

Harlem Nights : the secret history of Australia's Jazz age / Deirdre O'Connell Non Fiction 2021



The untold story of race and power in Australia's Jazz Age.

The 1920s were a time of wonder and flux, when Australians sensed a world growing smaller, turning faster-and, for some, skittering off balance. American movies, music and dance brought together what racial lines kept apart. A spirit of youthful rebellion collided with the promise of racial perfectibility, stirring deep anxieties in white nationalists and moral reformers.

African-American jazz represented the type of modernism that cosmopolitan Australians craved-and the champions of White Australia feared. Enter Sonny Clay's Colored Idea. Snuck in under the wire by an astute promoter, the Harlem-style revue broke from the usual blackface minstrel fare, delivering sophisticated, liberating rhythms. The story of their Australian tour is a tale of conspiracy - a secret plan to kick out and keep out 'undesirable' expressions of modernism, music and race.

AUSTRALIAN JAZZ HISTORY: A BRIEF OVERVIEW

by Tony Gould*

[The following is the 'Jazz' entry in Warren Bebbington's Oxford Companion to Australian Music, published in 1997.]

1. History.
2. Audience, Institutions, Events.
3. Styles and Characteristics. 1. History.

(i) Beginnings to 1929.

The emergence of jazz in Australia as a clearly identifiable genre can be placed in the years immediately after World War I. Johnson (1987) calls this period 'the first wave', and historians cite several performances which can be regarded as significant markers, among them those by Belle Sylvia and Her Jazz Band in Sydney in 1918, publicised as 'Australia's first jazz band', and those by Frank Ellis and His Californians, who visited from the USA in 1923. Such events, with their impact on the broader community, together with the social interaction between Americans and the impressionable Australians during and after the war,

and the increasing exposure to the new world of American entertainment generally, resulted in jazz soon becoming the principal popular music in the nation.

Although no recordings exist of the earliest attempts by Australians to play the 'hot' new music (which at first often included comic costumes and theatrical antics), it is likely that they were crude imitations of the American models. Historians suggest that the distinguishing features of jazz in Australia in the 1920s were its rhythmic aggressiveness and lack of subtlety, paralleling the new American dance crazes which quickly overtook the more refined styles from the old world. With only spasmodic visits by overseas performers and limited exposure to the music on recordings (from 1927 for a time a tariff on imported recordings limited their availability), the enthusiasm of musicians wanting to learn was, understandably, not yet matched by skill or knowledge of the idiom. Nonetheless early small-group jazz was infectious in its novelty and vitality and ideally suited the Australian tendency to 'have a go'.

The late 1920s were times of great change. With broadcast radio well established and the arrival of the 'talkies', the novelty and vitality of jazz was soon in competition with other new forms of entertainment, and the Great Depression which followed radically changed the character of popular music. The early 1930s was no time for joyous and raucous music; the majority turned to quieter, more calming forms. Sentimentality was the order of the day, and with it came the era of the American popular song. Again, what became fashionable in America quickly became so in Australia. In terms of popularity, jazz suffered a setback from which it never fully recovered.

For full article, including further history as outlined below, and some amazing photos, see the following link:

(ii) The Swing Era, 1930—45

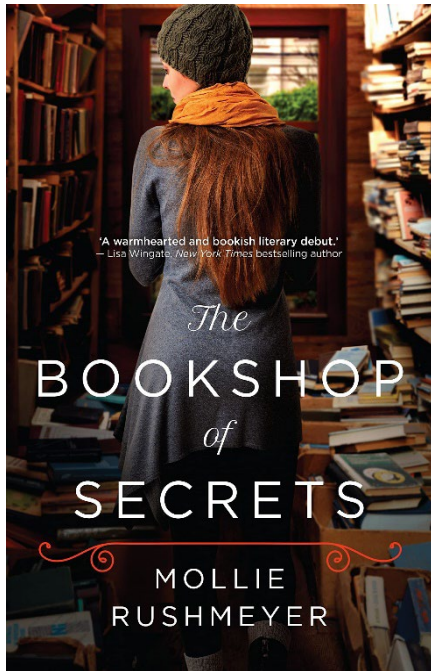
(iii) After the War, 1945 to 1960

(iv) 1960 to the Present

<https://eric-myers-2aka.squarespace.com/australian-jazz-blues>

Featured Title

***The Bookshop of Secrets* / Mollie Rushmeyer Fiction 2022**



A collection of lost books holds the clues to her family's legacy and her future. Hope Sparrow has mastered the art of outrunning her tragic past. Never stay anywhere too long, never allow anyone control over her life again. Coming to Wanishin Falls in search of her family's history already feels too risky. But somewhere in the towering stacks of this dusty old bookshop are the books that hold Hope's last ties to her late mother - and to a rumoured family treasure that could help her start over. Only, the bookshop is in shambles, and the elderly owner is in the beginning stages of dementia and can't remember where the books lie.

To find the last links to the loved ones she lost, Hope must stay and accept help from the townsfolk to locate the treasured volumes. Each secret she uncovers brings her closer to understanding where she came from. But the longer she stays in the quaint town, the more people find their way into the cracks in her heart. And letting them in may be the greatest risk of all.

About the Author

<https://www.molliejrushmeyer.com/>

Mollie Rushmeyer writes "Contemporary Fiction with a Heart for History." What does this mean exactly? She loves to write inspirational fiction in contemporary settings with fascinating historical elements, people, objects, and stories woven throughout.

A modern girl herself, she wouldn't want to go a day without modern plumbing and central air! But she's always felt a special connection to the past. The legacies and lives left behind are like gifts waiting to be unwrapped, and she plans to share this blend of history and contemporary living with readers.

A born and bred Midwestern gal, Mollie Rushmeyer, makes her home in Minnesota with her husband and two spunky, beautiful daughters. She is not only a bibliophile (the dustier the better, in her opinion), she's a true anglophile at heart. Tea and coffee fuel her travels, by Google maps at least, and her passion for the written word.

Book Review

<https://avonnalovesgenres.com/>

The Bookshop of Secrets by Mollie Rushmeyer is Christian fiction mystery with romantic elements featuring a broken young woman searching for clues to her family's legacy in missing old first edition books. This is a beautiful inspirational standalone story written by a debut author.

Hope Sparrow is protecting herself from her past by keeping on the move and never letting anyone get close or taking control of her life. She has been led to a small-town bookshop, 'Dusky Jackets' on the shore of Lake Superior. Her mother's treasured books were sent here, and Hope has come to find them and hopefully they will lead her to a rumored family treasure.

Hope agrees to stay for two months to help in the bookshop and hopefully discover where her books have disappeared to. With the help of the bookshop owner's grandson, Ronan, they work together to uncover the secrets of the books, hidden treasure and their families' intertwining pasts.

This debut book is several story threads in one and all of them come together seamlessly in an ending that is satisfying as well as inspirational. Hope's past is tragic and Ronan's family curse and accident have left him with more than physical scars and yet they come together and continually prove to each other that they are more than their pasts. The mystery of the missing books and the search for lost treasure is intricately woven into the story with plenty of twists and surprises. I feel Hope and Ronan's growing relationship is realistically portrayed as well as their return to their belief in God's love for them. There are several literary as well as biblical quotes throughout this story.

I highly recommend this book debut novel of hope, love, and inspiration with an intricate mystery intertwined throughout.

<https://www.netgalley.com/> Carolyn B, Reviewer

The Bookshop of Secrets is an impressive debut novel. This well-told contemporary story of family, friendship, redemption, and hope grabbed me the moment I stepped into the small-town 'Dusty Jackets' bookshop and kept me expectantly turning pages as the poignant story unfolded. The characters are complex and realistic. Both the hero and heroine are emotionally scarred by events in their past. Their quest to solve a family mystery leads them on a journey toward healing and learning to trust again. I appreciate the strong faith thread woven throughout the story and the thoughtful and tactful handling of the issues of human trafficking, dementia, and PTSD. Classic literary references added to the enjoyment of the read for this "book nerd". I totally enjoyed this read and look forward to reading more from this author.

I received a copy of this book from the publisher via NetGalley with no obligation to write a positive review. All thoughts and opinions are my own.

New Release

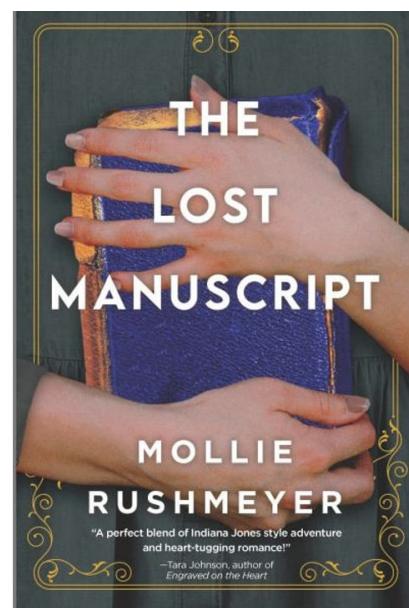
The Lost Manuscript

Released August 29th, 2023

In the vein of *The Library of Lost and Found* by Phaedra Patrick, a priceless manuscript could be one woman's key to finding her missing grandmother—and to her own second chance.

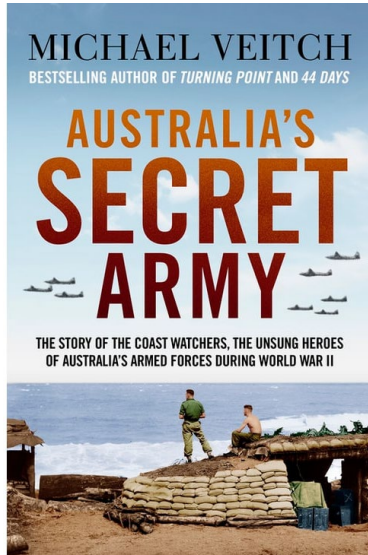
It's not just Ellora Lockwood's home that's being emptied as she prepares to sell—her heart seems to be empty too. Since the mysterious disappearance of her beloved Grandma June and separating from her husband, Alex, Ellora has felt adrift. Then comes an invitation from Alex to teach history at a summer program at Alnwick Castle in England. He's even found information about the location of a medieval manuscript that was her grandmother's obsession before she vanished.

Warily, Ellora accepts Alex's offer. Surrounded by lush English countryside and captivating history, she pieces together clues about the manuscript's whereabouts—and uncovers new questions. Could someone have been sabotaging her grandmother's work? Anonymous threats lead Ellora to suspect she too may be in danger, but as she and Alex work together, she's finding strength, new purpose and the courage to see this quest through, wherever it may lead...



Featured Title

Australia's Secret Army : the story of the Coastwatchers, the unsung heroes of Australia's armed forces during World War II / Michael Veitch Non Fiction 2022



Hidden deep in the jungles and high in the mountains of the Southwest Pacific during World War II, Australia's secret army - the Coastwatchers - reported every move of the Japanese invaders to Allied intelligence. Following World War I, the Coastwatcher organisation was formed from European planters, missionaries and patrol officers living in New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. All volunteers, they were tasked with keeping an eye on Australia's porous northern border and providing early warnings via radio. When World War II came to the Pacific, however, overnight the Coastwatchers found themselves no longer just observers but spies operating behind enemy lines. Besides evading the enemy's desperate efforts to hunt them down, the Coastwatchers battled exhaustion, tropical diseases and malnutrition, as well as the ever-present spectre of capture, torture and death. Yet without the Coastwatchers' crucial courage and intelligence, key moments of the Pacific War may have turned out very differently.

How the Coastwatchers Turned the Tide of the Pacific War

Australian Coastwatchers brought the tide of Japanese invasive successes to a shuddering halt when two coastwatchers spotted and reported an invasion fleet of 5,500 Japanese troops sailing south. The Coastwatchers' observation was pivotal as it precipitated the Battle of the Coral Sea in May 1942 and thwarted the Japanese invasion of Port Moresby.

In later noting the vital role played by the Coastwatchers with their timely warnings of enemy bombers headed towards Guadalcanal, the United States Admiral William F. (Bull) Halsey would state that 'The Coastwatchers saved Guadalcanal, and Guadalcanal saved the South Pacific.' The story of M Special Unit of the Allied Intelligence Bureau (the Coastwatchers) unfolds hereunder.

Follow the link below to read the full article.

<https://thelastcoastwatcher.wordpress.com/>

About the Author

Michael Veitch is well known as an author, actor and former ABC television and radio presenter. His books include the critically acclaimed accounts of Australian airmen in World War II, *44 Days*, *Heroes of the Skies*, *Fly, Flak*, *Barney Greatrex*, *Turning Point* and *The Battle of the Bismarck Sea*. He lives in the Yarra Valley, outside Melbourne.

Book Review in *The Canberra Times*

<https://www.canberratimes.com.au/> By Michael McKernan December 2022

This book is full of surprises, an unusual thing to say about a book on aspects of Australia during the war. Readers may think every aspect of the Australian story at war has been well covered in exhaustive detail.

Yet Australia's Secret Army reveals a story, and a cast of characters, of which we know little. For once, the tag line "unsung heroes" is absolutely justified. Well-written with passion, thoroughly researched, and eminently readable, this book will draw the reader into its story.

This is an easy book to like as it absorbs the reader, but hard to review. Readers would not thank the reviewer for revealing too many of the surprises. It would remove the fun and joy of reading this very satisfying book. Telling the story of the establishing of the coastwatchers, their recruitment, their work, their dangers and their substantial successes is as important as it is necessary.

Readers meet Eric Feldt, previously almost unknown to Australian military history. Feldt, born in 1899, was a member of the first intake of cadet midshipmen of the Royal Australian Navy. Enthusiastic, clever, wasted, he served during the First World War almost exclusively at Scapa Flow, thinking the navy had not made the most of his war service. Returning to Australia in 1920, Feldt resigned in 1922, securing a position as a junior officer in the administration at Rabaul. Feldt fell in love with Papua New Guinea, spoke the local language, Pidgin fluently, and thought carefully.

He foresaw the coming European war, seeing Japan as a potential threat. While the idea of coastwatchers, actually informants on enemy activity behind the lines, was not Feldt's, he embraced it enthusiastically. Invited by a former navy colleague 'to set up and command a large intelligence organisation' he agreed at once. And so the coastwatchers were born.

Most of the coastwatchers were well experienced in island work before the war, either as plantation owners or workers or government workers such as patrol officers. Initially recruited as civilians it seemed prudent to offer them commissions, fearing that, if captured the enemy would execute them as spies.

Grudgingly given, these commissions often were largely ignored by the military. But those at the sharp end of the fighting, particularly American airmen, or those on the ground under attack, knew their value. They operated as an early warning system, identifying flights of enemy aircraft, allowing allied airmen time to get into the air to make a fight of it. They observed the movement of Japanese ships in the area and the movement of troops and their numbers.

Meeting one of the leaders of the coastwatchers, Paul Mason, American admiral William F. Halsey Junior required the man to remain seated as he struggled to his feet as the admiral entered the room: "When I'm in the room with you," he said, "I'll be the one doing the standing."

Informed readers would know something of the story of Lark Force and the disaster that befell it on New Britain. Barely offering any resistance to the Japanese landing, to survive they must evade the enemy, while waiting for rescue.

Michael Veitch writes movingly of their awful, arduous, struggle to survive. They walked great distances in demanding terrain, lived off the land where they could, and desperately hoped that the authorities would recognise that they must be rescued. Increasingly this looked unlikely.

Former district officer, Keith McCarthy, pleading in vain with the military authorities in Port Moresby for rescue after leading a substantial party of Lark Force soldiers across the island, was at his wit's end, near to despair. There was nothing that could be done to rescue them, Moresby told him. It simply was not a priority.

Sitting on the beach with his men, McCarthy was desolate. Veitch wonders if McCarthy was praying for a miracle. It came anyway: "Deliverance arrived in the most unlikely of forms: a white, middle-aged woman" - one of the first and main surprises Michael Veitch offers readers.

It would be wrong to reveal more of this remarkable incident except to say that Mrs Gladys Baker delivered all of them safely to Cairns. So depleted and damaged were they that only a handful were allowed to continue to serve in the defence forces later in the war.

After the war, it was estimated the coastwatchers arranged the rescue just over 600 military personnel, and 450 civilians. Fifty-six of them, including 20 natives, died for their cause. None of them were honoured for their work in Australia and few of them received even the thanks of their country. Michael Veitch has rescued them.

Featured Title

***The Kinship of Secrets : a novel / Eugenia Kim* Fiction 2018**



The riveting story of two sisters, one raised in the United States, the other in South Korea, and the family that bound them together even as the Korean War kept them apart.

In 1948 Najin and Calvin Cho, with their young daughter Miran, travel from South Korea to the United States in search of new opportunities. Wary of the challenges ahead, Najin and Calvin make the difficult decision to leave their other daughter, Inja, behind with their extended family; soon, they hope, they will return to her. But then war breaks out in Korea, and there is no end in sight to the separation. Miran grows up in prosperous American suburbia, under the shadow of the daughter left behind, as Inja grapples in her war-torn land with ties to a family she doesn't remember. Najin and Calvin desperately seek a reunion with Inja, but are the bonds of love strong enough to reconnect their family over distance, time and war? And as deep family secrets are revealed, will everything they long for be upended?

Told through the alternating perspectives of the distanced sisters, and inspired by a true story, this book explores the cruelty of war, the power of hope, and what it means to be a sister.

An Interview with Eugenia Kim (for full article: <https://www.eugenia-kim.com/>)

How does your own family's story fit into your fictional family's?

My father came to America in 1948 to show his wife this new country he fell in love with, and to raise money for a church back home. Planning to return in a few years, they left behind their middle child, a daughter, with relatives—a decision that must have taken a great deal of faith. Everything changed when North Korea invaded the South on June 26, 1950. War, then U.S. immigration laws kept my parents separated from their daughter for ten years. During that first winter of the Korean War, my sister remembers fleeing Seoul in a cart pulled by my uncle, eventually walking about 100 miles south, then by truck 100 miles more to Busan. Another relative of ours lost hold of her five-year-old daughter's hand during the mass exodus and never again found her. These are the kinds of family stories that I had to bring into my novel.

Was there a particular story that inspired you to write *The Kinship of Secrets*?

Ever since I was young, born in America, I always knew I had a sister, Sun, in South Korea, but was too innocent to ask about the circumstances of why she was separated from the family. And after she arrived at age eleven when I was five, I never questioned what it meant for her to come to America. Over time, I learned a family secret that grew intertwined with Sun's story of being left behind, and that secrecy helped to cloud her story. Still, it never occurred to me to ask Sun what it was like to come to America—I assumed that all immigrants, like my parents, were grateful to be in this country. Sun was simply my bilingual "Korean sister," whereas my four other siblings, all older, were totally Americanized, like me. Even when I felt I knew Sun so well, I knew so little about her history.

In 2005, my sister, who had by then returned to her homeland multiple times, accompanied me on my first trip to South Korea to research my first novel, *The Calligrapher's Daughter*, and during a train ride I asked her at last what it was like to have come to the U.S. Her answer—that it was heartbreaking—surprised me, and took me on a journey into the story of her life. That was the beginning of what would become this novel.

How closely does the book follow your sister's story?

There are definite departures and as many similarities. My sister arrived here at age eleven, but in the novel I wanted her to be old enough to express deeper emotion, so the character, Inja, is sixteen. Also, a sole sister, Miran, in *The Kinship of Secrets* occupies the position of five real siblings. In the process of writing a fiction inspired by true events, the line gets blurry sometimes, but the characters ultimately become selves unlike their real-life counterparts, and take on their own lives needing original scenes and situations to advance the story. Still, in this novel, much essence of true story remains, including the story about why Sun was left behind in Korea.

You've said that the decision to leave her must have taken great faith. What was behind that decision?

As mentioned, my parents came to America in June 1948 during a brief period of peace between the end of the Pacific War and the beginning of the Korean War. They only planned to stay two or three years then return. In Korean style and in postwar hardship, my parents and their family of three children lived in Seoul with my mother's parents and my mother's brother and his wife. Grandmother was distraught that this young family was leaving Korea. She believed that, having tasted the waters of America's golden rivers, they would never return. So as a guarantee of their return, and because traveling by ship with three little ones was complicated, my parents decided to leave one child in Korea. The eldest, at three, was old enough to know that she'd been left behind. The youngest, a son, was not yet weaned. And so my sister Sun, age one, was left in Seoul with her relatives. In the novel, the choice is made between two children. The decision over which child to leave was I think in some ways a practical one, but also one that exemplified my mother's tremendous faith and love for her own mother.

Why couldn't your fictional parents return to Korea and reunite with their daughter after the Korean War?

Like my own parents' experience, during the war my novel's parents are only concerned about their daughter's survival. By the war's end, my own parents were rooted in America, and the novel mirrors this experience. My father had a job broadcasting news and propaganda to North Korea at the *Voice of America*, and my mother was now raising four girls and a boy, longing to be reunited with her second child. As a result of his job, my father would have been a prime candidate for kidnapping or assassination by the North Koreans. Also, it was discovered they were illegal aliens and so their status in the U.S. had to be handled.

While the novel tells an intimate story of two sisters separated by the Korean war, it is also the story about parents whose anguish over their missing daughter dominates every aspect of their lives, as it did my parents. My mother's yearning for her child is exemplified (in the photograph at right), where she cut and pasted an image of her missing daughter onto a family portrait. But it took a decade and an act of congress to bring her to America. Sun was raised by our aging grandparents, a loving uncle, and a stern aunt. My uncle took responsibility for his niece seriously. *The Kinship of Secrets* imagines what her life was like during and after the war, growing up in close quarters with relatives.

Seeing as how the novel is linked to your family's story, what part means the most to you?

....Scattered among her diary entries were bursts of narrative of my mother blaming herself for the decision to leave Sun behind, and her growing despair at the prolonged separation. Even before I was aware of my sister, I was aware of the important link of packages to Korea. So when I was given my mother's diaries at the beginning of this project and Sun helped me to translate them, I had a new connection both with my sister and my mother, who had passed in 2003. From these diaries I learned firsthand a little about my mother's heartache, as well as what from second-hand America was useful overseas. I think this is integral to the life of an immigrant family—gratitude for support in times of need given in a spirit of generosity and community.