

DARWIN RONDALLA

The vibrant music and dance heritage of Darwin's multi-cultural community remains as strong today as it did in the 1930s.

In those early years 'old' Darwin was a growing commercial hub and cultural melting pot, attracting people from the world over, especially from Asia and the Torres Strait.

They came with their families to work in the pearling, trochus fishing, cattle, construction and mining industries, and their descendants continue to make their mark on the Darwin music and dance culture.

Whilst early colonial Darwin sported the usual array of musical societies, choral groups and even a brass band, by far the greatest legacy was the flourishing string band era of the 1930s.

Originating from the Cubillo family 'big house' within the diverse, yet close knit Police Paddock community (now Stuart Park), the early Filipino rondallas (string bands) paved the way for a proliferation of string bands in Darwin in the 1930s.

The distinctive sound of these bands can still be heard with groups such as the Darwin Rondalla string band. Current oldest band member Gabe Hazelbane played with his uncles as a teenager until the Bombing of Darwin.



RIGHT: The legacy of the old 1930s Darwin string bands lives on today.