

JAZZ

All that top notch jazz

MELBOURNE jazz fans will have the opportunity to see a remarkable line up of first class talent over the next week. The Melbourne Jazz Festival will be on at Mister Ward's throughout the week, while The Jazz Masters will be at the Beaconsfield Hotel on Sunday and Monday nights.

The Jazz Masters are pianist Monty Alexander, bassist Ray Brown and guitarist Herb Ellis — gifted jazzmen who like their music swinging and happy.

Ray Brown is one of the great jazz bassists, and is a player with exceptional technique, taste and time. He achieved prominence with the Dizzy Gillespie Orchestra of the 1940s and the original MJQ before he clinched his reputation with the great trios led by Oscar Peterson from 1950-66.

He is a player of some charisma. When he last toured here in 1974, he even made the LA4 sound alert. Herb Ellis is an old colleague of Brown's, having worked with the Oscar Peterson Trio for five years from 1953. He has toured Australia several times since 1974 with Barney Kessell, and established himself as a favorite with Australian fans for his direct, bluesy attack.

Monty Alexander is an ideal pianist for Ellis and Brown. His trio approach is based on Oscar Peterson's style, as he grooves through standards with a busy attack, generating an infectious enthusiasm that is evidence of his Jamaican background.

These three musicians promise to provide truly delightful jazz at the Beaconsfield on Sunday and Monday nights. Tickets are \$16.50 (telephone 534 0225 for bookings).

Meanwhile, the Melbourne Jazz Festival begins at 8 pm tomorrow at Mister Ward's with a set from local band Odwalla (Martin Jackson, saxophones; Jamie Fielding, piano; Barry Buckley, bass; Allan Browne, drums), who play contemporary jazz with real fervor.

They will be followed by the Miroslav Vitous Quartet. Vitous is the Czech bass virtuoso who was a key member of Weather Report from 1971-73. His current band, on its two ECM albums, displays a similar improvisational style shown by early Weather Report, although it makes no attempt to disguise its European characteristics.

The other band members are Norwegian drummer, Jon Christensen (who has worked with Keith Jarrett and Jan Garbarek), English pianist John Taylor and saxophonist John Surman, who is a powerful virtuoso hailed as the most important baritone saxophonist since Harry Carney. He displays similar talent on bass clarinet and soprano sax. If you want to



Jamaican pianist Monty Alexander.

hear what Europe can contribute to contemporary jazz, listen to these musicians.

The Festival continues on Monday night with the Johnny Griffin Quartet. Tenor saxophonist Johnny Griffin, one of the surviving giants of the bebop era, is still a brilliant and exciting jazz soloist. He established himself in the 1950s as a sideman with Art Blakey and Thelonious Monk.

'The Little Giant' is sure to play some excellent hard-driving jazz with the help of his rhythm section, comprising ex-Jazz Messenger Ronnie Mathews on piano, Ray Drummond on bass and Kenny Washington on drums. The support band will be led by vibist Alan Lee, who plays bright jazz not far from Milt Jackson's 'bag'.

Tuesday night's concert will be opened by the Australian Jazz Ensemble, an accessible band featuring Brian Brown on soprano sax and flute, Bob Venler on trumpet and Bob Sedergreen on electric piano. They will be followed by Expedition, which comprises bassist Rufus Reid, reeds player Bob Rockwell, pianist Art Resnick (all former Thad Jones-Mel Lewis Big Band musicians) and ex-Woody Shaw drummer Victor Lewis.

They will play a short set before backing trumpet giant Freddie Hubbard. His

work in the 1960s — with almost every important figure of the day, including Blakey, Roach, Coltrane and Coleman — established him as the strongest trumpet talent to emerge since Dizzy Gillespie and Clifford Brown. Over the past decade he has achieved some commercial success at the expense of his musical reputation, but as his work with Herbie Hancock's VSOP proved, he remains an exceptionally dynamic jazz soloist.

Wednesday night's performance will begin with the Bobby Shew Quintet. Los Angeles-based trumpeter Shew toured last year, and proved himself a strong and interesting talent. He will be accompanied by trombonist Bill Reichenbach (of the Akiyoshi-Tabackin Big Band), and the excellent local rhythm section of pianist Bob Sedergreen, bassist Gary Costello and drummer Allan Browne.

Pianist Mick Nock, a New Zealander whose recent work in the US has displayed melodic eloquence, will team with the very fluent US vibist Dave Samuels. And, finally, pianist Hal Galper (former Cannonball Adderley, now with the Phil Woods Quartet) will play a trio set with Rufus Reid on bass and Victor Lewis on drums.

Thursday's concert will open with guitar jazz from Bruce Clarke and his Trio, and continue with a set featuring US guitarists Vic Juris and Steve Erquiaga, playing duets or backed by Miroslav Vitous and Jon Christensen. The Miroslav Vitous Quartet will head the bill.

Australian jazz band Onaje (Richard Miller on sax, Bob Sedergreen on piano, Gary Costello on bass and Allan Browne on drums) will be featured on Friday before Expedition and Freddie Hubbard do their stuff.

The concert on Saturday night (30 January) will open with the Ted Vining Trio, an excellent Australian band with Vining on drums, Barry Buckley on bass and Bob Sedergreen on piano. Pianist Norman Simmons, a Chicago bebop veteran whose work with Carmen McRae and Anita O'Day has established him as an excellent accompanist, will perform with Australian singers Suzie Dickinson, Ricky May, Paula Langlands and Edwin Duff.

The final set should provide a fitting finale to a week of top class jazz: the Johnny Griffin Quartet will perform with Freddie Hubbard as special guest.

Considering the amount of music that will be played each night, and the calibre of the musicians involved, tickets for the Melbourne Jazz Festival represent exceptional value at \$10 each night, or \$45 for a season ticket. They can be booked through BASS or Myers, or by telephoning 534 6465.

Adrian Jackson