

Poetry and the written word

Covid hasn't stopped anything in WA

by Christine Boult

Many other poets are busy with the country shows and the Greenbushes Music Festival.

Nambung Country Music Muster is the next major poetry event on our calendar.

We have been very lucky here in WA as most venues are still running, albeit with some restrictions and the occasional lockdown.

The WA Bush Poets and

Yarnspillers have returned to Bentley Park for their monthly musters and the Nanga Music Festival is full steam ahead for October.

The Fairbridge Festival is calling for interest from artists for 2022.

The Albany Shanty Festival is rescheduled for the first weekend in October and the Manjimup Bluegrass & Old Time Music Weekend is going ahead with a new programme, as their Victorian

tutors are unable to attend.

Morris, of course, is thriving.

Dance outs at Cottesloe on the beach before adjourning to the pub for lunch, Medieval Fayres, a weekend at Yallingup in September, dancing out at the wineries and staying for songs, music and revelry in the evenings.

The Morris English music session continues alongside the Irish teaching session on Mondays at the Irish Club.



Perth Morris Dancers and Musos at Cottesloe

Australian Bush Poetry Championships

by Christine Boult

The Australian Bush Poetry Championships are still hoping to be held at Orange in 2022.

The last national competition was held at Toodyay several years ago.

However, due to Covid

intervention in 2020, it was cancelled. All being well, this event will go ahead.

It will coincide with the Banjo Paterson festival and will run for ten days.

I haven't heard much more than that but I'm sure in due

course the ABPA will put out the relevant information on their website.

Unfortunately, for WA members, this is the same weekend as our Boyup Brook Country Music festival.

Poetry and the written word

The Yabberup Port, Pies and Poetry night

Edition 144 - Trad&Now

51

The Yabberup Port, Pies and Poetry night on August 28 has to be one of the delights on the WA calendar.

Now in its tenth year, I was able to attend for my first time.

It's a good two and a half hour drive from Perth.

We arrived early and were able to go for a bush walk just over the road from the hall, the wildflowers did not disappoint and were stunning.

This is mainly a local affair.

Everyone brings a pie to share and port for their table.

No entry fee, but the mandatory raffle proceeds go towards the upkeep of the hall.

Heating was by an open fire and the shared supper was heated and organised by the formidable team of Karen and Wendy.

Thankfully several others seamlessly assisted throughout the night and the dishes were washed by a rotating team.

Some small local halls in the South-west of WA are being revitalised by their communities.

The Yabberup Hall had a new roof and loving maintenance was evident.

We were welcomed by the locals and enjoyed a night where many new poems had been written by the people in the Yabberup and wider community.

Surely this is what the folk tradition is really about.

Some of the poems may

never see the light of day again but most were specifically relevant to the community's personal or political values.

Environmental issues were strongly represented but so were many other rural themes.

On the way back, we looked at Frog Hollow, people bring frogs and then look at them.

However, we were waylaid by a local entreating us to visit the cemetery where he and others had been planting Kangaroo Paws.

What a wonderful way to maintain a cemetery.

There was a sign on the gate saying no mowing would be happening until after the Kangaroo Paws had seeded, as bush regeneration was happening.

This is a great way to maintain a cemetery and a real memorial to those who have moved on.

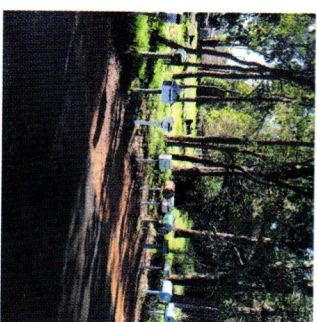
After a trip through the lush Ferguson Valley, we returned home, rejuvenated for the next time we would gather for a poetry event.

Some of what's On

Many other poets are busy with the country shows and the Greenbushes Music Festival.

Nambung Country Music Muster is the next major poetry event on our calendar.

We have been very lucky here in WA as most venues are still running, albeit with some restrictions and the occasional lockdown. The WA Bush Poets



by Christine Boult

Mailboxes at Yabberup 2021

and Yarnspillers have returned to Bentley Park for their monthly musters and the Nanga Music Festival is full steam ahead for October. The Fairbridge Festival is calling for interest from artists for 2022. The Albany Shanty festival is rescheduled for the first weekend in October and the Manjimup Bluegrass & Old Time Music Weekend is going ahead with a new programme, as their Victorian tutors are unable to attend.

Morris, of course, is thriving. Dance outs at Cottesloe on the beach before adjourning to the pub for lunch, Medieval Fayres... A weekend at Yallingup in September, dancing out at the wineries and staying for songs, music and revelry in the evenings. The Morris English music session continues alongside of the Irish teaching session on Mondays at the Irish Club.

Poetry and the written word

Ramblings from the track



Bill Gordon at the Derby Poets' Brunch 2021 Photo: Jane Cochrane

The Poets' Breakfast in Derby WA has now become a three hour Poets' Brunch, to follow the Derby Cup.

This is timely, of course, for racing enthusiasts and the date was also changed.

The time will revert to the morning next year due to the heat.

Even so, a reduced pack of poets decided to make the trek overland, although at least two more, Cobber Lethbridge and Peter Nettleton, opted for the winged carrier.

As we travelled along the road, many places were willing to exchange a night's accommodation for a Poets' Sundowner.

These evenings are popular at Caravan Parks and Station Stays.

by Christine Boutil

of one edition of the magazine! Anyway, this hilarious process made me ponder on that age old dilemma of what is folk?

Is the creation made sitting around the fire with your mates, writing a poem and spending the next couple of days fiddling with it, a real piece of folk?

I remember many years ago at Nariel Creek sitting around with Jo White, Ken McMasters, Johnny Ross and various others writing songs that were spoofs about Nariel Creek, sending ourselves up.

I now find that the Nariel Creek Songwriters Collective has been archived in the history of Nariel Creek.

Of course, at the time we were disparaged, particularly by Mick O'Rourke, and folk would cringe as we embarked on the hawking of our songs.

Is this folk? Where is Dave O'Connor when I need him?

He would be acerbic in his criticism and then probably join in.

The interesting fact from this is that these songs from the collective survived.

People couldn't remember the people that put them together and so they became Ken McMasters'.

His wife Sally wrote them out in beautiful calligraphy and we had a little pamphlet of our songs and parodies.

I wonder if anyone still has a copy?

So I digress, we wrote a poem on the track.

Poetry and the written word

I'll include it here and we had fun.

I think the importance of enjoyment and shared experience in our love of folk music and poetry is sometimes forgotten.

So many people hope to make a living from folk performance.

However, at the heart of folk music and poetry is that it happens, it tells our stories, dreams, hopes, disasters and becomes a part of our personal and public history.

Bogged at Peedamulla

Bound for Peedamulla at the word from the great John Hayes we stopped at Nanuterra to be robbed at the diesel bays

Four intrepid poets on their trip to the Derby brunch

Eating on the roadside, they had a hasty lunch.

Alan Aitken led the charge, he stopped at the Peedamulla sign

The open sign didn't tell of the danger they would find

Alan gave the thumbs up, Bill and Meg gave one too

Christine followed in their wake, hoping to make it through.

The road looked solid, scenic, inviting, what a laugh

170m of rain at Exmouth preceded their path

The caravans swished and swerved, red clay stuck like glue

Bill and Alan couldn't stop, they slid and silted through.

But Christine sank in quicksand as the van went over the lea

She prayed for mobile phone connection, to bring help, was her plea

Her van lay floundered in red mud, like a listing, sinking ship
So she leapt out of the van on that muddy slippery dip

Bill threw Meg out to aid Chris's plight and keep her company

She walked twenty miles to answer that crying, feeble plea.

Personal safety was no question, fearless she trudged through the mud

To be greeted by the survivor with some water and a hug.

Alan texted, make a cup of tea and read a book a while

We'll be ages getting in, he smirked a cunning smile

With Meg and Hetty the wonder dog, Chris was cheering up

Bill and Alan had yet to reach the homestead hopping for a cup

Hours went by, they chatted, the tardy men had not returned

Meg said she'd walk to meet them, she was really quite concerned

But then they spotted a white sliding into view

The car horn tooted, Bill and Alan were coming through.

Bill grinned and slushed around the van, Alan raised his cup

Bill had a white snatch strap and a steel shackle to hook up

It took ages to pull out that beached and soggy van

Alan pushed gingerly behind, what a super man!

Then he revealed he'd lost his electric van connector

They waded through the sludge looking for a black wire with flexor



Bogged at Peedamulla

Bill kept pulling, Alan leapt in with Hetty by the wheel

The van lurched wildly out as it tipped on precarious wheels.

Bill unhitiched and Alan steered the skew whiff van anew

But a charging mob of cattle stampeded into view

More slipping and sliding as they dodged the red charging bulls

If you believe this bullshit, you are so gullible.

Truth is buried in the poem, Chris really did get bogged

We did retrieve the connector, a soggy red mud plug

And strength comes from adversity when travelling with poet mates

Together they can handle any mess that's on their plate.



Dancing in Fetters – national tour

by Heather Blasdale Clarke



When we think of convicts, we don't tend to think of music and dance, but dance was an integral part of everyday life and one of the most popular forms of recreation in the early colony.

Convicts danced to escape the drudgery and harshness of their existence.

It provided social cohesion, a sense of belonging and cultural identity in a strange new land.

Dancing was a prime pastime for the underclasses in 18th and 19th century Britain and Ireland, where the majority of convicts originated from.

Once convicted, prisoners

danced in prisons and on the hulks while they awaited transportation.

Some danced to the music of their jangling chains.

A number of enlightened surgeons encouraged convicts to dance on the long voyage to the colony, knowing it was good for their health and "tranquility of mind".

In the colony, dancing remained a popular pursuit, even if it was sometimes associated with illegal activities!

The exhibition 'Dancing in Fetters: the culture of convict dance' was developed by

Moreton Bay Regional Council in partnership with dance historian, Heather Blasdale Clarke, and is based on doctoral research

undertaken at Queensland University of Technology.

Commencing in late 2021

the exhibition will go on tour to seven museums with convict

connections in Queensland, New South Wales, Tasmania, Norfolk Island, and Western Australia.

We've received funding from Visions of Australia, auspicing by The Abbey Museum, and support for public programming from Bush Traditions.

The tour will include public programming with concerts and workshops, an education pack, and interactive videos.

Spectators will discover a completely different aspect of convict life.

You should keep dancing

We're all getting older, but the Bee Gees were spot on when they suggested: "You should be dancing."

In fact, science is on their side.

A new study from Brazil (home of the saucy Samba) found that dancing may "effectively lower cholesterol levels, improve fitness and body composition and in the process, improve self-esteem", issues that are directly related to menopause.

Published in the Journal of the North American Menopause Society (NAMS), the study explains that women after menopause are more likely to experience weight gain, with particular increases of central body fat.

They also undergo metabolic disturbances, such as increases in triglycerides and 'bad' cholesterol, and overall are faced with an increase in cardiovascular catastrophe such as stroke or heart attack.

Throw in night sweats, some foggy thinking, a drop in libido, reduced physical activity, a heightened risk of falls and fractures and a compromised self-image, and life's not feeling too great.

The potential of dancing, as a means of getting physically and mentally fit, and as a boost for social skills, has been extensively explored in research.

There are studies from the 1980s that found dance was a great therapy for anxiety.

A 2017 study found that



dancing, which supports balance and co-ordination, helps stall the degradation of white brain tissue, the connective tissue that breaks down as we age.

Dancing in all directions can help keep muscles supple.

Because the body is moving from side to side, front and back, and turning this way and that, muscles become stronger and suppler.

All of this serves ageing people well.

The new NAMS study, according to the authors, is one of the very few to have investigated the effects of dance on body image, self-esteem, and physical fitness in postmenopausal women.

How the study worked

The researchers recruited 36 postmenopausal participants (mean age 57 years) and had them dance three times per week, for 90 minutes each session.

The women were evaluated before and after 16 weeks.

Body composition (body fat and lean mass), blood lipids (fats), functional fitness, self-image, and self-esteem were assessed.

The 16-week dance intervention was found effective in improving not only the fat profile and functional fitness of the participants, but also self-image and self-esteem.

The participants also enjoyed improvement in balance, postural control, gait (the manner in which they walked), strength and overall physical performance.

"In addition to these benefits, (the) women also probably enjoyed a sense of camaraderie from the shared experience of learning something new," NAMS Medical Director Stephanie Fabblon said.

Colonial Ball falls foul of Covid-19 restrictions

Despite having an advertisement and an article about the Colonial Ball in Canberra in Trad&Now 143, unfortunately, all did not go as planned.

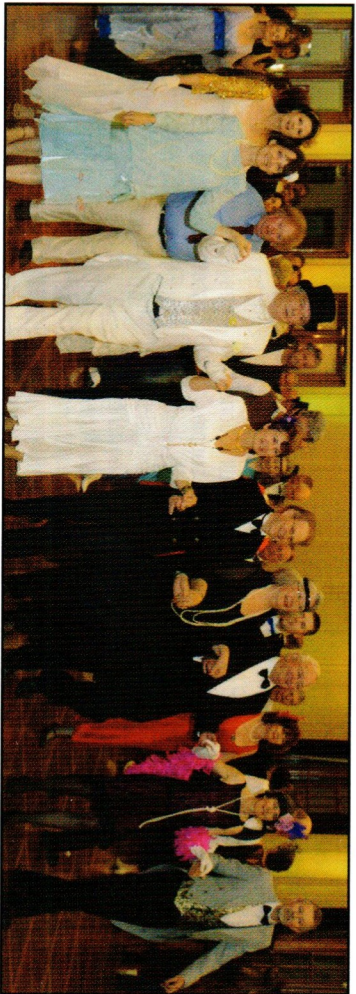
Antonella Salpietro on behalf of the Monaro Folk Society End of Month Dance Organising Team announced on September 2, "Regrettably, we had to make the difficult decision to cancel the Colonial Ball that was to be held on September 25."

Needless to say, this decision has been motivated by the current COVID situation and the restrictions in place in the ACT, NSW and Vic.

While the situation may change, and is somewhat fluid, it is unlikely that dancing will be allowed in the ACT in the next few weeks also curtailing the possibility to conduct dance workshops in preparation for the Ball.

"We also envisage that restrictions on large gatherings of people in indoor spaces will continue until at least the end of September, if not longer.

"I am sure that when we resume dancing, there will be other opportunities to explore their fascinating dance and music repertoire," Antonella said.



The Music Goes On

A report from the Troubadour on the NSW Central Coast by Michael Fine (President) and Hugh Worrall (Vice-President)

But it's a hard, hard time for the Folk Clubs where the stages and sad old halls are so empty.

There's a dispute about whether Slim Dusty actually wrote the original words to the famous

pub song, as he claimed.

But no one doubts that in the Pub with No Beer he captured and somehow managed to capitalise on the broken spirit that now seems to be all too familiar in the folk clubs and festivals going through the seemingly endless lockdown in NSW and Victoria.

Under the apparently endless series of lockdowns there is a visceral sense of loss and disappointment in the folk clubs. Where great music is made to be shared in good company, there is now an achingly similar vibe to that found in that legendary outback pub.

Where there was always a guarantee of the joy of great musicianship and the warmth of companionship, there are now the clubs with no songs.

It doesn't matter anymore whether you know the words or the tune.

The folk clubs echo with the sounds of silence.

There's no one there to sing-along to the chorus, clap or tap their feet to the beat.

For the time being, it seems, the thorns and briars are growing ever tighter around the palaces of harmony we all so fondly remember.

The locked halls, the empty seats, the unsold tickets, the cancelled concerts, the performers without audience or pay all cry out for a decent parody.

They deserve something better. There must be a good song in there somewhere.

But in this second year of lockdowns and pandemic all we've got, it seems, is a never-ending lament.

The first wave: Was it the death of music or the emergence of cancel culture?

The first lockdown, starting in March 2020, was scary and isolating.

But somehow, it was also a little exciting.

In fact, there was even a special word used for it: 'Unprecedented!'

We all had to play a part in this moment of global history.

To do that well, we had to stay home.

Isolated and alone, yes, but alone together.

At the Troubadour Central Coast Folk and Acoustic Music Club, we knew we were challenged, but working together, we hoped we would somehow get through.

And so, as the dates of our great concerts we had planned came and went, we shed a tear.

But we also felt bound to stand up and do something to keep the mighty folk spirit alive.

Looking back, 2020 had all looked so good.

But we should have known.

Our 2020 vision, which involved a host of amazing concerts, turned out to be an illusion.

After fabulous February, our first month, we ended up cancelling concerts from: the great Hallett Flood duo from the Blue Mountains with the Peppercorns from WA; Colum Sands, booked to come all the way from Ireland to sing in Woy Woy; and, Dingoes Breakfast who couldn't get out of West Australia despite their powerful songs, historic verses and their fabulous beards.

Then we had to cancel the great Enda Kenny concert planned for June, and in July, Vincent Cross from Ireland via New York, had to be postponed.

A year later, we're still waiting. And in August, our long awaited local(ish) super group, the Green Mohair Suits, were unable to perform.

The same fate befell Traditional Graffiti in September. Need I go on?

A new dawn? Discovering the jolly joys and ebbing frustrations of virtual folk

As our plans for great concerts began to collapse in a heap in March, we plotted and seized the opportunity to follow the beat of a different drum.

Drawing on the collective wisdom of our democratically elected committee, we hatched a few cunning schemes.

By dint of good planning and steely willpower, we would try and

manage to keep something going.

While the twice-monthly sessions have proven to be particularly important for sustaining participation, they are far from the only sign of continuing life in the old folk club.

The Troubadalkers, the Troubadour's fabulous ukulele ensemble, continued during the pandemic, cancelling their regular performances in a local aged care home, but keeping regular rehearsal sessions going by moving some of them outdoors to the Woy Woy Community Gardens, once this was permitted.

We also started a series we called our online floor spots, made available through the Troubadour Facebook page.

These quickly proved popular and in 2020 gave members and a few newcomers an opportunity to post performances of themselves at home.

Some of these proved so popular that they went almost viral. Helping this along, many of our online floor spots were also posted as 'Covided' performances on Facebook.

This was an initiative hosted from the UK. It gave the Troubadour, and many other not so famous Australian bedroom performers, true global reach.

To keep members and friends on our email list informed, we also prepared and sent out 'Keep in Touch' e-newsletters by email with details of the Troubadour events, news, as well as information and links to other events and links likely to be of interest to folkies at home.

Responding to the interest shown by our members and the problems that performers had as they were unable to earn an income from performing, we took the initiative to host two live online

concerts.

Chloe and Jason on May 4 and the Peppercorns on May 30.

Both were popular, even ground breaking in the NSW folk music scene, showing that there was a paying audience for online performers, particularly if they were online at the Troubadour.

Because the audience now came from beyond our local area, we were able to pay the performers more than would have been the case with a live performance.

That was a moment of pride!

Even better when we soon found others emulating the approach.

Troubadour kept singing regardless.

But our greatest and continuing success has been with our regular sessions.

When the first set of lockdowns happened, the sessions came to an abrupt stop.

But as we realised that the lockdowns and restrictions weren't going away, we came up with ways to keep the sessions going.

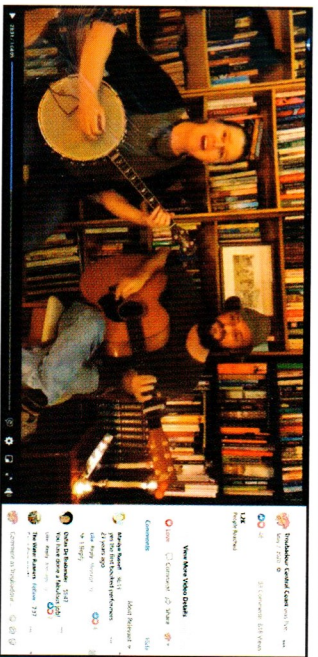
As soon as it was possible, we started meeting outdoors in the local Kariong EcoGarden.

It's a gorgeous little community garden on the Kariong hill and they have created a lovely 'in-the-round' space under a gazabo, so even in the cold and wet, we usually managed to keep the sessions going once a month.

We were able to spread out in a large circle and maintain the recommended distances and we used masks when needed.

We even got caught in a mammoth downpour which through the neighbourhood to a standstill, but we managed to get out with only wet feet.

As the year went on, we



realised that we weren't going to be able to return indoors anytime soon, so we found another interesting space at the Say When café in Woy Woy, which allowed us to have a second session per month.

Just around the corner from where we used to meet at the CWA hall, the Say When has an outdoor, open courtyard which has a roof.

The café owner, Dave, allowed us to have a Sunday afternoon session for the cost of our food and coffees.

We even managed to get all the way through winter, in some pretty bleak weather, before the second round of lockdowns sunk us again in July-August 2021.

However, we had improved our proficiency on Zoom by then, and some of us have been able to keep the sessions alive online.

We can't sing together but, if we take it in turns and everyone else mutes, then we can sing and play along at home, and that seems to approximate playing together.

It's not as good as a session, but it's something.

I must say, my harmonies sound a lot better on mute.

This second lockdown has given Hugh Worrall what he calls 'scoping addiction'.

"Every time I went out, I'd look at every potential outdoor venue".

Slowly an idea was forming.

He began to think hard. "Maybe we can have an outdoor session there when we're all vaccinated". And we did, while we could, until ...

Hard times come again no more!

Like other Folk Clubs across the country, the Troubadour Central Coast is unique.

We're somewhere between a venue and a community, a meeting place of the amazing and the strange with a special dose of everyday magic.

Some suspect us, with good reason, of being a senior citizens' club.

But we have an open door and a surfeit of younger members and new attendees with an interest in folk and acoustic music have shown they love and will continue the vibe.

Many are searching for a place to perform. We're a network of lost souls, a generator of social capital, an explosion of creativity and mutual support.

So, it was to be expected that we'd manage to survive.

We caught a good glimpse of what life might look like for our folk club in the final months of 2020 and the first six of 2021.

Every one of our concerts was sold out, to such an extent, we

have had to book a larger venue which can hold more people whenever possible.

The outdoor sessions, too, proved a big hit!

Then we learnt, on a bitter night in late June 2021, that our much anticipated concert with New Graces had to be cancelled.

It should have been a magical experience, as that silent night, the Central Coast was miraculously transported and reclassified as part of the Greater Sydney region.

Instead, it was our unwelcome induction to frustration.

Of course, we didn't worry at first as we knew it wouldn't last long.

But, as someone remarked, the hardest part of the two week shutdown we entered into that night proved to be the first ten weeks.

While we look forward to being with each other again, welcoming musicians from across the globe into our world, the challenges we have always faced continue to loom large.

As Virginia Wolfe would have surely observed, every folk club

needs a place of their own to perform.

Sadly, we don't have one. Instead, we beg, borrow, book when we can and pay the rent.

But without our own premises we are at the mercy of the landlords and the neighbours.

Our usually hospitable and community minded protectors, most recently the local Anglican church, have kept their community hall shut for more than 18 months now.

We've found a welcome in the local Country Club, and that often works well.

Certainly they serve good food and sell discounted alcohol, very popular.

But the hall hire is high and uncertain.

As catered weddings are more remunerative, we have already been bumped from the large hall on one occasion, and fear this becoming common.

Membership fees, low as they are, are also difficult.

So far this has worked well for our members, who found themselves granted free membership for an entire year, but this will be hard to continue.

Rather than rekindling the flames of our old ventures, we've kept in touch with each other by phone and social media link.

Blessed with some of the world's most pristine and glorious beaches and bush walks, we've discovered that we can meet and greet others we know every day that we head out for our regular outdoor exercise.

We can hum tunes and now even have picnics together, so long as we don't sing.

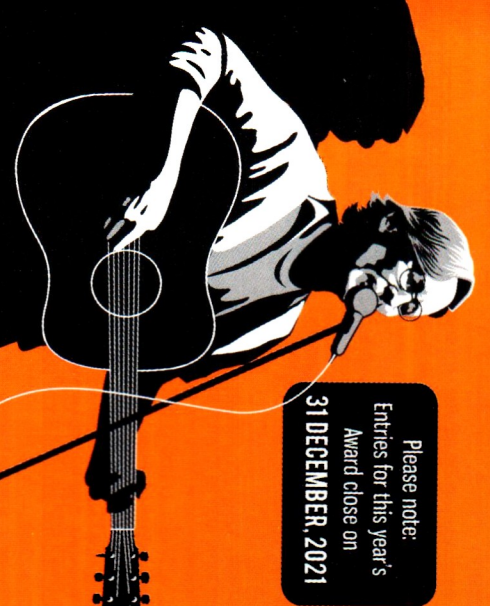
But the day we can get back together for a house concert, even a full hall, is surely coming.

**THE ALSTAIR HULETT MEMORIAL FUND
INVITES ENTRIES FOR THE 2022
SONGS FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE**

SONGWRITING AWARD
in memory of the late singer, songwriter,
political activist and social justice advocate
ALSTAIR HULETT

For more details about the Award please email: ahmf@me.com
or visit: www.alstairhulett.com/songs-for-social-justice-award

Please note:
Entries for this year's
Award close on
31 DECEMBER, 2021



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.

ACT - Monaro Folk Society

Run a variety of folk music and dance workshops and other events in Canberra. Monday night: Bush Dance Workshop with Bush Capital Band.

around the world. Meet each Tues at 5pm - 7pm & each Thurs 9am - 11am at the Community of Christ hall, Taree 65525142

NSW - Wongawilli Colonial Dance Club

Tuesday night: Contra dance and band - English Country Dance - alternate weeks Wednesday night - Irish set dance

info@MonaroFolk.org.au
www.MonaroFolk.org.au

Bush dance at Wongawilli Community Hall, Wongawilli Rd, Wongawilli, (Wollongong area) NSW. All dances walked through & called. No Partner needed. \$4 includes supper. Meet every Wednesday night 7:30pm. 0404667614 happyeyes3333@gmail.com

NSW - Lazarka International Folk Dance

Traditional dances from

happyeyes3333@gmail.com

SA - Australian Traditional & Bush Dance Society

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 (nr Vine St), Prospect.

enquiries@atbdsdancesa.com.au
http://www.atbdsdancesa.com.au/

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



Doug de Vries and Diana Clark - ...Three Shadows of Blue...

CD review by Tony Smith
TMS22-52 - \$25

Doug de Vries has mastery of practically every style of guitar.

In this 2004 collaboration with singer Diana Clark and percussionist Denis Close, he tackles the world of Brazilian music with its complex rhythms and unusual chords.

Knowing that many listeners and would-be imitators might not have his knowledge of these specialised sub-genres, de Vries includes chord charts and some translations of key lyrics in the sleeve notes.

Thanks Doug! Diana Clark has a deep, sultry voice which would be equally stunning singing blues, but on this album, she makes the Portuguese very accessible indeed.

There is nothing forced about her style, either in terms of reaching the notes, coping with the complex rhythms or in expressing the emotion in each song.

There is English in some songs but Diana Clark makes the translations seamless.

The 16 tracks on this 'Editions DdV' album occupy just over an

hour but transport the listener to an exotic world in a different time entirely.

'Vera Cruz', 'Para ver as meninas', 'Wave', 'Manha de Carnaval', 'Chiclete com banana', 'San Vicente', 'Michelle', 'Pra que mentir?', 'Agua de marco', 'Corcovado', 'Desafinado', 'Meditacao', 'Berimbau', 'O cio da terra', 'Demais ninguem', and 'Sinho meu'.

Casual listeners will be familiar with 'Michelle', adapted into the pop idiom by one 'Paul' and 'Desafinado' popular in the 1970s as 'Slightly Out of Tune'.

The sleeve notes comment it is clear that even those who lack the melodies and rhythms are still important.

It is what is in their hearts that matters.

There are some clear political references in the songs.

'O cio de terra' has become the anthem of the increasingly huge population of Brazil's landless who move to the 'favelas', Rio's squalid, poverty stricken shanty towns.

It speaks of the gestation of the earth.

'Chiclete com banana' which suggests a nice food, is a lament and challenge to the United States which dominates Latin America while failing to understand and engage with diverse populations.

'Corcovado' refers to the statue of Christ, which is Rio's most famous landmark.

'Demais ninguem' expresses an interesting take on disappointment and feeling blue.

'Pain belongs to the one in pain, it's my trophy, it's what's been left, if I no longer have my love I have my pain'.

This might seem like small consolation to our western

CD Reviews

This collaboration between Doug de Vries and Diana Clark shows yet again how talented Australian musicians are.

Even the most exotic musical forms have been brought home to our recently multicultural society.

Thanks to our musicians, we have so much diversity to enjoy.

Also available by Diana Clark is her CD Breathe into Time TMS31-52



Fiddlers Festival - Get Reel

CD review by Tony Smith
TMS08-52 - \$25

The main fiddlers on this 2003 CD are Marcus Holden, Clare O'Meara, Mark Oats and Andrew Clermont.

They are joined by many other musicians including Garry Steel, Ollie Cecchini, Willy Qua and Peter Kennard.

The website now has information about Fiddlers Feast, presumably a new generation FF. The 14 tracks on the album include not just fiddles but a huge range of instruments plucked, bowed, whacked, blown and

CD Reviews

knit. A feature is the use on a couple of tracks of the Stravinski, the so-called 'horned strings'.

The listener also gets Clare O'Meara's rich voice on Duke Ellington's, 'It Don't Mean A Thing If It Ain't Got That Swing' and 'Texas Fiddle Girl'.

The most prominent arrangers are Holden, Oats and O'Meara but you also get music by Bluegrass guru, Bill Monroe, tango maestro, Astor Piazzola, jazz pioneer, Duke Ellington, and others.

There is a Zydeco set, a 'Jewish' medley, Bill Monroe's 'Jerusalem', and Libertango by Astor Piazzola.

These compositions lend themselves to the swing style of fiddle playing with which Marcus Holden is so familiar.

It is however, the traditional tunes from the standard repertoire which would likely interest most fiddle players.

These include, Humours of Westport, President Garfield's Hornpipe, Salamanca, Banishes, Sallo's Bonnet, Musical Priest, Per Dien Set, Pumpherton, Cuckoo's Nest, Congress Reel and Flowers of Edinburgh.

Being largely high in pitch and tempo, this CD is aurally intense. It might be better appreciated in smaller bites if you wanted to listen actively to this lively music.

Also available by Fiddlers Feast are Live - TN506-52, Strung Out - TN512-52, Frenzée - TN497-47 and Caravan - TN1860-40



Fourplay - Catgut Ya Tongue?
CD review by Tony Smith
TN499-51 - \$25

Fourplay, an 'electric string quartet' released this slightly avant garde album in 1998.

While string quartets generally have a ready repertoire in the classical field, the originality of these arrangements makes it impossible to place Catgut Ya Tongue? into a fixed musical epoch or genre, except by identifying the sources of their tunes.

Fourplay are Lara Goodridge (violin and vocals), Chris Emerson (viola) and the Hollo brothers, Tim (viola) and Peter (cello).

As the punning name of the group suggests, there is a playful attitude in this ensemble.

It is not surprising then to find that among these 11 tracks are found two television themes from the popular programs, Dr Who with its futuristic sound, and the cheeky animated soapie, The Simpsons.

Other tunes from the public domain arranged by Fourplay are Jeff Buckley's 'Grace', Nina Simone's 'My Baby Just Cares For Me', Suede's 'The 2 Of Us', Metallica's 'Enter Sandman', Depeche Mode's 'The Sweetest Perfection', a Led Zeppelin medley of 'The Ocean' and 'Black Dog'.

Even The Beastie Boys get a run with 'Sabotage'. Peter Hollo shows flair for composition on 'Languid, Yet ...' and with Chris Emerson on 'Corrosion'.

The album warms up after the third track when the rhythm of the piece change.

Until then, it feels as though staccato cello sets the pace.

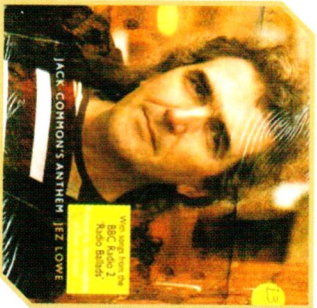
Or it could be that Lara Goodridge's true voice on 'My Baby Just Cares For Me' really puts the listener in touch with the group's spirit.

There is great talent in this string quartet.

It is commendable that they broke out of the classical mould and took the daring step into music which perhaps had never been covered in this way.

In the final analysis however, the listener's reaction will probably vary, from being mildly entertained and in awe of the players' virtuosity, to wild enthusiasm if Led Zeppelin, Depeche Mode, Metallica and Suede float your musical boat.

Also available by Fourplay is Now to the Future - TN498-51 and The Joy Of - TN500-51



Jez Lowe - Jack Common's Anthem
CD review by Greg Barnett

The album starts with a

crisp and rhythmic six-string guitar, melodic vocal, acoustic bass, fiddle and well-judged vocal harmony, all well recorded and mixed into a rich and pleasant blend.

The poetic lyrics are attractive and can be clearly heard above the music.

To my ears, the 'feel' is similar to Billy Bragg, the accent and the times might differ, but both men have the ability to paint the human condition and yearning for a better life, especially amongst working men.

Where Bragg is direct and simple, Jez Lowe's skill with guitar and arrangements provides additional depth and musicality.

For example, in "Black Trade", the instrumentation weaves around evocative lyrics about the old shipyards, "all you welders and riveters and boiler-smiths and plateners, you gaugers and pipettiers, sparks and sheet metal workers, all you riggers and coppersmiths, red-leaders and hard drinkers, you cablers and taggers, you pullers and dabbers."

Your mind is transported to darker times before 'Health and Safety', when most trades were dangerous.

His website says 'a double nomination in the 2015 BBC Folk Awards for best singer and best new song, was a timely reminder of Jez Lowe's standing in the UK folk and acoustic music scene'.

Not only he is one of the busiest live performers in the country, but his songs are among the most widely sung by other performers, whether by long-established acts like Fairport Convention, The Dubliners and Bob Fox, or by the new breed of stars like The Unthanks. The Young Uns and The Dunks. Jez apparently has a regular

stable of supporting musicians, and their contributions are excellent, including bass, clarinet, guitar, fiddle, mandolin, ciatro, piano, tin whistle, and cittern, and several of them provide additional vocals.

The album is all the more remarkable for Jez having written everything himself (except for a single co-write).

Also available by Jez Lowe are Tentertooks - TN545-54 and Honesty Box - TN544-54



Kate Bramley - Little Canaan
CD review by Greg Barnett
TN565-56 - \$30

A solo CD from Kate Bramley, produced by Jez Lowe and featuring The Bad Pennies and Edwina Hayes as guests.

Songs from the tradition, from her favourite writers and from her own pen, make up this solo CD from Kate Bramley, whose role as fiddler and vocalist with Jez Lowe's, Bad Pennies, has won her fans all over the world.

A vibrant blend of Celtic and old-timey influences, it brings together guest appearances from Edwina Hayes and James Keelaghan, and production by Jez, all stamped with the authority of Kate's rich vocals and dextrous multi-instrumental skills.

The album's eponymous first track hints at a great ensemble

CD Reviews

sound of somewhat traditional folk.

The second track however surprises with a much broader, sophisticated palette, including a sublime fingerpicked guitar, a fretless bass, and soprano sax and intimate, breathy vocals.

Following tracks add fiddle, mandolin, bazuki, whistle, harmonica and many more for delightful and interesting listening, placing the traditional-style lyrics and melodies in a varied and more contemporary setting, all fronted by Kate's wonderful voice.

A great recording that allows the music to shine.



Dennis O'Keeffe - Waltzing Matilda
CD Review by Graham Seal
TN1836-47 - \$25

Regulars at the National Folk Festival will recall the late Dennis O'Keeffe's legendary occupations of the session bar.

Concetta in hands and always ready to share a tune or song, Dennis was an essential feature of the National for many years, as he was at the Port Fairy festival.

CD and book Reviews

Dennis spent a good many years researching the history and mythology of 'Waltzing Matilda', eventually producing a full-length book about the song's secret history in 2012.

He expanded the known story in relation to the importance of the union troubles of the 1890s, relating these directly to the composition of the fabled song.

Dennis also tracked down, and interviewed, family descendants who provided the gossip on what was going on at Dagworth Station with Banjo Paterson and Christina Macpherson, the composers of our national ditty.

On this CD, Dennis and some very musical mates, present a selection of items related to 'Waltzing Matilda', the country and culture where it came from, together with some of Dennis's self-penned songs.

As well as various versions of the song, and its tunes, we hear about 'Diamantina Country' in Dennis's song of that name, about the strikes of 1894 and the story of one of its martyrs, Billy McLean, sung with great passion. William Spence, mostly forgotten pioneer co-founder of the Australian Shearers' Union, which became the Australian Workers' Union, is also remembered here in song.

Dennis fills it all out with some great versions of the bush ballads, 'The Dying Stockman', 'The Old Bark Hut' and, of course, 'Click Go the Shears'.

I particularly liked Dennis's song about the burning of the paddle steamer, Rodney, bringing strike-breakers up the Darling in 1894.

Unionists boarded her at night, marooned the scabs on an island and burned the Rodney to the waterline.

As she blazed, a young shearer played 'After the Ball is Over' on his accordion.

You can't make this stuff up! Of course, Dennis set his spirited lyrics to 'After the Ball is Over'.

Works a treat. Well produced and presented, with an informative booklet.

Dennis O'Keefe's 'Waltzing Matilda' is now a great memorial to the man and his music.

Also available by Dennis O'Keefe is 'Waltzing Down the Years' TN038-8

Life and Times



On Sydney Buses

Mary-Jane Field
Sydney

Mary-Jane Field – Life and Times on Sydney Buses
Book Review by Helen Briton Wheeler
TN2484-E-\$10

What a delight to read Mary-Jane Field's, 'Life and Times on Sydney Buses'.

It is the perfect light, but wise and wonderful entertainment, charmingly written and with clever, whimsical drawings scattered throughout.

Pick it up, read the stories and make your day a little happier.

If you like to carry your e-Reader tablet with you, browsing through this little e-Book is the perfect companion at a bus stop, on your bus, waiting for a medical appointment, or just relaxing over

a coffee. Everyone around will wonder why you are smiling.



Burach - Deeper

CD review by Tony Smith
TN509-52 - \$30

As 'burach' is Gaelic for delving or burrowing in the earth, deeper seems like a good term to describe a band's later album.

Deeper appeared in 2000, following earlier albums in 1995 and 1997, all on the Greentrax label and there has been a release in 2006 as well.

Burach is a six piece band of the Scottish folk rock variety.

The members are Ali Cherry (lead vocals), Eoghain Anderson (drums and percussion), Doug Anderson (banjo, mandolin, acoustic and electric guitars), Sandy Brechin (accordion and backing vocals), Greg Borland (fiddle and backing vocals) and Roy Waterston (bass and backing vocals).

Tracks include, 'And Still There', 'Beautiful Blues', 'Keep On Shining', 'Sweet Thing', 'A Turn Up For The Books', 'Shadow of the Night', 'Flora Whistles a Scanadanavian Tune', 'Left Unsaid', 'Heart of Gold' and 'Knot Quite Silverstone...'

The black and white photographs of the group against various backgrounds suggest the urban setting for Burach's eclectic mix of music.

However, there is nothing heavy or hard about either the lyrics of the songs or the playing of the instruments.

Indeed, there is a stylistic lightness about these tracks which puts the band beyond the folk rock stereotype.

There is a very nice balance between the songs, mainly by Ali Cherry, but with a contribution by Roy Waterston on his own 'The Life and Times of Johnny Hattersfield', and the instrumentals.

There is also an excellent combination at work here with the accordion forming a natural bridge between the backing bass and percussion and the melody instruments and voices.

If you enjoy accordion, you will be hooked on this album.

All Cherry's voice has a lightness which makes the words accessible and a command of delivery which lifts the songs beyond the fairly mundane lyrics.

'Smile, just smile at me, the sweetest thing can touch, deeper, far deeper now, for all who've loved too much' seems to be the only reference to the album title.

When Cherry sings 'Won't you come home soon, I need someone to keep me warm' the gentle blues tone is unmistakable.

A feature of the sleeve notes which has great appeal, is the witty introduction to the instrumentals.

In 'The Birds Set' for example, a frazzled Buzzard turns out to be a plastic bag on sober reflection, and Niamh's Capers is included because composer, Gerry O'Connor, played in a band called 'The Wild Geese'.

Accordionist, Sandy Brechin, has a couple of originals called, 'The Poetry Punch-Up and 10-NA, attributed to an American tourist mistaking Iona for the name of a highway. Fiddler, Greg(or) Borland, has

a tribute to Roman the Librarian and remembers improvising in Knot on a G-String.

It would do a disservice to Burach to pigeon-hole their music.

The Gaelic folk roots are obvious, but the band soars into original territory.

The harmony in the tracks on Deeper is clear and as with any ensemble that enjoys playing together, the effect on the listener is both instantaneous and deep.



Chris Gillespie - The Road to Tamworth

CD review by Greg Barnett
TN504-51 - \$10

Anyone who enjoys simple finger-picked dobro guitar, a pleasant tenor male voice, and country-inflected first-person stories will greatly enjoy this.

The first track carries the EP's title, and embellishments include tasteful pedal steel in the background, and Dylan-esque harmonica in the breaks.

As these are songs with such a personal vibe, slightly less reverend on the vocals would bring them closer in to the listener for a more intimate experience, but this is personal preference.

'Ed' is a quirkily attractive song about people playing country cricket!

With a vocal delivery like Paul Kelly in the upper registers, this EP makes me imagine sitting

CD and book Reviews

back in an acoustic folk club and listening to Chris entertain an enthusiastic and appreciative crowd.

Also available by Chris Gillespie is 'Don't Taligate' - TN505-51



Anna Glynn - Strange Memories Music for A Landscape

CD Review by Graham Seal
TN028-47 - \$30

Anna Glynn is a contemporary artist who develops multi-media projects and does them very well, judging by the dizzying array of exhibitions, residencies and awards on her website.

On this CD, Anna presents the results of a Parks Victoria Artist in Residence program on a large Yarra riverfront property.

By coincidence, it turned out that the property overlooked the farm where she grew up.

This synchronicity inspired this project, rendering her impressions of the place through her memories of childhood, using paintings, art, writing, music and

CD and book Reviews

performance.

Most of this ended up in a book titled *Strange Memories* and this is the musical performance aspect of the project.

The final piece, 'Forever Again', gives the tone and style of many of the lyrics on the CD:

I know this place
I've been here before
I know this place
I am here again
Together again
Forever again
I'm here

I know this place
I am here again

Forever again

Forever again

Forever again

It's near

Together again

Forever again

Together again

I'm here

Place, time and emotion are often evoked through word fragments and the texture of the accompaniments, rather than through narrative as in folk ballads.

Throughout the recording, Anna's appropriately minimalist words are beautifully accompanied by keyboards, violin, cello and voices to evoke a time and place, as envisioned by Anna. I played the keyboard with eyes closed and was at that place – walking by the river, smelling the eucalyptus, a warm breeze on my back – gone back in time.

Arrangements range from the jazz blues, 'Pony Girl', sung beautifully by Jane Machintosh, through to melodies that are often folkish, ethereal and

beautifully played. All fitting accompaniments to Anna Gynn's book, 'Strange Memories', available through Track&Now TN029-B - \$30.



Anne Ridgway - Paint A Thought

CD review by Tony Smith
TN1665-53 - \$25

On this CD, Anne Ridgway puts into practice her use of music as therapy.

More and more we are coming to understand how beneficial music is to our mental and spiritual wellbeing.

Music helps children socialise, as well as rounding out their education and assisting with academic subjects such as maths and art.

Brett Whiteley, for example, drew inspiration from the music of Dire Straits and it is clear that music helps the creative juices flow, tapping into natural instincts.

The notion of therapy assumes that something is amiss and needs treating.

Sadly, as people move further away from natural lifestyles and become trapped in urban rat races, all sorts of psychotherapy are in demand.

In 2020 of course, as we followed medical advice and limited social contacts strictly, these problems were exacerbated. While all music helps in our

healing, the tracks on this CD, 'Jacaranda', 'Scatter the Seed', 'Twenty Five Dollars a Day', 'Toll the Bell', 'Wintermoon', 'Paint A Thought', 'A Breeze from Tokyo', 'Inside Out', 'Serenidity', 'Soul Sister' and 'Warm Love' are specifically designed to calm, soothe and counter negativity.

There is an identifiable team from the Blue Mountains assisting Anne Ridgway in these pieces.

Bruce Reid plays lapsteel, national steel guitars and dobro, Ann Palumbo plays basses, and violin on 'A Breeze from Tokyo' is played by Tony Pyrzakowski.

The lyrics on 'Inside Out' were written by Tristan Watson.

Nina Rycroft designed and illustrated the bright, colourful album cover.

The songs were recorded and produced by Robin Janus at Crisp Studios Lawson.

The main voice, harmonies, acoustic guitar, composition and arrangements are by Anne Ridgway.

The singer addresses the 'Jacaranda' in second person 'you', giving the tree an almost human status.

The song promises 'your time will come and later announces 'your time has come now Jacaranda'.

The natural cycles are reassuring to all of us who indulge in them.

In most other tracks, Ridgway uses 'we' or 'I' to personalise the musings.

And in some, including the title track 'Paint A Thought', both 'you' and 'I' feature.

It is unlikely that any musician would deny that music generally has a therapeutic effect.

Nevertheless, some can be unsettling and leave the listener feeling on edge or jaded.

The songs of Ann Ridgway make pleasant listening and while not quite soporific, they

leave the listener relaxed and satisfied.

They bring the listener into pleasant places and pleasant climes, populated with pleasant if imaginary people and spirits.

Also available by Anne Ridgway is *Angophora* - TN017-2 and *Turn Your World Around* - TN452-2



Sacred Earth - Bhakti

CD review by Greg Barnett
TN1861-51 - \$20

The cover art of two cross-legged people, eyes closed in some deep meditative state, caused me a certain reluctance to begin listening.

However, my cynicism evaporated on the first notes and I was transported somewhere emotionally calm and beautiful by a fabulous recording of an unusual and exquisite blend of eastern and western instruments, overlaid with an ethereal and soaring female voice (and the occasional male contribution).

Prem & Jethro Williams' ancient mantras, rich flutes, beautiful soothing melodies & harmonies, all transport you to a state of deep peaceful bliss.

Having sold more than a quarter of a million albums, they are reportedly Australia's top-selling artists in the ambient music genre.

With a few pages in the booklet unreadable (poor text contrast) I was unable to confirm all the instruments used.

A rich bass guitar and tabla counterbalance the feathery upper tones throughout.

Some piano, choir synths, etc. provide variety throughout.

Imagine Pink Floyd if they only had access to acoustic eastern instruments.

While the mystical, devotional, religious aspect is there for those who want it, the music alone was sufficient to transport me to rarely-visited parts of my mind, that allowed me to both listen AND think at the same time, something usually quite uncommon for me when listening to music.

An unexpected but beautifully elemental discovery.



Wayward - Dance While You May

CD Review by Graham Seal
TN249-47 - \$30

The early music of the mediaeval era, such as we have of it, has a sense of joyous discovery as musicians found what they could do with melody and, later, harmony.

Sydney group, Wayward, recorded 'Dance While You May' in 2005, but its references to the Black Death and the impermanence of life resonates

CD and book Reviews

uncomfortably well with the present pandemic.

At the time of recording, the band consisted of: Ricarda Reek (hurdy gurdy, vocals, bells); Nicholas Potts (English border pipes, cunthorn, shawm, recorder, flute, lyre – the list goes on and he sings as well); Kenneth Smith (percussion, puppets); Dick Alias (drums, vocals); Tarek Sawires and Karen Wray play the darbuka, a hand drum used in the middle east and north Africa; and, Peter Wilkin played the harp.

This is a serious armoury of ancient instruments and they know what to do with them.

Wayward bill themselves as modern day successors to the goliards and minstrels.

The songs and tunes are mostly from the troubadour or trouverre tradition which developed mainly among professional musicians composing religious songs, songs of courtly love and dance tunes possibly based on peasant music for paid consumption by the rich and noble.

It is, in other words, an art music rather than a folk music tradition.

And a very fine one, part of the considerable heritage of western music, yet often displaying middle eastern and even north African influences, presumably picked up through the Crusades.

One of the songs is attributed to Richard the Lionheart, famously captured on his way back from smiting in the Holy Land in the twelfth century.

And there are drinking songs, carols, a Swedish ballad and religious pieces mostly rescued

CD **and** book **Reviews**

from ancient manuscripts and brought back to life on this recording.

But as music must fade and die, so must we.

The CD climaxes with a piece by Ricarda Reeck titled 'Death Dance', a tribute to the Dance of Death and the Grim Reaper, figures that evolved during the outbreaks of plague in medieval Europe.

This CD and its cover decoration of rattling skeletons is a reminder to 'dance while you may'.



Rendall Wagner

Rendall Wagner – The Art of Illusion

CD review by Greg Barnett
 TN549-48 - \$25

An unusual 20-sec fade-in finally reveals a single eastern-inflected flute over an acoustic stringed drone.

Very mysterious!

Track 2 starts with a raucous distorted rock guitar riff, followed by an acoustic-bouzouki plus vocal, these two phases then alternating throughout the song.

Track 3 features a Deep Purple-ish electric guitar.

Track 4 is eastern 'guitar' and percussion.

Track 5 alternates soft acoustic

with banging prog-rock.

The repeated juxtaposition of soft acoustic with full electric band is very reminiscent of Jeffro Tull, with Track 12 even featuring dextrous flute and many of Ian Anderson's signature embellishments, plus mixed meters and tempo.

Anyone would be hard-pressed to emulate Jeffro Tull's playing prowess, vocal strength, and brilliant folk poetry.

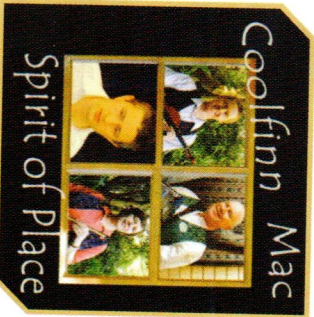
The final track, a cover of "It's Because I Love You" (1971, by The Masters Apprentices) is a good yardstick for the whole album.

Its quiet acoustic passages (underscored by a fine new blend of Eastern instruments) transition to the 'rock' passages with far more heavy/distorted guitar than the original.

The constant and regular sudden switches between soft/loud seemed unnecessarily formulaic when compared to the more subtle story-based ebb and flow of Jeffro Tull.

But one can't deny the creative spirit and playing chops, and there will be an appreciative audience for it.

Also available by Rendall Wagner is Aum – TN550-48



Coolfinn Mac – Spirit of Place

Review by Rick Narbutas
 TN1641-80 \$25

No strangers to the Celtic folk music scene, Coolfinn Mac have been playing to

appreciative audiences and in sessions for many years, celebrating all that is unique and distinctive about the times and places of legend, not to mention events of life in a vast new land.

Pam and Norm Merrigan have a wide repertoire of traditional music to please those of Irish ancestry.

Pam sings most of the vocals with a pure and gentle voice, playing keyboard, guitar and whistles.

Sadly, Norm Merrigan passed away recently.

However, in the CD, Norm added to the mood with vocals, button accordion, bouzouki and bodhran, providing harmonies on a few tracks as well.

Fiddler, James Palethorpe, and bass guitar player, Chris Merrigan, provide colour and drive to this authentic CD.

Their music is dedicated to those with Irish heritage who feel a strong connection to their Irish roots, ensuring the oral history of a bygone era is preserved for the next generation.

Some songs tell of the travels through the bush of Australia, shillelagh in hand, others of being able to marry anyone but the person you want to.

The CD contains jigs and reels, a traditional vocal and bodhran arrangement, well known tunes and some new offerings.

Ned Ryan, Singing Down the Wire and Ireland My Heart were all written by Norm with inspiration from travels overseas and gleaned from what they've heard played by others.

Norm also did the recording, mixing and mastering of all the tracks on the album.

TALKING GUITAR WITH NICK CHARLES

Yes, it's been a while since I put pen to paper in Trad&Now.

Apologies for my tardiness! In this issue, it's more of a tonic for the times rather than a clinical guitar chat.

SOME POSITIVE THOUGHTS FROM THE BUNKER

I can certainly sympathise with a songwriter's urge to write a gloomy lyric in these times!

I've written my share in the past eighteen months and the majority have landed in the round file (i.e., wastepaper basket).

Pessimism is a waste of valuable energy.

It's so obvious that what we need is something uplifting.

Remember all those stirring tunes that came out of World War Two?

Of course, there was a propaganda element, but there was an enemy at the gates to be vanquished.

The difference now is that the enemy has broken in, but there are similarities.

Personally, I found the first lockdowns in Melbourne, especially the first 8 week curfew one, not too stressful thanks to Jobkeeper and the thought that it might be over by Christmas last.

It was the first time in over 30 years that I had a break from constant gigging.

Indeed, we had a window of normality between Christmas and May, and I was gigging again and even made an interstate festival before the "proverbial" hit the fan this year.

This time around and some months in, there's a heavier fog to contend with, so I thought I might tell you how I've fared and perhaps you might take some inspiration from my ravings here!

I'm working on my playing again!

I've dug out the trusty "Real Books", if you don't know them, they are the "legal" charts of the finest works from the Great American Songbook, the works of Gershwin, Porter and the like. Just turn a page and you find a gem.

The charts are relatively easy to read and for a songwriter the chord changes are ripe for plunder.

If you've ever wondered where McCartney found musical inspiration, look no further.

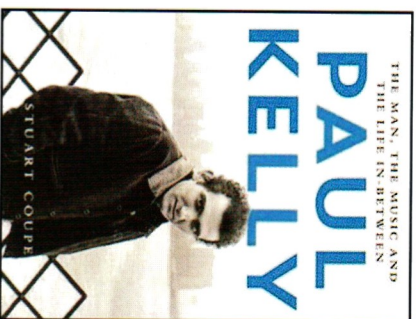
In terms of maintaining a repertoire, I've made a point of re-learning pieces from my earlier albums.

Firstly, that's given me some sense of pride, but it has also helped me rediscover the odd technique that I let slip as I moved through styles and new directions.

If you're not a player who's recorded, it's still worthwhile visiting music that first inspired you, your musical roots.

As a blues player, listening to my early heroes always reveals something new, that little bit of extra swing in Big Bill's playing, that astonishing phrasing in BB's soulfulness and singing and that soulfulness in John Hurt's work.

All of these elements can revitalise your playing. Try it!



STUART COOPER

At my lowest point, a couple of months ago when my gig calendar for 2021 began collapsing, and when I had actually considered throwing the towel in, I was contacted by a friend and fan who has pushed me into the 21st century.

I've always been hesitant to embrace the technology of the internet fully, I've only just entered the parallel universe of Facebook, but he has got me to "livestream" performances, and I'm astonished at the feedback I've received.

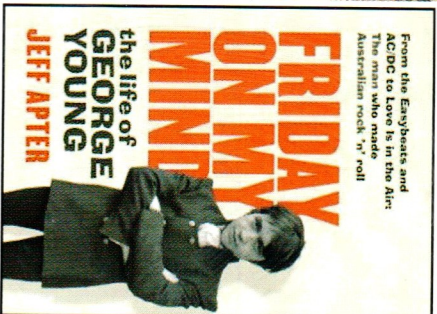
So much so that it has made practice relevant again.

People are asking for tunes from my past, suggesting new ones and even buying product.

There's no limit to the amount of great guitar information and film on YouTube.

There really are some wonderful players out there in every genre, and as you know, I jump genres!

I find interviews with great songwriters endlessly inspiring.



From the Easybeats and AC/DC to Love is in the Air: The man who made Australian rock 'n' roll

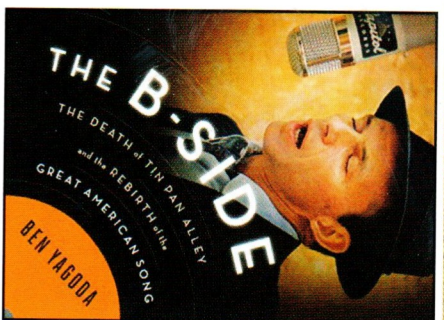
FRIDAY ON MY MIND
the life of **GEORGE YOUNG**
JEFF APTER

McCartney, James Taylor, Paul Simon, Dylan etc.

There are many "greatest acoustic riffs", "greatest intros", "greatest solos" and on and on. I think you can improve by watching them.

As usual, I also have some new books that I highly recommend that have helped me through.

In no particular order, I recommend: "Friday on My Mind", the life of George Young - former Easybeat and prolific hit writer; "Paul Kelly - The Man, The Music and The Life In Between"; "The B Side - the Death of Tin Pan Alley and the Rebirth of the Great American Song"; and finally, "One Two



Three Four- The Beatles in Time", a real gem.

These were all great reads.

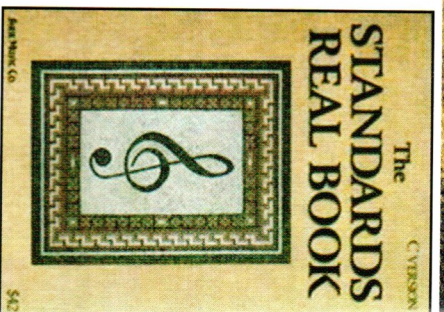
And just for a glimpse into a dizzying world of brilliance, have a look at the Motown story that's currently on air.

The writing, playing and singing was incredible.

Strangely too, the ZZ Top film was quite something, the mighty "Slow Blues in C" they play live at the start is worth a visit, so cool!

So there you have some thoughts and possible plans to spend your hours during this hiatus.

I'm also reminded that the great folk, country, blues and jazz age of the 1920s followed



directly after the great Spanish Flu Pandemic.

Maybe we can all be lifted into a new age of live music, great playing and inspiring songwriting.

I'll be doing my best.

Take care, keep on picking and we'll see you down the road...eventually!

The following Nick Charles albums are in stock at WWW.TradandNow.com

Closer to Home; Grace Notes;

Guitar Music; My Place; New Kind of Feeling; Return of the Travelling Fingertpicker; The River Flows; and; Travelling Fingertcker.



Getting off drugs is torture. Three months in one of our beds gets kids clean.

Please donate to support our live-in programs, giving addicted children their lives back. We'll buy more beds in more residences to take in more kids. It's as simple as that.

Buy beds for Ted. Call 1800 151 045 or visit www.tedfns.org.au



tednoffs
FOUNDATION
Engineering path to overcome drugs

Pierre from Guitars on Line sent us this clever piece of work

Ask yourself a question!

It looks like we're all going to be in various stages of lockdown for a little while longer, so, in a few years, we're all going to

look back at this time, and say to ourselves, wow, I can't believe I achieved all that during that COVID lockdown.
Now, when you look my most proud achievement back, what is your biggest was:

1. Finally getting my red wine consumption down to only one glass per day



2. Achieving the perfect home schooling/work from home balance



3. Investing in myself, investing in my children and reigniting my lifelong passion for classical guitar.



Now, we might not be able to help you achieve option 1 or 2, but, we can help you reignite your passion for classical guitar.