

## HEDONISM IN PUB CULTURE: THE MARBLE BAR

by Eric Myers

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Noel Crow's Jazzmen, Roger Janes Band, Bob Barnard Jazz Band  
Marble Bar, Sydney Hilton  
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One of the more interesting aspects of musical life in Australia is the extraordinary resilience of traditional jazz, which remains alive, long after its heyday during the 1920s in New Orleans and Chicago. A good opportunity to hear a variety of this type of music in one night is the bi-monthly concert which takes place in the elegant surroundings of the Marble Bar of the Sydney Hilton. Last night a capacity crowd enjoyed, not only the music, but an apparently unlimited supply of oysters, served free-of-charge.



*A later version of Noel Crow's Jazzmen, called Mister Crow. Trombonist/vocalist Jeff Hawes is second from left in the back row, with Crow himself fourth from the left, holding the clarinet. Others in the back row are Kevin Keough (trumpet), Allan Reilly (bass) and Phil Pryor (tenor sax). Crouching in front are Neville Byrnes (probably piano) and Will Dower (drums)...PHOTO COURTESY AUSTRALIAN JAZZ MUSEUM*

Noel Crow's Jazzmen are typical of the mainstream genre of traditional jazz which, fiercely played, is a strong part of the hedonism of Sydney's pub culture. More an entertaining unit and less concerned with the original spirit of the music, they have the advantage of being able to feature two singers: the trombonist Jeff Hawes, whose voice is suited to the kind of vocals which have become standard in this music, and the trumpeter Dave Ferrier.

Ferrier sings rarely, but his voice has a mean earthiness which suggests that he should sing more. The pianist in this group, Keith Jenkins, also doubles on harmonica and, in the tune *Broadway*, played a memorable solo, including one chorus unaccompanied in tempo, which drew great applause.

The music of the Roger Janes Band runs from traditional jazz to stomps, boogie-woogie, rhythm and blues, even country and western standards, all played with enough hints of irony to be crowd-pleasing. Janes himself is a mellow singer with a warm vibrato, while real musical flair is provided by the articulate Marty Mooney on tenor saxophone and Gary Walford, a delightful, rocking pianist.



*Marty Mooney (left, on tenor sax) and Roger Janes (trombone) on stage together...*

The Bob Barnard Jazz Band enjoys a reputation as the finest of Australia's traditional bands and deservedly so. Its music is characterised by immaculately correct and carefully arranged ensemble work, distinguishing it from the rough-



and-ready ensembles normally found in this idiom; a supremely relaxed, gentle rhythm section which gives the front-line players plenty of space, allowing the energy of the music to emerge naturally; and the authoritative cornet of Barnard, who plays with the majesty of a man who understands the history of pre-bebop jazz trumpet styles going back to Louis Armstrong.



*Some of members of the Bob Barnard Jazz Band, not necessarily present at this performance: L-R, Barnard (cornet), pianist Chris Taperell holding clarinet, Lawrie Thompson (drums), Dave Colton (guitar) and Wally Wickham (bass)...  
PHOTO COURTESY LORETTA BARNARD*

The next concert in this series will be on Wednesday, April 16 and will feature Nancy Stuart's Jazz Band, Paul Furniss's San Francisco Jazz Band and the Graeme Bell All Stars.