

I'D HOPED FOR A blinding revelation: a life-changing flash of "so *that's* how one gets more done in one's life." Most people, after all, are flat out finding the time and acquiring the skills to make a proper fist of *one* career. Roger Dean juggles half a dozen, not just with ease, but with sparks of genius.

His litany of current activities runs like this: Director of the Heart Research Institute; Artistic Director of (and composer for) new music ensemble *austraLYSIS*; keyboardist, computer manipulator and innovator in combining text and image with computer-generated sound in both *austraLYSIS* and its improvising cousin, the *austraLYSIS* electroband; internationally renowned classical double-bassist; jazz pianist; author of both scientific works and treatises on improvisation;

himself as a more conventional jazz pianist to be able to play with people. A passion for the European avant-garde of the likes of Stockhausen had also already been born.

His budding jazz career was understandably neglected while he completed his PhD. Thereafter he made up for lost time, putting himself on the vital

enthusiastically embraced the new possibilities, and now keenly pursues audio-visual-text interplay. His latest developments in this area will be aired by *austraLYSIS* at the Performance Space in Sydney in October, including a new piece devised with his poet-wife Hazel Smith, enticingly called *The Erotics of Gossip*.

Currently Dean is on sabbatical in England, completing a new book on computer-interactive sound improvisation. The release of two new CDs is also imminent, one for Tall Poppies, and the other on the FMR label.

Not surprisingly, Dean confirms that he is not one for vegetating in front of the telly. "I guess I enjoy working a lot and I'm fairly efficient at moving from one thing to another," he says. "There isn't a big down-time when I finish writing a scientific article and decide to start

## A MAN OF MANY PARTS

Australian editor of *The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz*.

Originally from England, Dean came to Australia in 1989 to establish the Heart Research Institute. His musical activities predated the science, which entered the equation in his teens, when he became fascinated by a part of the cell-structure called the lysosome (a centre for breaking down molecules). He went on to become a world authority.

Before going to Cambridge, a full-time future as a classical double-bassist had already been discarded. Offered the co-principal job in the Oslo Philharmonic as a result of being the principal bass in the National Youth Orchestra, he was "quite excited and interested and flattered but I thought about it for a while and realised that I did want to be a scientist."

Jazz piano became Dean's main musical focus. After childhood exposure to his father's modern jazz tastes, his own foraging had turned up more adventurous influences, so that by the time he went to Cambridge he found he had to "retrain"



programming some music. But I think mainly it's just that I'm quite happy to work extensively.

"I don't want to give the impression I don't do a lot of things besides work," he adds. "I'm very interested in cultural things, particularly visual arts, film and I think I go to rather more performances of modern music in various forms

### JOHN SHAND MEETS ROGER DEAN, A JACK OF ALL TRADES – AND MASTER OF THEM TOO.

London jazz map of the 1970s. In 1976 he formed *LYSIS*, thereby also establishing himself on the new music scene at home and abroad. By the time he came to Australia to set up the Institute, he had already toured here with *LYSIS* on two occasions, making valuable contacts for when he subsequently formed *austraLYSIS*.

Dean had begun to use synthesizers and electronics while still in Britain. As soon as computer-music became affordable he

than most people do. So I'm very keen on that kind of relaxation and contrast. But at the same time, a weekend would always involve some writing or some composing or some science of some form or other."

Asked if the balance between all the activities feels right, the response is typical: "I think really I would like to be doing more of most things."

IMAGE: Roger Dean, photo by Patrick Riviere