



Zing! went the strings of his bass

APRIL, FOR the Perth Jazz Society, began with a zing—a zing bass, that is, wielded by Frisco Soliano, a multi-instrumentalist from Singapore. This was his first gig for the PJS, although he has lived in Perth for a decade.

You may well ask “just what IS a zing bass?”. Apparently a Dutch invention, it is as tall as a double bass, with a similar fingerboard, but virtually devoid of its wooden, lower bulk.

Instead there is a sort of flimsy-looking, triangular framework, from which a power cable snakes to an amplifier. Remarkably, its sound is far closer to a “real” bass than the electric tennis racquet variety.

Aiding the bassist for this outing were trombonist Chris Greive, pianist Lukas Slawomirski and drummer Frank Gibson. The quartet started things rolling with Frisco’s original blues theme for the PJS.

This call-and-response-type down-homily grooved effectively with good solos from all, including a chorus or two of scat from guest Helen Matthews.

Although the leader is said to play trombone, piano and drums,

he stuck to his “zing” throughout the evening. Evergreens and jazz standards were the order of play, such as *Just In Time*, *Once I Loved*, a ripping *I’ll Remember April* (appropriate), *Dolphin Dance*, a full-steam-ahead *Killer Joe*, *Autumn Leaves*, *Lament*, a searing *Blues For Woody* (Woody Shaw), a ‘boneless *My Foolish Heart* highlighting skilled piano, and another trio venture — this time minus piano — on *All The Things You Are*.

This was an extremely pleasant concert by an accomplished bassist/leader whose playing in ensemble and solo fell melliflously upon the ear. That he also had fine taste in the selection of his material was an added bonus.

Carl steps in to help his brother

■ THE FOLLOWING week was meant to be a showcase for the expatriate tenorist John Mackey, home on vacation after two years in Sweden. Unfortunately, he needed abdominal surgery en route to Perth, and, although he was present, was unable to play.

Younger brother Carl took his place instead, fronting the group *Spur of the Moment* (apt), with Graham Wood (piano), Marcus Dengate (bass) and Ric Eastman (drums).

They provided a most entertaining evening of standards (*Beautiful Love*, *Willow Weep For Me*, *Caravan* etc), bop classics (*Woody’n You, Wee*) and later jazz pieces by Coltrane and Tynes.

Mackey the younger and Wood were particularly impressive, demonstrating an ability and feeling for various jazz styles far beyond their years.

It’s a shame we weren’t able to hear how much John has progressed during his overseas sojourn, but his sibling certainly made the event a worthwhile one, nonetheless. Speaking with John afterwards I learnt that Sydney is now his base, and he promised to play in Perth next year, whilst on holidays.

Message to Mike - don’t lose heart

■ THE MONTH’S middle was notable for an unusual presentation overseen by drummer Michael Pigneguy, using a core front-line of Carl Mackey (sax), Chris Greive (trombone) and David McGregor (trumpet), with the rhythm completed by pianist Russell Holmes and electric bassist Marc Dengate.

The Perth Jazz Orchestra (pictured below) has resumed regular Sunday night performances (7.30-10pm) at the Wardle Room, at Perth Concert Hall.

Many of Perth’s leading jazz performers, including the Jazz Divas (featuring Helen Matthews, June Smith, Jenny Wrenn, Sue Bluck, Kerry Byrom-Carter and Annie Neil) and Grady Lovelle will be joining the band on stage.

Earlier this year the PJO completed over 80 consecutive weeks at Fat Bellies Cafe in Leederville. Admission is \$5 (\$2 concession) and food is available.

