

## DON BURROWS & TEN PART INVENTION

by Gail Brennan/John Clare

---

*[Don Burrows and his quintet performed at the Don Burrows Supper Club, Regent Hotel, Sydney on March 22, 1991. John Pochée's group Ten Part Invention performed at the Professional Musicians' Club two days earlier, on March 20, 1991. This review appeared in the Sydney Morning Herald on Tuesday, March 26, 1991.]*

Some say that there is only one Don Burrows, but there are at least three. The Burrows who plays clarinet takes his band into deep cliché. He is not outstanding on this instrument, and probably retains it for its nostalgic value. Burrows is a very good flautist, often fresh, but when he plays this instrument the music overall can sound curiously pretentious... Any unusual chord or tricky turn in an arrangement is given a didactic emphasis.



*Burrows is a very good flautist, often fresh, but when he plays this instrument the music overall can sound curiously pretentious...*

Burrows' demeanour is also full of pointers — his little blisses, with mouth in fly-catching mode, and his keen smiles. His announcement that he would imitate the shakuhachi on a 20-cent wooden flute was followed by what sounded like nothing so much as a fluent, but rather ordinary performance on a 20-cent flute, though it seemed to amaze some of the diners.

While this is not so much pretension as good old show business, coupled with a sincere educational impulse, it was uncannily like a performance I'd witnessed by a smug contingent of the avant garde. Nevertheless, it made good dinner music.



*The Burrows who plays baritone or alto sax is a committed, inventive improvisor - one of the best in Australia...PHOTO COURTESY AUSTRALIAN JAZZ REAL BOOK*

The Burrows who plays baritone or alto sax is a committed, inventive improvisor - one of the best in Australia. On Friday he played brilliant alto in a style strongly influenced by Lee Konitz, giving this reviewer unalloyed pleasure. Indeed, the evening's performance had something for everybody.

Pianist Julian Lee, guitarist George Golla, bassist Craig Scott and drummer Gordon Rytmeister followed the changes expertly.



*Pianist Julian Lee: he and guitarist George Golla, bassist Craig Scott and drummer Gordon Rytmeister followed the changes expertly...*



*Roger Frampton on alto saxophone, performing in the Soviet Union in 1989...*  
PHOTO CREDIT ERIC MYERS

There are also two Roger Framptons. One whose arrangements tend towards pomp, and another who can produce compositions that amaze, move, amuse and excite; in which technical resource and expressive impulse are one. The second Frampton has produced what is surely his masterwork: a four movement suite inspired by his tour of the Soviet Union with the band Engine Room.

This was also the only work in which the band Ten Part Invention faltered slightly. Otherwise, they played compositions by Frampton, Bukovsky, Evans, McGann and Bertles with a precision, flair and thundering force that were astonishing, particularly in light of the fact that this was their first public performance in many months.

Perhaps the highlight of Frampton's *Jazznost Suite* was the movement in which tedium might have been expected — a depiction of interminable train journeys in the Soviet Union. This was the product of someone who seems to have heard every change of rhythm, every bump of wheels or buffers, while allowing long, gloriously melodic paragraphs of thought to drift through his mind.

One interlude of ingeniously interlocking fragments was actually made more effective by the fact that the saxophone section had to stamp its feet audibly in order to keep time. The work could be characterised as a play of continuous melody against

rhythmic intricacy and touches of dissonance. Both the melancholy and the sense of exultation that moved through it seemed to have been felt on the deepest levels.



*The Engine Room in concert in the Soviet Union, L-R, Roger Frampton (alto saxophone), Steve Elphick (bass), John Pochée (drums)...PHOTO CREDIT ERIC MYERS*

This night, which fell on the band's fifth anniversary, was an outstanding success, full of driving rhythms, vivid writing and brilliant solos, and it was greeted as such by a capacity, cross generational audience.



*Don Burrows (left), King of Australian Jazz, with unidentified clarinetist (centre) and Keith Hounslow (right): if Burrows is the public face of acceptable excellence, Ten Part Invention is the underground of inspiration...*

If Burrows is the public face of acceptable excellence, Ten Part Invention is the underground of inspiration. There are times, however, when they become one and the same thing. On this occasion, the underground was better attended than the establishment.