

**Wellington**



# **Newsletter**

May 2011

Next Club Meeting

**Bruce Brown**

**pianist, singer, songwriter**

at

**Chicago**

5 pm Sunday, 15 May

Members \$12 Public \$15 Students \$5



# Wellington



[www.wellingtonjazzclub.org.nz](http://www.wellingtonjazzclub.org.nz)

## Committee of the WELLINGTON JAZZ CLUB (Inc)

President	Michael Bain	(04) 934 2271
Treasurer		
Secretary		
Membership		
Newsletter distribution		

Gigs Manager and Vice President	Chris Caudwell	(04) 973 3204
------------------------------------	----------------	---------------

Members	Bernard Weinstein	(04) 476 0588
	Graham Kelly	(04) 234 8825
	Bob Feasey	(04) 232 9548
	Bob Laybourn	(04) 475 7506

Newsletter	Julie Bremner	(04) 972 9796
------------	---------------	---------------

[juliebremner@mac.com](mailto:juliebremner@mac.com)

## Responsibility outside committee:

Event email notifications	John Kliem	<a href="mailto:Kliem@xtra.co.nz">Kliem@xtra.co.nz</a>
------------------------------	------------	--

## **President's Message**

On Sunday 17 April we enjoyed a night of brilliant jazz from Geoff Culverwell and his talented trio with Jim Perkins on guitar, Mitch Watson on bass stick and Mike Jensen on drums. Their style was café jazz and included an excellent selection of bop, latin, electric and fusion. It was tight, dynamic, brilliant, and very cool. Despite the competition from the jazz and blues fund-raiser at the Wellington Town Hall at the same time, we had a good turn-out and the band received an excellent reception from a most enthusiastic audience.

This month we will host a return visit by Bruce Brown with a group of supporting top-class musicians. Bruce is a pianist, singer, and song-writer and his performances are always good fun and entertaining. The last time Bruce played for the club was 15 June 2008 at the Loaded Hog. It is well overdue to have him back and the club is in for an excellent night's entertainment.

I still have some DVDs of the tribute to Bob Barcham held at the James Cook on 27 February, which feature the X7s Dance Band, the audience in attendance, the speeches, and Bob himself playing with the band. Contact me at any time with \$20. I can recommend the DVD as a very good record of an auspicious event in the club's life.

Don't forget to pop into Music Works cnr Ghuznee and Marion Streets with your membership card to take advantage of their 10% discount while the discount offer lasts. They have an excellent range of instruments, music, and accessories.

Once again, I encourage all club members to come and actively support the Jazz Club meetings, enjoy the entertainment and meet other members. Bring your friends. We will make them welcome. It is truly a case of the more the merrier and a full house always provides a real buzz for the musos and audience alike.

For those who are not yet members, you will be most welcome to join the club and play your part in keeping jazz alive and well in the capital city. A big welcome to new members Mel Bogard and John Culy.

See you all on 15 May at the Chicago.

*Mike Bain*

President



**For all your musical needs  
come and see Steve at  
MusicWorks Wellington  
31 Ghuznee Street  
Ph : (04) 389 7012  
Fax (04) 389 7011  
[wellington.musicworks.co.nz](http://wellington.musicworks.co.nz)**

**Wellington Music**  
WORKS  
*musicians helping musicians*

## **Kevin's From Heaven ... The Barton Babe Too!**

*Sol Weinstein*

In November of 2002, a scant month after my transplantation from LA to tropical sweltering Plimmerton, my Greek god-like body was positional seductively into a figure eight (don't scoff; try it and you'll find it ain't easy) reclining on a satin-draped bed while nearby a superlative pianist's technique floated me into Nirvana (which will soon be a stop on the Matangi train).

Whoops ... gotta revamp that opening. Too much Jackie Collins sex-crazed Hollywood hottie novel stuff. (a) You don't need to know I possess the physique of a Hellenic deity – unfortunately, Athena's; and (b) The satin-draped bed was not in some lurid establishment of the demi-monde on Vivian Street but the bed department of the upscale Kirkcaldie & Stains store, the oddest site for a jazz concert I'd ever been to. I didn't see Kirkcaldie, but the guy with the paint splashes on his jeans must have been stains.

Loving the sounds the pianoman and his saxophonist and bassist were laying down, I called out, "You guys know that Tadd Dameron bebop tune 'Ladybird'?" And they ripped right into "Ladybird" (to which, incidentally, I've added some lyrics).

That afternoon was my introduction to keyboard and trumpet whiz Kevin Clark, who came to New Zealand four decades ago as a musician – also an architect – from South Africa. He amazed me further by revealing he was also a resident of Plimmerton and introduced me to Colin Hemmingsen, saxman and who's been in more reeds than Moses, and bassist Rowan Clark, no relation to Kevin except toponotch musicianship.

All these worthies, plus a heavenly honey-tressed hobbit of a singer named Fran Barton, are starring on a new CD on the Ode label "The Gentleman Is a Dope" which they'll be previewing for Wellington Jazz Club members and their guests next month. They'll be joined by drummer Reuben Bradley and Latin percussionist Miguel Amedo-Gomez.

"The Gentleman Is A Dope" (not the biography of Homer Simpson) is a poignant creation of classic Yank

songsmiths Rogers and Hammerstein about a lady lamenting the fact that the guy she'd be so right for just doesn't love her, and Fran communicates the spurned one's sorrow in her usual evocative manner.

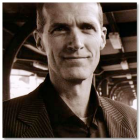
But Fran, who shows her versatility on all 13 of the CD's tracks, can segue from heartache to humour with "Someone's Been Sending Me Flowers" about a nutcase flooding a bewildered chick with tons of floral surprises. Co-writer of this oddball piece is Sheldon Harnick of "Fiddler On The Roof" renown. Then there's Fran's version of the old Louis Jordan rhythm and blues hit "Ain't Nobody There But Us Chickens" on which she hobble, hobble, hobbles all over the barnyard.

The Barton babe, who's been crooning with Kevin's bands for all of those four decades on New Zealand radio and television and heaps of area nighteries, performs a nice cover of Peggy Lee's hit "I Don't Know Enough About You" and amuses again with "My Canary Has Circles Under His Eyes", the ditty about the bird who can't handle the bottle.

Because Kevin has a passion for Latino music he leads Fran into vocalising "Quizas, Quizas, Quizas", better known to some as the English version "Perhaps, Perhaps, Perhaps". And the most ambitious track is also Latin. It's stellar pianist Chick Corea's reworking of Joaquin Rodrigo's Andalusian-tinged "Concierto de Aranjuez" into racehorse tempo called "Spain" on which Kevin and Fran even toss in some vocal scatting. All this and more will be delighting jazz club fans on Sunday 19 June, 5-7 pm at the D4 Irish Bar, cnr Featherston/Brandon Streets.

For a life of musical genius, here's my lyrical tribute to my fellow townie set to that grand old Bing Crosby standard "Pennies From Heaven":

Every time he plays we know, Kevin's from heaven.  
Rocket speed or sultry slow, Kevin's from heaven.  
He's got ten magic fingers, from heaven sent,  
Like my mom said in Yiddish "*Goldener hent!*" (Golden hands!)  
Ragtime, bebop, Latin too, Master of all styles,  
And before the gig is through, everyone's all smiles!  
And he belongs right up there with all those jazz kings  
Yes, Kevin's from heaven – and man, he swings!



## This month's gig

### Bruce Brown

*His songs are like potato chips, once you hear one, you'll  
wanna hear all of them*

This quote from Arthur Hamilton, writer of "Cry Me A River" aptly describes Bruce Brown's songs. Few singer/songwriter/pianists have incorporated the American popular songbook with a straight-ahead bebop approach to writing as successfully as he has. Formidable piano playing, a silky smooth voice, and lyrics that are witty, poignant, and above all swinging, capture the essence of the music – once you hear Bruce's songwriting, you'll be glad you did.

Bruce Brown, originally from LA, established himself as a highly regarded pianist, singer, and songwriter performing at all the major jazz clubs in Southern California. His songs have been described as "original standards". Bruce Brown's lyrics are his claim to fame – they are sophisticated and reflect his love of the *Great American Songbook*. Holding all the lyrics in place is a beautiful, almost invisible architecture. His words flow in careful trickles, clever bursts, and soulful yearns. His melodies dance and float over chord changes that provide daring colouration. As a performer, Bruce's easygoing spontaneity establishes a natural rapport, always leaving his audience wanting more.

Bruce arrived in New Zealand late 1998 to take up the position of senior tutor in piano and voice at the Conservatorium of Music, Massey University, Wellington where he currently teaches full time and performs regularly in the capital. In 2000 Bruce recorded "I Believe It" in Sydney. His second album "Love Finds You" was recorded in his home town of LA in early 2005.

Playing with Bruce will be Greg Crayford, drums, Simon Jones, guitar, and Paul Mouncy, bass.

## WHERE ARE THE CAMELS ?

John E Joyce

By Ken Avery (1922- 1983) Compiler and Editor: Clare Avery  
2010

*A Wellington NZ jazz musician's reminiscences of a bygone era*

Clare Avery, daughter of Ken Avery, has gathered her father's photos, clippings, and written notes and published them into a book. It covers Ken's life in music and what was happening in NZ jazz from the 1940s up until the 1970s including visits from visiting overseas jazzmen. Clare hopes surviving musicians of this era will enjoy the memories and reminiscences.

The title *Where Are the Camels* is pure Ken Avery wackiness. He remembered that Laurie Paddy a post-war bandleader at the prestigious Majestic Ballroom in Wellington, came in one night and observing the very hard neon lighting and the dusting of ballroom powder on the floor and remembering Western Desert for brightness said, "Where are the camels?"

I found it easy to read and very entertaining and if you have lived through this same time, I'm sure you will too. The trials and tribulations as a dance band sideman and leader and a recording star are all there. He also tells you about the overseas jazz musicians he met and talked with. There are plenty of press clippings reporting jazz concerts featuring Ken and especially his group called the Darktown Strutters, the band of which he was most proud. I remember Ken as a great band organisor who was also a humourist ("I'll do the funny stuff," he often used to say) in this regard I thought of him as the Eddie Condon of New Zealand except that he was a far better musician. We have both Ken and Clare Avery to thank for this slice of Jazz Kiwianna and the background of a dance band era which no longer exists.

The book is available on line at [www.nzbookshop.co.nz](http://www.nzbookshop.co.nz) <<http://www.nzbookshop.co.nz/>>