



Welcome to the February 2026 issue of the:

## ***Brisbane Jazz Club Newsletter***

### **Helen Abrahams - President's Message**

I can't believe we are halfway through February, as the Committee and staff have been busy on so many levels.

If you have been on our deck in the last two weeks, you will have seen the footings for the extension and the level of the new roof. A comparison with the property-aligned block wall and the existing western wall shows just how necessary the building works are.

**Lord Mayor Adrian Schrinner** visited the club on Tuesday, 12<sup>th</sup> March, as part of his announcement of the most recent Lord Mayor Better Suburb Grants. The BJC was successful. We were given the full amount requested to assist with the cost of our extension.

It was great that he was able to come on a Tuesday as he met most of the members of the **Tuesday Crew** and was impressed by just how much maintenance and improvements they had done, as volunteers, on our clubhouse and the Brisbane City Council's building.

As well as our current extension, the Tuesday Crew's recent works include the enclosure and roofing of the annex, the caterer's dishwashing and storage area, the tablecloths laundry area, the bench table in the Annie Street Lounge, the overseeing of the relocation of our new air-conditioning unit on the roof and the raising of the electric switchboard. Much of this is behind the scenes, but makes a huge difference to the operation of the club.

The club had an unexpected and potentially serious incident several weeks ago, when one of the parties involved in our ticket booking system, withdrew their online service without notice and without taking any responsibility for their action. Our extremely busy Treasurer **David Tambyah**, worked from the club for two days so that he and our hardworking Office Manager **Rachel Grant** could identify the problem and then find a solution. We were off-line for ticket sales for about 10 days as there were many steps to deliver in the background an alternative secure, internet system. We are still using TicketSearch so there are no changes for patrons wishing to buy tickets online.

The club apologises for any inconvenience to members as a result of this unprofessional action by the party involved.

Looking forward to the upcoming performances before our closure on 9<sup>th</sup> March.

**Helen Abrahams - President**

### **Around the Club**

#### **A Touching Tribute from Robyn Grundy to her Friend and the BJC**

Over the past couple of years, I have been blessed to attend many shows at the Brisbane Jazz

Club. I have always come away most satisfied and found everyone there to be thoroughly friendly and welcoming.

I did, however, want to express particular appreciation to all those connected with the January 3<sup>rd</sup> **To Sergio With Love** show, which I came along with a friend. It was my second time attending this show and to say I had a wonderful time would be quite the understatement.

I was first introduced to this wonderful music by my closest girlfriend **Linda**. As two blind girls growing up in the 1970s, we bonded strongly over music. It was very much our haven and our joy, filling many hours when we found ourselves either unable to easily participate in the chosen pursuits of peers, or unwelcome to do so. It provided both a balm when we felt misunderstood and a hope that better days were coming. A time when we would step out boldly into a more welcoming world that would see us for more than just our shared disability. On the old-school record players and cassette players that were among our most treasured belongings, we would move seamlessly from our top 40 favourites of the time to the music of artists like Brazil 66, George Benson, and Gino Vanelli - certainly not the typical soundtrack for most of our siblings or chronological peers.

Sadly, in late 2015, my dear friend passed away following a valiant battle with cancer. Yes, there was still so much more of life's journey and our beloved music to share, and there remain very few days when she will not enter my thoughts at some point. So, I hope you will understand now the reasons I have felt compelled to send these thanks. Not only for the opportunity to hear this marvellous music so beautifully and faithfully performed, but for the many precious memories the show invoked for me.

Warm regards,

**Robyn Grundy**

### **25th Anniversary - Jazz Singers' Jam Nights**

**The Jazz Singers' Jam Nights**, affectionately known as JSJN, marks its 25th Anniversary this year. From its humble beginnings in 2001 at the Travelodge Jazz'n'Blues Bar in Roma Street to The Bank/Belushis in Fortitude Valley, and a good stint at Maggie Black's Jazz Club in Park Road, Milton, the JSJNs are the longest-running vocal jam nights in the country, if not globally. In 2008, the JSJN found its rightful home at the Brisbane Jazz Club. The JSJN provides a regular showcase where singers of every age and capability present their talents before a highly supportive audience. It has been a launching pad for up-and-coming jazz vocalists, as well as a platform for seasoned performers to challenge themselves and push boundaries. As a jazz singer/voice teacher, **Ingrid James**, who recently accepted the honour of the Lord Mayor's Australia Day Cultural/Arts Award, and has been invited to be an Australia Day Ambassador, established these nights. Ingrid continues to produce and host the JSJNs. She recalls a gap in the Brisbane scene for a regular event to create an accessible pathway between music academies, the industry and the community, with a goal to building a strong and supportive vocal jazz culture in SE Queensland, as well as mentoring opportunities with visiting artists and local luminaries through continuing masterclasses, and more recently, the **Jazz Singers in Practice** monthly workshops before each jam night. *"Ingrid has re-invested her talent and experience in building up these nights to capacity houses on many occasions. This is indeed a labour of love for Ingrid and her team"* (**Alan Western, Vice President**). In this vastly commercial world, these community events such as the JSJNs, Jazz Singers in Practice workshops and **Voices of Tomorrow**, demonstrate how community spirit can be engendered between people with the common purpose of promoting and honouring

jazz as an art form.

This year, on the first Thursday of every month, the JSJN team and Brisbane Jazz Club will be celebrating this well-loved community of practice where *"one can feel surrounded by an extended family, all united by a common love for JAZZ!"* (**Di Clark**). As one jazz singer noted, *"being part of the JSJNs makes me so happy I could burst! There's nothing else like it in South East Queensland".* (**Kylie Agnew**).

**Robyn Hamilton**, Queensland Music Co-ordinator, State Library of Queensland, noted *"The Jazz Singers' Jam Night at The Brisbane Jazz Club is a critical part of the jazz scene in Queensland, and one of the highlights of Queensland's musical history. The musical stories it can tell are important and should be preserved, but just as important is its place in the future of Queensland Jazz. It has become an institution."*



### First Timers

See below, **Cheryl Perin** and her friends are having fun on their first visit to the BJC.



## Spotlight on our Patrons

We hope you like our new **Spotlight** feature, recognising our most regular members and those who add something special to the club.

**Dana McCown** is one of our loyal regulars who started coming to the club around 8 years ago. Dana, from Pittsburgh, US, arrived in Australia with her husband Bob in 1965. CSIRO recruited him to work in Townsville at the Davies Laboratory.

Dana studied art in the States and later earned a master's degree in Australia. She quickly put her knowledge and skills to good use in Australia and the region. Majoring in textiles, Dana researched weaving techniques in India, which led her to work with traditional weaving communities and showcase their skills in travelling exhibitions across many places. She has curated exhibitions in regional galleries. QAGGOMA acquired her collection of Indian Double Ikat.

Dana also set up a publishing business (**Storybridge Press**) in 1991 to publish works by local artists and poets. She is president of the **Brisbane Ionian Club**, which organises outings, a book club and friendship groups.

Dana's musical tastes lean towards Blues and Soul, but she also enjoys the other styles the BJC offers. Consequently, Dana can be seen at the club with a great variety of friends, enriching the club with a diverse range of patrons.

We thank Dana for her ongoing support and look forward to seeing her at the club many times in the future.



Pictured from left to right are Dana's friends **Mary Kios**, **Russell Brothers** and **Kay Rees**, sitting next to **Dana McCown**.

## Partying at the Club

**Claire Treston** had a great day celebrating her birthday with a bunch of friends at the BJC.

*"We spent a wonderful afternoon at the Brisbane Jazz Club celebrating my birthday. The riverside setting, delicious food, and live jazz made it the perfect venue for our group. Thank you to the team for hosting us and making the day so memorable! We can't wait to come back again."*



Pictured are **Kate Yamashita, George Yamashita, Lachy Fletcher, Hayley Roberts, Clare Treston, Damian Gibson, Catriona MacIvor** and **Rob**.

**Michael Westlake** and his family recently celebrated their daughter's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday at the club and this is what they had to say:

*"When it came to celebrating her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, **Maya Westlake** was looking for something special, but also something that moved to a different beat. Combining her passions for jazz and finding her zen by the water, the Brisbane Jazz Club was the perfect fit as around 30 of her nearest and dearest gathered to congratulate her on making the big step into adulthood.*

*On a blazing Brisbane afternoon on December 21st, Maya and her party guests were at least cooled down by the wonderful tunes delivered by the **Brisbane Big Band** and special guest artist **Melissa Western**, who rolled through a string of Christmas classics to add a festive touch to the birthday celebrations.*

*Outside on the glorious deck and taking refuge from the heat under the gazebo, Maya was able to keep an eye and an ear on the performances with a livestream from the stage broadcast to a television and sound system in the marquee.*

*From the first email enquiry to Business Office Manager **Rachel Grant** about hosting the party at the venue until the last guest departed, the staff of the Brisbane Jazz Club were exceptional in making sure Maya's milestone birthday was truly memorable.*

*Surrounded by loved ones, flowers, gifts, decorations and jazz, there could not have been too much more Maya could have wished for as she cut into her beautifully decorated cake – thanks to the Brisbane Jazz Club!"*



## **The Next Stage**

### **The First Club Presentation of *The Next Stage* Program**

On Wednesday 4th February, the club presented the first show of *The Next Stage* program, which features young bands who do not qualify for *The New Generation of Jazz* program. It was fitting that the first performance featured Brisbane-based jazz band **Méva's Journal**, who were also the first band presented by the club under the *New Generation of Jazz* program back in 2024.

With many live performances under their belt, plus the recording of a new album, *Prologue*, the band promised to impress and that they did. The band, led by drummer **Evan J. Evans**, played the new album in its entirety, much to the delight of the audience. The cool jazz, hard bop, bebop and avant-garde compositions by Evan are impressive. With **Tyger Middleton** (Tenor sax), **Chris James** (alto sax), **Alyssa Sinclair** (trumpet), **Jordan Stitt** (piano) and **Alex Askew** (bass), this jazz combo has a bright future ahead of them. **Steve Jackson** on sound did a fine job.



**Méva's Journal**

## New Generation of Jazz

### New Generation of Jazz Review: The Art of the Piano

The New Generation of Jazz presentation on Wednesday 28th January, was supposed to feature two piano trios from The Con under the moniker of **The Art of the Piano Trio**. Unfortunately, pianist **Jonah Garven** had to pull out at the last moment, so **Daniel Coleman** and his trio stepped up to play both sets.

Daniel is a fine jazz pianist influenced by Bill Evans and Ahmed Jamal. **Liam Jones** (bass) and **Ellis Yunker** (drums) backed him impressively. Daniel invited saxophonist **Angus Brydon** up to the stage for the second set, which included outstanding performances of Alice Coltrane's 'Blue Nile' and Pharaoh Sanders' 'The Creator has a Master Plan'. **Chris Munro** from The Con did a great job on sound and the audience loved the show.



The Daniel Coleman Trio with Angus Brydon & sound engineer Chris Munro.

### New Generation of Jazz Review: The Baxter Birrell Quintet

The New Generation of Jazz presentation on Wednesday 11 February featured the **Baxter Birrell Quintet** from the Jazz Music Institute. Baxter had previously played at the club as a sideman and this was his first gig as leader.

For such a young jazz pianist, Baxter shows very impressive skills and has composed several fine songs. His band featuring **Chris James** (alto sax), **Mason Harvey** (tenor sax), **Isaac Worland** (bass) and **Lachlan Robinson** (drums) provided empathetic support. The quintet's interpretations of songs from Bill Evans, Thelonius Monk, McCoy Tyner and Sun Ra impressed the audience. **Tavyn Mitchell** from the School of Audio Engineering had the band sounding good.

### Cameron Jeffs - Committee



**The Baxter Birrell Quintet**

### **A Thought for Us All**

Our good friend of the club, **Miles Foggon**, recently offered this reflection:

*"Beauty is in the eye of the beholder, while jazz is the essence of life itself."*

It is a reminder that while beauty is personal, jazz unites us through energy, expression, and enduring spirit.

### **ED-The Editor - is signing off until next month**

ED-The Editor - is signing off for this month, but looking forward to receiving your comments and stories to:

[edtheeditor@brisbanejazzclub.com.au](mailto:edtheeditor@brisbanejazzclub.com.au)

We want to know what you have to say.

