

Arnold Schoenberg... His *Pierrot Lunaire* is the last word in cacophony and musical anarchy.  
-Arthur M. Abell, Musical Courier, New York, November 6, 1912.

**Swing INTO Spring!**  
A Celebration of Jazz Classics  
with Newcastle University Choir  
& special guest Terence Koo  
with the Terence Koo Trio  
2pm **SUNDAY 14  
OCTOBER 2012**

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Bring Your Dancing Shoes!

Conductor **Christopher Allan**  
Guest Artists  
**Cassia Lindsay | Scott Gelzinnis**  
Songs include  
*Fly Me To The Moon,  
It Had To Be You, Sing Sing Sing*  
Featuring music by  
**Cole Porter, Duke Ellington,**  
and arrangements  
by **Terence Koo**

NEWCASTLE  
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CHOIR  
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## What, exactly, is jazz?

This question was put to Louis Armstrong by a reporter, on behalf of her readers. He replied "Honey, you tell 'em if they gotta ask, they ain't ever goin' to know".

The word itself may very well have come from the French word *jaser*, meaning to gossip. French was the language of New Orleans, and jazz is generally regarded as having started in Storyville, the licenced brothel area of the city. The music of the former slaves was quite unrestricted, like a free conversation, and it was also the slang word for sex.

The police closed Storyville, which had been an experiment in legalized prostitution, in 1917, and the musicians who had made their living there dispersed throughout the US. Yehudi Menuhin writes: "Jazz itself was once considered bold, experimental and dangerous. It was denounced from church pulpits and by newspapers as a corrupter of youth, just as the waltz had been in the century before."

By the 1930s jazz music was generally seen as reasonably acceptable, although the *Oxford Companion to Music* tut-tuts that "It may be mentioned that the number of jazz musicians making occasional or regular use of drugs such as marijuana or even heroin has been shown beyond dispute to be very large."

The *Oxford Junior Companion* warns young readers that jazz "includes a lot of noise from various kinds of Percussion Instruments and also from wind instruments played with very hard, loud tone... Music of that sort became widely known... and soon spread all over the world – to the dismay of many musicians who did not like it."

The term *swing* came into use around 1935, and that's where we're headed in our next concert.

So... What makes a classic?

This was an era of great musicians, big bands and songs that have stood the test of time. Your grandparents danced to them, so did your parents, and now it's your turn!

Inflation is when you pay fifteen dollars for the ten dollar haircut you used to get for five dollars when you had hair. – *Sam Ewing*

We'll start in 1924, when Isham Jones wrote the music and Gus Kahn the lyrics for *It Had to be You*. Johnny Mercer called this "the greatest popular song ever written," and he should know – he wrote the lyrics for more than 1500 songs. The song featured in more than 40 films, including *Casablanca*, *Annie Hall* and *When Harry Met Sally*.

Cole Porter wrote *Night and Day* for the 1932 Broadway musical *The Gay Divorcee*. He claimed that the music was inspired by Moroccan drums and an Islamic chant he heard while cruising down the Nile. The song was Frank Sinatra's first hit, and he recorded it at least four times – along with Ella Fitzgerald, Tony Bennett, Billie Holiday, The Temptations and U2.

Harold Arlen and Ted Koehler wrote *Stormy Weather* for Cab Calloway in 1933, but he left the Cotton Club before it was performed. Duke Ellington took over, but he didn't sing, so they gave the song to Ethel Waters, whose initial performance drew twelve encores. Ethel, who was recovering from the breakup of her marriage at the time, said "When I got out there in the middle of the Cotton Club floor, I was telling things I couldn't frame in words. I was singing the story of my misery and confusion, of the misunderstanding of my life I couldn't straighten out, the story of wrongs and outrages done to me by people I loved and trusted."

Louis Prima wrote *Sing Sing Sing* in 1936 for his friend Bing Crosby – it was originally titled *Sing Bing Sing*. The song was made famous by Benny Goodman, and became his signature song. It is said to be the song most reproduced on sheet music.

"*It's Latin America in Jitterbug Time*" claimed a poster for Duke Ellington's orchestra in 1942. Juan Tizol, who was Ellington's trombonist, wrote *Perdido* on the train, and handed it to the Duke, who wrote an arrangement that was performed that night.

It was Duke Ellington's son Mercer who is credited with writing *Things Ain't What They Used To Be* in 1943. Its original title was *Time's A-Wastin'*. There was a musicians' strike on at the time called by the American Society of Composers (ASCAP), and the Duke couldn't air any of his own compositions, so it was a golden opportunity for Mercer.

Skip to 1954, when Bart Howard wrote *Fly Me to the Moon* for the movie *Once Around*. Singer Felicia Saunders introduced it to the cabaret circuit under the title *In Other Words*. Johnny

Mathis was the first to record it under its present title in 1956. The definitive version is said to be Frank Sinatra's recording with the Count Basie Orchestra arranged by Quincy Jones. Frank was about to marry 21 year-old Mia Farrow at the time, which might have put a bit of a spring in his step. It became an international hit when Connie Francis recorded it in Italian as *Portami Con Te*. When Apollo 10 orbited the moon in May 1969 Sinatra's version of the song became one of the first ever to be performed in outer space, along with others such as *Moonlight Serenade*.

It's a sad coincidence – the death of Neil Armstrong – and perhaps this will bring back memories of the excitement of these years, when "fly me to the moon" became more than just the title of a hit song. During rehearsals some of us have noted that it's fitting that we'll be singing *Going up Yonder*, written by Walter Hawkins and arranged by Terence Koo.

When he died in 2010, the New York Times wrote: "Walter Hawkins [was a] gospel composer and singer whose songs brought a sense of contemporary rhythm to the howling, pleading, God-praising tradition of churchly ecstasy." It's exhilarating!

*Mas Que Nada* was written and originally performed by Jorge Ben in 1963. It's Portuguese for *No way*, or perhaps *Come on*. Sergio Mendes made it a hit in 1966, giving it a bossa nova beat and exciting vocals by Lani Hall.

Which brings us to 1988, when Guy Turner published *Tequila Samba*, which is somewhat risqué, involving as it does a young lady, tequila, a glass or two of bubbly and two martinis, followed by some sambaing in the street. Cha cha cha! Surprising then to learn that Turner studied music at Cambridge and sang in the Clare Chapel Choir under John Rutter.

So that's quite a journey through the swing era, featuring many truly great jazz classics, involving some of the best known jazz musicians of all time. Can a large choir, a jazz trio and a couple of vocalists pull it off? You bet we can, and this will be a great concert.

Terence Koo and his trio will perform other numbers, and will be accompanied by Cassie Lindsay and Scott Gelzinnis. More about them next issue.

A private collection of approximately 1000 records is for sale, classical and music from 1960s – 80s.

Proceeds to Newcastle University Choir  
For list of titles and catalogue access please email  
[monica.sinclair@singmercy.org.au](mailto:monica.sinclair@singmercy.org.au)