

# Australian Jazz Scene

FREE

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## CD REVIEWS



**The Wee Small Hours.**  
The Anita Harris Quartet & Guests  
Newmarket Music  
NEW 3185.2  
Released 2005

Featuring: **Anita Harris**, vcls; **Kim Harris**, pno/elec piano; **Leon Heale**, bs; **Alan Richards**, dms. Guests: **Graeme Steele**, tpt; **Ron Trigg**, flt/trn sax/ct.

Anita Harris is one of those very rare vocal stylists who have wide appeal to a range of age groups and jazz preferences in her audiences. Having caught the lady in settings as diverse as Festivals, Clubs and intimate rooms where food and beverages were of greatest interest to the motley assembly, it remains paramount that she can both draw and hold the attention by her vocal personality. It is quite amazing that this is only her second album since her career took off in the 1990's. The voice is exemplary on 'Skylark' and Nilsson's 'The Wailing of the Willow'; swinging intensely on 'Our Day Will Come' and 'In the Still of the Night'; and sending a sultry message on 'Miss Celie's Blues' and 'Softly, As in a Morning Sunrise'.

Standards predominate on the CD and there is something for every collector of vocal interpretation, which is a credit to the performer and to the entirely sympathetic and complementary accompaniment from some of Melbourne's best mainstream musos.

Give it a whirl, but don't miss Anita in live performance when she comes to a venue near you.



**Cover Story**  
Wayne Cornell Jr.  
& his Orchestra  
Shock Records  
WCJ 001  
Released 2005

This recording knocked me out! I don't know what I was expecting from a cover that offers five photos of the vocalist/bandleader, lists 13 track titles unknown to me, with the lyrics of only one printed; and provides no information on the band personnel, but the sound that comes from the disc is just great! The "orchestra", whoever they are, swing like there was no tomorrow and the vocalist does justice to some very fine songs with some even better arrangements. A few of the tracks are only musical or verbal intros to the next one and some are weird in the extreme, causing a momentary feeling of being ripped off. But when the music plays in R'n'B, swing, jazz, L-A, or Spanish rhythms, the tempi lifts this listener to an excitement that is tangible. The lyrics convey a message of *bonhomie* and young Wayne reminds me of cabaret artists ranging from Sammy Davis Jr. back to Cab Calloway and he is probably as physically active as both of them in live performance. Nice one.

Reviews by Ron Spain



**"Ruby"**  
Archie Roach, Ruby Hunter, Paul Grabowsky & The Australian Art Orchestra

Paul Grabowsky and The Australian Art Orchestra are well known for stretching musical boundaries. This CD is no exception with Grabowsky producing, arranging and playing piano on this comprehensive work.

The CD features **Ruby Hunter's** writings with Ruby and **Archie Roach** vocalising throughout the recording. Various musical styles are used behind the vocals including blues, country, gospel, reggae and swing, with many rhythmic and musical devices used. The orchestrations set the scene for Ruby's traditional Aboriginal writings presented with an incantatory quality which is quite unique. Archie Roach has a more relaxed ballad style but I found the affected wide vibrato a bit distracting. The content of the songs relates mainly to the struggles of Aboriginals with some moving dialogue.

The Australian Arts Orchestra features a host of Australia's well known jazz musicians such as trombonist **James Greening**, reed players **Paul Cutlan**, **Sandy Evans** and **Julien Wilson**, **Philip Rex**, bass, and **Simon Barker** on drums with **Alex Pertout** adding percussion on some tracks.

Sleeve notes are minimal but the press release and information sheet I received, provided the background to the recording and the words of the songs, would be well worth including with the CD.

I would categorise this CD as "World Music" rather than "Jazz" and found some tracks quite challenging.

Available now from most good record stores or from [www.aao.com.au](http://www.aao.com.au)

Reviewed by Don Brow

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**Jazz Scene** has reviewed many of these CDs in recent issues.

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Ron Spain, CD Review of The Wee Small Hours  
Australian Jazz Scene, April, 2006