

Bluesfest to be or not to be

The agony of whether to proceed with a festival in October or not given the present Covid-19 situation in Australia is clear to see in this communication from Bluesfest organisers on August 4, especially because their Easter event was postponed only one day before it was meant to start.

You may be wondering why we haven't yet made a call, organisers said.

Some of you may even be thinking that the solution is simple, and therefore think, "why hold out on an announcement any longer!"

Unfortunately, it's not that simple.

We understand your desire for answers, so we write to you this week with transparency, as we always endeavour to keep you as informed as possible.

The COVID-situation in NSW is at large, once again, this time with a strain that has increasingly been more difficult for state governments to contain.

And as the clusters begin to pop up in more places and continue to grow exponentially, a reschedule of our October event is becoming ever more likely.

But what does it take to firstly know that we can achieve a reschedule, have the resources necessary to do so, and then publicly announce this?

To put it simply, A LOT.

We value you and all of the support that you have given us.

We know you're hungry for a festival and for live music,

nothing can replace it, and the last thing we want to do is reschedule.

However, with the current situation, we are not confident that we can deliver a safe and successful event in October, and in the end, that's the bottom line.

We're not giving up.

We want to put on Bluesfest so bad, we cannot until we know that we can achieve this at a standard worth presenting.

We said it recently and we'll say it again, we do not want anyone to experience a repeat of what happened earlier this year, so please know that we are working tirelessly towards the future and an announcement is imminent.

Till then, stay tuned, stay informed and keep believing in the return of live music.



Fingers and toes crossed for Dashville Skyline



On July 23, Australia's very own Cosmic Country Weekender, Dashville Skyline, announced more acts ahead of its hopeful return this October to the hallowed bushland of Dashville in the Hunter Valley, NSW.

Organisers say that rolling out over the Labour Day long weekend, Friday 1st, Saturday 2nd and Sunday 3rd October 2021, the three day camping festival is essentially a celebration of classic song writing and the great folk and country artists from the 60s and 70s that continue to inspire modern generations of music purists and enthusiasts alike.

It's a weekend escape full of amazing live music, a myriad of artistic collaborations, loads of family activities, markets,

workshops, antique car and instrument displays, great Americana inspired food and laid back, old school, country inspired fun, with camping amongst the pristine bushland of the beautiful Hunter Valley.

Scouring the musical landscape, the hardworking team at Dashville were pleased to reveal the second round of acts to complete the great 'Cosmic Country Weekender' line up for 2021. However, while the Hunter Valley is not included in the current Greater Sydney lock down they are just north of it.

This has made them nervous and have shared their thoughts below.

"We're riding the storm!

"It's been a tough couple of weeks for us all, we hope you're hanging in there. "At Dashville, plans are being thrown up in the air, floating amidst the puffy white clouds of wonder and

we're doing our best to catch them in sensible fashion.

Little bit like parenting perhaps?"

PigSty is now on the 28th August, followed by Thrashville on the 11th September and then Dashville Skyline which kicks off Sept 30th.

"It's a busy time ahead and it's a burner that this crystal ball app doesn't work, because it would be super handy to know what the future holds for us," organisers said.

"No doubt, COVID restrictions will be still kicking about in some form in September, but to what degree?"

"None the less, with so much at stake, we can't really sit around and wonder.

"All we can do is keep our chin up, play by the rules and try and keep the show on the road for an industry that is no longer on its knees, but rather clasping



for air, falling forward on its face.

"After all, we've been here before and Dashville is proven to be no slouch when it comes to hosting safe open air gigs in a pandemic.

"This time last year we were swinging star pickets and erosion mesh around, paving a way forward with those quaint little party pens for that series

of Dashville Nights concerts that we ran throughout August.

"And they were a little weird, but those who came would agree they were some kind of fun! "Just as last year becomes a distant memory, it appears that we are back in the hot seat doing it all again.

"The 'it' in this case being whatever is viable in order to

help ensure that the legacy of live music and (safe) social interaction is available for our community when we all need it most.

"That's our pledge anyway, see how we fare against the shenanigans. "Stay safe everyone and we hope to see you at Dashville soon."



Slim Dusty Festival postponed

Slim Dusty KEMPSEY FESTIVAL

The Slim Dusty Foundation and Chandler Shaw Events regret to announce that due to the ongoing spectre of COVID-19 and its potential to restrict or cancel events, the Slim Dusty Kempsey Festival that was to proceed on Wednesday, June 2 will not be proceeding in 2021.

The good news is that the festival has been rescheduled and will now be held from Thursday, September 8-11, 2022, inclusive.

Organisers said that the past 15 months have been hugely challenging for festivals and the music industry due to the high level of risk that is unfortunately

still with us because of the pandemic.

Echoing this statement, the Chairman of the Slim Dusty Foundation, Dr David Kirkpatrick, said: "Whilst it

is very disappointing to have to postpone the Slim Dusty Kempsey Festival until next year, we wish to ensure everyone that we want to present the best possible event that we can, which is not achievable in the current environment.

"We are determined to make the 2022 festival a special event for all of us and we thank you for your patience and understanding; it will be worth it!"

Kempsey Shire Council Mayor, Cr Liz Campbell, was also positive about the future of the festival when commenting

about the postponement: "While it's disheartening to have the event postponed, the past 15 months have taught us all to appreciate just how complex it is to organise major events.

"We can be positive and know that it's not that far away before we'll have tickets booked and a fantastic Slim Dusty celebration to look forward to in 2022."

The artist lineup and program will be announced on Monday 1st November 2021.

Organisers and the Slim Dusty Foundation are looking forward to hosting what is sure to be a celebratory festival in more certain times.

2021 festival cancelled

Michael Stewart, Festival Director

COVID-19 continues to have a significant impact on the lives of all of us.

The wellbeing of our community is our primary concern and responsibility and in line with the current public health announcements, it is with

enormous regret and sadness that I advise the Newport Folk Festival 2021 is now cancelled.

The cancellation of the festival is greatly disappointing for all of us.

The Newport Folk Festival Team has worked incredibly hard to bring the festival together.

We are proud to support our musicians and artists, our locals and our extended festival community, and we thank you all for your support.

Warm regards and we wish you good health in these difficult times.

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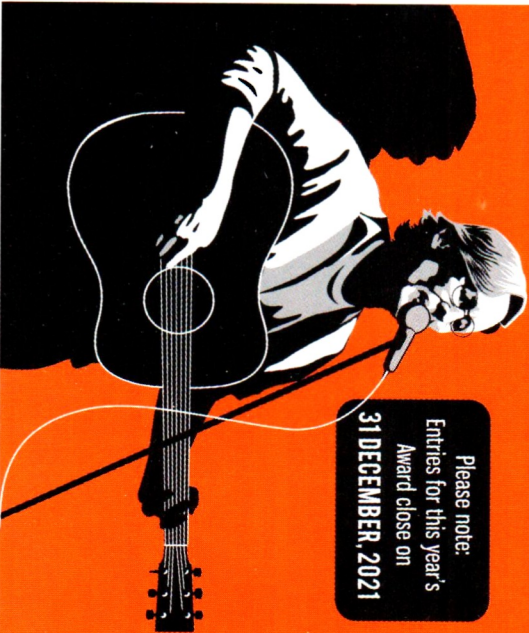
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by Lindsay Miller

Interview with Joseph Decosimo Part 3

Decosimo Part 3

This is the third and final part of our interview with Joseph Decosimo, champion East Tennessee banjoist and fiddler and 2018 instructor at the Dorrigo Old Time Music School who in our preceding instalments spoke about growing up, VHS cassettes, Bob Carlin, Charlie Acuff and getting started in music.

T&N: So, you learned at high school to be an entertainer.

JD: A little bit yeah, but I also started to learn this local repertoire and then, when I went to college, I chose to go to a school where there was a good old time scene at UNC Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

T&N: So you were at UNC at Chapel Hill, which is not that far away from East Tennessee, or at least your part of East Tennessee, so did other people there recognise their own particular kind of music there as opposed to say Bob Carlin's?

JD: One of the things that is fascinating about Chapel Hill is the history that took place in one of the earlier revival bands.

For the old time music revival was the Hollow Rock Stringband, so that was Hollow Rock Road,



which is just outside of Chapel Hill, so very early on, people were, you know, this was the hub, this was the nest of old time music junkies who were going off to visit the older players, bringing the music back and playing it for themselves.

So Chapel Hill has a history, Fuzzy Mountain Stringband was another one, I came way after that happened, but there was still a vibrant scene and a lot of people who were really experts on particular players, I didn't really get to meet them right off the bat, but Chapel Hill has a pretty amazing scene for I guess, we call it the triangle, Chapel Hill, Raleigh, Durham.

I live in Durham currently, but when I got there I was not a

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sound and repertoire and it was what I had to do with my home, and it continued to move me in this direction.

I grew up in the suburbs and I wanted to know what kind of music people had played where in that drove a lot of my search for repertoire and style.

T&N: Did this contribute to your Masters degree, did it propel you in that direction?

JD: Definitely, I ended up working a couple of summers in college for a folklorist named Bobby Fulcher.

He was a state park ranger. He did some field work in the Cumberland Plateau area back in the late 70s and early 80s and recorded some incredible ballad singers, D Hicks being one of them.

He released two albums of music from the Cumberland Plateau on County Records and featured some incredible stuff.

For two summers, I worked for Bobby, maybe it was three summers, and my job was to go and build trail, and that was cool because that is fun, you are out in the woods, and it is a beautiful area in south east Tennessee in these sand stone gorges with these bluffs and nice creeks and real dense foliage and, so you do that.

The second half of my job, I created radio shows for this local radio program that he ran, where anything anybody sent us through he would play, and the more to-fit the better, and Bobby loved playing a bad funny local recording, that's what he is into.

The other thing that I did was that I was supposed to go out and interview people and he gave me a Nogra reel to reel recorder, a couple of Sennheiser microphones and said you know, go out and find out what is happening to local music.

T&N: So that brings us to a circle at the moment. You mentioned when we started out that you started with a Masters degree and PhD and we have worked backwards, learning first banjo, fiddle and then Charlie Acuff coming through, so what do you think you are going to do now, now that you have done all that?

JD: That's a good question, you know, in the moment, I am looking for academic work, be it a professor of music or something, we'll see if anything comes with that.

In the mean time, I am happy to be working as a musician.

Since I've completed the degree, being an old time musician is not, not the easiest of jobs, or the most lucrative, but it is fun and has its rewards and it has, this you know, the last bit, I've ended up in places I never thought I would have ended up,

good fiddler.

At this point, I was really working on my, you know, becoming a good fiddler, I don't know if I'm a good fiddler now, but I do love to fiddle, and for some reason I decided that I mainly wanted to just play this particular repertoire and that was really, and to me that kind of mattered.

Perhaps it was because I had a relationship with, you know, some of these folks and that made it feel, the music was a little closer or real to me, but I would go to jams and, not really, I was kind of reluctant to play other things and I wasn't really, you know, I would listen to other things, but I really was in some ways trying to craft a particular

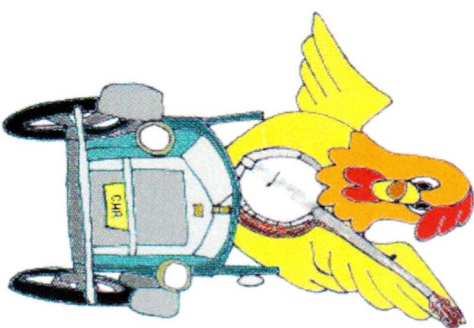
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T&N: Dorrigo NSW.

JD: There you go.

T&N: Maybe we'll catch you in another few years and find out what you have been up to.

Festival Watch

With on again, off again lock-downs, there are plenty of changes to the spring festival season, and at the time of writing, we can report the following, with the caveat that changes can occur as fast as a delta variant can spread.

The Phillip Island Jam Camp scheduled for Jul 24-26 was.

The Sydney Folk Festival Aug 13-15 has been postponed to a later date in 2021, rather than

cancelled outright due to you know what.

The Kelly Country Pick camp Aug 20-22 at the Old Priority, Beechworth VIC, a weekend of concerts, workshops and jamming will be preceded by the Kelly Country Pick music instruction from Andrew Clermont, Josh Bennett and Craig Woodward.

The Lake Borumba Jamming & Camping weekend will be held Aug 28 at the Lake Borumba Camping Ground, Imbil QLD (about two hours drive from Brisbane).

The Guildford Banjo Jambooree VIC, due to Covid will be conducted this year as a

single day event, Sep 18, with a performance marquee, stalls, workshops, jamming, chalk board concerts, a bush dance, but no camping on the oval.

The Manjimup Old Time Music Jam Camp is being hosted Sep 24-27 at the Manjimup Wellness Centre WA, including a Friday night concert, Sunday evening blackboard concert at the Tall Timbers Brewery, jamming on Saturday and Sunday, with camp instructors, Craig Woodward fiddle, Thomas Kendall guitar and Jeremy Marcotte banjo.

Katoomba's Oldtimey Folk Festival, Oct 15-17, will once again be centred at the cafe Plant Based Wholefoods, Katoomba NSW and include other surrounding venues.

The Dorrigo Folk and Bluegrass Festival Oct 22-24, Dorrigo NSW will feature The Morrions, Lyebird, Kaurra Cronin & Band and the Melbourne Songwriters Collective.

Mountaingrass, Beechworth VIC Nov 19-21 has announced its acts to include Bluegrass Parkway, Corn Nut Creek, Bluestone Junction, Crow Mountain, Backwater and The

Willing Ponies. Tickets are now on sale for the Golden Fiddle Awards, hosted by Pixie Jenkins and Andrew Clermont, Jan 20, Capitol Theatre, Tamworth NSW.

Jams Reports

Last issue we listed regular jams known to have re-opened post-covid lockdowns, and since then, have learned that the following have also reopened.

Each Wed 7:30pm, Star Hotel Yackandandah Vic; second Sat 12pm Jells Park, Wheelers Hill Vic; last Fridays 6pm Red Hill Hotel, Chewton Vic; each Wed 4pm Smith's Alternative ACT; and, second Saturdays noon, under the pergolas near Questacon ACT.

There is a new jam at the Great Lake Community Centre, Mienna (population 87), central tas (about a 100 minute drive from either Launceston and Hobart), 10am second Saturdays,

phone Ken Sulman 0409 136 268 for more information including current road conditions which apparently, at times, may be a bit dodgy. Sadly, all Sydney activities including the Annandale get-togethers are on hold during Sydney's second Covid lockdown.

Vale Fred Kuhl and Alan Funk

Fred Kuhl known as the Perth based bass player for the Sensitive New Age Cowpersons, passed away Apr 13 from pancreatic cancer, aged 71, survived by sister Karen and son Tom.

Alan Funk, well known Australian banjo builder passed away May 25, with a funeral service at the 7th Day Adventist Church, Pimpala Road, Morphett Vale SA.

Australian Artist Dates

The Davidson Brothers play Aug 13-15 Black Mountain Unplugged, Rossville Qld; Sep 5 Donald Memorial Hall, Donald Vic Sep 12.

Gareth Leath's album launch, Brunswick Ballroom Vic. Bluegrass Parkway play Aug 14 Frenantle Park, Sports and Community Centre WA.

Backwater play Aug 31 Mountain Pickers Association, Ferrtree Gully Bowling Club, Vic. The Cartridge Family play Sep 28 Mountain Pickers Association, Ferrtree Gully Bowling Club, Vic. Pete Denahy entertains the Oct 15-17 Fleurieu Folk Festival, Willunga SA.

Transcription

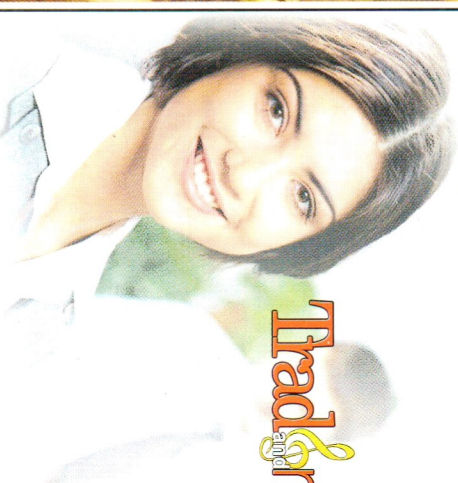
Last issue we had the tune Little Liza Jane, and this issue we have Liza Jane.



Liza Jane

Traditional, transcribed by Lindsay Mar from the playing of Dave Bing

Musical notation for the song 'Liza Jane'. It consists of three staves of music in 4/4 time, with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp, and a 4/4 time signature. The melody is written on a single staff. Chord diagrams are provided below the staff, including G, D, Em, and D. The notation includes a repeat sign and a first ending bracket.



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Kathy O'Hara – "Get this old Rock Chook back on her feet!"

Cygnnet Folk Festival organisers advised recently that "one of our much loved and hardworking regular sound crew was involved in a terrible car accident in April.

"Kathy O'Hara, who has in recent years managed the sound system in the Willie Smith's paddock and who moved permanently to Cygnnet six years ago, is still recovering in hospital."

St Albans Festival patrons will remember Kathy from her many years of looking after the sound there, often under very difficult circumstances in the early years.

Despite injuries to most of her lower body (both legs, pelvis etc) and likely to be wheelchair bound for some months, Kathy once she's out of hospital, Kathy remains mostly upbeat, grateful to be with us and keen to, literally and figuratively, get back on her feet.

Before the accident, Kathy had begun building her own tiny house in Cygnnet.

Now, this will not only need assistance to complete, but substantial modifications to make it wheel chair and then mobility friendly.

A Support Act fundraising campaign is underway and they included the following information.

For those of you unaware of Kathy's extensive background in the music business, in 1983,



the active live music scene in Sydney provided an opportunity for a keen young audiophile to worm her way into the biz, unloading trucks and learning to rig, patch and tune PA systems.

There was a fair few detractors.

"I tell ya, there's no room for a chick on the road... unless she's on her back" or "Nah, leave that for the boys, love, you take this snare drum, and put it on stage" but an astonishing amount of support and acceptance, Yogi, Michael Orland, Jeff Stewart, Arthur Alayllus, Kim Hasanik, were early mentors, but there were many more.

What a wonderful job, hours 2pm-2am, plus commute, 4-5 days a week, each day leading up to the thrill of the band stepping on stage and breathing fiery life into the day's labours.

There were scary stints with established bands, Kevin Borlich, where the gaps in her ability were sometimes patently

obvious to the artist, and even the punters.

She had to learn, quickly, the mysteries of tuning foldback.

She worked with many up-and-coming indie bands, and a bunch of lost-in-time acts you've probably never even heard of.

Exciting times. How cool to be paid to do this for a living!

In between gigs, she joined crews of hired muscles, unpacking semis for big touring acts.

A punishing pace, but she loved it, proud to be gaining acceptance as a female on the crew.

Early '90s she got a "proper job" as sound hire staff of Grafton's Sound, eventually becoming Hire Manager, still assembling and loading PAs, but with a home life too.

Eventually, as the live scene shrunk, she scored a job in the sound department of the Sydney Opera House, and stayed for 10 years, discovering all manner of non-rock-n-roll performance.

She learned to mic orchestras, tap-dancers on bubble-wrap, and once, even the spines of a cactus... for a plinkety-pink cactus solo with the Sydney Spring Ensemble during the opening of the Studio.

The march of time, and demands of parenthood, meant her working life morphed to operation at a bunch of annual regional music festivals, supplemented with local community gigs.

After about 7 years of spending each January in Tassie operating the popular Cygnnet Folk Festival, she made the move to live in that beautiful part of the world, and 6 years further on, on April Fools Day 2021, ran - SPLAT - into the back of an 18 tonne truck, embedding her lower body into the front of her trusty HiAce.

Life can change in a split second.

Now, with the bulk of her legs and pelvis having being patched back together by some jolly clever surgeons, she's trying to wrangle through the post-accident paperwork from her hospital bed, occasionally stopping to delight in the sight of one set of toes wiggling on demand at the end of the bed.

She is on the long slow healing process, managing mostly to keep a positive outlook.

She says:- Gratitude #1 "I will walk again, maybe even by the end of the year.

Gratitude #2 - "No one was in the passenger seat... that side of my van is so pushed in, that a passenger would mean that this whole story would include a fatality, and it DOESN'T, so YAAAY!

Gratitude #3 - the skilled crews who cut me free, choppered me to the hospital, and those surgeons who, over 3 days of induced coma, worked long hours to patch together the worst of the damage. Gratitude #4 - for the care

and kindness shown to me since, by the frontline nursing staff. These legends should be running the country, they'd be way more competent than those posturing pillocks on Parliament Hill.

Gratitude # 5 - You guys! The outpourings of concern have been numerous, and from all phases of my life. I've had great convos with colleagues from the whole length of my career. Thank you!"

Short-term, all she can do is lie in bed, and wiggle the toes of one foot, and excitingly, her hips, just a little bit (new development, that).

A wheelchair has just appeared in the corner of her room and she looks forward to one day swinging into it, and... wheeeee!

Before the crash, she was ¾ thru the building of a tiny house, using a skilled carpenter, and 2nd hand building materials sourced, over 4 years, from the recycling yard at which she now works, well... DID work.

She would never have imagined, let alone prepared, that on the morning of the crash, she would not return home for 3

months, and then, in a wheelchair, but the property is not ready for that.

We want Kathy to come home to a place she can comfortably spend the rest of her recovery in, we think she deserves at least that much.

All donations will go toward preparing a more liveable space in her property, for when she leaves hospital, and for any preparations to help with rehabilitation for when she learns to walk again.

Please donate to Kathy O'Hara to "Get this old Rock Chook Back on her feet!"

A letter from Kathy dated 7 July 2021

Thank you SupportAct!! On April Fools Day 2021, a nasty vehicle accident, (you're right! There are no nice ones), put me in hospital.

It was scary. Given the extent of my injuries, the future looked grim and my surgeons did not mince words.

Three months later, still in hospital, with most of the repair operations done and a fledgling



physio regime underway, I now believe that I will totter back up on these legs again in the foreseeable future.

Thanks to SupportAct, I have not been left alone.

This well named organisation has provided massive assistance in the form of:

- A repatriation grant, which has allowed me to retrofit my half-built house with wheelchair accessible

modifications:

- Maintaining a fundraiser which has helped/will help with future living and building costs during my (temporary, I hope) inability to work;
- One-to-one assistance from staff who are fantastically encouraging, friendly, professional and, I love this, music industry workers too; and,
- The Help-A-Mate campaign has also unexpectedly

allowed me to reconnect with colleagues from my early days in the business and introduced me to some new heroes too. This has been such a balm for my fear of working through this alone, and a big boost for morale.

Thank you SupportAct!

May you go from strength to strength.

Cheers – Kathy (Titanium) O’Hardware

2022 Gygnnet Folk Festival



Our selection team are assiduously going through all applications for the 2022 festival, which we hope will be a huge celebration after the cancellation of the 2021 event due to COVID-19

Due to ongoing border restrictions for international travel predicted to remain until at least mid-2022, we will be featuring the absolute best of Australian and New Zealand performers.

At this stage, it appears that

we will be otherwise fortunate in showcasing a “near normal” event with relatively minimal COVID restrictions. However, we remain vigilant, nimble and will keep everyone in the loop as any advice and information comes to hand.

New National Awards Program

by Keith Preston

Folk Alliance Australia announced earlier this year the launch of The AFMAs, the Australian Folk Music Awards, a new National Awards program for the folk music sector.

represented.

We have over fifty Australian folk festivals which are vibrant parts of city, and especially, regional arts and culture scenes giving them their creative identities and involvement with music and the arts.

Nominations closed on July 31.

FAA President, Keith Preston, in making the announcement, noted that folk music covers a lot of musical ground ranging from World & Ethnic, Roots, Americana, Bush, Celtic, acoustic blues and many acoustic styles, both traditional and contemporary.

For nomination or more information visit www.folkalliance.org.au/afmas

The AFMA awards will celebrate and recognise the musical and cultural talent, vibrancy, richness, diversity and community nature of the Australian Folk Music sector and will be presented on October 14 in Adelaide at a live-streamed Live Music Awards Concert and Gala event at The Lion Arts Centre.

The Folk music scene is comprised of many communities and brings this richness to the musical diversity that is folk music.

Folk music and traditional music are the ground spring of many contemporary music genres with many talented artists, organisations, communities and cultures

At the inaugural AFMAs eight (8) Awards will be presented in 2021

Artist Awards
Folk Album of the Year - Traditional; Folk Album of the Year - Contemporary; Folk Artist

of the year: Folk Artist of the Year – Solo; Folk Act of the Year – Duo/Group/Ensemble; People’s Choice

Industry/Community Awards
Folk Community/Cultural Project of the Year; Youth Artist of the Year; Contribution to Folk

The aim of the Australian Folk Music Awards are to:-
Create a National Folk Awards Scheme for the Australian Folk Music Sector/Community;
Raise the profile of Australian folk music;
Acknowledge, recognize and celebrate national achievements of the folk music sector;
Benefit Australian folk music artists to gain recognition and to build their profile and careers;
Involve and engage the wide diversity of Australian folk genres in the AFMA Awards;
Raise the profile of Folk Alliance Australia as a national organisation for folk music.



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Poetry and the written word

Les Barker is now doing it in Welsh

by Janie Meneely
Courtesy The Living Tradition 133

Many of you will remember seeing Les Barker at the National Folk Festival in Canberra and how amusing his unusual, pleading sense of humour was.

Unfortunately, he was unable to come to Australia the following year due to ill health, but he is well remembered and many look forward to seeing him again.

The following article was published in the UK and is reproduced here for your enjoyment.

As if making things rhyme (or not) in English wasn't enough, nowadays Les Barker is writing out his poetry in Welsh.

Can anyone say "Lanfairpwllgwynyllgogeryc hwmrdrobyllantyrillio gogogoch"? I can't.

I have played and replayed the how to pronounce it recording and can hardly even follow along on all syllables as I read it, let alone begin to say them out loud.

It is the name of a Welsh village, but that is neither here nor there.

It was for fun, really, that I thought to look it up in the first place.

Just like it was for fun, really, that Les Barker decided to speak and write Welsh, the language of his new homeland.

But for someone like Les

Barker, fun takes on greater and deeper shades of meaning than it does for many of us ordinary mortals.

Let's face it, most of his poetry is uproariously funny.

Some of it is on the dark side: "Have you got any new of the iceberg?" is the plaintiff plea of a polar bear whose family was aboard the iceberg struck by the Titanic.

It is downright tragic, yet most of us bust a gut laughing when he recites it.

Or "My bag for life has just died" in which the author manages to outwit death.

Brilliant piece of work!

Nowadays, his idea of fun is to create the strictly scanned traditional poetry of the ancient Welsh bards, a few steps forward from when he used the above-mentioned town moniker as the chorus of a song.

Called a *gywydd* (sounds like *co-ith*) the formal Welsh poetic form is roughly akin to a Shakespearean sonnet in that it has a specified number of lines, a distinct meter and rhyme scheme.

But there the similarity ends. The *gywydd* is far more complicated.

The end rhymes for example, alternate between accented and unaccented syllables.

Some of the lines but be alliterative, but not all.

That's all I can wrap my brain

around, but there was more.

And this is what Les has been playing with lately.

Once I'd tracked him down to a small cafeteria near the railway station in Redcar where he was heading to a gig, I posed the obvious question: How does a nice rhyming accountant from Manchester wind up working out tricky, bardic stanzas in Welsh?

"Easy", said Les. "Wales was the nearest to Manchester where I could afford to buy a detached house."

The neighbours on the other side of the wall at his old house were getting a bit noisome, and he was at the point in his life where he could pack up and go.

He found himself a house with a garden in Bwlchgwyn (sounds like Bulquin) North Wales (near Wrexham).

Once he was settled, he decided that he should the learn the language and some of the local history.

"I heard a lecture that talked about the very probable demise of the Welsh tongue if people don't start to defend it," Les told me.

"The point of the lecture was that just learning Welsh isn't enough to preserve it.

School children might be able to dabble in it conversationally among themselves, but the spirit of the language, of any language for that matter, lies in the way

people use it to describe and define their world, the art forms, the poetry.

"That's what keeps language alive, that's what gets it back into the blood of a culture."

So, he began attending Welsh classes twice a week.

Three years later he participated in his first Eisteddfod, essentially a talent show for Welsh learners.

"Like a folk festival with prizes," Les said.

It would typically include poetry, music and dramatic sketches.

He translated "Have you got any new of the iceberg?" and it had been a hit.

Image that.

Les Barker is one of those low key individuals, humble as a blackberry tart, rumbled as a morning quilt, unassuming, soft spoken, easily upstaged by a dog (not just any dog, of course, but we will get to that later).

His climb to fame was hardly meteoric until the dog came along.

In fact, he wasn't in the least but angling for stardom when he began showing up at folk clubs around Manchester in the late 1960's, but I'm getting ahead of myself.

Here's how he explains it: "I was in college studying to be an accountant with a half hour to spare, so I wrote a poem called 'The rise and fall of Genghis Ackroyd'.

"I sat alone in a notebook for a few years until I was actually employed as an accountant.

"My boss was in a folk group, and I gave him the poem just for a laugh."

Straight away the fellow began reciting it as part of his

stage show, so Les went to hear him at the Manchester YMCA Folk Club.

When the audience found out that Les had written the poem, they were after him to perform something himself.

He demurred, they pressed him, club after club, until finally he set himself the task of learning "The fastest accountant in the West" by heart so he could recite it for them.

It was about a fellow in his office that Les had dubbed nasty Jed Kerwoot.

This would have been the 1970's.

"I practiced it for a month, went to a club, and nobody asked for it," he recalls.

Not to be undaunted, he recited it anyway and that was that.

There must have been upwards of 90 Manchester clubs in those early days of the Folk Scene.

Les went around to all of them.

"I had figured out that people really enjoyed singing along on the songs, so I began adding choruses to my poems, giving people a chance to fill in the end rhymes, or just repeat certain lines."

The club members were more than happy to oblige.

They still are. At a recent recitation in Goathland, Les was able to stop altogether and let the audience take over, for one stanza, anyway.

Then Les got an inkling that he might be able to pocket some coin in this endeavor.

He went to the Chippenham and Lacock Folk Festival and joined in the sing arounds.

Sure enough, folks began inviting and paying him (!) to participate in other festivals.

His first festival hit was 'Cosmo the fairly accurate knife thrower' with its tantalizing list of lovely assistants.

Enter Mrs Ackroyd, "some time in the 1980's," Les thinks.

She was a pound puppy, a rescue, an incongruous mongrel of mixed heritage.

"Maybe a bit of Border Collie, a bit of Terrier?" Les muses.

"I named him Ackroyd after the character that showed up in so many of my poems, but she became Mrs Ackroyd when I realised he was a she.

"I had her for around 6 months, and it was my birthday, so I decided to take her with me to one of the Manchester clubs where I was scheduled to perform, and that was that."

The dog had a perfect sense of timing.

"Got the bark out at just the right moment," says Les.

After that he couldn't go anywhere without her.

Les Barker doesn't sing. Ever.

But he wanted to make a live album at the Bromyard Folk Festival and he needed someone to do the backup piano and vocals for a parody he had written to the Everly Brothers' song, 'Ebony Eyes'.

Steve and Lesley Davies oohed their way through 'Holland's meat pies' as Les intoned his account of a wedding breakfast gone awry.

That was the humble birth of what would come to be known as the Mrs. Ackroyd Band.

"I didn't realise it was the start of something," Les recalls.

Poetry and the written word

Poetry and the written word

"We began travelling to festivals as a trio.

"I'd recite my poems, and they'd sing my parodies.

"The audience was always invited to join in, and as they learned the words, we'd have them up on stage with us.

"Twenty four people on stage was the biggest gathering."

The band went through several revolutions.

Chris Pollington and Alison Younger came on board.

Eventually Hillary Spencer replaced Lesley Davies.

When Les stopped showing up to rehearsals, the band went on without him.

Nowadays, Mrs Ackroyd is Alison Younger, Hillary Spencer and Chris Harvey, who continue to wow audience with the musical end of Les Barker's material.

"It all used to be fun and farcical." Les says, referring to their stage shows.

"Now the band is simply music, none of the hiinks and pantomime that went on before, and I've come to appreciate their straight performance."

Participating at the Shetland Folk Festival one year was another transformative experience for Les.

"There I was on stage with 3 million fiddles," he says, and he was utterly intrigued.

"I began collecting Scottish slow airs, and worked with harpist, Savourna Stephenson, to develop a folk opera, 'The Stones of Callanish', which ultimately featured June Taboer."

He and Savourna went have

continued to work together from time to time.

"Essentially, every time her choir asks her to write something for them to sing, she comes to me for the words," he says.

"Now we've got quite a few things done, and are thinking about putting out an album."

These are serious efforts, written in English, a far cry from the Genghis Ackroyd sagas.

When he isn't thinking ethereal thoughts about errant saints and their wanderings, or contemplating some of the more ridiculous aspects of our mundane lives, Les is still wrapping his brain around the configurations of Welsh poetry.

These days he's focused on mastering the ancient form known as the cynghanedd (sounds like Kenn-Hannah), a complicated yet subtle approach to making words into music.

"It's a very enjoyable game," he says, "essentially playing with consonance and internal rhyme, something a writer does automatically in writing, but the Welsh make it obligatory."

"There used by a nine year apprenticeship before a poet could claim to be a bard, and it took me about 9 years to get the hang of it.

"The end game is to write something that follows the rules that doesn't sound like it follows the rules."

There are 24 approved metrical measures of the cynghanedd.

One of them is called the englyn, pronounced, oddly

enough, the way it looks.

Englynion (plural) are like haiku, they are supposed to be brief but profound.

For fun, Les shares with me the englyn he had written that morning, 'Trydar'.

I'll save you having to read the Welsh version.

The poem translates as, 'Twitter'.

The empty man is in Mar a Largo,

feasting on short lies,

The ugly words a continuous stream

drenching the truth with stupidity

"Hard to be profound about Trump," Les adds, and yet, as in so many things, he manages.

A wide range of Les Barker, Mrs Ackroyd and related CDs is available from www.tradandnow.com

These include many amusing titles like : A carli & bloke; An infinite number of occasional tables; Airs of the dog; Arovertherapy; CatNav; Guide cats for the blind (several volumes); Dogologues; Earwigo; Missing Perisians file; Some love; The Stones of Callanish; Up the creek without a poodle; Top cat, white tie and tails; Twilight of the dogs; and, The war on terrier.

Mrs Ackroyd Band CDs available are: Dark side of the mongrel; Oranges and lemmings; Gnus and roses; Rock'nRoll show; Tubular dogs; and, Yelp!

Poetry and the written word

Aif "The Axeman" Wallace

Born 1876 **WA,** **Died** 1924,
November 15,
Wooralloo, WA

A.E. 'Darkie' Wallace, who wrote under the name, 'The Axeman', was an important Goldfields Bard.

Left an orphan at an early age after the deaths of his parents Laura (Armstrong) and Alexander Warren, his upbringing was supervised by his maternal grandparents who had a large family of their own. His birth name was

Christopher Alexander Graham Warren, but after moving to the goldfields he changed his name to Alfred Edward Wallace.

Before settling at Meekatharra, in Western Australia's Murchison District, Wallace worked in the timber industry from Serpentine to Collie.

He was a champion axeman, log chopper, sleeper cutter and shingle splitter.

Described as a tall man with black hair and a black moustache, he was also a cattle

drover and shearer. At Meekatharra, he worked underground at the Kyarra gold mine where he contracted a lung disease that later claimed his life.

He also worked at the Beale pastoral station.

Selected poems and stories written by 'The Axeman' were published by the Telegraph Printing and Publishing Co (Meekatharra) under the title Cobbers of Mine and Other Poems, in 1919.

Beside the Serpentine

Beside the falls that roar and boom

You're sleeping, mother mine;

Where wattles, rich in yellow bloom,

And runners red enthine.

I oft in fancy dwell with you,

In dreams I hear you speak;

And sorrow's tears, when no one knew,

Have oft-times wet my cheek.

Gay times I've had life's journey through,

Long ere I knew a care;

I've often sat and thought of you,

And breathed for you a prayer,

Where ferns and foliage sway and sweep

The moss-grown water line:

God bless you, mother, where you sleep,

Beside the Serpentine.

Long years have passed, I'm grey and bent,

My eyes are growing dim,

Since God above the angels sent

To guard your soul for him.

The golden sunbeams kiss your grave,

The silver stars they shine:

Sleep on dear heart, where wattles wave,

Beside the Serpentine.

Poetry and the written word

The Mining Magnate

He was talking stopes and underlays
The night I met him first,
And drinking beer at Baker's,
That would shame a camel's thirst.
He talked of forking water
With his ninety-horsepower pump,
And his eighty-five head battery,
And the values of his dump.

The gold was on the hanging wall,
The reef was dipping north-
As he grabbed his second pint of beer,
And blew away the froth-
He spoke about his crushings
From his levels down below,
And I thought he was the owner
Of a six or eight ounce show.

He talked of drives and crosscuts,

When a Million

Soldiers Fall

Millions read the fearful death roll
And their homes in mourning drapes;
Every cheek is wet and tear-stained,
Every garment trimmed with crepe.
Loving eyes will fondly linger
On some photos on the wall.
Ten million tears are shedding
When a million soldiers fall.

Sad eyed sisters, loving mothers,
Aged fathers play their parts,
And the graves are waiting somewhere
For ten million broken hearts.
But, with joy and sorrow blended,
They will answer to the call
With another million soldiers,
When a million soldiers fall.
Fancy fashions, vivid pictures,

As he gripped another pot,
And about two thousand feet of backs
That assayed pretty hot.
And at the thousand level
The lode was twenty feet-
He reached out for another pot,
And tapped it up a treat.

He was swaying slightly sideways,
With a sort of starboard list,
And he hiccupped: "When she junctions
In a kind of hornblende schist."
He drove along a jasper bar-
Another beer he quaffed,
And he said he'd make things merry
When he sunk another shaft.

His voice was getting husky
And his mine was getting deep,
And I left him leaning quietly
On the counter, fast asleep.
I enquired of Con O'Brien
Who this mining boom had been;
He laughs and said: "Go-bli-me,
He's a trucker on the Queen!"

Till you seem to hear the thud
Of our boys who fell in action
In a sea of German blood.
Then your pulse will start to quicken
And the heart you thought was small
Will be beating hard for vengeance
When a million soldiers fall.

Dear old Jack, or Joe, or Billy
I would have you bear in mind
There are waiting in Australia
Loving hearts you left behind.
Wives and sweethearts read the death roll,
They are soldiers, one and all.
Ten million hearts are bursting
When a million soldiers fall.

Greyheaded dads will sorely miss you,
Grey haired mothers, too, will yearn.
Some are waiting, sad and lonely,
For the lads that can't return.
Still, in sunny, old Australia,
Where the trees are grand and tall,
There's ten million soldiers ready
When a million soldiers fall.

Poetry and the written word

Stone Broke

Christmas gone, I am stoney stiff,
Of Havelock the last I whiff,
And think, while puffing clouds of smoke,
I, three weeks back, was in the joke.
I strutted round with one of the best
In this back block town in the golden west,
But hazards, beer and tarts, what or!
Have flattened me out - I've got to go.

Back to the bush, it seems to call
Me back to the place where lizards crawl,
To take my place in the bush brigade
"Midst the chips and bark where the cheques are
made.

To build more castles, plan more schemes
On the old bag bunk, and dream more dreams;
To reconstruct from a total wreck
A bran new thirst and a bran new cheque.

There's Egan, Othy, me and Burke,
Are flattened out, we've got to work,
It's no use kickin', it must be did,
We must "bog in" for a few more quid.

We were stiff before, we did it then,
Drank water before - we'll drink it again,
We are the knights of the keen edged blade,
We are the boys of the bush brigade.

Goodbye to Connie, who lent us a quid,
Goodbye Dark and his bonzer kid,
And Charlie Connelly, good luck to you,
We'll be in to test your Easter brew.
We've an axe apiece - a bran new Plumb -
We'll make those old grey mulgas hum.
It's three weeks damper, after three weeks bread,
There'll be plenty of gaps like the Axeman said.
The jingling axeman is the chap who sings
About filling gaps and Collie Kings.
I suppose he'll write up a jingle new
About me and Bourke and our tin dog stew,
And describe the way we loop the loop
And dip our "beaks" in the 'roo tail soup,
For tough and hard are the chopper's "beaks"
After sleeping in beer for a fast three weeks.

This article was from Brian Langley's website.
Brian Langley has spent many years researching
and documenting past WA Poets.

This collection can be found on his website, just
type in Brian Langley, The City Poet.

MULGA MICK THE MEDITATOR

by MARK MARUSIC

Sometimes Mick will do it lying in his bed
And he likes to do it standing on his head
Other times astride some cushions in a stack
Daks slipping down, revealing arse crack
Or with knees on floor and feet tucked under,
perched on sloping stool

In positioning himself he is no fool
Well versed in the teachings of the Buddha
He's no longer fretting over snuddas, cuddas,
wuddas

Master of a motley of techniques
He has it in him to reach yet higher peaks

Mulga Mick's an ace at meditation
Long hours spent in contemplation
Mindfulness of breathing, mantra recitation
Observing candle flame, loving kindness cultivation
He's also into moving meditation
With his trademark steady concentration

Walking in a maze he doesn't merely dabble in
He made a replica of Chartres cathedral's labyrinth
In the scrub close by his mud brick shack
Hacking through in hardest yakka patchwork
tracks
This and all his other hard yards
He does indeed regard
As in oneness with his meditative practice
Such approach long time no lapses
At night he builds and tends a fire
Before it his attention never tres
The fire is his television
All else would be diversion
Except the star filled sky
When he's drawn to gaze up high
His spiritual development a total DIY
He's never had a guru or a guide
When it comes to being spiritual
He's a dead set natural!

Flowers, fans and bows is the theme for the 2021 MFS Colonial Ball

In the 19th century, Australian settler society transitioned from penal colonies, through agricultural expansion (with commensurate indigenous dispossession) and gold rushes expansion to a collection of relatively populous colonial states.

Although some elements of British Isles dance culture were transplanted to Australia even before the beginning of the century, the expansion of population and prosperity over the course of the century enabled the settler society to more fully import the ball culture of the British Isles and Europe.

A new Australian identity started to be forged, and ball-going was part of this identity.

All levels of society in the new colonies were keen to prove to themselves that they were the equals of those who in Britain and Europe might doubt their civility, and the ball was at the time not just a most important do-it-yourself form of entertainment (and for this alone essential), but the emblem of civilised life.

Australia did not have the century-old public assembly rooms, manor houses and pleasure gardens of England, the avant garde dance halls of Paris, or the palaces of courtly central Europe, but the colonists had a sense that they were creating communities, towns and cities for the future, and



balls were improvised on boats and on golffields, in woolsheds, homesteads, gardens, hotels and halls.

Indeed, purpose built spaces for balls were created and as regional centres expanded, grander halls replaced the earlier smaller ones.

Dance assembly societies were formed and regular dance series established.

Dancing masters established themselves and dance schools flourished.

Balls of all kinds were held, including well dressed ones and even fancy dress ones.

Balls would have featured lots of flowers, fans and bows, which is the theme for the Monaro Folk Society's 22nd Colonial Ball, to be held at Folk Dance Hall, 114 Matildand Street, Hackett, Canberra from 7.30 to 11.30 on Saturday 25 September (Springtime).

To rise to the theme, women might want to include a flower or bow motif in their dress or accoutrements and hang a fan by a ribbon from their wrist, and men might add a flower to their lapel

and wear a bow tie, or simply be prepared to 'bow' when asking ladies for a dance.

Another development in 19th century Australia is that music and dance manuals started increasingly to be written locally and published locally, bringing us to the second theme for this year's Monaro Folk Society's Colonial Ball: every item on the planned ball program will feature a dance and/or tunes that were known to have been enjoyed in 19th century Australia.

While some of the tunes and dances are drawn from notations and descriptions in Australian notebooks and diaries, some of the music is from scores published and known to have been played in Australia, and most of the dances are drawn from dance manuals that were published in Australia, be it by the Wivells in Adelaide, Roberts in Melbourne, Read in Sydney, Christison in Matildand or Lovember in Brisbane.

All keeping to the theme that the instructions and/or music are from Australian sources, the ball will include: five quadrilles, a

'First Set', a 'Prates of Penzance Lancers for 16', a 'Prince Imperial Quadrille', 'Varieties Parisiennes', 'Quadrille de Dames' and 'Quadrille de Jean Gilles' the latter set to the fabulous 'Sydney Exhibition Quadrilles'; five different dance games and game-like dances, including one using the ladies' fans, unique to an 1884 Brisbane manual, and one in which the nine-pin 'bumpkin' wears a hat as mentioned in an 1843 Port Macquarie diary; five country dances in longways and Circassian circle formations, set to waltzes and reels and sometimes both in alternation; and, four different free couple dances, polka, schottische, polka-mazurka and vavsoviennne, led in the style of the day.

Why not dance to 'The picnic polka', published in Sydney variants such as the 'Melbourne Polka' and the precursor to the 'Princess Polka, and glide along to 'The Waratah Polka Mazurka' dedicated to the first Australian XI cricket side... and to inspire people to improvise, each free couple's dance will be prefaced with a display of possibilities by local Earthly Delights Historic Dance Academy dancers.

Music will be offered by the Earthly Delights players, with Sally Taylor on piano, Peter Taylor on guitar, Ian Bull on mandolin, guitar and banjo, Sarah Bull on clarinet and saxophone, and John Gardiner-English on Irish flute and whistle, English Bagpipes and hurdy-gurdy.

Guesting as caller on some dances will be Katherine Tammaro. Most of the calling and MCing will be by John Gardiner-Garden, a veteran of the Australian dance scene, a fun dance leader and an internationally recognised dance historian.

John has created the vibrant Earthly Delights dance scene, produced 8 CDs of traditional dance music, and toured extensively overseas.

He has recently completed and published his enormous 31-book series entitled Dancing through the Ages, a 10,000 page series covering the history of social dance in the western European tradition up to 1900.

The work is supported by thousands of illustrations, musical notations and source facsimiles.

It traces the evolution of ball structure, dance forms, steps, figures, style and etiquette and includes detailed reconstructions of and instructions for nearly 1,000 dances.

John has also recently released a new collection of original dances, Dance Delights, and a new edition of his Christmas Carol Dance Book.

Several of John's publications are available from www.tradandnow.com



**Monaro Folk Society's
2021 Colonial Ball**
Saturday 25 September
Doors open at 7 pm, dance to 11.30 pm
Calling by: John Gardiner-Garden & Friends
Music by: Earthly Delights
Theme: Flowers, Fans and Bows
Folk Dance Hall, 114 Matildand Street,
Hackett, Canberra

An unforgettable night in Tasmania

Tasmania

by Cathy Hutchinson Photos Nick Peffer

Courtesy Folk Federation of Tasmania DRUMBET! August



In and out the windows for the Koonya Klap Kwadrille

If you collect two dozen musicians, get them along to rehearse together for months, then pack them all on stage in front of near a hundred dancers, you get a wonderful vibe, outstanding music and a lot of excitement!

Anthony's lighting created a warm atmosphere.

The hall was packed with dancers of all ages and a lot of laughter and fun was had out on the dance floor.

The stage was even more packed with the Tasmanian Heritage Fiddle Ensemble (THEE) musicians, with great camaraderie amongst them.

Between them both, they nearly lifted the roof!

So it was, on Saturday June 26, at St James Hall in Newtown.

Musical director, Emily Wolfe, showed much patience and forward planning getting the musicians up to speed at the rehearsals which really paid off!

The THEE "did her proud", especially since so many of the THE musicians had a lot of new music thrown at them!

Well, not literally, but continuously many new tunes were introduced.

Violet and Bec, who are the backbone of "The Crows", along with Emily, helped out at many rehearsals and on the night.

It is no secret that Emily is expecting a baby in the next little

while and I couldn't help thinking that this little baby will already know all the tunes!

On the dance floor, dance callers, Fiona Henwood and David Wanless, taught the dance moves, and soon had people whirling around in crazy spins in dances such as the Galopede and the Blackwattle Reel.

In the Koonya Klap Kwadrille, the outside circle danced in and out the windows created by the inside circle clapping their neighbours' hands and forming arches overhead, and charged wildly in couples, from one end of the hall to the other!

The dancers marched, as if on the deck of the Lady Nelson, to Steve Ray's dance of the same name.



The ever popular Scottish Ceilidh dance, Dashing White Sergeant, had lines of three circling, reeling and turning to Ross Smithard's Old Time tune, Dingo's Breakfast, paired with the Contra dance tune, Dancing Bear.

A "Lainy" tune, Richmond Lasses, was the signature tune for the dance Richmond Lads and Lasses, devised by dance caller, David Wanless, and the Virginia Reel featured Tasmanian collected tunes King Pippin's, Uncle Affie's and the ever popular Grandfather's Clock.

The three different rhythms

matched the three different parts to the dance.

There was a Schottische, Eileen McCoy's Varsovianna, Polkas and Waltzes, including many locally devised dances and tunes and many more collected traditional tunes and dances.

It was a night to remember for everyone who was part of it! As the main lights came on and we packed up afterwards, cleaning, putting away chairs and taking down banners, I couldn't help feeling that a little of the magic was lingering on.



Dance Directory

Attention Dance co-ordinators, teachers and dancers. If you are a dance class or dance event organiser and would like to be included in this directory, see pages 72 and 73 for more information. Directory entry is free to subscribers.

Wongawilli Dance Club	Colonial	Australian Traditional & Bush Dance Society	http://www.atbdsdancesa.com.au/
Bush dance at Wongawilli Community Hall, Wongawilli Rd, Wollongong area NSW. All dances walked through & called. No Partner needed. \$4 includes supper. Meet every Wednesday night 7:30pm. 0404667614 happyeyes3333@gmail.com		Have fun and stay fit with a group of singles and couples who enjoy bush and folk dancing and other social activities. Meets late January to mid-December - 2nd, 4th & 5th Tuesdays, 7.30 - 9.30pm, Prospect Town Hall, 128 Prospect Rd (cnr Vine St), Prospect. enquires@atbdsdancesa.com.au or	
		Lazarika International Folk Dance	Traditional dances from around the world. Meet each Tues at 5pm - 7pm & each Thurs 9am - 11am at the Community of Christ hall, Taree 6552 5142

Trad&Now is lucky to have a large panel of voluntary reviewers

They are people who have been involved with the folk music community for a long while and/or they are performers in their own right.

They spend a great deal of time listening to CDs very carefully and then sharing their thoughts with the rest of us.

This helps readers decide whether they should

purchase a CD or not by giving them some idea as to what to expect. However, as with movie reviewers and with any critics generally, the review published may not be the same as what you would personally feel about a CD.

Everyone has their own taste in music and the range of tastes seems to be endless.

Reviews are the opinion of the reviewer only and not necessarily that of Trad&Now or its editorial staff.

Performers submit CDs without any guarantee of a favourable review and readers should always form their own opinion, preferably by hearing the CD under review for themselves or seeing the performer at a live performance.

If you are interested in joining our review panel, please contact Trad&Now at info@tradandnow.com

The Ratters - Comradeship

CD review by Rick Narbutas
TM117-30 - \$20



One may be forgiven for believing that the necessity of preserving an oral history in a digital world is passé, that the labyrinth behind the black mirror is the sole "suppository" (thanks Tony) of human history, complete with click bait.

That's the myth of the modern age. But there are some more local stories you just can't access on the Internet, who will tell these tales?

Aboard the Comradeship, Mulheron and his fellow artists cruised and crafted a collection of just such stories into song. Here then are a few snippets woven into an oral history. Sing along!

Offerings of cheeky deeds and never say die defiance are interspersed with some light-hearted ditties.

"Four Strong Women" tells of Angie Zeltner and her three friends, the common people (although uncommon in their resolve and ingenuity) whose actions even a judge couldn't fault, what a ripper of a story!

Such an irony that little hummers could save the lives of

many. The Ratters give a nod too, to our own larrikin history. Who ever heard of the black listing of Lee Hayes?

Further on, Mulheron gives us an anthem to the power of wind and shovel in, "When the Coal Blew Away", re-visiting the deeds of labour pitted against the power of the bosses during the Bull Lockout of 1938

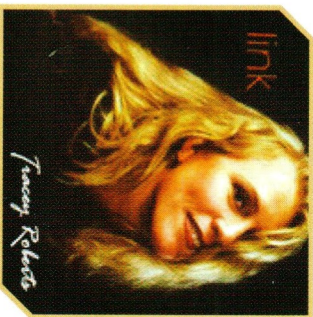
Covering John Dengater's song, famous boxer, Les Darcy, is fighting against greater forces having declared his opposition to conscription.

Decades before Mohammed Ali, Darcy refused to be a pinup boy for war.

We are reminded of the dramas of Maralinga and some even darker places too.

"In So Many Ways", Patrick Barnett uses Liz Frencham's soulful voice to expose the toll conflicts take on the innocent, the bottomless plunge into sadness at the madness of war.

Recorded at Main Street Recording Studios in Corramal NSW, this CD brings together the essence of what good folk music has to offer.



Tracey Roberts - Link

CD review by Tony Smith
TM471-36 - \$15

Tracey Roberts says on her website that she is into artistic music and musical art.

CD Reviews

This 2003 album is certainly aural art.

There are just four tracks, mainly Tracey and her piano, but the 20 odd minutes heard here would convince the most stringent critic of her talent.

Roberts articulates her lyrics well and her deep voice is a perfect vehicle for the style of song she favours on this CD.

And importantly, the piano is a perfect foil for the songs.

You can imagine her sitting at a baby grand and providing uplifting background music for a black-tie event in the swankiest venues.

You might also think that anyone who aspires to sing the kind of light opera made popular by the Lloyd Webber generation can eat their heart out with envy.

Tracey Roberts must have a great stage presence with her commanding range, clear voice and sweet piano.

Tracey enjoys collaborating with other musicians.

On these tracks, backing vocals, bass and electric guitar, weave seamlessly into the rhythms and harmonies.

Janette Geri (backing vocals), Phil Smith (bass and lead guitar) and Chris Hallam (bass and lead guitar) are the backing musicians here.

Roberts is a subtle arranger. The four tracks are 'Daniel's Hands', 'If You Told Them', 'Home' and 'Harvest Moon'.

There is an imprint of infant son, Daniel's, hands on the sleeve notes.

'If You Told Them' shows

CD Reviews

Roberts' skill expressing the blues.

'Home' is about belonging either in place or spirit.

As Tracey works in the Dandenongs outside Melbourne, the 'Harvest Moon' in question probably illuminates wheat stubble in December.

Some listeners are no doubt suckers for this style of music. I am not.

So, when I say that I am truly impressed with Tracey Roberts' song writing, playing and singing, you can be sure that I am genuinely in awe of the ability Link hints at.



Wendy Holman - Traditional Songs about Sex, Money, Death and Illidings.

CD review by Tony Smith
 TN1985-38 - \$20

This album is subtitled 'if you love the sound of banjo'.

Well anyone would love the much maligned banjo the way Wendy Holman plays it.

Whether mountain style, bluegrass or Scruggs, Wendy Holman picks clearly and clearly. She is a true ambassador for

the instrument.

On this 2005 album, Wendy Holman plays banjo, guitar and synthesiser and manipulates the tracks cleverly to record simultaneously.

Even better, she explains simply and briefly what she is doing artistically and technically on each track.

Indeed, she mentions that these banjo classics are intended primarily for her students at www.fingerstyle.com.au and one track she wrote, 'MTMT Rag', specifically for them, was to demonstrate some important techniques.

One thing is obvious, there is great cross fertilisation between banjo and guitar when played by such an aware exponent as Wendy Holman.

While she might use the 'vamp' sometimes, the picked arpeggio shows both instruments at their best.

While Holman says that her voice is not 'brilliant' she presents these traditional tunes more than adequately.

Some lyrics in these mainly American backwoods songs have the potential to produce a white or rasp but Holman's voice is perfectly sweet, while not losing any strength.

She supplies the lyrics as well as notes about how she plays each piece.

The tracks include several in two versions the better to appreciate the differences in style.

'I'll Fly Away', 'Blackberry Blossom' and 'Cripple Creek' lend themselves to these contrasting treatments.

Other tracks include 'Little Maggie', 'Two Dollar Bill', 'Willow Flower', 'Down in the Valley', 'Roll in My Sweet Baby's Arms', 'Worried Man Blues' and the beautiful gospel song, 'Will the

Circle Be Unbroken'.

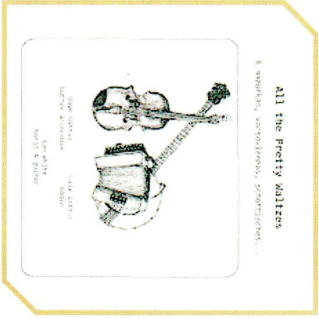
You might think that some of these titles are not familiar but most people will recognise both the instrumentals and the songs.

There is also a 'karaoke' style 'Waltzing Matilda' to which she supplies the lyrics (in case anyone does not know them) and 'Thank You', a brief concluding track in which she gets 'fluffy' about musical friends while 'doodling' in open G tuning.

Wendy Holman has produced a CD that is both entertaining and educational.

While there should be no contradiction between the two, this CD is outstanding in both ways.

After listening to Wendy Holman, many more music fans should love the sound of the banjo, and quite a few will try the instrument themselves.



Dave & Julie Gittus & Ian White - All the Pretty Waltzes

CD Review by Julie Castles
 TN2475-89 \$25

With waltzes, mazurkas, and varsoviennas, this album brings us traditional music as it was meant to be heard, simply presented and straight from the heart.
 Recorded with minimal takes,

there is an honest, home-made feel to this CD and Julie Gittus's enthusiastic comments have been left in.

Her instrument, modelled on the Norwegian Hardanger fiddle, has a warm, melodious sound, with Dave Gittus's single reed accordion specially tuned to suit this violin.

Their rich, mellow sound is augmented by Ian White's tasteful accompaniment.

The tune selection reflects the multicultural story of our heritage.

Complementing a range of traditional Australian dance tunes, are items such as the Swedish Roda Waltz, a contemporary waltz from the U.S., a Mexican Waltz and a set of Irish mazurkas.

Up tempo jigs and polkas have been left for another day.

These are, indeed, the pretty tunes, and a moderate tempo throughout ensures that we hear every note.

The tradition of passing down the tunes continues, and the Gittuses acknowledge arrangements suggested by others, as well as the tune sources.

The Dooley Chapman set, for example, is a pairing of Chapman's tunes passed on by Dave de Hugard; The Bell Tune, and the superbly titled Dressed in Rags Without a Bob.

Mazurkas played slowly are well suited to harmonisation.

Learned from Jacko Kevans, the Home Sweet Home Mazurka played here, is interwoven with harmony in a version which contrasts with Kevans' more lively rendition.

Singers often speak of 'owning' a song, in the sense that it is cherished and becomes a part of the singer.

The same can be said for musicians, and this is evidenced here in the sweet, harmonious playing of these tunes.

With a growing number of musicians wanting to learn from our own tradition, this CD is a

welcome addition to the large trove of collected music now available in print.



Collector - Pumpkin & Bear

CD Review by Graham Blackley
 TN224-7 - \$25

On this fifteen-track album, Collector display their prowess as skilled purveyors of traditional folk music, who are capable of harnessing the melodic power of a wide variety of instruments including fiddle, bouzouki, tenor guitar, Appalachian dulcimer and concertina.

The rollicking and lively opening track 'The Great Northern Line' would be the ideal accompaniment to a foaming pint of something dark, malty and mysterious at the Port Fairy Folk Festival.

On this foot-tapping gem the band strike the ideal balance between skilled execution and a down-to-earth vibe while ensuring that the end result is fresh, vibrant and alive.

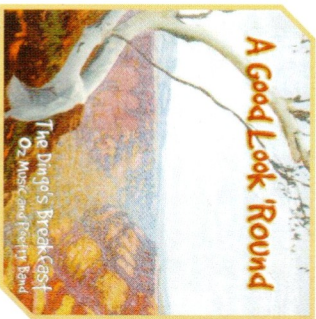
Another highlight is the powerful 'My Son Ted' which features a driving rhythm, impressive lead vocals and the deft and mellifluous interplay between the lead and backing singers.

This song dips its toe into goth-folk territory and proves to be a mesmerising treat.

While relishing such sonic delights, I recommend you peruse

the CD booklet which contains lyrics, photos and interesting background information.

CD Reviews



Dingo's Breakfast - A Good Look 'Round

CD Review by Chris Spencer
 TN354-9 - \$20

I would hope that most readers would be familiar with the music of Dingo's Breakfast, who have graced many a folk stage around the country.

Led by Roger Montgomery and his sidekick, John Angliss, the band have gathered the odd, occasional musician to assist them perform their mixture of poetry and bush music.

On this recording, Montgomery and Angliss are joined by Toby Montgomery (guitar, mandolin & vocals) and David Ralph (fiddle & vocals). Meredith Higgins, Helen Muio and John Reed assist on background vocals. Readers should note that this is the band's first CD, released in 2000.

As well as reciting poetry and performing well known Australian bush songs, the band host "Audio

CD and book Reviews

Dramas", consisting of songs and stories, around a theme.

I enjoy the humour of Roger Montgomery, which can be quite acerbic at times.

As he states in the liner notes, '...grab a beer, send the kids to bed, sit back and join the Dingo's Breakfast.'

The album has 19 tracks, with a smattering of traditional tunes, (Roger) Montgomery originals and poems.

The poems include, "How Mr/Dougall Topped the Score", "The Play" (an excerpt from C.J Dennis' classic, 'The Sentimental Bloke'), "Spirits of Australia", "Scots Annie" (the last two written by Roger).

A short poem also leads into first track, "Shenlock Town". Roger's original songs include, "Time to find Mathilda", "The Ballad of Emu Plains", "Maida Vale Dance", "The Yuppie Song", & "Kerosene Lane".

He also provided tunes to poems, "The Lost Shanty", "A Christmas Wish" & "A Good Look Round".

Traditional songs comprise, "Travelling down the Castlereagh" (credited here to Banjo Patterson) and "Poachers Fate".

Another couple of songs are taken from the band's Audio Dramas: "Women with Guns", "Going South" from Jack Sorensen, WA's Forgotten Bard (the words were composed by Jack Sorensen while the music was written by Louise Bavin); "The Ballad of Emu Plains" (from New Currency and Pure Merinos", the title track was previously used in an ABC production, 'Songs and Stories'.

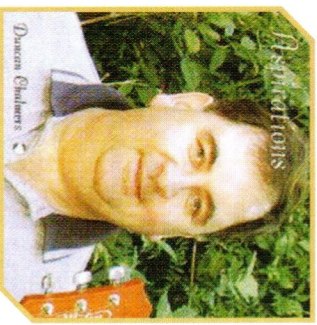
A highlight for me was the inclusion of the Don Henderson song, "Put a Light in Every Country Window".

I also admired their arrangement of the 2 traditional songs, acapella, utilising a full choir, surprising me with their use of harmonies of both male and female singers.

The production by Erik Kowarski, is crisp and clean, the vocals out front, easy to understand and the musical backing effective and varied.

The album has notes on each track, indicating where in some instances the band first heard the song, and providing background on the track.

If you don't already own a Dingo's Breakfast CD, this one would be an ideal selection to have in your collection.



Duncan Chalmers

Duncan Chalmers

Aspirations

CD Review by Chris Spencer
 TM042-10 - \$20

I'm loathe to describe

Duncan Chalmers as an uncomplicated folk singer, in case I denigrate Chalmers.

However, at the performances I have witnessed, he has appeared solo without the backing or support of other musicians.

On this, his second CD, he is accompanied by various instruments, but they're very

much in the background, allowing Chalmers's voice to be featured on every song.

This is good, Chalmers has an interesting tenor voice and his singing is a treat.

Duncan explains the background to the choice of the songs he has chosen to sing on this album.

He writes, "I gain inspiration from the heroic failures, as well as those who beat the odds and fly their dream... their struggle became the inspiration for those that followed, the songs on this album speak to me of these things".

He's included well known covers of various songwriters, "Love Minus Zero" (Bob Dylan), "Cats in the Cradle" (Harry Chapin), "Universal Soldier" (Buffy Saint Marie), "Fields of Athenry" (Pete St John), "Shelter" (Eric Bogle), "Jeannie C" (Stan Rogers) and perhaps the bit more obscure "Kathy's Song" by Paul Simon.

Traditional songs included are "Blackbird", "Carrick Fergus" while "Drink to Me", written in the 17th Century, could also be considered traditional!

There's also two renditions of songs by Andy Stewart, "Fire in the Glen" and "Fisherman's Song".

Chalmers own songs, "Lawrence Hargrave", about an early Australian pilot, and "Street Kid", describing the plight of the homeless, follow a similar format to the other material he sings here.

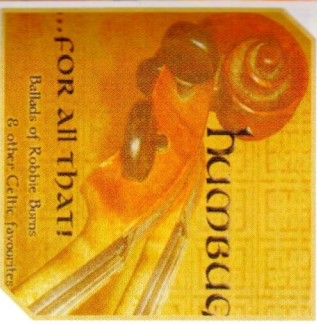
Musicians who have been recruited by producer, Rob Specogna, include members of Wongawilli, Dave de Santi, Graeme Murray; readers would also be familiar with other guest musicians, Chloe Roweth, Johnny Spillane and Lindsay Martin.

If there's a single niggle with the album, is that Chalmers doesn't vary the tempo, it's all lifting, laidback, almost quiet. A couple of rousing upbeat

songs might have helped break up the fare, although he gets a bit enthusiastic on "Shelter" at times!

But I particularly enjoyed "Cats in the Cradle" and his versions of "Fields of Athenry" and "Carrick Fergus".

Recommended for those who enjoy the music of a 'traditional' folk singer.



Humbug - For All That

CD Review by Chris Spencer
 TM1712-7 - \$25

This album is sub-titled Ballads of Robbie Burns & other Celtic Favourites.

And what an enjoyable album it is, I'm so enamoured that I have made enquiries how to obtain their other recordings.

Readers might note that this album was originally released in 2009, so there might even be more recordings available!

The band, consisting of 8 members on this recording, although it seems they perform with as few as 4 members, cover 5 Robbie Burns songs including, "A Man's a Man", "Ye Jacobites by Name", "Parcel o' Rogues", "Ae Fond Kiss" and finish with "Auld Lang Syne".

The Celtic favourites embrace "Caledonia", "Women of Ireland", "Mairi's Wedding" and "Belfast Mill".

Other tracks are, "Step it Out Mary" (written by Sean McCarthy), "Both Sides of the Tweed" (Dick Gaughan),

"Dumbarton's Drums", "Spanish Lady" and "Bonnie Jess" (Gary Shearston).

The album kicks off with a strident version of "A Man's a Man", propelled by the male 'choir'.

The band utilise vocal harmonies of both male and female, which keeps the listener engaged.

Thus, on the 2nd song, the female vocals of Jo Boyd, Tanya Caldwell, Naome Carrel, Ros Hales and Bronwyn Todd lead the rendition of the tragic "Step it Out Mary".

The men, Mal Bennett, Graham Chalke, Frank Nizynski and Jim Roberts assist with the choruses.

This track is embellished with tin whistle performed by Tanya Caldwell.

Naturally the choir of women tackle "Dumbarton's Drums" which highlights the flute playing of Caldwell, while the male choir sing about the "Spanish Lady" which features the banjo of Mal Bennett.

An un-named female solo vocalist sings "Ye Jacobites by Name" with its anti-war sentiments.

In "Caledonia", the Dougie Maclean classic, the verse is sung by a female, but the choir joins in for the chorus.

A track, a bit out of kilter with the rest of the album, is the Thomas Spencer poem, "Bonnie Jess".

Spencer, described as a bush ballad poet, wrote the words, while Gary Shearston put it to music on one of his early recordings.

Interestingly, "Women of Ireland" is performed as an instrumental, using the fiddle as the lead, neglecting the words of the original poem completely.

The notes do not indicate whether the fiddle is played by Bronwyn Todd or Mal Bennett.

CD and book Reviews

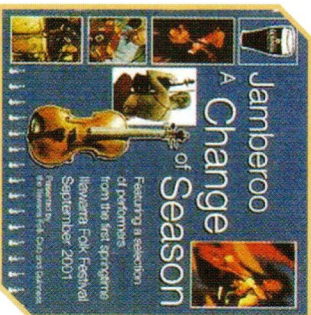
The tempo is also restrained on "Ae Fond Kiss", but livens up on "Mairi's Wedding", led by the banjo, whistle and fiddle.

I enjoyed the band's version of "Belfast Mill" which has alternating male and female choirs on the verses.

The album finishes appropriately with a gentle under-taking of "Auld Lang Syne".

The album was recorded by Ian Blake, who has captured the band and all its talents and arrangements well.

I preferred the band's up tempo songs more, but fans of Burns might prefer the interpretations of his songs. Highly recommended.



Jamberoo - A Change of Season

CD Review by Tony Smith
 TM081-40 - \$25

The Illawarra Folk club must be one of the strongest in the country.

Over the years hundreds of performers from Australia and overseas have entertained folkies at the club's regular meetings in Wollongong, at 'Stacky Flat' (Bull) festival and at Folk by the Sea in Kiama.

Formerly, it had a springtime festival at Jamberoo in the green