

Up for AIR



By Kath Rose

One of Australia's greatest unknown music stars was nominated for 2021 AIR Awards... and you will not believe her story!

This is the story of one of Australian music's greatest unknown shining lights.

She lives in Brisbane.

She has written almost 90 music singles, with 41 going straight to number one.

She is an international award-winning composer and songwriter with her titles streaming daily on music platforms around the world.

She collaborates with some of the biggest names in the business. When her music comes on, her fans go absolutely crazy.

Her name is Donna Dyson.

She is also legally blind.

"When I lost my sight, I gained my vision," she said in 2012, when her sight faded.

She's also had six strokes and TIA's.

"After the first stroke, I realised I couldn't speak straight away, but I could sing, create and compose. "It just connected me even

more with the people for whom I write music – kids."

She is the genius behind the music phenomenon that is Spotty Kites, one of the most popular children's music labels in the country, as well as Donna Dyson & Friends, the label that creates music adults love, and she is one of five finalists up for Best Independent Children's album or ep at the 2021 AIR (Australian Independent Recording) Awards.

Known as the Golden Globes of the Australian music industry, the AIR Awards recognise and celebrate the success of Australia's independent music sector and its music makers.

Past winners include Vance Joy, SA, Sheppard, Peking Duck and Violent Soho.

The awards were held on August 5 in Adelaide.

Donna Dyson, and her Spotty Kites album "Have a Spotty Christmas", is the only Queensland in the field.

The four other finalists are The Wiggles' "Choo Choo Trains, Propeller Planes & Toot Toot

Chugga Chugga Big Red Car", Amber Lawrence's "Kids Gone Country 2-Fun for all the Family", Diver City's "Welcome to Diver City" and Teeny Tiny Stevies' "Thoughtful Songs for Little People".

Donna has been writing the songs that children love for a long time, and she's really really good at it, because she spent the first two plus decades of her life as a teacher, educator, university academic and a lecturer and a significantly published author.

Specialising in pedagogy, literacy, literature and the arts, she has worked with many organisations as both advisor and advocate.

In 2012, she was suddenly diagnosed as legally blind, following her totally unexpected medical condition.

This was a pivotal point for her, she lost most of her sight, but gained her creative vision, which she now pours into music to produce fun songs with educational content for children.

By 2014, Donna started to receive recognition by her song writing peers at the APPA ASA annual awards and by 2016 was named, Australian Songwriter of the Year.

In 2018, driven by her first love of helping children learn by focusing on music, she was signed to MGM with her children's label Spotty Kites.

This resulted in 47 #1 iTunes hit single releases, 87 singles, two full albums, with a third on the way, and three EPs released over the past two plus years.

MGM also signed her for two other labels, Donna Dyson & Friends as well as Dyson & Young.

"MGM's support, encouragement and guidance has been the greatest pivotal gift to my music career.

"I'm indebted to their head, Sebastian Chase and his team for their ongoing faith and mentorship," she said.

Fast forward to today and Donna is an international award-winning composer and songwriter with her titles globally streaming daily on all music platforms.

She's one of the country's most unsung music heroes.

In short, she is unstoppable.

But, life isn't rainbows and lollipops.

Remember, Donna is legally blind and because of an inoperable brain tumour, she has had six strokes and expects more to come.

Even this doesn't faze her though, and she is currently collaborating and co-writing with her friends, Damien Leith, Tyrone Noonan and the Queensland Symphony Orchestra's Craig Allister Young (the Young of Dyson & Young), along with producers and engineers, Wil Hughes, Garry Smith

and Geoff McGahan.

The bulk of Donna's original songs feature instrumentalists from the OSO and hand-picked elite vocal artists (Australian Opera, singers from the Ten Tenors and Seven Sopranos, musical theatre and recording stars), giving her catalogue a richness and quality in sound for teachable moments.

On the odd occasion, she sings on some tracks, though chooses to concentrate on the composition.

Her success and talent come from her research based knowledge and deep understanding that children sing before they speak or read.

Her catalogue reflects this philosophy, with fun memorable songs which develop literacy, language and learning through extending Neuro-pathway development.

"The songs are much more than fun tunes.

"Spotty Kites' is composed to focus upon literacy through music and stories through songs.

"Every track is developing language, forging neuro links and

bringing extensive learning, early childhood literacy development and joy," she said.

Donna is a keen child advocate, promoter of literacy and music along with being the National Ambassador for Vision Australia and is in high demand as an inspirational speaker.

Whether she wins the AIR Award is really non-consequential. Donna Dyson writes the sound tracks of our children's lives.

She is forging the foundation of how our kids learn, talk, sing and communicate as a well-educated custodian of childhood.

For that, we should all be very grateful.

Also, she is proof that you don't have to see, to sing, because music really is the universal language.

As it turns out, just as well whether or not she wins the AIR Award is really non-consequential, as the award for best independent children's album went to Teeny Tiny Stevies – Thoughtful Songs For Little People.

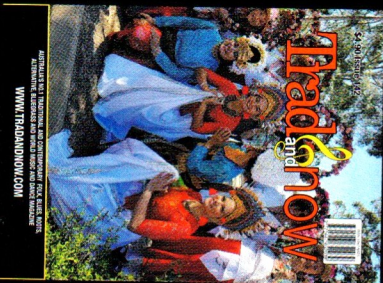
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Star for McLean as American Pie hits 50



Don McLean's star

On August 17, AAP reported that singer-songwriter, Don McLean, was given a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, marking the 50th anniversary of his classic single 'American Pie'.

McLean, 75, recalled how the almost nine minute long song about the loss of innocence in the rock generation had come to define his career and be sung at key moments in US cultural life. "At the turn of the century, I was invited to the Clinton White House. "I sang in front of 600,000

people in front of the reflecting pool as you look at the Washington Monument, and they were all singing 'American Pie' the last day of that millennium," McLean said. "I've had some wonderful experiences," he said. McLean's star was the 2,700th on the Hollywood Walk of Fame and was placed strategically outside The Piehole Shop on Hollywood Boulevard.

'American Pie' was released in October, 1971, and spent weeks on the charts in the US, Canada, Australia and Britain. Madonna released a cover

Photo: Getty version in 2000, the song features in the movie 'Black Widow' and Weird Al Yankovic recorded a parody version in 1999 inspired by the Star Wars films.

'American Pie' makes numerous cryptic cultural allusions to 1960s figures ranging from Elvis Presley to Bob Dylan.

The lyrics were sold at auction in New York in 2015 for \$US1.2 million and McLean wrote in notes for the auction sale catalogue that the song was about life "heading in the wrong direction" and "becoming less idyllic".

Chasing Music - My Crazy Campervan Adventures in America

by Ian Dale

In 1992, I left my job, rented out my house and went to America where I bought a little campervan with the idea of spending twelve months exploring the country and its music.

I had so much fun and so many adventures on the road that I ended up driving 250,000 KM over nearly six years, with visits home to top up my finances in between!

America is filled with wonderful music, extraordinary scenery and welcoming people and I just loved the freedom of the road.

It wasn't all good of course.

There were many nasty surprises, such as being struck by lightning at the Grand Canyon and numerous vehicle breakdowns.

The greatest thrill of all was being able to hear wonderful music in areas such as Memphis and the Mississippi Delta, Louisiana, Texas, Kentucky and The Appalachians.

I learnt so much about different genres and sub genres and was often able to meet and talk with some of the top musicians.

Festivals were a huge attraction and included New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival, King Biscuit Blues Festival and tons of Bluegrass events. In the course of this, I even



became obsessed with dancing!

My first teacher was an 85 year old clogger who had brought his huge rooster to the festival and tied it to a chair!

After settling back in Australia and starting my own radio show (Southern Style), I was invited by various groups to talk about my travels, the "highs" and the "lows."

People often suggested that I should write a book, so I decided to have a go.

Drawing on my diaries, photographs and memories, I spent years writing various drafts and gave up many times.

Then I had some wonderful encouragement from the filmmaker/broadcaster/writer and journalist, Phillip Adams, who kindly read an early draft. So I became determined to go ahead and "Chasing Music"

was finally published this year. The book traces my journeys through 48 U.S. states.

I describe extraordinary national parks and historic places and buildings, the local culture I encountered, and the wonderful music I found.

I also talk about the everyday details of life on the road, including the precautions I took as a woman travelling alone, often "camping" in rather odd places to save my precious few dollars.

So far the reviews have been good.

"This is a marvellous story and deserves to be read" - Phillip Adams, Award-winning journalist, broadcaster and filmmaker.

"I found your book truly amazing, not only in what you achieved but in the way you have written your story. You took me with you. I felt the stress of hill starts in San Francisco and your troubles with the van. Felt the joy of concerts and meeting new people. What an amazing adventure and such resilience." - Shelah Little, New Zealand

Chasing Music can be purchased through www.TradeNow.com.

My radio show, Southern Style, is broadcast on PBS FM, Melbourne, 106.7 on Tuesdays 1-3pm and via www.pbsfm.org.au

Remarkable Australian women remembered in song

Hoya is a new Sydney based ensemble which includes singer songwriter, Margaret Bradford, vocals, bowed psaltery and whistle, her daughter, Sonya Bradford, on vocals, keyboard and bass, and skilled professional bluegrass musicians, Gwyn Cleeves, on guitar, Ian Knight, on mandolin and vocals, and multi-talented, Marcus Holden, on fiddle and guitars.

Their repertoire includes a variety of genres but only recently have they begun to perform as a group, when Margaret was seeking musicians to accompany songs about Australian women that she has been researching for years.

All these accomplished musicians have performed in various domains over the years but 'Inspirational Women' is their first album together.

Here they present a collection of songs, mostly written by Margaret, telling the stories of remarkable Australian women, some of whom have received

little recognition for their achievements.

Margaret's extensive research prompted her to write these songs.

They tell of the hardships and challenges they faced

Some of the women included are Joice Nankivell Loch MBE -1887-1982, Georgiana Molloy-1805-1843, and Thancoupie Gloria Fletcher -1937-2011.

"On reading their amazing life stories, I was moved to write their songs."

Songs from Judy Small, Sue Gee and Pip James are also on the album.

The skilled artistry of Kerry Klinner has given the CD an elegant bright finish.

Their CD 'Inspirational Women' has been received with great interest at festivals, house concerts and local libraries around Sydney and beyond.

Images of the women are shown on a screen as they sing.

The project has been of great interest to students of women's history.

On more than one occasion at their performances, relatives and friends of the women have

come forward to tell of their connections.

CD is available for \$20 by contacting 'hoyaAUS39@gmail.com' OR through www.TradandNow.com

Quote from Anne Brown, Stanwell Tops NSW

I absolutely loved "Hoya".

It is beautifully presented and having that little story book with the lyrics makes it very special.

Your lovely, warm, gentle voice not only sings but relates a wonderful, powerful story so that these incredible women will not be forgotten!

You and Sonya harmonise beautifully together and the other artists complemented you perfectly.

The instruments, especially the gorgeous psaltery, added to the nostalgic feeling created by this combination.

Congratulations on creating such a beautiful CD.

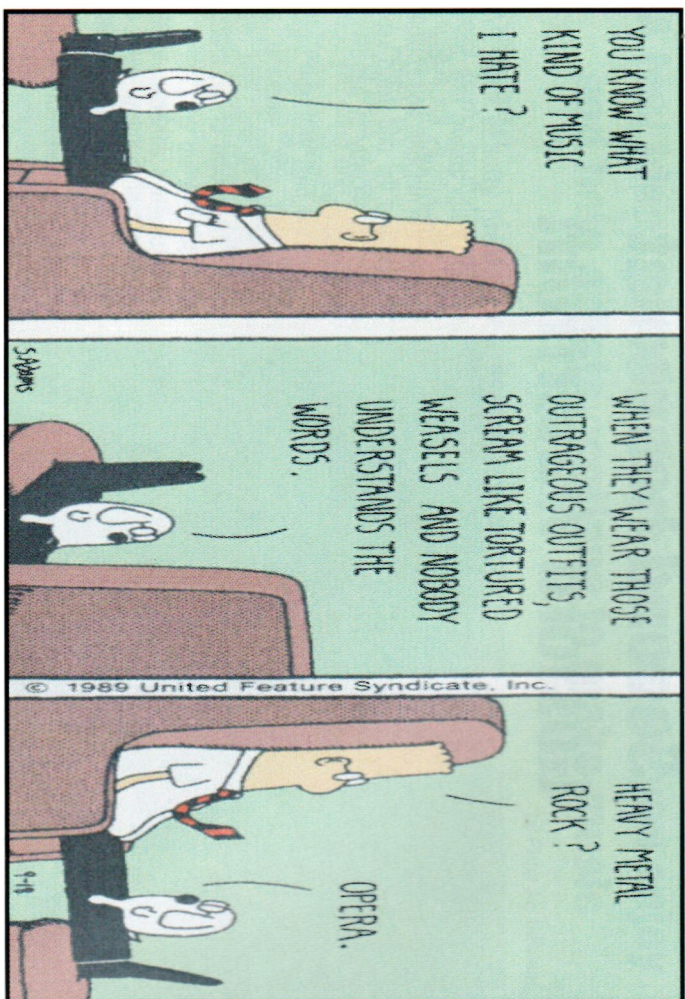
The title is perfect as the perennial Hoya symbolises the everlasting story that these inspirational women have left us and now, thanks to you creating this CD, they will be remembered.

Oops!

In Trad&Now 143, captions in photographs on pages 4 and 6 were reversed.

The photograph on page 4 should have read "Chris Sullivan and John Meredith"
while the photograph on page 6 should have read "Chris Sullivan and Jacko Keivins"
Thank you to the eagle eyed readers that spotted the error.

Cec Burello.



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Hot To Trot

Podcast Radio

Presented by

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In Didj'n'Us Australia

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Hot To Trot ... features First Nations musicians and bands, presenting music that isn't available on mainstream radio. Regular interviews with artists. News about upcoming festivals, gigs & the latest records. **Hot To Trot** acknowledges the First Nations people throughout Australia as the traditional custodians of country.

... *Sooooo deadly!!!*

<https://www.mixcloud.com/H2Tcmaine>

Second heaven at Gosford Waterfront

by Graham Black



The Settlers Band telling the "C Virus - where to go"

No, that "C Virus" didn't bowl us over.

We would much rather be playing one of our big gigs at St. Albans, but here we are at the Gosford NSW waterfront making the most of things.

"The Settlers Band" has found a great spot to rehearse in readiness for the good times ahead when things start to get back to normal.

The Gosford waterfront has proved to be a great area to find a quiet table and comply with

The waterfront crowd loved our music, that is, the seagulls danced, the magpies and kookas warbled and the odd lizard kept an eye on security by patrolling the boundaries.

Over the past year, the band has played one weekend a month at St Albans, and we bring a big crowd of fun loving campers with us.

Gigs are Friday night, Saturday and Sunday, over a beautiful lunch, for those who want to spoil themselves.

Plenty of opportunities to jam if you have itchy fingers. We are hoping that some of our other gigs at the wineries etc soon return.

Our last three big weekend gigs at St Albans were cancelled and we, and Settlers Inn, can't wait to get back to normal.

St Albans is a tiny classic village centred around the convict built sandstone Settlers Arms Inn and a delightful country drive of one or two hours from Sydney. The Central Coast and Newcastle.

It's the home of the great long standing St Albans Folk Festival held on the ANZAC Day weekend. Meanwhile, its rehearsal in our second heaven at Gosford Waterfront with the seagulls and a few clappers.

For info on our return to St Albans contact grahamblack@outlook.com.au

Keep plucking and wishing good times ahead to all.



A few ideas to help share the music you enjoy and help artists continue to make music

by Fiona Joy Hawkins



This isn't exactly breaking news, but music isn't doing so well at the moment.

I would like to give you a couple of ideas to help share the music you enjoy and help artists continue to make music.

If you choose one single option listed below you will be making a significant contribution.

1. FOLLOW the artist you like on the platforms that you listen to music on (spotify, pandora, tidal, amazon, apple etc)
2. Make Playlists and include your favourite songs.
3. SHARE music with your friends and encourage them to have a listen.
4. Follow on Bandcamp

where we own 100% of our downloads, sales and tickets to online concerts.

Bandcamp is where you will hear my new music FIRST and before official release.

Fiona Joy Hawkins' station and make a request to play your favourite songs.

5. Say 'Hey Google... play



Chasing Music

My crazy campervan adventures in America by Jan Dale

In 1992, one woman packed up her life, headed to America and bought herself a little campervan.

Hitting the open road she travelled 160,000 miles across 48 states, discovering Bluegrass and Cajun music, honk-tonks, juke joints and rodeos, dancing and romancing and camping in strange places.

What started as an exploration of America, its music, people and scenery quickly became a journey of self discovery.

Chasing Music

RRP: \$29.95
ebook: \$6.99

Available through all major on-line sites and local bookstores

Folk Radio Directory

Attention radio presenters. If this is you, see pages 72-73 for more information on how you can have your program listed in this Directory. Entry is free to subscribers

NSW - Chicken Hot Rod
 2RRR 88.5FM
 Three hours of Bluegrass, Old-Timey and other Forbidden Delights. Music You Can't Hear On the Radio. Sundays 9:00am to noon, Sydney 88.5FM
office@2rrr.org.au
www.2rrr.org.au

NSW - Folk 4 U/ 2 Way FM
 103.9
 Australian & overseas folk/ bush festival & performer updates. Every Saturday afternoon 2pm - 4pm
 Rod & Geoff
rodworthing1@gmail.com

NSW - Focus on Folk 2MBMS
 102.5 FM
 Folk Federation of NSW radio show on 2MBMS 102.5 FM in Sydney and finemusicFM.com where various local performers bring you their choice in Folk music. 1st Saturday of each month at 5PM for 1 hour

NSW - Minstreis' Gallery on Highland FM 107.1
 Minstreis' gallery has been broadcasting for several decades. It features contemporary and traditional folk music and poetry from around the world, presented by four enthusiasts in rotation.

Vic - Radio OCR FM 98.3FM Coliac & District
 Australian smorgasbord is a radio program hosted by OCRFM in South Western Victoria. The presenter plays Australian folk and blues artists.
 Every Tuesday, 11am - 1 pm.
(03) 5232 1991
moonlightau@gmail.com

Vic - Southern Style 106.7
 Presented by Jan Dale live on PBS FM, 106.7 Melbourne and archived on www.pbsfm.org.au - Bluegrass, Old-Time and some Blues, Cajun and Western Swing.
 Tuesdays 1-3pm (EST)
www.pbsfm.org.au
ozbluegrass@gmail.com

NSW - Australian Spectrum Show Alive 90.5 FM
 A Northwest Sydney radio show with featured artists weekly from the blues, roots, folk, country, instrumental, jazz, surf rock and alternative rock genres. Broadcasting for over 12 years and streaming worldwide on www.alive905.com.au/shows/aus-spectrum/
Every Tuesday 9pm-12m

6 - 8pm AEST every Mon on 107.1FM. Iheart radio and from website highlandfm.org.au
 Brian Haydon 0406 939 309
brian@haydons.com

Vic - Radio OCR FM 98.3FM Coliac & District
 Australian smorgasbord is a radio program hosted by OCRFM in South Western Victoria. The presenter plays Australian folk and blues artists.
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 Tuesdays 1-3pm (EST)
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Celebrating the Centenary of the Wallaga Lake Aboriginal Gumleaf Band

by Robin Ryan

Three decades ago, someone told former Wallaga Lake NSW resident, Herb Patten, that his humble gumleaf was "not really a musical instrument."

The Department of Aboriginal Affairs, Victoria, supported my application to produce a thesis legitimising the gumleaf as a dynamic musical instrument in the service of those whose dignity it celebrates. My fieldtrips uncovered a near forgotten, fecund musical tradition.

The unorthodox practice of accompanying hymns on gumleaves was instigated by missionaries in the late 19th century. Gumleaf bands achieved visibility in the 1920s and '30s on missions and at vaudeville shows.

In NSW, La Perouse and Wreck Bay nurtured talented gumleaf players, however the touring band formed at Wallaga Lake Aboriginal Station a century ago, deserves special commemoration.

This article documents positive public reception to the leaf playing tradition cultivated at Wallaga Lake over a period of nine decades.

As sources amply demonstrate, Djirngani-Yuin Country can be revered as the legendary "Mecca" of gumleaf band playing. The Wallaga Lake Gumleaf



Uncle Ossie's 2018 Gilyong Festival workshop

Band began touring during the 1920s, and by the 1930s their popularity extended far and wide. Only rarely did early 20th century Indigenous people share the same social environments as Settler Australians, so why were the Wallaga Lake bandsmen in such demand?

Within the popular 'novelty noise' decade of the 1920s, the band developed an autonomous performative dynamic freed from the contemporary paradigm of white control.

Their bi-musically flourished as remnant traditional traits inherent within introduced musical structures.

They regaled audiences with their leaf renditions of Sousa marches and minstrel standards. And bringing their combined energies to stage, the men also sang, performed corroboree movements, step- and tap-danced, played claspsticks, accordion, and fiddle, and clowned in a burlesque manner.

Imagine the sound, event and experience created by these leaf musicians in community contexts as they drew their kinsmen close around a common, organic pulse...

The roots of the iconic practice stretch back to at least 1900, when The Cobargo Chronicle described a corroboree staged at Bermagui Athletic Club by "Wallaga Lake Aborigines" to the accompaniment of "reeds and leaves of trees, and a concertina".

In 1902, The Leader & Shoalhaven District Newspaper reported "a great feature" of a sports day at Wallaga Lake Recreation Reserve on December 28, 1901, to be "the capital playing by the Aborigines by means of gum leaves".

In 1903, the Bega Standard mentioned a concert at Lyceum Hall, Quama, that featured leaf players accompanied by a violin and concertina. The "splendid" Wallaga Lake



Uncle Guboo Ted Thomas at 85 years. Photo: Robin Ryan, 1994

"Leaf Band" reviewed in The Braidwood Dispatch and Mining Journal of June 19, 1909, "could render the most difficult airs with a precision and tone that would do credit to a well-trained military band".

Fast-forwarding this 1909 description of ensemble "precision" to the 1920s, imagine Emie 'Friday' Hoskins beating the kangaroo-skin drum while leaf players simulated the staccato shots and shells of the World War 1 battlefield.

But theirs was a wide-ranging showmanship. The Sydney Mail of August 26, 1925, projected their musical

tone as "soft and melancholy, and often as sweet, as that drawn from the strings of a priceless Stradivarius".

The band's repertoire featured post-World War 1 choruses including the poignant lament "Break the News to Mother" by Chas. K. Harris:

Just break the news to Mother She knows how dear I love her And tell her not to wait for me For I'm not coming home

A photograph of nine Wallage Lake leaf bandsmen at Tilba

Tilba Showground in 1922 includes uniformed veteran Private Andy 'Digger' Bond, who, after being wounded and gassed on the Western Front, returned in 1918 to a rousing welcome in Tilba.

At the time the world was morphing into the Spanish Influenza pandemic.

Much of this account was informed by the late Yulin Elder, Edwin 'Guboo Ted' Thomas (1909-2002) who was the longest surviving member of the band.

According to John Blay in his book 'Wild Nature' (2020), Guboo walked the Cattlemans Track as a young boy with Wallage Lake men on their way to play gumleaves at the Cooma Show. Guboo (meaning "good

friend") learned the tribal lore of Gulaga (Mt Dromedary) and at 19 years old, he joined the 14-strong touring gumleaf band along with seven other members of the Thomas family.

Frances Peters-Little, in the Australian Dictionary of Biography, describes her grandfather, Jimmy 'Kunkus Little' (1911-1972), as "one of the band's flashiest performers, jumping about and making a racket and generally doing everything he could to charm the crowd".

Fisherman, John Campbell conducted them in with a 1-2-3 delivered brilliant leaf solos, and imitated the spearing of fish on stage to music.

Percy 'Square Blocks' Davis was a legendary fiddler and the band's best dancer.

Percy 'Bing' Mumbulla was a powerful leaf player who could reduce old ladies to tears with his smooth singing.

In their most legendary tour on a date yet to be established they began to walk from Murrumbidgee to Melbourne, to perform at a large ball.

In 1994, Guboo regaled me with stories of how the bandsmen carried leaves picked on Gulaga in bottles, of how they slept under bushes, cooked fish on hot coals, and performed in each country town hall.

They took time out to accept casual work on farms, and in a Yallourn coalmine.

When the Black Police escorted them into Lake Tyers Aboriginal Station, they joined forces with the resident gumleaf band, whose formation the Stewart brothers of Wallage Lake had inspired in 1917, and whose story, under mission management, warrants a

separate tribute.

Dressed in suits, the Wallage Lake bandsmen performed The Cuckoo Waltz and barn dance tunes at the Palais Royal, Melbourne, for a band fee of £5 per tune.

Their next engagement was a brass band meet at Bendigo, followed by a corroboree in Dandenong, and a Labour Day March through Swanston St.

They then proceeded to walk north to Cummeragunja Aboriginal Station, NSW, on their round trip back to Wallage Lake.

The bandsmen returned to Cummeragunja for a short visit in 1935, but when the time came to leave, girls dejected by their departure, filled their petrol tank with sugar ... and most of the band stayed on.

Indeed Jimmy 'Kunkus' Little married singer Frances McGee the same year.

In the late 1930s, the band purchased a two ton Ford truck and drove as far as Darlington Point NSW.

This was possibly the tour in which, according to Chittick and Fox (1997), they travelled with a Mr Reid, "right up around the western districts".

The group also drove to Cummeragunja, then returned to Wallage Lake, but soon drove back to Cummeragunja for an extended sojourn.

Mr Jock Milne took charge of the Aboriginal contingent who marched across Sydney Harbour Bridge at its opening in 1932.

He selected "warriors" from Wallage Lake, Brewarrina, Menindie, and La Perouse.

According to Dawn magazine, Milne proudly pronounced the performance of the gumleaf band as "the greatest hit of the Aboriginal entertainment



Bee Cruise at Ginyong Festival 2018

for Sydney siders", even "a symphony orchestra among gumleaf bands".

Some Wallage Lake men played leaves in commercial films of the 1930s and, on May 12, 1937, they led Cummeragunja's street procession celebrating the Coronation of King George VI.

The gumleaf band boosted the Aboriginal Concert Party's war fundraisers throughout the Goulburn Valley and the Riverina.

On April 7, 1945, "Eureka" reminisced in The Advertiser: One of the finest bands I have heard was the Wallage Lake Aboriginal Gumleaf Band ... It was splendid music, and the band was always well received.

The first of five anecdotes derived from Dawn magazine describes the visit of the Tasmanian Governor's wife to Wallage Lake Aboriginal Station in June 1952.

As Lady Cross's car was about to leave, the leaf band's rendition of "Maori Farewell" piqued her interest to chat with the bandsmen and watch how they played.

In November of the same year, a boxing tournament was held at the station, providing fighters from Cobargo, Bermagui and Tilba to match the Aboriginal boys.

Wallage Lake residents, including the leaf band, provided musical items, the event being remarked by a police officer as "one of the most entertaining evenings the District had ever seen".

On June 2, 1953, Wallage Lake residents participated in Cobargo's Coronation Day celebrations for Queen Elizabeth II with a procession float, a tug-of-war team, and some gumleaf items according to the State Records Authority of NSW.

In 1954, the Wallage Lake children presented a "splendid musical programme" including a gumleaf band composed of Costin (Coty) Parsons, Max Harrison, and Jim Chapman.

When, soon afterwards, the station manager organised a dance at Central Tilba Hall on behalf of the Bega District Ambulance Fund, the Wallage Lake Gumleaf Band "played tunes as a special feature and received much applause".

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Giyong Festival 2019 gumleaf workshop

Their splinter groups continued to entertain at dances, gymkhanas, and picnics.

In 1961, for instance, Jimmy (Kunkus) Little and Arthur McLeod, were photographed by Dawn magazine performing at Sydney's Martin Place ceremony for National Aborigines Day.

To mark the establishment of the Aboriginal Tent Embassy in 1972, Guboo Ted Thomas organised the Wallaga Lake Dreamtime Festival at which he and Percy Mumbulla performed "Swanee River" and other leaf items.

A decade later, in 1982, Alec Walker and Glen Parsons played popular lunes as leaf rounds while simultaneously step-dancing or foot-tapping.

Uncle Herb Patten performed in Narooma during his residences there in 1994 and 1998-9.

Notably, he placed second in Channel 7's Australia's Got Talent contest of 2007, just as violinist composer Jon Rose, in "Listening to History: Some Proposals for Reclaiming the Practice of Live Music", was pining the disappearance of the gumleaf band: "What has happened to this tradition?"

"The Wallaga Lake Band played for the opening of the Sydney Harbour Bridge in 1932.

"This is the New Orleans jazz of Australia.

"Who is looking after this, who is nurturing this?"

Enter Yvlin Elder, Uncle Ossie Cruse, of Eden (b. 1933), custodian of leaf playing in Far South East

NSW.

In remembrance of his old uncles, Uncle Ossie performs gumleaf in diverse contexts, for example at Welcome to Country engagements for seafarers and tourists.

In 2018, he led a gumleaf playing workshop at the inaugural Giyong Festival held at Jigarny, via Eden.

During NAIDOC Week celebrations 2019, he conducted workshops for some 500 school children from around Bega Valley.

Uncle Ossie has long dreamt of forming a new gumleaf band: "Gumleaf playing is part of the vision I have for our Youth Lands camp at Jigarny Farm.

"I'll enhance the quality of life we want to reintroduce, that is, the sharing and caring of community, with hope.

"To demonstrate how our people once lived, the sound of the gumleaf should not be erased".

In a fresh regional initiative, festival coordinator and event manager Jasmin (Jazz) Williams of Bega's South East Arts, has invited Uncle Ossie to form a Giyong Festival Gumleaf Band to be creatively documented by Toni Houston Media.

Despite this year's cancellation of Giyong, and so many festivals nationwide, jazz wisely reminds us that "It is art that helps both creators and consumers to process crises."

With leaf musician Elders like Uncles Herb Patten, James Goori Dungey, Wayne Thorpe, Kevin Tucker, and Ossie Stewart on board, along with 'young gun' Tommy Edwards, we look forward to the day when the Giyong Gumleaf tribute band can breathe new life into Wallaga Lake's faded form of band music.

Sessioners survive Sydney's coldest night

by Emma Sputrik



The NSW Bush Music Club, founded in 1954, held a Singabout Session between Covid-19 lock downs on June 10.

It was a success despite torrential rain and entirely coincidentally occurring on the coldest day in Sydney since 1987.

But, going back to the good old days we were, and sincere thanks goes to those brave and merry souls who traversed to Triton Hall, Marrickville, some travelling over 100km for the gathering.

We covered songs from the Blue and Green songbooks and were treated to some original interpretations by Helen, Tony, Dave, and Margaret.

Henry Lawson's works featured prominently and the opportunity to hear stories of the origins and differing versions of songs, tales of Duke Triton and Pete Seeger, and the history

of the Bush Music Club and its members was intriguing and enthralling.

There's a short clip on the Bush Music Club instagram: www.instagram.com/bushmusicclub

The song being sung in the video is "Gooranawa" which dates back to the 1860s and was collected by John Meredith from Duke Triton.

This song has now lived on for 160 years.

All are welcome to future Singabout Sessions held on the second Thursday of the month evenings at Triton Hall from 7pm onwards.

Bring a song, tune, story, shanty, an instrument or simply yourself for the next night.

Dress in warm clothing and maybe even bring a blanket as the hall is heated but, it's better to be safe than sorry given the conditions so far. Singabout selected reprints,

a Bush Music Club publication containing extracts from Singabout magazines published from 1956 to 1967 is available from Trad&Now at only \$8 plus postage.

It contains 96 pages of song lyrics and music as well as illustrations and some history of some songs edited by club stalwart, Bob Bolton.

There were only 22 Singabout magazines published during that period.

They were however considered very important to Australian folklore as they provided the only regular place to publish traditional and original material from Australian folk sources.

The aim of this selection is to pass on some of that flavour and perhaps some of the joy derived from early exposure to a rich folklore which only relatively few Australians know about.

The Songwriting Society of Australia

The Songwriting Society of Australia was incorporated in 1989 to be a voluntary, independent, non-profit organisation dedicated to helping songwriters in all genres of music and all levels of songwriting. It provides a support network for members with functions like Monthly Concerts, Darling Harbour Showcases, Newsletters, Workshops, Song Competitions, etc. Membership costs \$45 per year.

Email: songsoc@ozemail.com.au for information/applications

Pete Denahy - Multi talented musician

Originally published in Bluegrass Unlimited, USA by Jan Dale

Pete Denahy is an award winning Australian musician, comedian, storyteller, tour leader and horseman.

He has an interesting professional life often bridging the gap between Japanese and Australian Bluegrass musicians and spending time in both countries.

When he's not doing that, he may be leading a music based tour in Europe or outback Australia or performing on a Bluegrass and Country music cruise.

I visited him in the beautiful historic town of Yackandandah where he has lived for some time with his wife Alison.

Born in Australia to a Japanese mother and an Australian father, much of his early childhood was spent in his mother's home city of Hiroshima, where his Japanese grandfather, Kido Zenichi, was a well

respected classical musician playing and teaching cello and bassoon, composing, and working for radio NHK, Japan's national broadcaster.

As a child, Denahy learnt piano and violin.

His teacher, a Mercy nun, Sr. Rose Murray, was a huge influence.

He says: "She just wanted us to love music."

"She didn't care what we played and discouraged exams, which she felt killed a lot of enthusiasm."

So although he enjoyed music, particularly the violin, he didn't really take it seriously until he was sixteen, when he began to practice regularly.

At around age nine, he saw two Australian movies about horses, "Phar Lap" and "The Man From Snowy River", and he persuaded his parents to buy him a horse.

This led to attending a Campdrafting event, which is a

unique Australian sport involving cattle and horses, where he heard country music for the first time.

"I thought I should learn some Australian country music so I started with Slim Dusty, taught myself a few chords on the guitar and really wanted to be like Slim."

Denahy says: "The more I listened to Slim Dusty, I realised I really liked it when he included a Bluegrass element in his songs."

"He introduced a lot of Bluegrass musicians to Australia."

Two of these were the first Bluegrass fiddlers Denahy heard, Colleen Tremwith from New Zealand and Australian, Mike Kerrin, who worked with Slim Dusty for about twenty five years.

After hearing these players, he was so impressed that he says he couldn't put the fiddle down and he bought a book called Hot Licks for Bluegrass Fiddle, and then started buying tapes direct from the U.S., Tony Rice, Norman Blake, New Grass Revival, etc.

He discovered Doc Watson and the "Will The Circle Be Unbroken" record and also began listening to Vassar Clements.

"That's when I really started getting interested in Bluegrass."

"I made a few records myself, entered competitions, attended the Yarra Junction Fiddlers Convention near

Melbourne and it just grew like that."

At twenty two, Denahy joined a Melbourne band called The Poughboys playing the fiddle.

Their music was Irish with a country and bluegrass influence.

He says: "When we first started, we were riding on the crest of the Celtic wave."

"All these little Irish pubs where springing up all over the place and we were playing in them."

They played in pubs six nights a week, which he jokingly describes as "a great experience but hard on the liver!", and they were featured at some of the country's largest festivals.

He has also worked as a stand up comedian in Melbourne and has a natural gift for comedy, which is useful when acting as an emcee and performing with his own band.

"Even if I'm performing a straight song, I manage to get some comedy into the intro."

"I just love the sound of people laughing."

However, regarding songwriting, he says "I'm not a prolific song writer at all."

"It takes me a long time to get enough songs together for a record."

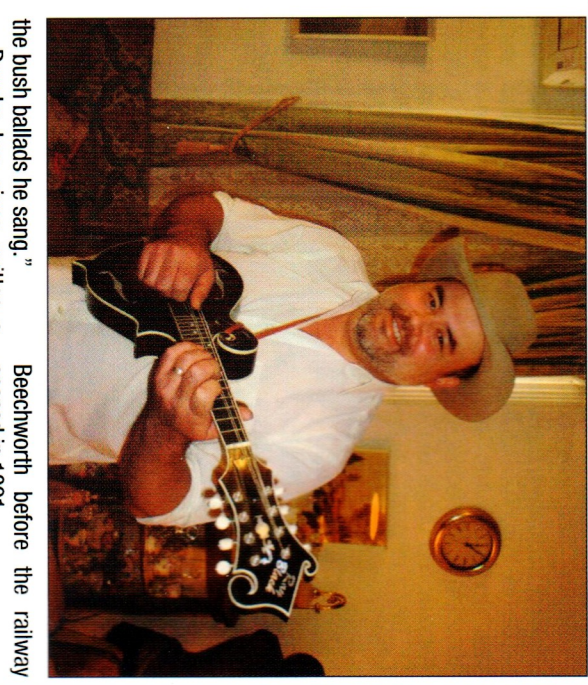
After that, he was thrilled to spend four years travelling with Slim Dusty providing some comedy and playing the fiddle.

He says: "I feel very lucky to have toured with him."

"He had a wonderful work ethic and like anyone who is at the top, was a complex character in many ways."

"He had to be focussed and he had that right from when he was eleven years old, when he coined the name Slim Dusty."

"He played beautiful old Martin guitars and wrote a lot of



the bush ballads he sang."

Denahy has since written a lot of bush ballads himself, and in 2009, he won the Stan Coster Memorial Bush Ballad Award with the song "Took His Saddle Home."

Then a Golden Guitar Award at the Country Music Awards of Australia for Best Bush Ballad for "Every Time He Travels through Cloncurry" which was recorded by Australian country singer, Luke Austen.

I suppose you could say that Australian bush ballads are similar to music written in America about cowboys and the west, but of course the Australian bush is so different.

Denahy says he is writing from a Bluegrass base but likes to write about Australian things.

He credits his home town, the historic gold mining town of Yackandandah, as being a great influence on his songwriting and many of his songs feature local historic characters.

For example, "Mr. Edwin Butson Has the Reins" is about a man who drove the mail coach between Yackandandah and

Beechworth before the railway opened in 1891.

"We have a museum across the road and I could be writing about this area for the rest of my life."

"I'm not overly interested in the relationship stuff."

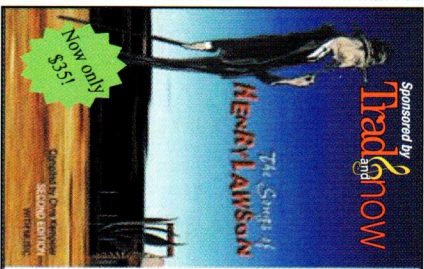
"Maybe I haven't had my heart broken enough!"

Returning to Japan for the first time as an adult, Denahy felt that part of him belonged there.

He couldn't wait to get back again and decided to try to make contact with Japanese Bluegrass musicians via Facebook, and the Bluegrass venue in Tokyo, called Rocky Top, and also through banjo player, Montz Matsumoto, from near Kyoto, who now lives in Tasmania.

He went back again, this time with his brother, and they met and played with those musicians.

They included mandolinist, Hiroki Maeta, and some members of The Bluegrass 45, the first Japanese Bluegrass band to tour the U.S., in the summer of 1971, Akira Otsuka, Tsuyoshi "Josh" Otsuka, and Saburo Watanabe Inoue.



The Songs of Henry Lawson

The Folk Federation of NSW has published a second edition of "The Songs of Henry Lawson", Originally published in 1989 by Chris Kemper.

The new edition adds 45 new settings for a total of 275 tunes. Australian folk songs have developed alongside our national identity.

This collection reflects the truth that the song making tradition lives on and that Lawson's poetry expresses timeless ideas. This new edition is designed with the needs of performers, teachers and students in mind, being spiral-bound and easy to prop on your music stand and now ONLY \$35! Singers and musicians will find in it inspiration for their own performance and composition.

To order a copy go to www.tradandnow.com or jam.org.au or call 02 9939 8802

Now only \$35!

Sponsored by Trad & Now

The Songs of Henry Lawson

by Chris Kemper

Update on the Update

Regular readers of recent editions of Trad&Now may remember reading two articles outlining the work being done behind the scenes to bring the Trad&Now website www.TradandNow.com up to date, following the old site no longer being operable.

I'm pleased to report that after many hours of weekend and weeknight work, we have completed a full stocktake of all CDs held in stock and have every one of them that is in stock now up on our website.

This is an extensive collection that has grown over the years to become what I believe is the world's largest holding of Australian folk, blues, roots, bluegrass and world music CDs, all of which are for sale while stocks last.

Most, I imagine, will be irreplaceable once sold out. We continue to welcome new CDs to the range to help performers have their new material publicised and even purchased.

Stock is held on consignment and an extra copy for review purposes is also welcomed. Speaking of CD reviews, we have also added all CD reviews published in Trad&Now over the years to the titles on the website, so that readers can have an independent opinion on each CD before purchasing a copy.

Any titles that haven't had a review published have recently been sent to members of our voluntary review panel for a review. These will be published in forthcoming editions of Trad&Now, as space permits, at about 16 titles per edition.

The reviews will also be placed on the website around the time of publication in the magazine. Our next step is to get all of the DVDs and books in stock up on the website for the world to see.

Apparently, simply by attention and not being prepared to give up on a lost cause, Trad&Now has become Australia's longest continuously running national folk and related genres music magazine.

Plans are to devote more time to it in the future, not less, to create an even better publication. There's a lot of love for Trad&Now out there and I hope to be able to continue producing editions deserving of that love.

The introduction of directories has made it an important reference source for readers to be able to communicate with each other, to be able to find festivals, radio programs, club meetings, performers, dance and poetry groups and a host of other information.

Contrary to trends shown with other publications, this niche publication is still expected to grow, particularly as the effects of Covid-19 recede and festivals and gigs return to our shores.

Trad&Now is unbelievably fortunate to have had a large number of voluntary contributors and helpers over the years, too many to mention here, but I'm sure that they know who they are.

They each devote a great deal of time and effort, in their own way, to help the publication survive and hopefully in the future, flourish. I can't thank these people enough.

However, in the end, it's the subscribers and advertisers that keep it going, for without them, then surely there would be no magazine. So, thanks to all the subscribers that renew every 11 editions, showing their faith and support. I hope you continue to enjoy the wide and varied content in each edition.

Also to the advertisers, some of whom have been with us for most of the journey, as they say these days, thank you for your very important and ongoing financial support.

I hope our readers around the country favour you with their business.

Cec Buccello, Publisher

Gene Horner built when I was at Greyfox and discovered that I'd be driving past his place on my way to Nashville.

"I called in and he had about eight or ten fiddles hanging in a cabinet.

"I spent a couple of hours going through them and found the one I wanted and left with the best souvenir I could have from that part of the world.

"It's a Strad shape, all Tennessee and West Virginia timber, quite a loud instrument and has a huge bottom end which is what initially caught my attention."

When I asked Denahy about specific goals for the future, he said "I suppose it is just to become a better player.

"Musically, that's all I want as long as I can keep paying the bills.

"Your measure of success changes from when you are in your twenties when you are after a bit of notoriety and fame, whatever that might be.

"I'm happy with my fiddle playing to a certain degree but never felt I'm a natural.

"It's something I really have to work at.

"I don't think any violinist or fiddle player worth their salt would say they are happy with their bowing.

"I'm never happy with mine and I often ask other players if they're happy with theirs.

"They always say no!

"It's the bane of your existence, but I think it's what keeps you going.

"You just want to get better.

"I believe the great cellist, Pablo Casales, was in his nineties when somebody asked him why he was still practicing eight hours a day.

"He said because I think I'm finally getting somewhere."

Denahy has also brought Japanese musicians to Australia. One of these is Hiroki Maeta, who performed with him in Hiroshima Prefecture and Kurashiki, near Okayama.

They released an album together called "Hiroshima Jam Session."

Denahy also formed a band called Wide Island with Tomoyuki Murata, Montz Matsumoto, Hiroki Maeta and Australian, Aron McLean.

He says: "so it's three and a half Japanese guys plus Aron.

"I'm the half"

Wide Island is a literal translation of Hiroshima.

In 2017 they released their debut CD "Going Home."

Australian musician, John Howe, started running Country and Bluegrass music based tours in the 1990s, and in 2015, invited Denahy along as one of the musicians and a tour leader.

It involved him acting as emcee as well as playing, so he was able to include some of his comedy.

This worked well and led to Denahy exploring the possibility of taking groups himself to Japan to play music.

He now does this twice a year.

He says that "initially, I thought I was going to have only musicians, but then I realised that most of them didn't have the money!

But we have had some and the rest are music fans.

It's not really a cultural or food tour.

We go primarily for the music, but they see a side of Japan not normally seen by tourists.

I tell my group that you don't have to see castles, gardens and temples all the time.

"You experience Japan when you walk out of your hotel.

"Last year, we finished at a big country music festival near

Kumamoto."

In the meantime, Denahy's song "Sort of Dumbo Nothin", about a conversation between a father and his teenage son is a big hit on YouTube, and his more recent song, "Looking at my Phone", is also getting lots of attention.

Neither of them are Bluegrass, but both are clever and funny and well filmed and acted.

He has also won more Golden Guitar award, in 2013 and 2016, for his Bluegrass albums "Wishbone Road" and "Singin' Shoes" and Instrumental of the Year for his version of Cluck Old Hen on the "Singin' Shoes" album.

These days, the bulk of the music that Denahy listens to is Bluegrass instrumental.

He says: "I love the harmonies in Bluegrass but the instrumental stuff really interests me.

"It just blows my mind how people can think that quickly."

In addition to guitar, and fiddle which is his main instrument in a band, Denahy also plays mandolin quoting Adam Steffey and Ronnie McCoury as his main influences.

After trying mandolins from around the world, he settled on one made by Australian luthier, Ray Black, and has never found one he likes better.

His beautiful guitar is also by a local luthier, Joe Gallacher from Albury, Victoria, not far from Yeckandandah.

It is modelled on a Martin D18 with a mahogany back and sides and a spruce top.

The mahogany neck is actually part of a window sill from the old Albury hospital, so there's a bit of local history in it, which Denahy loves.

He says: "It was built in 2012 and is maturing beautifully."

His fiddle is made by Gene Horner of Rockwood, Tennessee.

He says "I saw a fiddle that

Gene Horner built when I was at Greyfox and discovered that I'd be driving past his place on my way to Nashville.

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A personal reflection on singing and discrimination

by Mary-Jane Field

To paraphrase a famous pop ditty: "What a difference a song makes!"

Born in 1938 of parents from the United States of America's Deep South and exposed to the racism of the times and the following years, I have often wondered how it is that I did not take up those ideas.

While I am sure that no one can claim to be completely free from prejudice, I hope that in the main I have managed to rise above those attitudes.

I think there is an old song from my childhood days that helped.

My father was a diplomat, and my mother and I travelled the world with him on his assignments, mostly in Latin America.

Although he was a wonderful and very fair man, it was understood that, of course, Black people were "not like us".

My mother seemed to go along with that following his lead as head of the household, as most women did in those days.

But, surprisingly, she would often sing a song to me about the hurt felt by a Black child who was experiencing discrimination.

Although, as a privileged young white girl I was not in the same position as the little boy, I think it opened my eyes, and I quietly empathised with him when I heard the song.

Later on, I asked myself why it was that my mother had sung it to me in the first place.

She was not a good singer at all, in fact, she was a bit tone deaf!

But in spite of her limitations, she would frequently sing it as she was tucking me into bed for the night.

something just between the two of us, when my father would be unlikely to hear and offer any objections!

Many of you will know the song: A little Black child is broken-hearted because the white children he encounters will not play with him.

The gist of the song is that his mother takes him on her lap and says, "... Never mind what the white children do... What show you think they're gonna give to a Black little boy like you? ... Go out and play just as much as you like, but stay in your own back yard!"

I have not used all of the actual words in the song, written in 1899, as some of them would be considered offensive to read today, but the sense is clear.

This sad song made a big and a lasting impression on me, as I feel sure it was meant to.

It was like a secret between me and my mother, a counter to the prevailing Southern attitudes towards race relations.

In spite of her off-key singing, my mother managed to transmit the tune to me and I have never forgotten it, or the poignant lyrics.

I think most of us folkies would agree that the musical activism of people like Pete Seeger, Joan Baez and many others was important in changing people's attitudes to racism in the 60's and 70's and beyond.

I have also always believed that the protest songs of the times were pivotal in finally bringing the Vietnam war to an end.

I like to think that as a folk singer I have put in my little drop, through some of the songs I choose to sing as well as other actions in my everyday life, like many like-minded people. But I do have one claim of directly

influencing an issue of historic racism, it happened in 1960, during my last year of university in the US state of Virginia.

This institution had been founded in 1901 by a trust deed which established it as a centre exclusively for young white women.

But along with another student and the Dean of the University (Vice-Chancellor), I helped find a way to legally break the trust deed and make it possible for non-white women to eventually attend.

Six years after the proceedings had been set in motion, the university's first Black woman, one of a growing number since then, was enrolled.

I am proud to have been part of that move forward.

So thanks dear Mother for the seed you secretly planted in me with your song!

Today, I belong to a community choir (Solidarity) that is dedicated to songs of justice and freedom.

So as part of the group, I have had many opportunities to raise my voice, in tune I hope, not like my mother's, to celebrate unity and activism and to support those who suffer discrimination and marginalisation.

Mary-Jane is the author of, *Life and Times on Sydney Buses*, where there are, amongst other things, a couple of examples of real or perceived discrimination in the collection of stories.

Hard copies are available from her or an ePub version is available through ePub booksellers such as Booktopia.

All profits from sales of the book will go to charity.



by Bill Quinn

Observations and blatherings from the wide, wild, weird world of the open road

Folk on the road

by Bill Quinn (Overheard Productions)

In Trad&Now edition 143, I shared some sights and sounds from the 50th Top Half Folk Festival held at Mary River Wilderness Retreat at the western fringe of Kakadu National Park, Northern Territory.

As part of the information-gathering process for that article and the longer, many-times-sub-edited version on www.OverheardProductions.com, I had the great pleasure of meeting and interviewing The Shavings, a men's singing group from Mparntwe (Alice Springs) in the Northern Territory.

The red centre as opposed to the festival locale in the Top End.

By 'information-gathering process', we're talking about having an excellent time on a long weekend full of music and song, with the occasional note taking and showing of recording devices under various noses, but more usefully, mouths!

It's a much applied and much studied genre.

Highly recommended. The Shavings, let's talk about them.

They gave a great concert performance on Saturday night, took part in a really fun singing session or two on the back and front decks, and wound up with a brilliant singing workshop on Sunday afternoon.

Afterwards, we gathered at The Shavings' composite, half way twixt the Mary River Wilderness Retreat HQ hub and the eponymous river itself, and had a chat.



The first bit of our talk has been cut because it got a little silly, even for this column.

The last bit hit the cutting room floor because, well, Douglas Adams said it best: "I love deadlines, I love the whooshing noise they make as they go by."

But wait, there's more.

Despite our best efforts to jointly identify all the speakers individually, the idiot between the Inn table and the keyboard forgot to press 'Save' one last time.

So, as a true red collective, all speakers are called 'Shavings' here, sometimes there will a few speakers who responded to a question all collectively included in the one response.

The individuals will be recorded for posterity on the web version. You can read the full text and see more pictures and videos at www.OverheardProductions.com Roll tape, so to speak.

Bill Quinn: Is there a spokesperson for the group?

Shavings: No, we're a collective. We all speak together. [Sings] We speak with one voice. We are, you are, we are The

Shavings. [The next bit where the interviewer makes a horrendous and mostly unsuccessful joke by asking if The Shavings has a Nick has been deleted on the grounds of good taste.]

BQ: So, who can tell me the history of The Shavings?

The Shavings: I joined The Shavings in, I think it was, 2012.

Rod Moss and Des O'Shannessy were the founders.

Rod and I sang in the East Side Christmas Carollers in the noughties, and we used to go around East Side (a suburb of Alice Springs) in the back of a ute, and we used to job into random houses, without an invitation, and we just carol-bombed them.

We actually went into the Barra On Todd (restaurant and bar at The Chitley).

We went in there once and just sang to the crowd. Didn't ask the management, just sang.

Until security came. Anyway, Rod remembered me liking to sing in public, so he said, "Chris, there's a group getting