

## A MESSAGE TO ROGER FRAMPTON

by Dale Barlow

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*[Editor's Note: On Sunday, October 10, 1999, a benefit concert for Roger Frampton took place at The Basement in Sydney, from 1.30 – 5 pm. Groups appearing included Guy Strazzullo/Steve Elphick/John Bartram, Don Rader Quintet, Mike Nock Band, Don Burrows/Kevin Hunt Trio, and Ten Part Invention (TPI). Frampton performed with the Rader group and TPI. The following message was sent by the Australian saxophonist Dale Barlow from Amsterdam, The Netherlands, and read at the concert by the Sydney Morning Herald jazz writer John Shand. This message appeared in the Oct/Nov, 1999 edition of JazzChord.]*

**D**ear Roger, and anyone who's listening at The Basement. I hope you've been listening all afternoon. Roger Frampton was my major role model in music when I grew up in Sydney. I wanted to know as much as him. I wanted to be able to compose as well as him. I admired his effortless brilliance every time he played anything. I've probably learned more off Roger than any other musician in my life so far. To me, he always represented the hippest, most consummately knowledgeable, free-thinker, expansive, spontaneous creative musician that Australia has produced. An amazing piano player who would easily put a lot more famous piano players to shame even on a bad night. The same on the saxophone, and composing and arranging... an absolute master.



*Roger Frampton: the hippest, most consummately knowledgeable, freest-thinking, expansive, spontaneous creative musician that Australia has produced... PHOTO CREDIT JOE GLAYSHER*

To some of my friends who wanted to go overseas and study, I would say 'What do you think you're going to learn over there that somebody like Roger Frampton can show you right here in Australia, and much better?' I have never made it a secret that Roger was the best teacher I ever had. I played with him for years in his bands and other people's. We lived together before I left to go overseas. Roger has always been one of those rare musicians who could

play with absolutely anyone in the world and not just get by, or do the job adequately, but amaze them totally like they had discovered Bud Powell for the first time ever.



*Dale Barlow: Roger, I just wish more people in Australia could've let you know how much you've been loved....PHOTO CREDIT PETER SINCLAIR*

I hate using this word, because it's so misused, but under the circumstances I'm not going to be shy because it's true, and what's more, everybody knows it anyway. Roger Frampton is one of the truly great geniuses that the Australian music scene has ever produced. The things he knows, and has absorbed and can do, would take most people three extra brains and three extra lifetimes to even get close to. Humble, hysterically funny, playful, personable as well, Roger has inspired generations of Australian musicians over the years, and has been more of a real influence than any other musician I can think of over the last 30 years.

I'm not talking about any media-driven hype, record sales, awards, or any other meaningless superficiality which always dominate Australians' opinions, but for real... musically.., artistically. Simply, if it wasn't for Roger Frampton's influence, his willingness to share his knowledge, his high standards and concern for improving the standard of musicianship generally, Australia would be a much poorer place today as a result. He is a hero and a cultural icon for many more people than I think he knows. Roger wasn't made into a national treasure by some authority, he always was one in everybody's mind anyway. He made himself a national treasure without even knowing it by virtue of what he achieved. Now that's heavy - and it's very true. Roger has spent his entire life giving joy to the world. That's what musicians really do. I can't think of a more worthy and truly beautiful way of living a life on this planet than that. Our greatest role models and heroes throughout the history of human civilisation, were all only trying to do just that one thing, all in their own way.

Roger, I just wish more people in Australia could've let you know how much you've been loved. People can be so self-conscious about what they really think sometimes, and now is not that time for me at least. I love and respect you forever. Like anyone who has been a major influence in my life, you will be ever present in my life as long as I continue to be alive myself.

I love and respect you forever,

Dale Barlow