

The Winston Churchill Memorial Trust of Australia

Final Report

Andrew Butt – 2013 Churchill Fellow



Investigating the jazz education journey from high school through to professional performance in the USA.

I understand that the Churchill Trust may publish this Report, either in hard copy or on the internet or both, and consent to such publication.

I indemnify the Churchill Trust against any loss, costs or damages it may suffer arising out of any claim or proceedings made against the Trust in respect of or arising out of the publication of any Report submitted to the Trust and which the Trust places on a website for access over the internet.

I also warrant that my Final Report is original and does not infringe the copyright of any person, or contain anything which is, or the incorporation of which into the Final Report is, actionable for defamation, a breach of any privacy law or obligation, breach of confidence, contempt of court, passing-off or contravention of any other private right or of any law.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Butt".

Dated: 29th March, 2014



INTRODUCTION	4
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	4
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5
HIGHLIGHTS	5
MAJOR LESSONS	5
DISSEMINATION AND IMPLEMENTATION IN AUSTRALIA	5
ITINERARY	6
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON STATE	6
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS	6
NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK STATE	6
SEATTLE	7
ARRIVAL	7
IMMERSION @ ROOSEVELT HIGH SCHOOL	7
IMMERSION @ GARFIELD HIGH SCHOOL	9
CHICAGO	11
THE MIDWEST BAND AND ORCHESTRA CLINIC	11
DAY 1	11
DAY 2	12
DAY 3	13
DAY 4	13
NEW YORK CITY	14
LIVING THE DREAM @ 211 EAST 14 TH STREET, NEW YORK CITY	14
WEEK 1	15
WEEK 2	17
WEEK 3	20
NEW YORK CITY WINTER JAZZFEST	25
JAZZ CONNECT CONFERENCE @ NEW YORK CITY HILTON	27
WEEK 4	29
WEEK 5	34
CONCLUSIONS	35
RECOMMENDATIONS	37

Introduction

I have over 30 years experience as a jazz educator and performer in Queensland, Australia. During this time I have developed music programs, been a member of advisory structures at school, tertiary and professional levels, undertaken research, presented at state and national conferences as well as being actively involved in jazz performance. Australia is like many countries throughout the world where jazz culture is prevalent in both the performance and educational musical worlds. There can be little doubt however that the genre originated in North America and it is here where the majority of pedagogical resources and the main focus of professional performance exists. This research trip enabled me to follow the delivery of jazz education and professional performance in the home of jazz through a variety of experiences including:

- Immersion in schools in the Seattle area where a strong tradition of jazz education exists, investigating their pedagogical structures, methods and culture;
- Attending the Mid West Band and Orchestra Clinic in Chicago. The Clinic exists to improve the methods employed in music education, to disseminate to school music teachers, directors, supervisors, and others interested in music education, information to assist in their professional work;
- Spending a month immersed in the New York jazz scene attending performances, taking lessons and interviewing artists regarding their experiences as performers and jazz educators.

Through these experiences I have gained a deeper insight into the worlds of jazz education and performance in the USA. It has enabled me to gain a more informed perspective on how Australian jazz fits into and compares with best practice. I am now in an opportune position to share these experiences with the Australian jazz education and performance communities.

Acknowledgements

My sincere thanks must go to the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust of Australia for making this experience of a lifetime possible. I would also like to thank the music education and jazz performance communities here in Australia, including *Jazz Queensland* and the *Australian Society of Music Educators (ASME)* who have supported me in various ways over many years.

During this fellowship I have had the pleasure of meeting and interacting with people who have all been a motivating force to me as an educator and performer. In particular, I would like to thank Scott Brown from Roosevelt High School, Angela Davis, Jacam Manricks, Damien Sim, Bill McHenry and Branford Marsalis. Their friendships and knowledge have been a pure inspiration and I am confident that they will energize and sustain me on my continuing journey as a musician.

Executive Summary

Andrew Butt

Head of Music, Marist College Ashgrove

1 Watercress Place, The Gap, QLD 4061

mob: 0417 721359 e: butta@marash.qld.edu.au

Investigating the jazz education journey from high school through to professional performance in the USA.

Highlights

- One-week immersion in Seattle, Washington - predominantly at Roosevelt High School and also Garfield High School. Activities included attending classes, rehearsals and performances.
- Attendance at the 67th *Mid West Band and Orchestra Directors Conference* in Chicago, Illinois.
- One-month immersion in New York City attending concerts, conference sessions, lessons, performances and interviewing a variety of Australian, US and international jazz musicians based in the city including saxophonists Bill McHenry and Branford Marsalis.

Major Lessons

- Through conferences and networking I was aware that many differences existed between the way music education is delivered in the USA and Australia. It was not until I spent the week in Seattle however that I truly synthesized how these differences implicated on the students' outcomes. Music Education in the USA is focused primarily on performance. This happens through rehearsals every day of the school week, multiple large and group performances and regular participation in High School Jazz Festivals such as the *Essential Ellington* festival held at the Lincoln Centre in New York. Through these experiences, these music programs have developed a rich culture resulting in a high level of musical outcomes. This was not only evident from the music that I experienced in Seattle and Chicago but also from the variety of successful alumni that each program produced including Jimi Hendrix, Quincy Jones, Macklemore, and Ernestine Anderson.
- Through hearing many outstanding jazz musicians in New York City I concluded that the musicians who deeply rooted themselves in the tradition and history of jazz culture and were able to create something new were the ones who truly flourished and found success.

Dissemination and implementation in Australia

My experiences and findings in this project will be communicated in a variety of ways including:

- At an educational level - through my current teaching role, my involvement in the advisory structure of the Arts Australian National Curriculum (ACARA), Queensland Studies Authority (QSA) and continued presentations at state and national conferences and tertiary institutions.
- At a professional performance level - through my continued participation in jazz performance including being a featured artist at the 2014 Brisbane International Jazz Festival.

Itinerary

Seattle, Washington State

December 2013

- 9 - 12 Immersion @ Roosevelt High School with Band Director Scott Brown and Stuart MacDonald
- 13 - 14 Immersion @ Garfield High School with Band Director Clarence Alcox
- 15 Visit to EMP museum (Experience Music Project)

Chicago, Illinois

December 2013

- 18 - 21 Mid West Band and Orchestra Clinic, McCormick Place Chicago, IL
- 22 Visit Art Institute of Chicago

New York City, New York State

December 2013 to January 2014

22 – 22

Attending performances and meeting a cross section of NYC jazz musicians.

Highlights included:

- 5 Interview and meeting with Australian New York based performers and composers Jacam Manricks and Sean Wayland
- 6 Lesson in Brooklyn with saxophonist, composer and educator Bill McHenry
- 7 – 11 Attended *Jazz Winterfest @ Greenwich Village*
- 8 – 9 *Jazz Connect Conference* at NYC Hilton
- 8 Blue Note 75th Anniversary Concert, Town Hall
- 10 Meeting with Australian New York based performer and composer Linda Oh
- 15 Interview and meeting with Australian New York based performer and composer Angela Davis in Harlem
- 17 Meeting with Branford Marsalis at *Jazz at the Lincoln Centre*

Seattle

Monday December 9, 2013

Arrival

I arrived on an unusually clear day. Although under the duress of jet lag from the long journey I could not help but wonder at Seattle's pure beauty. As I approached the outskirts of the city Mount Rainier was clearly prominent, acting as an inspiring and welcoming beacon to the commencement of my fellowship. I was soon to realise that it was just one of the many surprises that the city had to offer. Seattle has not only fostered many prominent musicians such as Jimi Hendrix, Quincy Jones and Kurt Cobain it has also acted as the birthplace of many ideas and companies that have become prominent worldwide. Companies such as Microsoft, Amazon, Boeing and Starbucks all originate from this area and in my time here I was continually amazed by the creative culture that was prevalent in the area.



Mount Rainier, Dec 9, 2013

On the day of my arrival I made contact with the schools that I was to visit, took a look around Pike Place Fish Market and in the evening walked around the corner to the Jazz Alley to catch Louis Hayes and the Cannonball Legacy Band Featuring Vincent Herring (saxophones) and Jeremy Pelt (trumpet). I observed the bandstand from the bar of the dedicated jazz room playing to a packed audience. After the band finished their last tune *Work Song* (much to Vincent Herring's annoyance) they retired by chance to where I was sitting. So here I was sharing the bar with musicians who had performed with jazz greats to the likes of Horace Silver, Oscar Peterson, Cannonball Adderley and Dexter Gordon. My jazz journey was well and truly underway.

Tuesday December 10 to Thursday December 12

Immersion @ Roosevelt High School

I was slightly apprehensive before my arrival as communication leading up to the trip had been somewhat sporadic. Email was the primary source of communication but confirmation of details was not immediate and somewhat vague. When I arrived at Roosevelt High School a lot of things began to fall into place. I soon found the music room and introduced myself to Scott Brown, who has been the director of the award winning Roosevelt Jazz Band for over 30 years. His situation was very familiar to me. Throughout the day I observed him undertaking a multiple of tasks including sorting out music issues with students, organizing his own music and repertoire, counselling, loading gear, doing running repairs on instruments and furniture and *occasionally* checking emails. He was flat out just keeping the program running. Each day he ran a class of piano students, followed by junior & senior wind bands, the jazz band and jazz choir. Class sizes varied in numbers from around 25 to 80 students at a time. All classes were in the same room with Scott's office directly adjacent to the main space.

Jazz Band 1 was scheduled to rehearse at around midday and I arrived about 10 minutes prior to its commencement. Several of the students had also arrived with some of the brass players performing warm ups. Rhythm section players and a couple of saxophonists were playing over the Giant Steps cycle at about 240 beats per minute!



Wind Band (top) and Jazz Band (right)
with Scott Brown



Then the rehearsal began ... it was AMAZING!

The band read through a couple of Christmas charts for the weekend's concert and then rehearsed pieces including the Thad Jones classic *Groove Merchant* with the lead trumpet effortlessly punching out high F's above the staff. The level of performance was approaching a professional standard in both the ensemble playing and improvisation. Following the session I had multiple questions for Scott on how his band achieved such a high level of musicianship. Below are some of his responses and my main observations regarding this rehearsal and other jazz sessions throughout my time at Roosevelt:

- There are 3 jazz bands in the program. The main band is auditioned and rehearses each day for an hour. Students receive class credit for this activity. The other 2 bands rehearse after school 2 or 3 times a week and do not receive credit, similar to *co-curricular* music in Australian Schools.
- The bands rehearse & perform 80 to 100 charts or pieces a year.
- Repertoire was diverse including a lot of professional arrangements and compositions by Count Basie, Thad Jones & Maria Schneider.
- At most rehearsal sessions the students listened to recordings of professionals as well as recordings of their own performances. Students were encouraged to seek out their own recordings and transcribe them.
- Both Scott Brown (Jazz Band 1) and Stuart MacDonald (Jazz Band 2 & 3) sang a lot during the sessions. This was prevalent when they were working on phrasing and articulation of works.
- Great respect and dialogue between the students and staff.
- Students were admitted to the band if they were at the appropriate standard. This resulted in some positions being over-subscribed, particularly in the saxophone and rhythm sections. At times, students acted as reserves

or *sat out* for performances, including competitions. Different students were chosen for different gigs or performances.

- The program was mostly funded through fund raising events to provide instruments, music and infrastructure for international tours.
- The students in Band 1 had very good sight reading skills.

During my time at Roosevelt the bands performed at 3 different venues within the week. One evening the 1st Jazz Band performed at the upmarket *Sunset Club* in the city with the remainder of the band attending a jam session at a local restaurant in tandem with other players from the program. Special guest, Jeff Johnson sat in with the students from years 9 (freshman) through to senior. Stuart MacDonald directed the session giving advice and organizing tunes and students. The students played tunes such as *Four*, *All of me*, *Dolphin Dance* and *Blue Monk*. The students performed with and without charts with the importance of learning melodies being stressed. This was a great model for developing jazz skills and one that I am hoping to replicate back in Australia.

My time concluded at Roosevelt with the Jazz Night concert held in the school auditorium. Performances were given by Jazz Bands 1, 2 & 3 as well as the Vocal Jazz Ensemble, which was of a very high standard in both ensemble singing and improvising. After the concert we all had a *debriefing* at a local bar. It was fantastic to hear both Scott and Stuart continue discussions about the music and their students well into the night. It was clearly something that they both had a great passion for and did much to explain the success of the program.



Myself, Scott Brown & Stuart McDonald

Friday December 13 to Saturday December 14

Immersion @ Garfield High School



As I passed by the Quincy Jones Auditorium and checked through security at Garfield High School I could not help feeling that I was crossing behind enemy lines. The staff and students at Roosevelt often spoke of the great respect they held for the Garfield program however there was no doubt that there was fierce competition between the two.

Having both won the Essentially Ellington competition on multiple occasions, Roosevelt and Garfield have produced some of the most successful high school jazz bands in the USA. Coincidentally, during the week that I visited, a local television station was producing a documentary on the excellent music that the schools produced and their rivalry. I had made contact with the Garfield band director, Clarence Alcox, quite some time ago. There can be no doubt that Clarence Alcox is a local legend having been the driving force at Garfield for over 40 years. Even the Seattle Mayor is a fan being the proud owner of a Clarence Alcox badge. I immediately recognized Clarence as he strolled down the hallway to take the ensemble. Clarence is in semi-retirement and has been coerced by the school headmaster to continue work solely with the jazz band.

Again I witnessed an amazing band and rehearsal, and although I did not have the opportunity to converse with Clarence (as he was being interviewed for a documentary) I observed many of the things that I witnessed at Roosevelt including:

- Clarence handing out CD's during the rehearsal for students to listen to and study.
- Great respect between the students and Clarence.
- The band played a lot of traditional repertoire including a New Orleans "Stride Piano" style arrangement with lots of students performing high order improvisational skills.
- The membership of the band was again over-subscribed, with entire saxophone and rhythm sections swapping and alternating.
- Both schools also had excellent orchestral and concert band programs.



It was also interesting to note that the bass players did not always use amplification during rehearsals and the band balanced accordingly.



The following day I witnessed the band perform as part of Winterfest at the Seattle Centre to a packed and attentive audience. It was encouraging as a fellow music educator to observe that even though the students' performance level and musicianship were exceptional there were still several students who turned up to the

gig with missing music and in the wrong uniform ... it happens to us all!

I concluded my stay in Seattle checking out some of the tourist highlights including the Experience Music Project (EMP) museum, a nonprofit museum dedicated to contemporary and popular culture. I was once again amazed at the amount of culture that had emerged from this area including inspiring exhibitions dedicated to Kurt Cobain and Jimi Hendrix. Seattle had exceeded all of my expectations and I was starting to regret that I had not planned to stay longer. Winter storms were looming and the following morning I departed for the frigid midwest.

Chicago

Wednesday December 18 to Saturday December 21

The Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic

The Midwest Clinic began on December 7, 1946, with approximately 120 directors from the Chicago area assembling in a YWCA gymnasium on Chicago's West Side for a six-hour clinic and new music reading session. In 2013 over 17,000 Music Educators from around the world (including a large contingent of Australians) attended the 4-day conference held at McCormick Place, a large conference center not far from the heart of Chicago. This is the third time I have attended the conference and I can still vividly remember the first time I attended the event over 20 years ago. I heard performances from high school students beyond what I had imagined was possible. Times have changed and with access to many resources and recordings available via the click of a mouse it could be argued that these types of events have lost some of their validity.

However, this conference still presented me with a unique opportunity to network with world-leading educators and experience live ensembles - no audio or video stream could match it! Over the 4 days and 3 nights I attended a plethora of clinics and performances that were both educational and inspirational. Some of the highlights included:



Day 1

Wednesday December 18

CLINIC / A One & A Two: The Role of the Conductor in a Jazz Ensemble / Dean Sorenson Clinician

- Demonstrated the role of conductor in a jazz ensemble.
- Showed examples of different ways of directing.
- The importance of the count in. Correct vocal tone is essential and it is also important to emphasize the back beat (beats 2 & 4).
- How to play in different styles, with different articulations.
- How to cue and how to deal with syncopation.
- Important for players to know how their part relates to others.
- The show is not about us, it's about them.

PERFORMANCE / Del Valle High School Jazz Ensemble / Manuel Gamez Director

- An outstanding band from El Paso Texas.
- Drummers & bass players rotate, as with the high school bands in Seattle.
- Also had extra horn players & percussion, including vibes.
- Featured a variety of soloists.
- Played a variety of charts from modern fusion through to Bob Brookmeyer compositions.

CLINIC / *Using Motivic Development and other Compositional Devices in Improvisation* / Bob Mintzer Clinician

- How to use motive development and compositional devices for improvisation.
- Talked about a method/system for improvisation.
- Demonstrated rhythmic & harmonic devices and learning them by repetition.
- Suggested *Four and More* by Miles Davis as a listening tool.
- Talked about the importance of the altered scale.
- Thinks of ideas, practices them, plays them.
- Teach students to teach themselves.
- Don't play too many notes ... leave some space.

Day 2

Thursday December 19

CLINIC / *Jazz drumming 101 – The Drummers Role in the Jazz Band* / Rodrigo Villanueva Clinician

- Importance of listening to yourself (recording).
- Importance of consistent time and how to subdivide the beat.
- Play with heel down for softness in jazz & bossa nova styles.
- Listen / pay attention to detail / transcribe / imitate first ... fall in love with the track.
- Importance of practicing a variety of techniques & styles.

CLINIC / *The Articulate Jazz Musician: Mastering the Language of Jazz* / Caleb Chapman Clinician

- BEST CLINIC I HAVE SEEN FOR BIG BAND DIRECTORS!
- Have in mind what you want in the end.
- Also played recordings to students.
- Focus on articulation in rehearsals.
- There is no consensus on how to do it, so you have to establish one for your band.
- Don't start with improvisation. Mimic then improvise.
- Use active listening / need to practice listening.
- Learn the most common words first / jazz articulation syllables.
- There is a book published by Caleb about his approach. If you are serious about making your band better ... GET THIS BOOK.

PERFORMANCE / *Wheeling high school Jazz Band 1* / Brian Logan Director

- This band played to a packed auditorium.
- Loud, high & fast!!?



CLINIC / *The Real Deal: Understanding of Jazz Styles Through Real Time*

Demonstration / Robert Breithaupt and Rob Parton

- Importance of how the type of stick used can dictate how the cymbal sounds.
- Aim bass amp toward the horns.
- Use neck pickup for "Freddie Green" sound on Guitar.
- How to create latin styles/students must learn bossa nova/afro cuban (12/8).
- Swing feel - piano has priority over guitar/Latin - guitar has priority over piano/Afro Cuban - both have priority.

Day 3**Friday December 20****PERFORMANCE / *Dillard Centre For The Arts Jazz Ensemble 1* / Christopher Dorsey Director**

- This band has also won the Essential Ellington Competition (like Roosevelt & Garfield Schools).
- Another outstanding band from a performing arts high school.
- Played a variety of Charts including *Big Dipper* by Thad Jones and Count Basie compositions.

CLINIC / *The Midwest Jazz Interview with DownBeat Magazine Featuring Wycliffe Gordon* / Frank Alkyer Moderator

- Compelling Interview where Wycliffe discussed various aspects of jazz and education.
- Talked about how music teachers teach life skills.
- Talked about repertoire and how his high school band played Michael Jackson arrangements!
- Wycliffe studied music education because he saw a performance degree gave no guarantee of a job.
- Talked about the importance of planning.
- Spoke of going to Texas as a younger musician where he heard other kids his age perform at a high level. This was a turning point for him.
- Lots of listening ... become a sponge!
- Importance of being able to sing, if you sing it you can play it. Just use your ears (only) don't have to worry about technicality of improvising
- Talked about being a jazz musician and a teacher (He can do it AND teach it).

PERFORMANCE / *Naperville North High School Jazz Ensemble* / Dan Moore Director

- Director talked about breadth of the program including jazz band, concert band and orchestra.
- Band was of a good standard however not quite up to the standard of others I had seen. It was good to see that all bands were not exceptional!

Day 4**Saturday December 21**

The final day of the clinic concluded with wind band performances by outstanding high school and university ensembles.

New York City

Sunday December 22 to Wednesday January 22

Living the Dream @ 211 East 14th Street, New York City

In 2011, I was fortunate to be awarded a Special Commendation by the Hon Peter Garrett AM, MP, Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth for my contribution to Music Education as part of the Australian Government's Quality Teacher Program. I used the proceeds of this award to travel to New York for lessons with several saxophonists, including George Garzone and Chris Cheek, and to visit the iconic jazz clubs of the city. During my 10-day visit I met some fantastic people and had some wonderful experiences. However I soon realized that it was nowhere near long enough to even scratch the surface of what the city had to offer. I wanted to experience more jazz clubs, take more lessons, meet more jazz artists and have more time and space to soak up what this iconic city had to offer. This Churchill Fellowship enabled me to do just that. Throughout the month I saw a diverse range of performances, had lessons and conversed with some of the leading jazz musicians and educators in the world and met many other Australians who had moved to the city permanently and were living their New York City dream.



211 East 14th Street, my base in NYC

Week 1

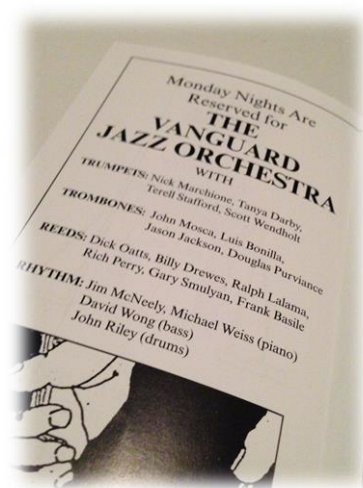
When I arrived on the 22nd of December the city was in full momentum preparing for Christmas, with lights lining the streets and stores full of Christmas provisions. New York is a city of extremes and this included the weather. Upon my arrival the city was experiencing one of its hottest days on record for this time of year. Many of the locals were wearing shorts and t-shirts and the temperature was hovering around 22 degrees Celsius. Within a short time the temperature plunged to record lows with a *Polar Vortex* engulfing the city and testing my resolve on explorations throughout the Manhattan and Brooklyn boroughs.

In my first week I focused familiarising myself with the jazz scene and clubs of New York City before undertaking lessons and interviews. Some of the highlights included:

Sunday December 22

Duduka Da Fonseca/Helio Alves Jazz Samba Christmas with Maucha Adnet, Anat Cohen, Helio Alves, Hans Glawischnig and Mike Moreno @ Dizzy's Club Coca Cola, Jazz at the Lincoln Centre

Anat Cohen is known for her expressive virtuosity on clarinet and saxophone. Her energy and vitality was prominent through the set and her sound on tenor and clarinet was stunning.



Monday December 23

The Vanguard Jazz Orchestra @ The Village Vanguard, Greenwich Village

Unfortunately the last time I was in New York the band was on tour in Europe. Established by Thad Jones and Mel Lewis, the Grammy-winning VJO has been playing Monday nights at the club since 1966. Since my teenage years, it has been my dream to see this band live (I have over 30 of their recordings) and they did not disappoint.



Wednesday December 25 Christmas
Peter Bernstein Quartet @ Smalls, Greenwich Village

Not your usual Christmas evening! This was a night of mostly standards with Billy Drummond on drums, Steve Nelson on vibes and Dwayne Burno on bass. Unfortunately it turned out to be one of Dwayne Burno's last performances as he passed away a few nights later. I also had the opportunity to speak to Melissa Aldana who had recently won the Thelonious *Monk* Institute Jazz Saxophone Competition.



Friday December 27

Eric Alexander Sextet featuring Harold Mabern, Jeremy Pelt & Vincent Herring @ Smoke Jazz & Supper Club-Lounge 2751 Broadway between 105th and 106th Streets

Saxophonist Eric Alexander lead this group with trumpeter Jeremy Pelt and alto saxophonist Vincent Herring who I had heard a couple of weeks earlier in Seattle. Another night of predominantly standards jazz played at a very high calibre. Alexander put his outstanding technique and virtuosity on full display.

Saturday December 28

Open Loose @ Cornelia Café, Greenwich Village

Mark Helias on bass, Tony Malaby on tenor and Tom Rainey on drums. This was free improvised jazz at its best and the place was packed! I reacquainted myself with Tony Malaby after the gig, having met him in Brisbane last year. He is very approachable and has somewhat of a cult following (understandably) throughout the world. We talked about various things including his love for Australia and, in particular, his *Australian brother* saxophonist Zac Hurren.



Week 2

In the second week of my stay in New York I continued to explore Manhattan and Brooklyn by day and attend performances throughout the evenings. I also began to meet up with several Australian jazz musicians who are now based in the city.

Sunday December 29

Eri Yamamoto Trio @ Cornelia Street Café, Greenwich Village

This group featured New York based Japanese pianist and composer Eri Yamamoto, David Ambrosio on bass and Ikuo Takeuchi on drums. The music was accessible and original jazz. It was interesting to note that although it was fairly well patronized there were a lot fewer people in the club than the previous night with Tony Malaby's group. It was evident that the New York audience was more likely to commit to a more avant-garde and challenging performance.



Monday December 30

Chris Speed Trio & The Ari Hoenig Quintet
@ Smalls, Greenwich Village

This was the usual jazz marathon at Smalls and the place was packed! Over 4 hours I enjoyed a night of challenging and engaging jazz. Chris Speed's sound was full, warm and powerful when heard live. The trio was an ensemble in the true sense of the word with Chris Tordini on bass and Dave King on drums equally contributing to the jazz conversation.



The Ari Hoenig Quintet has become a Smalls institution and the group performed well-rehearsed cutting edge jazz with complex harmonic and rhythmic elements. For me Gilad Helsenman was the highlight and saxophonist Tivon Pennicott showed why he was selected as a finalist in the Thelonious *Monk* Institute Jazz Saxophone Competition. The group was lead by Ari Hoenig on drums and also featured Orlando Le Fleming on bass and Shai Maestro on piano.

Tuesday December 31 New Years Eve

The Bad Plus @ the Village Vanguard, Greenwich Village

Jazz aficionados would well be familiar with the house rules at this iconic club. There is no room for flexibility and for over 70 years the proprietors have adhered to them vehemently ... no food, no photos and a 2-drink minimum. This however was not your usual Village Vanguard night. On arrival the waiters distributed party hats and food was served throughout the evening. Even the taking of photos was allowed at appropriate times. I was seated directly adjacent to the stage, practically on top of Dave King's drum set. I watched on throughout the night as he caressed and stroked his kit with a variety of exotic implements including a child's megaphone with spaceship lights. Pianist Ethan Iverson, bassist Reid Anderson, and drummer Dave King delivered their usual eclectic combination of modern, avant-guard, jazz, rock and pop elements into two sets that brought in the New Year of 2014. It was one of the highlights of my time in New York and I am certain that from this point onwards I will have fond memories of it each time I celebrate New Years Eve.



The Bad Plus, New Years Eve 2013

Wednesday January 1

Pippin the Musical @ Music Box Theatre, 239 West 45th Street

A visit to New York would not be complete without a Broadway show. This Tony Award winning musical was an entertaining contrast to what I had been experiencing over the preceding weeks. Of note was the pit band. There could be no doubt that the horn players were predominantly *jazzers* with many of them blowing over jazz progressions in their warm up prior to the opening curtain.

Friday January 3 Polar Vortex

Kenny Werner Quintet with Randy Brecker, David Sanchez, Scott Colley, Ari Hoenig @ Dizzy's Club Coca Cola, Jazz at the Lincoln Centre

As I entered the subway in fairly tranquil conditions to travel uptown to the Lincoln Centre I was unaware of the near apocalyptic snow storm that would greet me when I emerged only 20 minutes later from New York's underworld. Although the storm had been predicted with multiple warnings its veracity was still a shock with no more than 10 feet visibility. Once inside, the Manhattan Skyline that is the usual backdrop for Dizzy's stage was replaced with a near solid white wall of snow.



Kenny Werners group was comprised of a diverse collective of musicians who originate from a contrast of jazz genres. He is a world-class pianist and composer whose compositions, recordings and educational publications have had an influence on many artists, including some of my friends and colleagues back in Australia. This was a night of creatively arranged standards and original works. Tenorist David Sanchez has become well known throughout the world for his outstanding musicianship and his compelling playing gave clear evidence of why this is so.

Saturday January 4

Ray Gallon duo with Kiyoshi Kitagawa @ Knickerbocker @ Greenwich Village & meeting with **Damian Sim**

While walking through the snow and checking out Greenwich Village by day I was contacted via social media from expat pianist Damian Sim informing me of a gig with fellow pianist Ray Gallon. This was not only a great opportunity to check out an artist who has performed with many of the leading players of jazz, including Ron Carter, Lionel Hampton and Dizzy Gillespie, it was also a great opportunity to get some of Damian's perspectives on living in NYC. Damian and I played together back in Brisbane and he has been based in New York since moving over to undertake a Masters Degree. Since completing his degree he has remained in New York and is surviving through part-time lecturing, teaching, gigs and his savings. The main points garnered from this discussion were the extremes of music and life in general that he has experienced while living in the city. We also discussed a variety of music while admiring Ray's great playing. Ray swung hard and demonstrated more of an *old school* approach to playing that contrasted to some of the shredding that I had been listening to of late. It was a pleasant change - still fresh and creative while still showing a clear reference to the jazz heritage that is sometimes ignored elsewhere in Greenwich Village.

Week 3

By the third week of my stay I was becoming a lot more at home in the City. My location near Union Square provided excellent access to many parts of the city and each day and evening I continued my journey by checking out gigs, taking lessons, attending a festival and conference and meeting up with a variety of musicians.

Sunday January 5

Ehud Asherie, Fat Cat Big Band @ Fat Cat, West Village

Damien Sim proved to be the bearer of continued sage advice and prompted me to check out Ehud Asherie Trio at the Fat Cat in Christopher Street. This venue had a mixed menu of entertainment including live jazz, a bar, pool tables, ping-pong and board games, all for a minimal cover charge ... only in New York. The piano trio's style of playing was in a similar vein to what I had heard Ray Gallan perform a few nights previous, hard swinging stride and old school with a certain individuality and freshness. After a couple of games of ping pong I was entertained by the *Fat Cat Big Band* led by guitarist Jade Synstelien and featuring some of the most outstanding young players on the New York scene. It was a great opportunity to check out Stacy Dillard on Tenor and Jon Irabagon on Alto. This band was awesome and played a mixture of traditional tunes as well as arrangements of eclectic composers including Ludwig Beethoven and Thelonious Monk.



Monday January 6**Day: Meeting with *Jacam Manricks***

Although he may not remember, I first met Jacam when he was still a high school student. His parents were both professional musicians and our paths crossed on multiple occasions. Around the time he was leaving school I heard him play for the first time in a gig that we did together as casual players with the Queensland Symphony Orchestra. I immediately recognized something special. Throughout his years as an undergraduate I listened to him develop as a performer, so it was no surprise when I heard that he had left Australian shores to expand his musical horizons.

Jacam originally came to New York to undertake study at the renowned Manhattan School of Music and has since made the city his base. I had originally planned to meet up with him on the 4th but with the onslaught of the polar vortex I thought better of it and rescheduled. A couple of days later I headed to the Upper East Side where he resides with his wife and two children. He has definitely settled well into the big apple. Within the lounge room of his apartment is a sound-proof practice booth allowing Jacam to practice and prepare for his upcoming European tour. Jacam has established himself as a *name* on the NYC scene with multiple 4 star reviews in Downbeat (the jazz magazine bible) and is in constant demand as a soloist and sideman with some of the worlds jazz greats including being a member of the Jeff *Tain* Watts Family Reunion band. I had many questions for Jacam regarding his music and his experiences in becoming a member of the New York Jazz Scene. It was an informative afternoon. Here are some of the main points of interest:



- We discussed his story of being a performer, composer and academic and how each of these roles interact with each other.
- We discussed how he had written a theory book and had been a part-time lecturer.
- The importance of getting an agent and learning how to promote oneself and get gigs. It was interesting to note that as much money and time (if not more) was needed for promotion as was needed to actually produce the music.
- We discussed that everybody wants to play and that was the easy part. Getting yourself out there and promoted was infinitely more complex.
- We discussed his record deals and how they worked. His first album was self-released giving him the advantage of full control over the musical and production output. The downside to this was how time consuming it was. His latest release was controlled more by the record company with them paying for the studio time, other musicians and the production. It was recorded in a day and, like his debut recording, received a 4 star review in Downbeat. The downside to this was that he had little control over his music post the recording session.

Night: Sean Wayland Group @ 55 Bar and Vanguard Orchestra @ Village Vanguard

In the evening I caught up with expat Sean Wayland performing his own compositions at the iconic 55 bar in Greenwich Village prior to checking out the Vanguard Orchestra. Sean's band was amazing and we had a brief discussion in the break regarding mutual friends as well as his music and keyboard set up. Surviving in New York was not easy and although Sean was performing with many of the City's leading musicians he has recently become a real estate agent to enable him to pay the bills.

Once again The Vanguard Orchestra did not disappoint, and this time I got to hear one of my favorite players, Rich Perry. I was intrigued at just how focused Dick Oates and the saxophone section were prior to the band performing the classic Thad Jones chart, *Fingers*. Even though they all would have played it hundreds of times they still had to fully concentrate to pull off those intricate melodic lines.



Following the 30-minute line up outside the Village Vanguard ... it was COLD!

Tuesday January 7**Lesson and meeting with *Bill McHenry* @ Brooklyn**

I have been a fan of Bill's playing for some time. His recordings as a leader and sideman are some of my favorites. Most of all I admire his full and rich sound but I also love the way he approaches improvisation. It sounds cliché but for me he achieves a perfect balance between tradition and something new. My emotions consisted of a mix of excitement and apprehension as I made my way on the subway across to Brooklyn. I really did not know what to expect. It is a surreal situation when you are travelling to meet someone who you have been admiring for years and knowing that you would soon be playing in front of them. It felt very similar to going for an audition, which I had not experienced for some time. As it turned out I had nothing to worry about.

I immediately felt at ease with Bill's easy-going and sincere nature. We spent some time talking about my background and what I hoped to achieve from our meeting. He then suggested that he would leave the room for 5 or 10 minutes and that I should just play him something so he could see where *I was at*. I knew from previous lessons that there was a fair chance this would happen so I was partly prepared. I had in my mind to play a standard and started improvising. I was careful however not to over prepare as I really wanted to give an example of me creating something new and truly improvising rather than something that I had drilled over a couple of weeks. In the week prior, I had heard Chris Speed perform *All of Me* in a fairly loose fashion and I decided to do my version of the same. As I played I could hear Bill encourage me as he walked around the brownstone apartment, "*Oh yeah, I like that.*" After a time he returned to the room with the comment, "*I got no issues with any of that*". It was a great way to start the session and over the next couple of hours we spent time playing, discussing harmonic and melodic concepts and sound. Within the scope of this report there is not enough time to go into the full detail so I have summarized some of the major aspects of the topics covered:



- We discussed the role of producer and bandleader. It's pretty basic really - make the record sound good!
- Hire people for how they play rather than telling them how to play
- You have to be self sufficient for time and harmony when playing, do not rely on the bass player.
- He spoke of the amount of time he invested (a lot) to prepare for live recordings.

- We talked about rehearsing, playing together as a group and choosing players that will work with you (sometimes developing players).
- Learn off other people *all* the time.
- You have to want to keep learning yourself!
- How theory opens up possibilities for improvisation. In particular we discussed at length about the circle of 5ths and how each of the 12 notes work, relate to each other and how to use chords to harmonize them.
- We discussed how all modes originate from the circle of 5ths.
- The importance of long note studies. You must maintain even attack, even sound and even release. Practice at forte and pianissimo. It takes several hours to do this correctly. He picked this up by studying with Dewey Redman.
- He spoke of his high school years when he went to a performing arts high school. This was *his college*. He was a late developer and spent 18 months playing blues scales. He then discovered Dexter Gordon and was inspired to work it out.
- Importance of melody and how good melody implies the harmonic movement.
- We spoke of the importance of playing by ear and how some of his students in the past have claimed to do this however the evidence was clearly not in their playing.
- He also spoke of the day he realized that *ordinary* people were composers so there was no reason why he could not be one too.

It was a great afternoon and after the session Bill encouraged me to come back again. He also offered to leave my name at the door for free admission to the Village Vanguard for an upcoming gig of his. What a day!



Photos from the day including views from the iconic Brooklyn Bridge

Tuesday January 7 to Saturday January 11

New York City Winter Jazzfest

In its 10th year the NYC Winter Jazzfest is a jazz festival housed in 10 different venues, featuring over 90 groups and over 400 musicians. The festival was established in 2005 to give greater exposure to jazz in New York and beyond. Over five nights I was able to wander from one venue to the next sampling a wide cross section of what was New York jazz. It was a perfect time to be in the city. The music was widely varied from experimental *avant-garde* through to more accessible *pop* jazz. Experiencing current jazz stars such as Gretchen Parlato and Roy Hargrove playing to packed audiences, as well as upcoming groups, was a real inspiration. There were many highlights, some are included below.



WJF10 Blue Note Records 75th Anniversary Concert @ NYC Town Hall

One of my favorite jazz DVD's of all time is the Blue Note 50th Anniversary Concert, so it was a surreal experience to be at the 75th Celebration. This concert featured Robert Glasper & Jason Moran with special guests Ravi Coltrane, Bilal, Alan Hampton and Eric Harland. This was another highlight of my New York experience.

Ben Wendel Quartet @ NYC Law School

This group featured Henry Cole, Gerarld Clayton and Joe Saunders and was held at New York University Law School. I really enjoy and relate to Ben's playing and compositional style and it was great to see the group live.



JazzFest Showcase featuring *The Wallace Rodney Orchestra* and the *Revive Big Band* lead by *Igmar Thomas* and featuring *Bilal & Dr. Lonnie Smith* @ Le Poisson Rouge



As you can see from the photos above this was quite a night. The Revive Big band featured Wallace Rodney and Greg Osby performing the music of Wayne Shorter in a big band format. Just by chance I ended up sitting in the VIP performers area and got to mingle with the stars. Hanging with Dr. Lonnie Smith and Bilal was an unexpected treat. Right place, right time!



Ted Poor Quartet @ Zinc Bar

This group featured leader Ted Poor on drums, Josh Roseman on Trombone, Ben Street on bass and Bill McHenry on tenor. After having a lesson with Bill on the previous day it was great to see the concepts we had discussed put into action. The group played a mixture of original compositions as well as arrangements of the American Songbook.



Chris Lightcap & Bigmouth @ NYU Law

Chris Light on Bass, Gerald Cleaver on Drums, Craig Tadbourn on Piano and two of my favourite tenor players, Chris Cheek & Tony Malaby. I had studied with Chris Cheek last time I was in New York and it was inspirational to see him again.



Endangered Blood @ NYU Law

This ensemble is lead by Jim Back on drums and features Chris Speed on Tenor, Oscar Noriega on Clarinet & Alto and Trevor Dunn on bass. I love this group and have all of their recordings. They did not disappoint in their live format presentation.

Thursday January 9 to Friday January 10**Jazz Connect Conference @ New York City Hilton**

It was fortunate that I became aware of this event during my time in the city. The conference featured a series of workshops, panels and events and was held over two days.

With a theme of “The Road Ahead” the conference brought together a wide cross-section of the jazz community for 12 workshops and 5 plenary (meeting) sessions on a range of topics. Moderators and panelists included an impressive cross-section of artists and professionals such as musician/producers Dave Douglas and Greg Osby as well as editors and journalists from the jazz media. Over the 2 days I attended clinics and discussions that were predominantly directed to enable jazz musicians gain traction and promote themselves in a multiple of ways including social media and the Internet. Some of the highlights included:

Engaging the Jazz Media Gatekeepers panel discussion consisting of journalists
Session was based on how to get media coverage and reviews on your record/CD releases

- Good to have your name on the cover of the CD/record and the names of other players.
- Always helps to have a *name* player in the project (they referred to this as the Billy Hart effect).
- Send hard copies, not just links to digital versions of recordings.
- You need to be out there playing to be seen and heard (touring!).
- It is always good for the music to have a story behind it.
- Have a link to high resolution photos and press release.
- Presentation of press release is very important.
- *Buzz* effect is important.

The New Paradigm for Record Labels panel discussion consisting of owners of record labels including Greg Osby and Dave Douglas

Discussion on the new forms of presenting and selling your music

- Older artists tend to sell more physical copies.
- The sale of some labels still consists of 65% to 70% physical copies.
- Advice given on how to distribute CDs.
- Talked about releasing on vinyl. Some labels like the concept and the opportunity to present a more substantial product including artwork. Others thought it was old inferior technology with its associated *pops and cracks*.
- Discussion about the pros and cons of Spotify and Pandora.
- Live music is critical.
- Everybody needs to work together to get the music out there.



Keynote Speaker Ben Cameron (Doris Duke Foundation of America)

To be honest I am not a big fan of keynote addresses however this guy was fantastic. He presented a sincere and passionate address that appeared to connect with everybody in the room. His main points were: 1. Be most creative: 2. Everybody has something to offer: 3. Set aside competition and work together ... “Coopertition”. Ben also discussed the growth of festivals and how the people providing the money (via grants etc.) and the artist have to work together. As artists, we all have to “*bring something to the table*”.

Cutting Through the Clutter panel discussion and workshop

A panel of experts from various professional sectors analysed projects to see if they were ready for the prime time market and suggested ways to make them better. This was an opportunity to see some upcoming artists present their *product* to the people that count. Each artist presented recordings, artwork, promotional material and digital information to the panel and others in the room. There were some amazing artists and it was a very informative session with the panel providing constructive advice.

Friday January 10**Linda Oh Group** @ Roberto’s Winds, near Times Square

During this week I also caught up with New York based Australian bassist, Linda Oh. Linda is currently playing with the cream of New York’s and the World’s jazz artists including Dave Douglas, Joe Lovano, Mark Turner and Seamus Blake. The last time we met was in Brisbane when she toured with Jacam Manricks and held a workshop for my students. Linda presented a showcase of the music from her latest release with Ben Wendel on tenor, Matthew Stevens on guitar and Ted Poor on drums. Following the performance we caught up for a brief chat. We tried to work out another time to hold a more extensive conversation however we were unable to find a mutual time as she was flat out working!



WEEK 4

This was arguably the biggest week of my fellowship with meetings and performances ranging from high school and community ensembles through to jazz royalty. I even went to a concert that had music composed around one of Winston Churchill's speeches - a curious coincidence. Fortunately there was some respite from the extreme weather that enabled me to experience what New York had to offer. I was also very aware that my fellowship was soon coming to an end.



Monday January 13
Kurt Rosenwinkel New Quartet @ Jazz Standard E 27th St

This group included pianist Aaron Parks (who I literally ran into on the way downstairs to the club), bassist Eric Revis, and drummer Kendrick Scott. All of these musicians are leaders in their own right and I have many of their

recordings in my personal collection. It was great to hear them live. I was fortunate to have a chat with Kendrick Scott at the bar where we discussed his latest album and his recent trip to Australia to perform at the Wangaratta Jazz Festival.



Tuesday January 14
Mingus Orchestra @ Jazz Standard

The Mingus Big Band celebrates the music of composer/bassist Charles Mingus, who died in 1979. The 14-piece band performs *Mingus Mondays* at Jazz Standard featuring many of New York's top musicians. It was a great opportunity to hear Lew Soloff on lead trumpet and saxophonists Ronnie Cuber and Seamus Blake stretch out in their solos. As a bonus the award-winning menu served the best barbecue meal I have ever experienced.

Wednesday January 15

Meeting with **Angela Davis** @ Harlem

With a welcome break from the polar vortex I made my way up to Harlem to brunch with saxophonist Angela Davis. Based in New York City since January 2010, Angela was born in Toowoomba, Queensland, Australia. She received a Bachelor of Music with first class honors in 2006 from the Queensland Conservatorium of Music. During this time she recorded with The Con Artists Big Band led by trumpeter John Hoffman, a veteran of big bands led by Glen Miller, Buddy Rich and Woody Herman.

In 2006 Angela attended the Manhattan School of Music Summer workshop in Amsterdam where she studied with Dick Oatts, Gary Dial and Michael Abene. In September 2008 she moved to Philadelphia to study at the University of the Arts from which she received her Masters of Music in 2009. In 2013 Davis released her debut album, *The Art Of the Melody*, to rave reviews throughout the USA and Australia in publications such as the New York City Jazz Record and The Weekend Australian. When I heard this album I loved it and knew I had to catch up with Angela while in New York.



Over brunch we discussed a variety of topics with three main themes emerging: her lessons with Lee Konitz, the album and its production and her musical journey and experiences living in the *Big Apple*.

Below is a summary of the main topics discussed:

Lessons with Lee Kontiz

- This was over 18 months with lessons at irregular intervals.
- We discussed how important Lee saw melody, to be able to sing it and how they would always play

together in the lessons.

- The importance of being able to recognize chords by ear.
- As I have heard from others who have studied with Lee, they would focus on *All the things you are* at a slow tempo.
- Lee was all about playing by ear.

Time in New York

- Angela came over for a year after finishing her degree in Brisbane where she studied with Tony Hobbs and Ken Stubbs.
- She went to University of the Arts in Philadelphia and studied with Dick Oates (from the Vanguard Orchestra).
- She has lived in New York for over 5 years.
- Makes a living from gigs & teaching (surprisingly mostly piano teaching).

Production of Album

- Cd received high volume airplay on radio through promotion by her agent who also gave advice on track sequence.
- Recording in NYC is a lot more affordable than back in Australia.
- As stated by Jacam Manricks, the promotion of the recording was the most expensive part of the process.

Evening of the 15th

***Kevin Hays Quartet with
Chris Potter, Ben Street &
Eric McPherson @ Smalls,
Greenwich Village***

This was a great opportunity to hear up close the great saxophonist Chris Potter performing on tenor and bass clarinet. It was a fantastic display of virtuosity not just by Chris, but the whole band.

**Thursday January 16**

Meeting House Jazz Orchestra @ East Village

During our brunch the previous day Angela Davis invited me to a concert where she was performing with the Meeting House Jazz Orchestra featuring soloist Steve Wilson. The band is a professional ensemble composed of freelance jazz musicians living and working in the New York City area including Australians Angela, Mat Jodrel and Tim Stocker. The group rehearses in a historic Quaker meeting house and plays original compositions and arrangements written by members of the band as well as arrangements from the jazz canon. The concert also featured a school ensemble that played through some instrumental and vocal standards prior to the main set.



The event celebrated Martin Luther King Jr Day and comprised a variety of ensemble music featuring the band and soloists with the proceeds being donated to benefit a local shelter for the homeless.

The evening concluded with a local advocate giving a moving speech that featured an excerpt from a Martin Luther King speech and the band

performing an arrangement of *We Shall Overcome* - the folk song made famous by the peace movement.



Friday January 17

Meeting / lesson with **Branford Marsalis** @ Jazz at the Lincoln Centre

When I contacted Branford's management via his website in mid 2013 I was not expecting a response. Branford is one of the biggest names not only in jazz, but in music. In 2011 he was recognized as a National Endowment for the Arts jazz master. The NEA Jazz Masters Fellowship is "*the highest honor that our nation bestows upon jazz musicians. These fellowships are given in recognition that this magnificent art form, so profoundly based in American culture, is one of America's greatest gifts to the world.*" Over the last 3 decades he has led some of the most influential jazz groups, won three Grammy awards and performed with artists such as Art Blakey and Sting (to name a very few). Needless to say, it was with great excitement that I received the following email from Branford's management.

Thank you very much for your email and interest in meeting Branford for an interview and lesson. Congratulations on the Churchill Fellowship - your trip sounds very exciting! Branford will be in Asia for the first two weeks of December, but would be happy to meet with you upon his return.

Branford was scheduled to perform as a soloist with the *Jazz at the Lincoln Centre Orchestra* in mid January and through his management (with special thanks to Kathey Marsella) I arranged to meet with him prior to rehearsals. Branford was very generous and giving in finding the time to fit me into his busy schedule. In fact part way through our meeting a national television crew (with full sound and lighting rig) knocked on the door wanting to set up for an interview that was to follow our meeting. I took this as a sign that my session was over but he told them to come back at the end of our allocated time. It was a definite indication that the Churchill Fellowship carried some considerable weight.

We covered a variety of topics during our session and it was reassuring to learn that there was consensus on many of them. It was an experience that I will remember for a lifetime. He told me how he loved Australians because of the way we were so accepting and not scared to share our views and that he saw us in a similar way to people from the state of Louisiana where he spent his childhood. Branford was very upfront with his opinions and it was easy to see the connection between the two cultures, particularly with Queensland.

I gathered enough insight and ideas to fill many pages however, once again for brevity, I have summarized some of the major aspects of the topics covered:

- Each time Branford spoke about a concept he would play me an audio example from his iPad.
- We talked about how students and professionals need to listen to the masters and imitate them to really be able to play and not just practice transcriptions from a written/score medium. In this way they would pick up the nuance and analyse in the correct way. Everybody needs to learn to play by playing along with records.
- Branford recommended that students imitate Johnny Hodges, as his music is accessible and playable for a variety of players (eg. Johnny Hodges Complete Verve sessions). Lester Young was also given as an example.

- I voiced that when I improvised I really focused on the melody and not so much the chords (even though I learnt them as well). He totally agreed and stated that sometimes he was not even aware of the chords; melody is the most important thing.
- Branford said I really needed to go to New Orleans to hear the kids play, not New York where there was a lot of generic playing.
- He felt a lot of players in NYC did not really swing and were focused on playing in faster tempos or double timing. One way to *sort* out players was to count tunes in at 90 beats per minute (BPM), this would quickly determine if they could really swing.
- We discussed academic jazz. People that can't play, just justify it through formalization.
- He believed that students should be graded on effort, not necessarily their immediate outcomes. He gave an example of a student who took 18 months to learn a Lester Young solo. He was hopeless at first and then after a sustained effort it became perfect. After this the student could transcribe things (and play) a lot better than the other academic students. These more academic students laughed at him during the process when he was really striving to get it together but not seeming to make any obvious progress.
- We should not learn to play patterns or *licks*.
- Branford was of the opinion that most players in Smalls (the jazz club) did not really play jazz. They do not really improvise but perform a lot of pre-prepared patterns. A lot of players have the same sound and play the same.
- He also observed that most people are not going to listen to *modern* jazz
- We talked about the production of his recordings. He leaves a lot of the details to his sound engineer (who is anal and he is not) including microphones. He records mostly in the same space.



Saturday January 18

Fresh Sounds @ Jazz
at Lincoln Center with
works by **Ted Nash**
and **Victor Goines**
and featuring
Branford Marsalis

This concert
presented newly
commissioned works
by reed section
members Ted Nash
and Victor Goines.
Ted Nash lead the
band through his

latest piece *The Presidential Suite*, comprising six movements reflecting on "important and inspiring speeches by world leaders". This included a movement based on the Winston Churchill speech "*We shall fight them on the beaches*". Goines presented his composition entitled "Crescent City," a meditation on his hometown of New Orleans featuring Branford Marsalis on tenor. Branford was in top form and demonstrated many of the concepts we had discussed the previous day throughout his performance. We also met in the foyer after the concert, which was a great way to finish a very special week.

**WEEK 5**

As I began my final week in New York I received a message from a friend "Are you jazzed out yet". The reply was a definite *no* however when another blast descended from the Arctic it was definitely a test of my resolve. The end was close and I was ready to return to a tropical summer.

**Sunday January 19**

Tim Hagans Quartet @ Jazz at the Lincoln
Centre

This performance featured Grammy award-nominee Tim Hagans on trumpet, Ravi Coltrane on saxophone, Dave Stryker on guitar, Jay Anderson on bass and Jukkis Uotila on drums. The group was making its debut at the Lincoln Center led by the veteran trumpeter who has performed with groups and artists such as Thad Jones, Dexter Gordon, Stan Kenton, and Maria Schneider.

I had a table right next to the stage and could not help thinking how much Ravi Coltrane looked like his father in performance. It was an eerie and somewhat surreal experience.

Tuesday January 21

Guillermo Klein's Los

Guachos @ The Village Vanguard, Greenwich Village

The final night of my fellowship was spent at the Village Vanguard listening to three of my favorite tenor players, Mark Turner, Chris Cheek and Bill McHenry. Los Guachos consisted of 11 musicians performing the original music of Guillermo Klein with the compositions allowing each of the players to express their personalities. It was the perfect way to end my time in New York. When the second set was cancelled due to the extreme weather it was a good sign that my fellowship had come to an end and it was time to head back home to sunny Australia.



Conclusions

From the first morning in the high school band room in Seattle through to the final night at the Village Vanguard in New York I was in total amazement of the standard of music and what was possible in jazz education and performance. To experience the genre in its birthplace in both educational and performance settings has enabled me to more fully understand the context of its delivery and how this differs to an Australian environment.

When I first began my search into best practice in jazz education in high schools it was not long until investigations lead me to the Seattle area. These schools have been recognized over a sustained period for excellence through success at competitions and festivals as well as the alumni that they produce. Before I visited both Roosevelt and Garfield high schools I had made several presumptions including the level of funding that these schools received and their entry and audition requirements. Through my attendance at conferences in the USA in the past I had heard outstanding performances from performing arts or *magnet* high schools and the conditions that these groups thrived under is what I was expecting to experience in Seattle. What I found was the opposite. I discovered that these schools had limited funding, with the majority of funds provided through fundraising by parent committees. I also discovered that they did not have a selection or audition process for students to gain entry. Like my own school they relied on students being attracted from the surrounding areas because of what their music program offered. They also encountered similar problems to what we experience here, with an over

supply of instrumentalists in certain areas (rhythm section & saxophones) and an undersupply in others (trombones). Both of the schools produced excellent programs through dedicated teachers who had developed a rich culture of performing excellence and success over a sustained period of time. All of the teachers I met did not have any magic wands or boundless funds they simply had a passion and dedication for the jazz genre with a deep commitment and understanding of the needs and various personalities of their students. It was inspiring and affirming to experience this first hand.

While in New York I heard a *lot* of jazz. Night after night I heard amazing performances and compositions giving clear evidence of the vast numbers of talented musicians attracted to this great city. Upon reflection it struck me that the musicians reminded me of the many creatures and plants surviving in the tropical rainforest of Far North Queensland where I spent my youth. Both environments consist of a biodiversity of species. Living in the understory are a range of species - some beautiful, some unassuming – all fighting for survival on limited resources and providing essential nutrients to foster and support the growth and expansion of larger trees in the upper canopy. Although fewer in number these more majestic trees are deeply rooted in the forest bed and bask in full spotlight of the sun that is only accessible within the upper canopy. They are like the stars or names in jazz, and would not survive without the existence of others. Like many of the plants in the forest many outstanding jazz artists never make *it to the light* and from my time in New York I began to wonder why this is so. I really enjoyed the musicianship of many of the artists playing in New York however I began to notice a certain generic sound and style of playing and composing. The artists that really stood out for me were the ones who offered something different, something more individual. I believe that those musicians who deeply rooted themselves in the tradition and history of jazz culture and could then find a way to create something new were the ones that truly flourished and had found success.



Recommendations

- That Australian jazz educators utilize the many accessible recordings and audio resources that are now readily available. In every jazz setting that I experienced while in the USA, concepts were demonstrated by the playing of recordings. It is essential that jazz educators continue the aural tradition that jazz is founded upon. These include the many resources available via the [Jazz Academy](#) provided by Jazz at the Lincoln Centre.
- The establishment of the Essentially Ellington High School Competition and Festival in Australia. This would enable Australian students to have a richer and deeper understanding of the jazz genre through the performance of Ellington's music. It will also enable access to the expert people and resources dedicated to this movement. Plans are already in place for this to take place in Brisbane in 2015 through the Jazz Music Institute with which I have a close working relationship. It is planned that the winning ensemble from Australia will then travel to New York to perform in the finals.
- It is important that Australian educators are mindful of the context in which they are delivering jazz education. In the USA the norm was for the top ensembles to rehearse every school day. In Australia, ensembles usually only rehearse once each week. The same levels of achievement cannot be expected with the limited amount of time given to rehearsals.
- That I continue to share the experiences and knowledge gained during my fellowship through ongoing involvement with the Australian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (ACARA), the Queensland Studies Authority (QSA), the Australian Band & Orchestra Directors Association and the jazz performing community within Australia and Queensland.
- That I pursue excellence in my own jazz performance through continued performing, listening, study in jazz history and culture and to strive to produce my own individual sound.



