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## The Graeme Bell All Stars: Play On

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# THE GRAEME BELL ALL STARS

A celebration of the band, the music and  
the legacy they are leaving behind

## PLAY ON

**A new 57 minute documentary by Marco Ianniello**

## ONE LINER

THE GRAEME BELL ALL STARS PLAY ON:  
A celebration of the band, the music and the legacy they are leaving behind.



## SHORT SYNOPSIS

In the golden era of Australian jazz, The Graeme Bell All Stars were icons. From touring the globe to hosting their own television show they captured the world with their music. Recently, at 88 years of age, Graeme Bell re-formed the band and went back on tour.

## EXTENDED SYNOPSIS

In the golden era of Australian jazz, the Graeme Bell All Stars were icons. From touring the globe to having their own television show, they captured the world with their music.

Graeme Bell came out of retirement at the age of 88 to re-form his band. For over 3 years, they enjoyed sold-out performances and standing ovations at jazz festivals all around Australia.

This one hour documentary features rare coverage of the All Stars in full swing playing a repertoire of Australian jazz compositions for the first time, never before seen 8mm films of the All Stars tours in the 60's and the band's final concert for Graeme Bell's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday.

At the heart of this film is the energy and passion for jazz these men keep alive even in their twilight years. On tour and at home, these extraordinary characters will reflect on their present day lives, their amazing history and the legacy they are leaving behind.

## ONE PAGER

In the golden era of Australian Jazz in the 1950's and 60's **The Graeme Bell All Stars** were icons. From touring the globe to hosting their own TV show they captured the world with their music. Now, as Graeme approaches 90 the band is back on tour.



In 2003, Graeme Bell came out of retirement at the age of 88 to re-form his band. They enjoyed sell out performances and standing ovations at jazz festivals all around Australia. This documentary follows Graeme and his fellow musicians on the road for the first time in decades. With coverage of the performances, intimate backstage moments with the guys, in-depth interviews, this final tour is the backbone of the film's journey. The crew were fortunate enough to have captured Graeme's final performance with the All Stars in September 2004. Filmed at Australia's oldest theatre; The Independent in North Sydney, this beautiful art deco theatre is a stunning backdrop for this unique moment in time.

Running parallel to these contemporary exploits will be Graeme and his All Stars in the younger incarnation of their heyday: on the road throughout Australia in the 1950's and 60's. Graeme has given us exclusive access to abundant reels of 'never before seen' 8mm footage he shot and edited years ago, which until recently was sitting in a box in his garage. By juxtaposing 2004 with 1964, this film documents the final chapter in the illustrious career of these legendary performers while acknowledging their incredible history.

The film features many Australian Jazz legends; Graeme Bell, the leader of the band who had Australia's inaugural Jazz Awards 'The Bells' named after him; Bob Henderson, arguably one of the country's greatest trumpeters; and Len Barnard, the larrikin of the group, who still gets the audience going with his amazing drum solos and cheeky stand up routines. They all recognise that this tour will perhaps be one of the last times they all perform together, as soon they will be playing less and less. Several more legends of Australian Jazz will also appear in the film, including Bob Barnard, Lawrie Thompson, Paul Furniss, Jack Wiard, John McCarthy, Harry Harmon and Kate Dunbar.

At the heart of this film is the energy and passion for jazz these people keep alive even in their twilight years. On tour and at home, these extraordinary characters will reflect on their present day lives, their amazing history and the legacy they are leaving behind.

## DIRECTOR'S NOTES

The idea of *The Graeme Bell All Stars Play On* came out of a random visit to the Strawberry Hills Hotel in Sydney, where a band filled with Sydney's Jazz veterans were playing their regular Saturday arvo gig. There had to be a film here.

Curiosity about this older group of jazz muso's led to meeting Graeme Bell. This was back in 2002. At this stage Graeme Bell was retired, but was planning to have a one-off gig at the Coogee Legions Club, reforming the All Stars for the first time in over a decade.

I thought we had the makings of a great short doco about this special one-off event. However, this gig was special. The band fired like they had just stopped playing yesterday and it planted a seed for future events.

In 2003, Graeme decided to re-form the band after getting offers from a jazz festival in Bowral. Confident after the Coogee gig, the band soon had a tour on their hands and we had the makings of a great documentary, a much longer documentary.



With a small crew of 4, we followed The Graeme Bell All Stars Reunion Band from Newcastle, to Glenelg and Wangaratta to Canberra. We were excited to be capturing this legendary jazz band back in action. The concerts just seemed to be getting better and better and Graeme younger with every note he struck. It was truly a magical experience to go along for the ride.

The band would tour on and off for over 3 years. With a dedicated team working on the film on their weekends in an around day jobs and studying at film school (AFTRS), we had built a rich rushes archive. Along the way, Graeme remembered he had a box of 8mm film in his garage. This was a priceless discovery and the footage was stunning. It was footage of the band on the road in the 60's. Their road trips across Australia, to their tours in New Guinea and Europe. We now had the materials to bring together the reunion tour in a very special way.

We filmed the final concert in late 2004 and commenced a series of retrospective interviews in 2005. In late 2005, after raising independent resources to complete the project and finding an amazing editor in Rowena Crowe, we commenced cutting over 50 hours of material down to a TV hour.

This film has truly been a labour of love and it is fantastic to be able to bring the final chapter of the legendary jazz man Graeme Bell and his band to a wider audience.

The documentary was acquired by the ABC and has screened on Sunday Arts from June 2006-2009.



## THE GRAEME BELL ALL STARS PLAY ON | KEY PRINCIPALS



### GRAEME BELL | PIANO / BAND LEADER

Graeme Bell, AO, MBE (b. Melbourne Vic. 1914) studied piano as a child and came to jazz, through his younger brother Roger in 1934. With like-minded friends they played their first jobs in 1935 and recorded in 1939. The Graeme Bell Jazz Gang was formed in 1940 but the war intervened and Graeme played for the American Red Cross in Queensland.

He returned to Melbourne in 1944 and fronted his Dixieland Band, which became a local leader in the emerging worldwide jazz revival and toured Czechoslovakia, France and Britain in 1947-48. They made another UK-European tour in 1950-52 and disbanded in September 1952. Graeme then organized a group that, in 1954-55 entertained troops in Korea and Japan. He led bands in Brisbane (1955-56), moved to Sydney, played commercially then retired to run his art gallery. Graeme returned to jazz in June 1962 with his All Stars and a Festival Records contract, TV series and long residencies at the Chevron Hotel. For over forty years his All Stars recorded and played festivals and concerts throughout Australia and PNG, New Zealand and China. An enthusiastic and regular contributor to Australian jazz composition Graeme has, since the early 40's, written more than thirty jazz tunes.

Since his last concert with the Graeme Bell Reunion Band, which concludes the documentary, Graeme only plays the occasional guest spot at concerts and festivals around Australia.



### BOB HENDERSON | TRUMPET

Bob Henderson (b.1941, Sydney) learnt cornet in Glen Innes Municipal Band when he was nine. As a teen he switched to trumpet, playing at country dances and his interest in jazz began. As a professional he worked in ballrooms, clubs, theatre, television and touring shows, backing many national and international stars.

Graeme invited Bob to join the All Stars in 1979, which led to performances Australia-wide as well as playing in New Zealand, Holland, Germany, UK, China, S.E Asia and Japan. Bob worked with the bands of Warren Daly, Ed Wilson, Bob Gibson, Col Nolan, George Washingmachine, Marie Wilson, Janet Seitel and Joy Mulligan as well as the Café Society Orchestra and many others. Bob lead his own band a festivals, clubs and pubs. His main influence is Louis Armstrong, but his playing reflects interest in many jazz styles.

## THE GRAEME BELL ALL STARS PLAY ON | CREW BIOS



### PRODUCER / DIRECTOR | MARCO IANNELO

Since graduating with Honours in Film Production from Macquarie Uni's Bachelor of Media program, Marco alternated between drama and documentary projects for a couple of years until he saw the doco *Children Underground*. Realising the power of this type of film making, his mind was made up and has been making documentaries ever since.

Marco completed his Master of Arts in Documentary production at the Australian Film TV & Radio School (AFTRS) in 2004 and whilst there produced three films and directed a short documentary for SBS. His film **Sentences** about an art program inside Long Bay Gaol, won the IF Award for best short documentary (2005).

**The Graeme Bell All Stars Play On**, is Marco's longest project to date (57 minutes) and was produced independently. He was fortunate enough to be working with fellow AFTRS graduates who shared his passion to bring the 'All Stars' final chapter to a wider audience. **Play On** and **Sentences** were recently screened nationally on the ABC.

Marco is currently producing the one hour documentary **Midnight Basketball**, after receiving funding from the AFC and ABC through the jTV docs initiative for emerging documentary film makers. In addition to this Marco lectures film production units in the Communications department at The University of Notre Dame, Sydney.



### EDITOR | ROWENA CROWE

Rowena had always intended to be a painter but when life took her to the edit suite and showed her the art of editing she never looked back. Rowena has now been working as an editor and assistant editor for over 8 years working on feature films and television programs such as *Australian Rules*, *Head On*, and *The Secret Life of Us*. Rowena loves to cut and especially enjoys the collaborative opportunities for an editor within documentary filmmaking.

Most recently, Rowena was the editor of the Dendy Award Winning doco (CRC AWARD) **Switch on the Night** and a finalist in the Yoram Gross animation category for **Autumn Moon**, which she produced and co-animated.

## **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY | DAVID HAWKINS**



David's passion for art, drawing and photography was inspired in great part by his childhood love of comic books and cartoons. He completed a BA Media at Macquarie University then, realising how little he still knew, took on an Honours year in which he taught himself about film, cameras and how to shoot.

For the following 2 years, David assisted freelance and worked at SBS until he found himself a Finalist in the inaugural PanaVISIONS cinematography competition, alongside three very talented and experienced cinematographers. This spurred him to apply for AFTRS schooling.

Since completing his MA Cinematography and with a range of short dramas, music videos and documentaries under his belt, David is ready to embark on new imaginative and innovative projects.



## **SOUND RECORDIST | STEVAN BAE**

Stevan has completed a BA in Broadcasting in 2001 and worked for SBS and KBS in Korea as boom operator and sound recordist.

Since graduating from the AFTRS in 2004, he has worked as a sound recordist and boom operator on a range of feature films, television programs and documentaries, both in Australia and abroad.



## **PRODUCTION DETAILS:**

FULL TITLE: The Graeme Bell All Stars Play On  
LENGTH: 56min34s  
MASTER FORMAT: Digital Betacam FHA (16:9 PAL)  
SOUND: Ch. 1& 2 Stereo Mix (48k)  
Ch 3&4 M&E Mix  
SHOOTING GUAGE: DV CAM/HDV  
LICENCE PERIOD: June 2006 – June 2009 (ABC Free to Air)

## **HI-RESOLUTION STILLS and POSTER AVAILABLE ON REQUEST**

## **CONTACT DETAILS:**

All queries and questions regarding press kit and production please contact:

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