

Brian Brown

WILDFLOWERS



move



Brian Brown was born in Melbourne, Australia. He performed as a soloist and with his own ensembles since the mid-1950s throughout Australia and in Scandinavia, US, Japan, UK, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, Brunei and Germany. He played only original music. A self-taught player who emerged in the 1950s as a leading figure in Australia and remained prominent through the 1980s. According to Allmusic "Brown was one of first Australian musicians to develop a reputation for highly personal, individualistic style that was intense, lyrical and not simple imitation of an American great".

In early 1956 Brown returned to Melbourne from Europe and formed a new Hard Bop band with like-minded players – drummer Stewie Speer, trumpeter Keith Hounslow, schoolboy pianist Dave Martin and bassist Barry Buckley. The Brian Brown Quintet were regulars at Horst Liepolt's influential Jazz Centre 44 in St Kilda, which operated from 1955 to 1960. They were enthusiastic ambassadors for bop, introducing Melburnians to a musical style which was still largely unheard in Australia.

Brown made eight albums over an 18-year period heading various groups. He toured Europe with his Australian Jazz Ensemble in 1978, and also led groups doing experimental and original classical pieces from 1980–86. He founded the Improvisation Studies course at the Victorian College of the Arts where he taught from 1978 until his retirement in 1998. He appeared at the World Saxophone Congress in Tokyo in 1988, with Tony Gould, and in 1993 was awarded the Order of Australia for services to the performing arts as a Jazz performer, educator and composer.

Having been a listener, then a member of two of his groups; then a collaborator, and over the past few years a listener again, I find I can stand both inside and outside Brian's music.

Listening to **WILDFLOWERS** from this composite position, I hear an array of elements which I know make up his particular sound art. Yet, because he allows none to become conspicuously prominent or laboured, we are given freedom to listen to the music. At no stage are we burdened with stylistic declarations or forced to contend with instrumental gymnastics.

On side A all of these elements are there to discover; on side B several are there to explore.

Perhaps the most important is Brian's continuing ability to create situations highly conducive to creative here-now music. Give in to Bob's solo on **Mr. Speer**, Brian's solo on **Midnight ghost** and their spiralling duet on **Sawade** and you'll find three timeless movements offered as gifts for repeated taking.

After the composed narrative of the **Stockrider**, concluded poignantly by Nehama, Katya and Dure, the **Ghost** and **Sawade** are heightened experiences of totally in-the-present, spontaneous interaction.

This album is music liberated from any obligation to fashion or idiom. If you approach it with preconceptions about jazz for example, the predominant idiom of Brian's past, you'll be perplexed to say the least! To the contrary, it offers an experience which requires open-heartedness. It is a positive documentation that Brian Brown plays his own music out of his own environment and time, and that he invites/inspires his colleagues to do the same. The result is music-making energy, raw refusal to comply, lyrical romanticism, nervous discovery, delight, pathos, fast reflex responses and close interaction, as distinct from music reproduction which so often seems to be the recording industry's predominant interest.

This music is a personal synthesis of invention in the present and respect for past origins without compromise. It is a celebration of independence to be catalogued under "music for the love of music".

DAVID TOLLEY

Let me slumber in the hollow where the wattle blossoms wave,
With never stone or rail to fence my bed;
Should the sturdy station children pull the bush flowers on my grave,
I may chance to hear them romping overhead.

FROM THE POEM THE SICK STOCKRIDER BY ADAM LINDSAY GORDON.

1. **WILDFLOWERS** (Brian Brown) 10'38"
Brian Brown — flute and percussion
Bob Sedergreen — (piano solo)
Tony Gould — piano
Stephen Hadley — bass
Alex Pertout — percussion
String section led by Chantal Brown
2. **MR. SPEER** (Brian Brown) 3'06"
Brian Brown — pan flute
Bob Sedergreen — piano
Geoff Kluke — bass
Virgil Donati — drums
3. **BEWITCHED** (Rogers and Hart) 3'10"
Brian Brown — flute
Bob Sedergreen — piano
4. **WATERFALL** (Brian Brown and Bob Sedergreen) 3'18"
Brian Brown — pan flute
Bob Sedergreen — piano
5. **SPACEWALK** (Brian Brown) 2'22"
Brian Brown — soprano saxophone and synthesizer
Bob Sedergreen — piano
Geoff Kluke — bass
Virgil Donati — drums
6. **LITTLE RAINBOW** (Brian Brown and Bob Sedergreen) 2'24"
Brian Brown — pan flute
Bob Sedergreen — piano
7. **THE OLD STOCKRIDER** (Brian Brown) 10'59"
Brian Brown — soprano saxophone and alto flute
Nehama Patkin — piano
Chantal Brown — violin
Katya Brown — 'cello
Dure Dara — percussion
8. **MIDNIGHT GHOST** (Brian Brown and Barry Buckley) 4'59"
Brian Brown — tenor saxophone
Barry Buckley — bass
9. **SAWADE** (Brian Brown and Bob Sedergreen) 1'39"
Brian Brown — pan flute
Bob Sedergreen — piano

Engineers: Ian ('Mack') McKenzie
... tracks 1 and 2
Michael Letho and David Williams
... tracks 3, 4 and 6
Michael Letho
... tracks 5, 7, 8 and 9

Wildflowers photography:
Howard Birnstihl
Photograph of Brian Brown:
Simon Boyle

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