important part of jazz to Shalfoon, especially on a dancing gig, and this along with good dancing tempos is what made the Melody Boys so popular with the dancing public.<sup>85</sup>

During this period there is one event that the Melody Boys were at the centre of, which was extremely important to New Zealand jazz history: the first recording of jazz in New Zealand. This was not a record however, but a film. In October 1930 Epi Shalfoon and his Melody Boys were reportedly asked to assist the Tourism Board by providing music for a publicity film that they were filming in Rotorua. In exchange the Melody Boys were given the opportunity to make a short film to advertise the band at a reduced cost to them.<sup>86</sup> The filming took place in December 1930, with the final product lasting just over a minute in length.

In the film the band appears in casual white shirts and black trousers, arranged in front of the entrance to the replica pa at Whakarewarewa. Epi Shalfoon steps towards the camera and says: "I wish to introduce to you Rotorua's famous jazz band". He then moves towards the band, picks up his saxophone and leads them in a short Dixieland arrangement of the popular Maori song *E Puritai Tama E*. The music is jaunty, pure Dixieland with saxophone call and response accenting the dominating banjo and sousaphone rhythm. At the end of the film Shalfoon is pictured in close up by himself and states: "this band will be playing *real* dance music in your town soon."<sup>87</sup>

The choice of song (*E Puritai Tama e*, alternatively titled *He Puru Taitama*) is interesting as it was a popular Maori song, and not related to jazz. It is not recorded why the Melody Boys chose to use this song, as opposed to a jazz standard, or a globally known popular song. This signifies two

---

<sup>82</sup> Frank Gibson Jr. interview with Aleisha Ward (2011).

<sup>83</sup> Bourke, 63-64, Frank Gibson Jr. interview with Aleisha Ward (2011).

<sup>84</sup> Reo Sheirtcliff, neé Shalfoon, int by Francine Werry for 'Epi's Band' Bachelor of Communication Studies AUT, 2005.

<sup>85</sup> Dennis Huggard ed. *Thoughts of Musician Desmond 'Spike' Donovan*, 2009, 62.

<sup>86</sup> 'All Talkie and No Picture', NZT 20/8/1931, 4.

<sup>87</sup> Dennis Huggard, *Discographical Listing of Jazz Recordings of New Zealand 1930-1980*, 2009; [http://data.filmarchive.org.nz/search/details\\_film.php?ref\\_no=F7309](http://data.filmarchive.org.nz/search/details_film.php?ref_no=F7309) accessed 10 February 2011.

things: that there was not yet a solidified jazz repertoire, and that for the Melody Boys local popular songs had the possibility of jazz just as much as those from Tin Pan Alley, and that local popular songs were a normal part of their jazz repertoire. However, given the setting of the film (at Whakarewarewa) I believe that they might have chosen this song as a way of localising jazz in New Zealand. The combination of song and setting implies both generalised New Zealand-ness and specific Maori-ness.

Shalfoon's line at the end: "Watch the newspapers this band will be playing *real* dance music in your town soon," implies that they were a more authentic jazz band than most in New Zealand. The implication here is that the Melody Boys were an 'authentic' jazz band, which would have been an important aspect of Shalfoon's advertising, giving them an edge over the competition. Whether Shalfoon's ideal of authenticity was related to jazz in a specific country is unknown. What is known, however, is that (as mentioned above) Shalfoon was very interested in African-American blues based jazz, and so his concept of authentic jazz, of "*real* dance music", was likely based in those concepts.

By appealing to the twin concepts of 'authentic' jazz and New Zealand-ness, Shalfoon was attempting to move his audiences' ideals about jazz away from faux-jazz dance music to his own conceptions of jazz. He was also trying to move their constructions of jazz being authentic if only from Australia, Britain, and possibly even the United States, and bringing them towards the idea that New Zealand jazz, using New Zealand music could also be authentic.

Although this discussion has been based on the film, Shalfoon's printed advertisements also strongly reflect the ideal of the Melody Boys as an authentic jazz band. The idea of New Zealand-ness is less apparent, but is still present.<sup>88</sup> By approaching the advertising of the Melody Boys in this way, Shalfoon transformed the ideas of authenticity for his jazz band.

When the film print came back from processing, the quality was so bad that cinema managers were unable to use it. Shalfoon refused to pay the twenty-eight pound bill and a court case ensued in August 1931. The court case was extensively (and excitedly) reported in *Truth*, which detailed the making of the film, and the ensuing fall out, as part of the evidence. The judge agreed with Shalfoon that the film was of very bad quality and useless for promotional purposes, and found in Shalfoon's favour.<sup>89</sup>

---

<sup>88</sup> See for example the advertising flyer in Bourke, 63.

<sup>89</sup> "All Talkie and No Picture", NZT 20/8/1931, 4.



Despite the quality, copies of the film remain extant and it is valuable evidence of New Zealand's first recording of a jazz band. This film, as a document of New Zealand jazz from this period, is extremely important because it demonstrates how the Melody Boys conceptualised jazz. Although their choice of repertoire indicates a strong regionalism (both New Zealand, and Maori), it has been reinterpreted through the lens of jazz. It is clear from the use of prominent contrapuntal lines and the jaunty syncopated rhythms in this film that they performed (at that time) in the Dixieland vein, recalling the styles of bands from the early 1920s.

This film can also be viewed as a direct response to the perceptions Shalfoon and his Melody Boys had of the stylistic performance practices of a jazz band. Their physical movements in the film, although minimal, indicate that they thought that there were specific ways of moving that suited jazz: a bouncy sway that emphasised the banjo and sousaphone rhythmic patterns, essentially grooving to the music. This use of movement signified that they were a jazz band, as opposed to dance band, just as much as the music they performed.

The Melody Boys were one of the more successful jazz bands to survive the Depression, without a regular cabaret or theatre gig to help sustain them. Their enduring popularity can be traced back to Shalfoon's insistence that they were there to entertain the audience, and to the fact that they were willing to travel all over the North Island for gigs. This combination of attributes, added to the publicity from the making of the film and resulting court case, increased the bands allure in the eyes of the public, and resulted in more than enough gigs to help the band survive.<sup>90</sup>

Other bands and musicians that survived the Depression years mostly did so in a combination of at least one regular, steady gig, and musical and instrumental versatility. Bands such as Chips Healy's Civic Theatre and Wintergarden Orchestra and Ossie Cheesman's Majestic Cabaret Band relied on their musicians' abilities to play two or three instruments each, and to be able to perform a wide variety of music from classical through to jazz.<sup>91</sup> While both bandleaders may have desired such versatility in their musicians, the Depression made it a necessity in order to keep the patrons coming in and to keep their jobs.

#### **4.4 Early Swing Era**

The swing era in New Zealand began unobtrusively around 1936 as New Zealand was rising out of the depths of economic Depression. Soon though, swing style bands would take over the jazz

---

<sup>90</sup> Epi Shalfoon file DHJA; Reo Shalfoon, 'Dancing in the Dark' in *Music in New Zealand*, 1990, (10).

<sup>91</sup> AMM October 1932, June 1933, March, August 1934; May, June, July, August 1936; EP 3/4/1936, 2, 4/7/1936, 4.

scene until the 1950s. Unlike the earlier style of jazz where bands learnt 'on the fly', the swing style was heavily influenced by bands that toured New Zealand extensively, radio broadcasts, and recordings. Discussions of jazz in the popular press also continued to influence the general population and their responses to jazz and swing.

### **Print**

Responses to jazz, or now more specifically swing, in the popular press remained as varied as they did in the 1920s and early 1930s, showing many of the same underlying beliefs. The only real difference between the responses from the early and late 1930s is the use of the term swing in place of jazz. Essentially however, the arguments between the jazz/swing advocates and the classical/good music advocates remained the same as they had done since the 1920s as seen in Chapter Three, and in section 4.2 of this chapter.

The reporting of local jazz in the New Zealand popular press in the late 1930s increased from the levels of the early 1930s, but was by no means fully informative about the performance of jazz. Despite this, such reports remain important as partial illustrations of the construction of the local jazz scene. Reviews of dances and cabarets (live or via radio) now more often noted specifics about repertoire, and occasionally mentioned particular soloists as well as the bandleader. The inclusion of such details indicates a growing awareness by reporters of readers' interests in more than who attended and what they were wearing. This change also signals the growing importance of musicians and bands as central attractions of the cabaret/dance hall rather than them simply providing the music.

### **Musicians**

While the early 1930s were not entirely fallow for jazz, the late 1930s saw a resurgence in its popularity in New Zealand through the advent of swing. This period also saw the emergence of a great number of jazz musicians, and bands, who would become prominent throughout this period, World War Two and the post war decade. By this time musicians were easily introduced to jazz through the steady stream of recordings, radio, sheet music and local and visiting musicians.

However it was not just new musicians who were emerging on the scene that were important to the development of the jazz scene. While many of the musicians who began playing jazz in the 1920s were now fading from prominence, some, such as Epi Shalfoon, and Johnny Madden, were gaining more prominence on the jazz scene. In 1935 Shalfoon disbanded his Rotorua Melody Boys and moved to Auckland. Within a few months he reformed the Melody Boys with Auckland musicians and had a regular dance gig at the Crystal Palace Wintergarden in Mt. Eden. The band

quickly became popular among Auckland musicians and the Melody Boys band was soon known as an exciting band and an excellent training ground for musicians.<sup>92</sup>

Although Shalfoon was not particularly active in arranging he encouraged his musicians to arrange and compose, and would often incorporate riffs and motifs that occurred during Sunday rehearsals into the arrangement of songs.<sup>93</sup> Importantly, he always allowed his musician's space to improvise and to shine, often removing himself to the background, and encouraging them both on and off the bandstand.<sup>94</sup>

Leadership style appears to have been very much a personal preference for bandleaders during the interwar period. Some, like 'Chips' Healy, led in an obvious manner from the front, as conductors, or as instrumentalists. Others, like Epi Shalfoon, were more integrated with their sidemen. Leadership styles appear to have broadly reflected the leadership styles of overseas jazz bands. The minutiae of leading, whether the leader allowed the side musicians to extensively improvise, and so on, appears to have also reflected the leaders personality, and the situation that the band was performing in.

Many of the jazz musicians that came to prominence in the latter 1930s had also been playing jazz for several years or in the case of singer/drummer Johnny Madden over a decade. Johnny Madden began playing jazz in the mid 1920s with Ernie Beacham's Melody Boys and Edgar Bendall's Collegians at age sixteen. A self-taught drummer, Madden moved to Sydney in 1928 to try the scene over there, but returned when the Depression closed many of the venues.<sup>95</sup>

On his return to Auckland in 1933 Madden soon found work in the Peter Pan Cabaret band, which was then led by pianist Mervyn Bree. Madden would remain with the Peter Pan band throughout the 1930s (mostly led by saxophonist Lauri Paddi), receiving rave reviews as 'the crooning drummer'. As well as his Peter Pan commitment, Madden also regularly played with pianist Jack Thomson on 1ZBs *Two of a Kind*, with Mark Tozer and his Rhythm Boys and Alex Reagan's Rhythms Kings on 2ZB.<sup>96</sup>

In late 1938 Madden began to lead his own band, The Swing Kings, which eventually took over the contract at the Peter Pan Cabaret from the Paddi Band. The Swing Kings quickly became

---

<sup>92</sup> E.J. Wansburne, 'Epi Shalfoon', *Jukebox* October 1946, 2-3.

<sup>93</sup> Reo Sheirtcliff to Francine Werry 2005.

<sup>94</sup> Frank Gibson Jr. interview with Aleisha Ward (2010).

<sup>95</sup> 'Life had been a ball for Johnny' NZH 28/7/1979 Sect. 2, p. 2.

<sup>96</sup> AMM June, July 1937, January 1938.

popular and were soon known as one of Auckland's best swing bands.<sup>97</sup> Their repertoire was a mix of the latest novelty songs and jazz standards, as well as jazz arrangements of older songs, and audience requests for Madden's vocal styling.<sup>98</sup> Like Shalfoon, Madden emphasised the importance of dancing tempos to his band, as a result they were praised by the press for having "immaculate" dancing tempos, as well as having excellent swing arrangements.<sup>99</sup>

The Shalfoon and Madden bands were vital to the development of the Auckland scene because both leaders gave young musicians chances to perform that many established bands would not. In addition they actively mentored younger musicians and encouraged them in perfecting their instrumental technique, performance, and composition. This behaviour helped form a group of musicians who would be in high demand by other bandleaders across New Zealand, including visiting leaders such as Tut Coltman, Theo Walters, and Sammy Lee.

The late 1930s tours by the Tut Coltman Swing Stars, Theo Walters Personality Band and Sammy Lee and his World Famous Americanadians were all highly influential on the New Zealand jazz scene. As discussed in the previous chapter, these three bands were important to the dissemination of swing, and heavily influenced its acceptance and popularity among New Zealand jazz musicians and audiences.

New Zealand jazz musicians responded to the influence of these three bands in several ways. Firstly New Zealand bands incorporated more showmanship into their performances. Until the late 1930s few jazz bands utilised much in the way of showmanship, although why this was is unknown. Theories espoused in music trade publications usually rest on a natural reticence on the musicians' part; preferring to be the near invisible providers of music, rather than the centrepiece.<sup>100</sup> While New Zealand bands rarely went to the lengths that the Walters, Coltman and Lee bands did, creating skits and sketches for the entertainment of the audience, within their musical performances it was noted by musicians such as Jim Warren that there was a marked increase in show style and band choreography within song arrangements.<sup>101</sup>

Secondly the use of improvisation in New Zealand jazz bands increased. While many musicians were competent or good improvisers, many bands' leaders were reluctant, until the example of these three bands, to allow musicians significant space to improvise, lest it disrupt the

---

<sup>97</sup> AMM March, June 1939.

<sup>98</sup> 'Peter Pan' AS 17/7/1939, 11; AMM March, July, September 1939.

<sup>99</sup> AMM December 1939.

<sup>100</sup> J.R. Allanson 'Auckland Notes,' AMM August 1937, January 1938.

<sup>101</sup> Jim Warren, Interview with Aleisha Ward (2009).

flow of dancing.<sup>102</sup> The catalyst for including more improvisation was also probably helped by the growing craze for swing dancing, which, as an improvised (as opposed to set sequences) dance, could also embrace a certain amount of improvisation from the music. The increase of improvisation was not necessarily whole choruses however, which would interrupt the dancing, but rather extensions of the hot breaks (up to one section of a form, for example 16 measures) that were common in the 1920s.

In addition to these influences and local responses, New Zealand musicians report being generally impressed by these bands and individuals would attempt to emulate the sound or style of different musicians from these visiting bands. New Zealand musicians' emulation of foreign visiting musicians, and also those that they heard on the radio or records can be viewed as a response to the performance and stylistic practices that were occurring overseas and in New Zealand. These responses took many forms, from attempting to imitate a specific musician's style of performing, to attempting to reproduce generalised instrument timbres. While few musicians' went to the extent of the former many did attempt the latter. For example, trumpeter Jim Warren was particularly taken with the brass section of the Lee band, and attempted to emulate the large, open sound that the American trumpeters had. This trumpet timbre was a contrast to the narrow, almost pinched sound that was a product of the brass band style. Many New Zealand brass players during this period, including Warren, had begun their brass studies in brass bands, and had naturally carried this timbre over when they began playing jazz. Warren, and many other brass players were entranced by this very different brass sound and set about learning how to get that sound for themselves.<sup>103</sup>

## Fans

The first half of the 1930s appears to have been a relatively inactive period for jazz fans in New Zealand. While there were informal gatherings of musicians and fans at various venues these were either invitation only or (intentionally or unintentionally) secretive: you had to be 'in the know' to find them.<sup>104</sup> Fan organisations, such as the 1920s jazz clubs did not begin to re-emerge until the introduction of swing to New Zealand in 1936. In the late 1930s a new style of jazz club, dubbed Rhythm or Swing clubs, began to emerge as the predominant fan organisations around jazz. These organisations would help support the existing scene, and through their activities, encourage the expansion of each of their local (centred around particular towns) scenes.

---

<sup>102</sup> AMM December 1937, January 1938.

<sup>103</sup> Jim Warren, Interview with Aleisha Ward (2009).

<sup>104</sup> Lewis, 45-46.

The swing and rhythm clubs were a response to both the new swing style, and to the overseas fan organisations that New Zealand fans observed through the music and popular press, local and overseas radio, and films. These clubs were founded by early swing fans who wanted to share their passion with both fellow swing fans and anyone else that might be interested. The function and purpose of these clubs was to popularise swing, both music and dance in their local community.

These clubs were split across the activities of dancing and listening. The dancing clubs were known as swing clubs and the listening clubs were rhythm clubs. This use of swing to denote dancing clubs only occurred in the late 1930s and early 1940s. By the end of World War Two the term 'swing club' denoted a listening club. The swing (dancing) clubs activities differed slightly from their 1920s predecessors in that they did not always hire bands, but often used records for their dances. Some, such as the Wellington Swing Club (founded 1939), used both a live band and records. In the case of the Wellington Swing Club the band was one that was formed for the purpose of the swing club's dances.<sup>105</sup>

While the Wellington Swing Club was swing dance focused, their activities were not solely dances. Press reports indicate that at some of their members-only evenings they developed new steps and techniques, and listened to and discussed swing records. At one evening, their band's drummer, Cav Nichol (who later became the host of a jazz programme on 2YD), gave a lecture on the "Evolution of swing" with seventeen aural examples of development from "ragtime-jazz-Schmultz-swing."<sup>106</sup> This equal inclusion of the listening and knowledge aspects of jazz fandom had until this point been the preserve of the Rhythm Clubs.

In 1936 and 1937 several prominent Rhythm Clubs were established in the main towns in New Zealand. These clubs were a radical departure from the jazz fan clubs that focussed on the dance more than the music. These clubs were established so that fans could listen to and discuss the music, and in a way can be seen as initiating the formation of a jazz culture in New Zealand. The meetings for these clubs were usually a combination of the playing of the latest records, live music provided by members or invited guests, and lectures and discussions about various aspects of the music and the culture surrounding it.<sup>107</sup>

As a result of this focus, the Rhythm Clubs attracted a different type of jazz fan. These were fans who, while they appreciated that swing and the older jazz was dancing music, did not want to

---

<sup>105</sup> EP 23/8/1939, 6; DHJA 'Auckland Rhythm Club' MS-Papers-9018-52.

<sup>106</sup> EP 'Here and There' 1/5/1939, 14.

<sup>107</sup> DHJA Venue and Organisation files, MS-Papers-9018-52 through 59.

dance to it. These fans wanted to hear the extended improvisations that played with the rhythm, taking it out of dancing tempo/rhythm (embracing wider tempos and rhythmic shifts), wanted to hear the musicians playing with different aspects of the music. The membership of these clubs included many jazz musicians, ranging from amateur to professional, as well as non-musician fans, who were often avid record collectors.

The activities of the Rhythm Clubs, as they focused on the act of listening, were naturally different in space and form to the Swing Clubs. The meetings took place at a variety of venues, from the houses of members to community halls to commercial (mostly retail) venues, and were held at varying frequencies. It appears that the meetings usually held on Sunday evenings and lasted around two hours. The exception to this was when a jam session was included at the end of the meeting, which would then extend until the musicians decided to finish for the night.<sup>108</sup>

The meeting format for the Auckland Rhythm Club (established 1937) for November 6 1938 is fairly typical of the style and format of Rhythm Clubs around New Zealand, and gives an insight into the clubs focus and activities. This particular gathering began with Jack Gill presenting "gems from his collection," which surveyed both early and current jazz, playing records by the ODJB through to the Dorsey Brothers.

Following the conclusion of this record recital there was a lecture by Mr. W Walker entitled "Who is Mike?" The 'Mike' in question was an anonymous columnist for the British music periodical *Melody Maker*, who championed the "cause of hot players in the days when it was considered unsafe to play it." The conclusion that the speaker came to on the identity of 'Mike' was that it was British musician Patrick 'Spike' Hughes, although the report does not indicate how this conclusion was reached.

The meeting concluded with another recital of mostly early jazz records, this time from the collection of Mr. H Blampied. The reporter by this point appears to have run out of space and simply states the titles and offers a brief comment about American clarinettist Boyd Senter.<sup>109</sup>

While there were variations in format, the meetings for the various Rhythm Clubs around New Zealand almost always began with a record recital and had some sort of talk or discussion. The focus of these meetings is almost always on jazz, or jazz-related subjects from outside New Zealand. There are few mentions of local musicians outside of the context of members or jam

---

<sup>108</sup> DHJA 'Auckland Rhythm Club' MS-Papers-9018-52, 'Christchurch Rhythm Club MS-Papers-9018-53.

<sup>109</sup> AMM January 1939.

sessions in the reports. There were no mentions of local gigs that people attended, nor any promotion or advocacy for local jazz. Perhaps this was because many of the members were musicians who were active on the local scene and it was considered unnecessary to talk about it because 'everyone' knew.<sup>110</sup>

Fan organisations such as these were a response to the desire to connect with the wider jazz/swing scene both within New Zealand and internationally, even if it was vicariously through the media of records and second-hand reports from other clubs. This desire led individuals to investigate, and educate themselves, and their fellow fans in various matters pertaining to swing, whether it was the latest step seen on film or on the stage, or the latest recording by Duke Ellington or Benny Goodman. In this way New Zealand fan organisations responded to the influences they were seeking out from the United States, and also from Britain, and Australia.

The choices of music that people made for the record recitals at both Swing and Rhythm Club meetings would have reflected what they believed to be important jazz pieces, which were worthy of further thought and discussion. By collecting records, and focusing on particular bands and artists these fans were responding to influences surrounding the production of jazz records, from marketing to ideological concepts. In presenting selected items to an audience, they were further responding to the to this range of issues, especially surrounding the concept of authenticity as they were presenting what they believed to be authentic jazz, and also what they believed to reflect important aspects of that authenticity.<sup>111</sup>

Through these activities fans were creating ideological constructs about jazz, and why what they chose to present should be considered authentic. Fans' choices about records to present at club meetings also led to further development of local jazz repertoire, and the jazz culture in New Zealand. The records presented influenced the both a local repertoire and culture because, as mentioned above, the presenters believed there was a particular value in the record. These types of selections indicate that fans had a firm set of beliefs about what and what was not jazz, and such beliefs would have been passed on to the audience through the presenter's statements and reactions.

The beginning of World War Two had a major impact on both the Swing and Rhythm Clubs, and by the early 1940s nearly all had shut down due to the dramatic decrease in membership.

---

<sup>110</sup> DHJA 'Auckland Rhythm Club' MS-Papers-9018-52, 'Christchurch Rhythm Club' MS-Papers-9018-53.

<sup>111</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, 4-5.



The war years, like those of the Depression, were very quiet for fan organisations, and it would not be until mid-1945 that jazz clubs began to reappear in New Zealand.

#### 4.5 Conclusion

At the beginning of this chapter I posited that the 'symptoms' of the 'musical virus', jazz were different from country to country because of people's cultural experiences. Throughout this chapter I have aimed to demonstrate that metaphor within the context of New Zealand by examining how New Zealanders responded to jazz, and what aspects were reflected in the local production of jazz. I also used New Zealanders responses as the basis of the recontextualisation of jazz into a New Zealand setting.

The lack of boundaries on the ideas, sound and repertoire of jazz in the 1920s allowed New Zealanders to broadly reinterpret what was perceived as jazz, and to create a localised definition. As I explained in section 4.2 the definition of jazz was based on broad types that were decontextualised from the original source: it was jazz as popular music (to be specific, up-tempo popular *dance* music), it was jazz as an emotional quality, particularly excitement, or nervous energy, it was jazz as a cause of immorality. These broad types of definitions were a reflection of how New Zealanders responded to jazz, and were the beginnings of recontextualisation.

As discussed throughout this chapter, the cultural, social, and musical ideologies and contexts that surrounded jazz as it appeared in New Zealand determined the changing shape of jazz during the period 1920–1939. These factors influenced the acceptance of jazz in New Zealand society, and its position within society. However, although New Zealanders did not directly respond to the ideologies surrounding jazz in Australia, the United States or Great Britain, they did respond to jazz with reference to the influences from these countries. By this I mean that New Zealand's existing relationships with each of those countries influenced how New Zealanders reacted to anything (for example politics, art, consumer items) coming from those countries. Also, to paraphrase Gordon Mirams, New Zealanders *conceptualisation* of Anzac, Hollywood and 'home' (Australia, the United States, and Britain) played a role in *how* New Zealanders responded to artefacts from those countries, because there were particular ideas associated with those countries, and how they related to New Zealand

Although the extra-musical qualities of jazz disappeared from the local definition at the end of the 1920s, the broad definition of jazz as up-tempo popular dance music remained throughout the first half of the 1930s and was transmuted with the introduction of swing in 1936. The continuing broad definition of jazz also informed the development of a local jazz culture.

As explored throughout this chapter, musicians and fans were influenced by jazz from outside of New Zealand, and chose particular aspects to emulate, or share with their peers on the bandstand, and through the activities of jazz clubs. The selections were a personal response to the jazz that they heard; what they believed to be 'good' jazz, but it was also what they believed to be authentic. By presenting particular material to others, they took their responses to the next level, by becoming agents of cultural development.

The development of the local jazz repertoire and culture occurred not only through the activities of musicians and fans, but also through journalists in the press, and broadcasting officials. Their choices about what jazz to broadcast, what overseas article to reprint, or how to present different concepts of jazz to an audience, all informed the development of a jazz culture because they were informing wider society that what they were presenting was jazz in New Zealand.

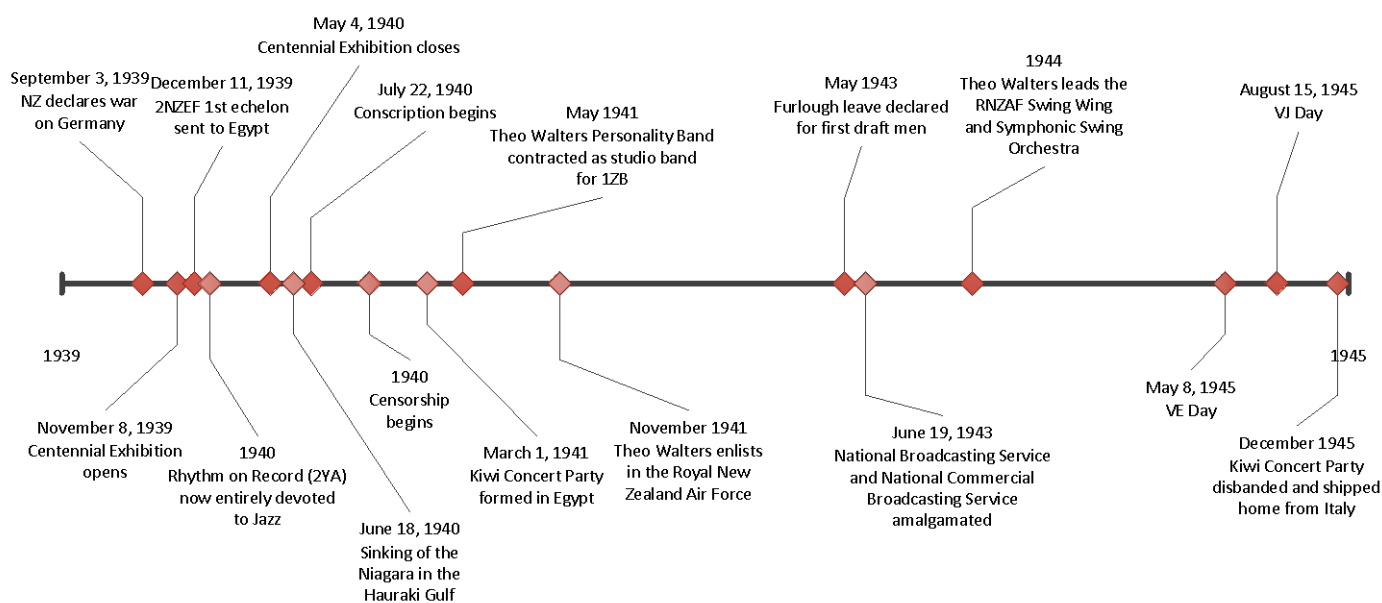
New Zealanders responses to jazz, and the way that jazz was presented, varied according to their beliefs and preferences. They were influenced by what they saw, read, and heard about jazz from many different, and often, conflicting sources. Those responses helped to shape the New Zealand jazz scene and position it in the wider music and entertainment industry throughout 1920–1939.

Through agents actively promoting aspects of jazz, and the audiences' responses, New Zealanders were actively engaged in the recontextualisation of jazz. The contemporaneous processes of promotion, response, recontextualisation, were reflected in the changing ideas about jazz across the period, and its position within New Zealand society. The broad effect of these processes that jazz developed a New Zealand accent and syntax in the period 1920–1939.

This chapter concludes Part One of this thesis. In Part Two, I examine the effects of World War Two on New Zealand and the jazz scene. In the following chapter I examine the effects that the war had on the local scene and that of New Zealand jazz musicians serving in the armed forces, both within New Zealand and overseas.

## **Part Three: World War Two**

---



## 5 World War Two and effects on the local jazz scene

### 5.1 Introduction

Two days before New Zealand declared war on Germany, radio station 2YAs jazz programme *Rhythm on Record* was interrupted by a broadcast from *Voice of America* relaying Hitler's invasion of Poland.<sup>1</sup> Coincident with this broadcast the New Zealand government declared a state of emergency and began issuing the first wartime regulations regarding armed forces mobilisation, and censorship.<sup>2</sup> This was the beginning of a series of disruptions that would last for the next six years. From enlistment and conscription to rationing, problems with production and importation to restrictions on broadcasting, the New Zealand music industry, and in particular the local jazz scene was disrupted in a many ways.

In this chapter I discuss the effects of World War Two on New Zealand jazz. I describe the experiences of individual New Zealand musicians and bands during the war, both military and civilian, and I discuss how the war affected the performance and broadcasting of jazz in New Zealand. The residency of American troops in New Zealand during 1942-1945 is a substantial separate topic, and I discuss this separately in Chapter 6. This chapter is written in a more narrative style than the preceding chapters, because much of its content is in the form of stories, uncovered either from archives or directly from the individuals involved. At the end of this chapter, I will draw conclusions about the similarities and differences between experiences, and assess how

<sup>1</sup> Ken Collins, *Broadcasting Grave and Gay*, Caxton: Christchurch, 1967, 83-84.

<sup>2</sup> Laurie Barber, *War Memorial: A Chronology of New Zealand and World War II*, Heinemann Reed: Auckland, 1989, 45.

representative these stories were of the experiences of all jazz musicians and the jazz-listening public during the war.

### **New Zealand at War:**

In the first months of the so called 'phoney war', in which very little war action occurred, there were few disruptions to the music industry; however, like the phoney war this did not last.<sup>3</sup> Enlistment and from 1940, conscription (see the timeline at the start of this chapter), had a many effects on the music industry especially disrupting band personnel, but also affecting the operation of venues, radio and music retail. These disruptions had long-ranging effects on the music industry as a whole throughout the war.

The Second New Zealand Expeditionary Force [2NZEF] First Echelon was dispatched from New Zealand to Egypt on January 5 1940.<sup>4</sup> By mid-1940 the phoney war had become a real one with the advent of the German *blitzkrieg*, literally 'lightening war' with Germany launching a massive, and multi-pronged attack on Western Europe.<sup>5</sup>

In New Zealand, the war became a local reality when the steamer *Niagara* was sunk when it hit a mine laid by the German raider *Orion* in Auckland's Hauraki Gulf on the evening of June 18.<sup>6</sup> This incident was the first enemy action in New Zealand territorial waters, and had an immediate effect on Auckland's jazz community. Local saxophonist Pat Watters had been aboard performing in the steamer's band when it hit the mine and was blown up. After making it back to shore he went to the Peter Pan Cabaret to see his brother Jim, who played tenor saxophone with the band. Bedraggled and weary he must have presented a shocking sight to the cabaret patrons and the band. Trumpeter Jim Warren said that he didn't understand the significance of the visit until later, when he heard the news of the *Niagara*: "he [Pat] had come to see his brother probably to get a bed for the night, and some clothes."<sup>7</sup>

The sinking of the *Niagara* bought home one reality of war to the jazz community, and indeed to New Zealand society as a whole. Until that point, New Zealand had been isolated from the physical danger of war. Physical safety within New Zealand's territorial waters, and by

---

<sup>3</sup> The term phoney war was coined by United States Senator William Borah in 'Defiant Peace Bid Hurlled by Hitler' *The Pittsburgh Press* 19/9/1939, 1,8.

<sup>4</sup> Ian McGibbon, *New Zealand and the Second World War: The People, the Battles and the Legacy*, Hodder Moa Beckett: Auckland, 2004, 40.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, 44.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, 53.

<sup>7</sup> Chris Bourke, *Blue Smoke: The Lost Dawn of New Zealand Popular Music 1919–1964*, Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2010, 112.

extension within New Zealand was no longer guaranteed.<sup>8</sup> Physical danger was an aspect of war that many musicians would become used to when they joined the armed forces, and for some of them it became a background to performing.

As the war progressed other realities such as rationing, conscription, enlistment, resulting in changing personnel of bands, and censorship affected the experience of jazz in New Zealand. For musicians serving in the forces overseas their experiences of jazz were affected by the situations, and places, that they found themselves in. The changing experience of jazz for musicians and fans during World War Two is central to this chapter, and resonates through the anecdotes of individuals, and through larger narratives.

### **Chapter Overview:**

In the first half of this chapter I examine the experiences of jazz musicians in the armed forces. Section 5.2 discusses jazz musicians that enlisted, or were conscripted, into the armed forces. This section focuses primarily on the RNZAF Central Band, and the experiences of individuals in the armed forces, both in New Zealand and overseas. In section 5.3 I examine the 2NZEF Entertainment Unit, more commonly known as the Kiwi Concert Party, and their experiences in the Middle East and Europe. I will also briefly discuss the activities of the lesser-known 2NZEF 3rd Division (Pacific) Entertainment Unit. In this part of the chapter I contrast the experiences between the RNZAF Central Band, and the Kiwi Concert Party, through the dichotomies of home/away, and physical danger and safety. These sections will also examine how musicians war experiences affected their musical technique and aspects of style and performance.

Following these sections, in 5.4, I explore the jazz scene within New Zealand, and the effects of enlistment and conscription on the local scenes. This section will examine the changing experience of jazz on the home front through the problems with keeping bands running with musicians disappearing into the armed forces, and the relationship between civilian and military musicians. Associated with this, I will examine the contrast between the civilian and military jazz experience on the home front. I will also explore some of the surprising positive outcomes due to the war on the jazz scene in New Zealand.

Finally, section 5.5 will focus on New Zealand broadcasting during the war years. This section will discuss problems of the production and importation of records during the war. I will also examine censorship, and programming changes, and how broadcasting staff coped with these problems. Further I will explore how some of the problems turned into positive long-term benefits

---

<sup>8</sup> MacGibbon, 53.

for broadcasting. It should be noted here that this section will only deal with stations under New Zealand control; the American Expeditionary Service Station Auckland (1ZM) will be examined in Chapter Six.

## **5.2 *Enlistment and Conscription: jazz on the battlefield***

In the first months of World War Two, enlistment of New Zealand men into the armed forces was best described as enthusiastic.<sup>9</sup> This enthusiasm caused many problems for bands across New Zealand, and would continue to do so throughout the war. The sudden disappearance of musicians into the forces often left bands short handed, and bandleaders scrabbling for temporary and eventually permanent replacements.

Musicians were considered by the Defence Department to be crucial to entertaining the troops at home and abroad, and also in the efforts to raise money for the Patriotic Fund. Each branch of the forces made a concerted effort to recruit musicians.<sup>10</sup>

This section primarily focuses on the Royal New Zealand Air Force Central Band. This is due to the fact that there are extensive archival holdings for the Air Force bands at Archives New Zealand, whereas there appears to be few records held for other branches bands held in any archive or library in New Zealand. It is also due to the fact that the subsidiary jazz bands were the closest thing to a national jazz band that New Zealand had at that time. This also gave musicians a way to measure themselves against musicians from other towns and to see how they fit within the hierarchy that had been constructed through the RNZAF band. This does not mean that there were no official, or unofficial bands in other service branches, however, but simply that there are not enough records from which I could construct a cohesive narrative about their activities in relation to the jazz scene.

### **Royal New Zealand Air Force Central Band:**

The Air Force, especially, seems to have taken advantage of musicians' desire to play in a forces band, and essentially head-hunted musicians from all genres for its Central Band.<sup>11</sup> With regard to jazz musicians, the Air Force enticed musicians and bandleaders from the best bands across New Zealand. In Auckland Art Larkins lost three members of his band (Wally Ransom, drums, Jerry Baxter, tenor sax, and Jimmy Gallagher, bass) in early 1940 to the Air Force Band. Around the same time saxophonist 'Chips' Healy left the Theo Walters Band, which would soon be

---

<sup>9</sup> Barber, 45.

<sup>10</sup> Bourke, 112.

<sup>11</sup> RNZAF Band playing at public functions May 1937-July 1944 AIR1 196 6/1/2 5, Archives NZ.

disbanded when Walters himself enlisted in the Air Force. At a similar time, saxophonist Roy Lester of the Americanadians band was contemplating enlisting in the Air Force.<sup>12</sup>

While there was patriotism involved in musicians' decision to enlist, they were also motivated by the chance to play in what was essentially an 'all-star' band.<sup>13</sup> By the end of 1940 the New Zealand Air Force had the best bands of all the forces, including dance/jazz bands, which were filled with many of the best jazz musicians and arrangers from around the country.<sup>14</sup> This wholesale recruitment may have been good for the Air Force, whose private mission it was to have the best forces bands, but to the general public it did not look good.<sup>15</sup>

The Central Band, based at Rongotai in the former Centennial Exhibition grounds, was a professional military band devoted to touring New Zealand and, later, overseas encampments. The band was to be made primarily of men who were either not of age, or were considered unfit for overseas service, although a certain level of fitness was required to fulfill band and military duties. While musicians were in the Central Band music was their primary employment, although they did have other military duties while on base. The band's primary duty was to tour around New Zealand raising money for the National Patriotic Fund Board, and entertaining on various military bases, and in parades.<sup>16</sup>

The Central Bands' full complement was sixty-three musicians and within that complement, the brass, marching, concert, and dance/jazz bands were formed.<sup>17</sup> The chain of command for the Central Band and its subsidiary bands was Band President Squadron Leader Beau T. Sheil, Musical Director Flight Lieutenant Gladstone Hill, who was also the conductor of the full complement Central Band (replacing Flight Lieutenant T.J. Kirk-Burnnand who transferred to the New Zealand Army early 1940), and below Hill were the conductors/leaders of the individual subsidiary bands.

The jazz component of the central Air Force band consisted of two bands: the Symphonic Swing Orchestra, which was a swing band with strings, and the dance/jazz band (the same personnel without strings), called the Swing Wing. The Symphonic Swing Orchestra, and the Swing

---

<sup>12</sup> AMM April, July 1940.

<sup>13</sup> Art Larkins file, AMM April 1940 DHJA MS-Papers-9018-26.

<sup>14</sup> Bourke, 107.

<sup>15</sup> RNZAF Band playing at public functions May 1937-July 1944 AIR1 196 6/1/2 5, Archives NZ.

<sup>16</sup> RNZAF Band playing at public functions May 1937-July 1944 AIR1 196 6/1/2 5, Archives NZ.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.



Wing as separate entities performed mostly at dances, but also took part in the RNZAF concerts and the revue *Flying High*.<sup>18</sup>

The Swing Wing was first led by Corporal Floyd, but was replaced by saxophonist Bob Girvan (who was mentioned in Chapter Three as part of Tut Coltman's band) when Floyd became ill in September 1943.<sup>19</sup> Musical director Flight Lieutenant Gladstone Hill reported to Band president, Squadron Leader Beau T. Sheil that he thought that Girvan would be an excellent leader, and would significantly improve the band.<sup>20</sup> How long Girvan led the Swing Wing is unknown, but by April 25 1944 the band was being led by (now) Corporal Theo Walters, who also led the Symphonic Swing Orchestra.<sup>21</sup>

The New Zealand jazz community thought the Swing Wing an excellent jazz band, which, considering its personnel included many of the best jazz musicians in the country is unsurprising. Given how much all component bands of the Central Band performed for the public, and on the radio, it is also unsurprising that the Swing Wing became well-known in civilian circles.<sup>22</sup> However, it was extremely popular in both military and civilian audience, and was much sought after to play at civilian dances, just as much as it was for military engagements. This popularity also caused some friction with the New Zealand Musicians' Union, which will be discussed in section 5.4.<sup>23</sup>

The numerous public appearances in New Zealand that the Central Band had in the next two years made it appear that the band was essentially professional musicians in Air Force uniforms rather than members of the Air Force defending New Zealand. This was not the case, but it was certainly true that because the Central Band was permanently stationed in New Zealand, it was an easier tour of duty in comparison to that of an average soldier.<sup>24</sup> As musicians turned 21, or became too old for overseas service, they were rotated in and out of the band. However, the changes in personnel were not immediately obvious to the public, despite membership being published in concert/revue programmes and newspaper reports.<sup>25</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> The identity of Corporal Floyd is unconfirmed, but I believe it was Wellington saxophonist/clarinetist Ross Floyd, who was known to be in the RNZAF and in the Central Band at this time, AMM June 1943.

<sup>20</sup> RNZAF Band playing at public functions May 1937-July 1944 AIR1 196 6/1/2 5, Archives NZ.

<sup>21</sup> Archives NZ: RNZAF Central Band Jan. 1943- Nov. 1945 AIR1 197 6/1/7 2.

<sup>22</sup> Theo Walter File, Jim Warren File DHJA MS-Papers-9018-48.

<sup>23</sup> Archives NZ: RNZAF Band playing at public functions May 1937-July 1944 AIR1 196 6/1/2 5.

<sup>24</sup> Bourke, 112.

<sup>25</sup> Archives NZ RNZAF Central Band Aug. 1940-July 1943 AIR 1 196 6/1/7 1.

Throughout the war there were ongoing debates in newspapers, in particular *New Zealand Truth*, about the band, and whether the musicians were actually doing their patriotic duty, or if this was a convenient escape from active service.<sup>26</sup> For example in September 1942, *Truth* received an anonymous letter from a person presumably in the Air Force, who informed the editor of *Truth* that the Air Force was ignoring the reclassification of fit-for-service grades with regards to band personnel. After the publication of that letter, *Truth* received similar letters, some of which also included the names of band members who were supposedly fit for field service. The editor, B.R. Connolly, applied to both the Minister of Defence, and the head of the Air Force for clarification on these matters. Both the Minister of Defence and the head of the Air Force replied to these allegations defending the band stating that Grade 1 men (those deemed fit for overseas service) were replaced as quickly as possible, but that due to the special qualifications of band work (*i.e.* high standard of musical ability) this was occasionally slower than certain sections of the public desired.<sup>27</sup>

Alternatively, there were complaints about the band not touring enough, and by late 1943, there were questions in the press about why the Central Band was not touring the Pacific encampments to raise the morale of the soldiers there. Hill found that despite the fundraising (which official figures put at over £150,000) and morale raising work that the band had done in New Zealand, he constantly had to justify the bands' existence to the New Zealand public as well as his superiors.<sup>28</sup>

RNZAF files report the constant battle that musical director Gladstone Hill had to keep the band at full complement. There are numerous memos between Hill, band president Beau Sheil, the personnel and public relations departments of the Air Force, and the Minister of Defence trying to explain how special the job of bandsman was. For example in the memorandum dated 9 November 1942 from Hill to the Chief of Air Staff, Hill iterated that membership in the band demanded a high level of expertise in one or more instruments, and constant rehearsal to keep the RNZAF Central Band at the peak of their abilities. Also, the rigorous tour schedule demanded that personnel not have a military job from which they could not be replaced. In addition to these conditions the men,

---

<sup>26</sup> Archives NZ RNZAF Central Band Aug. 1940-July 1943 AIR 1 196 6/1/7 1.

<sup>27</sup> RNZAF Central Band Aug. 1940-July 1943 AIR 1 196 6/1/7 1.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

although considered unfit for overseas service, had to have a good level of physical fitness in order to fulfill parade (marching) commitments.<sup>29</sup>

Some of the bureaucratic and press grumbling settled down in 1944 when the Central Band toured the Pacific encampments, entertaining allied troops. The band toured the islands of New Caledonia, Tulagi, Russell, Bougainville, Espiritu Santo and Fiji between June and October 1944. During that time the band gave more than 180 performances in horrible conditions, for both humans and instruments. However, such was their renown by this time that the troops eagerly awaited their concerts for hours in all sorts of conditions, up to, and including, tropical downpour.<sup>30</sup>

The RNZAF Central Band, especially the Swing Wing combination, proved very popular with audiences in the Pacific Islands. According to reports, some of the audiences were so enthusiastic about the Swing Wing that they all but mobbed the stage to express their appreciation. Some of the American troops even went so far as to favourably compare the Swing Wing to the Artie Shaw Band.<sup>31</sup>

The *Flying High* revue also made good use of the jazz musicians in the Band. *Flying High* appears to have been based on the variety show format that was used by the Second New Zealand Expeditionary Force Entertainment Unit (also known as the Kiwi Concert Party), which included items that highlighted the band. Within the show the Swing Wing was used to accompany sketches and other items and was highlighted with their own spots. Members of the Swing Wing were also used in comedy sketch band the Hillbilly Hotshots, which involved band members in hillbilly persona "sowing instrumental corn" with jazz arrangements of songs such as *Pistol Packin' Mama*.<sup>32</sup>

The musicians in the RNZAF band might have been considered privileged by the general population in terms of their active duty, but the experiences of the band were useful to musicians in many ways. The short turnaround times between rehearsal and performance, and the wide variety of repertoire needed were greatly educational to the musicians in the RNZAF band. These experiences

---

<sup>29</sup> Archives NZ: RNZAF Band playing at public functions May 1937-July 1944 AIR1 196 6/1/2 5; RNZAF Central Band Jan. 1943- Nov. 1945 AIR1 197 6/1/7 2; RNZAF Central Band Aug. 1940-July 1943 AIR 1 196 6/1/7 1.

<sup>30</sup> Geoff Bentley, *RNZAF, A Short History*, Reed: Wellington, 1969, 203-205.

<sup>31</sup> Archives NZ: Newspaper clippings FNZAF and other bands various dates 1940-1945 AIR 117 12 37.

<sup>32</sup> Archives NZ: RNZAF Band playing at public functions May 1937-July 1944 AIR1 196 6/1/2 5; EP 20/4/1944, 6.

were useful to jazz musicians in the post-war years in both live and broadcasting situations, especially after the creation of the radio band system.

### Jim Warren's experiences

Not all musicians in the Air Force were recruited specifically for the Central band. Some, like trumpeter Jim Warren, enlisted as regular servicemen, and were only later in their service tour transferred to the Central Band. While still civilians, Warren and fellow trumpeter Nolan Rafferty were asked by 'Chips' Healy, who led the band at the Hobsonville base to sit in with the band for some dances as they were short of trumpeters. During the performance, they were persuaded to enlist so they could join the band officially. Warren and Rafferty enlisted in the Air Force in 1941, but unlike the Central Band, the base band was essentially a hobby and they needed a trade, so they joined the marine section, which serviced the flying boats and other marine craft.<sup>33</sup>

In late 1941 or early 1942, both Warren and Rafferty were sent with their unit to Fiji to work on the flying boats there. While in Fiji they managed to scrape together a dance band to play for dances and concerts. To this day, Warren is surprised at how much trouble they had finding other musicians "among the several hundred men stationed on the island" to play in the band. Warren served in Fiji until early 1944, when his unit was returned to New Zealand. At that point he decided that he would like to play in the Central Band, and so he made an application, auditioned and was accepted.<sup>34</sup>

For the rest of the war, Warren was a member of the Central Band, which he thoroughly enjoyed. He especially enjoyed the touring, and the diverse repertoire that the band tackled. It also dramatically improved his reading skills, which were not as good as they could have been.<sup>35</sup>

Warren recalled that it was a very privileged way to spend the war, especially in comparison to his two years of regular duties before being transferred to the band. Although the life certainly wasn't easy, between being based in Rongotai, and constantly touring, they rarely saw their families, it was considerably less dangerous than the lives of their counterparts serving overseas. However, being in New Zealand they had to contend with the discontent vocalised by the public about their duties, and for some their guilt that they were not serving, or *could not* serve, overseas in an active capacity.<sup>36</sup>

---

<sup>33</sup> Jim Warren Interview with Aleisha Ward (2009).

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Jim Warren, Interview with Aleisha Ward (2009); Archives NZ: RNZAF band, policy June 1940-Dec. 1957 AIR1 195 6/1/1 1.

### Ken Avery's experiences

While many jazz musicians were fortunate enough to serve with one of the official bands in the forces at some point during their tenure in the military, there were also many who did not do so for a variety of reasons. Saxophonist Ken Avery, who was later better known for his novelty song writing, was one such. Avery had become interested in jazz in the late 1930s and his first gig was as a drummer in a pick up band with other soldiers at the Addington Raceway military camp for a dance. Avery states in his memoir *Where are the Camels? A Dance Band Diary* that at this point he was "learning to play the tenor sax...but was by no means competent enough to get through four hours of dance music."<sup>37</sup>

During the early war years, while Avery was stationed in Christchurch, he attempted to learn the saxophone and occasionally sat in with local bands, in particular Martin Winiata's band at the Union Rowing Club, to get experience. Avery's progress, by his own admittance, was slow, as he was attempting to teach himself both theory and practice.<sup>38</sup> However, Avery was determined to become competent at jazz, and this determination remained with him throughout his war experiences. The focus of this section is how Avery's war experiences informed his musical experiences, and how he continued his self-education in spite of, and occasionally because of the war.

In 1943 Avery was sent to Egypt for training before heading to the Italian front. On the way he regularly volunteered to play in ship concerts on a borrowed saxophone (having left his in New Zealand). Once in Egypt he would regularly go to any venue where he could listen to jazz, and attended jazz club evenings (along the lines of the jazz and swing clubs back in New Zealand), run by some jazz fans in the British Army. In particular he recalled a Sergeants' Club that had "a swinging combo," which Avery thought were "pretty good," and with which the tenor saxophonist allowed him to play his saxophone a few times (a particular highlight for Avery).<sup>39</sup>

At some point after arriving in Egypt (possibly early 1944) Avery heard that the Kiwi Concert Party was auditioning musicians, so he decided to attempt an audition. Avery stated that the audition consisted of "sight reading a fairly simple dance band arrangement." He quickly realised that it was beyond his capabilities and "after a few attempts at getting the written notes and phrasing right, I admitted defeat." Despite not being very good, Avery said that Terry Vaughan (the

---

<sup>37</sup> Ken Avery, *Where are the Camels? A New Zealand Dance Band Diary*, First Edition: Wellington, 2010, 3.

<sup>38</sup> Avery, 4-5.

<sup>39</sup> *ibid* 6-7.

leader of the Concert Party), was very nice to him, complimenting Avery on the tone he could get out of the (borrowed) saxophone, but also stating that his reading skills simply were not up to the job. Avery would audition for the Kiwi Concert Party again in 1945, and though he had improved, his reading skill still was not good enough to join the Party.<sup>40</sup>

After the first audition Avery used much of his spare time listening to all of the allied forces jazz bands that came to play at the bases in the Egyptian town of Maadi, or civilian jazz bands on radio or record. He and other musically inclined soldiers apparently tried to memorise the solos and arrangements that they heard, but none of them had the musical knowledge to teach others about what they heard. Avery admitted that he was quite ignorant about musical theory, and did not realise that there were books about theory and harmony that he could have utilised.<sup>41</sup>

After being shipped to Italy circa mid-1944, Avery realised that if he really wanted to be able to play jazz, he needed an instrument to practice on, and bought himself a clarinet in the Southern Italian town of Bari. Once he had acquired a clarinet Avery regularly practiced when he was not fighting, and he continued listening to any and all jazz bands that he ran across. This pattern of listening and practice was one that Avery continued throughout the war, especially through the winter when there was little fighting.<sup>42</sup>

It was this period that constituted Avery's musical self-education. By going and listening to bands from the various allied forces, talking to musicians, and finally acquiring books on theory, harmony, and arranging, Avery was preparing himself for civilian life as a musician. As one of his duties involved conveying soldiers on leave from Italy to Calais, he was more able than most soldiers to hear a wide variety of bands, and with his self-education he found that he was able to start analysing aspects of the bands he heard.<sup>43</sup>

This process of self-education was relatively common for New Zealand jazz musicians at this time, although most jazz musicians came to jazz already knowing the practical and theoretical basics of music. As Avery mentions in his memoir there were several other musically inclined soldiers with whom he shared information, in the form of books and records.<sup>44</sup> This practice was not so different from a self-taught civilian musician from this period, save the location and inability to devote a regular period every day to learning music.

---

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, 7-8, 11.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 9.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, 11-12.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid 10-13.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, 9.

On the troopship home in early 1946, Avery appeared in various concerts and revues and was finally able to play with the Kiwi Concert Party. The Concert Party had organised a series of concerts in which they regularly featured a 'guest artist' from the soldiers. Avery offered up his talents, and was accepted. He chose:

a waltz-time and swing arrangement of 'Indian Love Call.' A small group from the concert party orchestra provided the rhythm backing: Chas Patterson piano, Alan 'Horse' Brown drums, and George Campbell string bass, with Lew Campbell on cup muted trumpet. The whole performance went off pretty well – I think the Concert Party boys enjoyed it more than the soldier audience.<sup>45</sup>

The experiences of jazz musicians in the armed forces were wide and varied from hobbyist soldier, to professional musician. Many of the individual experiences were a result of luck, good or bad, just as much as ability, and contacts. What each of the differing experiences had in common were the changes that individual and collective experiences had on how musicians performed jazz, and what technical and musical changes they experienced because of those war experiences. For Avery the war gave him time to teach himself a number of essential skills (both theoretical and practical), and meet a number of musicians that would help him in creating a musical career when he returned to New Zealand.

### ***5.3 The Kiwi Concert Party***

---

<sup>45</sup> Ibid 13.

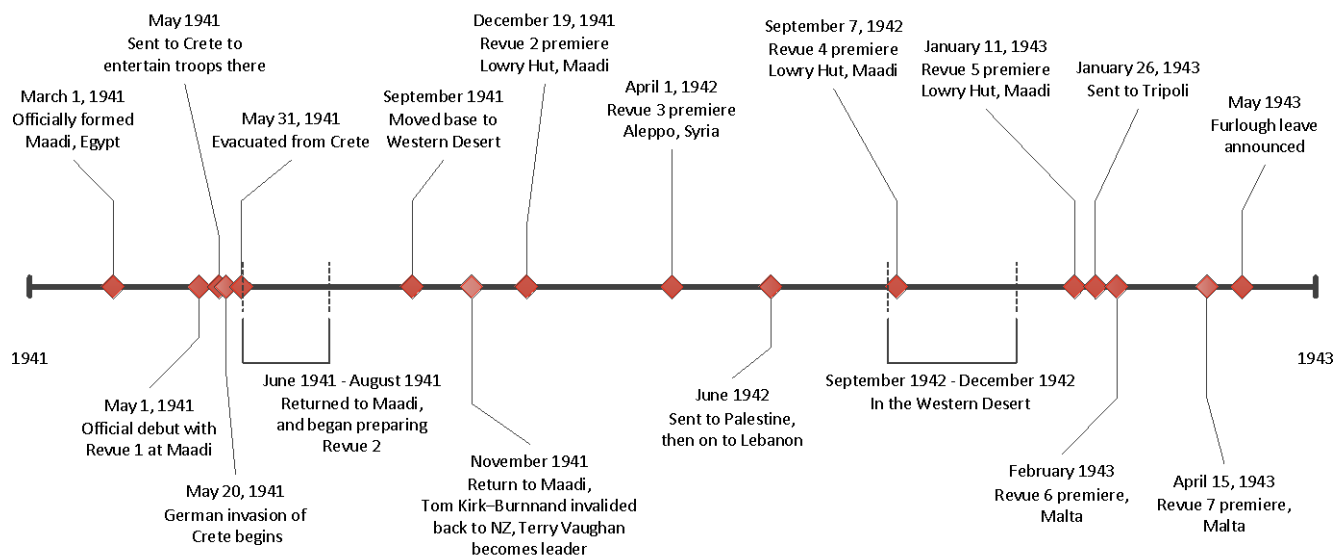


Figure 6: Kiwi Concert Party 1941-1943 timeline

### First Party: 1941–1943 Middle East– North Africa

The Second New Zealand Expeditionary Force [2NZEF] Entertainment Unit commonly known as the Kiwi Concert Party was officially formed in March 1941, but actually began in mid–October 1940. In his unpublished manuscript of the Kiwi Concert Party, singer Tony Rex recalled that he had been stationed in the Egyptian town of Maadi about three weeks when he was approached by sergeant–major Tom Kirk–Burnnand to help put on a one hour show in the Maadi Tent (the allied soldiers' local recreational facility) as the commander of 2NZEF, General Bernard Freyberg, was going to be there the following evening.<sup>46</sup> With a hasty half–hour rehearsal the small group performed for Freyberg and hundreds of servicemen to rapturous applause. At the end of the show Freyberg came 'back stage' to congratulate the men, and told them he had been thinking that the division needed a concert party, and now he was convinced. Freyberg placed Kirk–Burnnand in charge of the incipient entertainment unit and gave him *carte blanche* within the Division to find whomever he needed or wanted for the Concert Party.<sup>47</sup>

An Entertainment Unit or Concert Party took many forms among Allied troops, but for the most part it was a variety show format. For some of the allied forces entertainment units, the focus was entirely on the on–stage entertainers, and the band was used only to support the acts on the

<sup>46</sup> Tony Rex, *The Kiwi Concert Party*, Auckland Museum Library MS 1624, 1. The Maadi Tent was an unofficial service club (and actually held in a marquee), near the village of Maadi, Egypt, which was run by English volunteers.

<sup>47</sup> Rex, 2-3.



stage.<sup>48</sup> The Kiwi Concert Party differed from many other entertainment units in that its directors, Tom Kirk–Burnnand, and later, Terry Vaughn, integrated the band, as a whole, in sub–groups and as soloists into the show format.<sup>49</sup>

In civilian life, Kirk–Burnnand was a choirmaster, and organist, who was also involved in broadcasting both as a performer and as a musical director. Early in the war he had been the conductor for the RNZAF Central Band, before being transferred to the Army.<sup>50</sup> With such a varied musical and entertainment background General Freyberg considered him ideally suited to forming and managing a concert party. Between November 1940 and February 1941 Kirk–Burnnand held auditions and sought out those entertainers he knew were in the ranks. While not yet officially formed, the incipient entertainment unit was already entertaining at the various camps, service clubs and hospitals near Maadi–Cairo–Helwan.<sup>51</sup>

On March 1 1941, the 2NZE Entertainment Unit, soon commonly known as the Kiwi Concert Party, was officially commissioned and began rehearsing for their official debut performance on May 1. Their mission was to perform as close to the front lines as possible and to all allied troops, not just to New Zealanders. This made them unique among the concert parties, entertainment units and service organisation revues, as they had to be a self–contained military unit first and a concert party second. Being so close to the front lines meant that they had to be competent as an infantry unit, so about half of their rehearsal time was actually in combat training.<sup>52</sup>

Revue 1 was created as a variety show in the vaudeville style with a mixture of drama, comedy, novelty items, and all types of music, from classical to jazz. The one thing that Kirk–Burnnand insisted on in creating the show was that nothing remotely relating to military life or the war, was depicted, including no uniforms on stage. He also emphasised a mix of ensemble work and solos for both the band and the stage talent.<sup>53</sup>

As can be seen in the timeline at the start of this section, in early May 1941 the Kiwi Concert Party was sent to Crete to perform for the troops there. This was to be their first test entertaining under fire, and as a combat unit. For four days they performed for the troops at the

---

<sup>48</sup> Rex, 7, 98; Noel Habgood, unpublished manuscript *Freyberg's Circus*, 1-10; WAI1 210 DA 203/12/2 1 Archives New Zealand.

<sup>49</sup> KCP Programmes and ephemera WAI1 210 DA 203/15/1 Archives NZ, Vaughn, 60.

<sup>50</sup> John E. Reed, *Sing as We Go: The Story of the Kiwi Concert Party, 1941-43*, Reed: Auckland, 11-12.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid*, 12.

<sup>52</sup> Rex, 7-8, 66, 98.

<sup>53</sup> Rex, 7-8, 98.

frontlines, and regularly under bombardment. On May 20 the invasion of Crete by the Germans began, and the Concert Party downed costumes and instruments and took up arms. Over the next eleven days, the battle became a rout and then a forced march evacuation for the Kiwis, who lost all of their costumes, instruments and other equipment.<sup>54</sup> They also lost saxophonist/clarinetist Bill Taylor and piano accordionist Snowy Wilson when they were captured by the Germans and made prisoners of war.<sup>55</sup>

Once evacuated from Crete and returned to Egypt, the Concert Party regrouped and reequipped, and began a routine of rehearsing, occasional combat, and performing three to five times a day on the frontlines around the Middle East and North Africa until they returned to New Zealand on furlough leave in June 1943 (see the timeline for movements). During this period there were several changes in show and personnel, including the loss of Kirk–Burnnand when he was invalided back to New Zealand in November 1941 with a severe hearing condition.<sup>56</sup> Kirk–Burnnand was replaced as leader by pianist–arranger Terry Vaughan, who had been Kirk–Burnnand's musical second in command.

The musicians of the Kiwi Concert Party band were from a mixture of different musical backgrounds mostly classical and brass bands, with the odd dance band/jazz musician thrown in. However, all were musicians of an extremely high standard, as both Kirk–Burnnand and Vaughan knew that they had to be able to perform new arrangements with very little rehearsal, and under adverse conditions.<sup>57</sup> In this Concert Party configuration the band consisted of two violins, a three–man reed section (saxophones and clarinets), four trumpets, piano, drums and accordion. Within the band there were two musicians considered to be their jazz specialists: trumpeter Lindsay Brown and drummer/percussionist Hector Bell.

Brown was an up–and–coming jazz trumpeter, but having enlisted at nineteen had little jazz performance experience before the war. In 1942 Brown's playing came to the fore when the Party acquired a score for Glen Miller's *In the Mood*. Rex states: "Our woodwind section was bang on for this type of hot number with Brownie's modern trumpet playing improved out of sight, he could

---

<sup>54</sup> Reed, 14-15, Rex, 17-22.

<sup>55</sup> Terry Vaughan, *Whistle as You Go: The Story of the Kiwi Concert Party and Terry Vaughan*, Random House: Auckland, 1995, 12-16.

<sup>56</sup> Bourke, 139; Rex, 23-45.

<sup>57</sup> Avery, 8.

now really get 'with it'."<sup>58</sup> Brown was also the units' reveille player, but as befitting a concert party it was never the standard reveille tune, more often *Start the Day Right*, or *Bugle Call Rag*.<sup>59</sup>

Hector Bell was the one drummer with an ability to play jazz that Kirk–Burnnand could find in the Division originally. While acknowledged by his Party mates as being a fine jazz drummer and percussionist, Bell also had a drinking problem. According to Vaughan it was never a problem on the job, but after the show it could be an issue.<sup>60</sup> According to Rex, however, it got to the point that Vaughan had to threaten him with dismissal if he caught him drunk on the job.<sup>61</sup>

The band always had a special spot in the revues at the beginning of the second half, which showcased them in different genres. They would usually play at least one jazz piece (often more) and one classical piece with the balance made up of popular and folk songs. Individuals and sections of the band also had their own spots to showcase their abilities.<sup>62</sup>

When furlough leave was announced in 1943 it was only supposed to be for men who had served three years, which was most of the Party. This created a problem as the Concert Party was supposed to continue touring and performing while the missing members were on leave. Vaughan approached General Freyberg about this issue, and he decided to send the whole Concert Party back to New Zealand on the condition that they spend part of their time touring New Zealand raising money for the National Patriotic Fund.<sup>63</sup>

### **Interlude from War: Furlough Leave and Tour 1943**

The Kiwi Concert Party departed Egypt May 14 1943, and arrived in Wellington July 12 1943.<sup>64</sup> On arrival the Concert Party was informed by Colonel Bell, of Army Education Welfare Service, that they were to spend two months touring, with only one month leave. This was quite contrary to what had been discussed in Egypt with General Freyberg. For the men who were fully entitled to the three months furlough, this was quite a blow, and they were quite indignant about the fact. Eventually a compromise of two months leave and a one–month tour was agreed upon.<sup>65</sup>

Although most of the Concert Party had a well–deserved leave, Vaughan had discovered that several members would need to be replaced, as only Grade 1 Men would be returned to the

---

<sup>58</sup> Rex, 43.

<sup>59</sup> Rex, 40.

<sup>60</sup> Vaughan, 22.

<sup>61</sup> Rex, 57.

<sup>62</sup> Archives NZ Kiwi Concert Party Programmes and ephemera WAI1 210 DA 203/15/1.

<sup>63</sup> Rex, 54.

<sup>64</sup> Reed, 139; Rex, 55.

<sup>65</sup> Noel Habgood, unpublished manuscript *Freyberg's Circus*, 206.

theatre of war, and that those with pregnant wives would be allowed to stay home.<sup>66</sup> In addition to this edict the Party members all had to have medical examinations and some were downgraded to unfit for overseas service. This meant that he had to spend most of his so-called leave recruiting and auditioning potential new members and refitting some of the Party's equipment.<sup>67</sup>

Between late July and mid-August 1943, Vaughan scoured the military camps, both Army and Air Force, for musicians and entertainers to fill the gaps that would be left by those who had to leave the troupe. Two of his finds were brothers Phil and George Campbell, on trumpet and bass respectively (for a photograph of George see Appendix: Selected Photographs),<sup>68</sup> Originally from Paeroa, the Campbell brothers, were two of the leading musicians of the New Zealand jazz scene before the war, and their younger brother Lew (see Appendix: Selected Photographs for a picture), on trumpet and piano, was an up-and-coming star.<sup>69</sup> Lew was nineteen, and was not in the Army when his brothers were recruited for the Concert Party, but when he heard that they had joined the party he promptly enlisted in the Army. According to Tony Rex, Lew Campbell scrambled aboard their ship, as they were about to sail back to the Middle East, after all of five days enlistment in the Army.<sup>70</sup>

Other jazz musicians Vaughan recruited included veteran Wellington jazz drummer/vibraphonist Allan Brown, whom he "shanghaied" (enticed away) from the Air Force, and who turned out to be a brilliant showman, with excellent instincts on how best to support the band or the act on stage.<sup>71</sup> On the recommendation of the Campbell brothers, Vaughan also "purloined" trombonist Des Blundell from the Trentham camp band.<sup>72</sup>

The new musicians and showmen (excepting Lew Campbell who joined only just before they returned to the Middle East) became part of the Concert Party for the tour of New Zealand, which helped them to get up to speed with how the troupe worked, and what sort of life they could expect (without being under fire). The Party rehearsed for one week and then made a whistle-stop tour of sixteen towns between September 22 and October 22.<sup>73</sup> The tour also served to test out new arrangements for the band, as the new band was of a considerably different composition than the original one. They had lost their string section (but gained a double bass), and had gained several

---

<sup>66</sup> Rex, 57.

<sup>67</sup> Habgood, 206; Rex, 57; Vaughan, 47.

<sup>68</sup> Vaughan, 47.

<sup>69</sup> Bourke 104-106.

<sup>70</sup> Rex, 60.

<sup>71</sup> Rex, 63; Vaughan, 49.

<sup>72</sup> Vaughan 47.

<sup>73</sup> Archives NZ, KCP Programmes and ephemera WAI1 210 DA.

more brass and woodwind players, making the balance quite different. As mentioned above, several of them were dedicated jazz musicians, which allowed Vaughan to attempt different repertoire, and so the revue added more jazz to the mix.<sup>74</sup> By the time the tour ended the new members of the troupe had found their niches and the Party was working smoothly, in time for their return to Egypt.

---

<sup>74</sup> Rex, 57-60, Vaughan, 47-49.

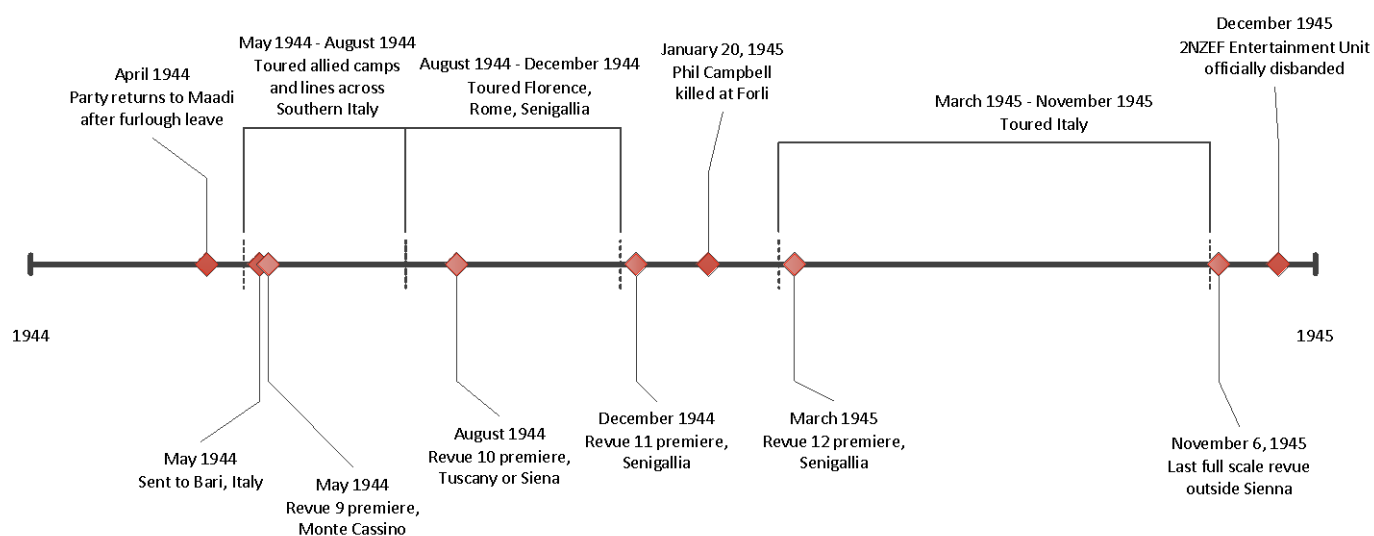


Figure 7: Kiwi Concert Party 1944-1945 timeline

## Second Party: 1944–1945 Italy

As is noted in the timeline above (fig. 7), the Kiwi Concert Party arrived in Maadi in early April 1944, and spent six weeks trying to find where the Division had stored their equipment, reequipping, and adding equipment. During this time Vaughan added three more jazz musicians to the band, guitarist Allen Sundborn, trumpeter Charlie Bye, and saxophonist Ces. Day.<sup>75</sup> By late May they were ready to head to their new base in Italy to perform for the troops fighting there.

The Concert Party would spend the rest of war touring Italy performing for allied troops and civilian audiences (see the timeline fig. 7). They were based in the southern Italian town of Bari for regrouping, as some of the new and returning members were to join the Party there, and rehearsals of Revue 9, which was a parody of the operatic format and clichés. With the addition of several jazz musicians to the band, more jazz was included in the shows' repertoire.<sup>76</sup>

Once they had regrouped, the Concert Party made their way towards Monte Cassino, performing for troops that had recently finished two unsuccessful assaults on the town. The Party then played in Anzio, just north of Cassino for American troops, who were very impressed that a concert party would come and perform for them so close the front line. According to Rex the troops were enthusiastic about the show, and were particularly impressed by the quality of the band. Phil Campbell and Des Blundell were especially praised by the troops some of whom told Rex that Campbell and Blundell could "stand along side any of their top-liners back in the States."<sup>77</sup>

<sup>75</sup> Vaughan, 57.

<sup>76</sup> Vaughan, 57-58, 60.

<sup>77</sup> Rex, 67.

The Party continued to tour up and down Italy at all the battle points before returning to their base at Bari to begin work on their tenth revue. Vaughan made reference to the difficulties of trying to create new material for the Concert Party, which had a variety of different talent bases. While he sourced a great deal of ideas from Expeditionary Forces Radio, some of the ideas came from the men themselves. Vaughan recalled one summer night when he heard someone playing Debussy's *Clair de Lune*, which then moved into "a jack-hammer boogie." Vaughan was intrigued, he "hadn't known Charlie Patterson played Debussy, and I didn't think our standby pianist, Pat Bell, could play such brilliant boogie-woogie. I got up. It was our third trumpet young Lew Campbell."<sup>78</sup> The idea of integrating classical and jazz stuck and was worked into some of the band arrangements, creating showcases for individuals and small groups within the band.

Tragedy struck the Concert Party on January 20 1945. The Maori Battalion had requested that the Party provide them with a dance band for a dance they were having that evening at their headquarters in Faenza. A small group from the band was provided and included were Chas Patterson (piano/piano accordion), Des Blundell (trombone), Dae Stafford (saxophone), Red Moore (vocals), and Phil (trumpet), George (bass), and Lew (trumpet) Campbell. George Campbell was asked by Tony Rex to provide him with his memories of that day for his manuscript. George Campbell recalled:

"We arrived by jeep at about 4.00pm and immediately familiarised ourselves with the lay out of this large three-storied casa in the main street of Faenza. The dance was to be held on the first floor so I placed my string bass alongside the pianos in an alcove off the room...

Then it was up to the penthouse for an early dinner with some members of the Battalion. At 5.00pm spasmodic bombardment began and the shell seemed to be getting closer and closer...Padre Huata rushed up to our top floor saying we'd better disperse...Phil and I, accompanied by Mete Kingi [*a friend of the Campbell brothers*] of the 28th Battalion went into the dance room to be close to the fire place.

I was standing just behind the other two and happened to glance towards the door opening on to the outside stairs. In that split second I actually saw the shell land and woke up some minutes later on my knees, with my head and hands over Phil's body.

---

<sup>78</sup> Vaughan, 60.

The room was a wreck. The huge ceiling beams, having miraculously missed me, had broken, crushing and twisting Phil's legs into an unsightly tangle, and there was a hole right through his stomach, I couldn't budge him an inch with those beams covering him.

With his head cradled in my arms I said, 'Phil – Phil, say something.'

He opened his eyes, gave me a faint smile. 'Look after Mum and Dad. Get them a house,' and died...

I could do nothing for my brother, so my immediate concert was for my string bass. It was smashed to pieces. I retrieved the neck as a souvenir and battled my way down the rubble to find General Freyberg on the scene who said, 'get the Campbell boys to Forli at once'

Only then did I start to think, 'why wasn't I killed?' Phil and Mete had only been two feet away from me and all I copped was the left side of both my battle dress trousers and jacket being torn away completely, the hair on the left side of my head was badly scorched, and a small piece of shrapnel which had somehow entered the right side of my neck."<sup>79</sup>

Phil Campbell was the only Concert Party casualty (although the Maori Battalion lost ten of their men in this attack), but it was a severe blow for the entire troupe. Although the Concert Party had lost men before, it had been to enemy capture rather than killed due to enemy action. They regularly performed within a mile of the front, often performing under bombardment, and they took part in fighting, but this was the first time that a member of the unit had been killed.<sup>80</sup>

When Campbell's death was reported in New Zealand the jazz community were equally shocked. Campbell was well respected, and liked in the community. He was also considered to be one of New Zealand's best jazz trumpeters, and was an up-and-coming bandleader.<sup>81</sup>

The old adage that 'the show must go on' was a grim reality for the Concert Party, and they continued to tour (including Campbell's brothers), making adjustments to band arrangements as needed. Four weeks after the death of Phil Campbell, the Party was split up when six of the original

---

<sup>79</sup> George Campbell in Tony Rex *The Kiwi Concert Party* unpublished manuscript Auckland War Memorial Museum.

<sup>80</sup> Vaughan, 14, 63-64.

<sup>81</sup> Phil Campbell file, DHJA MS- Papers-9018-07; Jukebox 'Jim Foley' Nov. 1946 2.



members received their orders that they were to be released from service and repatriated back to New Zealand.<sup>82</sup>

The releases meant that a new revue had to be created to adjust for their losses. 'Revue 12' was to be the Kiwi Concert Party's last show (see timeline fig. 7), which they performed from March 1945 through to the end of the war, and then through the troops repatriation into early 1946. Terry Vaughan (now a captain) was released from service in late May leaving the Party in the hands of his second in command Noel Habgood.<sup>83</sup> The last full-scale show was presented outside Siena November 6 1945, with the Kiwi Concert Party being officially disbanded in December 1945, although they would continue to entertain troops on their way back to New Zealand.<sup>84</sup>

### **Pacific Concert Party: 1943–1945**

Little is known about the 2NZEF 3rd Div Entertainment unit, known as the Pacific Kiwi Concert Party, in comparison to the original 2NZEF Kiwi Concert Party. It was formed in 1943 with men from the 2NZEF 3rd Division who were serving in the Pacific war under the leadership of renowned classical and dance band musician Oswald (Ossie) Cheesman.<sup>85</sup> As with the original 2NZEF Concert Party, the Pacific Concert Party performed as close to the frontlines as possible. Aside from their mission, this concert party bore little relation to the Kiwi Concert Party in the northern hemisphere.

The Pacific Party started out by using some of the Northern Kiwi Concert Party's material, but the style of shows and music was different from the Party in the northern hemisphere, although still based in a variety show format.<sup>86</sup> Aside from Cheesman the musical personnel are unknown, except for the pianist John Mackenzie, who was Cheesman's piano duet partner. However, the musicians were probably as good as the Northern Concert Party, as Cheesman was reputed to be just as particular about the ability of his musicians as his counterpart Terry Vaughan.<sup>87</sup>

According to a report in the *New Zealand Free Lance*, the Pacific Concert Party shows contained a broader range of music than their Northern counterparts, including more original

---

<sup>82</sup> Vaughan, 64.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid, 65.

<sup>84</sup> Rex, 86.

<sup>85</sup> NZL 'He Had to Lead a Band –But He'd Rather Play Liszt,' 3/8/1945, 6.

<sup>86</sup> Vaughan 69.

<sup>87</sup> 'He Had to Lead a Band' NZL 3/8/1945, 6.

compositions (mostly by Cheesman), and more jazz.<sup>88</sup> In contrast to the Northern Concert Party however, Cheesman did include references to the Army and the war in his repertoire.<sup>89</sup>

The Kiwi Concert Parties had a profound effect on jazz in New Zealand in the post-war decade. As has been demonstrated, there were a number of prominent jazz musicians involved in the entertainment units. Their experiences in learning, rehearsing and performing new material, on a constant basis made all the musicians more versatile, and stood them in good stead once they returned to civilian life. For the jazz musicians, their experiences made them popular with bandleaders, especially for the newly formed radio bands that had a high turnover of arrangements, and performances, with little rehearsal.<sup>90</sup>

The experience of jazz within the military depended entirely on situation. There was a great contrast between musicians in the RNZAF Central Band, and those in the Kiwi Concert Party, or in general units. Part of this was purely the contrast between performing at the battle-front versus far behind the lines, and danger versus safety. Another part of the contrast was between being overseas versus being at home. The experiences and conditions of musicians serving overseas were radically different from those serving at home. Jim Warren, who served both overseas and at home, said of his experiences that compared to general Air Force duties, serving in the Central Band was a very privileged way to spend the war, and while it had its own difficulties, they were more bearable than serving in active duty overseas.<sup>91</sup>

#### **5.4 The jazz scene on the home front**

Jazz on the home front contrasted in experience with those serving in the military, and overseas. In order to fully understand the state of affairs on the home front we need to explore how jazz was affected by many factors surrounding the war, especially personnel and rationing. Because the Defence Department believed that musicians were important for the morale of the troops the armed forces (particularly the RNZAF) took this to as *carte blanche* to entice musicians to join various service branches bands.

The Defence Department edict left many gaps to be filled in bands, bringing teenaged and female musicians to the fore. Concurrent with this were changes in the broadcasting system, which were forced by censorship and security as well as disputes between the Musicians Union and the

---

<sup>88</sup> 'Kiwis Have Excellent Entertainment,' *New Zealand Free Lance* 8/9/1943, 14.

<sup>89</sup> 'Kiwi Concert Party', EP 10/11/1943, 6.

<sup>90</sup> 'Days of dance gigs, jingles and war,' NZH 19/6/1982, 2/2; 'Lew lows back to jazz work,' AS 14/9/1963, 10.

<sup>91</sup> Jim Warren Interview with Aleisha Ward (2009).

Armed Forces (especially the RNZAF), severe rationing, and, at the beginning of the war, the extravagance of the New Zealand Centennial Exhibition.

### **Centennial Exhibition**

Before the war began the New Zealand government had planned a large national centenary celebration throughout late 1939 and 1940. With the advent of the war, these plans had to be scaled back, but the Centennial Exhibition in the Wellington suburb of Rongotai was to go ahead as planned.<sup>92</sup> The Exhibition ran from November 8 1939 to May 4 1940, and as part of the festivities a cabaret was especially constructed for the Exhibition, which was promoted as having the largest dance floor in New Zealand at that time with space for up to four hundred couples.

The Centennial Exhibition (and the cabaret within it) was an exception to New Zealanders' general experience of the war. It contrasted with the increasing restrictions and rationing that was occurring outside of its grounds, but it remains an important part of New Zealanders early experiences of war as it raised the morale of the general populace. While war overshadowed the celebratory elements of the exhibition, it served as a way of bringing New Zealanders closer together, and solidifying a New Zealand identity that stood separate from New Zealanders' British identity.<sup>93</sup>

In June 1939 Manuel Raymond, formerly known as Manuel Hyman, was chosen as the musical director and cabaret bandleader for the New Zealand Centennial Exhibition in Wellington. Raymond had been the musical director for the cabaret band at the South Seas Exhibition in 1925–1926, and was considered to have the reputation to bring patrons to the Centennial Exhibition Cabaret. As with the South Seas Exhibition, the cabaret was open both afternoons and evenings, and the band was made up of New Zealand and overseas musicians. This time Raymond bought two British musicians with him (he had been based in London for much of the past decade): trumpeter George Taylor, and saxophonist Ken Waldrige, as the New Zealand musicians union had given them a special dispensation to perform in the Centennial Exhibition Cabaret Band, and they were mentioned in an article by local jazz authority Arthur Pearce in an article for the *Australian Music Maker* about the Exhibition Cabaret band in February 1940.<sup>94</sup> The rest of the personnel read like a Who's Who list of New Zealand jazz musicians (see Appendix: personnel charts).

---

<sup>92</sup> Mein Smith, *A Concise History* 164-165.

<sup>93</sup> Mein Smith 165.

<sup>94</sup> EP 19/5/1939, 4; 7/11/1939, 14; AMM November 1939, February 1940.

The repertoire of the Centenary Cabaret band is, unfortunately, unknown, as none of the press reports mention individual pieces. However, the reports on the band's style and performance were uniformly positive, in particular mentioning their excellent rhythm and perfect intonation, and frequently mentioning warm praise from the dancers and listeners.<sup>95</sup> In addition to their cabaret duties, the band was also broadcast regularly over 2YA, and their broadcasts garnered praise from Arthur Pearce for their high musical standards. In praising the band, Pearce opined that they were better than most New Zealand bands that broadcast on a regular basis.<sup>96</sup> The Exhibition Cabaret band appears to have been used as a yardstick for the next few months with music writers often lamenting that their local bands were not as good as the Exhibition band, and clearly needed such competition to improve.<sup>97</sup>

### Disruptions to Bands and Venues

Outside of the Exhibition however, civilian society had to make rapid adjustments. For the jazz community, the initial surge of enlistments in the first two months of the war prompted many personnel changes in bands, but soon the personnel situation settled down and everything continued seemingly as normal. However this normality was not to last and soon after other disruptions crept in. Cabarets soon found that companies that usually held balls cancelled their bookings for 1940, which was disastrous given that corporate balls were a vital source of income. The Peter Pan Cabaret in Auckland experienced a sharp downturn in ball bookings, with over half of their bookings cancelling, causing the ball season to end in July when it would normally run until October.<sup>98</sup> In addition to this cabarets occasionally found that their house band had to disband due to enlistments or conscription, and finding another band could be difficult.<sup>99</sup>

These disruptions would continue throughout the war, with the civilian ball season getting shorter in 1942 and almost disappearing until the end of the war. However, a small part of the lost revenue was restored with service branches electing to use cabarets for their own balls. Aside from the special events, such as balls, though, most cabarets dramatically reduced their public hours as rationing for both venues, and their patrons, made it difficult to continue to operate.

On June 18 1940 parliament enacted the National Service Emergency Regulations and conscription was declared for all New Zealand males over 16, excepting Maori.<sup>100</sup> Conscription

---

<sup>95</sup> EP, 3/4/1940 11; Arthur Pearce, Wellington Notes AMM February 1940.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> John Spedding, Dunedin Notes AMM March 1940.

<sup>98</sup> AMM August, September 1940.

<sup>99</sup> Bourke, 107.

<sup>100</sup> Laurie Barber, 65-66.

impacted quite harshly on the music industry. As with the initial enlistment surge in 1939, bands struggled to keep pace with the disappearance of musicians into the forces. Now, with so many musicians already enlisted in the forces and their bands, it was even more difficult to find replacements.<sup>101</sup>

Even before conscription jazz/dance bands were having problems. Despite the reduction of private bookings there were still plenty of gigs to be had, but often not enough civilian bands to fill them. Into this breach came the service musicians, especially from the RNZAF. However, this caused friction with the New Zealand Musicians' Union with the executive worried that service musicians would be taking jobs away from civilian musicians. However, since there was a shortfall of bands to fulfil engagements the Musicians' Union needed the musicians who served in the forces.

This contradictory situation appears to have been irritating for both the various military services and for the New Zealand Musicians' Union. Memoranda from the Musicians' Union to the RNZAF, from early 1940 demonstrate the contradictory position of the Musicians' Union. The memoranda describe both positions above: they wanted the RNZAF to prevent musicians from within their ranks from taking on civilian engagements, but at the same time the Union sent memos urging the RNZAF to release musicians for outside engagements, so long as Union conditions were met.<sup>102</sup> This contradictory position does not appear to have been easily remedied, as similar memoranda and letters continued to be sent to the RNZAF (and presumably other service branches) until the middle of 1943.

While the New Zealand Musicians Union executive committee clearly felt that protecting civilian jobs for civilian musicians was an important issue, it is unknown how musicians and bandleaders felt. There were a number of musicians in the forces (and forces musicians) who regularly played in civilian bands. For example, after saxophonist Pat Watters was conscripted into the Army in late 1941, he made regular trips from Waiouru to Auckland to perform in various bands.

Trumpeter Nolan Rafferty and drummer Gerry Horsup would also regularly go Absent Without Leave (AWOL) from the Hobsonville Air Force Base to play the Del Crook's El Rey band.<sup>103</sup> On one night they were AWOL, an administration officer from their base spending an evening at the El Rey, who knew that they should have been on base, caught Rafferty and Horsup performing with the band. According to Rafferty: "The officer came right up to the bandstand and

---

<sup>101</sup> AMM various dates 1940, 1941.

<sup>102</sup> Archives NZ: RNZAF Band playing at public functions May 1937-July 1944 AIR1 196 6/1/2 5.

<sup>103</sup> Bourke, 119; AMM March 1942.

said, 'It's all right boys, I've seen you.' He never said anything else." At some point after this the same officer saw them playing on base, and came over to tell them that they looked better in their uniforms than in dinner suits, but there were no other repercussions.<sup>104</sup>

While these are only a few examples, the practice of military musicians filling positions in civilian bands appears to have been widespread during the war. Despite the friction it caused with the NZMU, it was also a necessary practice, and one that bandleaders, and civilian musicians willingly participated in. Very occasionally the reverse would occur, as with the story mentioned in 5.2 with Jim Warren and Nolan Rafferty before they enlisted being asked to play with the Hobsonville Air Base band.

### **Rationing and Restrictions**

There were other problems for bands and musicians aside from the friction between military and civilian musicians, and the downturn in ball bookings. As the war continued rationing of consumables, such as fuel, severely affected the lives of New Zealanders. The rationing affected the jazz community in several different ways, at both a personal and business level. Possibly the most important strictly rationed items to musicians were petrol (and other vehicle fuels) and rubber.

Petrol rationing began within weeks of war being declared, and by mid-1940 petrol for private vehicles was restricted to eight to ten gallons, depending on the size of vehicle, per month. However, by 1942, fuel was reduced to one to two gallons of fuel per month, and would remain at this level for the rest of the war. During this period the average person utilised public transport, horse and cart (especially in rural areas), bicycles, and their own feet. Motor vehicles were reserved for emergency, essential or special trips. Rubber rationing came in 1942 when, with the fall of the Malay Peninsula to the Japanese, there was a critical worldwide rubber shortage. Tyres became impossible to acquire for private cars, except on the black market.<sup>105</sup>

For musicians, especially those with large instruments such as drums or bass, this made it very difficult to get to gigs. Musicians would carpool, or use public transport where they could, but the rationing of petrol, and the restriction of rubber meant the end of travelling around the country, or even across town to get to gigs. This somewhat isolated each city's jazz scene, and isolated the urban from the suburban and rural.<sup>106</sup>

---

<sup>104</sup> Bioletti, 65; Bourke, 122.

<sup>105</sup> Alison Parr, *Home*, 23, 144-146.

<sup>106</sup> Bourke, 107-110.

Fuel and food restrictions also hit jazz venues: cabarets had to limit their use of most food items from early in the war, but by 1942, the restrictions became much greater. At the community dances where women provided the supper from their own pantries, a dance meant that they had to save their rations for weeks to be able to provide the requisite 'plate.' These restrictions (among others) caused many venues to limit their hours: cabarets that were once open six nights a week, and some afternoons, may only be open two or three. Some dance halls ended their dances earlier so that patrons had time to catch the last bus, tram, or train.<sup>107</sup>

Clothing was also rationed, which made it difficult for both patrons and musicians. Photographs of bands during the war often show the band in dinner suits, but some band had uniform jackets, and women in the band wore elegant evening gowns. Their patrons were similarly dressed, and by May 1942 all clothing items and material was strictly rationed making it difficult to acquire new clothes. For everyone, clothing had to be carefully taken care of, as it would be uncertain whether the item was replaceable.<sup>108</sup>

Paper products, such as sheet music, were not rationed; however, the importation of sheet music became extremely difficult with the disruptions to shipping. Although some packages from publishers, and friends got through, there was always uncertainty, especially after the sinking of the *Niagara* brought home how the war could affect New Zealanders on their home front. Thus, arrangements became another area where New Zealand musicians 'made do.'

### **Positive consequences of the war period**

While World War Two was a time of difficulty and change for the New Zealand jazz scene, there were also some benefits. Adolescents were offered chances in bands that under normal peace-time circumstances, probably would not have had except for the dearth of available instrumentalists. Reedsman, Johnny Williams, recalled getting his first professional gig playing at Wellington service clubs in 1944, with his Dixieland band, when he was about 15.<sup>109</sup> Singer Pat McMinn (see Appendix: Selected Photographs for picture) won a contest to sing with Johnny Madden's Swing Kings at the New Dixieland Cabaret when she was 15.<sup>110</sup> For both of them, these gigs were the start of long, successful, musical careers.

Band arrangers also benefited, although they may not have believed it at the time. The difficulty of acquiring new arrangements for bands led to bandleaders relying more heavily on the

---

<sup>107</sup> Parr, 128-158.

<sup>108</sup> Parr, 139-142.

<sup>109</sup> Johnny Williams interview with Aleisha Ward (2003).

<sup>110</sup> Bourke, 131.

arrangers in the band to come up with new material, which may have to fit odd combinations of instruments. This challenge was actually good, as it would assist many of them to arranging and band leading gigs on New Zealand radio in the post-war decade, and it would start a tradition of innovative band arranging that prevailed in New Zealand in the middle and late twentieth century.<sup>111</sup>

### Female Musicians

There were fewer female instrumentalists on the jazz scene than on other New Zealand music scenes, but the dearth of male instrumentalists during the war helped bring women to the fore. It also encouraged other female instrumentalists to 'have a go' at performing in swing bands. For jazz pianists Nancy Harrie, Eva Ellis, Alice 'Al' Clarke, Marie Darby and Vora Kissin, the war placed them in higher demand than they already were, as both side musicians and leaders. By the end of the war these women were as well known, and well respected on the jazz scene as their male counterparts.<sup>112</sup> This prominence would continue in the post war years for these women, gaining them pre-eminent positions as side musicians and leaders.

'Girl vocalistes' as they were known in World War Two, were common to the majority of jazz bands by the time the war had begun. However, while they had been common fixtures, the war made the role of vocalist far more prominent to cover for missing instrumentalists. Each main centre had a number of singers who were considered stars, but there were a few who became truly influential on the New Zealand music scene in the mid-twentieth century: In Christchurch Anita (Ann) Osborn, and Coral Cummins were considered the queens of the airwaves, just as much as they were on the bandstand.<sup>113</sup> In Wellington it was Marion Waite 'the war bride who went the wrong way,' a singer originally from Detroit was known as the leading swing vocalist in town, although local commentators thought she had tough competition from Scottish born singer Jean McPherson, who was known as the 'Sweetheart of the Forces' from her radio broadcasts.<sup>114</sup> In Auckland Esme Stephens, and Pat McMinn, who was still in her teens, were both popular with live and radio audiences.<sup>115</sup>

There were also a number of 'all girl' bands across New Zealand, such as the Maids of Melody, based in Napier. Unfortunately very little has been recorded about these bands, so their

---

<sup>111</sup> Dale Alderton interview with Aleisha Ward (2002).

<sup>112</sup> Bourke, 131; DHJA artist files, see for example MS-Papers-9018-43.

<sup>113</sup> Jo Jules, *A Passion for Jazz: The Christchurch scene then and now*, Christchurch: CPIT, 2009, 26, 30.

<sup>114</sup> Artist files Jean Macpherson, MS-Papers-9018-29; Marion Waite, MS-Papers-9018-47.

<sup>115</sup> Bourke, 131-138.



repertoire, and whether it included jazz is unknown. Many of these 'all girl' bands focused on raising money for the National Patriotic Fund, or entertaining servicemen at camps or in hospitals, rather than performing at dances, and most were a product of the war situation, and disbanded soon after the war ended.<sup>116</sup>

### 5.5 *Broadcasting during the war*

During the Second World War broadcasting in New Zealand was fraught with difficulties and, as a result underwent a number of significant changes. While many of these changes were short-term results of the war, some of them affected broadcasting throughout the war, and after it. Most of these changes affected the overall structure of broadcasting in New Zealand, but some impacted directly on the broadcasting of jazz during the war.

#### **Problems in broadcasting arising from the war**

Many of these changes were a direct result of the difficulty of importing records during this period. Shellac and aluminium, vital components in the manufacture of acetate discs and records, became restricted materials necessary for the war effort. This shortage affected both recorded and blank discs, the latter being essential for pre-recording broadcasts. Even when there were records to ship the difficulties and dangers of shipping material from the northern hemisphere, or even from Australia to New Zealand, very few new records were being imported to New Zealand between 1940 and 1945.<sup>117</sup>

In addition to the difficulty of importing records, the war situation forced broadcasting officials to place restrictions on the material broadcast. Even in the music programmes, play-lists were scrutinised by officials to make sure that no secret messages or codes that might give information to the enemy. Any song with an 'informative' or revealing title, or lyrics that referenced anything remotely associated with the movement of troops or vehicles (such as *The Fleet's in Port Again*) was deemed unacceptable for broadcast. In addition to this, programme scripts were pre-screened and censored by broadcast officials and the majority of programmes were now pre-recorded so that the timing of the broadcast would not compromise any vital intelligence.<sup>118</sup>

These regulations were also strictly enforced on relay broadcasts. Before full censorship came into effect in early 1941, people did not appear to realise the gravity of mentioning information pertaining to the movements of forces or other aspects of New Zealand's war

---

<sup>116</sup> Bourke, 111; 'Strollers recall bands birth in WW2,' *Napier Courier* 17/2/2005, 7.

<sup>117</sup> Day, 268.

<sup>118</sup> Day, 266-267.

preparation in a live broadcast. This naivety on the part of broadcasting participants, such as religious personages, aspiring politicians, and masters of ceremonies at dancing venues, was at times astonishing. Early in the war all participants in relay broadcasts were sent letters warning them not to include revealing material but many, especially religious ministers, apparently did not comprehend the danger. Their lack of comprehension was particularly apparent during prayers in which many inadvertently included details of troop activities, such as praying for the safety of recently departed troops. Such slips led to broadcasting technicians and engineers needing fast fingers on the main control switch, in order to cut the broadcast if a speaker veered into potentially dangerous territory.<sup>119</sup>

In particular, special efforts were made to keep the general public, especially young servicemen, away from the microphones in so that they did not inadvertently let slip any information that could be used by the enemy. This was exceptionally important after the stationing of American troops in New Zealand from 1942. Drummer Wally Ransom recalled that in the first months of the Americans' residency young servicemen, would grab the microphone on the bandstand to tell their mothers where they had been, or where they were, and that they would be coming home soon.<sup>120</sup>

### **How broadcasting was changed due to the war**

As a result of the difficulties with record importation and the potential dangers of relay broadcasts, there were a number of changes in the way broadcasting operated in New Zealand during the war. Although these new regulations were quite restricting for broadcasters, there was one positive result amongst all the negative ones: the necessity for foreign programming. There was a marked increase in foreign relay and rebroadcast programming, which had rarely occurred before the outbreak of war. Many of these, especially at the beginning of the war, were news and current affairs programmes from the British Broadcasting Corporation [BBC], either from their world service, or rebroadcasts, and the National Broadcasting Company [NBC] in the United States. As time passed the use of foreign programmes was broadened to include drama, comedy and music programmes including some of the latest jazz via relay or rebroadcasts of music programmes.<sup>121</sup> American programming became increasingly prevalent after 1942 and the arrival of the American troops to New Zealand.<sup>122</sup>

---

<sup>119</sup> Ken G. Collins, *Broadcasting Grave and Gay*, Caxton: Christchurch, 1967, 86-88.

<sup>120</sup> Day, 266-267, 'Life Has Been a Ball for Johnny', NZH 28/7/1979 Sect. 2, p.2.

<sup>121</sup> Day 270; Lewis, 137-138.

<sup>122</sup> Day, 270, Bevan, 355-356.

The broadcast of jazz on New Zealand radio was, by World War Two, split into two distinct categories: live performance and recordings. The live performance of jazz on the radio was both relays from cabarets and dance halls, and live performance within the studio. Relay broadcasting of jazz only suffered slightly from the new restrictions (mostly due to the microphone 'grabbers' mentioned above) and continued mostly unabated during the war. Most of the commercial and some of the national stations would include thirty minutes to an hour, or occasionally more, of relayed dance music (including jazz) from the best dance venues in the main centres, and other towns that had a radio station, five or six evenings a week.<sup>123</sup>

Live performances of jazz from within the studio became increasingly common, and popular, as stations began to hire well-known bandleaders, and bands to perform. No longer a potential disaster with unknown amateur (volunteer) groups, the late 1930s had heralded a new policy for musical performances, and the dance music division of the National Broadcasting Service now reaped the benefits.

The head of the division, Bob Bothamley, was an enthusiastic promoter of jazz on New Zealand radio, both recordings and live performance. He was instrumental in increasing the number of performances by good jazz bands via relay and in the studio. As a jazz fan, Bothamley's knowledge of the New Zealand jazz scene was crucial to knowing which bands played where, and which were good, and most importantly, which ones came across best on the radio. Many of the bands that Bothamley approved for relay broadcasts would also be invited to perform in the studio either as part of a variety programme, or in their own special spot.<sup>124</sup>

By World War Two there were a number of resident dance bands on New Zealand radio stations on both the Commercial and National service. These bands were said to represent the best of the New Zealand dance band scene, which, of course, included swing bands. Many of the musicians involved in the studio dance bands were also members of bands that regularly broadcasted via relay, which helped with audience familiarity.<sup>125</sup> However, during the war, there was an increase in audience and official support for dance bands, which resulted in an increase of dance/jazz bands performing from the station studios. In addition to the house bands, most stations had several other bands performing in various shows, many of which became extremely popular with radio audiences.<sup>126</sup>

---

<sup>123</sup> Bourke, 107-108.

<sup>124</sup> Bourke, 72-73.

<sup>125</sup> Bourke 107.

<sup>126</sup> NZBS file DHJA MS-Papers-9018-68.

In mid-1941 the biggest war-time coup for the broadcast of jazz came with the Theo Walters band being contracted as the 1ZB dance band. In mid-1941 1ZB opened a new purpose built studio theatre, and to celebrate the opening station officials had organised three months of special musical show, with the Walters band as the centrepiece. The Walters band was a firm favourite of jazz fans across New Zealand. Although the band was mostly based in Auckland or Wellington Walters, with various incarnations of his band, had toured the country extensively since 1936.<sup>127</sup>

The personnel of the Walters 1ZB band was drawn primarily from Auckland and Wellington musicians, but also included musicians from the South Island, making it, essentially, a national dance band. The band became the highest paid radio band in the country. Although I have not found any figures on what they were paid, the term 'lucrative' was frequently mentioned in press reports on the contract. Whatever they were paid, it was apparently considerably more than the average band. The contract surprised broadcasting officials and musicians as the parsimony of the National Commercial Broadcasting Service was infamous, and musicians had previously taken on broadcasting jobs for the love of it rather than money.<sup>128</sup>

By World War Two there were several 'modern dance music' programmes that included jazz recordings. 2YAs 'Modern Dance Music with Special Swing Session,' which would soon become *Rhythm on Record*, perhaps broadcast the most jazz, with approximately half of the programme dedicated to jazz in 1939, and by late 1940 the entire hour would be devoted to jazz. The majority of the recordings broadcast on the modern dance music programmes came from the central libraries of the NBS or the NCBS, with some of the compères utilising their own collections on occasion.<sup>129</sup>

The war did not truly affect importation of records until 1942. Despite the potential dangers of shipping the NBS still had the latest records from the United State within three weeks of their release date. Once in New Zealand a record would circulate around the radio stations for several months before returning to Wellington.<sup>130</sup>

However, once the war started to affect the production and importation of recordings, the selection broadcast began to stagnate. The broadcasting libraries based in Wellington were

---

<sup>127</sup> Theo Walters, 1ZB file DHJA MS-Papers-9018-48.

<sup>128</sup> Theo Walters file, DHJA MS-Papers-9018-48; Bourke, 107; John Hall, *The History of Broadcasting in New Zealand 1920-1954*, Broadcasting Corporation of New Zealand: Wellington, 1980, 124.

<sup>129</sup> Bourke 70-74, 108-109. It should be noted that the NBS and NCBS amalgamated in 1943, but remained essentially separate entities until 1 April 1946 (Day, 273-275).

<sup>130</sup> Bourke, 108.

reasonably extensive, but they had to service all of the national and commercial stations in the country. With relatively few new recordings coming into the country, the jazz audience, well renowned for listening to every station they could find to hear jazz, could quickly become exasperated with hearing the same recordings repeatedly.<sup>131</sup>

Some compères, such as *Rhythm on Record's* Arthur Pearce, began to utilise their personal collections to fill up the programme. Pearce managed to balance repeating recordings from the NBS library with less known (either early or obscure) records of artists such as Count Basie, Duke Ellington, Artie Shaw and many others that he had acquired over his years of collecting. He also used recordings of musicians in different circumstances than what the public might associate them with, for example the leader of a big band in a trio, or vice versa. Pearce also utilised more recordings by African-American artists, which were rarely heard on the other jazz programmes at this time.<sup>132</sup>

*Rhythm on Record* was unusual even among the few jazz programmes on New Zealand radio. While even its closest competitor 1ZB's *Rhythm Review*, was considered a serious jazz programme, the host was content to appeal to the mainstream audience and play the latest releases and hits, Pearce's *Rhythm on Record* was aimed at the jazz fanatic, and musicians. In addition to playing the recordings Pearce was known as an 'encyclopaedia' of jazz, and was full of details about each recording. His audience not only wanted to keep up with the latest developments and innovations, but also wanted to learn about the music, the arrangements, the soloists and other minutiae that Pearce provided.<sup>133</sup>

By the end of the war the broadcasting of jazz on New Zealand radio was being reinvigorated. The resumption of record importation near the end of the war helped. Although there were still limitations on the amount of records imported, soon the broadcasting libraries were receiving records on a regular basis again. The records imported included the new style of bebop, which, when broadcast, provoked much discussion among jazz fans.<sup>134</sup>

The live performance of jazz on New Zealand radio also assisted with the reinvigoration. While before the war the relay and in-studio broadcasts were something of a programme-filler, now both had become an essential sphere for the broadcast of jazz. In-studio broadcasts, and particularly station dance and jazz bands, had become extremely important to broadcast officials,

---

<sup>131</sup> Lewis, 118-119.

<sup>132</sup> Lewis, 115-119.

<sup>133</sup> Lewis, 118.

<sup>134</sup> Lewis, 150.

musicians and fans for a variety of reasons. For the broadcast officials, it meant that they had greater control of the material presented (and quality thereof), unlike relay broadcasts. For musicians this was now an excellent musical *and* financial opportunity, as stations were now offering better compensation than they had before the war. Finally, for fans, this was a way to hear many of the best jazz musicians in New Zealand in the comfort of their own home.

## 5.6 Conclusion

World War Two had two distinct endings: Victory in Europe (VE), when Germany surrendered to Allied forces on May 8 1945, and Victory in Japan (VJ) on August 15, when Japan capitulated. In New Zealand both days were celebrated with exuberance, with official and unofficial celebrations, and with dancing that spilled from the halls and cabarets into the streets.<sup>135</sup> The victories also had a lasting impact on the jazz scene; finally the disruptions would come to an end. Finally, musicians who had been serving in the forces would return home.

Over the next six or so months New Zealanders stationed overseas began to return home, with mental and physical scars, and with tales of adventure. Musicians in the armed forces as soldiers, or the Kiwi Concert Party were no different from anyone else returning home. Everyone serving overseas had seen their share of tragedy and triumph, and of the amazing and horrendous.

Musicians returning home would find the New Zealand jazz scene seemingly the same as when they left it. However, on closer inspection, there were subtle changes. While many of the venues still operated, the effects of the war were visible in their operating hours, the 'make do' approach to refreshments and suppers, and the size, composition and instrumentation of the band. There were also subtle changes in the repertoire, and performance practices, which were a result of the American troop residency (which will be examined in the next chapter). Returning musicians' own experiences overseas also provoked changes in the performance of jazz in New Zealand.

In this chapter I examined the effects that the war had on the *experience* of jazz within New Zealand, from the perspectives of the military and civilians, musicians and the audience. I also examined the experience of jazz for New Zealanders serving overseas, again both as performers and as the audience. At the end of the war the contrasting experiences of jazz for military and civilians, within New Zealand and overseas, greatly influenced the local jazz scene, and continued to be influential into the post war decade.

The contrast between jazz 'at home' and jazz 'overseas' was a central thread throughout this chapter. This contrast was most apparent in the civilian and military experiences, but it was also

---

<sup>135</sup> Bourke, 147-148; McGibbon, 195.

apparent in differing military situations such as the New Zealand based RNZAF Central Band and the 2NZEF Entertainment Unit (Kiwi Concert Party). The experiences of jazz were influenced by many different factors, including location, situation and purpose.

The contrast between the jazz experience in New Zealand and the jazz experience overseas, for example in Cairo, was extreme in circumstance, but not necessarily extreme in music. For a New Zealand soldier based in Cairo (or anywhere else for that matter) there were a number of jazz bands with the allied forces, and local Egyptian jazz bands that they could listen to, and (if a musician) could sit in with. The variety of jazz performance practices and repertoire were different from what they heard at home, but not so much that the differences could not be embraced.

Although the contrast between jazz experiences at home and overseas was primarily a military based one, there were also contrasts between civilian and military jazz experience within New Zealand. Civilian bands struggled to keep personnel consistent with musicians joining the forces. Military bands, especially the RNZAF Central Band, had a similar issue with musicians being sent overseas or to different postings in New Zealand, however there was a wider range of potential replacements compared to civilian bands.

While the civilian bands continued on with the usual engagements of dances, revues, and fêtes, the military bands' primary engagements were dances, revues, and military functions. This overlap in engagement types also overlapped in spheres, with military jazz/dance bands performing for dances at civilian venues for mixed civilian and military patrons. This overlap caused some tension between the branches of the armed forces and the New Zealand Musicians' Union [NZMU], who were concerned about military bands taking engagements away from civilian bands. Although the NZMU was aware of the need for military musicians to help fulfill civilian engagements, it also wished to protect civilian musicians from losing engagements to military bands.

In addition to the contrasting experiences of at home and overseas, and civilian and military are the contrasts between negative circumstances, and positive results. The negative–positive dichotomy was mostly experienced on the civilian scene in New Zealand during the war years, but was also experienced by musicians in military bands.

The civilian experience of jazz within New Zealand during World War Two was surrounded by a great many problems. Musicians left bands for the armed forces, and venues had to restrict the employment of bands due to the drop in private bookings, and the effects of rationing. In addition to the problems that were occurring with venues, censorship restricted live relay broadcasts, and the material that was acceptable for broadcast.

Despite these problems there were many positive results arising from these circumstances. Female musicians now played a significant role both within existing bands, and forming their own bands, as did younger musicians. Although venues suffered difficulties initially, the arrival of the United States forces in 1942, and the large-scale furlough leave for New Zealand forces in 1943 substantially increased their patronage. In addition, with band personnel settling down with the addition of women and teenage musicians, few venues had to close permanently.

The restrictions on broadcasting during the war years were significant, however there were also positive outcomes from the negative circumstances. As a result of relay broadcasts being restricted due to censorship, there was an increase in in-studio performances by bands (both civilian and military). There was also an increase in importation of foreign, especially American, material for broadcast.

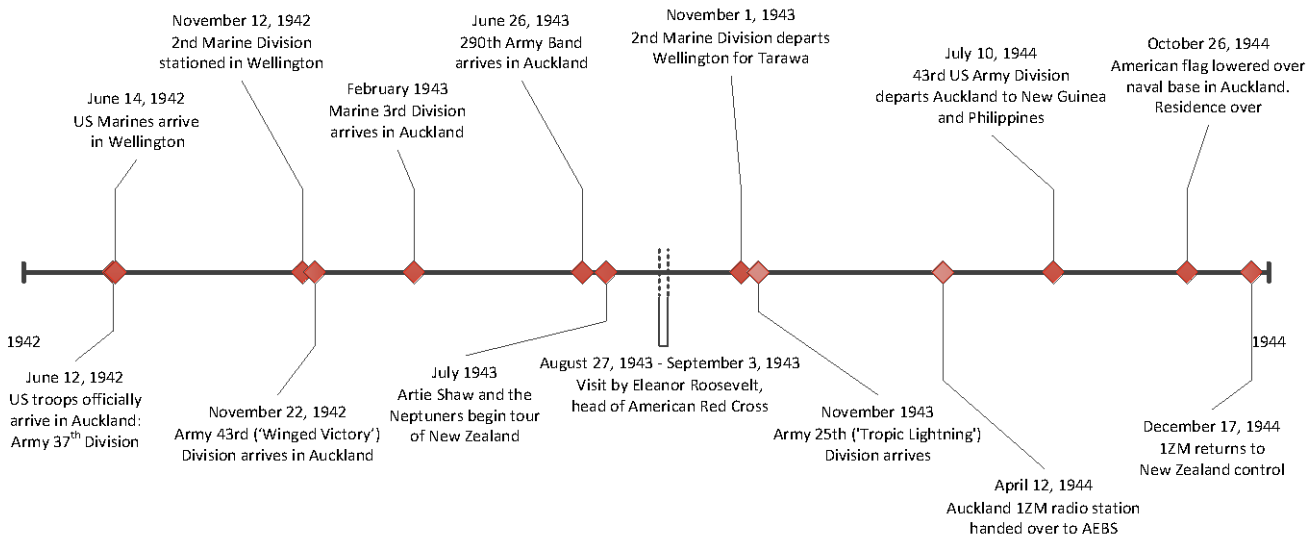
The contrasting experiences of jazz, and the effects of the negative-positive dichotomy had a lasting effect on jazz in New Zealand. The experiences of New Zealanders during the war, both at home and overseas, subtly provoked changes in performance practices, composition of bands, and repertoire. There were also changes in audiences' expectations regarding what repertoire they wanted to hear, and how they thought bands should perform.

The effects of the contrasting experiences of jazz also went beyond live venues and into broadcasting. Although broadcasting officials did not wish to change their policies on material for broadcast, the use of in-studio bands, and the increase of foreign material during the war had influenced the radio audience's attitude toward what they believe should be presented. These elements also influenced the audience's perceptions about how material should be presented.

While the war played a role in the changing experience of jazz in New Zealand, it could also be said that jazz played a role in the war experience of New Zealanders. Musicians and fans sought out contact with jazz in military and civilian situations, both live at clubs, halls and cabarets, and via the radio. It could be said that jazz was the soundtrack to many aspects of war both within New Zealand and overseas.

The following chapter continues the discussion of jazz in New Zealand's war experiences with an examination of what is commonly known as the 'friendly invasion': the American troops residency from 1942 to 1945. This chapter will investigate the highs and lows of the invasion on New Zealanders, and especially how the American troops, and musicians, affected and influenced the New Zealand jazz scene during their tenure.





## 6 The American Invasion 1942–1945: Interaction and Response

### 6.1 Introduction: *The Yanks are Coming!*

On June 12 1942, people witnessing the unmarked transport convoy sailing up Auckland's Waitemata Harbour feared that the Japanese were invading.<sup>136</sup> It was quickly established that this was not the case; instead, the convoy marked the arrival of the 37th United States Army Infantry Division, the 'Buckeyes'. The reportedly enthusiastic welcome by local civilians must have also been tinged with relief that the 'invasion' was friendly, rather than hostile.<sup>137</sup> Two days later, on June 14, the 'invasion' of Wellington began (see the timeline above) with the arrival of units from the 1st Marine Division to the same mixture of fear and relief from the civilian population.<sup>138</sup>

These initial arrivals signalled the beginning of a foreign residency whose main body of personnel were young (the bulk were under the age of thirty), and male. This event was quite unprecedented in New Zealand history; although the nation had been visited by foreign troops before, this would be the first time that thousands of troops at once would be encamped in New Zealand. In the first eighteen months of the troops' residence (to October 1944), it is estimated that up to 500,000 American defence personnel visited New Zealand shores.<sup>139</sup> While some only visited

<sup>136</sup> Harry Bioletti, *The Yanks are Coming: The American Invasion of New Zealand 1942–1944*, Century Hutchinson: Auckland, 1989, 1.

<sup>137</sup> Dennis Bevan, *United States Force in New Zealand 1942-1945*, Alexandra: Macpherson, 1992, 78.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid*, 99-100; Bioletti, 2.

<sup>139</sup> Harry Bioletti, *The Yanks are Coming*, 35. Nancy M. Taylor, *The New Zealand People at War: The Home Front vol. 1* Department of Internal Affairs: Wellington, 1986, 633. There is a great disparity between the estimates of Bioletti (500,000) and Taylor (100,000), however both couch their estimates with the term 'about' or 'approximately.' It is clear that neither were working from

for only a few days, many stayed longer. To put this in perspective, the New Zealand population according to the 1936 census—the last census before the war—was 1.6 million people.<sup>140</sup> This figure naturally differed during the war years as an estimated 200,000 men and women were enlisted or drafted into the armed or auxiliary forces (including medical forces), with over 100,000 serving overseas.<sup>141</sup>

This chapter focuses on the interactions between American defence personnel and New Zealanders, both military and civilian, in the period 1942–1945 specifically with respect to jazz. It should be noted that when I use the term 'American' in this chapter I am referring specifically to people from the United States of America. The writing style of this chapter is similar to Chapter Five in that I am using the stories and oral histories of individuals to shape my narrative. Here, however, I am using the stories as illustrations of events and interactions. At the same time I am addressing how representative individuals' histories were of what was happening to the wider population during this period.

The period of the American residency was one of great inspiration for New Zealand jazz musicians and fans. American musicians with the forces brought different musical techniques, performance, and stylistic practices, which excited New Zealand musicians. The influences from the forces bands were also long-lasting, and influenced jazz long after American troops had left New Zealand's shores.

The residency of American armed forces personnel in New Zealand had many effects on nearly all aspects of New Zealand social life including the jazz scene. There were many tensions arising from racism, gender imbalances, and differences in culture, some of which played out on the dance floors of halls and cabarets around New Zealand. These tensions would be exacerbated by the war conditions, both economic and social, that dominated life in New Zealand during this period.

On average, approximately *five* percent of the total population of New Zealand was replaced with Americans during the years 1942–1945. At the forces' peak in 1943, that figure was raised to *ten* percent of the total population.<sup>142</sup> The changing balance between American troops and New Zealanders was important as it motivated the sudden changes in society that took place during these

---

established data. It is also possible that Taylor did not include the Naval personnel that lived on board their ships whilst stationed in New Zealand.

<sup>140</sup> New Zealand Census 1936.

<sup>141</sup> James Belich, *Paradise Reforged: A History of the New Zealanders from the 1880s to the Year 2000*, Penguin: Auckland 2001, 270, 287.

<sup>142</sup> See Bevan, 370-371; <http://archives.govt.nz/research/guides/war#second> accessed 2/1/2012

years; New Zealand life was radically changed by the introduction of so many American troops in such a short time.

## **Chapter Overview**

This chapter examines three spheres of cultural exchange between Americans and New Zealanders. Section 6.2 examines social interactions between New Zealanders and Americans centred on the act of dancing. I examine these interactions against the backdrop of the cabaret and dance hall, and the music, specifically jazz that was performed. In this section I focus on the impressions Americans had of New Zealand, and the impressions New Zealanders had of the Americans.

In Section 6.3 I investigate the best-known bands belonging to the American forces stationed in New Zealand. In particular, I discuss bands within the division or regiment to which they belonged, and determine whether they were official (sanctioned by the military branch) or unofficial (formed by the troops) bands. I also discuss interactions between New Zealand and American musicians, and the New Zealand musicians' reactions and responses to the American bands.

Section 6.4 describes tours by two prominent American bands that visited New Zealand during the period of American residency. First is the tour by the Artie Shaw Naval band in 1943. The second is a tour by the Claude Thornhill Show in 1945. These tours were the most influential on jazz musicians and fans in New Zealand during this period. This section examines the ways that New Zealand jazz fans and musicians were able to see or hear the bands perform, their reactions to the bands, and interactions with band members.

Section 6.5 examines the activities of the American Expeditionary Broadcasting Service and the secondment of station 1ZM in Auckland to the service in 1944. This section will discuss the creation and operation of the American Expeditionary Station Auckland, their broadcasting style and programming. I will also describe the responses by listeners and officials within the New Zealand broadcasting establishment.

## **6.2 *Social Interactions between American Servicemen and New Zealanders***

By mid-1942 wartime restrictions and rationing had strenuously affected the lives and businesses of New Zealanders.<sup>143</sup> The arrival of the American troops was a considerable shock to the economic and social systems of New Zealand. Within days of the first American troops arriving

---

<sup>143</sup> Belich, 288; Parr, 128-150.

on New Zealand shores (see the timeline at the start of the chapter), the American troops were curious and eager to meet the locals. Although they were involved in extensive training for the campaigns to come, they were also given liberty and having fun was high on the agenda. The official armed forces handbooks warned them of the wartime restrictions, and the fact that on Sundays very few businesses or entertainment venues were open, but this does not appear to have deterred eager Americans in their efforts to find amusement.<sup>144</sup>

When troops arrived in New Zealand there were three things high on the Americans recreational agenda: decent food, liquor, and company, preferably female. The last was especially high on the list for servicemen who had previously been in the battle zones and whose only contact with women for the past several months was likely an Army or Red Cross nurse whilst he was sick or wounded.<sup>145</sup>

This section focuses on dance venues and dancing as the intersection between the New Zealand jazz scene and Americans. In this section I will sketch where, and in what situations the interaction between Americans and the New Zealand jazz scene occurred. The examination of such interactions forms the background for the examination of bands and events that are the central feature of sections 6.3 and 6.4, and this background informs the attitudes, issues and New Zealanders reactions surrounding the American residency.

## **Tensions and conflict**

Tensions between American troops and New Zealanders have been thoroughly examined in other forums and it is not my aim to re-hash other scholars arguments about what did or did not happen during the American residency.<sup>146</sup> However, they need to be noted here as they indicate what understanding (or lack of understanding) each culture had for the other, which impacted on the jazz scene in a number of oblique ways that will be discussed throughout this chapter. There were two main sources of conflict between Americans and New Zealanders that were reflected on the jazz scene: conflict due to racial divisions, and conflict over local women.

Racial tensions occurred within the American forces, between white and African–Americans, but also between Americans and Maori. There were African–American units in the

---

<sup>144</sup> Bioletti 48-55.

<sup>145</sup> Alison Parr, *Home: Civilian New Zealanders Remember the Second World War*, Auckland: Penguin, 223-227.

<sup>146</sup> For example: Mary Christine Beckett 'The American Invasion: From Manners Street to Cuba Street', (MA Thesis, University of Auckland 2009); Bevan, 215-216, 284-286; Bioletti 149-154.

American armed forces (mostly the Marine Corps) that came to New Zealand, however they were strictly segregated from the white American forces. According to historian Harry Bioletti, leave for African–American servicemen was rare as the American authorities were concerned about clashes with white troops, especially with any units from the southern United States.<sup>147</sup> They had their own service clubs, held their own dances, and had their own bands separate from the ones for white Americans.<sup>148</sup> Although African–American troops were rarely be seen in the towns and at cabarets, there were still opportunities for New Zealanders to interact with them, particularly through dancing.

The Americans attitudes towards Maori varied greatly from cautious acceptance to outright bigotry. This often caused problems between New Zealanders and Americans, and in the extreme cases resulted in brawls, street battles and riots.<sup>149</sup> These tensions were not confined to rank–and–file troops either, as demonstrated by the example of Princess Te Puea who, when on a mission to defuse the racial tensions between the Americans and Maori, was insulted by an American officer and his aide–de–camp.<sup>150</sup>

The jealousy that lay behind the mantra 'oversexed, overpaid and over here' was another source of conflict between New Zealanders and Americans.<sup>151</sup> Different manners, methods of courtship, and the relative wealth of American servicemen compared to New Zealand men increased tension between the two groups. However, if there was one particular source of conflict between American and New Zealand men, it was women. New Zealand men accused women of being 'Yank crazy' and women accused men of being boring. Fuelled by alcohol and jealousy at the Yanks for 'stealing their women' fights between New Zealanders and Americans regularly broke out at dances.<sup>152</sup>

In retrospect, not all New Zealand women were 'Yank crazy,' nor were all the American servicemen Hollywood princes. While many women were at least a little fascinated by the

---

<sup>147</sup> Bioletti, 31-32.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid, also, Bourke, 125.

<sup>149</sup> Bioletti 149-158. Parr, 222-223.

<sup>150</sup> Michael King, *Te Puea, a Life*; Auckland: Reed, 2003, 235-237.

<sup>151</sup> The saying 'over sexed, over paid, and over here' was common throughout allied countries during World War Two, and mostly referred to the American troops in various allied countries, but particularly Britain, Australia, and New Zealand. The origins of this saying appear to have been lost, but is occasionally attributed to British comedian Tommy Trinder, for example:

<http://www.phrases.org.uk/meanings/oversexed-overpaid-and-over-here.html>.

<sup>152</sup> Eve Ebbett, *When the Boys Were Away: New Zealand Women in World War II*, Wellington: A.H. Reed, 1984 150-152, 156-159; Alison Parr, *Home*, 217-222;

Americans, not all of them wanted to do anything more than be hospitable to young men a long way from home. However, this fascination was enough to frustrate New Zealand men.<sup>153</sup>

So great was the American military's concern about potential conflicts that, by 1943, some urban areas of Auckland and Wellington, and certain venues were placed strictly out of bounds for American personnel on leave, as there was a history of clashes between American forces (Marine versus Army appears to have been the most common clash), American and New Zealand forces personnel, civilians and armed forces personnel, and Americans (not always white Americans) and Maori.<sup>154</sup> While the banned areas were never explicitly stated in any of the histories of the American forces in New Zealand, some can probably be guessed at from the infamous 'battles' of 1943: Manners Street, Wellington, The Dixie Club on K' Road, sections of Queen Street, in Auckland, and others.<sup>155</sup>

### **Dancing at military camps**

One of the favoured recreation activities for many young servicemen was dancing. There were regular dances at the camps, especially in the rural areas, and the local civilian population (male and female) were regularly invited, as were the New Zealand women who worked for the clerical and transport pools.<sup>156</sup> It was also at camp dances that the majority of interaction between New Zealanders and African–American troops occurred.

Dances at the military camps varied in formality and organisation, but usually had a band (either local civilians, or from within the camp) and some sort of refreshments. For many people in rural areas it was considered a treat to be invited to a dance at the military camps, as the social life had become quite restricted due to the wartime rationing of fuel. Although the camps were slightly spare, it appears that the troops made up this by being charming and gracious. Women interviewed for various histories particularly noted how polite and gentlemanly the American troops were in comparison to New Zealand men.<sup>157</sup>

These dances were also often the first real introduction that New Zealanders had to jitterbugging. While various forms of swing dancing had been gaining popularity in New Zealand dancing circles since the late 1930s it was not until the American troops came that it became a true craze. Many of the camp dances had a jitterbug exhibition as part of the evening's entertainment,

---

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

<sup>154</sup> Bevan, 341.

<sup>155</sup> Bevan, 285-286; Bioletti, 149-152, 154-158.

<sup>156</sup> Bevan, 145-146; Bourke, 125.

<sup>157</sup> Alison Parr, 217; Judith Fyfe, ed. *War Stories our Mothers Never Told Us*, Auckland: Penguin 1995, 84-85.

usually with two men as the participants. While this was slightly shocking to the local audience, the skill of the dancing most often astounded the local attendees, many of whom (especially women) resolved to learn the dance as quickly as possible.<sup>158</sup> Jitterbugging also appears to have been where African–American troops gained the most social interaction with New Zealanders. One young woman recalled that she used to "chase" the African–American soldiers because they were the best dancers of all the troops, especially jitterbugging.<sup>159</sup>

### **Dancing at service clubs**

The service clubs located in Auckland and Wellington were organised and managed by numerous military, charitable and religious organisations. The clubs were open to all service people—men and women, American and New Zealander, from 1942 through 1944. However, there were several in Auckland and Wellington that catered specifically to the Americans. American service people could find American–style food and drink, do their laundry, play games such as ping–pong, meet up with friends or interact with the American and New Zealand hostesses.<sup>160</sup> The clubs also regularly held lectures and classes of various sorts (including dance classes), and hosted formal afternoon teas and dances.<sup>161</sup>

Dancing was a regular feature of all of the service clubs, often happening on an impromptu basis, utilising the radio or gramophone or live piano. Many service clubs had regular formally organised dances with bands drawn from the American forces, or local civilian bands. The formal dances covered a variety of different dance styles from square dancing, to "strict–tempo" ballroom, to the jitterbug.<sup>162</sup>

Many service clubs had house bands or a regular roster of bands to perform for dances and general entertainment. Many of the bands that performed at the service clubs were local civilian bands. For example, at the Officers Club on Shortland Street, called the Shortland Club, several bands rotated, including a jazz trio led by Ian 'Nin' Pitcaithley on bass, and a quartet led by jazz saxophonist Harry Wicks. At the Cecil Club, situated in the Hotel Cecil in Wellington and run by

---

<sup>158</sup> Georgina White, *Light Fantastic: Dance floor Courtship in New Zealand*, Auckland: HarperCollins, 2007, 108-109.

<sup>159</sup> Fyfe, 84-85.

<sup>160</sup> Sandra Coney, *Every Girl: A Social History of Women and the YWCA in Auckland*, Auckland: YWCA, 1986, 228.

<sup>161</sup> Bioletti 65-66.

<sup>162</sup> Coney, 230-231.

the American Red Cross, they used bands that were drawn from the American troops (mostly Marines) that were based in the region for long stretches of training.<sup>163</sup>

As noted above, African–American troops were segregated and so there was at least one specific African–American service club. In Auckland, the American Negro Club was based at the Hampton Court Apartments on Wellesley Street, although it appears that very little has been recorded about it. I presume that it was run along the same lines as the other service clubs (providing home comforts, and entertainment), but according to Auckland recording engineer Eldred Stebbing it was "a fairly seedy sort of situation."<sup>164</sup> Stebbing, although not a serviceman, would go to the American Negro Club because it had jazz bands (of various configurations), all drawn from the African–American units performing there on a regular basis.<sup>165</sup> I could find no record of a similar club in Wellington, but as noted above in *Tensions and Conflicts*, it was very rare for African–American servicemen to be allowed a long enough leave period for them to go into Wellington city.<sup>166</sup>

### **Dancing and music at civilian venues**

In the rural and suburban areas around the camps, the local civilian population did their best to accommodate the needs of the servicemen, including recreation possibilities. Most of the short leave (an evening or one day) passes required servicemen to be back in camp by midnight or one a.m., meaning that leave in the cities of Auckland and Wellington was limited by time. For men stationed at the Warkworth or Papakura (north and south of Auckland respectively), or Paekakariki or Silverstream camps north of Wellington, it could be difficult, or impossible, to return from the city before curfew, and being late resulted in punishment duty. This resulted in servicemen finding entertainment closer to the camps, which led them to the rural and suburban dances.

These dances were often the regular local dance at which much of the civilian population would attend every week. Some, however, were organised for the troops by local groups (from church committees to the Returned Soldier's Associations as the RSA was then known), while others were organised by the American military as a change from the camp settings. The provision of music ranged from the wireless and gramophone, to a solo pianist, through to a full big band. Most of the musicians were New Zealanders, though if the dance was organised by the Americans,

---

<sup>163</sup> Bourke 125, 127; EP 'For Allied Forces' 4 March 1943, 3.

<sup>164</sup> Bourke, 125.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid.

<sup>166</sup> Bioletti, 31–32.



the band was often from one or more of the units stationed nearby.<sup>167</sup> Specific unit bands will be discussed later in Section 6.3.

Accounts of the music at these dances recalled it as being variable, dependent on what the musicians knew rather than what the dancers might have desired. Women attending these dances recalled that the evening always started and ended with a waltz, but in between the style of music played could be anything and everything, although swing, especially if it was an American band, was often a dominant feature.<sup>168</sup>

By 1943, some of the war restrictions were eased (including blackout conditions and electricity restrictions), making it easier for servicemen on leave to find entertainment in the cities. Along with the range of service clubs, movie theatres, diners, restaurants, skating rinks and other amusements there were several nightclubs and cabarets that were particularly popular with the Americans. Some of the popular venues that were noted for their jazz activities in each city will be examined in the following paragraphs.

### **Major venues in Auckland**

In Auckland there were many venues that were popular with American troops both in the central city and in the suburbs. Each of the venues appears to have attracted different groups of ranks and branches of the services, but there was always a certain amount of mixing. This mixing of branches and ranks did occasionally cause friction, but the majority of servicemen managed to remain on polite terms. In the central city, the Peter Pan and Civic Wintergarden cabarets were among the most popular venues for servicemen on leave. They were also popular venues for service dances organised either by the American or New Zealand military authorities. Both the Peter Pan and the Civic Wintergarden were considered 'classy' venues and were often favourite venues for balls, but they were also 'accessible' as they did not have exorbitant admission fees nor did they require full formal evening dress.

During the Second World War the Peter Pan Cabaret was one of the fashionable cabarets in Auckland. It had a reputation for having excellent dance bands, whose personnel were among best musicians in Auckland. During the period 1942–1945 saxophonist Hugh Tatton led the Peter Pan house band, and the band was considered one of Auckland's hottest swing bands. The Americans' hunger for entertainment led to capacity crowds at the Peter Pan, which during the forces peak in

---

<sup>167</sup> White, 108; Fyfe, 84.

<sup>168</sup> Fyfe, 84; White 109.

1943 meant upwards of one thousand people through the Pan's doors every night.<sup>169</sup> The Pan was one of the most popular venues in town; with all branches of the United States forces also frequented it on a regular basis.<sup>170</sup>

Part of the popularity of the Peter Pan, was due to the fact that, unlike some venues, did not ban the jitterbug during the American's residence the management merely demanded that women in full skirts refrain from dancing it.<sup>171</sup> This fact led to some enthusiastic dance by American servicemen and women. Johnny Madden, the well-known drummer/vocalist of the Peter Pan's (and later at the Trocadero) house band recalled being amazed at the acrobatics that the men executed with their partners.

Madden also recalled the stir the Americans created amongst the local male population, and not a positive one. From the bandstand Madden noted that women with an American escort always came in with a corsage, and that their escorts laid on the charm "with a trowel," treating the women like princesses. However, the New Zealand men, who did not routinely give their ladies flowers, or try to charm them, were left by the wayside in favour of the Americans, which caused quite a bit of friction, although apparently no incidents occurred inside the Pan, or at least in view of the bandstand.<sup>172</sup>

The Civic Wintergarden had been closed due to financial problems by the management from the late 1930s, but with the arrival of the American troops it was reopened in late 1942. The Wintergarden also became a very popular venue for American servicemen on leave. From late December 1942 until March 1944 the Wintergarden band was led saxophonist Bert Peterson. Peterson was an executive member of the Auckland Musicians Union, and regular columnist for *Australian Music Maker and Dance Band News* in addition to his performing and leading activities.<sup>173</sup> The cabaret band did double duty by playing for the overture and interval show for the films shown in the theatre above. Initially the band played two nights a week, but a third, and later fourth night was introduced when the management decided on having service-only evenings in 1943.<sup>174</sup>

---

<sup>169</sup> AMM April 1943.

<sup>170</sup> Dianne Haworth and Dianne Miller, *Freda Stark: Her Extraordinary Life*, Auckland: HarperCollins, 2000, 92; Bioletti, 68, 82

<sup>171</sup> Bioletti, 64.

<sup>172</sup> Bourke, 118-119.

<sup>173</sup> AMM August 1940.

<sup>174</sup> AMM December 1942, August, November 1943.

The Wintergarden, as part of the Civic Theatre complex, was a favoured place to go for a movie and stage show, and then dancing. With the introduction of servicemen-only evenings, the management made efforts to particularly appeal to their American clientele by showing the latest American films they could get hold of, and by including American style food on their supper menus for the Wintergarden.<sup>175</sup>

The Civic also held themed evenings for the entertainment of both service people and civilians. These evenings were usually to raise money for Liberty Bonds, or some other war fund-raising organisation. For most, however, it was a chance to dress 'to the nines', see a movie that was especially organised for the evening, a good stage show (based on the evening's theme) by the Civic's dance troupe the 'Lucky Lovelies', and then dance the night away in the Wintergarden.<sup>176</sup>

The Peterson band was not the only band to play on these servicemen-only evenings. Between mid-1943 and mid-1944 some of the bands with the American troops took over these evenings including the Tropicats and the 290th Army Band. There were also two memorable performances by the Artie Shaw Band during the bands tour in August 1943, which packed the Wintergarden out to well over capacity, and had jazz fans hovering around all the entrances in an attempt to hear the band. The performances of the bands with the American forces will be examined further in section 6.3, and those by the Artie Shaw band in section 6.4.

The American bands at the Civic were great draw-cards for local jazz fans as well as the servicemen. Even though these bands were mostly playing on the service nights, numerous local jazz fans devised ways of listening to them, for example trombonist Dale Alderton recalled regularly hiding in a stairwell near one of the cabaret entrances and listening entranced to the various American bands that played in the Wintergarden.<sup>177</sup> The methods musicians and fans used to listen to American bands will be detailed in the following sections.

The El Rey in the Auckland suburb of Hillsborough was an exclusive subscription nightclub, which opened in the late 1930s. The atmosphere and decor of the El Rey was reminiscent of an American Prohibition-era nightclub. To add to its exclusivity members and their guests had to adhere to a strict dress code: men were to wear dress uniform or tuxedos and the women wore full-

---

<sup>175</sup> Bourke, 119.

<sup>176</sup> AMM Aug. 1943; Haworth and Miller, 90.

<sup>177</sup> Dale Alderton interview with Aleisha Ward (2002).

length evening gowns. To spend an evening at the El Rey was to be in with the fashion forward, swing–music loving crowd.<sup>178</sup>

Among the American servicemen the El Rey was more favoured by officers than the rank–and–file serviceman. Because of its exclusive reputation, it became the unofficial Officers Club for the American servicemen.<sup>179</sup> It was also *the* place in Auckland to enjoy American style T-bone steaks, decent beer and whiskey, despite alcohol being illegal in the 'dry' suburb of Hillsborough.<sup>180</sup>

The musicians of the El Rey house band recalled that the American servicemen who frequented the venue were generous lot giving them hefty tips of money or alcohol for playing requests. One particular story was that a Texan major would give the band a bottle of whiskey every time the played *Deep in the Heart of Texas* for him. Another hefty tipper, they were later shocked to discover, was Rear Admiral Richard E. Byrd, who, while the band knew he was a "brass hat", was "no snob."<sup>181</sup>

Because of the popularity of the El Rey the band also attracted servicemen "who reckoned they could play", some stating that they'd played with big name swing bands back in the States: "[Y]ou'd set them up there with a trumpet or a sax and they were hopeless. But some of those Yanks were really great players, they had it."<sup>182</sup> This experience appears to have been quite common for New Zealand jazz musicians during these years. After numerous tales of proficiency, the New Zealanders' willingness to believe the tales they heard from American servicemen only stretched as far as one chorus.<sup>183</sup>

Finally in Auckland, the Orange Coronation Hall, popularly known as the Orange Hall or simply The Orange, in Newton Road, was well established as one of the most popular non-cabaret dance venues for dancing in Auckland. During the period of the American residency it was extremely popular with the lower-ranked and younger servicemen, who did not have as much money to spend on the cabarets. Three nights a week the dances were run by bandleader Ted Croad and boasted a band with many of the best jazz musicians in Auckland. During the American's

---

<sup>178</sup> Bioletti, 64-65; "El Rey" DHJA venue files.

<sup>179</sup> The official Officers Club was the Shortland Club in the central city.

<sup>180</sup> Bioletti, 64-65; "El Rey" DHJA venue files.

<sup>181</sup> Bioletti, 65.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid.

<sup>183</sup> Bioletti, 65, Lauri Paddi File DHJA.

residency the dances became so popular that Croad often had to close the doors, and a queue of couples would form along Newton Road hoping for their chance to get in.<sup>184</sup>

Unfortunately this popularity caused Croad some trouble with the Hall's trustees (The Protestant Orange Lodge), who believed that alcohol, chewing gum and jitterbugging would be the ruin of the hall, not to mention the morals of the young people attending the dance.<sup>185</sup> As he was only ever given a week-to-week lease of the hall, Croad had to walk a careful line between keeping the patrons happy and keeping his leaseholders happy. As a result the dances had some of the strictest rules in Auckland: no chewing gum was to be sold, no jitterbugging was to take place on the dance floor, no pass-out chits were to be given, and no alcohol was allowed anywhere near, let alone in the Hall.<sup>186</sup> Despite these rules, the people kept coming, and because of these rules there was very little trouble from inebriated servicemen.

Although Croad is now remembered as a somewhat uninspiring leader he was in his heyday during the swing era.<sup>187</sup> Swing was the music that he loved, and while he could have cut costs by only having an eight-piece band, he loved the sound of a full big band, and endeavoured to have a band of at least twelve instruments. During the years of the American troops residency, he was making a great deal of money from the heavy patronage of his dances, but he spent much of that in hiring excellent musicians who were "well trained, they could read music, had a good ear, and could play a tune."<sup>188</sup> The repertoire was "what the public wanted— not what the band wanted," but there were few complaints, and certainly none of them were loud, as this was a good gig.<sup>189</sup>

## Major venues in Wellington

Histories of World War Two and the American invasion have tended to focus primarily on Auckland events and venues. Where numerous pages are devoted to recalling the venues and goings-on in Auckland there are far fewer recollections of the same things in Wellington.<sup>190</sup> Wellington in these histories appears to have become notorious for the battles between New Zealanders and Americans, and little else, except the Cecil Club and the Majestic Cabaret.

---

<sup>184</sup> Jim Warren, interview with Aleisha Ward (2009), 'Cheek to Cheek at the Orange' AS1/12/1984, B3.

<sup>185</sup> Bourke, 120-121.

<sup>186</sup> 'Nights of Foxtrots and Madeira Cake' NZH 9/8/1980 Sect.2, p.2; 'Cheek to Cheek at the Orange' AS1/12/1984, B3.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid.

<sup>188</sup> 'Nights of Foxtrots and Madeira Cake' NZH 9/8/1980 Sect 2, p.2.

<sup>189</sup> ibid, also AS 'Cheek to Cheek at the Orange' 1/12/1984, B3.

<sup>190</sup> See for example Chris Bourke's *Blue Smoke*, and Harry Bioletti's *The Yanks are Coming!*

However, while there were certainly hundreds, if not thousands, of American servicemen in Wellington Central on any given day of the week, the main camps for the Marines were all north of Wellington in the Hutt Valley and points north as far as Masterton. It appears that much of the short leave (usually a day) was spent in the nearby provincial towns rather than spending an hour or more on a train into Wellington Central.

When troops did take their leave in Wellington it does appear that there were fewer commercial venues that regularly had jazz bands than Auckland, which attracted American troops. Of those venues that regularly had jazz bands, the Majestic Cabaret was, indeed, the favourite destination for troops on leave.

The Majestic Cabaret was much like the Civic Wintergarden in Auckland in that it was attached to a theatre, in this case the Majestic Theatre. As with the Civic in Auckland the Majestic in Wellington was a favourite venue for a movie–dancing–supper type of evening, with the main feature of the cabaret being the glass dance floor. By the time the Americans arrived in 1942, the Majestic Cabaret was well known as the swing venue in Wellington. The main house band during this period was the Lauri Paddi Band, formerly of the Peter Pan Cabaret in Auckland.

The Paddi Band had resided at the Majestic since July 1940 and would continue their residence until April 1944 and again May through July 1945.<sup>191</sup> During these tenures they were favourites not only of Wellingtonians, but of the visiting American servicemen and women as well. Throughout the war they reigned supreme at the Majestic and despite losing key members to the forces the Paddi band continued to be considered one of the best bands in the country.<sup>192</sup> Although swing fanatics thought that Paddi was a shade too strict and sweet in his musical tastes, and did not allow his musicians to really demonstrate their improvisatory abilities, the dancers at the Majestic did not have any such qualms.<sup>193</sup>

As the Majestic was a popular venue with the servicemen, it also became a popular venue for the United States Navy and Marines to use for their dances.<sup>194</sup> While Marine or Navy bands usually played for these events there is photographic evidence that the Paddi Band also occasionally played for their dances.<sup>195</sup> In addition to the regular American service bands the Majestic was the host for several performances of the Artie Shaw Band during August 1943. The Majestic was so

---

<sup>191</sup> AMM July 1940, EP, 27/4/1944, 3, 25/5/1945, 2 23/7/1945, 2.

<sup>192</sup> AMM December 1941, May, December 1942.

<sup>193</sup> AMM May 1943.

<sup>194</sup> Bioletti, 70-71; White, 113.

<sup>195</sup> E.M. Alderdice Photographic Collection Alexander Turnbull Library; Radio New Zealand Sound Archives.

popular among both the Americans and Wellingtonians that, by the end of the war, the renowned glass dance floor had been ruined by the thousands of jitterbug stomping feet.<sup>196</sup>

Like his colleagues at the El Rey and other venues in Auckland, in the first year of the American residency in New Zealand Paddi had to deal with frequent tales of jazz proficiency by members of the American services. Like the El Rey band, Paddi and his bandsmen probably gave the tale-bearers one chorus to prove themselves. However, the tales apparently became so irritating that the normally mild-mannered and gentlemanly Paddi actually commented on his frustration to *Australian Music Maker* New Zealand correspondent Bert Peterson. It is not mentioned what, if any, steps he took to remedy this irritation.<sup>197</sup>

The Manager of the Majestic Frederick Carr regularly hired or loaned the facilities to various local clubs (including service clubs) and organisations for fund-raising events most of which were connected with the war effort. The Majestic was regularly the venue for the American and New Zealand Red Cross dances, as well as various women's auxiliary leagues.<sup>198</sup> The Majestic also became the base for the Wellington Spinsters Club after their facilities were damaged in the November 1942 earthquake. The club had free use of the Cabaret on Sundays to host afternoon teas and concerts and variety shows for the servicemen.<sup>199</sup>

While there were numerous community halls around Wellington that hosted regular dances, including the Centennial Exhibition Hall in Rongotai, St. Francis' Hall on the Terrace, appears to have been to most popular with American servicemen in central Wellington. Why this is remains unknown as I have not found any information regarding the popularity of these halls. I also could not discover what bands performed at these halls on a regular basis, but many Marines in particular recalled that going to dance the jitterbug at St Francis Hall was a regular feature.<sup>200</sup>

There was one other popular venue frequented by American troops that regularly had a swing band and that was the Empress Ballroom. Unlike all the other venues in this section, it was considered to be a real dive by the locals, a place where 'nice girls' did not go.<sup>201</sup> However, 'nice girls' did occasionally end up going there when their American dates neglected to mention where they were taking them.

---

<sup>196</sup> Chris Bourke in 'Music Map' *Capital Times*, (Wellington), 13/10/2010.

<sup>197</sup> AMM May 1943.

<sup>198</sup> EP 'Voluntary Aids' 30/10/1942, 6; 'Help For Others' 29/2/1944, 8; 'Here and There' 8/6/1944, 8.

<sup>199</sup> Bioletti, 70. The Spinsters club was a group of single young women who had banded together to offer hospitality to servicemen, EP 'Spinsters Clubs, An Outsize Birthday Bash' 6/10/1942, 6.

<sup>200</sup> Bioletti, 71-72.

<sup>201</sup> White , 113.

The attraction for the Americans was a good band, and loose security with regard to alcohol. The main bands to play at the Empress were led by Cliff Jones and Doug Roche. Both are remembered as being competent dance musicians, though they were not necessarily jazz musicians. However more often than not they employed jazz musicians as their sidemen, and were able to perform as a swing band.<sup>202</sup>

Poet Lauris Edmond recalled to historian Georgina White that the Empress was: "A dimly lit den full of American sailors and marines and weird female creatures...all jitterbugging wildly, a blue smoke haze over everything."<sup>203</sup> She further recalled that there was a fight whilst they were there, but she and her partner "grimly danced on," she concluded her memory with the fact that she "felt deliciously sinful being there."<sup>204</sup>

### **6.3 Bands with the Troops**

There were a number of official and unofficial bands within the American troops, in a variety of styles, including jazz. The jazz bands that were remembered the best by New Zealand jazz musicians and fans mostly appear to have been active locally later in the troops' residence. These jazz bands were units within the larger divisional or unit band, and would have been expected to play all styles of music that were called for in all situations. This section will examine the best-known of these bands and what is known of their activities in Auckland and Wellington. I will also discuss the reactions from New Zealand jazz musicians and fans that listened to, and in some cases played with these bands.

It should be noted that the American armed forces segregation policies extended to the band units. While there were African–American band units within the wider divisions, these units were only rarely seen in New Zealand. The African–American bands performed at the African–American service clubs, but these bands would never play for the wider New Zealand audience at the big service dances, on radio, or for civic occasions.<sup>205</sup>

The information gathered by New Zealand historians about the bands with the United States forces in New Zealand appears to have been almost entirely second–hand or third–hand through post–war interviews with musicians and fans and resulting publications. Much of the information cited by historians appears to come from two people, pianist Jim Foley, and jazz fan Peter Sellers. While both had good knowledge of the American bands in New Zealand neither have been quoted

---

<sup>202</sup> EP 4/8/1942, 2; 18/6/1943, 2; EP 12/9/1945, 2.

<sup>203</sup> White 113.

<sup>204</sup> White 113.

<sup>205</sup> Bourke, 125.



as stating which band was with which unit. Because of this small pool of knowledge I have taken a prudent approach and not cited these gentlemen except where I could reasonably expect them to be correct, or where I was able to verify with other sources including official military records.

### **Marine Corps and Naval Bands**

Although there is photographic evidence in various collections of Marine jazz bands performing in New Zealand, mostly in Wellington, little is known about their presence in either Wellington or Auckland. The 1st Marine Division band was not officially established during the period when the 1st Marines were based in Wellington between June and August 1942, nor is it known whether they had any unofficial bands during this time.

Units of the 2nd Marine Division were garrisoned in Wellington for a much longer period than the 1st Division. The 2nd Division resided in New Zealand between November 1942 and November 1943, and it is possible that the photographs with Marine jazz bands (mentioned above) are from the 2nd Division during this period. There is also evidence that various bands within the 2nd Division regularly broadcast on Wellington's station 2ZB during 1942–1943, but I was unable to discover if they ever performed in cabarets or nightclubs in the city.<sup>206</sup>

It is known that the United States Naval Operating Base in New Zealand had bands within the units stationed there, and that these bands performed for various civic occasions, and on radio in both Auckland and Wellington.<sup>207</sup> Also, many of the American Naval vessels that visited New Zealand had bands that performed in various situations. However, I could not discover whether either Base or vessels bands had any swing bands within the units, and (if there was) whether they performed at civilian venues.

I made efforts to contact historians and archivists associated with the United States Marine Corps and Navy, in an attempt to discover which official unit bands were stationed, or visited New Zealand, and when. However I was unsuccessful in my efforts and have not been able to access this information.

### **United States Army Bands: The 290th Army Band**

The 290th Army band that was in New Zealand during the Americans' residency has long been touted in New Zealand history as being "a peacetime band in Boston."<sup>208</sup> While there was

---

<sup>206</sup> Bevan, 356.

<sup>207</sup> Dale Alderton(2002), Johnny Williams (2003) interview with Aleisha Ward; Bevan, 183; White, 113.

<sup>208</sup> Bourke, 125; E.J. Wansburne 'Jim Foley – Pianist' *Jukebox* November 1946, 3.

indeed a 290th Army Band that was originally a band in Boston, the 290th Army band that was in New Zealand *was not the same band*.<sup>209</sup> United States Army records show that the 290th Army band that played here, while also from the state of Massachusetts, was originally the 101st Medical Regiment of the 26th Army Division. On the regiments' arrival in Auckland 26 June 1943 (noted in the timeline at the start of this chapter), after they were evacuated at the end of the Guadalcanal campaign, it was reorganised and attached to the United States Air Force and Service Command. With this new attachment and reorganisation the 101st Medical Regiment and Band was *redesignated* as the 290th Army.<sup>210</sup>

Because of wartime censorship little is known about the venues or situations the 290th Army Band performed in, but it is known that they regularly played for service dances at the Auckland Town Hall and other venues as their substitute pianist was local jazzman Jim Foley.<sup>211</sup> Although the press was unable to comment on the band's activities, the 290th Army became well known to the Auckland public through their regular performances on local radio, in particular the American Expeditionary Service Radio on 1ZM.<sup>212</sup> Contemporary comments about the band recalled them as being a hard swinging (extremely good) jazz band and making them very popular with local jazz musicians.<sup>213</sup>

The 290th Band was also one of the longest residing bands from the United States forces. Between the dances and their radio work this gave made them a significant presence on the Auckland jazz scene. When the band left New Zealand for deployment to New Caledonia on July 26 1944 the local jazz community considered it a great loss.<sup>214</sup>

### **Bands of the 43rd and 25th Army Divisions**

These divisions need to be considered together as there is confusion surrounding the bands in these two divisions. The 43rd United States Army Infantry Division had two residences in New Zealand between 1942 and 1944. Nicknamed 'Winged Victory', this division possibly had the greatest connection with New Zealanders of all the units that passed through New Zealand. While their initial residence was several weeks of hard training before shipping out to Guadalcanal, their

---

<sup>209</sup> The 'real' 290th Army Band was deployed to Europe in 1942–1944 attached to the 75th Infantry Division: <http://www.6thcorpscombatengineers.com/engforum/index.php?showtopic=4347>

<sup>210</sup> US Army records 290th Army Band.

<sup>211</sup> E.J. Wansburne 'Jim Foley – Pianist', *Jukebox*, November 1946, 3.

<sup>212</sup> NZL, 1ZM listings April–July 1944; Dale Alderton interview with Aleisha Ward (2002); Larry Dysart memoir DHJA.

<sup>213</sup> Dale Alderton interview with Aleisha Ward (2002); 'Play all night, sleep half the day,' *Auckland Star* 13/1/1987 B1/4.

<sup>214</sup> US Army records 290th Band.

second residence from December 1943 to July 1944 gave the divisions' bands ample opportunity to perform for both the armed forces and civilian population in Auckland.

According to historian Denys Bevan (whose information was gathered via jazz fan Peter Sellers, who possibly gathered his information from pianist Jim Foley) the 43rd had several jazz bands within their divisional band structure.<sup>215</sup> This is partially borne out in the United States Army records regarding the band as the 43rd Division incorporated the 103rd Regiment during the Solomon Islands campaign in 1943.<sup>216</sup> The bands' names according to Bevan were the 'Commandos of Swing', 'The Rhythmaires', and the 'Tropicats'.<sup>217</sup> This last band is where the confusion between bands and 43rd and 25th divisions is primarily centred

At approximately the same time that the 43rd returned to New Zealand, the 25th United States Army Infantry Division (from Hawaii), called 'Tropic Lightning' also arrived in Auckland. Although these divisions were deployed in the tropics their divisional nicknames were either unofficial and created before deployment, or official and earned in combat. The nicknames for both often referred to aspects of their home states, and to their divisional insignia. In the case of 25th division, their insignia was a lightning bolt superimposed on a taro leaf, representing their tropical, and Pacific origin.<sup>218</sup> Tropic Lightning was an 'official designation' as it had been mandated by the United States Army for their service (and the speed at which they completed their mission) at Guadalcanal in 1942.<sup>219</sup>

With the nickname of Tropic Lightning it has always seemed to me that the *Tropicats* might actually have belonged to the 25th Division rather than the 43rd (Winged Victory). As Bevan's information is, at best, second hand, and other histories routinely mix the divisions and nicknames together, I have always wondered about the accuracy of the association of band names with divisions.

As mention above, the United States Army records do not record popular names of the bands and it is impossible to know with any certainty which band belonged where. These records also do not take into account any unofficial bands within the divisional band, or within the wider division. It is possible that all jazz bands that were known to Aucklanders from the 43rd and 25th Divisions were entirely unofficial. Further, given that the majority of information about these bands

---

<sup>215</sup> Bevan, 127.

<sup>216</sup> US Army records 43rd Division/103rd Regiment.

<sup>217</sup> Bevan, 127.

<sup>218</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicknames\\_of\\_United\\_States\\_Army\\_divisions](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicknames_of_United_States_Army_divisions); US army

<http://www.25idl.army.mil/history.html#>

<sup>219</sup> <http://www.1ad.army.mil/History.htm>

comes from one person—pianist, Jim Foley—and from one article—a profile of Foley's career in *Jukebox* magazine—it is possible that there are inaccuracies in the records on which band was associated with which division.

Despite this caveat regarding the accuracy or otherwise of the names of bands in within the 43rd and 25th Divisions, the fact remains that all of the above mentioned bands were very popular among Aucklanders. The bands all played for military and civilian dances at venues such as the Civic Wintergarden and the Peter Pan Cabaret as well as at various forces camps and hospital/rehabilitation facilities.<sup>220</sup> The extent of their activities in Auckland is unknown. The United States Army did not record the bands' individual activities, and as mentioned in connection with the 290th band, the local press had to be circumspect in their publication of band details.

I do not know how much interaction occurred between the Commandos of Swing, The Rhythmaires, the Tropicats and the local jazz community. It is known that many local musicians admired these bands and that the 290th, and Tropicats occasionally employed local musicians including pianist Jim Foley, and Australian singer, June Mendoza. According to Foley the Tropicats were one of the best of the United States forces bands that came to New Zealand, and he felt privileged to be able to play with them.<sup>221</sup>

### **New Zealand reactions to American forces jazz bands**

When it first became apparent that there were jazz bands with the American forces jazz musicians and fans were reportedly extremely excited at the prospect of being able to hear them frequently. However as the majority of the bands' live (as opposed to broadcasting) work was playing for service-only functions, the chances to hear these bands in person were fewer than the New Zealanders had hoped.<sup>222</sup> As mentioned above, local fans soon came up with several remedies for this situation, the most common of which was to stand outside the venues fire exits or near windows in an attempt to listen. Some took their attempts further, like Auckland trombonist Dale Alderton who reported that on one occasion he managed to sneak into the Auckland Town Hall before a service dance and hid in the choir loft for the evening.<sup>223</sup> Others managed to befriend band members and would be allowed to sit in with the band or listen from the side of the stage.<sup>224</sup>

---

<sup>220</sup> Bevan, 127.

<sup>221</sup> E.J. Wansburne 'Jim Foley – Pianist' *Jukebox* November 1946, 3.

<sup>222</sup> Dale Alderton (2002), Johnny Williams (2003), Jim Warren (2009) interview with Aleisha Ward.

<sup>223</sup> Dale Alderton interview with Aleisha Ward 2002.

<sup>224</sup> Bourke, 129.

When they did manage to hear American bands, such as the ones mentioned above, musicians report being astounded by the phenomenal volume of sound that these mostly un-amplified bands could produce. They were also impressed by the quality of sound that the bands could produce at that volume.<sup>225</sup> In addition to the sound of the bands local musicians were very impressed by the innovative arrangements that they used.

What appears to have most impressed local musicians was the American bands' performance style and flair, the way they commanded the attention of the audience, and also their behaviour on the bandstand. Jim Foley reported that he was particularly impressed that when someone was soloing, the rest of the band would pay respectful attention to the soloist, something that was apparently not a regular occurrence in New Zealand bands.<sup>226</sup> Other musicians report being impressed by the choreography the bands used in various parts of their arrangements, such as section unison passages where sections would stand up to spotlight the passage.<sup>227</sup>

The few local musicians who were fortunate to play with the bands—such as Jim Foley, clarinettist Derek Heine, and singers Esme Stephens and June Mendoza—recall that the experience was a great education. An aspect that they particularly mentioned included the showmanship of how to present themselves both within a section and as a soloist. They also mentioned that it was a great experience to learn large amounts of what the Americans thought of as standard repertoire, which were not necessarily common to the New Zealand jazz repertoire.<sup>228</sup>

Friendships between the musicians from both cultures resulted in many theoretical and practical discussions and explorations of jazz. They also resulted in generous assistance in the attempts of acquiring new sheet music and recordings. Singer Pat McMinn recalled to historian Chris Bourke of striking up a friendship with an American saxophonist, Bob Kingsbury, who when hearing how hard it had become for New Zealand musicians to acquire new music during the war asked his mother to send McMinn regular packages of new music from the United States.<sup>229</sup> Incidences of generosity such as McMinn experienced may not have been very common, but Bourke records many other occurrences of musical exploration and generosity in rehearsing and

<sup>225</sup> Bourke 129-130, *Jukebox*, Nov. 1946, 3.

<sup>226</sup> E.J. Wansburne 'Jim Foley – Pianist', *Jukebox* November 1946, 3.

<sup>227</sup> Dale Alderton interview with Aleisha Ward 2002.

<sup>228</sup> Bourke, 125, 129-130; also Dale Alderton (2002), Johnny Williams (2003), Jim Warren (2009) interviews with Aleisha Ward; Wansburne 'Jim Foley' *Jukebox*, November 1946, 3.

<sup>229</sup> Bourke, 132-133.

performing with American bands, or having their arrangements and compositions rehearsed or performed.<sup>230</sup>

#### 6.4 Famous Tours: Artie Shaw and Claude Thornhill

During the course of the residency of the United States forces in New Zealand there were several tours by United Service Organisation–sponsored entertainers. For jazz fans however there two tours that were especially influential: those of the Artie Shaw Naval Band in 1943, and the Claude Thornhill Show in 1945.

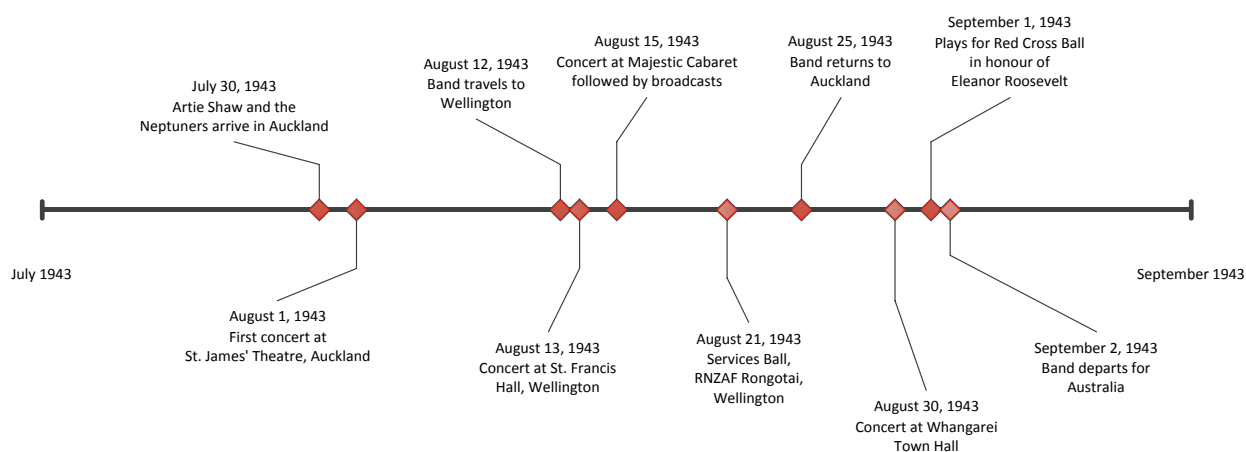


Figure 8: Artie Shaw band timeline

#### Artie Shaw

By the middle of 1943 the number of US forces stationed in New Zealand was at its peak, with approximately 50,000 personnel spread across the Auckland and Wellington regions.<sup>231</sup> During this time Artie Shaw and the *Neptuners* (also known as the *Rangers*, but officially United States Navy Band #501) toured New Zealand, entertaining American and returned New Zealand troops.

As can be seen from the timeline above (fig.8), the band arrived in Auckland on July 30 1943 after performing for the troops in Noumea. Contrary to other activities that peripherally involved the United States military in New Zealand, the New Zealand press was apparently allowed to expand on details about personnel and where the band had come from in the Pacific. The press appears to have also been allowed to explicitly advertise, preview, and review the bands performances, including giving details of distinguished military guests.<sup>232</sup>

<sup>230</sup> Ibid.

<sup>231</sup> Belich, 289; Bevan 370-371.

<sup>232</sup> Dennis Huggard, *Artie Shaw in New Zealand 1943*, New Zealand Series Booklet 15, 2007.

The first concert by the Shaw band for combined New Zealand and American service people was scheduled for August 1 at the St James Theatre in Auckland city. Given that the band's instruments needed repair following the climate extremes of the Pacific islands, and damage following bomb raids when they were performing for troops at Guadalcanal, the press (both local and foreign) found the fact that they would perform within forty–eight hours of their arrival slightly surprising.<sup>233</sup>

For their first performance in Auckland local vocalist, Esmé Stephens, who was well known for her performances on station 1ZB and with several cabaret bands, was recruited to perform two songs with the band: *White Christmas* and *This Love of Mine*. Stephens was recorded singing *White Christmas* with the Shaw band from this performance. Somehow in the course of the day Noel Peach, founder of Astor Recording Studios, was recruited (possibly by Jack Chignall, Shaw's local liaison, and a member of the 1ZB staff) to record Stephens' performance that evening. According to Chris Bourke (from information provided by Dale Alderton), Peach recorded Stephens on a portable recorder and relayed it to the Spackman and Howarth recording studio where Alderton and Eldred Stebbing pressed it onto acetate.<sup>234</sup> However, while Stephens sung with the band, it did not include Shaw in the arrangement as he used her set to take a break.<sup>235</sup>

For the first two weeks of the tour (seen in the timeline, fig. 8) the Shaw band was based in Auckland. During the day they performed at troops' camps, and hospital and rehabilitation facilities, also visiting with patients in the facilities, a duty that was occasionally emotionally overwhelming for the musicians.<sup>236</sup> In the evenings the band performed concerts and for dances at various venues including the Auckland Town Hall, Civic Wintergarden, and Westhaven Cabaret.<sup>237</sup> Importantly, these evening concerts and dances, involved both American and New Zealand service people and their civilian guests, which included a number of local musicians.<sup>238</sup>

On August 12 the band proceeded to Wellington on the Overlander train, where their performance schedule was similar to Auckland: camps and hospitals during the day and concerts and dances in the city at night. During the course of their stay in Wellington the Shaw band broadcast several times on various Wellington stations. On August 15 he broadcast live from the

<sup>233</sup> NZH 31/7/1943; New York Times 29/8/1943, 6.

<sup>234</sup> Bourke 129, Dennis Huggard *Artie Shaw in New Zealand 1943*, New Zealand Series Booklet 15, 2007, unpaginated 1 August.

<sup>235</sup> Bourke 129.

<sup>236</sup> Bourke 129.

<sup>237</sup> Dennis Huggard *Artie Shaw in New Zealand 1943*, New Zealand Series Booklet 15, 2007

<sup>238</sup> Bourke, 129; Huggard, unpaginated, various dates.

Centennial Exhibition Hall broadcasting studios in Rongotai (as noted in the timeline, fig. 8) in between engagements at the Majestic Cabaret—the evening dance on this day boasted the highest attendance of all of the band's engagements with approximately 2,400 people attending.<sup>239</sup>

The Shaw band also played for a welcome home ball for the recently returned New Zealand troops on August 21 at the Centennial Exhibition Hall in Rongotai. This was the only engagement by the band that was specifically for New Zealand armed forces personnel although there were also American servicemen and women in attendance. The ball was also broadcast live over 2YA.<sup>240</sup>

On August 25 the band returned to Auckland for several engagements in Auckland, and the northern camps, including a dance in Whangarei. At the dance in Whangarei, the Shaw band shared the bandstand with a local dance band led by Cecil Wright, alternating two-hour sets. This was the only time during the tour that Shaw shared the stage with a local band, but unfortunately no information from the Cecil Wright Band about that night has surfaced.<sup>241</sup>

Of the engagements in Auckland perhaps the most prominent of the entire tour was the dance at the Auckland Town Hall on September 1 1943. This dance (noted in the timeline above) was organised by the American Red Cross and in honour of the United States First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, who was touring the South Pacific encampments.<sup>242</sup> Attended by 1,500 servicemen and women, the dance was broadcast live on station 1ZM, and was recorded via relay by Eldred Stebbing for the American Expeditionary Broadcasting Service network.<sup>243</sup>

For the New Zealand jazz community the tour by the Artie Shaw band was considered a momentous event. Here was a world-renowned jazz musician, with a band that combined musicians from his and other well-known and well respected jazz bands, and they were going to perform in New Zealand! For a country that only saw the top jazz musicians on film, this was an almost unbelievable event. The mood among the jazz community was apparently verging on ecstatic for anyone near Auckland or Wellington.<sup>244</sup>

Given that many of the bands' engagements were held at civilian, central city venues, there were many legitimate and also less legitimate means by which local musicians and fans might hear the Shaw band. The most common practices were the ones described in the previous section:

---

<sup>239</sup> Huggard, unpaginated 15 August; Bevan, 356; EP 16/8/1943, 3.

<sup>240</sup> 'Welcome Home Ball', EP 16/8/1943, 3; 'Returned Men' EP 23/8/1943, 6; 'Blues for business but Beethoven for Pleasure' NZL 27/8/1943, 5.

<sup>241</sup> Huggard, unpaginated 30 August.

<sup>242</sup> White, *Light Fantastic*, 105.

<sup>243</sup> Huggard, unpaginated, 1 September.

<sup>244</sup> Bert Peterson 'Artie Shaw Makes History at Auckland!' AMM September 1943.



finding open windows or doors to listen at through. Also popular was attempting to sneak in and hide inside the venue, although this could be difficult with the presence of 'official' caretakers or guards.<sup>245</sup> Reedsman and pianist Don Richardson managed to get in through a different method: he met an American soldier while attempting to figure out a way to either get a ticket or sneak into the theatre, when the soldier could not find a young woman to accompany him he told Richardson that he could be his 'date' for the evening.<sup>246</sup>

Some devoted fans in the armed forces and unable to get leave even went so far as going Absent Without Leave (AWOL), from their bases. This was a great risk as there were severe punishments if they were caught. However, a number of fans and musicians were apparently willing to risk punishment in order to hear their idols perform.

For musicians there were two other slightly more legitimate tactics to hear the Shaw band. Firstly, and most legitimately, the Auckland Musicians Union had made arrangements with the United States Naval Headquarters that local musicians were allowed admission to two of the service dances at the Auckland Town Hall on production of their union membership cards.<sup>247</sup> The second method was to befriend members of the band. Clarinettist Derek Heine, and trumpeter Lew Campbell both managed to strike up friendships with members of the band and were allowed to sit in on a few numbers.<sup>248</sup> Canadian expatriate, Art Rosoman (tenor saxophone) renewed his acquaintance with saxophonist Sam Donahue, with whom he had played some years previously.<sup>249</sup> Other musicians met members of the Shaw band when the band came to see them perform at various cabarets and clubs after the end of their engagements, or at parties/jam sessions to which Shaw band members had been invited.<sup>250</sup>

No matter which way local fans and musicians got to hear, and see, the Shaw band, the impression was the same: astonishment and awe. Musicians and fans report that while they had thought that the bands with the American troops were the best that they had ever heard perform, that quickly changed when they heard the Shaw band. Using terms such as 'unbelievable' and 'phenomenal,' they were uniformly ecstatic at hearing the band. In one particular tale related in Dennis Huggard's booklet *Artie Shaw in New Zealand – 1943*, one young soldier, David Commin

---

<sup>245</sup> Bourke 129, Huggard, unpaginated, 13 August.

<sup>246</sup> Bourke, 129.

<sup>247</sup> Huggard, unpaginated, 9 August. I believe the dances in question the Naval dance on August 6 and the Marine Aviation dance on August 7, AS 7/7/1943, 6.

<sup>248</sup> Bourke 129.

<sup>249</sup> 'Rosoman Reminisces' *Jukebox* March 1947, 3.

<sup>250</sup> Bourke, 129-130.

was on duty watch at the Wellington Winter Showgrounds camp when he went AWOL, and made his way to the Majestic Theatre in Wellington central where the Shaw band was to play that day. According to his story when he tried to purchase a ticket he discovered that they were sold out:

You can imagine how I felt. I turned to leave the theatre, no doubt looking extremely downcast, when a US officer approached me— I was only a lowly Private. 'Did you wish to attend the concert soldier?' I did not hesitate to assure him of my desire and my dashed hopes, to which he responded by presenting me with a ticket. That ticket entitled me to a seat in the centre of the front row of the dress circle. For the next two hours I was in seventh heaven, I couldn't believe this was happening to me. Yes, I was caught getting back into camp, but it was worth the 14 days of CB [punishment duties] I received.<sup>251</sup>

For the musicians however, Bert Peterson, Auckland columnist for *Australian Music Maker and Dance Band News*, summed it up best:

What an opportunity, and what a revelation! That music went right to the hearts of dance musicians...[Shaw's] mastery of every phase of the game is inspiring to behold, and the arrangements the band played put new life into every musician present. I guarantee all hands tore home to put in a few hours practice on the strength of it. Long-forgotten tutors, textbooks, and studies were rescued from the attic and thumbed anew.<sup>252</sup>

Nearly every aspect of the bands' performance appears to have impressed local fans and musicians. Musicians interviewed in the years afterwards particularly mentioned sound of the band, how clean, rounded, and uniform it was despite playing at volumes that often astonished local musicians.<sup>253</sup> It appears that the sound, technique, and arrangements of the band were what impressed New Zealand fans and musicians more than anything else. There are numerous comments in interviews and in the contemporary press about the volume of sound that the band produced. Trumpeter Vern Wilson noted that the brass players had to have been incredibly fit

---

<sup>251</sup> Huggard, *Artie Shaw*, unpaginated 'A Day to Remember By David Commin.'

<sup>252</sup> Bert Peterson 'Artie Shaw Makes History at Auckland!' *AMM* September 1943, Artie Shaw File DHJA MS-Papers-9018-60.

<sup>253</sup> Bourke, 129-130; Dale Alderton, Calder Prescott, Johnny Williams interviewed by Aleisha Ward.

because of the volume that they could produce.<sup>254</sup> At the same time although the volume of sound was incredible according to Dale Alderton it was also incredibly flexible and dynamic.<sup>255</sup>

Local musicians were astounded by the exacting instrumental technique the Shaw band demonstrated through their arrangements. While Peterson's review does not reveal specifics about either arrangements or techniques it appears that the tightness of each section and the band overall was what New Zealand musicians found impressive. Other musicians, such as Pat McMinn and Don Richardson, also make reference in interviews about the technique and arrangements of the Shaw band, and how impressed they were by the controlled, disciplined, sections, and how well each section worked as a whole.<sup>256</sup>

By the time the Shaw band left for Australia on September 2 1943, the band had left a significant impression on the local jazz community. As Bert Peterson stated, many were reinvigorated and inspired by the band, especially in the areas of performance and arranging, but also in terms of their professionalism and stage presence. The wider communities of Auckland and Wellington apparently made their own impact on band members, as several later stated in interviews, articles, and memoirs how much they enjoyed their welcome and tour of New Zealand, despite their hectic schedule. Pianist Rocky Coluccio told Dennis Huggard:

"The people in Auckland were unusually warm and friendly. The ladies were wonderful. Despite the concerts and dances played, it was more like a rest and rehabilitation situation for the band. After the New Hebrides, Solomons and New Caledonia, the food seemed like manna from heaven."<sup>257</sup>

### **Claude Thornhill**

The Claude Thornhill Show arrived in New Zealand July 1945, famously without Claude Thornhill. Thornhill had recently been medically evacuated to Hawaii after falling ill on one of the Pacific Islands, and the band was led in New Zealand by vocalist Denis Day.<sup>258</sup> Little is known about the activities of the Thornhill Navy Band (which was the band for the Claude Thornhill Show) during the war, except that it toured the Pacific encampments extensively between 1942 and 1945.

---

<sup>254</sup> Vern Wilson Oral History.

<sup>255</sup> Dale Alderton interview with Aleisha Ward (2002).

<sup>256</sup> Bourke, 129.

<sup>257</sup> Huggard, unpaginated, 31 August.

<sup>258</sup> AMM August 1945.

In New Zealand the band had a limited tour, but was advertised to perform in all the main centres and some of the larger provincial towns, as well as the principal service establishments that were still operating.<sup>259</sup> Unlike the Shaw band, the Thornhill band and show attracted little attention from either popular or music press before or during their visit. This is somewhat surprising as the band included several renowned musicians, including drummer/actor Jackie Cooper.

Although details about the tour are sketchy at best, it is known that the Claude Thornhill Show was apparently well-received throughout New Zealand. A variety show in the style of the United Service Organisation or New Zealand Concert Party, the band was only one part of the show. However, it was also the only part to be extensively written about as jazz fan Peter Sellers wrote a review for the *Australian Music Maker*, which was published in their August 1945 issue.

The Calude Thornhill Show played two concerts in the Auckland Town Hall on July 6 and 7, which were free to active and returned servicemen and women who were each allowed one guest. It is one of these shows that Peter Sellers attended. His review of the show was exuberant, particularly about the jazz pieces that the band played. Sellers was impressed by both the individual talents and the ensemble work, especially on the 'jam' numbers, and while he noted every musician at some point in his review he picked out saxophonist Freddie Greenwell's work on the jazz numbers as being the highlight for swing fans.<sup>260</sup>

On the evening of July 8 the revues' cast and band attended a party at Cabaret Metropole, where they were prevailed upon to play a few numbers, which then turned into a jam session with the Bert Peterson band who were also playing for the party. Peterson recorded that the jamming was superb, and that he was completely impressed by the skills of the Thornhill band.<sup>261</sup>

After performing in Auckland the show travelled to Wellington to perform at the remaining camps and military hospitals, and also a performance on July 16 at the Opera House. The reviewer for the *Evening Post* was impressed by the performance, especially by the quality of the band. Although the reviewer says little specifically about the music, he appears to have been fascinated by a *Tiger Rag* drum duet by Jackie Cooper and 'Smokey' Stover.<sup>262</sup>

As in Auckland the band remained in Wellington for a few days after this concert, and were seen at the Roseland Cabaret on the evening of the nineteenth. The patrons at the cabaret were surprised and fascinated by the celebrities in their midst. The women's column reporter noted that

---

<sup>259</sup> 'To Visit Dominion- Film and Radio Stars' EP, 27/6/1945, 6.

<sup>260</sup> AMM August 1945.

<sup>261</sup> Ibid.

<sup>262</sup> 'Bright Programme', EP 17/7/1945, 7.

Jackie Cooper obliged the band by sitting in, although only a few took the opportunity to dance, with most of the patrons gathered around the bandstand to watch the performance.<sup>263</sup>

Both the Artie Shaw and Claude Thornhill tours greatly impressed the musicians and fans that were able to attend or hear the bands whilst they were in New Zealand. However, it is clear that the Shaw Band had the greater impact on the New Zealand jazz community. This is possibly because the individual musicians were better known, and the band had more stature because of Shaw, and because, in spite of censorship, the Shaw tour was better publicised. It is also possible that the Thornhill tour's impact was lessened due to the fact that Thornhill was not with the band.

### **6.5 *Radio Broadcasting: The American Expeditionary Broadcasting Service***

In 1944, during the latter stages of the Americans' residence in New Zealand, the American Expeditionary Broadcasting Service [AEBS] petitioned the newly amalgamated National Broadcasting Service/National Commercial Broadcasting Service for the use of a station in Auckland. The head of the combined services, Professor James Shelley agreed, and loaned the AEBS station 1ZM, which operated from the 1YA building on Auckland's Shortland Street.<sup>264</sup> On April 12 1944 (noted in the timeline at the start of this chapter) 1ZM was official ceded to AEBS control and temporarily renamed American Expeditionary Service [AES] Station 1ZM Auckland, or more commonly, AES Auckland.<sup>265</sup>

AES Auckland was officially under the command of Major Prunell H. Gould the regional commander for the Pacific division of the AEBS. The officer-in-charge was Lieutenant Commander Brooks Gifford, but day-to-day operation was in the hands of Sergeant Larry Dysart as the programming supervisor/announcer/writer. Dysart was assisted by Corporal Eugene Twombly, who was then still a Private, as announcer/operator and sound effects (in his civilian life Twombly worked for CBS Hollywood as a sound effects specialist), Corporal Karl Jean as announcer/operator and classical music specialist, and finally Private First Class Frank Gaunt, who was their main announcer.<sup>266</sup>

The opening broadcast was the usual dedicatory affair, notable for two things, the first was Frank Gaunt's greeting: "Good morning GIs, Bluejackets and Leathernecks," a wholly unfamiliar style of greeting to Auckland radio audiences. The second was the performance by the 290th Army Band, which played between each of the speakers and who Dysart describes as a 'crack musical

<sup>263</sup> 'Bright Interlude', EP 20/7/1945, 8.

<sup>264</sup> Day 270.

<sup>265</sup> Bevan, 359.

<sup>266</sup> Larry Dysart Oral Hist. of 1ZM DHJA.

unit.' The 290th had broadcast on Auckland radio several times before this, but this performance would signal the start of regular radio appearances on 1ZM, which would continue until their departure in July 1944.

The majority of the content on AES Auckland was similar to New Zealand operated stations, although American rather than British, Australian or New Zealand. They had serials, radio dramas, sports commentary, and music of all genres. Where they differed was they presented a wider variety of jazz, and, according to jazz fans, more of it and earlier in the day from the New Zealand stations. AES Auckland also introduced the hit parade and make-believe ballroom programme concepts to New Zealand audiences.<sup>267</sup>

With easy access to the V-Discs, regular material deliveries from the Armed Forces Radio Service [AFRS] and with access to not only their own record library, but also 1YAs record library AES Auckland was able to satisfy fans of music genres.<sup>268</sup> Occasionally they were even able to scoop other stations with their material. For example, in one particular incident Karl Jean managed to privately purchase a recording of J.S. Bach's B Minor Mass, which he then broadcast to the pleasure of the audience, and the chagrin of NBS officials who had been trying to find and broadcast that particular recording for several months.<sup>269</sup>

The staff of AES Auckland noticed that their audience had a "decided interest in good music," and that among jazz fans there was a strong swing fan base, particularly for the Cab Calloway style of swing.<sup>270</sup> AES Auckland's jazz niche was in the more recent recordings that were unavailable in New Zealand due to the war, which made them popular with fans starved of the latest developments.<sup>271</sup> They also made jazz fans happy by regularly broadcasting live performances by the troops jazz bands who were not often heard by the civilian public. The overall effect that AES Auckland had on jazz fans was overwhelmingly positive. New Zealand musicians also enjoyed these broadcasts and also found them to be a great education, especially the live broadcasts of the American bands that they were not always able to hear live.<sup>272</sup>

The AES Auckland presentation style was also very different from New Zealand stations. The New Zealand audience was not used to being greeted with a drawled "Hello all you lovely people out there," such informality was unheard of on the NBS/NCBS stations. Radio personality

---

<sup>267</sup> Denys Bevan, 359-360; interviews Dale Alderton, Jim Warren, Eric Allen.

<sup>268</sup> Bevan, 359-360.

<sup>269</sup> Larry Dysart Oral Hist. 1ZM, DHJA, Listener Letters to Ed. December 1944

<sup>270</sup> newspaper article date and paper unknown, DHJA 1ZM file.

<sup>271</sup> Bourke 119.

<sup>272</sup> Bioletti, 59; Int. Dale Alderton; personal communication Dennis Huggard.

Aunt Daisy's (Daisy Basham) briskly perky greeting of "Good *morning* everybody!" was as informal as New Zealand radio got during this period.<sup>273</sup> Despite being a military station, the AES team made themselves very popular with the local civilian population by playing requests from civilians and acknowledging the fan mail that they received from both civilian and military fans.

Despite being an Auckland station, AES Auckland was heard and had fans throughout the country. Dunedin pianist Calder Prescott, who was about fourteen at the time recalled regularly listening to 1ZM during this time as they had "all this American jazz," which he thought "was just great!"<sup>274</sup> Dysart recalled that when it was announced that the station was to close down the station was deluged with fan mail from both North and South Islands "all [saying they were] sorry to see us go."<sup>275</sup>

Although AES Auckland was mostly popular with listeners, a number of NBS/NCBS staff did not like the way that the Americans operated. Not just in terms of on-air hosting style, but they felt that the Americans were able to get away with infringing copyright, and many of the broadcasting restrictions that the New Zealand stations were subjected to during these years. One anonymous broadcasting official interviewed for Harry Bioletti's *The Yanks Are Coming: The American Invasion of New Zealand 1942–1944*, called them pirates and thought that they had all the privileges and none of the responsibilities.<sup>276</sup> Whether or not they did have the privileges but no responsibilities is unrecorded, but it is known that the operating procedures for the AEBS stations were radically different from those for New Zealand stations.

This anonymous broadcasting official also perhaps overstated the accusation of copyright infringement. Over half of the AES broadcast material was AFRS packages, V-discs or other transcription discs that had been compiled by the military, and covered under special regulations. The rest of the broadcast material was made up of locally acquired material (the AES staff were given licence to use the 1ZM library) and live programming, which dispensed with the need to illegally broadcast material.<sup>277</sup>

---

<sup>273</sup> Bioletti, 59.

<sup>274</sup> Calder Prescott interview with Aleisha Ward (2010).

<sup>275</sup> Larry Dysart Oral Hist. 1ZM file letters to the editor DHJA; also letters to the editor NZL 19/1/1945, 7; 'Radio Viewstreet' NZL 22/12/1945, 8-9.

<sup>276</sup> Bioletti, 60.

<sup>277</sup> Larry Dysart Oral Hist. 1ZM, DHJA; Martin Hadlow, "'The Mosquito Network' American Military Broadcasting in the South-West Pacific during World War Two' in P. Dennis, J. Grey eds. *The Military and the Media: The Chief of Army Military History Conference 2008* (variant title: *The Military, the Media and Information Warfare*), Australian Military History Publications: Canberra, 2009, 86-87.

The commander of AES Auckland, Lieutenant Commander Brooks Gifford, was a lawyer in his civilian life, and was also in charge of censorship of American material that might be printed in the New Zealand press.<sup>278</sup> Also, the manager of 1YA, Alex O'Donoghue, although not responsible for AES, made it his job to guide the AES crew in "the right direction" according to Dysart, for which they were grateful.<sup>279</sup> In addition to this guidance, New Zealand technical staff, fully cognisant in local copyright laws, supplemented the American broadcasting staff. With all this guidance and with their commander being more than familiar with the legalities of the situation it is probable that the AES staff were far less piratical than has been expressed.<sup>280</sup>

## 6.6 Conclusion

This chapter examined the residency of American troops in New Zealand in the period 1942–1945, with an emphasis on the interactions between New Zealanders and Americans through the medium of jazz. These interactions, both good and bad explored the influences that Americans had on New Zealanders during the period 1942–1945.

The American residency had many effects on New Zealand society and culture. For the jazz community in New Zealand the main effect was inspiration. The performance practices of the American bands, their repertoire, recordings, and individual musicians technique all inspired New Zealand jazz musicians to improve their technique and polish their performances. They were also inspired to try different techniques and performance practices, and different repertoire.

The inspiration of American musicians has been a central theme throughout this chapter. The American service bands affected New Zealand musicians and fans primarily through performance practices, and musical technique, but fans and musicians were also impressed, and inspired, by the breadth of repertoire and the styles of arranging. The musical exploration that occurred and friendships that developed all affected the way New Zealand jazz musicians perceived jazz, and how they approached jazz. The musicians active from this period and from the 1950s believe that the techniques learned from the Americans during this time profoundly affected the way they wrote and performed jazz in the middle of the century, which will be explored in Chapter Seven.<sup>281</sup>

---

<sup>278</sup> Bevan, 278-279.

<sup>279</sup> Larry Dysart Oral Hist. 1ZM, DHJA.

<sup>280</sup> Trent Christman, *Brass Button Broadcasters*, Turner: Paducah KY, 1992, 44.

<sup>281</sup> Bernie Allen (2008), Wayne Senior (2009), Frank Gibson Junior (2011), Lyn Christie Junior (2011), Mark Laurent (2008) communications with Aleisha Ward; Tony Ashby (via letter 2008), Doug Caldwell (2010) Calder Prescott (2010), David Hall (via email 2008), Johnny Williams (2003) interviewed by Aleisha Ward



The Artie Shaw and the Claude Thornhill tours were special events for the American and New Zealand armed forces, but because they performed in many civilian venues, and broadcast on New Zealand radio, they were accessible to New Zealand jazz musicians and fans in one form or another during the course of their tours. In the New Zealand jazz community the tour by the Artie Shaw Naval Band was considered the most important jazz tour of the first half of the twentieth century. This tour made an emphatic impact on the jazz community in 1943, inspiring musicians and fans across the country. The reactions of fans and musicians were powerful.

Fans of Shaw went to extremes to hear the band, and were, as Dave Commin said, "in seventh heaven." This was a chance that many (quite correctly) thought would only happen once, and fans were determined to hear the Shaw band no matter the cost. For musicians hearing the band the performances impressed them and possibly intimidated them. Fans and musicians were particularly impressed by the performance practices of the band, and by the style and precision of the performance. To quote *Australian Music Maker* columnist Bert Peterson once more: "all hands tore home to put in a few hours practice on the strength of it. Long-forgotten tutors, textbooks, and studies were rescued from the attic and thumbed anew."<sup>282</sup>

The tour by the Claude Thornhill Show was considerably smaller and less publicised than the Shaw tour. Unfortunately, because the tour occurred in July 1945, it appears to have gotten somewhat lost in the chaos of the end of the war. That being said the Claude Thornhill band still made a positive impression on New Zealand audiences'. Jazz fans were impressed by both the individual and ensemble skills of the band, and by the innovative arrangements.

Section 6.5 focused on the activities of AES Auckland, and how that influenced New Zealand jazz fans and musicians. Although AES Auckland's broadcast material was similar to New Zealand operated stations, the main difference for jazz fans was that AES Auckland utilised more jazz, and broadcast it throughout the day. This made AES Auckland *the* station to listen to if you were a jazz fan. The access that AES Auckland had to recordings that were not readily available to New Zealand stations made it an invaluable station to listen to for both fans and musicians to hear new or different jazz records, and influenced listeners' tastes in jazz.

The musical activities of the Americans in New Zealand during World War Two influenced the shape of the New Zealand jazz scene in the post-war years. Their influences, through repertoire, performance practices, and broadcastings styles would affect how New Zealanders perceived, and

---

<sup>282</sup> Bert Peterson 'Artie Shaw Makes History at Auckland!' AMM September 1943; Artie Shaw File DHJA.

responded to jazz in the post-war decade. The after effects of the American residency will be further examined and developed in the following chapter.

By the end of 1943 the number of American troops residing in New Zealand began to reduce as the Pacific war moved north toward Japan. Over the next eight months the majority of the active troops finished their recuperation leave and training and embarked for various battles around the Pacific, and the camps and military bases began to be dismantled.<sup>283</sup>

In August 1944 the last group of active servicemen departed from New Zealand shores leaving only administration, medical units, sick and wounded personnel behind. On October 26 1944 the American flags were lowered at the remaining bases and the invasion had officially ended. Over the next eighteen months the American presence in New Zealand gradually and quietly reduced, with the last Americans leaving in early 1946.<sup>284</sup>

This concludes Part Three of this thesis. In Part Four I investigate New Zealand post-war world and the transitions and developments that occurred on the jazz scene during the post-war decade. Chapter Seven will examine the after-effects of the American troops' residency, and the changing position of jazz in New Zealand society.

---

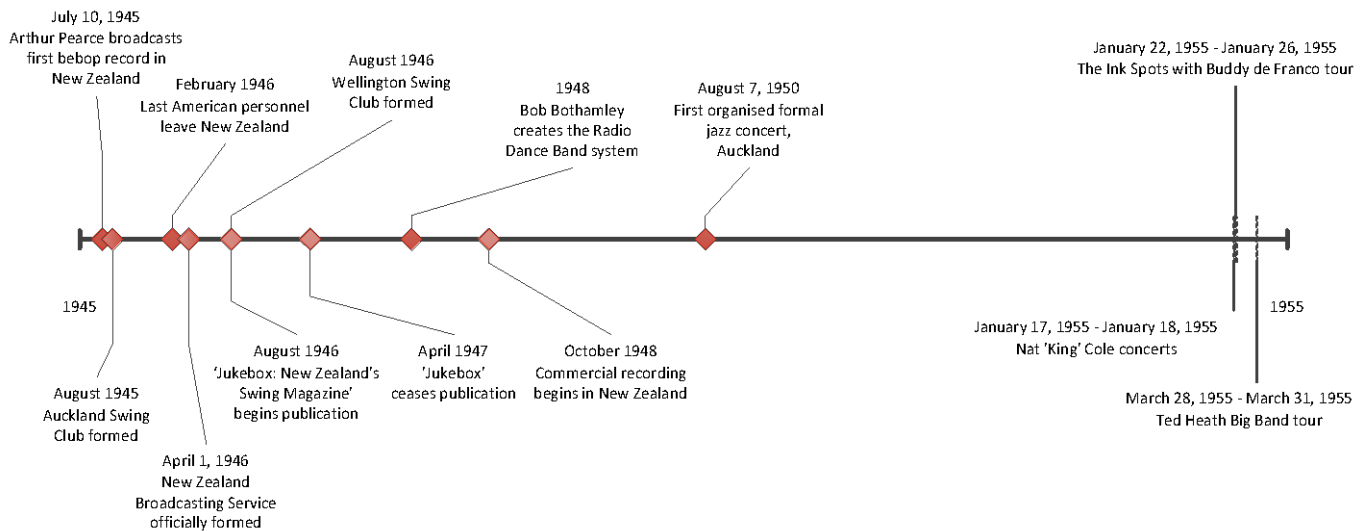
<sup>283</sup> Bioletti, 159-163, 174-175.

<sup>284</sup> Bevan 377-378.



## **Part Four: The Post-War Decade**

---



## 7 The Post-war Decade: Developments and Transitions

### 7.1 Introduction

The departure of the American troops and the return of New Zealand troops from overseas postings affected New Zealand culture and society in many different ways. The New Zealand government had begun to assert a certain level of independence from Great Britain during the war with the signing of the Canberra Pact in 1944. The transition towards independence was continued in the post-war decade with the ratification and adoption of the United Kingdom's *1931 Statute of Westminster* by the *Statute of Westminster Adoption Act 1947*, which granted legislative independence from Great Britain. In 1951 this transition was furthered with New Zealand's signing of the Australia, New Zealand, United States [ANZUS] security treaty, which formalised military and security ties between the three countries.<sup>1</sup>

Culturally, the transition towards political independence occurred less obviously. *God Save the King* rather than *God Defend New Zealand* continued to be played at theatres, schools, and at official occasions but at the same time prominent young composer Douglas Lilburn spoke and wrote about the search (and the need) for a New Zealand composing tradition.<sup>2</sup> This choice between clinging to British culture, and moving towards New Zealand-ness coloured many aspects of New Zealand culture in the post-war decade.

Jazz and other popular music also experienced transitions in the post-war decade however, as with art and folk music, it was a less explicit move away from British, American, or Australian

<sup>1</sup> James Belich, *Paradise Reforged: A History of the New Zealanders from the 1880s to the Year 2000*, Penguin: Auckland, 2001, 318-319.

<sup>2</sup> Belich, 320-321; Douglas Lilburn, *A Search for Tradition*, Alexander Turnbull Endowment Trust: Wellington, 1984.

musical influences. All three cultures, but particularly Britain and the United States, continued to strongly influence jazz in New Zealand throughout the post-war decade. However, these continuing influences did not preclude a move towards a New Zealand style of performing or composition.

In the realm of jazz and popular entertainment, dance music tastes changed from the wild jitterbugging of the war years to what dancers term 'strict tempo music'. This style of music arose from the standardisation of competitive ballroom by the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing in the 1930s, but became popular with the New Zealand public post-war. Although the term 'strict tempo' has connotations towards a specific set of tempos and regular rhythm, it also refers to the style of arrangement including the introductions which musically indicate what type of dance the song was going to be and the use of certain devices within phrases to give dancers musical cues for the next sequence of steps.<sup>3</sup> Especially popular with New Zealand dancers were bands in the style of the British Victor Silvester Orchestra.<sup>4</sup> Popular music tastes changed as well, with a rise of American rhythm and blues, and eventually rock and roll.<sup>5</sup>

Within jazz there were also new musical styles and amalgamations occurring. The arrival of bebop onto the New Zealand scene was the first major new jazz style since swing had arrived in New Zealand a decade before. Latin popular and dance music, Latinised jazz and Cubop (Cuban bebop—essentially a Latin style bass with bebop melody and improvisation), arrived in New Zealand just after bebop, as did the revival of the Dixieland style.<sup>6</sup> These musical developments, with the changes in popular music taste, played an important role in the transition of jazz away from a strictly youth and dancing music into a music style that was considered more cerebral: more for listening, and less for dancing.<sup>7</sup>

With the change of dance and popular music tastes, and the transition of jazz to a listening (rather than dancing) activity, the venues for jazz changed as well. No longer was the cabaret and

---

<sup>3</sup> Communication with dance teacher John Young QSM (2011).

<sup>4</sup> British dancer and bandleader Victor Silvester is considered to be one of the pioneers of this style of music, which conformed to the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing recommendations for dances. "Silvester, Victor Marlborough (1900–1978)," Derek B. Scott in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, January 2011, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.auckland.ac.nz/view/article/31685> (accessed March 23, 2012).

<sup>5</sup> Doug Caldwell (2010) interview with Aleisha Ward; Georgina White, *Light Fantastic: Dance Floor Courtship in New Zealand*, Harper Collins: Auckland, 2007 133, 164-166; 'Dancing' [advertisements] EP 16/5/1942, 2.

<sup>6</sup> Chris Bourke, *Blue Smoke: The Lost Dawn of New Zealand Popular Music 1918–1964*, Auckland University Press: Auckland, 2010, 204-208, 212-213.

<sup>7</sup> 'Organisation of Swing Lovers,' *New Zealand Free Lance* 11/9/1946, 40.

the ballroom the centre of jazz scene in New Zealand.<sup>8</sup> Although dance venues remained a significant employment venue for jazz musicians throughout the post-war decade, the music that they routinely performed was no longer dominated by jazz-influenced styles, such as swing.<sup>9</sup> Because of this change in dance music tastes, I will not be discussing the dance scene in relation to jazz in this chapter. The jazz musicians who performed in ballrooms and cabarets, such as Doug Caldwell, Calder Prescott, and John Williams, have routinely stated to myself and other researchers that the music that they performed there was not jazz. The jazz scene instead began to move into the coffee lounges, restaurants, and small nightclubs, all without dance floors. There, musicians would play to audiences who wanted to listen rather than dance.

This chapter investigates some aspects of these transitions and developments on the New Zealand jazz scene. In particular I will focus on how the new musical development of bebop fit into the existing jazz scene, how and where musicians found, or were given, opportunities to perform it, and how that in turn affected the contexts and venues of jazz in New Zealand in the post-war decade. I will equally focus on how the change in dance music tastes affected and assisted the transition of jazz away from the ballroom and into the concert chamber. I will also examine how these transitions were played out in the various fan activities, through changes in the structure of broadcasting, and the creation of the commercial recording industry, and through international tours and the rise in formal jazz concerts. Through these activities I will examine some of the causes behind these changes and, particularly involving fan activities, the motivations for these changes

## **7.2 *After effects of the American Residency***

The departure of the American troops began in 1944, but continued through into 1946.<sup>10</sup> I have chosen to detail the withdrawal here as the departure affected jazz in New Zealand as much as the residence did. The departure also played a role in the effects of the American residency on jazz in New Zealand during the post war decade. The part of the section details the departure of the American troops and the immediate effects that had on the New Zealand jazz scene, while the second part delves into the long-range effects of the residency on jazz in New Zealand.

### **Americans Farewell**

The departure of the American troops in 1944–1945 changed the configuration of the live music scene in Auckland and Wellington. The cabarets went from being filled to overflowing with

---

<sup>8</sup> Bourke, 177; Duncan Stuart, 'Bless My Soul, it's...Rock and Roll' *Metro*, March 1986, 98.

<sup>9</sup> White, 132-152.

<sup>10</sup> Denys Bevan, *United States Forces in New Zealand 1942–1945*, Alexandra: Macpherson, 1992, 377-378.

American troops and their local girlfriends three or four (or more) nights a week to being half empty.<sup>11</sup> Where they had been able to have public evenings most nights of the week of the previous two years, cabarets now found that they had to reduce to only one or two public evenings as the patronage reduced dramatically. Although the Americans did not all leave at once, the majority had left by the end of 1944, and while some New Zealand men had returned from the fronts in Europe, North Africa and the Middle East, many of them remained in service at the various battle fronts.<sup>12</sup>

The departure of the Americans had another effect on the live music scene: the removal of the official and unofficial forces bands. The removal of these bands did not affect the venues very much (although they were known to bring in large crowds), but it did affect New Zealand musicians who performed with them, and those that studied their performances. This departure was felt keenly among the jazz fraternity in particular who found that there was still a great deal that they could learn from the American bands.<sup>13</sup>

Another consequence of the Americans' departure on the New Zealand music industry was the closure of American Expeditionary Station [AES] Auckland. During its nearly eight months on air, it had become a great favourite of musicians and music fans of all genres across New Zealand. AES Auckland reverted to New Zealand broadcasting control on December 17 1944 disappointing a wide fan base who had hoped that they would operate for a longer period.<sup>14</sup> After the closure of AES Auckland fans wrote into the *New Zealand Listener* hoping that the New Zealand Broadcasting Service would take note of the Americans' broadcasting style and programming and integrate some of those aspects into New Zealand broadcasting. This request from fans was found repeatedly in the letters to the editor column in the *Listener* throughout the year following the closure of AES Auckland.<sup>15</sup> It appears, however, that the NZBS disagreed with the fans' assessment and made no changes to broadcasting policy in the period immediately following the closure of AES Auckland.

---

<sup>11</sup> Alison Parr, *Home: Civilian New Zealanders Remember the Second World War*, Penguin: Auckland 2010, 229; Nancy Taylor, *The Home Front Vol. 1*, Wellington: Department of Internal Affairs, Historical Publications Branch, 1986, 661.

<sup>12</sup> Laurie Barber, *War Memorial: A Chronology of New Zealand and World War Two*, Heinemann Reed: Auckland, 1989, 196-197; Denys Bevan, *United States Forces in New Zealand*, 373-375, 377-378.

<sup>13</sup> Dale Alderton (2002), Johnny Williams (2003) interviewed by Aleisha Ward; E.J. Wansbone 'Jim Foley: Pianist,' *Jukebox: New Zealand's Swing Magazine*, November 1946, 2-3.

<sup>14</sup> Larry Dysart Oral History, letters to the editor 1ZM File, DHJA.

<sup>15</sup> *New Zealand Listener* Letters to the Editor 19/1/1945, 7; *Radio Viewstreet: What our Commentators Say* 22/12/1945 8-9.



### Long term effects of the Americans' residency on jazz

The Americans' residence in New Zealand between 1942 and 1945 had many lasting effects on the New Zealand culture as a whole. On the jazz scene, musicians began to incorporate standard repertoire, the 'jam tunes' that were mentioned by pianist Jim Foley, learned from the American bands. They also began to integrate some of the bands' practices, such as paying attention to a soloist if they were not required to play, and to include some of the performance practices of these bands such as bandstand choreography and showmanship (as defined in Chapter 1).<sup>16</sup>

Musicians from the post-war period believe that jazz in New Zealand became quite 'Americanised' as a result of the contact that occurred during World War Two.<sup>17</sup> Musicians who became active in the 1950s also believed that in comparison to Australian jazz, New Zealand jazz was much more Americanised.<sup>18</sup> In particular the musicians from the post-war period mention that the *sound and timbre* of New Zealand jazz became more American. As noted in the previous chapters (particularly Chapter's Three and Five) regarding American bands, the brass section had a "big, shimmery" quality to it. This was a contrast to the New Zealand brass sound (mentioned in Chapter Three) that had developed through the institution of brass bands. Many of the brass players in New Zealand jazz bands were awestruck by the timbre of the American brass players and actively worked on achieving that same quality of sound.<sup>19</sup>

Although New Zealand reed instrumentalists did not have a particular sound 'school' as local brass players did, the saxophone fraternity were generally enamoured of the American saxophone timbre. After the Artie Shaw band had toured, saxophonist Ken Avery recalled that all the saxophonists he knew tried to emulate the sound of Shaw's first tenor man Sam Donahue. However, apparently few New Zealand clarinetists attempted to sound like Shaw or any of the other American clarinetists. Avery, who also played clarinet, chose not to emulate Shaw because he had a distinctive style, and Avery wanted to develop his own style. I do not know whether this was the case for other clarinetists, but it seems a plausible explanation.<sup>20</sup>

Vocalists also learned from the American bands, despite there being few vocalists with those bands. The American bands primarily influenced New Zealand vocalists' showmanship.

<sup>16</sup> E.J. Wansburne 'Jim Foley – Pianist', *Jukebox* November 1946, 3.

<sup>17</sup> Jim Warren (2009), Dale Alderton (2002) interviewed by Aleisha Ward; Bernie Allen, private communication to Aleisha Ward, 2002.

<sup>18</sup> Bernie Allen communication, Aleisha Ward (2008); Calder Prescott (2010), Dale Alderton (2002) interviewed by Aleisha Ward.

<sup>19</sup> Jim Warren (2009), Doug Caldwell (2010) interviewed by Aleisha Ward; Bourke, 126,128-130, 132-133.

<sup>20</sup> Avery, 22.

Singers like Pat McMinn and Esme Stephens, who both worked with American bands (in Stephens' case with the Artie Shaw band), discovered that the Americans expected more from them in terms of showmanship. McMinn, especially, recalled being told by a bandleader to "get that bedroom look in your eye" on a particular song. As an innocent seventeen year old, she thought that it was a lot to ask of her; however, it did teach her about 'selling the song' to the audience.<sup>21</sup>

The general technical quality of sound was another factor that New Zealand musicians admired, and attempted to emulate. The crisp sectional playing, and balance between sections was much admired, as was the projection the American bands could produce, without compromising the quality of their sound. After hearing the Artie Shaw band *Australian Music Maker* Auckland columnist Bert Peterson noted that he and, likely every other musician in the audience, went home, pulled out the technique books and "put in a few hours practice on the strength of [the performance]."<sup>22</sup>

These aspects of jazz performance clearly stood out in the post-war decade as being connected to the residence of the American troops. They were aspects that, over half a century later, musicians could recall in interviews with many different people, including myself. While they were probably not the only aspects of jazz that showed the effects of the American residency, these ones in particular clearly had an impact on how New Zealand jazz sounded in the mid-twentieth century.

### **7.3 Introduction of Bebop to New Zealand**

'Bebop', or, as it was sometimes called in the mid-1940s, 'Re-bop', was a style born out of experiments by a group of young jazz musicians, including Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker, in New York City in the late 1930s and early 1940s. These young musicians would gather at after hours clubs to jam and experiment with ideas that they were unable to work on in their gigs. The terms re-bop or bebop were the onomatopoeic words that musicians involved in these experiments used to describe the way they regularly ended improvised phrases.<sup>23</sup>

The style itself was something of a revolt against rigidity of commercial swing. It was radically different from both swing and the older Dixieland style, and featured harmonic, melodic and rhythmic complexities that swing and Dixieland, as primarily dancing music, could not

---

<sup>21</sup> Bourke, 132-133.

<sup>22</sup> AMM 'Artie Shaw Makes History at Auckland!' September 1943; Artie Shaw File DHJA.

<sup>23</sup> Porter, 174-176; André Hodeir. 'Bop.' In *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy.auckland.ac.nz/subscriber/article/grove/music/03559> (accessed March 3, 2012).

incorporate. Bebop also had a much wider range of tempos than swing did because it was not tied to the activity of dancing.<sup>24</sup>

Bebop first appeared in New Zealand in the latter stages of the war. It is likely that bebop made its first appearance in New Zealand on 2YAs *Rhythm on Record*, possibly in early 1945. Unfortunately, it is not noted who the recordings were by, or what songs were broadcast. However, compère Arthur Pearce ('Turntable') recalled being delighted that soon after he introduced the bop recordings into his programme his listeners began to argue the merits (or lack) of this new style of jazz, and how it related to swing and Dixieland.<sup>25</sup> Pearce himself did not particularly care for bop, once saying that: "bop is complex melodically, and sometimes rhythmically. It's intellectually brilliant, but you can't dance to it."<sup>26</sup> He was determined to provide this musical information for his listeners so that they could form their own opinions, without pressing his own opinions of the music on his audience.<sup>27</sup>

Certainly the fans did form opinions. Although little was printed in the press from the fans and listeners in 1945, the merits of bebop became a powerful debate among readers of *Jukebox*, *New Zealand's Swing Magazine* in late 1946 and early 1947. One avowed small group jazz fan (but not a "Dixieland diehard") described bop as a "banality" and "superficial," bearing little or no relation to other forms of small group jazz. The writer further believed that bop would have little future, especially in comparison to Dixieland.<sup>28</sup>

In reply to this letter, a modern jazz fan wrote that he could scarcely believe that the Dixieland fan was serious in his criticism of bop. The writer then berated the bop critic for his conservative attitude and used the rest of the letter to "enlighten him if that is possible, and show him just where he has gone astray."<sup>29</sup> Soon there was dialogue between the two original writers, and other fans began to chime in for or against bop. Fans continued this heated debate about bebop until the magazine ceased publication suddenly in mid-1947.<sup>30</sup>

These debates in letters to the editor were, in one sense, a continuation of the same debate that was taking place in every country to which bop had disseminated. Bebop was also discussed in

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, also Scott Devaux, *The Birth of Bebop: A Social and Musical History*, University of California Press: Los Angeles, 1997, 369, 438-439.

<sup>25</sup> Laurie Lewis, *Arthur and the Nights at the Turntable: The Life and Times of a Jazz Broadcaster*, Excaliber: London 1997, 150, 153-155.

<sup>26</sup> 'Tolerant Enthusiast' NZL 3/3/1950, 24.

<sup>27</sup> Lewis, 150.

<sup>28</sup> 'Concerning "Be-bop"' *Jukebox*, December 1946, 18, March 1947, 14.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid 'Pro-Re-Bop' January/February 1947, 11-12, 'Concerning Be-bop' March 1947, 14-15.

<sup>30</sup> 'Jukebox Junked,' *Swing Session* June 1947.

the meetings of swing clubs around New Zealand throughout 1946 and 1947. There were a number of small lectures (or talks in local 1940s parlance) by club members on the origins of bop and aspects of its style. Fan publications also published explanatory articles, and question and answer style articles to help fans grasp what bebop was and how it fitted into the jazz style.<sup>31</sup>

By discussing and debating the origins and style aspects of bop, fans were uncovering reasons about why bop should be included or excluded from jazz. These discussions occurred in many different countries among jazz fans who focused on whether bop was actually a jazz style, and if it was whether it was a progressive development or whether it was tangential to jazz. In New Zealand the discussions about bop in the swing clubs and in the press continued the formation of a local jazz culture that began in the 1930s (see Chapter Three and Four).

Music trade magazines, such as *Australian Music Maker and Dance Band News* and *Tempo*, began to discuss bebop from circa 1946. In the August 1946 issue of *Music Maker* the editorial was devoted to describing this new style of jazz. The editorial, by guest editor Wally Norman, was a result of Norman having recently heard some of Dizzy Gillespie's bop recordings.<sup>32</sup> According to historian John Whiteoak, when this editorial was published, bebop had yet to be heard on Australian radio. This is in contrast to New Zealand's early bop broadcasts (early 1945) as described above.<sup>33</sup> This is not to say that there were no musicians accessing bop records and experimenting with this new style, but rather that bop had not yet hit the collective consciousness of the Australian jazz scene, and wider public.

Bop marks the first jazz style to be imported into New Zealand without significant support and influence from Australian musicians. As discussed in Chapters Three and Four, in both the Dixieland and swing crazes, the Australian musicians (such as Linn Smith and Theo Walters) who toured New Zealand during the early stages of those phenomena significantly influenced New Zealand musicians' ideas, and stylistic practices. Whether the lack of influence from Australian musicians affected the stylistic practices of bebop in New Zealand is unknown. However it seems plausible that bop, as performed in New Zealand, emerged differently than it might otherwise have done with the influence of Australian musicians.

---

<sup>31</sup> 'Auckland Swing Club News,' *Jukebox*, November 1946, 15; 'Bebop,' *Swing Session* May 1947 1-2, 4; 'Bebop' *Swing Session* October 1947, 1-2.

<sup>32</sup> AMM August 1946, 1.

<sup>33</sup> John Whiteoak, *Playing Ad Lib: Improvisatory Music in Australia 1836–1970*, Currency: Sydney, 1999, 249-250.

The interactions between New Zealand musicians and bebop are difficult to trace. Only a small amount of information is known about how jazz musicians from this era encountered and learned about bebop. Because of the effects of the war, and the American Federation of Musicians recording ban, bebop was not recorded until late 1944 and appeared in New Zealand (on records) essentially fully formed.<sup>34</sup> While *Rhythm on Record* broadcast recordings of bop, it is unknown if any of the other New Zealand radio jazz sessions did in 1945 or 1946.<sup>35</sup> There were no tours by bop artists until the later 1950s, so the sources for interaction in the mid and late 1940s would have been primarily through American recordings, broadcasts, and music trade press.

In some ways the emergence of bebop returned New Zealand musicians to a similar state as nearly thirty years previously when jazz first arrived in New Zealand. Comparatively speaking, there was only a small amount of information from which to form ideas about this style. In 1945–1947 there were few bop recordings that were readily available in New Zealand (due to the monopoly by HMV NZ— see Chapter Two), and only a little had been written about bop in the musical or general press outside of New Zealand. However, musicians who were interested, such as multi-instrumentalist Julian Lee, began experimenting in earnest soon after the first appearances of bop in New Zealand.<sup>36</sup>

Musicians' reactions to bop were only rarely recorded in any of the fan or music trade magazines from this period. Like jazz musicians in other countries, some dismissed it outright (some were unsure whether it was actually jazz or not), some found it exciting.<sup>37</sup> In later interviews and oral histories many appear to have been generally positive about the new style, and believed that the majority of the scene was too. New Zealand musicians described being intrigued by this new style of jazz, and were interested in attempting it.<sup>38</sup> Their initial impressions of bop were that the style needed "terrific phrasing," and was "only for very hep [knowledgeable] musicians."<sup>39</sup>

---

<sup>34</sup> For a discussion on the AFM recording ban see Russell Sanjek, *American Popular Music and its Business: The First Four Hundred Years Volume III, From 1900 to 1984*, Oxford University Press: New York, 1988, 217-221.

<sup>35</sup> Lewis, 150, 153-155.

<sup>36</sup> Bourke, 185, 212-213.

<sup>37</sup> 'Rosoman Reminisces' *Jukebox*, April 1947, 3; Whiteoak, 250; Doug Caldwell, Calder Prescott interviewed by Aleisha Ward 2010.

<sup>38</sup> Dale Alderton (2002), Johnny Williams (2003), Doug Caldwell (2010), Calder Prescott (2010) interviewed by Aleisha Ward.

<sup>39</sup> 'Rosoman Reminisces', *Jukebox* April 1947, 3. The term 'hep' was American slang for a fashionable or knowledgeable person *Oxford English Dictionary*

While New Zealand musicians were curious about bebop, there was little room in the average dance gig to attempt anything more than a few small phrases here and there.<sup>40</sup> The style, they soon discovered, simply was not suited to dancing. While swing could include a certain amount of improvisation without losing the integrity of the dance, bop, with its combination of extended solos, fast tempos, and abrupt endings was the antithesis of the coherence needed by dancers. It was at the formal (organised by swing clubs or individuals with an invited audience) and informal jam sessions that musicians began to experiment with bebop, and where the local style was shaped. Because of this 'behind the scenes' experimentation, and dance gigs being the main employment for jazz musicians, it would not be until the 1950s that musicians would be able to play bop regularly on gigs.

Because of the continued prevalence of dances as the primary gig for jazz musicians in New Zealand, bebop went mostly unnoticed by the general public. Unlike its predecessors of Dixieland and swing, bop, as I have mentioned, was not a dancing music. Nor was bop a phenomenon in the way that either Dixieland or swing were. Both Dixieland and swing were phenomena in part *because* they were associated with dancing, but also because there were international trigger events (the end of World War One for Dixieland, and Benny Goodman's Palomar Ballroom gig for swing), which catapulted them into the public consciousness. Because of the way bop developed it did not receive the same amount of popular media attention in New Zealand that would have bought it to the attention of the public.

It was not until the beginning of the formal jazz concerts in 1950 (which will be discussed in section 7.6) that bebop received any significant amount of attention from the general public and local press. These concerts were the first significant performance of bop to the general public in New Zealand. Both the press and the public reactions initially appear to have an aura of bemusement over this style, especially the dress and mannerisms of the performers (who tended towards the American 'hipster' style of dress complete with berets and horn rimmed glasses). However, by 1952 bebop, was considered just another part of jazz by the press.<sup>41</sup>

The changing attitude toward bebop in the New Zealand press, and by the public, appears to have occurred because jazz concerts were frequent events over the first years of the 1950s (every two or three months). The frequent exposure to both the music, and the associated mannerisms normalised bop for audiences and the press. The acceptance of bop was possibly also helped by the

---

<sup>40</sup> Bourke, 212.

<sup>41</sup> See for example: 'Jazz Storms the Town Hall' EP 11/11/1952, 8.

fact that most of the audience only heard it in a concert chamber, thus subconsciously applying the connotations of art and 'quality' music to it.

The advent of live music venues *without* dance floors in the mid and late 1940s, such as Hi Diddle Griddle restaurant and nightclub in Auckland, also helped foster the small group jazz scene (in the 1940s still primarily swing based jazz), and provide a new economy for jazz musicians. Such venues were often inspired by American nightclubs, or rather the New Zealand interpretation of American nightclubs, with lush dark decor, small stage, and, importantly, no dance floor.<sup>42</sup> These types of venues were particularly important to the performance of bop and the revival of Dixieland in New Zealand, and other small group (non–dance) jazz because the expectations of the audience were different from those in the cabarets. At restaurant, nightclub, and coffee lounge type venues the audience was there to eat, drink, and listen to the band playing.<sup>43</sup>

Bebop appears to have been less divisive among fans and musicians in 1940s New Zealand than in other countries, such as Britain. Although there was a certain amount of sniping among fans, as evidenced by the letters to the editor in *Jukebox*, there appears to have been less divisiveness between musicians. Perhaps this was due to a smaller jazz scene, a closer jazz fraternity, or perhaps it was simply that musicians could not earn money playing bop in New Zealand until the 1950s. Whatever the reason, the in–fighting that was prevalent on the American, Australian and British jazz scenes between the 'mouldy figs' (traditional jazz) and the 'hep cats' (beboppers), and to a lesser extent between the commercial swing musicians, and boppers does not appear to have occurred in New Zealand.<sup>44</sup>

## 7.4 Fan Activities

In the years following World War Two there was a resurgence of fan activities on the jazz scene. Primarily based in the fan clubs, fans congregated to listen, dance, and perform jazz in all of its incarnations. Fans also gathered to promote jazz in the wider community as more than just music to dance to: as music worthy of consideration as an art form. This section examines two aspects of fan activities in New Zealand in the post–war years: jazz and swing clubs and fan publications.

<sup>42</sup> Stuart, 'Bless my soul, it's...rock and roll' *Metro*, March 1986, 98.

<sup>43</sup> Bourke, 177.

<sup>44</sup> Whiteoak, 250; Bruce Johnson *Oxford Companion to Australian Jazz*, 36–40; Lewis Porter, *Jazz: A Century of Change—Readings and New Essays*, 173–174; George McKay, *Circular Breathing: The Cultural Politics of Jazz in Britain*, Duke University Press: London, 2005, 98–99. The term 'hep cat' was 1940s American slang for a jazz addict or hipster. *Oxford English Dictionary*.

## Jazz and Swing Clubs

After the end of World War Two jazz clubs for listening, now termed Swing Clubs, began to re-emerge in all of the main centres of New Zealand. The Swing Clubs bore a marked resemblance to the Rhythm Clubs of the late 1930s, in terms of membership demographics, format and structure. The main difference appears to have been more of an inclusion of invited bands, jam sessions, both informal and formal, and more promotion and advocacy of local jazz. The primary aim of these clubs was "the furtherance and appreciation of swing music" in New Zealand society.<sup>45</sup>

The demographics of the post-war clubs were a mixture of musicians and serious jazz fans, from all backgrounds, and all ages from teenagers to men and women in their fifties and older. The only quality needed was a passion for listening to, and learning about jazz.<sup>46</sup> While there were usually more men than women involved, women were welcomed, and a number served on the organising committees. Some, like Auckland pianist Vora Kissin were instrumental in the formation of the post-war clubs.<sup>47</sup>

By the end of 1946 all of the main cities had at least one swing club (Auckland had three), and so did many of the smaller towns.<sup>48</sup> Nor were the membership lists small. The Auckland Swing Club (the biggest of the three swing/jazz clubs in Auckland), which had been established in August 1945 (as detailed in the timeline at the start of this chapter), had a membership of five hundred and fifty people by June 1946. Wellington Swing Club, which was established in August 1946 had, by the publication of the October 1946 issue of *Jukebox* magazine, a membership of one hundred and thirteen people.<sup>49</sup> That there were large numbers joining the various jazz clubs indicates how interested people were in swing, and other forms of jazz. It also indicates the existence of fans that wanted to listen to swing, and critique it, as well as (or more than) dancing to it.

Unfortunately there are no statistics available on the pre-war jazz clubs so I am unable to compare whether the popularity had increased or decreased between pre- and post-war clubs. However, it is possible that the popularity of the swing clubs was due in part to the general popularity of commercial swing music. Another part of the popularity may have been the change of dance music in the cabarets away from swing music to (as termed by the Regent Ballroom—formerly a swing venue during the war), "correct ballroom dancing."<sup>50</sup>

---

<sup>45</sup> Judy Kissin, 'Who Said Swing is Dying?' NZWW13/6/1946, 41.

<sup>46</sup> *ibid.*, 8, 41.

<sup>47</sup> 'Origin of the Auckland Swing Club', *Jukebox* Nov. 1946, 11, back cover.

<sup>48</sup> 'Editorial' *Jukebox* October 1946, 1.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> 'Regent Ballroom [advertisement], EP 18/12/1945, 3.



The club evenings were chances for members to explain and share with their fellow fans different aspects of jazz that they were particularly attracted to, which, incidentally continued the jazz culture activities from before the war. The format and structure of club meetings and events varied somewhat from club to club, but they all included some commonalities. There were presentations by members of recordings, with analyses of the composition and/or the solos, short talks on a jazz related topic, and, of course, the live performance of jazz by local musicians.<sup>51</sup>

The advocacy of jazz via the swing clubs took several forms. Firstly, local and visiting musicians/bands were regularly invited to perform at the meetings, both formally and informally, separate from the jam sessions. Invitations to perform were regularly given to the young up-and-coming musicians, as much, or more than established musicians.<sup>52</sup>

Another form of advocacy was jam sessions, both as a regular part of club meetings and outside of the club. The jam sessions in the club meetings were a common way to end the meeting with any musician members, as well as invited guests, taking the stage.<sup>53</sup> Jam sessions were also organised by individuals outside of club meetings. These types of jam sessions were usually hosted by a club member in their home or occasionally in a public setting, and they were entire evenings devoted to the interaction between musicians and fans.<sup>54</sup> Both types of jam sessions can be viewed as forms of advocacy as promoted awareness among fans about the heretofore-private rituals of musicians. Participation by younger musicians advocated their skills and potential to older musicians, and bandleaders, and also to the fans.

In addition to the jam session, clubs hosted activities that were open to the general public, such as record recitals and dances, to promote jazz in general, and local jazz in particular. Clubs, and the fan publication *Jukebox* also ran local popularity polls, in the style of the polls run by American jazz magazine *Downbeat*, with the club polls open to the general public rather than just club members.<sup>55</sup>

These and other activities helped place Swing Clubs as advocates of not just swing but all styles of jazz in the New Zealand jazz community. The clubs promoted and supported established and up and coming jazz musicians through their activities. They also provided a forum for fan-fan, and fan-musician, and even musician-musician interaction, and for debates about all aspects of jazz

---

<sup>51</sup> 'Auckland Swing Club News' *Jukebox* October 1946, 6; 'Windy City Wanderings' December 1946, 4.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> 'All Night "Hot Jam" Session' *Swing!* July 1942, 1-2.

<sup>55</sup> Jazz Club Files DHJA, 'Windy City Wanderings' *Jukebox*, April 1947, 10.

for both fans and musicians, often across the fan–musician divide. The following section continues the theme of fan and musician interaction by investigating publications created by jazz fans.

### Fan Publications

During World War Two, swing fans in Wellington had attempted to produce what was New Zealand's first jazz periodical. Entitled *Swing!*, the publication was entirely organised and produced by fans. As such, the quality of the production was enthusiastic, but amateur, but as the editor stated on several occasions the publication was never meant to be a commercial (*i.e.* profit–making) venture.<sup>56</sup> The majority of the contents were record reviews of American (and occasionally English) bands, but there were also reports on jam sessions, and articles on topics such as how to start collecting jazz records.<sup>57</sup> Unfortunately for swing fans, its publication run was barely a year, lasting from September 1941 to August 1942. The shortness of its run was directly related to effects of the war: printing and distribution became difficult, and contributors were lost when they were called up for military service.<sup>58</sup>

Despite its short publication run the popularity of *Swing!* gave some indication that there was an audience for a locally produced swing magazine. It was the example of *Swing!* that gave fans in Auckland the impetus to publish what would be New Zealand's second jazz publication, *Jukebox: New Zealand's Swing Magazine*, in 1946 (noted in the timeline at the beginning of this chapter).

*Jukebox* was similar to *Swing!* in that while it was not a profit–making venture it was a magazine that was sold in newsagents and music stores. Where *Jukebox* differed from *Swing!* in terms of production was that it was a far more professionally produced magazine than *Swing!* had been. In the first issue in August 1946 the editor, Ernest J. Wansbone, stated that the publication staff had two main aims for the magazine. The first aim was to promote and critique local jazz talent, with the intent that any criticism of local musicians would be both constructive and fair, and based on the highest musical standards, rather than personal stylistic preferences. The second aim was to embrace all styles of jazz "from the new Woody Herman Band to Eddie Condon Dixieland Groups."<sup>59</sup>

The publication staff held by these aims throughout the publication run of *Jukebox*, with the majority of its content being reports of local jazz activities, across all different styles of jazz. The

---

<sup>56</sup> *Swing!*, for example: Editorials September 1941 (vol. 1 no. 1), June 1942 (vol. 1, no. 10)

<sup>57</sup> See, for example *Swing!*, vol. 1, no. 3.

<sup>58</sup> 'Editorial' *Swing!*, Vol. 1, no. 10 (June 1942), 1.

<sup>59</sup> 'Editorial' *Jukebox*, August 1946, 1.

local content mostly focused on jazz activities in Auckland, Wellington, and Christchurch, but occasionally mentioned other towns. Many items on local jazz activities were reviews of gigs, and the reviewing staff appeared to be scrupulously fair in their criticism. For example in a review of Ted Croad's band at the Orange Coronation Ballroom in Auckland, the reviewers praised the individual abilities of many of the musicians, but lamented the dearth of modern arrangements. This could be remedied, stated the reviewers, if: "the Croad Band adapted itself in accordance with the spirit of the younger local musicians, who undoubtedly have the ability and who know how to phrase dance music the correct way."<sup>60</sup>

In addition to the reviews, and the content about who was playing with which band, and which band was playing where, *Jukebox* also published profiles of prominent local musicians and jazz fans/advocates. These profiles ranged from light examinations on a person's jazz activities (musician or collector), to in-depth histories of their entire career. The profiles made observations on how musicians and fans came to be interested in jazz, which artists influenced their performing or collecting activities, and how they began participating in the local scene. In addition to the subject's activities, these profiles gave an insight into the relationships between musicians and fans and the networking that occurred on the New Zealand scene, and between New Zealanders and fans and musicians in other countries.<sup>61</sup>

*Jukebox* also had regular reports on the formation and activities of swing clubs around the country. These reports included detailed accounts of the club's last meeting, or jam session, but also of events that involved the general public, such as dances. The reports of these activities demonstrated the breadth of activities that the swing clubs were involved in, and how they supported the local jazz scene.<sup>62</sup>

The publication run of *Jukebox* suddenly ceased in April 1947. What happened exactly is unknown, but the editor of Wellington Swing Club's newsletter, *Swing Session*, stated in the October 1947 issue that a sudden drop in sales precipitated the cessation. The editor then proceeded to lay blame on the number of self-proclaimed swing fans who were "lethargic" in their support of the New Zealand swing community. Further the editor stated that a local swing magazine would

---

<sup>60</sup> 'Croad's Band Could Be Improved' *Jukebox* August 1946, 5.

<sup>61</sup> See for example, 'Len Chambers, Connoisseur' *Jukebox* December 1946, 2-3.

<sup>62</sup> See for example, 'Auckland Swing Club News' *Jukebox* September 1946, back cover; 'Windy City Wanderings' December 1946, 6, and 'An Introduction to the Little Nick's Swing Club' December 1946, 9.

never be successful until swing fans actively supported it. At the end of the editorial *Swing Session's* editor stated that true hot music enthusiasts "will be the poorer for its demise."<sup>63</sup>

Though vitriolic in tone, the editor of *Swing Session* made an important point about publications such as *Jukebox* requiring a high level of fan support to continue publishing. *Jukebox*, like *Swing!* before it, was never intended to be a profit-making venture. The small amount of advertising paid for the basic printing and distribution costs, but the staff were all volunteers who contributed their own money towards the publication of the magazine. Without fans consistently purchasing, or subscribing to *Jukebox*, it had no chance of success, and as was noted, the fans that did support it were not numerous enough to assist its continuation. Also noted was the fact that fans were the poorer for the loss as this was the only local music publication devoted to jazz, which helped connect jazz communities in different regions together.

It is a curious dichotomy in the jazz fandom in New Zealand during this period that there were large numbers of people 'involved' in the fan-clubs (or at least members of them), but they were unwilling to support an aspect of local jazz such as *Jukebox*. The editor of *Swing Session* believed that this was due to people joining clubs out of novelty rather than being true fans of the music. When that novelty wore off, so did their enthusiasm for swing and other forms of jazz. Alternatively these less-than-devoted fans of swing may have preferred the commercial form of jazz, which was looked down on by swing aficionados, which also may have lessened their enthusiasm for the swing clubs.<sup>64</sup> A further possibility is that some of these fans were devotees of American or British swing, and for what ever reason (perhaps a belief of 'not good enough' or 'not pure enough') dismissed the swing that was being performed in New Zealand.

*Swing Session's* editor noted that out of the 240 people that made up the membership list of the Wellington Swing Club, only about 80 of them were such mad-keen fans that they would attend all, or almost all, of the club meetings.<sup>65</sup> If this type of behaviour was indicative of the rest of the country's swing clubs (with less than half of the membership regularly attending), it is unsurprising that a local jazz publication would be unable to flourish.

While a sad indictment on the wider jazz fandom, the editorial in *Swing Session* regarding the demise of *Jukebox* was an accurate assessment on music periodical publication in New Zealand. New Zealand simply did not have a large enough, and dedicated enough audience of jazz fans to sustain a jazz periodical. This was not a jazz-specific issue either. As noted in Chapter One, even

---

<sup>63</sup> Ivan Fisher 'Bebop' *Swing Session* Oct 1947, 1, 4.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> *ibid.*

classically-oriented music periodicals found it impossible to survive for more than a few years during the period that I have research in this thesis.

I speculate that the reason behind these failures is due primarily to the lack of support of fans and aficionados of various music genres. The lack of support may have, in part, come from the lethargy that was noted by the editor of *Swing Session*: New Zealand fans were essentially lazy in appreciating local aspects of their fandom. Related to the lethargy surrounding local aspects is possibly the fact that there were a number of excellent international publications readily available for purchase in New Zealand, which discussed music across the occidental world. For jazz specifically there were the Australian publications *Music Maker*, *Tempo*, and the *Australian Jazz Quarterly* all of which featured columns devoted to New Zealand jazz. There were also American (*Downbeat*) and British (*Melody Maker* and *Gramophone*) publications that were regularly imported to New Zealand. The choice between international, professional publications and local, less professional ones may have persuaded fans to adhere to the larger international publications because their visual presentation gave an aura of authority on the subject.

Fan activities were vital to the survival of a jazz scene in New Zealand. Through clubs, publications, and individuals' activities, fans supported and promoted the existing scene, actively trying to boost public awareness of jazz. By increasing awareness of jazz fans hoped to convince the general public that jazz was not bad music, or "degrading art," as jazz was still often thought of among elite circles, nor was it the commercial music from big bands.<sup>66</sup>

Jazz, what was considered by fans to be *real* jazz, was hot and modern, filled with improvisation and individual expression. Whether that expression was through Dixieland, swing, or bebop style was not significant to the majority of jazz fans during the post-war decade; it was the musician's individual musical expression of that hotness and modernity that was important. In the December 1946 issue of *Jukebox* the editor stated:

A musician playing at a Swing Club's meeting knows he can play just the way he wants and doesn't have to pander to commercial taste. And he also knows that his efforts will be far more appreciated (and applauded), by members of the Club, than they would be by the dancing public.<sup>67</sup>

This sentiment typifies the ideals of fan organisations and activities at this time. Fan organisations wanted to make sure that jazz musicians knew that their music, their creativity, was

---

<sup>66</sup> 'Editorial' *Jukebox* August 1946, 1.

<sup>67</sup> 'Editorial' *Jukebox* December 1946, 1.

appreciated for the artistry that it was. The activities and support of jazz fans helped the performing jazz community through the transition from a popular and dancing music, into a niche music away from the cabarets and ballrooms. Although jazz may sometimes be used for the purposes of dancing, was no longer reliant on dancing patrons for gigs.

### **7.5 Jazz in the Broadcasting and Recording Industries**

The broadcasting industry and recording in New Zealand were closely linked from the mid-1930s when the New Zealand Broadcasting Board invested in recording equipment in order to record individual items, as well as entire programmes. Patrick Day states that "recording changed the nature of broadcasting," but it can also be said that in New Zealand broadcasting supported, influenced, and affected the nature of the local recording industry.<sup>68</sup>

In 1948 two events occurred in which New Zealand jazz musicians played important roles: the creation of the radio dance band system at the recently formed New Zealand Broadcasting Service, and the creation of the New Zealand commercial recording industry, both of which are noted in the timeline at the beginning of this chapter. This section investigates both of these events, the roles that jazz musicians played in them, and the roles that the advent of recording and the radio band system played in the jazz scene.

#### **The Radio Dance Band System**

Jazz groups had been a regular feature of New Zealand broadcasting since the industry's earliest days. However, until World War Two, the majority of broadcasts were relays from cabarets, dance halls, and other venues, rather than from the studio. Studio broadcasts became increasingly popular from the mid-1930s, and by the late 1940s, would become the main venue for local jazz broadcasts as demonstrated in Chapter's Three and Four. This change was due mainly to the changes in the structure of broadcasting, which led to the creation of the radio band system.<sup>69</sup>

As noted in the timeline at the beginning of this chapter, on April 1 1946 the New Zealand Broadcasting Service [NZBS] officially began operations. Formed in 1943 by the amalgamation of the National Broadcasting Service, and the National Commercial Broadcasting Service, the NZBS was created to streamline many of the behind-the-scenes procedures, such as purchasing and importing recordings.<sup>70</sup> Initially, the creation of the NZBS had little effect on the broadcast of local,

---

<sup>68</sup> Patrick Day *The Radio Years: A History of Broadcasting in New Zealand Vol. 1*, Auckland University Press: Auckland, 1994, 251.

<sup>69</sup> Day 86-89, 273-275, 283.

<sup>70</sup> Day, 279-282.

live, jazz in New Zealand; however, that changed when Bob Bothamley (head of dance music) created the radio dance–band system in 1948.

The system was designed by Bothamley to ensure excellent station bands, with innovative (though still mainstream) arrangements, in each of the main cities. Every four months, musicians (including singers) in each city auditioned for Bothamley, and had to meet a required set of musical standards before being accepted into the station bands. Bothamley, would choose who was to be the bandleader, and that person was responsible for writing arrangements, rehearsals and leading the band on the air.<sup>71</sup> While terms of contract differed from band to band, and station to station, the station bands broadcast live at least once a week, and usually two or three times per week. For this work musicians received a weekly salary of £3 7s. 6d.<sup>72</sup>

The configuration of the radio bands were usually that of a big band, with a vocalist and/or vocal group added. Each week, the leaders were given some basic information about what was required for the next week, such as how much time they would be playing for, and what balance of vocals versus instrumental pieces was wanted by broadcasting officials. The repertoire of the bands was mostly mainstream jazz and popular music, but there was some leeway given in terms of arranging styles. The arranging style of the band depended entirely on the leader of the time, and could be anything from sweet swing to innovative expanded arrangements, but had to conform to the dictates of broadcasting policy regarding acceptable material.<sup>73</sup>

Because of the standards enforced by broadcasting officials, the musicians in the radio dance bands had to be of an extremely high standard, technically and musically. They had to have the ability to consistently perform numerous and often complicated arrangements with little rehearsal. Because of these abilities, and the prestige of performing on the radio, other jazz musicians viewed the radio bands as being the 'best of the best': they were at the top of the jazz hierarchy in New Zealand.<sup>74</sup>

There was one problem with this system, however: because of the pool of very talented musicians auditioning and re–auditioning, it was difficult to break into. The bandleaders chosen for the contract would naturally prefer to use musicians that they already knew, and in whose abilities

---

<sup>71</sup> Doug Caldwell, Calder Prescott (2010) interviewed by Aleisha Ward; Bourke, 167-168.

<sup>72</sup> George Wood 'N.Z. offers work only for the lucky few' *Melody Maker* 1/7/1949.

<sup>73</sup> Int. Doug Caldwell (2009); DHJA Radio Stations File MS-Papers-9018-68 ATL; Bourke 170.

<sup>74</sup> Wood MM 1949, Interview with Dale Alderton (2002), Doug Caldwell (2010), Calder Prescott (2010), and John Williams, also communication with Bernie Allen.

they had confidence.<sup>75</sup> However, once a musician was in the system, it became an invaluable opportunity, especially when they were asked by Bothamley to lead a band.

Younger musicians in the bands were particularly happy when Bothamley asked them to lead a band. This was an opportunity to lead an excellent big band, and to find their own leading and writing styles within that format. Leadership gave younger leaders, such as Doug Caldwell, Crombie Murdoch, Julian Lee and Lew Campbell, valuable experience in leading and writing under time pressure, and commercial pressure. It also gave young leaders, and musicians, the chance to become familiar with performing in the studio, which would be invaluable when they were asked to record by the fledgling record labels.<sup>76</sup>

### **Other Studio Jazz Groups**

In addition to the dance bands, there were a number of small jazz groups that were primarily formed from the same pool of musicians that broadcast on a regular basis. The vocal groups the Knaves and the Duplicats were formed by singers that regularly performed with the radio dance bands, both as soloists and as groups, were given regular broadcast time outside of the radio bands. Julian Lee's Symphonettes, and the Lew Campbell Sextet, and other small groups, were also formed by musicians from the radio bands, and as with the vocalists were also given regular broadcast time outside of the radio band context.<sup>77</sup>

The musicians in the radio band system were the logical talent group for the incipient recording industry to utilise. These highly talented and disciplined musicians were used to a high turn-around of arrangements and performances, and becoming increasingly familiar with the studio environment. The skills that they had developed in the radio band system were of great use in the New Zealand recording industry.

### **The New Zealand Recording Industry and Broadcasting**

Recording in New Zealand emerged as part of the broadcasting industry in the mid-1930s. Recording studios were established for commercials, items, and whole programmes to be recorded onto acetate discs for broadcast.<sup>78</sup> Although aligned to various radio stations, the recording studios were separate businesses and were available for hire if anyone wanted to record a one-off record. It

---

<sup>75</sup> Wood MM 1949.

<sup>76</sup> Int., Doug Caldwell, Calder Prescott (2010); Bourke, 168-170.

<sup>77</sup> DHJA Artist files Lew Campbell, MS-Papers-9018-07; The Knaves, MS-Papers-9018-25; Julian Lee, MS-Papers-9018-26; Bert Peterson 'Small Groups Get Good Showing in New Zealand Broadcasting' AMM July 1949.

<sup>78</sup> Day 251.



should be noted that recordings made between the mid-1930s and 1948 were not commercially available as New Zealand did not have a disc-pressing plant.<sup>79</sup> The other option for studios, sending a master disc overseas to be pressed, and then having to import the records appears to have been too cost-prohibitive for New Zealand studios.<sup>80</sup> This lack meant that, in essence, there was no commercial recording industry in New Zealand during this period.

The recording studios came into their own during World War Two when the censorship regulations meant that broadcast material had to be vetted and examined before being broadcast.<sup>81</sup> During these years, the sharp increase in workload, and variety of recordings meant that recording engineers were able to hone their skills in a number of areas. From in-studio work, to relay recordings (such as Noel Peach's recording of Esme Stephens singing with the Artie Shaw band at Auckland's Civic Theatre in 1943), to recording relay broadcasts for later use (such as Eldred Stebbing's recordings of the Artie Shaw band broadcast for the American Expeditionary Broadcasting Service), through to the broad variety of techniques required for different recording situations, World War Two offered many challenges for recording engineers.<sup>82</sup>

The relaxation of censorship at the end of the war saw some reduction in their work, but New Zealand's recording studios now found other commercial opportunities as a result. From making recordings of weddings, and meetings, to recording musicians, as well as their work for the radio stations, the immediate post-war years were the beginning of the transition of the New Zealand recording industry from being almost entirely an adjunct of the New Zealand broadcasting industry.<sup>83</sup>

The creation of New Zealand's commercial recording industry has been examined by other writers (for example, Bourke, Staff, and Ashley), and I will not examine it in depth here. However a small amount of detail is needed to clarify the situation and the events that gave rise to the creation of a local commercial recording industry. The impetus for its creation arose from a retail dispute between local radio and gramophone company Radio Corp, and the Electrical and Musical

---

<sup>79</sup> Bourke 156-157.

<sup>80</sup> Bryan Staff and Sheran Ashley *For the Record: A History of the Recording Industry in New Zealand*, David Bateman: Auckland, 2002, 38-39.

<sup>81</sup> Day 266.

<sup>82</sup> Int Dale Alderton 2002; Bryan Staff and Sheran Ashley, *For the Record: A History of the Recording Industry in New Zealand*, David Bateman: Auckland, 2002, 35-40.

<sup>83</sup> Bourke, 163-164.

Industries [EMI] New Zealand subsidiary, trading as HMV (NZ).<sup>84</sup> This dispute, surrounding the monopoly of the New Zealand market by HMV/EMI led Radio Corp to expanding their recording branch to make commercial pressings.<sup>85</sup>

By October 1948 (as noted in the timeline at the start of this chapter) Radio Corp had built and fitted out a studio and pressing plant in central Wellington. The first recording fully made in New Zealand for commercial release was Ruru Karaitiana's *Blue Smoke*. Recorded in late 1948, and released in 1949, the recording became known more as an industrial achievement than as a musical one. For Radio Corp, this recording represented a gauntlet thrown in the direction of the HMV monopoly, and an advertisement for their 'Kiwi can-do' attitude.<sup>86</sup>

The fledgling industry quickly began to spread with the establishment of Radio Corp's pressing plant in October 1948, and in March 1949, HMV's new pressing plant in Kilbirnie, Wellington. While the HMV plant only rarely pressed New Zealand recordings in its first few years (preferring instead to press overseas hits), the pressing plants signalled surmounting the last hurdle in establishing a New Zealand commercial recording industry<sup>87</sup>. Other recording labels quickly began to emerge, mostly from established recording studios, such as Stebbing Brothers (Stebbing, and Zodiac labels), and Noel Peach's Astor (whose label was also called Astor).<sup>88</sup>

### Radio Bands and Recording Artists

Until the later 1950s there was a very close relationship between the commercial recording industry and the broadcasting industry. Many radio engineers and artists worked in both industries throughout the war and the post-war decade.<sup>89</sup> This was partly due to the fact that the music industry in New Zealand was small, and there was something of a 'big fish-small pond' scenario. The "lucky few," as *Melody Maker* columnist George Wood called them (of which he was one), were able to get most of the radio and recording work in the late 1940s and early 1950s, because they were excellent at their job, and they had the necessary contacts in both recording and radio.<sup>90</sup>

Many of the jazz musicians involved in the fledgling local recording industry were also involved in the radio band system. As mentioned above, the musicians selected for the radio bands

<sup>84</sup> Radio Corp was originally titled Radio Corporation of New Zealand, but by the 1940s was simply known as Radio Corp, Staff and Ashley, 40; Bruce Anderson *Story of the New Zealand Recording Industry*, George Jeffrey: Wellington, 30, 38, 55.

<sup>85</sup> Bourke, 155-167; Staff and Ashley, 40-45.

<sup>86</sup> Bourke, 160-161.

<sup>87</sup> Bourke, 157.

<sup>88</sup> Staff and Ashley, 43-44.

<sup>89</sup> Dale Alderton interviewed by Aleisha Ward (2002).

<sup>90</sup> George Wood MM 9/7/1949.

were of an excellent standard, and were considered by many in the music industry to be the best of New Zealand's jazz musicians.<sup>91</sup> The enthusiasm for recording studios and labels to use radio band musicians, especially jazz musicians, arose from the range of music that was popular to record. Most of the music recorded was popular or novelty songs, with a small amount of jazz. While some of the arrangements and songs recorded were simple, many were not. The skills that radio band musicians had developed (bearing in mind that many musicians also had day jobs, and other musical gigs, so rehearsal was limited), where the turn-around on new charts was a matter of days, became essential for recording work.<sup>92</sup>

The musicians were happy participants in the new recording industry. Even for those involved in the radio bands, recording was a novelty. The ability to record their music, and sell it was seen, not as a commercial activity for the musicians, but as a way of allowing musicians to extend their audience. Records were considered another way of bringing the audience music, especially styles of jazz (such as bebop) that were not always heard on the radio, or in the cabaret or club.<sup>93</sup>

The musicians' attitude toward recording in the early years of the industry is quite intriguing. It does not appear that recording was regarded as a money-making activity (or at the very least not wholly so). The musicians were paid union standard or perhaps a bit more, for their time, but it appears that they recorded more for the novelty of doing so, and as an advertisement for their work in the clubs and on the radio. For a fledgling industry this was probably a good thing, as it was difficult for local labels to break even on pressing a disc.<sup>94</sup> Even in the later 1950s musicians did not make a great deal of money from recordings. Jazz pianist Crombie Murdoch only earned £200 for his very popular song *Opo the Crazy Dolphin* in 1956.<sup>95</sup>

The radio bands system and the recording industry continued their close relationship throughout the 1950s and into the 1960s. Throughout these years, many of the musicians from the radio bands were frequently utilised as backing musicians for TANZA, Astor, and Stebbing labels (and from the late 1950s, HMV), as well as recording as lead artists in their own right. Although

---

<sup>91</sup> Bourke 163-164.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> John Williams (2003), Jim Warren (2009), Calder Prescott (2010) interviewed by Aleisha Ward.

<sup>94</sup> Bourke, 164.

<sup>95</sup> Bourke, 209.

relatively little jazz was recorded compared to the popular and novelty recordings, the majority of jazz was recorded by the musicians associated with the radio band system.<sup>96</sup>

## 7.6 New Zealand Jazz Concerts

The jazz concerts were a significant development on the New Zealand jazz scene because they were an important means of taking jazz out of the background music and dancing contexts in which it had become set. The concerts were also a family-friendly venture as they were held in halls and theatres, and occasionally in parks, where people of all ages were welcome, thus gaining a new audience.<sup>97</sup>

By 1945 there were two concepts of a jazz concert globally: The formal concert, and a concert inspired by jam sessions.<sup>98</sup> The concept of a formal (sitting down in a concert hall) jazz concert emerged in the 1920s with Paul Whiteman's *Experiments in Modern Music* at New York City's Aeolian Hall in 1924. Between the 1920s and mid 1940s, however, this style of jazz concert during this period was often a showcase of wholly scored music, or an opportunity for bandleaders and composers to present jazz as an art form as opposed to dancing entertainment. These concerts were most often planned as special events, and frequently premiered new jazz compositions, which were, in many instances, formally and thematically reminiscent of classical works (for instance suites, concertos, or rhapsodies).<sup>99</sup>

The other style of concert tried to recreate the intimate atmosphere of a jam session. As publicly accessible jam sessions in nightclubs were rare occurrences until the post-war period, this style of concert offered jazz fans an insight into what musicians did behind closed doors. This style of concert was less promoted and commercial than the formal jazz concerts were, and, in the United States at least, only occasionally included jazz stars. This is the style that jazz impresario Norman Granz took for the Jazz at the Philharmonic [JATP] concerts, which quickly gained international recognition, and aroused the interest of musicians and fans in other countries.<sup>100</sup>

In New Zealand, the concept of a jazz concert became attractive to jazz musicians in the post-war years, possibly due to the change in dance music tastes (as mentioned in section 7.1 and

---

<sup>96</sup> Bourke, 163-164. See also Dennis Huggard *A Discographical Listing of Jazz Recordings of New Zealand 1930-1980*.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Scott Devaux, 'The Emergence of the Jazz Concert 1935-1945' *American Music* 7/1 1989, 6-10.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid, 8, 13-14, 18-19.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid, 15-16, 21-24. For a definition of the JATP concept see Scott DeVaux and Gary Giddins, *Jazz*, Norton: New York, 2009, 306-307.

7.3), which led to less jazz in their regular gigs.<sup>101</sup> At the same time however, the jazz scene was participating in the development of bebop and Latin jazz, and the revival of Dixieland. These styles were all more musically adventurous than the music jazz musicians were allowed to play in the majority of gigs that they relied on, and while the radio bands offered jazz that was more adventurous than in the ballroom, there were musical restrictions there too. Jam sessions helped musicians experiment and develop these styles, but musicians wanted a context in which they could perform all jazz styles to the public.<sup>102</sup>

The first jazz concert in New Zealand was organised by Auckland drummer Bruce MacDonald as a way to expose the general public to the less mainstream expressions of jazz, including the new bebop style. In mid-1950 MacDonald gathered together twelve of Auckland's best jazz musicians (see Appendix: Band Personnel Charts) to create a concert programme that ranged from solos to ensembles of varying sizes. The musical selections for this first concert were, for the most part, jazz standards, which would have been familiar to both the jazz fans, and the general public.<sup>103</sup>

On the evening of August 7, 1950 (noted in the timeline at the start of this chapter), this group of musicians performed the first formal jazz concert in New Zealand, held in the Auckland Town Hall's concert chamber. The chamber quickly filled to overflowing, and hundreds were reportedly turned away. The concert did not have the most fortuitous of beginnings: there were problems with the sound mixing, making for a late start. When the concert did begin compère Pete Young walked on stage, and remarked about the chambers' "bloody lights" still being on.<sup>104</sup> Unbeknownst to Young, the microphone was live and his comment was heard around the chamber. It was also caught on the recording of the evening that was being made via wired relay (phone lines) at Astor Recording Studio on Shortland Street.<sup>105</sup>

In spite of the slightly bumpy start, the concert itself was performed without a technical hitch. According to the reviews, the performers "bought the house down," with the crowd giving them "great plaudits."<sup>106</sup> So enthusiastic was the reception by the audience that reviewers believed it boded well for future jazz concerts.<sup>107</sup> The reviewers were prophetic, because the second Auckland

---

<sup>101</sup> Doug Caldwell, *My Life in the Key of Jazz*, CPIT Press: Christchurch 2010, 81-83.

<sup>102</sup> Bourke, 170-171.

<sup>103</sup> Duncan Campbell 'Live Jazz Lives Again', NZL 8/10/1994, 42.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Bourke, 170.

<sup>106</sup> AMM Oct 1950.

<sup>107</sup> AMM Oct. 1950, AS 8/8/1950.

jazz concert took place on November 20 1950, and was quickly followed by the first jazz concert in Wellington one month later on December 19.<sup>108</sup> These concerts were not just isolated events, but the beginning of a fashion for jazz concerts in New Zealand that lasted through the 1950s.<sup>109</sup>

The jazz concerts were also important to the jazz community in promoting awareness about the different styles of jazz to the general public. They successfully did this within the concerts, but without separating them into different categories or time periods. All styles of jazz were presented in a mixture: the combined ensemble could play a swing piece, and might be followed by a bop vocal group, or a Dixieland band. The reasoning behind this choice is unknown, and may have simply reflected the JATP formula in the United States, which was reported on in *Australian Music Maker* and *Tempo* magazines.

The jazz concerts presented in New Zealand were primarily based in the jam session/JATP concept, rather than the formal concert concept. However, compared to the American 'jam session' style concerts (especially those of the JATP concept) there appears to have been less of an accent on the competitive aspects of a jam session, except in constructed 'battles.'<sup>110</sup> In jazz musician parlance a battle, otherwise called a cutting contest, (either in a jam session or on a gig) was a musical duel between individual musicians or whole bands. The usual procedure for individuals would be for the musicians involved to play the melody and then trade phrases or choruses of improvisation, each attempting to musically out-perform the other.<sup>111</sup>

In the New Zealand jazz concerts such examples of constructed battles were 'The Battle of the Tenor Saxes' at the first combined Auckland–Wellington Jazz concert on August 17 1953 (combining musicians from both cities at the Auckland Town Hall), or Frank Gibson's (Senior) Drum Trio at Jazz Wagon number 1 (Auckland, Town Hall October 22 1954). Both of these 'battles,' and others like them, were specially constructed to demonstrate this aspect of musicians' jam sessions (and the virtuosity of the musicians involved) to the public, but were only one small section of the concert.<sup>112</sup>

---

<sup>108</sup> DHJA Chronological Concert Files, ATL MS-Papers-9018-60

<sup>109</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>110</sup> Scott Deveaux and Gary Giddons, *Jazz* 306.

<sup>111</sup> "Cutting contest." In *The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz*, 2nd ed., edited by Barry Kernfeld. *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*,

<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy.auckland.ac.nz/subscriber/article/grove/music/J109500> (accessed March 24, 2012).

<sup>112</sup> DHJA Chronological Concert Files, ATL MS-Papers-9018-60

As the concerts progressed through the 1950s, the programming became bolder, and the number of musicians involved became greater. While the concerts still included many jazz standards, they also featured some less well-known works, and began to utilise more experimental arrangements and improvisations. The inclusion of original compositions by the musicians involved had occurred occasionally from the first concert, but as time passed the programming increasingly featured local compositions. With more musicians involved the variety of ensemble work widened and led to greater experimentation with arrangements.<sup>113</sup>

However, the concerts were not without some controversy. Various councils in the early and mid-1950s were concerned about whether they should let the organisers of jazz concerts use the Town Halls, and importantly whether they should allow musicians to use the grand pianos.<sup>114</sup> On one particular occasion in early September 1952, the Auckland City Council banned jazz musicians from using the newly purchased Steinway grand piano after they were informed that the musicians had hammered the piano "with both hands and feet."<sup>115</sup> This assumed pummelling had supposedly detuned the piano and caused problems with the pedal mechanism.

The jazz musicians and audience members refuted this allegation, stating that they had not hammered the piano, and had barely used the pedals. Two of the pianists that participated in the concert, Monte Oliver and Julian Lee, both stated to the press that they had found the piano to be out of tune and of inferior quality, and would have preferred to play on the older Chappell grand if it had not been awkwardly positioned on the stage.<sup>116</sup> In addition to this defence, the *New Zealand Herald* interviewed some of Auckland's leading piano teachers, including the head of Auckland University College's Music Faculty, who all stated that while it was theoretically possible that damage could have occurred it was probably no more or less likely than damage occurring from a classical pianist.<sup>117</sup>

This was certainly not the only incident between jazz concert organisers and various council committees. A similar incident in Whangarei inspired a satiric article in the *Northern Advocate* which stated: "A new committee, to be known as the Committee for the Prevention of Piano-Thumping, may shortly be set up by the Whangarei Borough Council to carry out its ban of bebop

---

<sup>113</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>114</sup> 'Protests', AS 2/9/1952, 1; 'The Grand is not for Jazz!' NZH 4/9/1952, 10.

<sup>115</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>116</sup> 'We Don't Like the Steinway Anyhow!', AS 3/9/1952 1; NZH Letters to the Editor 4/9/1952, 8; 8/9/1952, 6.

<sup>117</sup> 'Can Jazz Be Unkind to a Piano?' NZH 3/9/1952, 10.

on the Bechstein."<sup>118</sup> Committee members would attend concerts and if they decided that the pianist had drifted "into a jazz tempo, it will be the committee's duty to rush to the stage and stop the pianist immediately."<sup>119</sup>

It appears that many people, whether or not they enjoyed jazz, thought that a small cadre of classical music fanatics, who were out of touch with modern music, was overly influencing council committees decisions. This feeling led to debates in letters to the editor columns about purpose of such expensive instruments in Town Halls: were they there to satisfy a small cadre of musicians and society, or were they meant to be used by all musicians for all purposes?<sup>120</sup> While these letters were not necessarily a statement of support for jazz musicians and their concerts, they were a statement supporting egalitarianism for the use of town halls, and their instruments, by all types of musical groups.

These and other similar incidents indicate that among certain sections of town councils jazz was still viewed as rather risky (and possible risqué) entertainment. While the council committees involved in the two aforementioned incidents were worried about their expensive grand pianos, others were concerned about the types of people these concerts were attracting, and the behaviour of the audience. Many officials were concerned about patrons dancing in the aisles, the foyer, or other areas, and generally acting in, as one council officer put it "an unseemly manner."<sup>121</sup> Such behaviour resulted in concert organisers being informed that if they could not control the audience's behaviour then Town Halls would be unavailable for booking.

These problems were understandable in the first year or two of the concerts around the country: initially no one involved in the jazz concerts, musicians, councils, or the audience, really had any idea about what would happen at a jazz concert. However, these were not isolated or early problems. These conflicts regularly occurred between jazz concert organisers and council committees into the mid-1950s. It appears that although the concerts were popular with jazz fans and parts of the general public, this popularity might have contributed to the problems, especially regarding audience behaviour. Eventually, however, the behaviour of audiences changed. From

---

<sup>118</sup> A.J. McCarthy 'Dr Buckley's Bon Mot on bebop Ban on Bechstein' NZ14/2/1953.

<sup>119</sup> A.J. McCarthy 'Dr Buckley's Bon Mot on bebop Ban on Bechstein' NA,14/2/1953.

<sup>120</sup> 'Steinway Jazz' NZH 8/9/1952.

<sup>121</sup> Letter from Mr Peterson, Town Clerk for Wellington City Council to Vernon Clare, Jazz Concert Organiser 7/12/1955. DHJA Chronological Concert Files, ATL MS-Papers-9018-60.



about 1956 there appear to have been fewer complaints about audiences' bad behaviour, and a number of reviews of jazz concerts from this time remarked on the quietness of audiences.<sup>122</sup>

The popularity of jazz concerts grew throughout the 1950s, and by the latter half had begun to transmute into jazz festivals. As dance and popular music tastes moved away from jazz, the concerts and festivals grew in importance to the jazz community throughout the decade. The concerts were one of the few places outside of jam sessions where jazz musicians were able to express themselves in the way that they wanted, without regard to what their employer or the club/cabaret audience wanted to hear.

### **7.7 *The Mid-Century Jazz Tours and interactions with New Zealand jazz musicians***

In the first three months of 1955 there were three jazz-related tours to New Zealand that had several impacts on the local jazz scene. As detailed in the timeline at the start of this tour all three tours were short, with the longest lasting only four performing dates. Despite the short tour lengths all made significant impressions on the New Zealand jazz scene through the performances, and the interactions with New Zealand musicians. These tours were also significant factors in increasing the cachet of jazz as a listening and concert music.

#### ***The Big Show featuring Nat 'King' Cole***

Pianist/singer Nat 'King' Cole was the first major jazz-related musician to visit New Zealand since the end of World War Two. Cole's visit to Auckland in early 1955 came at the peak of his popular vocal career, as headliner for Australian promoter Lee Gordon's *The Big Show*, which also included singer June Christy. Instead of bringing a band (excepting Cole's trio) with them, the tour promoter contracted local Auckland musicians to perform as the backing band for the acts.<sup>123</sup>

Cole, Christy, and company arrived in Auckland on January 16 1955 for a two-day layover before flying on to Australia.<sup>124</sup> It should be noted that while some of the New Zealand press stated that his family came with him, according to his biography by Daniel Mark Epstein, his wife Maria and young daughter Natalie actually remained behind in the United States.<sup>125</sup> Thousands of excited fans gathered at Whenuapai airport to witness Cole's arrival at 10 pm with many coming by the

<sup>122</sup> See for example 'Cavalcade of Jazz' 16/2/1956 file DHJA Chronological Concert Files, ATL MS-Papers-9018-60.

<sup>123</sup> 'Nat "King" Cole was a Shy Young Soul', NZL 4/2/1955, 7.

<sup>124</sup> Daniel Mark Epstein, *Nat King Cole*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux: New York, 1999, 243.

<sup>125</sup> 'Nat "King" Cole was a Shy Young Soul', NZL 4/2/1955, 7; Epstein, 244.

special buses that were provided by tour management.<sup>126</sup> The Auckland Swing Club provided a band to entertain the crowds during their wait.<sup>127</sup>

Also awaiting Cole's arrival at Whenuapai were Bart Fortune, head of the Radio Corp–owned TANZA label, and the head of HMV (NZ), Jack Wyness. As a director of Capitol Records, Cole had to inform Fortune that their contract to distribute Capitol records in New Zealand was about to be cancelled. The parent company of HMV (NZ), Electrical Music and Industries [EMI], had bought a majority holding in Capitol. As a result, HMV (NZ) would now be handling the distribution of Capitol Records. For the still fledgling New Zealand owned and operated section of the local record industry, this was a significant blow to competing against the behemoth that was HMV/EMI.<sup>128</sup>

During the layover, *The Big Show* performed four shows at the Auckland Town Hall on January 17 and 18. Before the performances could occur, though, came an all night rehearsal with the New Zealand band, which was led by pianist Crombie Murdoch. For some the New Zealand musicians involved this was seen as an opportunity to "prove themselves" to be as good as American musicians.<sup>129</sup>

Little is recorded about the Americans' responses to the New Zealand band, except for a brief mention in the February issue of *Australian Music Maker*. This note indicated that Cole, his trio, and June Christy were all impressed at the standard of musicians in the band, and were "surprised at the modern sound produced by the band."<sup>130</sup> For their part the New Zealand musicians were enthusiastic about working with such big names in the jazz world, and were impressed by the American musicians dedication and meticulousness in rehearsal. Cole's drummer, Lee Young (the brother of saxophonist Lester Young) directed the band rehearsal, teaching them the arrangements, while Cole worked with bandleader Crombie Murdoch on the show structure (timing and tempos) and scores. Although the all–night rehearsal was exhausting for all concerned, a candid photo essay in the *Auckland Star* appears to indicate that despite working hard to quickly perfect the arrangements, the musicians all enjoyed working with each other.<sup>131</sup>

---

<sup>126</sup> 'Nat "King" Cole' [advertisement], NZH 11/1/1955, 16; '5000 Fight to see Nat 'King' Cole,' 17/1/1955, 8.

<sup>127</sup> '5000 Fight to see Nat 'King' Cole,' NZH 17/1/1955, 8.

<sup>128</sup> Bourke, 213, 359-360; Alan Siddall 'New Zealand News', *Tempo* February 1955.

<sup>129</sup> Bourke, 213-214.

<sup>130</sup> AMM Feb. 1955.

<sup>131</sup> 'Night Rehearsal', AS 20/1/1955, 7.

*The Big Show* performances were reported as being fast-paced and exciting, with Cole's set list including many of his vocal hits, including *Mona Lisa*, *Tenderly*, and *Unforgettable*. Audiences were also treated to two purely instrumental numbers, one of which was *Tea for Two*. His instrumental performances demonstrated, that while he was making a career out of being a pop singer, his keyboard virtuosity had not diminished, much to the delight of jazz fans.<sup>132</sup>

Although June Christy was a support act to the headliner of Cole, her performances also impressed the audiences and press. The press reported on her sets with variations on how she "collected the male votes," and won approval from the women in the audience.<sup>133</sup> Despite a few balance problems between her and the band in one of the performances reviewed, the press made much of her "throaty purr" and her wide and varied repertoire. The press were particularly impressed by the way she managed to move from torch songs to bop without disrupting the tone of her set.<sup>134</sup>

Of the New Zealand band, the majority of the popular and music press lauded the band for being able to competently perform difficult arrangements with only a few hours rehearsal. The only quibbles came from the reviews of the *New Zealand Herald* and the *New Zealand Listener*. The *Herald* reviewer noted (as mentioned above) that the band overwhelmed June Christy's voice, and the *Listener* reviewer noted that there were "a few lapses."<sup>135</sup> There is no indication in these reviews however, whether these problems were consistent over the set, or whether they were momentary. Nor is there any indication whether the problem was with the musicians or the sound engineers.

Although this visit lasted a mere forty-eight hours, it had an impact on the jazz scene, and wider music industry. Fans and musicians alike were clearly extremely impressed by the American visitors. Pianist Mike Nock, who was about twelve at the time, stated that the concert "blew my mind....To hear that music was thrilling for me."<sup>136</sup> Nock also stated in an interview with Chris

---

<sup>132</sup> DHJA Nat 'King Cole' Concert File MS-Papers-9018-60; 'Rapturous Audience for Nat 'King' Cole,' NZH 18/1/1955, 10; 'Nat "King Cole was a Shy Young Soul', NZL 4/2/1955, 7; Norman Meehan, *Serious Fun: The Life and Music of Mike Nock*, Victoria University Press: Wellington, 2010, 22.

<sup>133</sup> 'Nat "King" Cole was a Shy Young Soul', NZL 4/2/1955, 7; R.G.S 'Sincerity Stamps Nat Cole's Songs', AS 18/1/1955, 3.

<sup>134</sup> R.G.S. 'Sincerity Stamps Nat Cole's Songs', AS 18/1/1955, 3; 'Rapturous Audience for Nat "King" Cole', NZH 18/1/1955, 10.

<sup>135</sup> 'Rapturous Audience for Nat "King" Cole', NZH, 18/1/1955, 10; 'Nat "King" Cole was a Shy Young Soul', NZL 4/2/1955, 7.

<sup>136</sup> Meehan, 22.

Bourke that attending *The Big Show* was a life changing experience for him.<sup>137</sup> Bassist Bob Ewing was impressed that the local musicians could perform at such a high standard after little rehearsal stating that their performances demonstrated "just how good the Auckland musicians were."<sup>138</sup>

The praise for the local musicians from both the popular and musical press perhaps demonstrates where the impact was centred. As mentioned above, the Auckland musicians felt they had to prove how good they were to the American musicians. Their work with the American musicians demonstrated to the Auckland musicians that they were able to meet most, if not all of the Americans musical and performance demands. This in turn increased local musicians' confidence in their own abilities.

On a less positive note, the impact of Cole's news for TANZA and HMV affected the New Zealand record industry, both retail and recording, quite significantly. The loss of the lucrative distribution contract for Capitol Records affected the role of Radio Corp/TANZA within the music industry. The Capitol Records distribution contract had virtually underwritten much of the local recording that they did, which included many local jazz recordings.<sup>139</sup> With the loss of this contract, it was the beginning of a slow decline of the TANZA label and the company's ideal to record New Zealand artists.

### ***The Show of Shows with Buddy de Franco***

In the week following Cole's visit, *The Show of Shows* featuring the Ink Spots, with supporting performers, including reed–man Buddy de Franco, arrived after touring Australia for an equally short visit. Between January 22 and 26 the troupe performed two concerts per night in Auckland, Dunedin and Wellington. The three–night tour (January 23 was a Sunday, thus no concert), was noted as being one of the most expensive shows ever bought to New Zealand at a cost of three thousand pounds.<sup>140</sup> This cost resulted in *The Show of Shows* having one of the most expensive ticket prices in New Zealand entertainment history at between ten and thirty shillings per ticket.<sup>141</sup>

The troupe arrived from Sydney on January 22 and went directly from Whenuapai airport to the Auckland Town Hall for their first performance at six in the evening. According to the *New Zealand Herald* reviewer, their plane was running late. This meant that the show started

---

<sup>137</sup> Bourke, 214, 360.

<sup>138</sup> Bourke 214.

<sup>139</sup> Bourke, 299-300.

<sup>140</sup> 'Ink Spots' [advertisement] D 25/1/1955, 2.

<sup>141</sup> AMM March 1955; 'Ink Spots' [advertisement], AS 18/1/1955, 19.

approximately 45 minutes late, and that the majority of the performers did not have time to change from their travelling clothes before performing. Nevertheless it appears that the troupe managed to perform an excellent, if shortened, concert.<sup>142</sup>

Although *The Show of Shows* was far less publicised than Nat Cole, and *The Big Show*, jazz fans were ecstatic about de Franco's visit. As the *Auckland Star* reviewer, J. O. C., stated: "on any other programme clarinet virtuoso, Buddy de Franco would have been given top billing."<sup>143</sup> This accurately describes the feelings of jazz fans in Auckland, Wellington, and Dunedin, who attended the show, not for the Ink Spots, or the Wally Norman Big Band, or for pianist-singer Rose Murphy, or any of the other acts, but solely for de Franco.

Nor were jazz fans disappointed despite de Franco not having top billing. Every newspaper review paid de Franco compliments regarding his performance. The *Dominion* reviewer possibly stated the audiences' reactions best: "[F]or the audience the de Franco recital was a concert in itself: they heard the possibilities of the clarinet."<sup>144</sup> While de Franco mostly performed standards such as *Stardust*, and *After You've Gone*, according to the *Auckland Star* review it was on the bop tune *Now's the Time* that "he really excelled."<sup>145</sup>

The only qualms that were noted about de Franco's performance were, as with June Christy, issues of balance between instruments and microphone placement. The review of the Wellington concert in *Australian Music Maker* noted that the performance "was slightly marred by the pauses of the drummer." The reviewer was unsure whether that was due to where they were sitting in the Town Hall, or whether it had to do with microphone placement, but he further noted that it did "not spoil a fantastic performance."<sup>146</sup> Reed-man Ken Avery also attended one of the Wellington shows and states boldly in his memoir that "[T]he sidemen the tour promoter managed to get for Buddy were not really good enough to back him properly. The drummer could only just keep up with the very fast tempo that Buddy wanted for his solo on 'After You've Gone'..."<sup>147</sup>

Unlike *The Big Show* concerts, New Zealand musicians were not involved in the performances of *The Show of Shows*, with one exception. It appears that Auckland reed-man Derek Heine performed with the Norman band at the Dunedin and Wellington shows, substituting for one of the reed players. His response was described in the *Australian Music Maker* as enthusiastic,

<sup>142</sup> 'Busy Line at Town Hall for Rose Murphy', NZH, 24/1/1955, 10.

<sup>143</sup> J.O.C. 'Aucklanders Hear Famous Quartet', AS 24/1/1955, 5.

<sup>144</sup> 'Audiences Happy with "The Spots"', D 26/1/1955, 11.

<sup>145</sup> 'Aucklanders Hear Famous Quartet', AS 24/1/1955, 5.

<sup>146</sup> AMM March 1955.

<sup>147</sup> Avery, *Where are the Camels?* 65.

though little more was noted, except that he had received invitations from the American contingent to "look them up in the States sometime," which he would do the following year when he moved to the United States.<sup>148</sup>

Musicians' responses to de Franco were as audience members and fans rather than as fellow performers. Although the effects of de Franco's visit were not as widespread as Cole's, his performances, like the Artie Shaw tour a decade before, were inspirational to jazz musicians, especially reed players, and enjoyable for fans. They admired his technical skills and musical style, especially noting his timbre and the vitality in his playing. Ken Avery stated that de Franco's technical control and tone inspired him so much that he tried to emulate those qualities in his own playing.<sup>149</sup>

### **Ted Heath Big Band**

The tour by the Ted Heath Big Band was markedly different from both of the *Show's*. While both *The Big Show* and *The Show of Shows* were musical variety-type concerts with multiple acts, the Heath tour was the first time since World War Two that a big band had toured New Zealand. While longer than both of the *Show* visits, the Heath bands' tour was still very short playing one-night stands (two shows per night) in Auckland, Hamilton, Wellington and Christchurch at the end of March 1955.

The tour arrived in Auckland on March 27 after a two-week tour of Australia. The press reaction in advance of their arrival was nearly as strong as that of Nat 'King' Cole, and for similar reasons. In 1955 the Heath band was at their most prominent with appearances in films and engagements across the globe (after leaving New Zealand they would head directly to New York City to fulfill a series of engagements). They were frequently described as the world's greatest big band, by both press and musicians alike.<sup>150</sup>

The reception for the band in each city apparently rivalled the enthusiasm shown for Nat 'King' Cole, with full houses, and multiple ovations by audiences. The demographics of the Heath Band audience's were somewhat different from Cole's however. Where the Cole audiences were primarily young adults, the Heath band attracted teenagers through to middle-aged patrons, although this clearly did not affect the enthusiastic reception.<sup>151</sup>

---

<sup>148</sup> AMM Feb 1955, AS 17/5/1977, 8.

<sup>149</sup> AS, 24/1/1955; Avery, 65.

<sup>150</sup> Ted Heath file DHJA ATL MS-Papers-9018-60.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid and Nat Cole file DHJA ATL MS-Papers-9018-60.

The wider audience demographic appears to have been a result of the longevity of both Heath and his band. Heath had been performing in prominent dance and jazz bands (including the Bert Ambrose and Jack Hylton Orchestra's) in Britain since the early 1920s, and had formed his big band in 1944. This longevity would have been responsible for his having older fans. As well as a number of prominent engagements, the band also appeared in two popular films in 1946 and 1950, which resulted in a wider popularity, and celebrity.<sup>152</sup>

The newspaper reviews of the concerts in each city paid fulsome tribute to the technique, precision, and sound of the band, and the leadership of Heath. The review of the Auckland concert in *Australian Music Maker*, succinctly noted that the band's forte was their brass section, and also noted that band's "sureness of attack, the light and shade and all round musical approach of the whole band, was a lesson to all of us who aspire to something a little better in our playing."<sup>153</sup>

While the press praised the technical abilities of the Heath Band, the review in the *Australian Music Maker* noted that for jazz fans "the concert was slightly on the mild side."<sup>154</sup> Ken Avery, who attended the Wellington concert, describes the band as having "a wonderful brass section, and great precision. What they lacked was that indefinable something called 'swing'. It didn't swing but provided a great evening's big band entertainment." However, Avery also noted that the band used to swing when drummer Jack Parnell played with them.<sup>155</sup> While jazz fans might have been disappointed at the lack of really hot jazz (as defined in Chapter One) from the band, the other technical and musical abilities of the band appear to have provided recompense and inspiration.

While New Zealand musicians did not perform with all of these artists, there was a certain amount of interaction off stage at jam sessions and nightclubs. Nat Cole was supposedly seen at Hi Diddle Griddle in Auckland after the gigs, possibly with some of the other members of the tour.<sup>156</sup> The Ted Heath band attended a jam session organised by the Auckland Swing Club after their Auckland show, where they played with local musicians, and talked with musicians and fans.<sup>157</sup> In

---

<sup>152</sup> Brian Priestley and Alyn Shipton. "Heath, Ted." In *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy.auckland.ac.nz/subscriber/article/grove/music/12644> (accessed March 25, 2012).

<sup>153</sup> AMM May 1955.

<sup>154</sup> AMM May 1955.

<sup>155</sup> Avery, 66.

<sup>156</sup> Bourke, 177.

<sup>157</sup> AMM May 1955.

Wellington, some of the local jazz musicians organised a party for the Heath band at the Empress Ballroom so that the local jazz community could meet the members of the band.<sup>158</sup> The off-stage interactions influenced New Zealand musicians' perceptions of these visiting musicians by making them less iconic and more approachable.

These, and other, tours were usually on the way to or from Australian tours, but they had a major impact on New Zealand's standing in the global music industry. By the end of 1955 it was now seen as somewhat viable (musically and financially) to have a stopover tour in New Zealand. This led to an increase in top entertainers touring New Zealand.

The tours helped to increase the artistic cachet of jazz in New Zealand as a listening music, and as *concert* music. The process that was begun with the local jazz concerts was furthered by these package tours. The use of town hall concert chambers as venues signalled a change in attitude about the appropriateness of jazz as a concert music. Jazz was no longer just a music for dancing, but a music worthy of listening, and critiquing, as much as any form of art music. In this way these tours helped the New Zealand jazz scene in their transition away from dance music and the cabaret as the primary venue for jazz

## 7.8 Conclusion

Jazz in post-war New Zealand experienced a number of musical and community developments and transitions, which have been the focus of this chapter. The transitional nature of the jazz scene in the post-war decade was a result of international developments, such as bebop, and local ones, such as the radio dance band system.<sup>159</sup> The transitions ranged across several different aspects of the New Zealand jazz scene, but all had the same essential focus, that of the move of jazz from dancing music to listening music.<sup>160</sup>

This transition from dancing to listening was an important turning point for the New Zealand jazz scene for several reasons. The physical location of the jazz scene moved from dance venues to the coffee lounge, nightclub and concert hall. The audience changed, as did the activity of the audience: they were people who wanted to *listen*, to *intellectualise*, and to *critique* the music rather than participating in it by dancing to it. Finally the repertoire, and performance practices of jazz musicians changed. No longer did arrangements need to conform to the act of dancing: they could be longer, the tempo could vary dramatically, improvisation could become more obvious, and more the central feature of the music. These changes allowed jazz musicians to craft their music to

---

<sup>158</sup> Avery, 66.

<sup>159</sup> Porter, 174-176; Bourke, 167.

<sup>160</sup> Caldwell, 83; Dale Alderton (2002), Jim Warren (2009) interviewed by Aleisha Ward.



not only the venue and the patrons, but also allowed them to more fully utilise their own musical inclinations in the course of performance.<sup>161</sup>

The underlying meaning of these events was that the primary purpose of jazz had changed, and was continuing to change. Changes in style aside, the standards of what was considered good jazz by the primarily dancing audience in the 1930s were vastly different from the growing listening audience in the 1950s. By changing the main activity associated with jazz, the musicians and the audience were changing the purpose, the standards, and the culture of jazz. The musicians and the audience were also changing the ways that they approached jazz intellectually and emotionally. It is probably no coincidence that jazz musicians began to change their identity from dance musicians to jazz musicians during this period.<sup>162</sup>

The changing purpose of jazz can be seen as the impetus of the unconscious (and occasionally conscious) decisions made by fans, musicians, venue managers, broadcasting officials, and so on, in regards to the local contextualisation of jazz. The changing purpose can also be seen as the *result* of these decisions. I believe that it was quite possibly mixed together and was both the cause and the effect.

The nature of fan support and advocacy also changed in the post-war decade. Before World War Two the majority of fan groups were focused on the activity of dancing rather than listening. When a fan club did focus on listening it was rare that they advocated and supported local jazz. In the post-war decade, however, the fan organisations emphatically aimed to advocate all styles of jazz, and support the local jazz scene through their activities.<sup>163</sup> This support aided the transition of jazz away from the cabaret, and away from dancing music, by providing an audience base and advocacy among venue managers to heighten the profile of jazz as a listening music.

The transition towards jazz as a listening music also signals the beginning of widespread intellectualisation of jazz in New Zealand. The trend toward intellectualism in jazz was an international one, and, in some respects New Zealand fans and musicians were simply reflecting the ideas that were occurring overseas, especially in the United States. However, within New Zealand, while there had been a number of dedicated jazz fans, such as Arthur Pearce and Cav Nichol, who investigated and appreciated jazz as an art form from its earliest days in New Zealand, the idea of

---

<sup>161</sup> Int John Williams, Calder Prescott; Stuart 'Bless My Soul' Metro 1986, 98.

<sup>162</sup> Jim Warren (2009), John Williams (2003), Doug Caldwell (2010), Frank Gibson Jr. (2011) interviewed by Aleisha Ward.

<sup>163</sup> 'Editorial' *Jukebox* August 1946, 1.

jazz as an intellectual music became widespread in the post-war years, particularly through the swing clubs.

As detailed in section 7.4, the format of the club meeting actively promoted certain aspects of jazz, which had begun with the pre-war rhythm clubs, and further developed the local jazz culture. This active promotion of particular listening aspects in the swing clubs (whether conscious or unconscious) was also a part of the intellectualisation process of jazz, both of which promoted jazz as a listening music. This process of intellectualisation also promoted jazz as a 'timeless' art form, one that could be preserved for posterity.

This transition towards the idea of jazz as an artefact has an inherent conflict attached. By consciously or unconsciously promoting jazz as an art form and artefact, swing clubs in New Zealand were also taking away some of the original essence of jazz. The original links that jazz had with spontaneity, with dancing, and with fun and excitement were being shunted to one side as aspects that were no longer connected to it. While these remained as a part of the culture and repertoire, they were historical aspects of the music and culture, not contemporary. Even with the inclusion of the Dixieland revivalists in the swing clubs, these aspects of Dixieland music (dancing, and so on) had been removed.

The beginnings of the intellectualisation of jazz internationally also helped promote the standardisation of certain aspects of jazz. In New Zealand it appears that fans and musicians were quite egalitarian about what aspects of jazz they considered should be within the standard jazz repertoire. In this early phase of both intellectualisation, New Zealand musicians and fans seem to have been very inclusive, making more of a distinction between 'commercial' music and jazz rather than including or excluding certain styles of jazz (for example Dixieland). This inclusiveness may have been a result of jazz musicians frequently performing in more than one jazz style (and not so incidentally often playing other genres of music), the small size of the jazz scene (including fandom), and the relatively close nature of the jazz fraternity with musicians frequently travelling between towns, and individual scenes.

The transition away from the venues central to jazz for the previous three decades and the transition towards the intellectualisation of jazz did not occur instantaneously, nor was it complete by the end of the period I have surveyed in this thesis. However, by the end of the post-war decade, jazz was rapidly moving away from the dance floor and into the concert chamber. The rise in non-dancing venues for jazz, the local jazz concerts, and international jazz related tours had given jazz a profile that highlighted its status as music to listen to, and to be intellectualised.

By the end of 1955 New Zealand was becoming a regular stop on international jazz tours. As commercial flights became regular, New Zealanders also increased their travel, and jazz musicians began to regularly participate in jazz scenes in countries beyond Australia, especially to the United States. This led to New Zealand jazz musicians taking a greater part in the wider jazz world.

## 8 Conclusions

### 8.1 Summary of research

This thesis explored the history of jazz in New Zealand from 1920 to 1955. The aim of this thesis was to fill a gap in the history of music in New Zealand, which, until recently, has primarily focused on art music. I believe that it is important to fill this void because jazz has a rich history, repertoire, and culture of its own. Further, during the period that I considered in this study, jazz musicians interacted extensively with other musicians and musical genres.

The broadly ethnographic approach taken in this thesis encompassed archival research and oral history has enabled a history of jazz in New Zealand to be constructed that spans jazz culture as well as jazz music. The cultural aspects of jazz are of particular importance because the political, economic, and cultural relationships that New Zealand had with the United States, Great Britain, and Australia were reflected in the ways that jazz was imported and disseminated to New Zealanders. These cultural relationships also influenced how New Zealanders responded to jazz and how they adapted it to New Zealand society.

In exploring both jazz music and culture I used several interrelated theoretical concepts to underpin the history. Through models of globalisation, decontextualisation/recontextualisation, localisation, and the creation of culture and tradition that were discussed in Chapter One, I constructed a base for examining how jazz was imported to New Zealand. The models of these concepts were also used in examining and explaining how jazz was adapted to the local society and culture. These concepts were used implicitly throughout the thesis to explain and underscore the methods and means of how jazz imported, adapted, and used in the New Zealand context between 1920 and 1955.

Part One of this thesis described and examined issues relating to jazz in New Zealand across the period 1920–1955. In Chapter One I discussed varied points including the theoretical concepts mentioned above, New Zealand's cultural relationships with Britain and the United States, the concept of professionalism among musicians and key terminology that had subtle local differences to the more commonly known definitions. In Chapter Two I described the processes involved with the *acquisition* of jazz through different media and social activities (such as vaudeville and dancing). The different modes of acquisition were important in understanding how jazz was imported and who was doing the importing. The modes of acquisition were also important in understanding to which parts of New Zealand society was being disseminated to, such as radio audiences and social dancers.

In Part Two: Birth of a Jazz Scene, examined the period 1920–1939 from the angle of foreign influences (Chapter Three) and local responses to the dissemination of jazz (Chapter Four). I investigated the people and the events that influenced the dissemination of jazz, and the creation of a local jazz scene. I uncovered the influences of foreign musicians on jazz in New Zealand, especially regarding performance practices, and how they affected the reception of jazz in New Zealand. I also discovered how the representations of jazz in the popular press, and on the radio affected its local perception, and reception in the wider society New Zealand.

I used the previously untapped source of the popular press to describe New Zealanders' responses to jazz as music and culture, and how jazz was *recontextualised* in New Zealand culture and society. These responses ranged from the creation of venues and fan organisations (like the Christchurch Winter Garden in 1921, established by the Christchurch Jazz Club), through to interpretations of jazz (culturally and musically) in the popular press, and New Zealand attitudes to jazz in print. I concluded that the aspects of jazz that New Zealanders were responding to were often extreme. It was jazz as popular music or dance, as excitement, as immorality, to which New Zealanders responded. Nor was jazz connected to a specific country or culture: New Zealanders did not necessarily relate jazz to the United States, or Great Britain, or to African–American culture.

Through archival research and using pre-existing oral history interviews, I discovered that the jazz repertoire in the period 1920–1939 was wide and varied. Nor was the repertoire constrained by any boundaries about what was, or was not considered jazz. Using those sources I explained how that lack of boundaries affected the choices of repertoire (such as local popular songs) contributed to the recontextualisation of jazz into a potentially New Zealand setting and sound.

In Part Three, I focused on World War Two and the effects that the war had on jazz in New Zealand. I described the effects that war had on jazz musicians both in New Zealand and serving overseas, and the effects of the war on the jazz scene in New Zealand. In this section, I uncovered the effects of rationing and censorship on the New Zealand jazz scene, and the changes that the occurred as a result. I also discovered that for civilian musicians, in particular women and teenagers, the war offered some surprising opportunities and benefits to work as jazz musicians. I concluded that although the war had many negative effects on jazz musicians and the scene as a whole, there were also a surprising number of positive effects such as the abovementioned creation of opportunities for women and teenaged musicians. In the sphere of broadcasting, the necessity of restricting relay broadcasts led to the rise of studio bands, which was an immediate benefit for civilian musicians, but it also led to the creation of the radio band system in 1948. There were also benefits for musicians serving in the armed forces, especially those connected with the Royal New

Zealand Air Force Central Band and the Second New Zealand Expeditionary Service Entertainment Units. Musicians in these units were rapidly able to improve their musical skills, from instrumental technique and sight-reading, to performing proficiently with very little rehearsal or in physically dangerous conditions.

Later in Part Three (Chapter Six), I dealt specifically with the residency of troops from the United States in New Zealand during World War Two. This chapter described the effects that the American troops (and the bands that accompanied the troops) had on the jazz scene and New Zealand as a whole. I concluded that for jazz musicians this was a period of great inspiration; their interactions with American musicians broadened their musical horizons through exposure to new repertoire, technical skills and performance practices.

Finally in Part Four I discussed the post-war decade and the changes to jazz that took place in this period. In particular, I explored the transition of jazz from a dancing music to a listening music. This fundamental transition was accompanied by changes in jazz music styles, especially the introduction of bebop, changes in venues (the physical locations of the jazz scene), and the changing nature of support by jazz fans. A number of aspects of popular culture, such as jazz concerts, the creation in the radio band system, and rise in small nightclubs and coffee lounges encouraged the move of jazz away from dancing to listening. I also demonstrated how the changing nature of jazz fan organisations, and, importantly, their aims, supported and encouraged this transition towards jazz for listening.

## ***8.2 Major Changes in New Zealand Jazz***

The most obvious change to jazz across the period covered in this thesis was that of jazz becoming a listening music. In its first twenty-five years in New Zealand jazz was first and foremost dance music. The link between jazz music and social dance affected the composition of the audience for jazz in New Zealand as it did throughout the world. However, in New Zealand there was perhaps a broader range of venue locations, from urban to semi-rural, and a correspondingly broader audience demographic. This subtly different base also affected the repertoire choices of the bands because they needed to appeal to a wider variety of social dancers and jazz fans to which jazz meant very different things.

At the end of World War Two, however, international tastes in dance music and dance styles moved away from the jazz influences of the past twenty-five years. This transition provided part of the impetus for jazz to move from dancing to listening. In New Zealand this transition

towards listening music was greatly assisted by the activities of the post-war swing clubs, and by the creation of small nightclubs without dance floors.

Despite their title as 'swing' clubs, these fan organisations engaged with all styles of jazz from earliest Dixieland to the latest innovations of bebop and Latin jazz. The clubs had stated or implied agendas that aimed at promoting the local jazz scene usually through advocating jazz as a listening music to encourage interaction between the general public and the existing jazz scene. The swing clubs also actively promoted spaces in which jazz musicians were allowed to perform jazz in their own fashion. These two facets of swing club activities were arguably the cornerstone of the transition of jazz from a dancing music to a listening music.

The transition from dancing music to listening music was significant for three reasons:

First, it changed the physical location of the jazz scene. Although the cabarets and dance halls that were central to Parts Two and Three of this thesis continued to employ jazz musicians in their bands such venues were no longer the centre of the jazz scene. This position was now increasingly occupied by the coffee lounges, restaurants, nightclubs, concert halls and other non-dancing venues discussed in Part Four.

Second, the change of location led to a significant change in repertoire and performance practices. With the change of venues from dancing venues to listening venues musicians had to change their repertoire, arrangements, and performance practices. No longer constrained by what suited dancers, musicians could experiment with wider ranges of tempo, expanded arrangements, and longer sections for improvisation. Musicians also became the centre of attention for the audience, and correspondingly there was a shift in identity from background entertainer to serious musician at the centre of the audiences' attention.

Finally, the audience for jazz broadened in age. While dancing patrons were mostly young adults, the new locations of the jazz scene invited a wider range of age groups from teenagers to middle-aged and older. Some venues, such as jazz concerts held in concert chambers or parks, were envisaged as being family-friendly, including children.

Another significant change to jazz in New Zealand that emerged during the period under consideration involved broadcasting. In the early years of state-controlled broadcasting in New Zealand (from 1925), jazz was considered by broadcasting officials to be 'filler' material: necessary, but not desirable. The local live broadcasting in the pre-World War Two period may have been driven by necessity on the part of programming officials, but it was also a means by which local and touring bands could publicise themselves and become known to a wider audience. Consequently, it

was a way for fans and musicians in other towns to become aware of activities on the wider New Zealand jazz scene. This was important for musicians and fans because it gave them connections in different towns and served as an introduction to the local jazz scenes within towns.

At this time the jazz recordings considered by New Zealand radio officials to be preferred broadcast material were mostly sophisticated 'society' jazz bands, such as Jack Hylton's or Paul Whiteman's Orchestra as discussed in Chapter Three, with 'hot' (see Chapter One) jazz artists rarely being broadcast in the years leading up to World War Two. No extensive research has been done on music programming on New Zealand radio during this period despite music having made up the bulk of programming. In order to research which jazz artists were broadcast, and at which times, I surveyed *New Zealand Radio Record and Electric Home Journal* (1927–1939), *The New Zealand Listener* (1939–1955), and broadcasting columns in the daily newspapers.

My survey of radio programming showed that although British recordings made up most of New Zealand's musical broadcast material over this period, American recordings were significantly represented and the proportion between the two was much more even than has been previously believed.<sup>164</sup> I estimate that as much as forty percent of jazz recordings were American in origin and this figure increased in the post-war period. This is a significantly different finding from the received wisdom about popular music on New Zealand radio during this period which can be boiled down to 'it was all British'.

Throughout the 1930s there appears to have been a gradual increase in the number and type of jazz records that were broadcast although the official preference remained centred on society bands or those jazz bands that were lighter on improvisation and other 'hot' musical devices. However, there was one major exception to the rule: from 1937 station 2YA's *Modern Dance Music Session* (later renamed *Rhythm on Record*) was hosted by jazz fan Arthur Pearce. As discussed in Chapter Three, Pearce actively worked to increase the proportion and variety of jazz in the programmes he broadcast. *Rhythm on Record* marked a significant turning point in the broadcast of jazz in New Zealand. With the knowledgeable Pearce as host, the programme quickly became very popular among jazz fans and musicians and became essential listening for anyone wanting to learn about jazz.

Pearce was passionate about bringing jazz, in all its forms, to as wide an audience as possible. *Rhythm on Record* was the most influential jazz programme on New Zealand radio across

---

<sup>164</sup> See James Belich, *Paradise Reforged: A History of the New Zealanders from the 1880s to the Year 2000*, Auckland: Penguin, 2001, 251–253.



its forty-year span. It was *the* programme to listen to for fans and musicians, because of the music that Pearce chose to broadcast and the minutiae about the artists and recordings that he imparted in each programme. In many ways *Rhythm on Record* and Pearce were the primary educators of New Zealand jazz fans and musicians during this period.

From these changes I conclude that, despite the complaints from musicians and fans that there was no jazz on New Zealand radio, there was in fact a reasonable amount. Whether it was the jazz that they wanted to hear or whether the music broadcast matched their perceptions of jazz, of course, is another matter entirely.

The advent of World War Two forced many changes on broadcasting in New Zealand and on the jazz scene. As the censorship regulations forced restrictions on broadcasting, and in particular relay broadcasts, the use of in-studio bands became important to both broadcasting staff and musicians. The use of bands in the studio during the war had many positive aspects for broadcasting staff and musicians. For broadcasting staff it was far easier to regulate the repertoire performed and environmental factors such as the audience. For musicians it gave them experience in the studio environment and microphone recording techniques. The increase in using studio bands also planted the seeds for a significant, long-term project for New Zealand radio which greatly affected the New Zealand jazz scene in the immediate post-war years: the radio bands and the studio band system.

Two other changes during the war that had a long-term impact on both broadcasting and the jazz scene were directly related to the residence of the United States troops in New Zealand. The first was the significant increase of American material (including jazz) that was broadcast from late 1942 to give American soldiers a taste of home during their time in New Zealand. Although aimed at the American audience in New Zealand it was impossible to prevent local audiences from tuning, and the American music broadcast influenced the tastes of New Zealand jazz musicians and fans.

Second, and more significantly, my research on American Expeditionary Station [AES] Auckland revealed that it had an extraordinary impact on the jazz scene in New Zealand despite broadcasting for only a short time in 1944. The lasting impact of AES Auckland on New Zealand fans came from the tangible difference in broadcasting style and material compared to other stations, and the fact that jazz was not restricted to certain times of the day. Jazz fans and musicians considered the variety of material to be educational: they were hearing bands and artists that they did not regularly hear on New Zealand radio. The differences in material and broadcast style changed how New Zealand radio listeners thought that radio could, or should be presented. It also

led listeners to question the policies that New Zealand radio held over presentation, and what was considered acceptable broadcast material.

The war also provided the catalyst for the creation of the studio band, and the idea of using bands in the studio for programmes gained support in the immediate post-war years. This led to the creation of the radio band system in 1948 by the New Zealand Broadcasting Service's Head of Dance Music, Bob Bothamley. The radio band system had a significant impact on the shape of the jazz scene, on the hierarchy among jazz musicians, and on changing skill sets needed by jazz musicians. The system ensured that each of the station in the main centres of New Zealand had excellent station bands. As described in Chapter Seven, the system gathered the best of New Zealand's jazz musicians, and melded them into a variety of band combinations. This system gave musicians the opportunity to perform in what were essentially 'all-star' bands and it gave opportunities to younger musicians to lead and arrange for the bands.

The short turnaround time for arranging, rehearsal and broadcast for the radio bands led to a rapid development of musicians' skill sets. This was a musical 'hot-house' in which musicians were required to develop the requisite skill sets quickly, or face not being invited back for a return audition. This rapid development of skills made the musicians involved in high demand for live gigs, whether in local bands, or for touring musicians such as Nat 'King' Cole. It also made these musicians highly desirable for recording gigs in the fledgling New Zealand recording industry.

The transition from dancing to listening and the development of the radio band system significantly changed what jazz musicians thought were top class gigs and which musicians were at the top of the hierarchy in the post-war decade. By 1955 the top gigs and bands were no longer in the cabarets, and they rarely played for dances. Instead it was the radio bands performing in the studio for listening audiences that were considered to be the best of the best.

### ***8.3 Did jazz gain a New Zealand identity?***

Throughout this thesis, I have demonstrated that jazz was disseminated to New Zealanders through a number of sources, and was influenced by musicians primarily from the United States, Great Britain, and Australia. However, New Zealanders also responded to jazz from their own cultural contexts, with only occasional references to the originating cultures (see Chapters Three, Four and Seven). So can it be said that jazz, as performed in New Zealand during this period, gained an explicitly New Zealand identity?

As was demonstrated in Chapters 1–4, the influences on jazz in New Zealand from Britain, Australia and the United States occurred in near-equal measure, particularly in the 1920s and 1930s. Australia had the greatest 'live' influences, through the vaudeville circuit and later individual tours, but Great Britain and the United States were the source of most jazz recordings that were imported and broadcast on New Zealand radio. These influences mirrored the wider socio-cultural influences that were occurring in New Zealand at that time and historians have occasionally questioned the extent of an explicit New Zealand identity during this period.<sup>165</sup>

Whether or not there was an explicit New Zealand identity during the 1920s and 1930s for the country as a whole is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, with regards to a New Zealand jazz identity there are a number of factors that give rise to the potential for a New Zealand jazz identity.

Through the models of globalisation, recontextualisation and localisation that I applied to this thesis, I argued that while New Zealanders would be able to understand some of the cultural experiences such as racial tension surrounding jazz in the source countries on an intellectual level, their physical and cultural distance from them meant that New Zealanders would not be able to experience them or interpret them through jazz in the same way. This meant that New Zealanders could only be partially informed about the original ideologies associated with it in the countries of origin. This in turn led to the creation of *alternate* models of jazz based on the individual and collective musico-cultural experiences of jazz musicians and fans in New Zealand.

It might be argued that the creation of alternate models of jazz could have led to the emergence of a distinctive New Zealand jazz identity. Certainly, during the 1920s and 1930s, the lack of repertoire and performance practice boundaries led to New Zealand jazz musicians using local songs as well as the hits imported from the United States, Great Britain or Australia. The Dixieland style arrangement of *E Puritai Tama E* by Epi Shalfoon, and his Melody Boys (see Chapter Four) is an excellent example of how New Zealand musicians could recontextualise jazz and lay the foundations for a New Zealand jazz identity. Unfortunately, the lack of information regarding jazz repertoire during these decades makes it difficult to determine how important a part New Zealand songs really played in the local jazz repertoire. Saxophonist Elsie Doyle (né Nixon) recalled in her oral history interview with Auckland librarian Patricia French that the repertoire for jazz bands in the late 1920s and early 1930s was the latest popular songs, and songs from musicals

---

<sup>165</sup> See, for example, James Belich, Keith Sinclair, Peter Gibbons and Miles Fairburn listed in the bibliography.

and films, rather than the tunes that would later be considered part of the standard jazz repertoire.<sup>166</sup> Although it is hard to say with any certainty that locally produced repertoire was a mainstay of New Zealand jazz repertoire Doyle's statement suggests that popular local songs, such as *E Purutai Tama E* would likely have been included in the jazz repertoire.

Despite lack of detailed information about the repertoire, I argue that the absence of prescriptive practices (such as instrumentation and performance practices) for the jazz scene in New Zealand had the potential to assist in the creation of a local jazz identity. As described in Chapters Three and Four, there was so much disparate and contradictory information about what jazz was and how it sounded that there was considerable scope to create a New Zealand jazz sound. *If* there was a New Zealand jazz sound and local identity during the period studied in this thesis, I believe that it was most likely to have occurred in the pre–World War Two decades.

The advent of World War Two and the residency of United States armed forces in New Zealand between 1942 and 1945 hindered the potential consolidation of a New Zealand jazz identity. Although only a few New Zealand musicians performed with the American forces' bands, many New Zealand jazz musicians were strongly influenced by the musical technique, style and performance practices of the American musicians, and this influence continued long after the Americans had left New Zealand.

The repertoire of the American forces' bands also had a great influence on jazz in New Zealand. Pianist Jim Foley noted that when he performed with the 290th Army Band and the Tropicats, he learned several hundred 'jam tunes' (standard repertoire for those bands).<sup>167</sup> This standard repertoire filtered out to his Auckland colleagues and subsequently branched out across the jazz scene.

By the official end of the residency (1944), repertoire acquired from American forces bands was included in the New Zealand jazz repertoire. The early commercial jazz recordings of the late 1940s demonstrate how influential the American repertoire was on New Zealand jazz. Standard repertoire such as *Honeysuckle Rose*, *St. Louis Blues*, and *'S Wonderful*, were common songs for New Zealand jazz musicians to record, whereas few local songs or original compositions were recorded for commercial release.<sup>168</sup> The jazz concerts of the 1950s also demonstrate the influence of

---

<sup>166</sup> Elsie Doyle interviewed by Patricia French, Auckland Public Library Oral History Collection.

<sup>167</sup> E.J. Wansburne, 'Jim Foley' *Jukebox* 1946, 2-3.

<sup>168</sup> See *TANZA Catalogue* (6th ed.) or *The Stebbing Catalogue* compiled by Dennis O. Huggard, 2009 and 2008 respectively.

American repertoire on New Zealand jazz. The programme for the first jazz concert in Auckland (7 August 1950), for example, consisted entirely of American standard jazz repertoire.

The influence of American repertoire on New Zealand jazz in the post-war decade was partially a reflection of the direct influence of the Americans in New Zealand during the war. It was also a reflection of the changes in cultural hegemony experienced by New Zealand as a whole as American cultural influence began to replace British.<sup>169</sup> The changes in the wider New Zealand culture also affected the jazz scene; the post-war influence of the United States on jazz in New Zealand therefore can be seen as having two connections, which made the Americanisation of New Zealand jazz inevitable.

So to return to the question posed at the start of this section: did jazz gain a New Zealand identity? In my opinion, in spite of the potential in the 1920s and 1930s, jazz did *not* gain a specifically New Zealand identity during the period 1920–1955. This is primarily because of the strong influences from the United States, but also the influences from Britain and Australia. Certainly by 1955 the New Zealand jazz scene appears to have whole-heartedly embraced American musical trends and repertoire as was demonstrated in Chapter 7. However, the question of whether there was a New Zealand jazz identity, is an area that will benefit from further research into repertoire and performance practices from across the twentieth century.

I do believe, however, that there were strands of New Zealand-ness in the jazz scene. Although general performance practices and repertoire were heavily influenced by outside forces, strands of New Zealand identity can be seen through the ways that New Zealanders responded to and recontextualised jazz. This can also be seen in the ways that musicians used local repertoire and different combinations of instruments and how jazz was adapted to the local conditions and venues. The creation of fan organisations and the activities of those organisations along with the interpretations of, and reader responses to, jazz in the popular press, were just some of the ways in which New Zealanders actively engaged with a New Zealand-centred jazz. Further research on these individual aspects of how New Zealanders responded to and recontextualised jazz (such as jam sessions, representations in the press or on the radio) is needed to explore fully the strands of New Zealand identity in jazz and to see how jazz fits within the changing sensibilities of New Zealand society across the period 1920–1955.

---

<sup>169</sup> Mein Smith, *Remaking*, 88, 104.

## 9 Appendix: Band Personnel Charts

### 9.1 Chapter 3 Creating the New Zealand Jazz Scene: Dissemination and Influences

Original 1931 Band	Late 1931 Band	1932 Band
Tut Coltman <i>Trumpet/Cornet</i>	Tut Coltman	Tut Coltman
Cluny Macpherson <i>Banjo</i>	Cluny Macpherson	Cluny Macpherson
Jimmy Coates <i>Unknown</i>	Tommy Stratton <i>Saxophone</i>	Syd French <i>Saxophone</i>
Jimmy Downes <i>Unknown</i>	Jerry Connolly <i>Drums</i>	Calude Bennett <i>Piano</i>
Bill Thompson <i>Unknown</i>	Unknown	Allen Brown <i>Drums</i>
Frank Chapple <i>Unknown</i>	Unknown	Unknown

Original 1938 Band	1939 Band
Sammy Lee <i>Drums</i>	Sammy Lee <i>Drums</i>
Bob Reid <i>Brass, vocals, arr.</i>	Bob Reid <i>Brass, vocals</i>
Pete McMurray <i>Trumpet, alto saxophone</i>	Pete McMurray <i>Trumpet, alto saxophone</i>
Bill Arstad <i>Trombone</i>	Bill Arstad <i>Trombone</i>
Neil Thurgate <i>Trumpet, alto saxophone arr.</i>	Roy Lester <i>Reeds, trombone, violin</i>
Stan Grant <i>Saxophone</i>	Norm D'Arth <i>Saxophones, brass</i>
Len Hawkins <i>Piano</i>	Len Hawkins
Del Davies <i>Bass, vocals</i>	Ron Bush <i>Bass, guitar</i>
Joy Rovelleville <i>Vocals</i>	Joy Rovelleville

Original 1936 Band	Mid-1937 Peter Pan and touring band
Theo Walters	Theo Walters

<b>Original 1936 Band</b>	<b>Mid-1937 Peter Pan and touring band</b>
<i>Saxophone</i>	
Dutchy Turner <i>Saxophone</i>	Baden Brown <i>Saxophone</i>
George Dobson <i>Trumpet</i>	Jimmy Watters <i>Saxophone</i>
Bernie Duggan <i>Piano</i>	Vern Wilson <i>Trumpet</i>
Sal Martin <i>Drums</i>	Phil Campbell <i>Trumpet</i>
	Bernie Duggan <i>Piano</i>
	Max Roberts/George Campbell <i>Bass</i>
	Sal Martin <i>Drums</i>

## 9.2 Chapter 4 Creating The New Zealand Jazz Scene: Responses

<b>Bob Adams 1922 Band</b>
Bob Adams <i>Percussion/saxophone</i>
F. Hunter <i>Trombone</i>
Charles Adams <i>Cornet</i>
A. Harris <i>Cornet</i>
Freda Hunter <i>Violin</i>
Rita Sullivan <i>Piano</i>
R. Edwards <i>Bass</i>

<b>Walter Smith Circa 1927</b>
Walter Smith <i>Saxophone</i>
Sidney David Kamau <i>Clarinet</i>
?

<b>Walter Smith</b> <b>Circa 1927</b>
<i>Trumpet</i>
? <i>Trombone</i>
? <i>Saxophone</i>
Marjorie Greening <i>Piano</i>
Dinah Greening <i>Banjo</i>

<b>Shalfoon Melody Boys</b>			
<b>1925</b>	<b>1932</b>	<b>1935 (Rotorua)</b>	<b>1935 (Auckland)</b>
Epi Shalfoon <i>Piano/saxophone</i>	Epi Shalfoon <i>Saxophone</i>	Epi Shalfoon <i>Saxophone</i>	Epi Shalfoon <i>Saxophone</i>
Eugene (Tony) Shalfoon <i>Violin</i>	Tony Shalfoon <i>Saxophone</i>	Tony Shalfoon <i>Saxophone</i>	Trevor Blomfiled <i>Trumpet</i>
Ernie Wells <i>Saxophone</i>	Jim Aspen <i>Saxophone</i>	Jim Aspen <i>Saxophone</i>	Ernie Butters <i>Saxophone</i>
Gus Wells <i>Saxophone</i>	Hugh Anderson <i>Trumpet</i>	Ron Knowles <i>Banjo/violin</i>	Eric Munson <i>Piano</i>
Walter Burton <i>Drums</i>	Eric Munsen <i>Piano</i>	Colin Castleton <i>Tuba/bass</i>	Frank Condon <i>Drums</i>
	Ron Knowles <i>Banjo/violin</i>	Norman Steele ?	
	Colin Castleton <i>Tuba/Bass</i>	Dick Turnbull ?	
	Hugh Anderson <i>Drums</i>		

## Roster of Musicians 1935–1953

Tony Shalfoon saxophone  
 Nolan Rafferty trumpet  
 Bob Griffiths trumpet  
 Frank Gibson Sr drums  
 Lew Campbell trumpet  
 Bob Ewing bass  
 Albie Parkinson bass  
 Owen Barrett piano  
 Jack Clague trumpet  
 Peter Burrell ?  
 Julian Lee trumpet/saxophone/piano  
 Derek Heine saxophone/clarinet  
 Lloyd Sly ?



George Vodanovitch clarinet  
 Dale Alderton trombone  
 Reo Shalfoon vocals

**Elsie Nixon's Gala Girls**
**Circa 1931**

Elsie Nixon

*Saxophone/clarinet*

Eve Hewitt

*Violin*

Dinah Greening

*Banjo*

Alice 'Al' Clarke

*Piano*
**9.3 Chapter 5 World War Two and Effects on the Local Jazz Scene**
**Centennial Exhibition Cabaret**
**Band**

Manuel Raymond

*Leader*

Ken Waldridge

*Saxophone*

Ken MacDonald

*Saxophone*

Lauri Paddi

*Saxophone*

George Taylor

*Trumpet*

Phil Campbell

*Trumpet*

Doug Lowrie

*Trumpet*

Jack Roberts

*Piano*

George Campbell

*Bass*

Alan Brown

*Drums*
**RNZAF Swing Wing**
**1944**

Theo Walters

*Leader/saxophone*

Jim Warren

*Trumpet*

Cliff Inns

<b>RNZAF Swing Wing 1944</b>
<i>Trumpet</i>
Nip Spring <i>Trumpet</i>
Doug Kelly <i>Trumpet</i>
Roy Miller <i>Trombone</i>
Tia Bennett <i>Trombone</i>
Bill Eggerton <i>Trombone</i>
Bob Girvan <i>Saxophone</i>
Jack McCaw <i>Saxophone</i>
Keith Harris <i>Saxophone</i>
Pat Watters <i>Saxophone</i>
Frank Robb <i>Saxophone</i>
? <i>Piano</i>
? <i>Bass</i>
? <i>Drums</i>

<b>Kiwi Concert Party Band 1941–1943</b>	<b>1944–1945</b>
<b>Cyril Pasco</b> <i>Violin</i>	Noel Habgood <i>Saxophone/clarinet</i>
<b>Fred Mumme</b> <i>Violin</i>	Ces. Day <i>Saxophone/clarinet</i>
<b>Hughie Bolton</b> <i>Saxophone/clarinet</i>	Hughie Bolton <i>Saxophone/clarinet</i>
<b>Dave Stafford</b> <i>Saxophone/clarinet</i>	Dave Stafford <i>Saxophone/clarinet</i>
<b>Noel Habgood</b> <i>Saxophone/clarinet</i>	Phil Campbell <i>Trumpet</i>
<b>Bill Taylor</b> <i>Saxophone/clarinet</i>	Lew Campbell <i>Trumpet</i>
<b>Bill Sharley</b> <i>Trumpet</i>	Lindsay Brown <i>Trumpet</i>
<b>Lindsay Brown</b>	Chas. Bye

<b>Kiwi Concert Party Band</b>	
<b>1941–1943</b>	<b>1944–1945</b>
<i>Trumpet</i>	<i>Trumpet</i>
<b>Tom Heads</b> <i>Trumpet</i>	Des Blundell <i>Trombone</i>
<b>Jack Moss</b> <i>Trumpet</i>	Alan Sundborn <i>Steel guitar</i>
<b>Terry Vaughn</b> <i>Piano (Nov. 1941 leader)</i>	Chas Patterson <i>Piano</i>
<b>Hector Bell</b> <i>Drums/percussion</i>	George Campbell <i>Bass</i>
<b>Snowy Wilson</b> <i>Piano accordion</i>	Allan Brown <i>Drums</i>

#### 9.4 Chapter 6 The American Invasion 1942-1945: Interaction and Response

<b>Artie Shaw Navy Band NZ Tour 1943</b>	
<i>Trumpets</i>	Frank Beach, Conrad Gozzo, John Best, Max Kaminsky
<i>Trombones</i>	Earl Le Favre, Tasso Harris, Vahey 'Tak' Takorian
<i>Saxophones</i>	Mack Pierce, Ralph La Polla (alto); Sam Donohue, Joe Aglora (tenor); Charles Wade (baritone)
<i>Piano</i>	Roscoe 'Rocky' Coluccio
<i>Accordion</i>	Harold Wax
<i>Guitar</i>	Al Horesh
<i>Bass</i>	Barney Spieler
<i>Drums</i>	Dave Tough
<i>Arrangers</i>	David Rose, Dick Jones

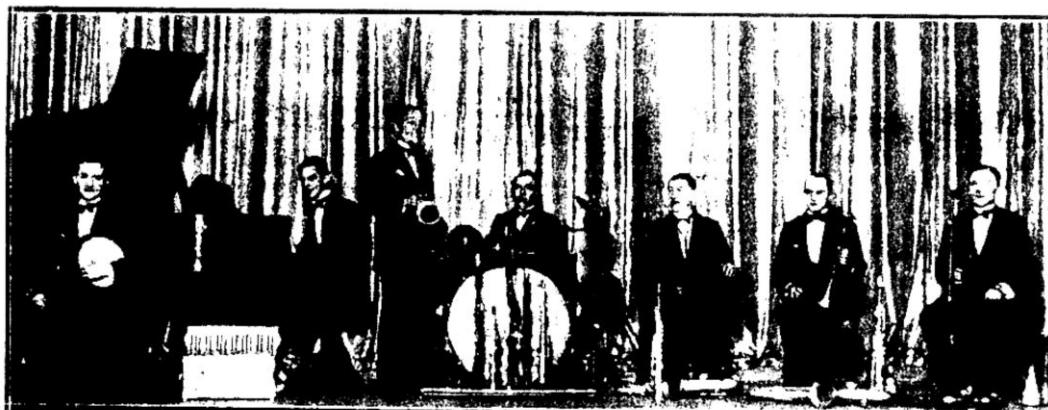
#### 9.5 Chapter 7 The Post-War Decade: Developments and Transitions

<b>First Jazz Concert, Auckland Town Hall, August 7 1950</b>	
<i>Saxophone</i>	Julian Lee (alto); Colin Martin (tenor)
<i>Trumpet</i>	Murray Tanner
<i>Trombone</i>	Dale Alderton
<i>Tin Whistle</i>	Hughie Gordon
<i>Guitars</i>	Thomson Yandell; Mark Kahi (solo); Dick Hobday (rhythm)
<i>Vocals</i>	Mavis Rivers
<i>Piano</i>	Crombie Murdoch
<i>Bass</i>	George Campbell
<i>Drums</i>	Denny O'Brien

## 10 Appendix: Selected Photographs of Musicians and Bands



Bob Adams Jazz Band circa 1922, *New Zealand Herald* 13 May 1981.



Bert Ralton and his World Famous Savoy Havana Band, *Dominion*, 10 January 1925.



Epi Shalfoon's Melody Boys circa 1927, *Jukebox: New Zealand's Swing Magazine* September 1946.



Dixieland Internationals, *New Zealand Radio Record and Electric Home Journal* 19 August 1927.



Walter Smith's Aloha Jazz Band, *New Zealand Radio Record and Electric Home Journal* 12 August 1927.



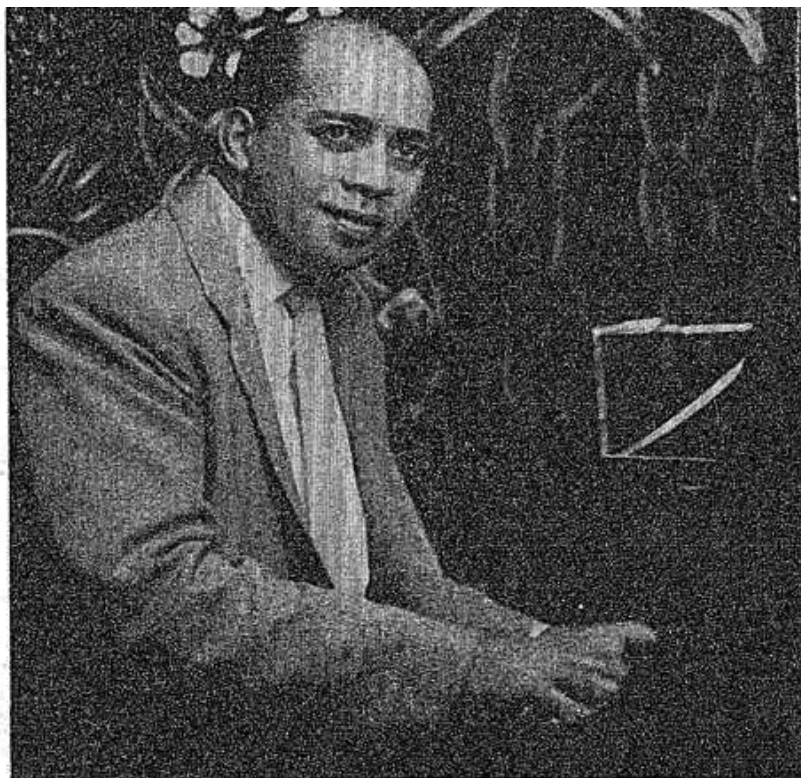
Theo Walters and his Personality Band, *New Zealand Radio Record and Electric Home Journal* 2 October 1936.



Epi Shalfoon Melody Boys 1947, *Central Suburbs Leader* 20 June 1967.



George Campbell, *Te Ao Hou* June 1959.



*Lew Campbell, Te Ao Hou June 1959.*



*Mark Kahi, Te Ao Hou June 1959.*





Arthur Pearce circa 1950, *The New Zealand Listener* July 1977.



Pat McMinn, *Auckland Star* 25 November 1961.

## 11 Bibliography

### 11.1 Books, Journals and Theses

Adorno, Theodor. 'Culture Industry Reconsidered', trans. Anson G. Rabinbach, *New German Critique* 6 (1975), 12-19.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Essays on Music*, Theodor W. Adorno, ed. Richard Leppert, trans. Susan H. Gillespie, Berkley CA: University of California Press, 2002.

Albert, Jane. *House of Hits: The Great Untold Story of Australia's First Family of Music*. Prahan, Vic.: Hardie Grant, 2010.

Anderson, Bruce. *Story of the New Zealand Record Industry*. Wellington, 1984.

Appadurai, Arjun. 'Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy'. In Bruce Robbins ed. *The Phantom Public Sphere*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993, 269-295.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996.

\_\_\_\_\_. ed. *Globalization*. Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2001.

Avery, Ken. *Where Are the Camels? A New Zealand Dance Band Diary*. Wellington: First Edition, 2010.

Ballantine, Christopher. *Marabi Nights: Early South African Jazz and Vaudeville*. Johannesburg: Raven, 1993.

Baltzis, Alexandros G. 'Globalisation and Musical Culture', *Acta Musicologica*, 77/1 (2005), 137-150.

Barber, Laurie. *War Memorial: A Chronology of New Zealand and World War II*. Auckland: Heinemann Reed, 1989.

Bauman, Richard and Charles Briggs. 'Poetics and Performance as Critical Perspectives on Language and Social Life' in *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 19 (1990), 59-88.

Beckett, Mary Christine. 'The American Invasion: From Manners Street to Cuba Street'. University of Auckland (2009).

Belich, James. *Paradise Reforged: A History of New Zealanders from the 1880s to the Year 2000*. Auckland: Penguin Press, 2001.

- Bisset, Andrew. *Black Roots, White Flowers: A History of Jazz in Australia*. Revised ed. Sydney: ABC Enterprises, 1987.
- Blake, Jody. *Le Tumulte Noir: Modernist Art and Popular Entertainment in Jazz-Age Paris, 1900-1930*. University Park PA: Pennsylvania State University, 1999.
- Bourke, Chris. *Blue Smoke: The Lost Dawn of New Zealand Popular Music 1918-1964*. Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2010.
- Brown, Robin. 'Americanization at its Best?: The Globalization of Jazz'. In M.I. Franklin ed. *Resounding International Relations*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005, 88-109.
- Buhler, James. 'Frankfurt School Blues'. In Berthold Hoekner ed. *Apparitions: New Perspectives on Adorno and Twentieth Century Music*, New York: Routledge 2006, 103-130.
- Caldwell, Doug. *My Life in the Key of Jazz*. Christchurch: CPIT, 2010.
- Christman, Trent. *Brass Button Broadcasters*. Paducah KY: Turner, 1992.
- Collins, Ken G. *Broadcasting Grave and Gay*. Christchurch: Caxton, 1967.
- Coney, Sandra. *Every Girl: A Social History of Women and the YWCA in Auckland*. Auckland: YWCA, 1986.
- Day, Patrick. *The Radio Years: A History of Broadcasting in New Zealand*. 2 vols. Vol. 1. Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1994.
- Deveaux, Scott. "The Emergence of the Jazz Concert, 1935-1945." *American Music* 7/1 (1989), 6-29.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Birth of Bebop: A Social and Musical History*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997.
- Deveaux, Scott, and Gary Giddons. *Jazz*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2009.
- Dodge, Roger Pryor. *Hot Jazz and Jazz Dance*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- Ebbett, Eve. *When the Boys Were Away: New Zealand Women in World War II*. Wellington: A.H. Reed, 1984.
- Fairburn, Miles. 'Is There a Good Case for New Zealand Exceptionalism?' In Tony Ballantyne and Brian Moloughney eds. *Disputed Histories: Imagining New Zealand's Pasts*. Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2006.
- Fyfe, Judith. *War Stories our Mothers Never Told Us*. Auckland: Penguin, 1995.

- Gendron, Bernard. 'Theodor Adorno Meets the Cadillacs'. In Tania Modleski ed. *Studies in Entertainment: Critical Approaches to Mass Culture*, Bloomington IN: Indiana University Press, 1986, 18-36.
- Gibbons, Peter. 'Cultural Colonization and National Identity'. *New Zealand Journal of History*, 36/1 (2002), 5-17.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 'The Far Side of the Search for Identity: Reconsidering New Zealand History'. *New Zealand Journal of History*, 37/1 (2003) 38-49.
- Giddons, Anthony. *The Consequences of Modernity*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990.
- Giordano, Ralph G. *Social Dancing in America. Vol. 2 Lindy Hop to Hip hop 1901–2000*. Westport Conn.: Greenwood, 2007.
- Griffiths, John. 'Popular Culture and Modernity: Dancing in New Zealand Society 1920–1945.' *Journal of Social History*, Spring (2008), 611-632.
- Hadlow, Martin. "'The Mosquito Network" American Military Broadcasting in the South–West Pacific During World War Two' Paper presented at: The Chief of Army Military History Conference 2008.
- Hall, John. *The History of Broadcasting in New Zealand 1920 - 1954*. Wellington: Broadcasting Corporation of New Zealand, 1980.
- Hardie, Richard and Allan Thomas eds. *Jazz Aotearoa: Notes Towards a New Zealand History*. Wellington: Steele Roberts, 2009.
- Hirst, Paul, and Grahame Thompson. *Globalization in Question*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996.
- Ho, Wai-Chung. 'Between Globalisation and Localisation: A Study of Hong Kong Popular Music', *Popular Music*, 22/2 (2003), 143-157.
- Hobsbawm, Eric. *Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Horkheimer, Max and Theodor Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. John Cumming, New York: Herder and Herder, 1969
- Huggard, Dennis O. *Artie Shaw in New Zealand 1943, New Zealand Series*. Auckland, 2007.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Crombie Murdoch Discography, New Zealand Jazz Series*. Auckland, 2002.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *A Discographical Listing of Jazz Recordings of New Zealand 1930-1980, New Zealand Series*. Auckland, 2009.

- \_\_\_\_\_. *Ken Avery Discography, New Zealand Jazz Series*. Auckland, 2001.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Stebbing Catalogue, New Zealand Series*. Auckland, 2008.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Tanza Catalogue, New Zealand Series*. Auckland, 2009.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Thoughts of Musician Desmond "Spike" Donovan. Edited by Dennis O. Huggard*. Vol. 5, New Zealand Series, 2009.
- Johnson, Bruce. *The Inaudible Music: Jazz Gender and Australian Modernity*. Strawberry Hills, NSW: Currency, 2000.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Oxford Companion to Australian Jazz*. Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1987.
- Jackson, Jeffrey H. *Making Jazz French: Music and Modern Life in Interwar Paris*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2003.
- Jordan, Matthew F. *Le Jazz: Jazz and French Cultural Identity*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010.
- Jules, Jo. *A Passion for Jazz: The Christchurch Jazz Scene Then and Now*. Christchurch: Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology School of Performing Arts, 2009.
- King, Michael. *Te Puea, a Life*. Auckland: Reed, 2003.
- Laurenson, Helen B. "Going Up? – Going Down!" the Rise and Fall of Auckland Department Stores 1920–1960.' University of Auckland (2003).
- Lewis, Laurie. *Arthur and the Nights at the Turntable: The Life and Times of a Jazz Broadcaster*. London: Excalibur Press, 1996.
- Lissington, M.P. *New Zealand and the United States 1840–1944*, Wellington: A. Shearer, 1972.
- MacArthur, Jan and Jean Gordon. 'American Women and Domestic Consumption 1800–1920: Four Interpretive Themes'. *Journal of American Culture* 8/3 (2004), 35-46.
- McGibbon, Ian. *New Zealand and the Second World War: The People, the Battles and the Legacy*. Auckland: Hodder Moa Beckett, 2004.
- McKay, George. *Circular Breathing: The Cultural Politics of Jazz in Britain*. London: Duke University Press, 2005.
- McKinnon, Malcolm. 'New Zealand and the World'. In Keith Sinclair ed. *The Oxford Illustrated History of New Zealand*, Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1996, 237-266.

- Meehan, Norman. *Serious Fun: The Life and Music of Mike Nock*. Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2010.
- Mein-Smith, Phillippa. *A Concise History of New Zealand*. Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Mein-Smith, Philippa, Peter Hempenstall and Shaun Goldfinch. *Remaking the Tasman World*. Christchurch: Canterbury University Press, 2008.
- Mirams, Gordon. *Speaking Candidly: Films and People in New Zealand*. Hamilton: Paul's Book Arcade, 1945.
- Moore, H. *Inside British Jazz: Crossing Borders of Race, Nation and Class*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007
- Müller-Doohm, Stefan. *Adorno, a Biography*, trans. Rodney Livingstone, Cambridge: Polity, 2005.
- Nichol, Elizabeth. 'Music Publishing'. In Penny Griffith, Ross Harvey and Keith Maslan eds. *Book and Print in New Zealand*. Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1997, 151-152.
- Nott, James. *Music for the People: Popular Music and Dance in Interwar Britain*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Olssen, Erik. 'Depression and War'. In Keith Sinclair ed. *The Oxford Illustrated History of New Zealand*, Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1996, 211-236.
- Parr, Alison. *Home: Civilian New Zealanders Remember the Second World War*. Auckland: Penguin, 2010.
- Parsonage, C. *The Evolution of Jazz in Britain, 1880 - 1935*. Burlington, Ashgate, 2005.
- Porter, Lewis. *Jazz: A Century of Change - Readings and New Essays*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2004.
- Reed, John E. *Sing as We Go*. Wellington: Raupo, 1944.
- Richard Bauman, and Charles L. Briggs. 'Poetics and Performance as Critical Perspectives in Language and Social Life.' *Annual Review of Anthropology* 19 (1990), 59-88.
- Sanjeck, Russell. *American Popular Music and Its Business: The First Four Hundred Years. Vol. III From 1900 to 1984*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988.
- Scruton, Roger. *Modern Culture*, London: Continuum (2nd ed) 2005.

Seeger, Anthony. 'Ethnography of Music.' In Helen Myers ed. *Ethnomusicology, an Introduction*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co./ Macmillan Press, 1992, 88-109.

Sheirtcliff, Reo. 'Dancing in the Dark: A Memoir of Epi Shalfoon.' *Music in New Zealand*, no. 10 (1990), 40-45.

Shirley, Henry. *Just a Bloody Piano Player*. Auckland: Price, 1971.

Shope, Bradley. 'Anglo-Indian Identity, Knowledge, and Power: Western Ballroom Music in Lucknow'. *The Drama Review*, 48/4 (2004), 167-182.

\_\_\_\_\_. 'They Treat Us White Folks Fine: African American Musicians and the Popular Music Terrain in Late-Colonial India'. *South Asian Popular Culture*, 5/2 (2007), 97-116.

Sinclair, Keith. *A History of New Zealand* revised ed. Auckland: Penguin, 1991.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Oxford Illustrated History of New Zealand*, Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Staff, Brian, and Sheran Ashley. *For the Record: A History of the Recording Industry in New Zealand*. Auckland: David Bateman, 2002.

Strinati, Dominic. *An Introduction to Theories of Popular Culture*, London: Routledge, 1995.

Tallis, Michael, and Joan Tallis. *The Silent Showman Sir George Tallis, the Man Behind the World's Largest Entertainment Organisation of the 1920s*. Adelaide: Wakefield Press, 1999.

Taylor, Nancy M. *The New Zealand People at War: The Home Front Vol. 1*. Wellington: Department of Internal Affairs, 1986.

Taylor, Timothy D. *Beyond Exoticism: Western Music and the World*. London: Duke University Press, 2007.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Music and the Rise of Radio in Twenties America: Technological Imperialism, Socialization, and the Transformation of Intimacy." In Paul D. Greene and Thomas Porcello eds. *Wired for Sound: Engineering and Technologies in Sonic Cultures*. Middletown Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 2005, 245-268.

Thomas, A., Ed. *Music In New Zealand: A Reader from the 1940s*. The Canterbury Series of Bibliographies, Catalogues and Source Documents in Music. Christchurch: University of Canterbury, 2000.

Thomas, A. *Music Is Where You Find It: Music in the Town of Hawera, 1946, an Historical Ethnography*. Wellington, Music Books New Zealand. 2004

Thomson, John Mansfield. *The Oxford History of New Zealand Music*. Auckland: Oxford

University Press, 1991.

Vaughan, Terry. *Whistle as You Go: The Story of the Kiwi Concert Party and Terry Vaughan*. Auckland: Random House, 1995.

Ward, Aleisha. "'Anzac, Hollywood and Home': Constructing a New Zealand Jazz Culture.' In Henry Johnson ed. *Many Voices: Music and National Identity in Aotearoa/New Zealand*. Newcastle UK: Cambridge Scholars, 2010, 93-102.

White, Georgina. *Light Fantastic: Dance Floor Courtship in New Zealand*. Auckland: HarperCollins, 2007.

Whiteoak, John. *Playing Ad Lib: Improvisatory Music in Australia 1983–1970*. Strawberry Hills NSW: Currency, 1999.

Witkin, Robert W. *Adorno on Music*, London: Routledge, 1998.

### **11.2 Archival Sources**

Dennis Huggard Jazz Archive, Alexander Turnbull Library

Royal New Zealand Air Force Band Papers, Archives New Zealand

Kiwi Concert Party Collection, Archives New Zealand

Ken Avery Papers University of Otago Hocken Library

### **11.3 Periodicals**

Auckland Star

Australian Music Maker and Dance Band News

Colonialist

Dominion

Ellesmere Guardian

Evening Post

Jukebox: New Zealand's Swing Magazine

Melody Maker

Music In New Zealand

New Zealand Herald



New Zealand Listener

New Zealand Observer

New Zealand Radio Record and Electric Home Journal

New Zealand Truth

New Zealand Women's Weekly

Otago Daily Times

Press (Christchurch)

Swing!

Swing Session

Tempo

Wanganui Chronicle

#### ***11.4 Interviews and Communications***

Dale Alderton, 2002

Bernie Allen, 2002, 2008

Tony Ashby, 2008

Doug Caldwell, 2009

Lyn Christie, 2010

Frank Gibson Jr, 2010

Dennis Huggard, 2008

Mark Laurant, 2008

Calder Prescott, 2009

Jim Warren, 2008

John Williams, 2003