



Welcome to the November 2025 issue of the:

Brisbane Jazz Club Newsletter

Helen Abrahams - President's Message

November is passing quickly, and soon the festive season will be upon us. The Brisbane Jazz Club will continue to feature a diverse range of live jazz music performances until 21st December, finishing the year with our New Year's Eve special event with the **Mark Pradella Band and Peter Vance**.

I wish to give an overview of the new Management Committee: the individuals, their skills and current projects.

Alan Western, Vice President, has just completed a very successful two-day Brisbane Big Band Festival, and he continues the important task of finalising the BJC's contracts with every band that performs at our club.

David Herbert is focused on the planning and management of our extension. The brickwork is scheduled to start in January, which is exciting. I am confident it will make a real difference for band members and patrons while coming in, or very close to our budget.

David Tambyah, our new Treasurer, has moved seamlessly into the role, and he is researching issues with the Taxation Office to ensure compliance.

Meg Feenan, a new Committee member, is using her human resource management skills to make our communications between numerous volunteers and staff even better. We currently have 119 volunteers, including Duty Managers and 19 paid Bar/Front of House/Admin staff.

Cameron Jeffs is the central instigator and go-to person for *The New Generation of Jazz*. The final performance of this very successful new initiative, featuring **Emorphis**, a Queensland Conservatorium band, was astounding, with 'Jazz Rap' incorporating Hindu melodies.

Irene McLeod continues her essential and much-appreciated weekly task of designing and overseeing the production of all the printed material in the club and the design of all posters and the Gig Guide on our website. She had all the work covered even while overseas recently – a wonderful effort.

Michael Osmond has nobly undertaken the role of Secretary, for which, as the former secretary, I am so thankful. As well, he has assisted Cameron with grant applications. The most recent grant is the Lord Mayor's Better Suburbs Grant for funds for the extension. We will know whether we are successful in February.

Ian Lock continues his role of practical advice on Committee matters – a great asset, and ensures the lighting, cameras and sound are functioning for all our gigs.

Bob Drumgold has lifted the quality of BJC merchandise and initiated the monthly newsletter, both great community-focused projects. You may also see him working as Front of House staff.

Bernard Lakey is another new Committee member. We welcome his inquiring mind that questions our routines, identifies any lazy thinking and offers possible alternative solutions. It is an essential part of a good management Committee.

I hope you share with me confidence in the skill, commitment and energy of the current Management Committee. It builds on the shoulders of our previous President **David Herbert's** achievements and relies on the essential and professional work of our Administration team.

Helen Abrahams - President

Merchandise Update

We have been experiencing ongoing issues with rain in Brisbane over the past few weeks, so it is a good idea to purchase one of our fabulous Brisbane Jazz Club umbrellas to keep you dry in this rainy weather.

See our merchandise selection below and on the reverse side of our bar menu at the club.

BJC Merchandise 2025

Item	Members	Non-Members
T Shirts - Band Image	\$40	\$45
T Shirts - BJC Logo	\$35	\$40
Cap	\$25	\$30
Lanyard	\$10	\$12
Umbrella	\$40	\$45
Whisky Glass	\$16	\$20
Stubby Holder	\$12	\$15

Take a part of Brisbane Jazz Club home with you!

Monthly Gig Review- Festival Special

BJC has become quite adept at running festivals over the years.

We currently host four festivals throughout the year - **Oz Manouche** (Gypsy jazz), **Brisbane Vocal Jazz Festival**, **Brisbane Big Band Festival** and **Brisbane Youth Jazz Festival**.

The great thing about festivals is that they bring together lovers of particular genres of jazz, which heightens the enjoyment. In October, I had the great fun of attending one of the **Brisbane Vocal Jazz Festival** sessions - *Tripple Trouble* featuring **Dan Barnett**, **Lauren Dawes** and **George WashingMachine**. It is not often that we get such an array of talent with not one, not two, but three exceptionally gifted vocal musicians. Their combination of music, comedy and personality kept the audience transfixed for the whole night.

After an unexpectedly gentle start with the Mills Bros version of 'You Always Hurt the One You Love', they moved on to the Four Freshmen's style with a swinging version of 'Candy' featuring Dan on trombone and then a beautifully harmonious version of 'Moonlight Serenade'. Lauren then gave us a solo with 'Lullaby of Birdland' as a prelude to the raw

comedy of George with, would you believe, 'Who Put the Benzadrine in Mrs Murphy's Ovaltine'?

Dan showed the more romantic side of his voice with 'Getting Sentimental Over You' and the Jobim hit 'If You Never Come to Me', and all three showed their scatting skills with a really swingy rendition of 'Just You, Just Me'. One thing that amazed me was when having a chat with George during the interval I asked him how many of these 3-piece shows they had done together, and his answer was "Just two so far" - which proves the quality of the talent - you'd think they had done it for years! It also says much about the quality of our local musos who backed them - **the Paul Henderson Trio**.

Back on stage we were regaled with 'Bye Bye Blues', then George and Dan joined forces on 'When I Grow Too Old To Dream'. Swinging into 'Let Me Love You' and 'Moonglow', then led into 'One Note Samba' with Dan playing a solo on a Conch shell and the audience clapping in rhythm - what more variety could you ask for!? George singing with his violin surprised everyone with a charming version of 'If I Only Had a Brain' from *The Wizard of Oz*.

All good things must come to an end, and all three got together for 'Squeeze Me', which saw a fitting close to a memorable night.

These were intended to be reviews from October shows, but, because the theme is festivals, I have included the **Brisbane Big Band Festival** show from 1st November. After Oz Manouche, the BBBF is BJC's longest-running festival, starting in 2012. Such has been the success of this and the Youth Jazz Festival, that over the past few years we have been obliged to move to the spacious BEMAC auditorium, which is just around the corner from the BJC.

A typical big band features 5 saxes, 4 trumpets, 4 trombones, 4 rhythm section and one or two vocalists. On this occasion, we featured 5 bands - the 22-piece **Second Wind Big Band**, 21-piece **Jindalee Jazz Orchestra**, 19-piece **Swingalicious Big Band**, 18-piece **Pepperazzi Big Band** and the 20-piece **TNT Big Band** (first time at the festival for this band), with each band performing a 45-minute set. It is not unusual to see several musos playing in various bands at these festivals, which is a good opportunity for musos to get to know each other.

We were graced by a formal welcome to the Festival from our new President, **Helen Abrahams** and opened the show with **Second Wind Big Band**, led by **Louise Goodwin**, playing favourites such as 'Tangerine' and 'Sweet Georgia Brown'. On vocals, **Michael Thomas** got the crowd well involved with the "Hi Di Hi, Di Hi's" in a standout version of 'Minnie the Moocher'. The band closed with a great swing version of Australia's folk anthem 'Waltzing Matilda'.

Long-time loyal members of the festival, **Jindalee Jazz Orchestra**, led by **Mark Watkins**, showed how Latin American music now has a strong following in the jazz world, evidenced by their rendition of 'La Almeja Pequena', 'Sway', 'Mas Que Nada' and 'Soul Bossa Nova' in their set. Popular Brisbane jazz singer **Di Clark** impressed with her performance of James Morrison's composition 'This Madness Called Love'. The whole band also impressed with a jazz waltz chart of 'Sugar Plum Fairy' - well worth hearing.

Opening with 'Strike Up the Band', the well-named **Swingalicious Big Band** led by **Allan Head** served up a very strong menu of vocals with **Tamara Smith** and **Christian Villanueva** duetting on 'Perhaps (Qui Sas?)'. Tamara got the band and crowd singing along

with '40 Cups of Coffee' and Christian showed plenty of personality and fun in his version of 'Just a Gigolo'.

Amanda Mooney and **Wayne Harper** shared the vocals with the spicy sounding **Pepperazzi Big Band** with **Mary McWeeny** in the lead, kicking off with the great favourite 'Bandstand Boogie' and instrumentals such as 'Ja-Da', 'Whatever Lola Wants', sung by Amanda and 'Ain't That a Kick in the Head?' from Wayne. The band closed with a rousing chorus of 'Got To Get You Into My Life'.

Our final band, the **TNT Big Band** led by **Paul Damms**, guaranteed themselves invitations to play at future festivals with some fine performances on such tunes as 'Brass Machine' and 'Crunchie Frog'. **Rachel Damms** stood out with her vocal version of Bjork's 'It's Oh So Quiet' and the band rounded off the night with a superb rendition of 'McArthur Park' featuring **Andre Carpenter** on trombone.

Alan Western - Vice President

Voices of Tomorrow Finale

On Thursday, 13 November 2025 *Voices of Tomorrow* (produced by **Ingrid James**), the vibrant offshoot of Jazz Singers' Jam Nights, once again showcased the emerging talent of school-aged jazz musicians, and this month's edition delivered an evening rich in creativity, confidence, and musical curiosity. Celebrating its 5th year with **Sean Andrews** hosting, ably supported by **Catriona Lincoln** while regular MC Ingrid was out of town performing in Sydney, the night unfolded with warmth, humour, and effortless flow. The ever-reliable **Kellee Green Trio** anchored the performances, offering sensitive, responsive backing that elevated every young artist who stepped onto the stage.

Act I

The **Brigidine Jazz Ensemble** opened the night with poise, setting an upbeat tone and demonstrating the ensemble cohesion that comes only from steady rehearsal and genuine enjoyment. **Eliza Wright** followed with a beautifully controlled vocal performance: clear, expressive and quietly confident.

A highlight of the early bracket came from **Lucinda Dillon**, whose set was enriched by the soulful vocals of **Ruby Williams** and the expressive trumpet lines of **Kate Harrington**. Their chemistry brought an added layer of depth to the music. **Jacob Staggs** delivered a thoughtful, well-shaped performance and **Vibhuti Chopra** impressed with her sensitive phrasing and musical maturity.

One of the most colourful numbers of the night came from **Macy Connolly**, joined by **Phoebe Robinson**, **Lucie Robinson** and **Christina Dimitrios** on vocals: an energetic, charismatic ensemble performance that filled the room with warmth. The first half closed with the polished and dynamically rich **St Peter's Senior Jazz Band**, whose tight horn lines and rhythmic drive brought the audience into the break buzzing.

Act II

Returning after intermission, a house **instrumental band** set created the perfect reset: moody textures, relaxed tempos and a chance for the audience to settle back into the groove.

Charli Buick then took the stage, supported by vocals from **Ruby Williams** and **Christina Dimitrios**, plus another stylish appearance by **Kate Harrington** on trumpet. Their blend of timbres and well-balanced ensemble sound made this set a standout of the evening.

Lucie Robinson impressed with her assured delivery, complemented by Kate's melodic trumpet accompaniment and Phoebe's warm, supportive vocals. **Gracie Strong** brought a delicate, introspective tone, which was contrasted by **Nori Wallace**, who performed with confidence and made bold musical choices.

Closing the night was **Harry Hales**, who travelled all the way from Toowoomba to perform. His tenor sax playing was full-bodied, expressive and stylistically informed—a finale that earned enthusiastic applause.

This November edition of *Voices of Tomorrow* reaffirmed why the event is so treasured in the community: it provides a space where young musicians can grow, collaborate and shine. Guided by dedicated mentors and supported by professional accompanists, these emerging artists continue to push their musical boundaries. The audience left with the unmistakable sense that they had heard the beginnings of many bright futures in Australian jazz.

Review by Michelle Cop in association with Ingrid James

4ZZZ Podcast – The Jamm Session

As part of the 4ZZZ Radio flexible training program, Defence veteran and Zed trainee **David Pullen** recorded and interviewed singers at the Jazz Singers' Jam Night on the 6th November 2025.

A lineup of up-and-coming singers, under the guidance and mentoring of Ingrid James, got their first taste of being recorded and interviewed for a podcast series called *The Jam Session*, along with the brilliant house band, **Ava Bolwell**, **Ada Martin-Kerr** and **Jenni Fleming**. Look out for further collaboration with Ingrid's JSJN for more updates through the 4ZZZ podcast.

Review by David Pullen, in association with Ingrid James.

BJC Patrons' Travel Stories

Green Mill Jazz, Chicago

If you ever find yourself in Chicago, put the Green Mill on your 'must-do' list. It's a narrow, neon-lit bar that's been slinging drinks and swing since before Billie Holiday and Benny Goodman were household names. Stories of the Mob and secret escape tunnels add to the intrigue.

I had the great fortune to go there in April while visiting family. We weren't notorious enough to qualify for the "Al Capone booth" (famous for its clear view of both entrances), but our Aussie accents did score us a front-row table. Our tickets were to see local guitar legend **George Freeman**, who played there every year on his birthday.

Sadly, George did not make it to his party this year. We arrived to find he had passed away just a couple of days before, on what would have been his 98th birthday! However, his band and the enthusiastic crowd of Green Mill regulars were determined that the evening was going to be a fitting tribute.

History will remember George as one of Chicago's great guitar originals. Born on the South Side in 1927, he was fronting one of the city's first modern-jazz bebop bands in the mid-1940s and went on to collaborate with Charlie Parker. He was still releasing albums in his nineties, the latest of which is called *The Good Life*. His sound was said to be unmistakably rough-

edged and a little behind the beat; enough to make you do a double take, “what did he just play?” – see the video at the end and judge for yourself.

The history in the room that night was palpable. His regular trio took to the small stage. **Mike Allemana** on guitar, **Pete Benson** at the Hammond B-3 (crazy!) and **Charles Heath** on drums. They made sure George wouldn't miss a thing: his empty chair took pride of place, along with his guitar for inspiration. It was clear throughout that they were playing to their mate as much as to the rest of us.

There were no tears or long speeches. Instead, they did what I can only imagine George would have wanted, leaning into the sound that made his records cult favourites: greasy blues, funky shuffles and standards nudged just far enough left of centre to raise an eyebrow. The crowd's reaction said it all – they would have done George proud.

The Green Mill gave their much-loved local hero a fitting send-off and it was a privilege to be there. It also stirred a powerful sense of déjà vu – that feeling of being at home, with friends on stage carried by a room full of familiar faces, while the music did all the talking. Sound familiar?

Green Mill, Chicago <https://greenmilljazz.com/>

George Freeman, YouTube [Meet the jazz guitarist still thrilling crowds at 96 years old](#)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3_KDrWkCPDg

Meg Feenan - Committee



New Generation of Jazz

Nic Scully Quartets, Wednesday 22nd October 2025

The Brisbane Jazz Club's New Generation of Jazz (NGoJ) program has been running for about a year. The purpose of the program is to provide opportunities for musicians studying at a tertiary level to perform in a commercial, professional venue and to solidify their performance skills.

I can say categorically that the program has been an enormous success. The musical and performance competence of the musicians has far exceeded my expectations, and over the year, the fortnightly Wednesday evening performances have developed their own following. The audiences include proud parents and relatives of the musicians, but mainly, there is a definite slant towards younger people.

The format is different from most gigs at BJC. The club is open from 6pm to 9pm and bands play two forty-five-minute sets. Seating is unallocated, and this contributes to a more casual vibe.

Amongst many stellar NGoJ performances, the **Nic Scully Quartets** (there were two quartets - piano was swapped for guitar in the second half of the gig) was astonishing in terms of performance and musicality - and was rapturously received by the audience of 70. The musicians are all current students at the Queensland Conservatorium.

Nic's virtuosity on saxophones (tenor and baritone) is dazzling, and he kept his band together brilliantly. His selection was bold and definitely not for the faint-hearted - works by Joe Lovano, Thelonious Monk, Chick Corea and Pat Metheny. This is complex jazz, and Nic's mastery of it was breathtaking.

The rhythm section **Connor Perkins** - bass and **Oscar Langton** - drums, was exemplary and kept the band tight. Connor gave us a wonderful solo on his double bass, which showcased his mastery of the instrument.

Oliver Radcliffe delighted us on piano during the first half, and James Todd, who seems to be the go-to guitarist for many of these NGoJ gigs, worked brilliantly with Nic in the second half of the set.

The audience did not want the gig to finish - nor did Nic, who pushed the boundaries of his advertised two 45-minute sets and was clearly in his element on the stage.

Sound engineer **Chris Munro**, also a Queensland Conservatorium student, was kept busy at the sound desk and did a great job.

Soon these students will graduate and will be tempted by opportunities in Melbourne, London and New York. Do yourself a favour and please patronise live jazz venues around Brisbane so we can keep emerging musicians of this calibre in Brisbane for a little longer.

The state government funding that has helped BJC to start the NGoJ program will cease at the end of this year. We do not expect to receive further funding, but the program has been so wildly successful that it would be churlish for us to discontinue it. As a volunteer-run community club, BJC has relatively low overheads and BJC intends to fund NGoJ in 2026 without the assistance of a government grant. It will be a bit of a financial stretch - please

keep attending the club so that we can offset our cost through ticket sales and purchases at our bar, and keep this excellent program going.

David Herbert - Committee

The Cody Gray Septet, Wednesday 29th October 2025

Cody Gray, from The Jazz Music Institute, is a vocalist strongly influenced by Harry Connick Jr. and Michael Bublé, and tonight he was backed by **Alyssa Sinclair** (trumpet), **Chris James** (alto sax), **Mason Harvey** (tenor sax), **Minnie Rumble** (piano), **James Dent** (bass) and **Harry Beeton** (drums). Occasionally, Cody played piano himself.

As one would expect with such influences, the combo performed songs by Cole Porter, Hoagy Carmichael and Harold Arlan. Between songs, Cody explained the band's interpretation and his selection of arrangements. For example, Cody selected arrangements of songs previously performed by Tony Bennett ('Body & Soul') and Chet Baker ('It's Only a Paper Moon'). Cody also mixed things up a bit by playing songs as a duo, a quartet or a septet.

The audience was thoroughly entertained and **Steve Jackson** from the School of Audio Engineering had the band sounding great.



Cody Gray Septet

Cameron Jeffs - Committee

ED-The Editor - is signing off until next month

Please send your comments to

edtheeditor@brisbanejazzclub.com.au.

We want to know what you have to say.

