

Nominations open for the 2023 Australian Folk Music Awards (AFMAS)



by Keith Preston

Folk Alliance Australia invites nominations from artists, performers, venues, festivals and projects to showcase and highlight the talent and diversity of the Australian folk music scene.

We welcome nominations from first nations and culturally diverse artists in the 2023 AFMAs to fully reflect the full range of folk music being played in Australia.

We also welcome nominations from previous years nominators.

The 2023 AFMA Awards will celebrate and recognise the musical and cultural talent, vibrancy, richness, diversity and community nature of the Australian folk music sector and their achievements during the past year.

Awards will be presented at an Awards Concert/Gala event at The Brunswick Ballroom, Melbourne on October 25.

The Awards will also be live-streamed.

Nine (9) Awards will be presented in 2023:

Folk Album of the Year –

- Traditional;
- Folk Album of the Year – Contemporary;
- Folk Artist of the year – Solo;
- Folk Act of the year – Duo/ Group/Ensemble;
- Instrumentalist of the Year;
- Folk Act of the Year - People's Choice (by public voting);
- Folk Community/Cultural Project of The Year;
- Youth Artist of the Year;
- Contribution to Folk (over a period of time);
- and, Lifetime Award.

The Awards are the Australian Folk Music Awards are to: Create a national folk awards scheme for the Australian folk music sector/community; Raise the profile of Australian folk music; Acknowledge, recognise and celebrate national achievements of the folk music sector; Benefit Australian folk music artists to build their profile and careers; Involve and engage the wide diversity of Australian folk genres in the AFMA Awards; and, Raise the profile of Folk Alliance Australia as a national organisation for folk music.

The Awards will recognise and celebrate five finalists in each Award section.

Folk music covers a lot of musical ground ranging from World & Ethnic, Roots, Americana, Bush, Celtic, acoustic blues and many acoustic styles, both traditional and contemporary.

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

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

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

AFMA Nominations are On-line and close on Midnight, July 31 EST.

To nominate or for more information visit www.folkalliance.org.au/afmas-2023.

The Milk Carton Kids' Australian tour

by Ali Webb

World renowned Grammy nominated traditionalist folk duo, The Milk Carton Kids, have announced their first Australian tour since 2015, fresh from releasing 'All Of The Time In The World To Kill', the first song off their new album 'I Only See The Moon'.

Kenneth Pattengale and Joey Ryan are The Milk Carton Kids, who joined forces in 2011 with their delicious harmonies and intricate guitars in their hometown of Eagle Rock, California.

Since then, the duo has released six albums to great acclaim, earning them two Grammy Award nominations and extensive praise for their extraordinary devotion to the American folk tradition and contemporary songcraft.

On curating The Milk Carton Kids Australian tour, Love Police promoter BT said: "Kenneth and Joey are an absolute classic act, part mind blowing acoustic musical champs and part insanely funny comic duo."

"Strap in for an evening of musical majesty and hilarious action."

The amazing musical performances of these two fine musicians, coupled with their ample wit, make for a thoroughly entertaining evening of song and banter as previous tour reviews testify.

The songs emerge somewhere in the silences and the struggle between their sensibilities and the duo have been known to argue over song choices from the stage.

Actually, they have been known to argue about everything from wardrobe to geography to

grammar, but their singing is the place where they make room for each other and the shared identity that rises out of their combined voices.

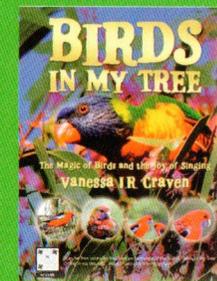
Opening for all shows will be poet, vocalist and multi-instrumentalist, Vera Sola, who has been described as the 'lost love child of Leonard Cohen and Nancy Sinatra'.

Vera Sola makes timeless, time bending sound and in the words of the London Sunday Times, she's a creature all her own, 'an utterly singular talent'.

The Milk Carton Kids with special guest Vera Sola will be performing in Queenscliff, Meeniyan, Castlemaine, Melbourne, Bangalow, Brisbane, Sydney and Adelaide from June 30 to July 13.

For further information and to book tickets visit lovepolice.com.au

Birds in My Tree: The Magic of Birds and the Joy of Singing



Purchase directly from author: <https://www.acousticssessions.com.au/product/birds-in-my-tree/>

Book links: <https://www.vircravenbirdsongbook.com>

Song link: <https://youtu.be/IVMNggnhpiA>

Book Review: "Theosophy Downunder" No 148 June 2023:

<http://theosophydownunder.org/australiansnewsletterjune2023.pdf>

Trad&now

Trad&Now Live! is now live

Trad&Now Live! is a free international streaming service for Australian folk music in its broadest sense.

It can be heard 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and all music heard was recorded in Australia and is available on a CD available from the Trad&Now website.

Genres included are traditional and contemporary folk music, bluegrass, acoustic blues, roots, Australiana, Americana, Celtic, World music, and traditional dance music with a little bit of bush poetry. More music is added every week.

Additional features will also be added. These will include

new arrivals, upcoming festival news, folk music programs on community radio, interviews., podcasts and music from touring acts.

This is the first such service for Australian folk music and is an ideal medium for making Australian folk music available to everyone at any time all around Australia and anywhere in the world as well.

Trad&Now Live! complements the Trad&Now magazine and the Trad&Now website.

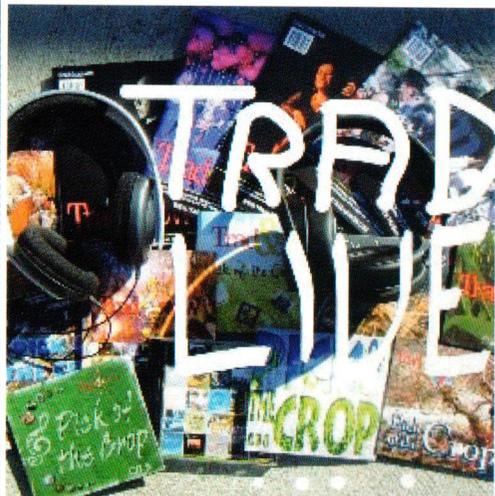
Playlists and other content information is available on the website.

The Trad&Now website has the world's largest selection of

Australian recorded folk music listed and available for sale and Trad&Now Live! will help to expose this vast catalogue of music to the world.

Trad&Now magazine is Australia's longest continually running national magazine covering those genres of folk music and is available mostly by subscription and from all good newsagents around Australia. Eight (8) editions are published every year, it only costs \$55 and includes a free compilation CD.

For more information or to submit material, contact info@TradandNow.com



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Origins of the original Bushwackers Band

by Dave Isom

As the final siren approaches in my game of life, I believe it important to get the facts regarding the origins of the Bushwackers Band, Melbourne, not to be confused with Moreton Bay Bushwackers or any other group of that name who we were at the time oblivious to the original band and my role in founding it.

In 1969, I commenced studying Economics at Latrobe University, Bundoora, which had only been going for two years previously.

As it was a new University, not a lot was happening socially and some seed funding was available for Clubs and Societies (\$100 or thereabouts), so I started the Latrobe University Folk Music Club.

They were great boozy nights where I'd get Danny Spooner, often chaperoned by Stan Gottschalk, Richard Leech (Skreetch), Margret Roadknight and others to perform, after which we'd have an "all in" with myself on guitar, Bert Kahanoff on lagerphone, and the following year, Jan Wositzky joined in on harmonica and tea chest bass, with all of us singing.

One night Bert and I attended a concert at The Assembly Hall, Collins Street to see "The Wild Colonial Boys", who provided the sound track to the Ned Kelly film featuring Mick Jagger as Ned!

We were blown away by the band and walking home up Collins Street I said to Bert: "let's start a bush band".

I had been filling in for Dave Hubbard in "Captain Matchbox Whoopee Band" on vocals and playing guitar while he was off

for health reasons, but my real love was and still is Australian bush music.

My musical mentor was Martyn Wyndham Read who had put out a record with others, including Jim Buchanan and Peter Dickie, called "Bullockies, Bushwackers and Booze" which had high rotation on my Phillips portable record player.

In May 1971, a few of us from the folk club went to the first Aquarius Festival at the ANU Canberra.

We slept in small tents inside a massive marquee as the nights were cold, so we spent a lot of time during the evenings in the warmest, most convivial place, the Union Bar.

There we drank as much beer as we were able, played music and met an accordion player and Pharmacy student, Mick Slocum.

Mick could see our energy



Donkeys at Boort Fiesta Victoria 1973 Mick Slocum, Bert Kahanoff, Davey Kidd, Jan Wositzky, Dave Isom



Jan Wositzky, Dave Isom, John Elischer, John (Pearly) Spencer, Bert Kahanoff and Silvester Kroyherr.

and our love of Australian songs and Irish tunes, and identified with that.

At the end of the festival there was a concert locally where a bunch of us got together, including the fore mentioned and when the compere asked the name of the band, I said "The Original Bushwackers and Bullockies Bush Band", lifting the name from the record that had been on high rotation.

The first professional gig was as a trio with me on guitar and banjo, Bert Kahanoff on lagerphone and Jan Wositzky on bush bass, spoons and harmonica, in October 1971, either for the Clayton Arts Council or it may have been at the Matthews Avenue Community Hall, Tullamarine, where Ben Hall attended.

We really can't remember which one was first.

Ben and his wife Molly were dry cleaners in Niddrie, was the great grandson of the infamous

bush ranger of the same name, and ran a part time business keeping the family tradition going with horse drawn Cobb and Co. Coaches.

Even as a trio, we were well received, playing the songs with much energy and conviction which audiences enjoyed, so the band quickly expanded with some of Jan's mates who played tenor banjo, mandolin, harmonica and with our first fiddler, Sylvester Kroyherr, we held the band's first formal rehearsal in December 1971.

Gigs followed, including such classics as "The Eaglehawk Dahlia and Arts Festival" and "The Boort Fiesta", as well as the commencement of regular work at Emu Bottom, Sunbury, Victoria's oldest homestead.

During 1972, Mick had joined us, players had come and gone, but the line up settled for the time, being by 1973 with, myself, Jan Wositzky, Mick Slocum, Bert Kahanoff and Davey Kidd on fiddle.

Through a mutual friend at our legendary gigs at the Polaris Inn, Carlton, we met folk singer and radio host, Dennis Gibbons, who lined up our first recording sessions at Armstrong Studios, South Melbourne.

Then trainee sound engineer, Ross Cockle recorded us after hours and although the original tapes have been lost, a cassette survived and has been skilfully remastered to remake the first official recording, "Vintage Bushwackers" into a CD.

By 1973, we had decided to give it a go "full time", arranged our own tour of New Zealand and became busy with gigs and high energy, youthful performances and interesting arrangements of Australian Anglo/Celtic songs and tunes.

Bert Kahanoff decided to peruse a corporate career with his Economics Degree and left the band at the end of that year, being replaced by former "Ranting Lads" lagerphone player, Dobe Newton, who joined

us full time in 1974.

A busy period followed with Victorian Arts Council touring, the band's first recording contract on Picture Records, "The Shearer's Dream", regular trips to Sydney for work in RSL Clubs and kid's TV shows, the sound track to a new bushranger TV series "Cash & Co.", and a flying visit to perform in Jakarta for the Australian Tourist Commission before departing in June for a 9 month tour of Europe.

I left the band mid 1975 and commenced a long association with the Victorian Arts Council touring in schools and evening productions in various states, cofounding "The Sundowners", with former "Mulga Bill's Bicycle Band" member, Peter McDonald, and later recording, "Colonial Classics" with Hammard Records, which became a "Gold Record".

Wanting more flexibility to pursue other interests, including offshore sailing, I left the Sundowners, started booking agency, "Colonial Entertainers", and was busy with my one man show, "Dave's Bush Music Show" in schools and evening performances, but had flexibility with time to develop my sailing interests.

A highlight of that period was to lead a bush dance for 500 school kids at Portland in front of our now King, then Prince Charles and Lady Dianna when they came here to celebrate Victoria's 150th birthday in 1985, and a stint in Dallas Texas, God dammit!

Curiously, The Bushwackers Band always seemed to have some inner energy or momentum of its own, even as a three piece group with no lead melody instrument.

It is pleasing to know that the band I initiated over fifty years ago continues today, albeit without any original members, but has kept getting re-energised through a turnover of top musicians with over one hundred members having played with The Bushwackers, all of whom have added something to the musical tapestry which makes up the band.

Long may they run.

Today, I still love singing bush and sea songs, learning more Aussie tunes on fiddle and putting back some of my extensive performance experience running a community group, "The Newport Bush Orchestra" which helps keep our Anglo Celtic Australian music alive while still having fun playing music with others.



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- 3 NOVEMBER - ESPERANCE, WA
- 4 NOVEMBER - KALAMUNDA, WA

FESTIVALS

- 30 SEPTEMBER - ALBANY FOLKNSHANTY FESTIVAL
- 28 OCTOBER - DORRIGO FOLK AND BLUEGRASS FESTIVAL
- 24 NOVEMBER - BUNDANOON FOLK FESTIVAL

LOOK ALBUM LAUNCH TOUR

- 1 SEPTEMBER - WOLLONGONG
- 29 SEPTEMBER - PERTH
- 14 OCTOBER - SYDNEY
- 18 NOVEMBER - WAUCHOPE, NSW
- 10 NOVEMBER - GLENLYON, VIC
- 12 NOVEMBER - BRUNSWICK, VIC
- 19 NOVEMBER - KALANG (NEAR BELLINGEN), NSW
- 25 NOVEMBER - CANBERRA
- 3 DECEMBER - BRAIDWOOD, NSW
- 16 DECEMBER - TANJA, NSW
- 3 FEBRUARY - HOBART, TAS

WWW.FREDSMITH.COM.AU

'Moments of synchronicity': Remembering Gary Shearston

by Jim Low

It was the last day of 2008.

I was enjoying a leisurely stroll around the historic township of Windsor in the New South Wales Hawkesbury region.

In a second hand shop I came across a cardboard box full of old photographs.

My initial disinterest while rummaging through the box changed to pleasant surprise.

Its contents included various black and white photographs of

a man playing a guitar.

I was amazed to recognise immediately images of a young Gary Shearston.

Through his songwriting and interpretation of traditional and contemporary songs, Gary Shearston gained considerable popularity as an Australian folk singer in the 1960s.

Shuffling through the rest of this miscellaneous collection, I retrieved about a dozen more

photographs of Gary.

A later visit brought the total to seventeen, all different and of varying quality and condition.

On the back of each photograph was the same date, December 1963.

These old photographs reminded me of the cover of Gary's first CBS LP (long playing) recording, 'Folk Songs and Ballads of Australia'.

It was released in April 1964 and a month later I purchased a copy with money given to me for my sixteenth birthday.

I really valued that collection of songs, one of the first albums that I owned.

The songs on the LP came from a tradition of songs which told stories about Australian places and characters.

They were sparsely produced and sung in Gary's clear, warm and unashamedly Australian voice.

This LP was for me the ideal introduction to Australian folk music.

When I sent Gary copies of some of the photographs I had found, they roused old memories for him too.

In a letter written in June 2009, he expressed his appreciation and amazement.

"Moments of synchronicity never fail to fascinate!" he wrote.

"How extraordinary that these photos should turn up in some Windsor shop only to be discovered by yourself!

"Perusal of the cover of

'Australian Folk Songs and Ballads' suggest they are part of a shoot done by legendary 'Push' photographer, Lou Horton, during a performance at The 'Troubadour'.

"I remember it well because a mate of his who accompanied him was overly voluble over his coffee and I had to suggest he might like to tone it down a bit and cock an ear to the songs.

"Anyway ... same old 'Tatay' guitar, same shirt, same 'moody' black 'n' white atmosphere, so I'm 99% sure of the association."

Late in May 1964, the very popular American folk group, Peter, Paul and Mary, began their first Australian tour.

A photograph appeared in a Sydney newspaper showing the trio reading Gary's album notes to the recently released 'Folk Songs and Ballads of Australia', thereby giving ample prominence to its front cover.

In 1966 the group released

their version of Gary's song, 'Sometime Lovin'.

I remember telling Gary in a telephone conversation in late 2004 how influential this collection of songs was for me.

He told me the LP was recorded in about three hours in a little EMI studio in Sydney, just after he and Les Miller, who played guitar and banjo on the album, had returned from an Arts Council tour.

He described the recording session as resembling 'a little concert'.

The order of the songs was basically the same order as on the album, saving editing time.

He felt that this gave the recording its 'live' feel.

Jokingly, he reckoned the LP contains the fastest version of Brisbane Ladies in recording history.

But he expressed a pride in the LP which he felt still 'holds up'.

He referred especially to the song 'Reedy River', a Henry Lawson poem set to music by Chris Kempster and featured in the musical of the same name.

He also expressed strong attachment to the LP's opening track, Don Henderson's 'Put A Light in Every Country Window'. Gary's friendship with Henderson had been a long and close one.

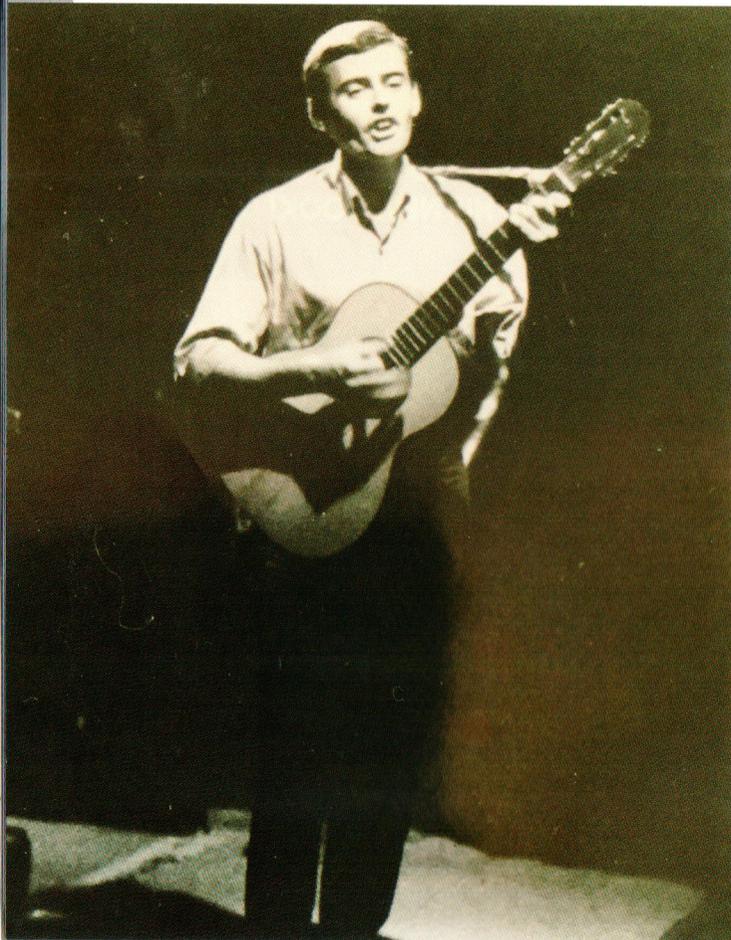
He always expressed admiration for Henderson's songs.

He regretted to me in 2009 that he never was financially able to make an album of Don Henderson's songs which he said he 'always wanted to do'.

'I have to leave,' he reflected, 'all that on the shelf marked pipe dreams.'

It's hard to believe that ten years have passed since Gary Shearston's death on July 1, 2013.

As a songwriter myself, I have to claim Gary as the significant



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I was fortunate to meet him when he returned to Australia in 1989.

That meeting gave me the opportunity to thank him personally for his early songs and those later recorded while overseas.

From that meeting we became friends and over the following years he generously encouraged my songwriting.

In a later telephone conversation, I shared with him another moment of synchronicity.

When I was growing up in North Sydney in the 1950s and 1960s, Gary lived in the same street as me.

He lived for a short while in a new high-rise complex of units.

This was when he was involved with Hayes Gordon's infant Ensemble Theatre, born in a dilapidated, old, corrugated-iron building on the shores of Careening Cove at Kirribilli.

I often saw him walking down my street, usually carrying his guitar.

If you are familiar with the cover of Gary's third CBS LP recording 'Australian Broadside', released in March 1965, then that is pretty much how I remember him.

Unfortunately I was too shy to approach him, even though his songs were becoming familiar to me.

He reflected appreciatively on this time in his life in an unreleased song called 'Dropping A Few', in which he modestly says, 'I came to use what gifts I had, the better for passing through'.

It is sometimes difficult to make someone genuinely aware of how important they have been in your life.

In 2005, I tried to express some of my thoughts about Gary in a song.

For me he was a folksinger, part of that important, long line of troubadours who sing their way throughout their lives.

So I simply called my song 'Folksinger' and was grateful that Gary got to hear it.

A man who sometimes wore his heart on his sleeve, he was interested in and considerate of others and always endeavoured to be true to his beliefs and ideals.

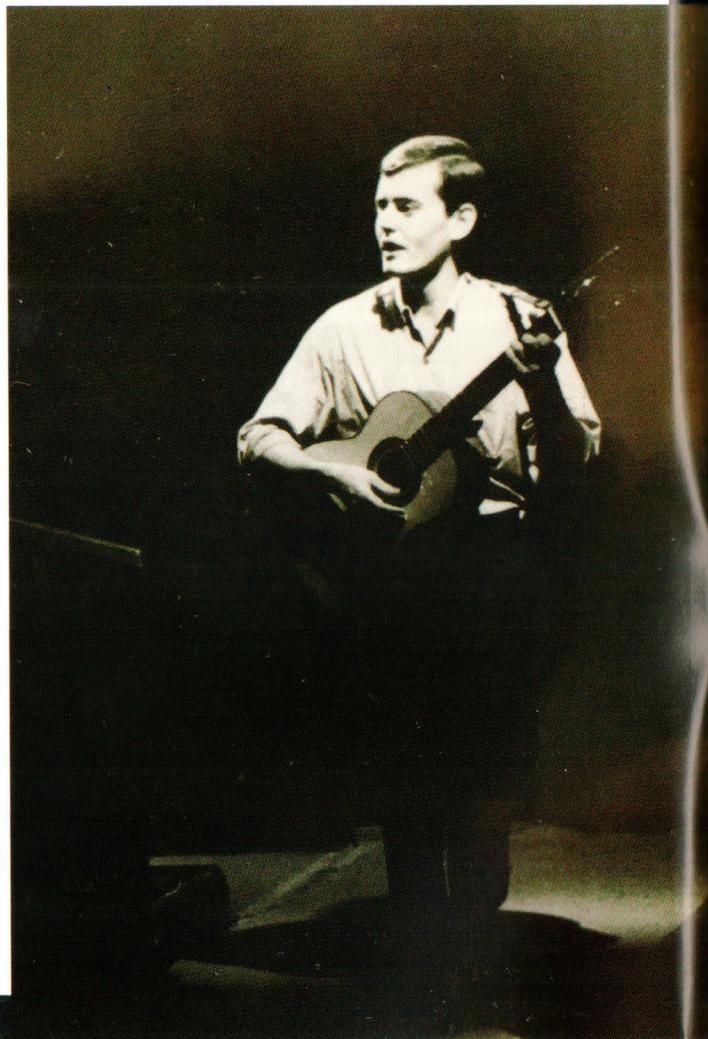
I feel really fortunate to have

known him.

Throughout his life, Gary Shearston continued performing songs from 'Folk Songs and Ballads of Australia'.

He also continued writing songs, passionately applying himself to what he called the 'song writing trade'.

As songs of our time, his reflection with honesty upon our uncertain world, always celebrating and inspiring a real hope and faith in humanity, left a wonderful collection of songs to continue exploring and enjoying.



Fred's been a busy boy

Fred Smith has been extremely busy touring the nation promoting his new album and a new book.

His new album, "Look", debuted at the National Folk Festival in Canberra over easter, ahead of tour dates that started in June.

Fred describes the recording as "a collection of songs that are not about Afghanistan.

"With contributions from luminaries including Mal Webb, Stephen Taberner and Liz Frencham, it's very much an album by the Australian folk scene.

"It embodies the best elements of folk song tradition: humour, narrative, melody, feeling and deftly expressed politics."

Track one is a tongue in cheek survey of Fred's own career in folk music.

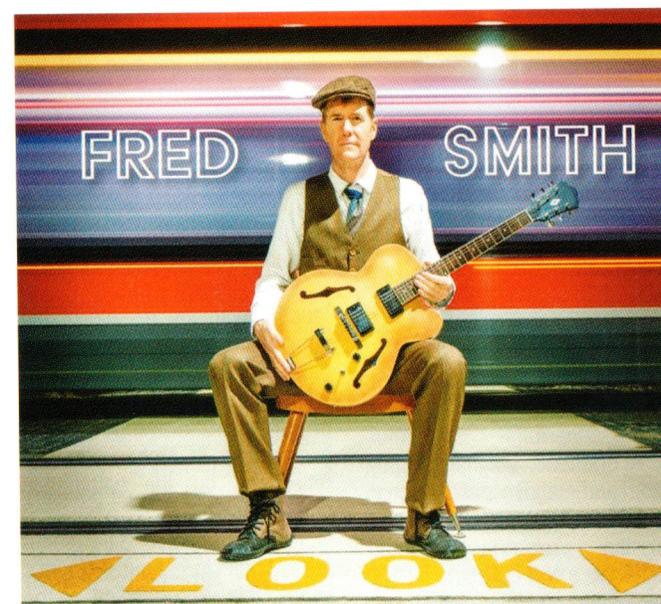
Other songs are wry odes to the artist's heroes: Leonard Cohen, Helen Garner and the late Brisbane lawyer-folksinger, John Thompson.

Mortality and introspection weave through and are masterfully handled.

Smith toys with a range of timings and feels, from waltz to rhumba to bluegrass, but there are a couple of gentle ballads, "Come and Say Goodnight", "Corners of My Mind".

Their intimacy reminds us why every generation rediscovers folk music.

The recording offers a warm blend of mirth and meaning and would fit well in your kitchen.



There's a squiggly line in the absurd running through the recording, absurdity being the only sensible response to being human, and that's the bottom line with this recording, it's a good one for humans.

As if that's not enough, Fred has also written a book to be released in August.

As the second anniversary of the collapse of Kabul approached, book publishers, Puncher and Wattmann, were delighted to announce the publication of 'The Sparrows of Kabul'.

This fast-paced memoir is a personal account of Fred Smith's experiences working on the evacuation of Kabul in the heady days following the collapse of the Afghan republic on August 15, 2021.

On return to Australia from

Kabul, Smith wrote a 90,000 word first draft of this memoir in a sleepless two-week binge while COVID quarantining in an Adelaide hotel.

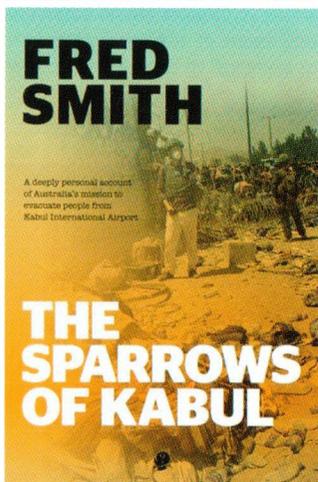
Two weeks in the writing, two years in the editing, the book sizzles with the rawness of immediate experience while benefiting from the structure of a story well told.

"I'd never seen such absolute desperation as I saw in the eyes of the people outside the gates of the airport" says Smith.

"Australians followed our 20-year involvement in Afghanistan out of the corners of their eyes, and watched on TV as the whole thing collapsed.

"Offering an accessible account of it all has been my project."

'The Sparrows of Kabul' is vivid reportage from someone



Fred Smith, Sparrows of Kabul,
(Puncher and Wattmann)
288pp, \$32.95

who was there.

A dramatic, poignant, funny, sad and above all, human account of Australia's evacuation mission which ultimately managed to extract 4,100 vulnerable people from the clutches of the Taliban.

We are left admiring the courage and tenacity of so many Afghan men, women and children who, in a last-ditch dash for freedom, braved the human cattle yards outside the

gates of Kabul Airport, as well as the public servants and soldiers who helped them.

'The Sparrows of Kabul' is the culmination of a remarkably sustained piece of storytelling by a writer regarded by many as a national treasure and the poet of Australia's Afghanistan experience.

The lyrics to Fred's song 'Sapper's Lullaby' are engraved in marble at the Australian plot in the centuries old British War Cemetery in Kabul.

It is being published in tandem with the release of the companion album of the same name featuring songs written by Fred after the release of 'Dust of Uruzgan' drawing on his experiences in Afghanistan and reflections on the withdrawal and evacuation.

Hugh Rimington said about the book: "In Fred Smith's hands, this vivid account of the evacuation of Kabul is a rare bird; viscerally honest, packed with self-doubt, suffering and grace.

"Not just the facts but the feelings as the mission saved many but failed others.

"Profoundly moving."

Allan Gyngell, AO, also said: "...perfectly captures the urgency of contemporary events...combining lightness of tone with seriousness of content and purpose...it works beautifully".

Fred is the unusual combination of a diplomat and a songwriter.

He was the first Australian diplomat to be sent to work alongside our troops in Uruzgan province in 2009 and the last to leave in 2013.

In 2011, Fred released the album 'Dust of Uruzgan', which received rave reviews and comparisons with the great Australian balladeers, Eric Bogle, John Schumann, and Don Walker.

In 2016, Allen and Unwin published 'The Dust of Uruzgan', Smith's memoir of his experiences in the province.

Smith returned to Afghanistan in March 2021 to work at the Embassy in Kabul as front of house for Australia's development and humanitarian program.

He ended up working from

Kabul airport as part of the Australian team seeking to get former Australian government staff and thousands of others in through the human logjams at the airport's gates and out of Afghanistan.

Since returning, he has continued to tour his Afghanistan songs extensively around Australia, often raising money for charities close to his heart.

The royalties from sales of the book, 'The Sparrows of Kabul', will be donated to Soldier On, a non-profit organisation dedicated to helping Australian Defence Force personnel and their families, and the Asadi Zan Foundation which has been helping Afghan women's rights defenders since the fall of Kabul.

Fred received the Australian Folk Music Awards Artist of the Year - solo in 2022 and in 2021 he was awarded the ACT Chief Minister's Rotary Peace Prize.

In 2023, he also received the Alistair Hulett Songs for Social Justice Award and he is the

only artist to win two National Folk Recording Awards (NFSA), for Bagarap Empires (2002) and Urban Sea Shanties (2009)

In 2008, Sydney Morning Herald critic, Bruce Elder, wrote: "It is about time Australia caught up with Fred Smith.

"This remarkable singer-songwriter, who at various times reveals influences that range from Paul Kelly via Lou Reed to Loudon Wainwright III to Leonard Cohen, keeps releasing amazingly accomplished albums.

"Fred Smith has been a favourite on the Australian festival circuit for years, much loved for his gentle wit, gift for story and melody, and sublime collaborations with Liz Frencham and The Spooky Men's Chorale.

"Now the rest of Australia is catching up with Fred Smith.

"He was the subject of a recent ABC Australian Story feature about his work in Afghanistan and on peace keeping operations in the war-torn islands of the South Pacific.

"Fred's book, 'The Dust of Uruzgan', was published by Allen and Unwin in 2016, and his 2020 album 'Domestic' earned rave reviews."

Bruce Elder also said on a separate occasion: "Fred Smith is simply the best folk/country musician working in this country...beyond writing some of the finest songs about Australians at war (Dust of Uruzgan), he's created a repertoire that is wry, literate, witty, powerfully emotional and insightful."

This was supported by Warwick McFadyen, from the Sunday Age who said:

"Fred Smith is one of this country's most literate, humorous, intelligent and empathic songwriters", while Arne Fealing, Canberra Times said: "Grace, gentility, and an art that is purely his own.

"No one does it like him."



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The Joys of the Women re-enjoyed



Kavisha Mazzella

On July 2, at New Farm Cinemas, New Farm, Qld, a 30th anniversary screening of 'The Joys of the Women' documentary was held.

'The Joys of the Women' was first broadcast on ABC TV in 1993 and was the first of a new genre of music documentaries centered on community choirs.

The rest is history!

The anniversary event also featured performances by Kavisha Mazzella, Brisbane based Italian folk band, Zumpa, the Taranta Meanjin Dancers and a Q&A with the Director, Franco Di Chiera.

'The Joys of the Women' (Le Gioie Delle Donne) documentary is a heartfelt musical journey.

The film traces the search by singer/songwriter Kavisha Mazzella (OAM) to find the lost songs of a generation.

It captures with wit and warmth the larger than life

characters in the Fremantle Italian women's choir and documents last vestiges of Italian folk music in Italy and Australia.

The film introduced the Choir to a national audience, helping them to become a cultural phenomenon.

The film included the song, 'Wedding Sheets' which won Kavisha a Songwriting Prize at the West Australia Music Industry Awards (WAMIA).

A clip of the song is part of the permanent exhibit at the Museo Italiano in Melbourne, complete with Kavisha's original hand-written lyrics.

Other excerpts from the film are featured on Australian Screen Online.

The music CD became one of ABC Enterprises's highest selling sound-track albums.

Kavisha is an ARIA Award winner and was made a Member of the Order of Australia for

service to the performing arts, and to the community, through the development of musical projects promoting awareness of multicultural, refugee and Indigenous experiences.

'The Joys of the Women' was first released in the cinemas around Australia in 1993 including sell out seasons.

The documentary garnered rave reviews with Filmnews reviewer, Stephen Bennetts, writing: "Here and elsewhere, the use of black and white footage makes powerful associations with Italian cinema of neo-realism of the forties and fifties, and its focus on the everyday lives of Italian working-class people.

"As each woman talks about her life, she is framed dramatically inside a small vignette of her own home, speaking volumes about life histories and culture.

"One woman stands in the middle of a vast expanse of a Great Australian Suburban Backyard, singing an Italian immigrant's song, which encapsulates her own life story, a powerful image of Italian peasant culture in the Australian suburbs which becomes symbolic of the cultural and historical contradictions of migrant life in Australia".

The film screened at prestigious international film festivals including the 34th International Festival dei Popoli Florence, Trezieme Bilan du Film Ethnographique Paris and

Sydney International Film Festival.

It was also nominated for Best Documentary in the Film Critics Circle of Australia Awards.

After three decades, it still screens at festivals including the Sguardi Altrove Film Festival in Milan, where it was part of a special section "sull'Australia", exploring Italian migration to Australia.

In a fitting tribute to the women themselves, 'The Joys of The Women Choir' was invited to sing at a luncheon in Canberra to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Australian women winning the vote, in the presence of then Prime Minister, Paul Keating.

The Choir also recorded the theme song for the Fremantle Docker's Australian football team and sang it at their grand final match in Perth, making front-page headlines.

One member of the Choir, the late Emma Ciccosto, became something of a talk show celebrity with her award winning book 'Emma: A Translated Life'.

The stage play adaptation,

'Emma', was a critical and box office success.

Her later book 'A Recipe for Life' is part autobiographical, part musical and theatrical performance, and part cookbook, with over 150 Italian recipes.

Emma and the Choir helped personify the joyous celebration of Italian immigrant women in Australia and their multi-faceted lives.

Director Di Chiera commented, "I'm very proud this film continues to have a long life and is being appreciated, not just as a piece of entertainment, but as a joyous celebration of Italian immigrant women in Australia and their multi-faceted lives".

Other projects of Di Chiera have won an Australian Film Institute Award (AFI/ACTA) for Best Mini Series/Telefeature, Best Documentary at RomeFictionFest and screened at the Venice Film Festival.

His feature film, 'Big Mamma's Boy' was released nationally by Madman Entertainment and sold to Fox

Movies.

He is currently involved in the Queensland film, 'Photos in the Attic' and the Victorian-based project, 'Bonegilla'.

Joint Producer, Andrew Ogilvie, now heads one of the most successful documentary production houses in the country, Electric Pictures.

The company has developed particular expertise in blue chip docs, drama docs, and factual series, often tackling hard subjects like the exploitation of children as soldiers, and the drama of war, but are also expert at cultural histories, science stories, political intrigue, and a more fun approach to topics such as the Eurovision Song Contest and the Australian wine industry.

The company has produced content for global public broadcasters and cable TV, and more recently has found great international success with the long running factual series, 'Aussie Gold Hunters', for Discovery.



Zumpa

Archival revival project

by Glenn Nelson

Music was the first of my life's addictions.

By age sixteen I became the first person invited to any party because I had the music.

Since this time my library has never stopped growing.

While over the years this has become quite diverse, it has long been dominated by the blues.

It wasn't until I had purchased my first blues album that the realisation that blues was what I had actively, yet unknowingly, been seeking, settled upon my consciousness.

It was fun racing about liked a crazed individual seeking to expand my blues collection and in such pursuit, there was virtually nowhere I would not tread.

Decades later, due to my involvement within the Australian

blues community, especially on the journalistic side of things, I found myself an honorary member of every blues club and society in the country.

Each month, while reading through the various newsletters which arrived in the mail, I'd often see adds placed by bands advertising their newly released cassette.

Some of these bands would produce as few as 100 copies.

As result, a cheque would be drafted, an envelope addressed, a stamp licked and a stroll to the nearest postbox ensued.

A few days later, Australia Post was way more efficient back then, a new album would arrive.

As my collection grew, it became apparent that the early to mid 90s was, in my

humble opinion, the pinnacle of Australian country blues.

"The Bayou Brothers" from Perth, the "Mudsteppers", and "The Blues Preachers" from Sydney and from Melbourne, "Alex Burns & Nick Charles" all produced some truly fabulous recordings.

While a lot of equally fabulous bands followed, such as the "Ten Cent Shooters" from Perth or "Blues Before Sunrise" from Melbourne, to name just a couple, the early to mid 90s was a wonderfully prolific period for home bred country blues and similar, by which time CD technology had well established itself.

Today, scouring the internet or searching through music databases such as Discogs or Allmusic, one will find virtually

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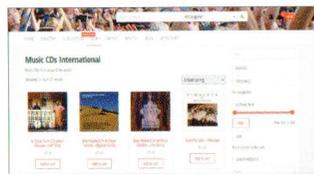
Did you know that the world's largest range of Australian recorded folk music and related genres available for sale is featured on the Trad&Now website, www.tradandnow.com?

Quantities of many hundreds of titles, collected for nearly 20 years from performers around the country, are there for you to choose from.

If you want to hear something that you recall fondly from a performance on a stage, at a club or at a festival, it's very likely to be still available for purchase from the website.

If it's out of stock, we will try and source it for you from the original performers.

Take a look now!
You'll be amazed at how extensive a range of CDs, books and some DVDs is available.



Phone 0410 522 070 or email info@TradandNow.com if you need more specific information.

no reference to many of the bands or recordings I have amassed.

While cassettes may represent a fabulous source of analogue audio, such things will not last indefinitely.

Nor will those of us with these private collections.

Aware of the possibility that such recordings could be lost to time, as has so often been the case, the desire to archive these emerged.

In times past, archiving a cassette simply meant making another copy.

Now, in the digital age, we have other options, the digitisation of these recordings being just one and the one deemed most appropriate.

The digitisation of tape recordings needs to be done in real time ensuring no sonic degradation takes place.

My computer, a Linux machine built specifically to support audio, became the workhorse of this digitisation / archival process which for myself has now become relatively straight forward, thank goodness.

A number of years ago, as cassette tapes went very much out of vogue, many unwanted pieces of fine stereo equipment found their way onto local marketplaces.

During this period, I managed to acquire two additional decks including a beautiful Luxman unit now permanently attached to my computer via a Behringer U-Phono UFO 202.

With all the technical headaches and hurdles overcome, it was then time to take a whip and chair to the audio editing program Audacity, the freely available yet highly

acclaimed audio recording, editing software for Linux, Mac and Windows.

The tapes are recorded, exported in wav format before finally being edited into their individual tracks with embedded metadata.

I am delighted to report that virtually no further editing was required other than for a few poorly recorded live performances.

Wav files are readily burned to CD.

Hint: when burning audio, choose the slowest speed that your software supports as this will minimise potential playback / player compatibility issues.

With the archiving project well under way, Armadillo Slim (Highway 49) contributed his own archived collection from which was found gems such as a terrific remastered recording by the "Bellair Bandits" featuring Andy Baylor, Chris Palmer, Jimmy Baeck, Mark Gough, Sam Linton-Smith and Chris Pascoe from 1976.

Also from Slim's archive an equally terrific release by the "Emma Franz Band" from 1991 along with another by the "Adderley Smith Blues Band", not to mention many Live-To-Air performances from what

was once the "Yarrambat Blues Lounge".

Ross "Rooster" Mortimer, founder of Muddy Waters Cafe and Blue Tongue Records, graciously provided his collection for the project, from where the 1983/4 "Five Aces" recording emerged, featuring Kerri Simpson, Ken Farmer, Steve Purcell, Sammy Semple and Vernon Gibson, while Ken Farmer kindly provided the "Mudcats" self-titled recording of 1989.

Had we not already digitised the "Panton Hill Umbrella Club" release 'Sofisticated', Ken would have also happily provided this.

Also from Rooster's archive is some unreleased "Hoochie Coochie Boys" material, one featuring guest appearances by Kerri Simpson, along with a wondrous live "Chickenhead" performance from 1996, featuring special guest Chris Wilson.

Knowing that Sarah Carroll has herself been archiving Chris' output since his death in 2019, this recording was made available to her family, which she has since given to Max Crawdaddy, who has long been one of Chris' biggest fans.

Ross and myself both felt it was nothing shy of wonderful to be in a position to be able to



provide this recording to Sarah and her sons.

On a similar note, after digitising some of the foreign cassette only releases, I reached out to Georgette Fry, one of Canada's leading vocalists, to confirm the details of the guitarists of a terrific trio she fronted back in 1990 named "One Flight Up".

Shortly after, a very gracious response arrived from Georgette's daughter who answered my questions stating further that they themselves no longer had a copy asking if such could be provided.

Again it was wonderful to find myself in such a position to return to the artist a long lost recording.

While the wheels of this endeavour continue to roll, where it will lead next and how much further it will travel is uncertain.

Equally uncertain is what will

happen with the archive when it's done.

I suspect this may become a perpetual work in progress.

One thing for certain is that copies will be made available to the "usual suspects".

Communications have been exchanged with the "National Film and Sound Archive" in Canberra in view of potentially finding a permanent home for the archive there.

Other options include making these recordings available via on-line streaming, decisions yet to be made.

At time of writing, close to a hundred albums have been archived as part of this project.

A few of these now digitised recordings have been aired, where out here in listener land, they sound truly fabulous.

For the record, its not just many of these cassette only releases that have vanished, references to many CD only

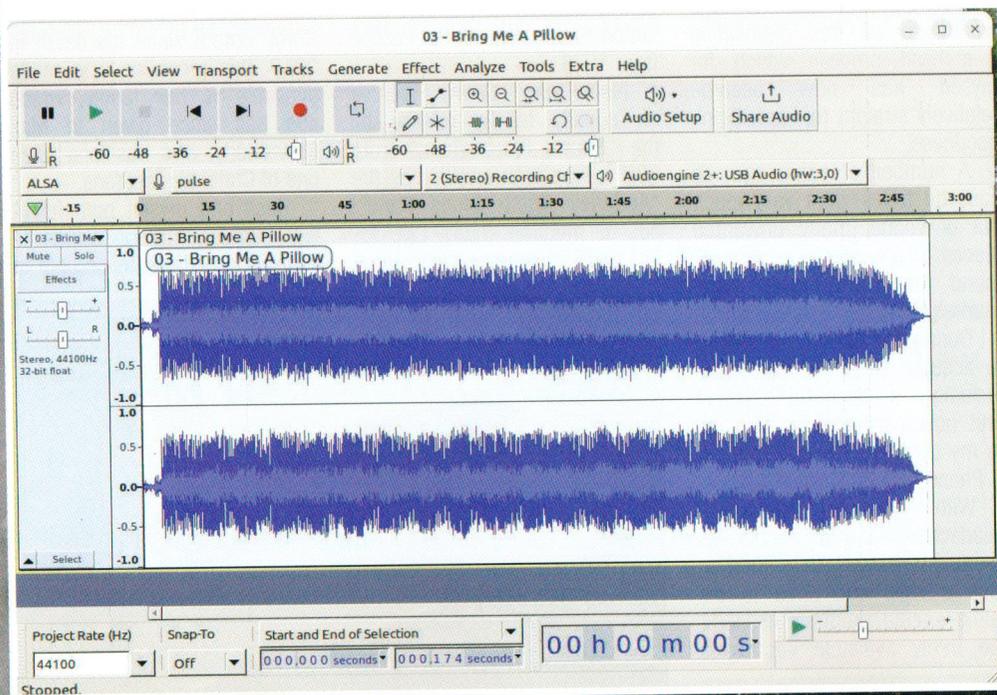
releases can no longer be found, such as the remarkable outing by 'Dean Addison's Hidden Charms' (Melbourne) "Use Your Head" or the equally remarkable 'Big Top Blues Band's' (Sydney) "Mad Love" to mention just two - I could go on.

We need to save more while we can.

I remain grateful for the encouragement and contributions from Armadillo Slim and Ross Mortimer.

Thanks to my nephew Cain who built my Linux box, and lastly to Jan Dale for airing some of these recordings on "Southern Style" - it's been soooo fabulous hearing them again.

Glenn Nelson is a former presenter of the Highway 49 Blues radio program (Melbourne) and web-master of the Highway 49 Blues web pages (now discontinued).



Challenge accepted - My Master of Ceremonies journey

by Xueqian (Chien) Zhang

The artistic director from my university back in China told me when I was 20: 'You are so shy that you will never be able to do MCing.'

Everyone respected him, so he was the authority, representing truths.

Therefore, I believed everything he said was right.

But now, slowly, I've changed my mind.

I shouldn't let someone define my destiny.

Even though I still have some self-doubts, I am working on them through keeping accepting challenges.

I want to record my current journey to remind myself, but also inspire you in some ways, if possible.

Last October, my friend Rose told me about the Wirrina Bluegrass and Acoustic Roots Festival after hearing that I like bluegrass music.

So I started to browse its website and discovered that by being a volunteer, I could get a free ticket (the ticket price is \$85, a good deal!).

But after being a volunteer at the Royal Adelaide Show, I didn't want to do customer service type jobs anymore (boring, sorry).

Luckily, I found out there was a different task listed: MC (Master of Ceremonies) concerts. 'Ah, that would be much more interesting', I said to myself.

After a phone call, I got the



role.

But I also started to feel nervous, so my inner dialogue started: 'I've never done that before.'

'What did I sign up for? Am I too crazy?'

But, I've already said yes.

There's a Chinese saying, 'there is no turning back of an arrow once it's shot'.

I have to do it now then.

Luckily, Thea, one of the festival committee members, a lovely lady, saved me.

She said: 'You can have a chat with Caz, an experienced MC, for a mini coach session if you want.' Oh, yes!

When I saw Caz, I instantly felt her full energy.

My intuition told me: 'She knows what she is doing', and I was right.

Caz said: 'On the stage, you just need to be yourself.'

'Don't try to be someone else, because everyone's style is different.'

'Just say things from your heart. That's it. Simple.'

Really? I couldn't believe it at first.

Growing up, I always envied some very talented people.

How come they could be so humorous, confident, relaxed and talkative on the stage?

I thought that I needed and wanted to be like them, but I felt our gap was too huge to fill, so I felt sad and frustrated.

Caz's words were like a ray of sunshine, but too good to be true.

I don't need to be like them?

No one told me this before.

Shall I trust her?

But hearing that did make me feel lighter.

Besides, I believed Caz was someone that I could trust.

So I decided to give it a go, treating it as a test.

There was nothing to lose anyway.

No one knew me here.

The first band I was allocated to is Mark Curtis & the Flannelettes.

Even though I'd practised the word 'flannelettes' a few times beforehand, on the stage, I still couldn't pronounce it smoothly.

Too hard for a non-English speaker.

So I thought audiences would laugh at me, but unexpectedly, I saw many forgiving faces, their eyes and smiles were full of kindness.

When I finished my introduction, one audience member even shouted from the crowd: 'You did a great introduction!'

That warmed my heart and boosted my confidence.

'People love your authenticity, see?', Caz commented when I returned to my seat.

I gave her a big smile.

After I finished my MCing, there were five to six people telling me that they liked my style.

Hearing these pleasant surprises from me, Caz said, 'It was very rare for people to do that, so you should be proud of

yourself.

'Now I am excited to see how you're going to develop and shape your own style in the future.'

Wow. That moment made me want to continue this journey because I was curious too.

Two weeks ago, Thea told me that the Music in the Valley festival needs volunteers so I called the organiser and said I am happy to be one of their volunteer MCs, and they accepted my offer.

This is another community festival, I wish there is something like that in my hometown too.

The location is at Alma's Hem Amphitheatre, an outdoor music and cultural venue.

It has a very cute setup, based on its original natural surroundings.

The stage was not big, which made me feel less nervous.

It was decorated with warm coloured flags which added a very homey touch.

However, my confidence level was still not high, because it was only my second time being an MC and I hadn't done extensive research on every performer this time.

But in the end, I realised a lot of my worries were unnecessary because I've got some secret power within.

'Is there anything that you want me to include in your introductions?' I asked the sister band, Ella & Sienna.

'Not much. We are from Adelaide Hills, Mt Barker and we wrote our songs too.'

'Great. When did you form your band?'

'How did you form it?'

I started to ask one question

after another.

It was so natural to me, and I did discover something interesting to say.

For another band, it was also an onsite creation.

The singer was sick, so I was told that I could just say: 'They are all four accomplished musicians, it will be a great show.'

But I didn't think it was good enough.

So, I started to have chats with them to explore the background story behind their performance, instruments, and music styles that they played today.

By doing that, again, I received some personal information.

It also made me realise the privilege of being a host, I can interact with performers and ask them any questions.

Therefore, it's vital to think from the audience's perspective and ask questions that they may want to know, but sometimes performers were so busy setting up that I had to keep chasing them.

For example, in order to pronounce one aboriginal word, Ngaanyatjarra, correctly, I followed Vonda Last from the stage to backstage.

A host is also an audience, who can share feelings after watching the shows.

In daily life, I am also a person who likes to share, writing is another form of sharing, right?'

So I shared my feelings on the stage, and what I didn't expect was how much musicians appreciated this feedback and feelings.

When I commented on Ella & Sienna's sweet harmony: 'Your

music made me feel like breeze in summer and sunshine in winter. Very refreshing.'

Their deep appreciation was reflected in their facial expressions, in their eyes and the tone of their voices especially.

It was beautiful to see.

I made people so happy.

I didn't expect that suddenly I wanted to ask Vonda Last if there's any theme for her music today.

She said: 'Stories, real and imagined.'

That made me and I am sure also audiences, more curious about her upcoming performance.

Another moment is seeing the band Brothers of Soul that performed after the sister band Ella & Sienna, prompted me to have this transition line: 'We're coming to a competition now, brothers vs sisters.'

'Who will win?'

'Tell me who you like more after the show.'

This time again, I had audiences telling me they liked my hosting and singing for the Open Mic session.

They also interacted with me when I asked them questions on the stage.

Besides, I had two special moments.

One man asked if I won the Open Mic competition.

After knowing I didn't, he said: 'Really? I thought you would win, but no matter whether you won or lost, neither of them is important.'

'The main thing is whether you are enjoying it and having fun.'

So true, but it's easier said than done.

A great reminder for me.

Sometimes I don't need to be too specific.

Like a writing rule: show, don't tell.

When I was introducing one aboriginal instrument, the didgeridoo, I copied the performer's explanation to me:

'This instrument is like a log with holes in it'.

I didn't know it was disrespectful to aboriginal people (sorry).

But luckily, the audiences were very forgiving and gentle to me.

Thanks for allowing me to make mistakes while learning new things.

I am starting to like MCing more.

It's still challenging to me, especially thinking my next gig will be even bigger, at the National Folk Festival.

It's nerve-racking, but I'm also curious to see how I'm going to interact with performers and audiences.

Lots of uncertainty ahead, but it will be another opportunity for me to discover myself, my ability and my potential.

Step by step.

Maybe a duck can transform into a swan?

Give the answer to time and let things evolve naturally.



Click Go the Shears goes back to the nineteenth century

by Stephen Whiteside

Click Go the Shears' is the seventh song on Burl Ives' 1953 album, '9 Australian Folk Songs.'

It is one of Australia's most famous folk songs, recorded by many singers, including Rolf Harris and Slim Dusty, yet surprisingly little is known about its origins.

Indeed, until fairly recently, many folk music scholars felt it may have been written as late as the 1940s.

The breakthrough came in 2013, when doctoral student Mark Gregory typed the phrase 'tar here jack' into the search function of Trove, the repository of Australia's digitalised newspapers.

Bingo!

Up came the words to 'Click Go the Shears' - albeit with the different name of 'The Bare Bellied Ewe' in the Bacchus Marsh Express of 5th December 1891.

There were, of course, some significant differences in the lyrics, and the Burl Ives version was found to be much shorter than the original.

This discovery placed the song right at the heart of the shearers' strikes of the 1890s, and the turmoil that led to the establishment of the Australian Labor Party in the years leading up to Federation in 1901.

Gregory's own account of his discovery can be found at <http://www.unionsong.com/ebooks/barebelledewe.pdf>

More information can be

found on the website of the University of Wollongong.

The ABC television programme 'Landline' also ran a story on it.

The story includes a performance by Jason and Chloe Roweth singing the original version at a woolshed in western New South Wales.

'The Bare Bellied Ewe' in the Bacchus Marsh Express was attributed to 'C. C.' from 'Eynesbury, Nov 20, 1891.'

'Eynesbury' was a large sheep station in the 19th century, located approximately 20km southeast of Bacchus Marsh.

Wikipedia explains that it was named after the birthplace of Simon Staughton in England.

Staughton came to Australia in 1841, and settled on a large property.

Following his death in 1863, the property was subdivided into four smaller properties (still very large!) for his four sons.

One of these was 'Eynesbury.'

The Eynesbury Homestead, the grandest of all the four homesteads, was constructed by Samuel Staughton in 1872.

It is still standing, and is used as a function centre.

'Eynesbury' is now the site of a housing estate in the suburb of Melton in Melbourne's far west.

The National Trust launched the 'Eynesbury Heritage Trail' earlier this year.



To my knowledge, there is no clear evidence that 'The Bare-Bellied Ewe' was written at Eynesbury.

It is, however, the place from which our earliest record of the song came, and that is significant in its own right.

It would be fascinating to know who 'C. C.' was.

It is possible that he wrote the words but, to my mind, more likely that he simply submitted them to the newspaper.

The Bacchus Marsh Express gives the tune of the song as 'Ring the Bell, Watchman.'

This is an American song that was written by Henry Clay to mark the celebration, by the ringing of church bells, of the victory by the northern states in

the American Civil War in 1865.

The words of the two songs are very similar.

'Ring the Bell, Watchman' begins as follows:

High in the belfry the old sexton stands,

Grasping the rope with his thin bony hands.

Fix'd is his gaze as by some magic spell

'Till he hears the distant murmur,

Ring, ring the bell.

'The Bare Bellied Ewe' begins as follows:

Oh, down at the catching pen an old shearer stands,

Grasping his shears in his long bony hands;

Fixed is his gaze on a bare bellied ewe,

Saying "If I can only get her, won't I make the ringer go."

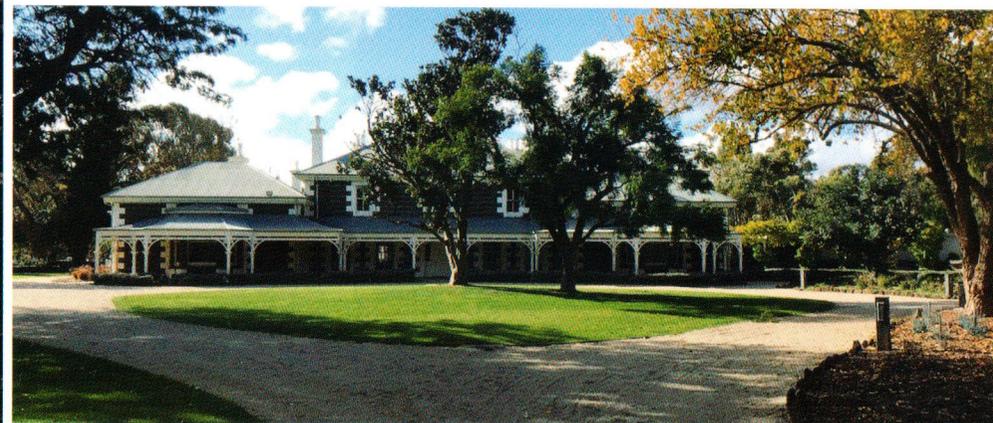
Bob Bolton explains on the website of Fresno State University that the words of 'Ring the Bell, Watchman' were too specific to remain popular for very long.

However, the tune was very popular, and travelled quickly around the world.

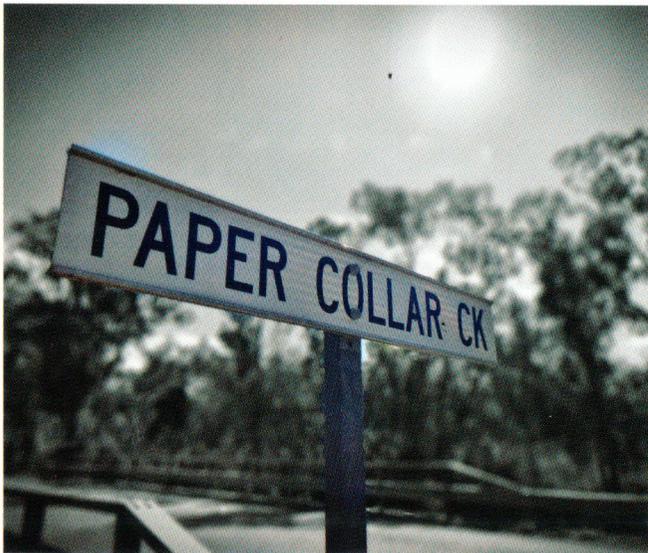
It had reached Australia by 1868.

Maddy Prior and the Carnival Band can be heard singing 'Ring the Bell, Watchman' at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZQCJyYLJQJY>



Rekindling a musical friendship 3,500 kilometers apart



Deep in the forests of WA's south coast in the winter of 2009, two musical duos met for the first time in Denmark's celebrated Festival of Voice.

After witnessing each others' shows, the Peppercorns (Craig Sinclair and Lara Norman) and The Skipjacks (Bob Lipinski and Rod Vervest) naturally gravitated towards each other.

Conversation ensued and what began as a humorous quip ("why don't we merge the duos into a quartet and call it The Pepperjacks"), became a reality within a few short months.

An EP called Tram 34, literally recorded in a 100-year-old Fremantle tram at Lipinski's home at The Wolery, near Denmark, was released in 2011, followed by a full album (Way

Back When) in 2014.

The band regularly played, recorded and toured over a period of 7 years.

Renowned for their harmony singing and artfully constructed story songs, the fire in the belly of this quartet was the fusion of the twined guitars of Sinclair and Vervest.

Both established fingerstyle guitarists in their own rights, the sound of the quartet relied heavily on the guitars being tightly interwoven and becoming one.

As Rod reflected, "two fingerpickers in one band requires some very careful honing, capo usage and musical sensitivity to create harmony and rhythm that doesn't cancel or counteract itself.

"The search for that chemistry led Craig and I into a

deep exploration of the guitar styles we offered and began a musical relationship that has endured".

As for Craig, "I revelled in the chance to learn more about blues and ragtime picking from Rod, as well as finding some space to start developing a dobro style that was a bit aside from the standard bluegrass approach".

Rod continued, "The studio was a place to really refine things and get at close quarters to what was happening in the guitar parts.

"That allowed us to get forensic about it and you soon learn that a good musical outcome is often very much about leaving out things as opposed to adding them.

"It was here, in the cauldron of the recording studio, that we started to realise just how much the natural voices of our different instruments would blend around beautiful microphones.

"Playing through pickups into direct boxes and folding everything back through monitors was the accepted way of performing live, at least on bigger stages, but we craved the natural tone.

"When the Pepperjacks wound up in 2018, due to Craig and Lara's relocation to Sydney, both Craig and I somehow knew that in the future we would get back together and continue the path of learning and making music together".

And so, it came to pass.

A few years later, in the midst of pandemic lockdowns and border closures, Craig suggested starting a duo and within a heartbeat, Rod was in.

This began a process of sending recordings to and fro between Sydney and Rod's hometown of Albany.

The duo gave themselves a working name of the Paper Collar Pickers, in reference to the mythological sandalwood chopping rascals from Paper Collar Creek, featured in one of the developing songs.

Craig reflected on the process, "Readjusting to life in lockdown in a small inner-city apartment initially made it difficult to get out and meet the Sydney folkie community.

"Keeping that familiar relationship with Rod's musical ideas and sharp ear provided some welcome relief, even if it was mainly through text messages and video calls.

"We both looked forward to the chance to reconnect and see how well these songs and tunes would fit together in person".

What happened next was sudden and got us focused even more deeply.

The duo were booked to play the Illawarra Festival in January, 2023.

Without any local profile and with just a handful of ragtime style instrumentals, some Doc Watson classics, a few reworked Pepperjacks tunes and the emerging drafts of new material, suddenly here they are programmed alongside a prestigious bill of artists!

Rod said, "I remember boarding the plane to Sydney thinking we'll have about 2 days to actually consummate this marriage of music and then walk onto a festival stage.

"I recall the first gig vividly and as the harmonised melody of the Doc Watson fingerstyle classic 'Windy and Warm' blended around the single mic, I thought, this really is a fine space to be in".

And so it has been as the year 2023 has unfolded.

A WA tour around Easter took them to folk clubs, house concerts, art galleries and even the small rural town of Borden (the home of Paper Collar Creek), as the project continued to grow.

We have fallen into a pattern of hopping across the country every few months and the duo is set to play the Sydney Folk Festival this August and then tour regional NSW to Canberra.

Hot on the heels of the tour, Craig fly's back West where the duo are involved in composing a soundtrack for an oral history project.

More festivals are on the horizon!

"We are both fingerpicking guitar tragics", Rod joked.

"We are burning to get into the studio now and to again dive deep into that world where note and tone fuse to deliver the magic of interwoven guitars.

"I'm really looking forward to that.

"Where exactly it happens, I'm not sure, as we have the inconvenience of 3,500 kilometres between us.

"Nevertheless, the urge is strong and it hasn't stopped anything yet".

You can catch the Paper Collar Pickers on an upcoming tour during August which includes Sydney, Canberra and the Southern Highlands in NSW.

For more details go to <https://www.craigsinclair.com.au/papercollar>



Festival News & Reviews

New grants projects for a new festival

by Winsome Hall

Dress our venues and streets



A new kid on the block, the Bundanoon NSW Folk Festival will be playing to the crowds on the last weekend of November, 24-26.

Festival goers will get the chance to see new and favourite artists in intimate indoor settings all within easy walking distance of the railway station and village shops or via the festival bus.

We aim to establish an annual festival which encourages community participation in all its forms.

Dave Johnson has ably led Bush Orchestras and Bush Dances in the Highlands and is a strong advocate for folk festivals to provide plenty of opportunity for ordinary folk to get together and make music.

The people have songs project

Together with chorale composer, Miguel Heatwole, instrumentalist and arranger, Marriama Mitchel, and dance

caller and choreographer, Claire Stoneman, this group of intrepid collaborators are part of The People Have Songs Project.

With a Festival Australia grant of just over \$9,000, this is a collaborative community project to create new and original works.

We are calling for poetry, tunes, and lyrics that tell the stories of Bundanoon's people, place and history to develop into a final performance of poetry, choral and instrumental music and dance.

A series of workshops for local choristers and musicians will rehearse the works leading to the Festival and festival goers will also be invited to take part with easy to rehearse segments learned over the weekend of the Festival and to be part of the final concert.

We are particularly excited by this rather ambitious project and have already started receiving contributions and stories from the Bundanoon and surrounds community.

Dress Our Venues and Streets is a local community arts project to create a festive atmosphere throughout the village and some of our lovely venues.

With funding for a community project leader and materials, we are looking forward to some beautiful and exciting creations.

Bundanoon locals who love to sew, knit and variously create are excited to be involved with this project and to what they may create.

Probably more than most events, folk festivals can provide opportunities for our younger musicians to stretch their performance wings.

We were delighted when the Country Arts Support Program awarded us \$3,000 to support 10 young regional NSW artists between 18 - 25 to perform at the festival and at a lead up concert beforehand. Applications are now open, so get your applications in.

The Bundanoon Folk Festival is ramping up towards an exciting and engaging 3 days at the end of November.

We hope to see you there!

Tickets and camp bookings and more information about projects can be found at www.bundanoonfolkfestival.com.au



Irish
&
Celtic
Music
Festival

Join the Craic in Yass!
15, 16, 17 September 2023

irishcelticmusicfestival.com  

Old-Time Music School and Festival plans well underway

by Bridget Rees



Dorrigo Folk and Bluegrass Festival inc.

As the year passes by at what seems like a lightning pace, it is so good to see festivals and events giving it their all to stand strong, in what is still a difficult environment, to hold fast to our ideals.

Small festivals can be tough going over the years, and successful grant applications are not easy to come by.

Yet, I'm not complaining, because it is what is at the heart of a festival that counts and builds the event into a memorable time for all those involved.

That beating heart opens up opportunities for many participants and I feel privileged to share the pulse with so many.

The programme for Dorrigo is underway and I am over the moon to be working with a top line up of performers - and to be inspired by the many workshops that will be offered, always

attempting to make each year a little better than the last!

his is all done with a small, but amazing, team of eight as the core, and extends into our wonderful family of volunteers leading up to the festival and packing down.

We would love for you to get on the website and check out our artists for this year, and to take note of our 5th Old-Time Music School which, in a similar mode to the festival, is becoming a must do for many people.

The school is a great lead up into the festival, where you really get to put into practise what you have learnt, and still have room for abundant inspiration from our old-time artists.

We are working on introducing some new creative elements for the young, running alongside the storytelling workshops under the shady trees.

There is plenty of camping available at the showground,

which puts you right on site, just a short walk to town, where once again we will be running our cafe breakfasts.

If you are lucky enough to put aside some extra time, then the Dorrigo Plateau beckons with rainforest walks, waterfalls and rolling hills.

We hope you will come sit down with us and enjoy amazing concerts, inspiring workshops, dance the floors, join in a session, and immerse yourself in our small, family friendly, and earth conscious festival.

We aim to be a plastic, smoke, drug, and alcohol free festival and thank our contributors for acknowledging this.

Now, it's time to jump online and book your tickets!

www.dorrigofolkbluegrass.com.au



International artists announced for Out On The Weekend and beyond

by Ali Webb

Since 2014, Melbourne's Out On The Weekend Festival has been a prime destination for lovers of all things Americana, and this year's line-up is undoubtedly the biggest and best.

Interstate music fans can catch the action when the artists hit the road, with the Festival's stellar line-up of internationals pushing their wares up and down the East Coast and beyond before and after the Festival, which takes place at Seaworks in Williamstown on Saturday, October 14.

Out On The Weekend's most iconic headliners ever, the institution that is Asleep At The Wheel, has made Austin, Texas, its home for 50 years, in which time they've won a huge 9 Grammys and released over 20 albums.

This year, Asleep At The Wheel, featuring Ray Benson, Lucky Oceans, Brennan

Leigh and Joshua Hedley, will make their Australian debut, performing their Western Swing for fans Down Under.

From his early days with Old Crow Medicine Show to his current work as a solo artist, Willie Watson is a master folk singer, storyteller and troubadour who is coming back for his first Australian shows in six years.

Mining the same old timey field as Willie but with a stronger pre-war blues influence, Kentucky's Nat Myers is a genuine up and comer who has just released his first album.

Myers will also make his Australian debut supporting Willie up the east coast.

Melissa Carper's old-timey sound will whistle across the country when she heads to Australia for the first time this October.

Melissa will be performing new music from this year's Ramblin' Soul and will be bringing Texan schoolteacher turned Honky-Tonk troubadour,



Asleep at the Wheel

Summer Dean along for the ride.

Returning after last year's successful country run is Jenny Don't & The Spurs, who will be picking up where they left off with US cosmic country stars The Pink Stones and newest discovery, The Bures Band from way out Western Australia supporting on some shows.

This October promises plenty of international touring artists heading your way with blends of Americana, alt-country, Western Swing and good ol' classic country.

For dates and venues visit lovepolice.com.au/tours



Folk by the Sea 22-24 September 2023

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Festival News & Reviews

Sydney Folk Festival, a wonderful celebration of folk music, culture and community



'Chaika, just one of our brilliant SydFolkFest23 acts'

Warm up your winter and find your folk!

That's right folks!

Forget Winter camping and cold frosty mornings.

SydFolkFest23 has you covered with cosy venues and a compact, walkable festival precinct all easily accessed via public transport.

While we know many of you will be looking forward to seeing some of your festival favourites, we also hope you'll take the time to discover someone new future favourites.

The best way to get the most out of your SydFolkFest23 experience is with a Festival Season Ticket giving you a

choice of over 42 individual shows.

There are also special productions like the Awards and Youth Concert, the John Dengate Tribute, Reedy River and Sionnach Rua's Great Irish Song Book.

Maybe you like to participate and yes, there will be sessions and dancing too!

Yes for those of you with fancy feet, there will be dancing as well.

Our Festival Dance is programmed on Saturday night, August 19 in The Quakers' Hall, 7:30 - 10:30pm and will be a mix of styles including Contra, Irish and English, with callers (L-R below) Keith Wood,

Margaret and Bill Winnett and David Potter.

With music by Short Dented Potts, Ann O'Donovan and the Ceili Playboys and a host of others, it promises to be a cracking night of dancing.

The Dance is included in the Festival Season Ticket.

However, because we know that some dancers just like to dance, we have structured the program so we can offer a dance only ticket.

We look forward to you joining us from 18-20 August at SydFolkFest23 for a wonderful celebration of folk music, culture and community.



Festival News & Reviews

Organisers brimming with ideas

Cygnat Folk Festival, Tasmania, Coordinator, Bridget Binnie, sent Trad&Now an update following their recent successful festival.

"It was fantastic to be back after a two year hiatus and we are so proud to have put on a successful festival once again", Bridget said.

"We have received wonderful feedback from those who attended, performed, volunteered, billeted artists and members of the local community, all of whom we can't thank enough for being involved.

"I would also like to thank the Festival Committee who worked tirelessly to put the event together and give a special thank you to our core crew members who each work throughout the year to ensure that everything runs smoothly.

"We are brimming with ideas for the next festival and after having a well earned break we are ready to start planning another superb festival to be held between the 12th - 14th January 2024, save the date", Bridget said.

Artistic Director, Erin Collins, added: "What a joy to have performers back on our stages and on floors and roving the park, to see workshop rooms full, a huge turnout for the festival choir and orchestra, dancers and smiling faces all weekend.

"Amongst all the events over the weekend, a couple deserve

special mention.

"We were very happy to welcome to our wonderful youth showcase Oceanique from WA, the winners of the Folk Alliance Australia Youth Award for 2022.

"From our own Youth Blackboard competition, congratulations to LJ Parks and

The Unknown, first and second prize winners.

"Thanks to Rosalie Woodruff for the donation of cash prizes for the two recipients, and to Daniel Townsend for generously offering to mentor both acts during the coming year.

"The future of folk is certainly

Festival News & Reviews

in good hands and voices!

"A new award was instigated this year, a bequest from the family of the late Dr Dennis DuBetz going to two acts from the festival.

"We're very happy to announce that these have gone to Isabel Rumble towards her debut CD and to Youkali (Kasey Patrick and Andrew Viewers) who contributed enormously to several projects over the festival weekend.

"Even though we've just

wound up from the festival, performer applications for 2024 are closed.

"We can't wait to see what may be in store for next January", Erin said.

Finally, a few words from the President, Anne Foale: "It's time to look ahead to planning the 2024 festival (and beyond).

"The current Festival Committee is a strong group of locals with a passion for being involved in the nuts and bolts of putting on a grass roots festival.

"If you've ever considered joining the committee, let us know.

"We are most grateful for the significant support provided by our small group of festival patrons - thank you, you know who you are.

"Finally, thank you to our sponsors for the 2023 festival, we could not have put on the festival without your support", Anne said.



Cygnets 2023 Award Winners



Isabel Rumbel
Isabel Rumble will put her Dennis Dubetz award towards her CD.



Youkali
Both well respected performers in their own fields, Kasey Patrick and Andrew Viewers double their musical magic to form Youkali.



LJ Parks
LJ Parks is the winner of the 2023 Youth blackboard. We look forward to seeing her future performances. Get along to CresFest!

LOVE POLICE
& RRR. PRESENT

Out on the Weekend

Starring **A Sleep at the Wheel**

WILLIE WATSON
MELISSA CARPER ★ **THE PINK STONES**
WATTY THOMPSON ★ **CHARLOTTE LE LIEVRE**
AND AN ALL-STAR TRIBUTE TO LINDA RONSTADT

★ ★ ★ **NOW WITH EVEN MORE!** ★ ★ ★

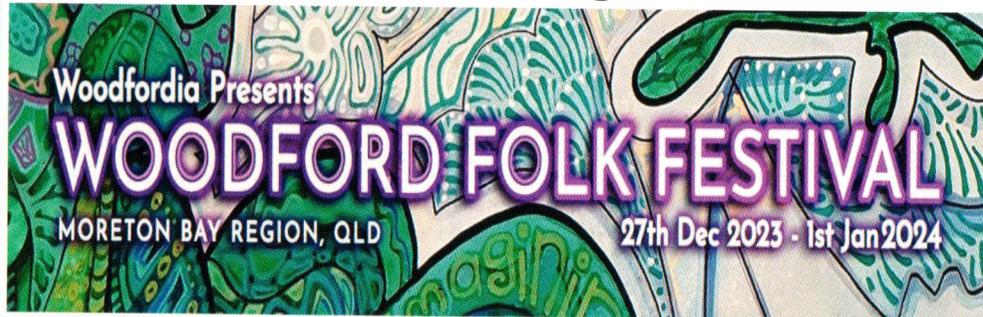
JENNY DON'T & THE SPURS
SUMMER DEAN ★ **NAT MYERS**
BUD ROKESKY ★ **BONES MACKINNON**
THE COLLINGWOOD CASANOVAS
AND INTRODUCING **THE BURES BAND**
AND STILL MORE TO COME...

SEAWORKS
BOON WURRUNG/BUNURONG WILLIAMSTOWN

Saturday 14th October

Festival News & Reviews

Woodford 22/23 was a hard one to pull off



Woodford Folk Festival directors contacted their supporters of the 2022/2023 festival for a number of reasons.

Firstly to say "thank you to all who came to the festival and supported Woodfordia as we returned our beloved gathering back after the challenging pandemic years.

"It was not an easy event to deliver, in fact it was probably our most difficult", they said.

"While the returned Woodford Folk Festival was sensational in so many ways, we think it is important to give you some background on the issues that we were confronting and a quick look into our plans this year.

"It wasn't until May that we could make a confident yet risky decision to return the event.

"It was a difficult schedule.

"While heartened by the wonderful support from our organisers and volunteers, our budget couldn't enable a full staffing level.

"Volunteer numbers were down across all sectors and

many in the events industry had moved on to other work.

"With tourism only just opening to international travellers, we also did not have the wonderful cohort of backpackers that help build the festival each year", festival directors said.

"The events industry was challenged with a building boom creating supply issues and many of our former suppliers were simply not trading.

"Many of our food and craft merchants faced equipment and staff shortages which resulted in less diversity and comfort for our patrons.

"To top all of this off, we were implementing testing and quarantine protocols onsite to minimize any outbreaks in the lead up to the event.

"If it wasn't for the tremendous effort by our organisers and volunteers it's hard to see how we would have got through it.

"We are so grateful to our patrons for their kindness and forgiveness during the event when things could have

been better, and to our artists and presenters who lifted us all with their creativity and passion, igniting us into that place of belonging, celebration, connection and being hopeful towards the future.

"We have commenced our planning work for the 2023/24 festival and we will be challenging ourselves to deliver an event of improved comfort levels along with the compassion and creativity that our community is known for.

"We will work towards better mitigation against wet weather conditions in both the campgrounds and venues, improve our gate entry logistics, increase the number and quality of amenities along with many other improvements.

"For those of you who have taken the time to write in with both compliments and criticism, we thank you, as your feedback helps us focus on the areas that we need to improve.

"As they say: stay tuned."



KANGAROO VALLEY

Folk Festival 2023

20-22 OCTOBER

AUSTRAL

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THE BLUES PREACHERS

THE HUMBUCKIN' PICKUPS

BENJI & THE SALTWATER SOUND SYSTEM

DANIEL J TOWNSEND ISABEL RUMBLE BRODIE BUTTONS

TIMOTHY NELSON JOSHUA BATTEN GREAT AUNT

THE OTHERNOONANS MISCHA VICKAS

DJAARMBY BAND ROBBARRATT BUCK & DEANNE

ALJAMIA THEBEEZ MEREMBA DELA ENSEMBLE

RHEINBERGER & WILSON THE CHOOKS GEORGE MANN

FELICITY DOWD CHLOE & JASON ROWETH

MUDJINGAAL YANGAMBA CHOIR GLENN SKUTHORPE

BAGGAGE & STUFF LUCKY JIM

CASUARINA LIGHT PHENOMENON

MAYFAIR LANE CHERRY MAMALADE

AND MORE

www.kangaroovalleyfolkfestival.com.au



Festival News & Reviews

2nd Wirrina music camp precedes bluegrass and acoustic festival

So, last year's inaugural music camp at Wirrina Cove, SA, went really well, which tells us there's clearly demand for it again, 3 days of workshops, electives and informal gathering.

The exact timetable is yet to be confirmed but we intend to help participants get the most out of coming.

Also, much love and appreciation to all of last year's participants (students, volunteers and tutors), who have told us what they would like more of, and how they'd like us to grow and improve what we offer.

If you're not sure what they are on about, you probably need to come and see for yourself.

The camp, like last year, leads in to a full weekend of the 11th Wirrina Bluegrass & Acoustic Roots Festival.

The weekend features various Bluegrass and Acoustic artists from around the country including high-energy bluegrass band High Street Drifters, as well as the Foghorn Stringband from Canada/USA.

Always plenty to do, see and hear, and we are delighted to once again have huge support from the Wirrina Cove Holiday Park in holding both the music camp and the festival.

Most excitingly, we have booked Nadine Landry, Sammy Lind, Reeb Wilms & Caleb Klauder (from the Foghorn Stringband), and

Tony O'Rourke from Melbourne as tutors.

Acclaimed ukulele tutor, Sally Carter from Victoria, who is appearing at the festival as half of the Green Fieldz folk duo, is very keen to run a rigorous uke class at the camp, but uke players, like everyone else, will need to book in so we know we have the numbers to cover the additional tutor fee and infrastructure.

Other tutors/classes to be confirmed.

Please let us know if there's something you'd like on the class schedule that's not mentioned.

So far, we are scheduling classes for guitar, fiddle & mandolin, bass, uke, and we hope to offer a couple of options for banjo.

For these classes to run, we need to confirm minimum enrolments by mid September.

So if you are thinking of joining us, please email us on wirrinabluegrass@gmail.com to arrange to book and pay the non refundable deposit to confirm your place in class!

We will limit numbers in each class to make sure participants get enough attention from the tutor.

We plan for classes to be held in marquees and workshop spaces this year.

We'll have the marquees on site prior to the camp to minimise disruption to the teaching schedule and enable classes to have more space.

The camp fee covers tuition

by Caz Williams and Thea Taylor

and participation in all camp activities, but you will need to book accommodation separately, through the caravan park if you wish to stay on site, or local accommodation options.

Your festival ticket is separate and can be booked through the festival website www.wirrinabluegrass.com

Tickets are available for sale now.

To book camping for the festival and music camp period, you will need the promotional code Bluegrass2023 to put in the website, otherwise it will tell you there are no spots available.

There is plenty of camping space and many powered campsites, but the park is open only to festival and camp patrons from Saturday, November 18 through to Monday, November 27.

For caravan park bookings: www.wirrinacoveholidaypark.com.au

Please tell your friends and music networks about this as these things spread best by word of mouth.

We are excited about this year's camp, and hope to see a good number of new faces as well as those returning to learn with this year's tutors.

For any enquiries about the camp or music festival, please contact us preferably by email, or see our website for other options.

Hope to hear from you soon!

21st Dorrigo Folk & Bluegrass Festival
27, 28, 29 October 2023

5th Dorrigo Old-Time Music School 25, 26, 27 October 2023

Dorrigo, NSW
On Gumbaynggirr Country

www.dorrigofolkbluegrass.com.au

Presenting:
Erynn Marshall & Carl Jones USA
Foghorn Stringband USA/CAN
Ryland Moran CAN
The Special Consensus USA
You, Me, Everybody NZ
Alana Wilkinson
Amy Ryan

Archer Austral
Cat Canteri
Chloë & Jason Roweth
Corn Nut Creek
Ernest Aines
Fred Smith
Great Aunt

Greater Glider Stringband
Hardrive Bluegrass Band
Karl S. Williams
Kym Pitman
Loren Kate & The Understory

Tallowood
The Borough
The Freewheeler
The Good Behaviours
The High Street Drifters
The Wild Women of Anywhere Beach
Tiffany Eckhart

Narrownecks w/ Rachel Johnston
Parvyn & Josh Bennett
Pirritu
Ross Smithard & Friends
Royal Duck
Siannah Rua's Great Irish Songbook

Luke Byrnes & The Big Scrub Revival
Luke Watt
Luke William Wright
Melanie Horsnell
Meridian Country Blues
Mickey & Michelle
Minor Gold
Miss Ohio

We aim to be an earth conscious plastic smoke drug and alcohol free venue. Thank you!

Concerts
Festival Choir
Vocal, Dance and Instrumental Workshops
Circus w/ The Pitts Family
Bluegrass and Poets
Breakfast's
Dances
Jams

Tickets and Camping now available!

Festival News & Reviews

Brisbane Girls become Brisbane Ladies or Picnic at Hanging Rock reversed?

by Colin Fong

Readers would be familiar with the story line of 'Picnic at Hanging Rock', either in book form or from the movie or television series.

This was about a group of Victorian private school girls who got lost.

Compare this to 2023, where one of the highlights of the National Folk Festival was the performances of the Brisbane Girls Grammar School Celtic and Gypsy music ensembles.

These were two of the thirty five music ensembles at the school.

No one got lost and these musicians definitely found their feet in the heady environment of the festival.

Over the years people have often asked me what the hot ticket at the festival is and for 2023 the Brisbane Girls were definitely the hot ticket.

They delighted the audiences with their poise and professionalism.

The Gypsy ensemble played without needing to read their music.

In the festival programme, sometimes they were listed simply as Brisbane Girls.

This was an understatement and audiences were enthralled by their maturity.

On Friday evening, a friend from Albury informed me of her having seen the Brisbane Girls play and suggested I try and see them on Saturday.

So on Saturday, I initially saw the Celtic ensemble play in the Trocadero then an hour later I heard the Gypsy ensemble play at the Carnival Stage.

One of their teachers enthusiastically revealed: "If you want to learn French, you need to go to France.

"If you want to learn folk music, you must go to a folk festival".

I enjoyed their concerts so much I listened to them again on Saturday in the Bohemia Bar at 5pm and on Sunday at the Flute & Fiddle.

A funny thing happened on the way to a Billy Bragg concert.

On Sunday, as I was planning to attend a Billy Bragg concert in the Budawang at 1pm, I noticed

the venue was full with a queue waiting to get in.

I was approached by Sheree Greenhill, from Dance Kaleidoscope, Brisbane, to participate in a flash mob of English country dancing in the retail precinct with the Brisbane Girls.

In Sydney, I am a member of the Sydney English Country Dancers so how could I resist?

I promptly went into the Coorong and grabbed three dancers, then met two Canberra dancers and asked them to join us and they in turn grabbed two more Canberra dancers in costumes so we had a good sized group to do our flash mob joining others who had agreed to participate.

After our display, we grabbed onlookers to join in.

A video of the event can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f8cpxpkkkrxc>

The girls were also seen dancing at the nightly balls of Scottish, English Country and Colonial.

As their Monday flight was delayed, the girls also joined in an Irish Ceili Dance.

If I was an organizer selecting acts for the festival finale closing concert, I would have selected the girls to perform there.

There is a famous Australian folk song called Brisbane Ladies and during the festival this group of Brisbane Girls truly became Brisbane Ladies!

Festival News & Reviews

Are you joining the Craic in Yass in 2023?

by Janno Scanes

We will all be spoilt for choice when this festival lands on the stages of Yass, NSW.

On September 15 to 17, you will find something for everyone.

Be it music of several genres, sixty seven acts, trad, folk, blues, and surprises, performers of excellent quality, poetry, dance, the Junior Fleadh, workshops, lovely warm venues, good food and coffee, tasty local wines and many historical buildings.

When you are reading this article, it is only 4 weeks until

you can be enjoying this years' amazing lineup of performers. from soloists to groups of ten, for all to enjoy.

No doubt there will be the usual amazing pub sessions which were so joyful last year.

Tickets are available through Humanatix, check them out as they are Aussies doing good work!

The link is on our face book page or go to the website.

I look forward to seeing you in Yass in September.



Join the Craic in Yass!
15, 16, 17 September 2023

Wirrina Music Camp 2023

3 full days of music tuition, jamming, & fun!

Join other players of stringed instruments in tuition from our experienced tutors. Daytime classes, evening jams. Suitable for adults and older teens with some skills. Improve your skills and learn new styles in guitar, fiddle, mandolin, banjo. Tuition in other instruments will be added if there is demand—let us know!

Located at Wirrina Cove Holiday Park, on the beautiful Fleurieu Peninsula, South Australia.

Accommodation: Camp onsite or book other holiday accommodation nearby.



Wirrina
Bluegrass
& Acoustic Roots
Festival

Camp dates

Tues 21 —Thurs 23
November, 2023

Festival dates

Fri 24 —Sun 26
November, 2023

Interested?

For further info or to register your interest please email:
wirrinabluegrass@gmail.com

Stay on for the Wirrina Bluegrass & Acoustic Roots Festival: Fri 24–Sun 26, Nov. 2023

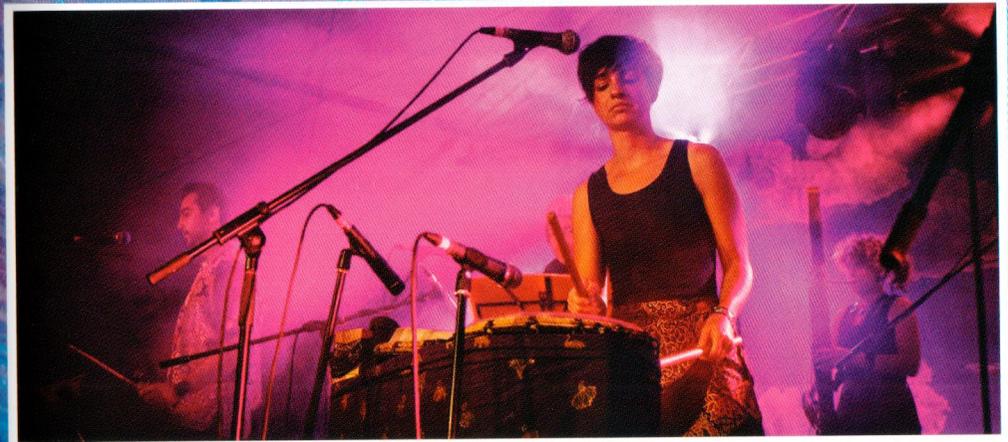


Festival News & Reviews

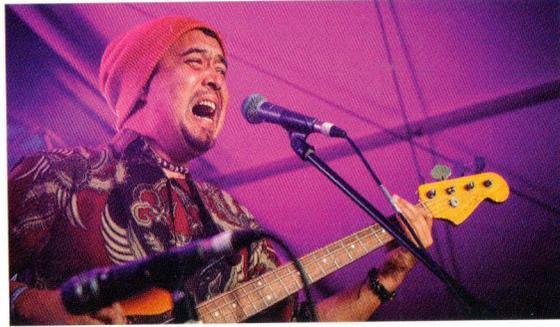
Festival News & Reviews

National Folk Festival 2023

photos - Malcolm Watson



Festival News & Reviews



What's on around the clubs?

Following is a list of acts booked at venues listed in the Clubs and Venues Directory. For time, place and contact detail, see the entry in the Directory

NSW

Goulburn Club - 7.30pm

Aug 25: Water Runners
 Sep 25: Mick Kidd
 Nov 25: jive Bombers

Hornsby Ku-Ring-Gai Folk Club - 7pm

Aug 18: Rachel Collis
 Sep 15: The Times they are a Changing, Pat Craigie, Maurie Mulheron
 Oct 20: CJ Shaw
 Nov 17: Wayne Gillespie
 Dec 15: Traditional Graffiti

Humph Hall

Sep 2: Waltz for Jill (Loosely Woven) 1pm & 5pm
 Sep 8: East of West 7pm
 Sep 15: Dingo's Breakfast 7pm

Illawarra Folk Club

Sep 1: Fred Smith 7pm

Loaded Dog

Aug 26: Ten Quid Poms & Coolfinn Mac
 Sep 23: Tripple Effect & Ecopella
 Oct 28: George Mann (USA) & Wombats Crossing
 Nov 18: Shiny Bum Singers & Water Runners

Newcastle & Hunter Valley Folk Club 6.30pm (new venue)

Sep 2: Phil Davidson
 Oct 7: Two Voices in the Crowd and Tripple Effect
 Oct 14: Traditional Graffiti (Teralba Community Hall)
 Nov 4: Enda Kenny
 Dec 2: Newcastle Peoples Chorus

Shack (The) 7.30pm

Sep 2: Heywood and Moore Hoe
 Down Bana; Naked Strangers; Tommy Castle

Troubadour Central Coast

Aug 26: Maurie Mulheron and Pat Craigie 7pm
 Sep 29: Judy Small and Anousha Victoire trio 2pm

QLD

Folk Redlands 1-4pm

Aug 20: Gary Shepherd
 Sept 17: Wolf's Tales
 Oct 15: The Folk Redlands Gang

Tom Aitken Hall

Aug 19: The Loveys 7pm
 Aug 25: Black Square Quartet 7pm
 Aug 26: Sweet Thunder Jazz

Orchestra 5pm
 Sep 2: Karl S. Williams 7pm
 Sep 9: Clea 7pm
 Sep 24: Kooralbyn 5pm
 Sep 30: Jeff Lang 7pm
 Oct 7: Dana Gehrmann 7pm

Unplugged Gigs (the BUG) 7.30pm

Aug 15: Dean Winchester & The Supernatural band, Mo McMorrow
 Aug 22: Milena Luna & band, Ian Dearden & Rebecca Wright
 Aug 29: Bobby Longstaff, Tropical Dance Sextet
 Sep 5: The Burrough Bluegrass Band
 Sep 12: Mira Choric
 Sep 19: Lizzie Flynn and the Reckoning
 Sep 26: Jan Wositzky (Vic), Choro Brisbane
 Oct 3: Asleep At The Reel
 Oct 10: Rough Red
 Oct 17: 3 Miles From Texas
 Oct 24: Bearded Coucals

VIC

Peninsula Folk Club 5.30pm

Sep 3: Jam Tarts
 Oct 1: Appoline

All clubs and venues listed in the Clubs and Venues Directory are welcome to have their upcoming specific events listed here

Poetry and the written word

A Strange World!!! -

Poem by a refugee child!

On July 7, this poem was circulated as a petition by Neil Para on behalf of the Union of Australian Refugees Friends Group, Ballarat, via Change.org.

At last count, it had over 12,000 signatures.

In a world of chaos,
where hope seems lost,
A refugee child is born.
Born in a land ravaged by war's cruel hands,
Her innocence shattered,
like grains of sand.
Fleeing from danger,
seeking sanctuary,
it's scary yet full of bravery.
Through barren landscapes,
she walks alone,
Her tiny feet aching,
her spirit unknown.
In unfamiliar lands,
In the arms of strangers,
A language unknown,
a culture so strange,
its overwhelming
Yet she finds resilience among the change.
Her laughter,
a beacon in the darkest night,
A reminder of hope,
a candle's gentle light.
Though her future's uncertain,
She dreams of a world where peace can be found.
She longs for education,
a chance to grow,
To blossom like a daisy,
Beautiful and strong
Let's not forget this refugee child,
For in her eyes lies untold tales,
Let's open our hearts,
extend a helping hand,
For in her dreams lies our shared destiny,
To create a world where every child is free.



Poetry and the written word

Net zero or bust

by Jake Lynch

A topical poem dealing with the threat from climate change to nature as evoked in lyric verse, and protests for effective preventative action.

Is Robert Frost's wood still yellow and green?
Do Banjo's parrots still call on the bough,
Or Wordsworth's daffodils nod in the breeze?
In Sunburnt Country, fire danger says 'low',
But rain builds fuel loads, which signboards
don't show.

So as we alternately bail and broil,
How come we keep on prospecting for oil?
And what must we do to reach Net Zero?

Enjoy the Pastoral in lyric verse
But ask yourself what's better, and what's
worse?

Inconvenience on the Harbour Bridge –
A road less travelled by, once in a while –
Or pandering to climate change denial
Where resource rent tax benefits the rich?
Electric cars to take us to our camp –
Or eternal dread of both drought and damp?

When Vi Coco looked on that tent of blue
Which prisoners call sky, it filled with fumes

From fossil fuels that dimmed its limpid space.
For there she was sent, by a bully-court:
Deterrent, on a day of dark disgrace.
Ah but, we heard, Violet was not our sort
Of person. Enter the Knitting Nannas,
Challenging draconian protest law –
For someone has to stop new coal and gas,
Lest Mackellar's beauty cede to terror.

Politics resists radical ideas.
Canberra flacks will always interfere.
It's we who must force the point to its crux,
Through petitions and – yes – sometimes
roadblocks,
Though it makes the four-wheel-drive owners
cuss.

Else we'll find the payback will be on us:
The lavish plains and paddocks will stay dry,
Or drown beneath floodwater where they lie;
And that karmic ghost-dog from Gundagai
Turn out to have shat in our tucker box.



Poets Directory

Jake Lynch (2374-162)
Intentional Bathos.
Progressive comic verse for
struggle and resistance.
Available in Greater Sydney Area
for benefit events on similar themes.
Jake.lynch@sydney.edu.au

Keith McKenry (22-169)
A leading member of Australia's
small clan of folklorists.
An award winning performance
poet, his unique amalgam of humour
and biting social comment defies
stereotype.
FangedWombat@Bigpond.com

Peter Willey (144-168)
A comedian with an arsenal of
sharp tongued stories, poems, jokes,
original songs and parodies.
His jokes have not been tested on
animals. Hilarious!
0411 697 532
Peter@PeterWilley.com.au

**Poets at the Petersham Bowlo
(NSW) (2289-161)**
Open mic soiree – 3rd Thursday.
6.30PM
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music.
Free admission.

**Facebook: Poets at the
Petersham Bowlo**

Rhymer from Ryde (663-174)
The Rhymer from Ryde's bush
poetry is 98% fat free, low in salt,
good for your cholesterol and best
enjoyed sitting down. In true larrikin
style his reciting covers everything
from the silly to the serious,
traditional, contemporary and original
verse. Crowds around the country
enjoy his easy going manner and
theatrical style of delivery.
Ph: 0419 415 137
[TheRhymerfromRyde@
Bigpond.com](http://TheRhymerfromRyde@Bigpond.com)

www.TheRhymerFromRyde.com
WA Bush Poets (1071-169)
1st Friday 7pm Bentley Park
Auditorium, Bentley Park
www.wabushpoets.asn.au/
Albany Bush Poetry Group
Last Tuesday 7.30pm 1426
Lower Denmark Rd, Elleker
Ph: 9844 6606

Bunbury Bush Poets
1st Monday The Parade Hotel, 1
Austral Parade, East Bunbury
PH: 0400 249 243 636
Goldfields Bush Poetry Group
1st Wednesday 7.30pm
Kalgoorlie Country Club
Ph: 0419 943 376

Peel Poetry Group
1st Tuesday Ravenswood Hotel
Ph: 0417 099 676

**If you are involved with Bush Poetry and would like to be included in this Directory,
see pages 76 - 77 for more information. Directory entry is free to subscribers.**

Bluegrass News

by Lindsay Mar

Dorrigo Old-Time Music School



Foghorn

Attending a folk festival is one thing, with lots of musical performances to be expected, instrumental workshops, food, bric-a-brac, apparel stalls, luthier stalls, ice cream and coffee, circus tents, clowns and juggling.

But in Australia, we often forget about the folk tradition and meanings that underpin the folk music that is the core of a folk festival.

And it seems, that in an English speaking country such as Australia, that is especially true when it comes to Anglo-Celtic traditions such as Old-Time and Bluegrass.

We simply are so immersed

in what we think of as the familiar, that we don't appreciate the uniqueness of what we have.

The Dorrigo Old-Time music school was established as a foil to that.

Now in its fifth year, the event is held Oct 25-27, the three days that immediately precede the Dorrigo Folk & Bluegrass Festival Oct 27-29.

The school is held across the road from the Dorrigo Showgrounds and Festival, where camping is available.

This year's instructors include the Foghorn Stringband (USA), Erynn Marshall and Carl Jones (USA) and from Melbourne, Ian Alexander.

The Foghorns have each spent many years researching their craft and we have

previously spoken to fiddler Sammy Lind and the time he has spent with other Old-Time fiddlers.

His partner, Nadine Landry, is actually from Canada and not only has a fascination for Appalachian culture, but as a native French speaker, has also explored the Cajun swamp culture as well.

Reeb Willms and Caleb Klaunder round out the Foghorn Stringband and are also as familiar with 1930s style brother duets as they are with stringband music.

Erynn Marshall is also originally a Canadian so enamoured with Appalachian music that she travelled many miles to learn directly from the Old Masters, while Carl Jones grew up with the music in North Georgia.

Melbourne's Ian Alexander has travelled the USA extensively, has played with many Old-Time music pickers and also has many stories to tell.

And that is what the Dorrigo Old Time music school hopes to achieve.

Away from the glitz and glamour of the big tents, pavilions and multi-colour flags, the Dorrigo Old-Time music school provides three days of immersion and discussion into the background culture of the music that we see at the festivals, and Old-Time ones in particular.

Go to dorrigofolkbluegrass.com.au for more information and to book yourself in.

Festival Watch

Folk by the Sea Kiama, NSW Sep 22-24, literally on the waterfront, at the Pavilion, Kiama Showground will not offer on site camping this year, but instead encourages everyone to book early into nearby campgrounds as well as festival tickets, for artists such as Scroggin, The Water Runners, Chloe & Jason Roweth and Corn Nut Creek.

The Australian Bluegrass Conference presented by Bellbird Banjos returns Dec 7-10, at Tranquil Park Resort, Maleny Qld, after a four year Covid absence.

Regular instructors from the USA and Australia return and will feature in a Bluegrass USA Concert Dec 3.

More details in following issues of Trad&Now.

The Illawarra Folk Festival at the Bulli Showgrounds NSW has announced the next festival dates as Jan 19-21, 2024, with a dedicated folk school, concerts, 75+ international and national and local acts including musicians, dancers, poets, street musicians and a volunteer program enticing participants to support folk music in Australia and the opportunity to make new friends.

Asleep At The Wheel

Not Bluegrass, but really, really big news for anyone who loves traditional country music, is the debut Australian visit of THE western swing band, well, at least as of 1973, from Austin Texas, Asleep at the Wheel, complete with founding member, Ray Benson, and original band member, Australian Lucky Oceans.

They will be accompanied on the tour with retro Western

singer, Brennen Leigh and fiddler Joshua Hedley.

Their Australian tour is Oct 14, "Out On The Weekend", Seaworks, Williamstown Vic; Oct 15, Factory Theatre, Marrickville NSW; Oct 18, The Gov, Adelaide SA; Oct 19, Freo Social, Fremantle WA; Oct 22, Groundwater Country Music Festival, Broadbeach Qld.

Other Bluegrass News

Songsalive - Australia & Tamworth Songwriters Association will host a songwriting workshop Aug 19-20 at the Clarendon Guest House, Katoomba, NSW, with Allan Caswell, Lyn Bowtell and Roger Corbet.

Richard Drew hosts another Cedar Creek Jam, Aug 20 noon, at the Cedar Creek Hall, Chardon Bridge Road, Gold Coast, Qld.

The Mountain Pickers Association meets at the Ferntree Gully Bowling Club Vic with special guest Aug 29 The Colvin Brothers and Sep 26 The Remnants.

The Town and Country

Hotel, St Peters NSW where Slim Dusty and Duncan said that the atmosphere was great, and home of many Bluegrass & Traditional Country Music Society of Australia jam sessions is set to close.

Currently we have no news of plans for the building.

Guildford Banjo Jambaoree

The 18th Guildford Banjo Jambaoree returns Sep 15-17 to Guildford Vic with all things banjo, including Bluegrass, Old-Time, Jug Band, Celtic, Klezmer and Jazz.

There will be a bush dance to kick off Friday night, called by Maggie Duncan, followed the next day with Saturday morning banjo workshops, a high noon Banjo and music parade, Saturday afternoon concert at the Public Hall with seven local bands featuring banjo, a Saturday evening jam with another seven bands, Sunday morning Gospel singalong, followed by a jam session dedicated to "Johnno" Caldwell at the Public Hall with



Asleep at the Wheel with Lucky Oceans

Bush Traditions DanceFest

by Ray Mulligan

The Bush Traditions DanceFest happened in Bundanoon over the June long weekend.

The weather was kind, the music was excellent and the dancing was fantastic, enjoyed by all who turned up.

Dancers and musicians

travelled great distances to attend this festival of social dance, including from Melbourne and Brisbane and many places in between.

We had Bush, Bavarian, Ballroom/New Vogue, Colonial, Contra, English Country, Estonian, Scottish,

Scandinavian and Irish.

The Festival is a favourite of many experienced dancers and the standard of dancing is high.

This allows callers to change their reputations by calling new and often quite complex sequences.

Some fell apart but most succeeded, often spectacularly. A memorable moment for me was to witness Peter Foster call a complex dance sequence with six quadrille sets in close formation.

I don't remember what Peter called it so I shall call it Foster's Ratchet.

In this sequence, dancers perform a number of movements within their sets and then at the end of the sequence, dancers turn their backs on their set and exchange places with dancers in adjacent sets.

Yep, there are dancers on the edge who do a meanwhile before dancing on.

Thus are the sets repopulated and the sequence repeated.

Extraordinary stuff!

Lilac Ball

1st October 2023

7.30 - 11 pm

St Saviours Hall
170 Bourke St, Goulburn

* All dances called

* Light supper included

* Tickets available online at

events.humanitix.com/lilac-festival-ball



Music by Heritage Ensemble

Calling by Don Richmond



Steampunk

meets



Colonial

Steampunk meets Colonial

by David Johnson

Lilac Ball in Goulburn on Sunday, October 1, will be a first!

An event where Steampunkers and Colonial Ball Dancers come together for a night of dancing.

It might seem an odd conjunction, but both groups are involved with what has been termed cosplay - an abbreviation of costume play.

Steampunk players are coming from Blue Mountains and Canberra and Sydney to join in the Lilac Festival Parade with their distinctive costumes and

lively enthusiasm.

Wikipedia suggests that Steampunk is a subgenre of science fiction that incorporates retrofuturistic technology and aesthetics inspired by 19th-century industrial steam-powered machinery.

It is also used to refer to a trend in fashion and music.

The Ball will feature music played by The Heritage Ensemble under Musical Director, Dave Johnson, and the dances will be called by the very capable Don Richmond.

Dancers in their colonial splendour are expected from

Canberra, Sydney and beyond.

The last Ball held in Goulburn was the Railway Ball, held for the Sesquicentenary of the arrival of the train line.

The NSW Governor was in attendance for the official proceedings and then joined in the fun of the Ball.

Tickets for the 2023 Lilac Ball are available online from <https://events.humanitix.com/lilac-festival-ball>.

Enquiries can be directed to David Johnson (davidjohnson2579@gmail.com).

Dance Directory

If you are a dance class or dance event organiser and would like to be included in this directory, see pages 76 and 77 for more information. Directory entry is free to subscribers.

Stringfiddle - (264-163)

Fiddles and piano - Play for Scottish Country, Ceilidh, colonial and bush dances.

Perform concert brackets at festivals.

Stringfiddle@gmail.com

ACT - Monaro Folk Society (2225-167)

Run a variety of folk music and dance workshops and other events in Canberra.

Monday night: Bush Dance Workshop with Bush capital Band. Tuesday night: Contra Dance and band- English Country Dance - alternate weeks

Wednesday night - Irish set dance

info@MonaroFolk.org.au

www.MonaroFolk.org.au

NSW - Sydney English Country Dancers (2194-160)

Group aims to teach and learn traditional and contemporary English country dances.

4th Saturday, Strathfield.

ChristineThereseMiller@gmail.com

www.SydneyEnglishCountryDancers.org.au

SA - Australian Traditional & Bush Dance Society (553-169)

Have fun and stay fit with a group of singles and couples who enjoy bush and folk dancing and other social activities. Meets

late January to mid-December - 2nd, 4th & 5th Tuesdays, 7.30 - 9.30pm, Prospect Town Hall, 128 Prospect Rd (cnr Vine St), Prospect.

enquiries@atbdsdancesa.com.au

<http://www.atbdsdancesa.com.au/>

Vic - Bendigo Bush Dance & Music Club (596-156)

Old time, colonial and bush dances on third Saturdays

Ph: 03 5442 1153

Secretary@

BendigoBushDance.org.au

Ear-resistible: why there are some songs we simply can't get out of our head

by Ben Knight, UNSW Sydney

A new study explains the kind of tunes we can't seem to shake off.

Have you ever had a song that you couldn't get out of your head?

You may not even like the tune that much, or remember where it came from, but there's just something about it that has it stuck on replay.

If there's a track running through your mind that you can't stop, chances are you've picked up an earworm.

Not a literal worm, that's just what it's called when a catchy piece of music is involuntarily wriggling around inside our heads.

The experience is quite common and may be a near-universal phenomenon.

Some research suggests that up to 98 per cent of us have experienced an earworm, or involuntary musical imagery (INMI) as it's known in music terms.

Music researchers have been searching for the secrets behind these catchy tunes in their tempos and pitches, but new research published in the journal, *Music & Science* suggests a different explanation for the kinds of music we can't seem to shake off.

The key, says Professor Emery Schubert, author of the

systematic review study from the Empirical Musicology Laboratory in the School of the Arts & Media, University of New South Wales, is repetition.

"Drawing together the literature, it appears that there's an essential characteristic necessary for a song to roll out the earworms, the music itself must have some repetition in it," Prof. Schubert says.

Prof. Schubert says most reported earworms are the chorus of songs, which are inevitably the pieces of the music repeated the most.

"Most research on earworms to date analyses what's in the hook, the short riff or passage to catch the ear of the listener," Prof. Schubert says.

"But what hasn't been considered is that the hook is invariably repeated in the music, most commonly in the chorus.

"The implication is that earworms might not have anything to do with the musical features at all.

"It largely doesn't matter what the music is, as long as repetition is part of the music structure."

But the repetition in a song is only one part of the equation.

There are several preconditions for an earworm to occur, including recency and familiarity with the music.

But to activate an earworm,

we must also be in what's called a low-attentional state, according to the study.

"It's sometimes referred to as mind wandering, which is a state of relaxation.

"In other words, if you're deeply engaged with the environment you are in, really concentrating on a task, then you won't get an earworm," Prof. Schubert says.

"Inside your relaxed mind, you don't have to follow the exact structure of the music.

"Your mind is free to wander wherever it likes, and the easiest place to go is the repeated fragment and to simply repeat it."

While earworms can be an unwelcome distraction at times, many people find them enjoyable.

"It's a bit of a misconception that they're a problem," Prof. Schubert says.

"We're starting to see more research suggesting many find getting an earworm to be quite pleasant and it is not an issue that needs solving."

The cases where earworms are dreaded is when the music itself is not liked, Prof. Schubert says.

"The earworm doesn't care about enjoyment; it cares about how familiar the music is, how recently something similar was heard, and whether the music

contains repetition."

While an earworm is not a medical condition or considered a danger in most cases, for those hoping to expel an unwelcome tune, there are many theories for how to get rid of them.

"You may be able to wrap up an earworm by either finishing off the music, consciously

thinking of another piece of music, or by removing yourself from the triggers, such as words or memories that relate to the music or lyrics," Prof. Schubert says.

Prof. Schubert also says that research into earworms gives us insights into consciousness and how we organise and recall material.

"We don't go out to find earworms, but earworms find us," Prof. Schubert says.

"There are still several puzzles we need to solve to understand not only their nature but what it might mean for cognition and memory."

Enda Kenny concert had it all

by Michael Fine

As President of the Troubadour Folk Club and MC of Saturday's concert (February 25) with Enda Kenny, I knew we were in for something special.

But as a large crowd filled the hall and we kicked off the program with floor spots, I became aware of just what a demanding job a one man show is.

Enda was on his own, his beloved support, Dave O'Neill, facing medical challenges that kept him away.

It can be daunting.

But from the first few notes, any doubts that I may have had were blown away.

Enda Kenny showed once again that he was simply the

complete performer, a man at the height of his power.

From the powerful opening song, through his warm and tender ballads and on to his quirky, funny sketches, every song he performed drew the audience deeper in.

That's no mean feat.

Two complete sets, over an hour and a half of solo performance, a man, his guitar and a microphone.

Nothing more, yet people hung off every note and each line of every song.

I've always enjoyed seeing Enda play, but on Saturday night we had an epic, a retrospective that included songs from his first recording released in Australia over 25 years ago, through to his most recent and beyond, to

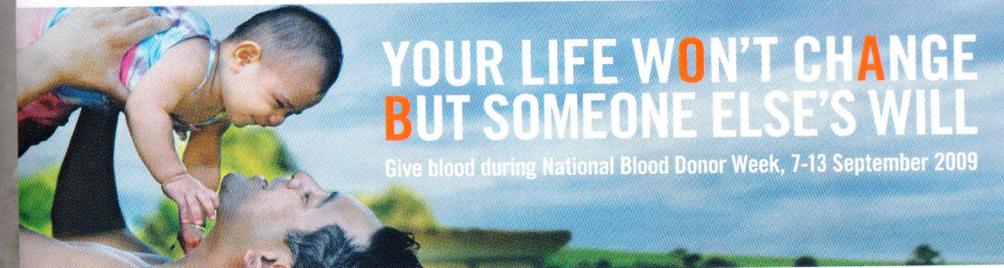
some of the great new songs he's yet to record.

So many good ones, it seems wrong to single any particular song out, but one that had a special resonance with many on the night was Vigil, his evocative, inspiring, angry yet soothing tribute to Jill Meagher and Eurydice Dixon, recent victims of horrific homicides in Melbourne, emblematic also of much wider tragedy.

Enda is our own Irish born bard, our Ozzie balladeer, whether we come from Melbourne or Woy Woy or beyond.

If you missed him, you can still hear his songs.

Buy his CDs from his website or from the Trad&Now website.



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GormleyClark@Gmail.com

New Holland Honey Eaters

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Stan@StansPage.com

Nick Charles

Performs acoustic 5roots and blues guitar instrumentals and songs. Has a 20 album, 40 year career with 13 US tours. Port fairy Artist of the Year and twice winner of the Australian Song Contest.

Pac50@Bigpond.net.au
www.CharlesGitar.com

Nick Vulture

Singer-songwriter from SA. Background in garage punk scene although his solo work is contemporary folk.

NVulture52@Gmail.com
www.NickVulture.com

Pete & Sue McMahon

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www.PeteMcMahon.com.au

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G.Alex.Bishop@Gmail.com

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Simplefolk@Soundcolour.com

Steve Tyson

Singer/songwriter, member of Rough Red, has released four solo albums to date, tours and plays solo or with his band The Train Rex.

www.stevetyson.com.au
steve.tyson411@gmail.com

Swing Beans

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Julie.witney@bigpond.com

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Ted@TedEgan.com.au

Tiffany Eckhardt

Award winning singer songwriter, Tiffany has released

10 successful independent albums. She has recently released *Starry Stuff* (2022) which reflects influences of folk, jazz and blues.

Ph: 0409 896 877

Tiffany.Eckhardt@Gmail.com

See www.TradandNow.com for more info

Traditional Graffiti

Evolved out of the Wheeze and Suck Band, 'The Trad's' formed in 2016 and continue their performances of traditional and contemporary roots material.

JMilce@Sherborne.com.au

Tripple Effect

Award winning Newcastle based acoustic trio performing original contemporary folk songs with tight harmonies informed by social and environmental issues as well as songs that speak to the heart.

TrippleEffect.Band@gmail.com

See www.TradandNow.com for more info

Vanessa Craven

Award winning musician, performer, poet. Performs solo, duo as 'Lake Mist' and in a band as 'Lunar Dust'. Silky, soulful, imaginative, mysterious. Originals and covers.

AcousticSessions@Mmnet.com.au

www.facebook.com/
VanessaCravenMusic

See www.TradandNow.com for more info

For more information on these artists, most have CDs for sale at www.TradandNow.com with independent reviews on those CDs included.



Telek

Papuan legend Telek

The legendary musician George Telek is coming downunder from Papua New Guinea (PNG) to Melbourne on August 19 to perform songs from his extensive catalogue and his 2022 album, *Kambek* (I Lilikun Mulai), at Memo Music Hall, playing alongside his long-time collaborator, David Bridie.

George Mamua Telek, or Telek as he is known, has long been at the forefront of the PNG music scene.

Having first come to the notice of Australian music fans through his contribution to David Bridie's *Not Drowning Waving* 1990 album, Tabaran, Telek released three solo albums – *Telek* (1997), *Serious Tam* (2000)

and

Arnette (2004).

He then joined the Wantok Musik Foundation and has recorded *Matogo* with the Moab Stringband (2007), *Christmas* with George Telek and Friends (2008), *Akave* (2010) and *A Bit Na Ta* with David Bridie & Musicians of the Guantuna (2016).

His chance to reach a wider audience occurred in 1986 when David was on holiday in Papua New Guinea and heard a tape of Telek playing with The Moab Stringband.

"It was a booming local scene and groups from Rabaul were successful throughout Papua New Guinea, both rock bands and string bands, so I bought a couple of George's tapes and they were instantly

appealing, though unlike anything I had heard before".

"We met up over a few beers and decided to work together to try and get his music heard outside Papua New Guinea," recalls Bridie.

Combining the languages Tok Pisin (Pigeon English) and Kuanua, *Kambek* (I Lilikun Mulai) includes references to Telek's recent recovery from a long fought battle with mouth cancer.

Having been booked to perform at the 2018 Commonwealth Games on Queensland's Gold Coast, it was there that George was diagnosed with a highly aggressive mouth cancer.

It required immediate surgery, followed by radiation therapy with a long recovery period, and that, coupled with the global Covid pandemic, caused several years of absence from touring and recording.

In 1994 Rabaul was rocked by the Tavurvur volcano destroying the town, including its recording studios, so *Kambek*



by Peter James Dawson

(I Lilikun Mulai) is the first album Sir George has recorded in his home base since then.

Telek enlisted his former Painim Wok bandmates, guitarist Sir John Warbat, drummer Henry Maniot, and bass player John "Pooger" Yass, with mixing by Simon Polinski (Yothu Yindi, Paul Kelly) who recorded and mixed Telek's self-titled album in 1997 (Best World Music Album ARIA).

Regarded as one of the most important performers in the Pacific region, his creativity over the last four decades garnered an ARIA Award and an MBE for services to the development of music culture and industry in PNG.

Whether playing with the village-based Moab Stringband, the legendary 1980s rock band Painim Wok, his collaborations with Archie Roach, Kev Carmody and David Bridie, releasing music on Peter Gabriel's Real World record label in the UK or his critically acclaimed solo output, George is never still for long.

As quoted from the Wantok website, "George Telek's songs and his hauntingly beautiful voice traverse many musical styles capturing the spirit of the Tolai people of Papua New Guinea and by blending contemporary grooves with Melanesian rhythms, the music is enriched with island

harmonies and textured environmental sounds."

Wantok goes on to say, "Telek believes in the power of song, with Kambek album opener, 'Noken Paitim Meri' (English translation: No violence against your woman), a powerful ballad, where Telek speaks directly to other Papua New Guinean men that domestic violence is abhorrent and acceptable under no circumstances.

"On 'Gadin Kaikai', Telek joins up with his long-time associates, the Moab Stringband, another song of advocacy that extols the virtues of a village based garden diet.

"A contemporary island reggae tune 'Giraun Em I Laif', underscores the message that your customary land is your livelihood, while Ramkuk is a traditional Gunantuna song performed in stringband style about the power that a magical spirit bird has over you.

"Dedicated to the families and friends of the ENBP officials who lost their lives in the boat disaster at Wide Bay Pomio 'Lus Lo Solwara' is another example of Telek's unique vocal sound and style."

Yarrabah Music & Cultural Festival

Billed as Australia's most idyllic coastal music festival,

it features some of the cream of First Nations performers this year, with Jessica Mauboy, Electric Fields, Jessie Lloyd and Yarrabah's own Yarrabah Brass Band!

Punters are invited to explore traditional Gunggandji cultural practices and workshops, enjoy delectable flavours and soak up the latest sounds.

Set in the warmth of tropical Far North Queensland, this free event on Saturday, October 7, is only an hour's drive from Cairns, with Yarrabah nestled between rolling green hills and crystalline sea.

Presented by Qld Music Trails and the Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council, the Yarrabah Music & Cultural Festival was started in 2012 to reignite Yarrabah's century-long legacy of brass music excellence.

The concert is all ages and family-friendly, with patrons under the age of 16 to be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Alcohol will not be for sale at this event, and BYO Alcohol will not be permitted at this event.

Limited free return bus transfers from Cairns are available

Register at Moshtix.

Tickets are free, but ticket registration is essential.

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.

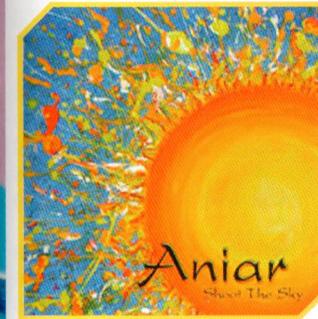
Everyone has their own taste in music and the range of tastes seems to be endless.

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



Aniar - Shoot the Sky

CD review by Tony Smith
TN440-2 - \$25

This album of 12 tracks has a Celtic flavour but with some distinctly Australian features.

The songs that are originals are mainly the work of Don Stewart, who also produced, recorded and mixed the tracks.

While Stewart wrote words and music to most of the songs, on one track he used lyrics by W.B. Yeats.

With Stewart (guitar, Celtic

bouzouki, vocals) are Gemma Belfrage (djembe, vocals, percussion), Andrew Hallett (acoustic bass guitar, vocals) and Airlie Tait (flute).

Don Blair added small pipes to 'When the Ducks Arrive' and bagpipes to 'The Lake Isle of Innisfree'.

The traditional tracks include slip jigs (Elizabeth Kelly's Delight/ The Kid on the Mountain/ Caitlin NiAedha/ the Butterfly/ Disused Railway/ Comb Your Hair and Cut It), reels (Forfar Hunt/ Sally Kelly/ Comely Garden), polkas (Ballydesmond #2,/ Maggie in the Woods/ Ballydesmond #3) and hornpipes (From Galway to Dublin Town/ The Wicklow/ Poll Ha'penny).

Mostly, these tunes are carried by Airlie's exceptional flute playing.

Some have the expected traditional rhythms, while in others, the guitar backings give a slightly jazz-like interpretation.

The songs for which Stewart wrote words and music are

CD Reviews

'My Country', 'Monday Night in Edenhope', 'Shoot the Sky' and 'When the Ducks Arrive'. 'The Lake Isle of Innisfree' is the Yeats poem set to music by Stewart.

Andrew Hallett wrote words for the 'Forfar Hunt' and Stewart set the words of G. Hancock to music in 'Bird of Ending Laughs'.

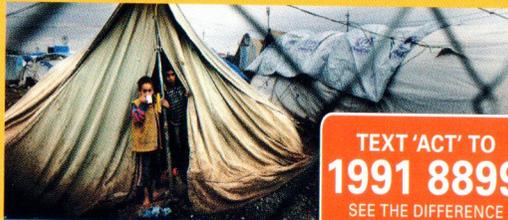
The songs mostly tell modern stories and are mainly literal, but they evoke some fine Australian images, especially where exploring the notion of belonging.

Stewart's love for the land is obvious in his yearning to belong and in his ability to learn from the inhabitants.

He asks: "Where is the ground that I belong?"

"What language must I speak?"

"What culture must I know?"
Meanwhile, Gemma gives her



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CD book Reviews

voice an ethereal quality which is a good fit for the Yeats verse and adapts it to an Australian setting.

Overall, the album has a good balance between songs and instrumentals.

Trad and now

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Geordie stories in song and novels by Jez Lowe

Book review by Tony Smith

Jez Lowe is a remarkable musician.

He plays many instruments and has been an active collaborator with others in the folk movement, especially in England.

It is however, as a songwriter, arranger and singer of the Geordie repertoire that Lowe has acquired a reputation for authenticity, sincerity and skill.

Oh, and he happens to be a novelist as well!

While Jez Lowe is perfectly capable performing solo, he is also renowned for playing with the 'Pitman Poets' and his band 'The Bad Pennies'.

Among some 20 albums, Lowe has an exceptional CD with hurdy gurdy maestro Jake Walton, which shows the pair would be comfortable in early music.

Lowe plays guitar (left handed), cittern, mandolin, banjo,

dulcimer, keyboards, harmonica, bass, whistle, bodhran and accordion with ease.

What is really impressive about Lowe's style is that he sings proudly within the Durham/Northumberland idiom.

Songs about miners, seafarers and the many 'characters' who inhabit England's north east sound best expressed with the Geordie accent.

Arising from Lowe's exhaustive research into Geordie folk tales are three very readable novels.

It is no surprise that Lowe's books are so enjoyable.

He is a naturally gifted story teller in song and his ear for a meaningful narrative transfers to 'The Dillen Doll', 'The Corly Croons' and 'Piper's Lonnen'.

'The Dillen Doll' (2017) is based on a street chant 'Do Li A' widely known for generations around Newcastle.

Without trying to explain the 'facts' behind the song, Lowe takes the existence of a Dolly Coxon as the starting point for a tale set in poverty stricken Tyneside around 1800.

Dolly has various adventures which eventually see her on a mission into Scotland to secure justice for her lover.

Lowe produced a matching CD of songs to accompany 'Dillen Doll' and these include well known pieces such as 'Broom Bezzoms', 'Blind Willie', 'Keel Lad', 'Bobby Shafto' and the song itself 'Do Li A'.

The CD released by Tantobie Records features Andie May (Northumbrian pipes), Kate Bramley (violin) and producer David De La Haye (bass) with Rachel Hamer, Kari MacLeod and Benny Graham (vocals) and Robbie Sherratt (string synth).

'The Corly Croons' (2019) is set among the poets of the mid eighteenth century.

Mention of the names of these

bards (Gilchrist, Selkirk, Rossiter, Leonard) and some of the verse they produced ('Ode to Pandon Dene', 'On Ropery Banks', 'The Fiery Clock Face') ensures that readers will follow up with their own research into the period.

Lowe creates an historical mystery complete with police investigators and links to an assassination attempt on Prime Minister Peel.

And just as musicologists are likely to uncover all sorts of stories in their search for the provenance of folk songs, Lowe's Inspector Evan Piper, a London 'Bobby', makes many literary discoveries which enrich his stay in Newcastle, endanger his life and lead to some solutions.

Blind Willie Purvis, a fiddler and busker, is a character in both books.

In 'Piper's Lonnen', Evan Piper returns from London to investigate the kidnapping of some players of the Northumbrian small pipes.

Local legends suggest that strange magical creatures are responsible and Piper must confront these superstitions in order to solve the mundane crimes.

The locals think he is a 'boggle ranter' come to exorcise the Yottuns and he becomes embroiled in a dark, cold and wet world before he uncovers a cynical operation with links across to the Netherlands.

Many of the chapters recall popular tunes from ballads and the repertoire of the pipes.

Again, Lowe has provided a short CD of tunes featuring Andy May on pipes to set the mood.

These Bad Apple books feature fine artwork by Kari MacLeod.

Perhaps the fact that I happen to have ancestors from the north east might predispose me to enjoy Geordie folklore and culture.

A female convict came from Alnwick in 1800 and a great grandfather came in about 1850 from Morpeth.

But most of the attraction comes from the way that Lowe uses his research into the folk world as starting points for his creativity.

That, and his faithfulness to Geordie style.

One of Lowe's humorous songs, 'Talk To Me Dirty In Geordie', acknowledges the distinctiveness of the speech of the working class people of England's north east.

Meanwhile, I look forward to another Evan Piper adventure and wonder when a songwriter might pen a novel eliciting a theme from Australian folklore.



Leigh Sloggett - Wait For the Change

CD review by Tony Smith
TN2522-81 - \$25

All tracks on this 2022 album were composed and arranged by Leigh Sloggett except the blues standards 'Moonshine' by Memphis Minnie and 'How Long' which has lyrics by Leroy Carr.

Sloggett also supplies vocals as well as playing acoustic guitar, electric guitar, acoustic lap slide, electric lap steel and high strung guitar.

Supporting musicians on various tracks are Chris Riseley (double bass and backing vocals), Les Oldman (drums and backing vocals) and Patrick Evans (violin, mandolin and backing vocals).

The title track opens the album and finds someone 'down on my luck, loaded with debt, worrying about payments that I hadn't met'.

It's a universal problem and this song lets listeners know he is like them.

This is Sloggett's fourth album and the first for almost a decade.

Over the years he has collaborated with many artists including Nick Charles and Liz Frencham.

In the meantime, he issued the striking single 'Fragile', which is the longest track on this album.

It is a brooding piece with plenty of driving guitar work almost in the acid-rock style – think Jimi Hendrix.

The lyrics concern a man feeling the worse for wear and his mood does not improve when he admits that he is not like he used to be, looking in the mirror he is surprised to see an old man!

A feature of the album is the way Leigh Sloggett positions the tracks for contrast.

They are all foot-tapping and danceable, but some are slower blues while others have a walking beat.

Almost every track features a catchy guitar introduction while 'Fragile' opens with equally catchy drums.

The Leroy Carr song, 'How Long', asks when a train left the station.

This is a metaphor for a relationship and really ponders how long it has been over without the bloke noticing.

This is followed by 'Helping the Vegies Grow' and is also a metaphor for domestic matters, this time upbeat and optimistic, although initially, the singer fears

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he is coming second to his girl's vegie patch.

'Fast Train' follows the weighty 'Fragile' and provides a nice contrast.

The slower 'Shinjuku Bound' also suggests a train journey as the singer observes the sights along the way and the rhythm seems right for a slow trip by rail.

This is followed by 'Switchback', an instrumental.

The tune is laid back and has a tension which always seems about to break.

'Damn You Wind' is a complaint about that familiar horror, a fire in the Australian bush which threatens a town.

'Compassion Deficit' is perhaps the best track here: 'Give me love over hate and derision/ Give me wind over dirty brown coal/ A good life is a life lived with empathy/ In a world where compassion takes hold'.

Not only do the lyrics go beyond personal problems into the area of global issues, but the guitar work is particularly interesting.

Indeed, a feature of the album is the uncompromising guitar playing by Leigh Sloggett, whichever instrument he picks up.

'Brand New Suit' is a heavier track: 'the one thing you can take with you is your black suit when you die'.

In some respects, this is an ideal final word.

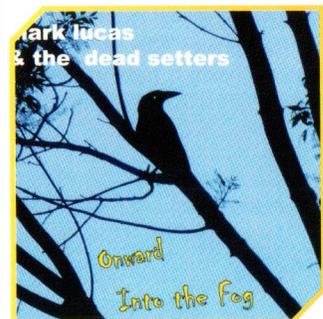
'Wait for the Change' is a very strong album by Leigh Sloggett.

Fans will reckon say that this set of tunes has made the wait well worthwhile.

Whether your ear emphasises the highly skilled guitar work or

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the passion in the lyrics, Leigh Sloggett comes across as the real deal in the world of blues.



Mark Lucas and the Dead Setters - Onward Into the Fog

CD review by Tony Smith

On this 2023 album of 15 tracks, all songs were written by Mark Lucas and produced and mixed by Jake Lardot.

The opening track - 'My Ring Still on Your Finger?' - with its slide steel sets the CD firmly in the country mould.

'Let It Rain' takes the listener into modern dance music territory with guitar riffs, keyboard and bass featured.

There are plenty of weather lyrics in these songs.

'Between the Lines' has a Dylanesque accent without the mysterious words.

Soaring guitar leads this one.

Eyes - of beholders and storms - lead off 'Guardian Angel'.

This song is almost a prayer to a special woman.

But she left years ago, tired of the same old song.

'Consider Me Gone', blues fans will really enjoy this one.

'Salty Tears' returns to the realm of weather analogies and is another song blues fans will welcome.

'Northern Star' is slower.

It is about finding your home and how a special person can be a guide.

This is perhaps the best of many fine tracks on this album.

The boogy-woogy 'Sally Anne' is out of that fifties rock and roll genre that so influenced later groups including The Beatles.

The keys are lively and the guitar almost speaks the girl's name.

'Another Road' goes back to the country.

This is a farewell song, going away out west.

Love is a journey.

Body art is all the rage.

So are new relationships.

What happens to the old tattoo?

'New Tattoo' features some growling gob iron.

One song that should be played on radio in the USA is 'Gun Control'.

"I don't know where I'm going but I'm getting there fast ... dreaming of snow white with a pistol in her hand".

'When It Goes' describes what is left when love departs, can take you with it, shiver in the tropics.

'Last Slow Dance' opens with wistful guitar.

'On this old hardwood floor where the boot heels of time scratch out the score... Music grows dim your fingers spread mine - our lives entwine'.

This is a memorable song on which to finish.

Its poetry lingers.

Lucas (vocals, guitar) is supported by Lardot (vocals, guitar, keyboards) and Chris Mearns (vocals, bass).

They are joined by Lawrie

Minson's slide guitar and harmonica and Tomi Grasso's pedal steel guitar on a couple of songs.

It seems that Mark Lucas has led various groups over the years.

This 'post-Covid' CD shows that he has been right to persevere - his voice, his song lyrics, his guitar and his arrangements are quality music.

The songs all have nice rhythms which would make pleasant dance tunes in a pub setting.

The album was recorded in a Cherrybrook garage.

Well, if this is typical of music that comes out of garages in that Sydney suburb, there should be more of it.

Forget the pub, nearby residents will let down their hair in the street.

Trad and now

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McMahon and Short - Loungeroom Sessions

CD review by Tony Smith

The 14 tracks on this CD are largely the work of Pete McMahon and Kim Short.

They play, sing, compose, arrange, record, mix, take photographs and produce!

Along the way, there is support from Sue McMahon (vocals, keyboard, management and Anglo concertina), Ralph Pride (pizzicato violin on a track) and Kathy Potter (flute on a track).

McMahon plays guitar and ukulele while Short plays bass,

guitar, drums, percussion and keyboard.

The picture of a box of chocolates with various centres is an ideal visual representation of this assortment of tunes.

The tracks and their acknowledgements are:

Mangoes (McMahon and Short), Downstairs (K McArthur), I Ride A Bicycle (G Floyd and Short), Rolling Dice (G Floyd), Ain't Misbehaving (Brooks, Razaf, Waller), Murphy's Pub (B McHardy, Short, S Lockwood), One Day (P and S McMahon), North Coast Line (Short), Driving to me Door (P Brosgarth), Liquorice Junkie (G Floyd), Making Music (K McArthur), Astrology (G Floyd and Short), Don't Fence me In (C Porter) and Everybody's Advertising (Short).

'Mangoes' has a summery feel and the voices blend well here.

'Downstairs' starts with a cheeky laugh and we soon find ourselves at a drunken party.

On 'Rolling Dice' the higher female voice over the walking bass provides nice variety.

Some fine guitar picking is a feature of 'Ain't Misbehaving'.

'Murphy's Pub' is a strong drinking song, while 'One Day' encourages dreams of a happy future.

There is a surprisingly ethereal atmosphere to 'Driving to My Door'.

'Liquorice Junkie' is perhaps one of the most appealing tracks here with Sue McMahon's voice again central.

They kept the best till last.

'Everybody's Advertising' has the guitar rhythms of a Rolling Stones' tune and the lyrics are sharp.

Yes, everyone has a slogan on their t-shirt these days, and sometimes this amounts to 'wearing your heart on your sleeve', even if you do not really believe.

Overall, 'Loungeroom Sessions' has a simple enough theme.

Short and the McMahons are enjoying themselves, and why would they not want to share their pleasure in being able to perform and to join together so happily?

It would be good to have a little more information about G Floyd, as he or she is a large presence in these tracks.

McMahon says that 'lyrics and background stories' are available on his website.

They were not available when I looked.

Perhaps they are now.



Mel Biggs - From Darkness Comes Light

CD review by Tony Smith

This is an appropriate title for an album by Mel Biggs, who is one of England's best known teachers of the melodeon.

Over the years, Mel must have heard numerous students exclaim with delight as some of the mystery about the diatonic button accordion became clear to them.

Mel's background is available on her eponymous website as well as at melodeon.net.

Joining Mel Biggs on accordions and vocals are Kat Biggs on piano accordion, Jon Loomes on guitar and cittern,

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Bridget Slater on fiddle and David Squirrell on mandolin and octave mandola.

Mel wrote and arranged most of the tracks with the exception of the traditional 'Mounthills' and the 'Coleford Jig'.

The originals are 'A New Day Dawns', 'Dream Big' (in the sleeve notes she thanks many people who helped her dream big enough to produce this album), 'Shivelight in Spring', 'High Places', 'Oppland Upland', 'Shimmer', 'Long Shadows', 'Catching Flies', 'Winter Weather Warning', 'Silver Linings' and 'Katy's Theme'.

There is an obvious emphasis in these titles on natural phenomena, places, seasons and the like.

In style, the pieces are varied.

'Shivelight in Spring' for example has the distinct rhythms you would expect from a Morris dance, as the dancers lift and meet.

'Oppland Upland' has an eastern European flavour.

'Shimmer' could be used for belly dance.

'Long Shadows', at a brief 39 seconds, might have emerged from an electronic composition.

'Catching Flies' has the jaunty, playful approach the title suggests.

If the name Mel Biggs also seems like a descriptive term, it has to be said that 'Mel' is a natural fit for such a competent player of button accordion.

I would certainly appreciate more details about the humble, intuitive folk instruments Mel uses here.

For example, variables could include the keys (D/G is one pair

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likely), the tuning, which seems close to dry (reeds close together in pitch) and the makers.

'Silver Linings' expresses hope emerging from the winter and is both wistful and contemplative.

It gathers in strength as it progresses and leaves a feeling of peace.

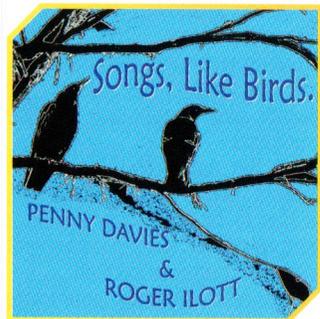
'Katy's Theme' is a good finale in that it demonstrates some of richness which an experienced player can elicit from the melodeon.

Biggs thanks her 'kickstarter' supporters.

She also notes that David's parts came via cables to maintain social distancing.

This CD is obviously a Covid/ isolation therapy and Biggs suggests that fans 'keep the conversation going about mental health'.

While this music is obviously very personal and innovative and not easily replicated, this album, like music generally, makes a great contribution to our well being.



Penny Davies and Roger Ilott - Songs, Like Birds

CD Review by Tony Smith

Songs, Like Birds... are strange and rare.

They raise up the heart as they rise in the air.

This 2023 album by versatile evergreen folk duo Davies and Ilott is typically diverse.

Davies and Tony Ilott wrote 'Looking Out at Mountains', 'Sleeping Child on Christmas Eve' and the title track penned for Hamish Henderson, while Davies and Roger Ilott arranged the traditional 'The Parting Glass'.

Penny Davies also has credits for 'Silver in the Moon' and 'The Woodford Bell' and she collaborated with Joe Cannon on 'Blue Sky'.

Other tracks include Gary Shearston's 'Sometime Lovin'', Bob Dylan/ The Byrds' 'My Back Pages', 'Victor Jara of Chile' by Adrian Mitchell and Arlo Guthrie, 'This World Is Rich (for Stephen Mabo)' by Gary Brooker (Procol Harum) and Keith Reid and 'John O'Dreams' by Bill Caddick to a Tchaikovsky tune.

Penny Davies and Roger Ilott carry the vocals and there are instrumental contributions from Davies (mandolin and mandola), Roger Ilott (guitars, banjo and keyboards), Tony Ilott (bass, keyboards, violin arrangement), J.D. Ilott (drums, pedal steel, backing vocals), Will Rodgers (border pipes, whistles), Kristin Kelly (violin) and Alan Kelly (bodhran).

The opening track 'Silver in the Moon' is a joyous song with typical acoustic folk instrument backing.

'Looking Out At Mountains' is another personal reflection on the way a beautiful landscape can affect you.

The title track also arose from Davies' personal experience at the Edinburgh festival where the amazing Hamish Henderson welcomed her in song.

As with Brooker, Shearston, Caddick and other songwriters

whose work is covered here, Davies shows how folksingers belong to an enduring and developing tradition.

The pipes are absolutely right for a track about Edinburgh!

Three tracks concern sleeping and silence.

The story of the sleeping child represents the tragedy that befalls so many children in wartime.

It is perhaps the most poignant track on this album.

Then follows the story of the 'sandman' who gives 'respite and peace too, with the gift of sleep, and the mystery of dreaming'.

'The Woodford Bell' tells the simple tale of the traditional three minutes silence at that famed festival and how the bell ends the silence.

The stories of Victor Jara, covered by many famous singers, and Stephen Mabo of South Africa are in the tradition of protest songs.

I was amused by a comment by Grace Petrie that one newspaper article claimed there was no such thing as a protest singer.

Petrie observed that the writer reckoned she did not exist.

There are of course, many powerful protest songs and thankfully, singers like Petrie and Davies who have the courage to sing them.

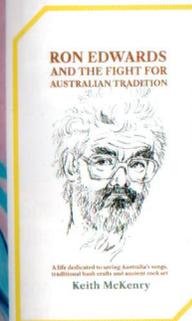
The closing track, 'The Parting Glass', again one which has been covered by numerous folk singers, is given pleasant treatment which combines an opening of solo voice and instrumental melody line.

Davies remarks that this track expresses the feeling that in a troubled world, she and Roger have been able to spend their time in special company, doing what they love.

'How lucky can you get?' she asks.

While this is certainly true, this

Restless Music duo are generous collaborators who deserve to have spent their time in good company, sending their songs flying to raise spirits.



Keith McKenry Ron Edwards and the Fight for Australian Tradition: A Life Dedicated to Saving Australia's Songs, Traditional Bush Crafts and Ancient Rock Art

Arcadia 2023. ISBN: 978-1-922952-04-2. Hardback. 362 pp.
Book review by Tony Smith

This lavishly presented biography of a remarkable Australian is a pleasant read for anyone interested in the adventures of a folklore collector.

Ron Edwards (1930 – 2008) combined art with printing, publishing, collection of yarns and songs and research into Aboriginal cave paintings in north Queensland.

Keith McKenry tells the life story of this remarkable and determined character in a largely linear narrative.

This makes it easy to follow developments in his subject's skills.

Edwards experienced many changes in direction, sometimes because of the actions of others.

There was for example, a dispute with Hugh Anderson

with whom Edwards had earlier co-operated on an important publishing project, and Edwards was disappointed when several institutions refused to fund his anthropological research because he lacked formal qualifications.

Edwards struggled financially at times.

Although he had taught art at Swinburne Tech, the Queensland Education Department refused him employment.

In some years, his wife Anne was the family's breadwinner.

Partly because his father built homes for the family and he was accustomed to roughing it, and partly because he had developed confidence in his skills as an isolated Boy Scout, Edwards built several homes and galleries on various properties, notably at Holloways Beach, Trinity Beach and 'Fairyland' at Kuranda near Cairns.

Edwards was largely a self-taught musician.

Buying a tenor recorder for playing around the campfire but being forbidden to use it there, he joined John Manifold's Brisbane consort.

Edwards remarked of Manifold, an important collector of folk songs, that his mentor was prone to exaggerate his exploits.

This could not be said of Edwards.

He always stated the case from his point of view and saw little need for conciliatory or diplomatic behaviour.

Those inclined to criticise Edwards might see this straight speaking as evidence of ego.

Edwards had so many disappointments from publishers that he often resorted to his own outlet, the Rams Skull Press.

The books he wrote occupy some five pages in the bibliography.

Many of those publications

are with Rams Skull.

The press published over 300 titles, including Ron's own.

He began his publishing career being a skilled illustrator and trained printer.

Edwards had a full life. He travelled extensively, especially to China, where he made 14 visits.

He was particularly interested in peasant building techniques and saw the potential for these in Australia's back to earth movement.

He made mud bricks himself and wrote about them and even experimented with using remaindered books in mud!

He was influenced by calligraphy in China and Japan and even dabbled in Shingon Buddhism.

He went to England to dig out old broadside ballads and took wife Anne to Spain, seemingly for relaxation.

His collected yarns were thought popular enough to be presented on ABC television along with Bill Wannan, Stan Arthur and Bill Scott.

He engaged in debates about what exactly a yarn might be.

A Melbourne theatre picked up his yarns and made them into a scripted play called 'Bullsh!'

When bureaucracy became important in funding the arts, Edwards was resistant at first, but then got a place on the Folk Trust to ensure that collectors were included.

The proceedings of several conferences made him fear that performers, administrators and academia were taking over.

It is a little surprising perhaps that author McKenry belonged

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to the arts bureaucracy but still became friends with Edwards.

Generally, McKenry's writing about Edwards is uncritical.

He accepts without demur the reasons Edwards gave for his stances on issues.

Interestingly however, Edwards does not emerge from this work as a character who inspires empathy.

In one of his very few assessments, McKenry says that Edwards was not an attentive parent.

Daughter Lee was disappointed when she asked for support to attend college.

Edwards cried poor but Lee noted that he had purchased some mining shares.

Curiously McKenry mentions the further alienation of son David, but not earlier instances.

After his parents' death, David was angry to find that Ron had left a small fortune while his mother had been forced to live in houses without normal comforts.

Perhaps Ron was not an attentive spouse either, but there is no evidence in this book that Anne complained.

This is a lavish book for which the publisher will charge a high price.

It was false economy to skimp on proofreading services.

The many typos are a distraction - 'had great hoped', 'hoard of people', 'he and told', the nervous 'populous' for example.

So too is the lack of dates on some illustrations.

For example, while we are told that Edwards played recorder, guitar and sousaphone,

he is pictured being interviewed by Wendy Lowenstein while playing a concertina.

Often, the term 'that year' appears when it would be as easy and more helpful to provide the year.

And when Ron finally regained the research materials he and Charles Mountford had gathered on Aboriginal rock art, we are told that he finished 'the book' but not given its title.

Ron Edwards received a Medal of the Order of Australia and an honorary doctorate from Swinburne University of Technology where his art education began, so was not without recognition.

His name certainly belongs in the collectors' pantheon with the likes of John Meredith, Alan and Bill Scott, Manifold, Lowenstein and some still alive who have booked their places.

His work collecting the songs of the Torres Strait is the most remarkable in this field.

Also, Edwards is without peer as a writer on bush crafts and was fittingly invited to overseas conferences to speak on topics such as saddles and whip plaiting.

One question that must be asked is how Keith McKenry's biography relates to the autobiography Edwards penned late in life.

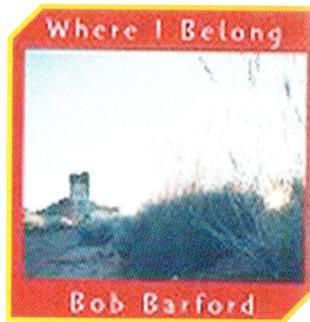
Given how prickly Edwards was about writers attributing sources accurately, it would be interesting to have his reaction.

The dust cover of this book, which perhaps could be summarised as 'the struggle over folklore collection', has a self-portrait by the subject.

The Ron Edwards who emerges from these pages was an autodidact, a polymath and an obsessive.

He looks out from the sketch as though slightly bemused to find anyone that could know

anything about Ron Edwards.



Bob Barford - Where I Belong

CD review by Tony Smith
TNO23-4 - \$20

In this 'wrapped up' production from Alice Springs, Bob Barford, of the famous band 'Bloodwood', showed exactly where he belonged, personally, geographically and musically.

The fourteen tracks which include some originals, and an 'Aussie Medley', two versions of Waltzing Matilda, Click Go the Shears, Botany Bay, made it clear where Barford's heart belongs.

He covered Hugh MacDonald's 'Diamantina Drover', John Williamson's 'Raining on the Rock' and Ted Egan's 'Drover's Boy'.

Barford commented that 'I am Australian' by Bruce Woodley of The Seekers and Dobe Newton of the Bushwackers, would make a good national anthem.

His arrangement of Henry Lawson's 'Freedom on the Wallaby' was very good.

He wore his republican heart on his sleeve in this one.

Some tunes Barford wrote are 'Sail Away' for the Todd River yachties, 'Benchmark Cafe' about a good tree for boiling the billy and 'Jassara', a lullaby for

his granddaughter.

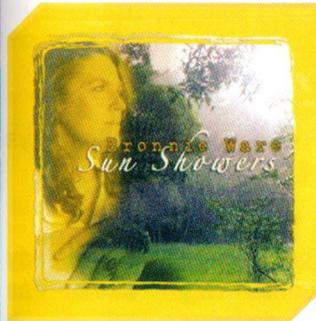
Bob and Lesley Bradford collaborated on the title track 'Where I Belong' and 'Old Bamboo Chair' by Alan Hughes is covered.

So was Cook's 'Go Tell Your Father', which is about a bushranger, and Steve Smith's 'Handy Camel', clearly a song from Central Australia.

From the other side of the world, Barford included the Alice Springs string group playing Jay Ungar's 'Ashokan Farewell'.

Barford thanked numerous contributors: Scott Balfour, Mick Cafe, Ella Carmichael, Dave Evans, Barney Foran, Peter and Nicola Gilham, Isaak Hartley-Richards, Alan and Jayne Hughes, Anne Jaquiere, Dave McCall, Kate and Ross Muir, Colin Monroe, Therese O'Brien, Toddy Shilton and Barry Skipsey.

Where I Belong is a straight, honest declaration of Bob Barford's love for the land and the characters who help to make Central Australia unique.



Bronnie Ware - Sun Showers

CD review by Tony Smith
TN679-74 - \$20

This album of 13 tracks by former NSW Blue Mountains singer-songwriter Bronnie Ware showed a subtle grasp of emotional content.

It is no surprise to find then that in her subsequent career, she went on to write several

books and to offer counselling about very sensitive, almost taboo, subjects such as palliative care and the end-of-life experience.

The optimistic title Sun Showers is a reminder to look on the bright side of life.

After all, if 'Words' fail you, that is because words are not enough.

Sometimes love can be expressed in silence.

Some of the lyrics have a poetic quality.

In 'Calling Your Name Too' Ware sang: "The sky has called me home again, always seems to do, But I'm coming back to love you and it's calling your name too".

Ware gave 'Crossing Paths' an interesting treatment.

The verses are recited but the chorus is sung and the combination is effective.

In 'What Do You Know', the fiddle accompaniment is a feature.

Ware is not afraid to deal with extremes of emotion.

In 'Far Away' the feelings are out of control: "Oh lover I can't think straight, I need you here, cannot wait".

The language is simple and so easily accessible, but certainly does not oversimplify complex emotions.

'Beneath Australian Skies' is based on the feelings aroused by seeing some of the outstanding natural features of the country, its 'hardened beauty'.

There is no need to specify what feelings are invoked at places such as the Nullarbor and the Great Ocean Road, but the term 'spellbound' is appropriate.

Other tracks include 'Having Fun', 'Sweet Thing', 'Nearly Home', 'A Dark Day', 'Treetops' and 'Let Yourself Be Surprised'.

Bronnie Ware (vocals, guitar) was supported on this album by Bruce Reid (guitars, production),

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Karl Broadie (harmonica, backing vocals), Pete Drummond (drums) and Fiona McVicar (fiddle).

She also thanked Donna Neaves, Louise Cook, Paul Najar and Reesa Ryan for the way the album sounds and looks.

Mostly these songs describe the joys to be found in personal intimacy and the discovery that you want to be close to someone.

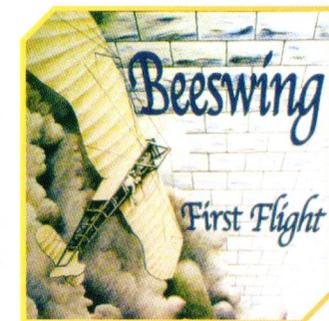
But they do not shy away from the fact that such relationships are fragile and possibly transitory.

So they tackle issues such as parting, and the desire to wander and live the 'gypsy life'.

The final track 'Dance Little Girl' encourages the celebration of life and not to be afraid of tomorrow.

This song could be intended for a girl of young age, but could also address the little girl, the spirit residing in every human.

The album ends with the postscript 'May all beings be happy'.



Beeswing - First Flight

CD review by Tony Smith
TN1147-46 - \$20

This album by NSW Hunter Valley outfit Beeswing has a balance of Scott Thomson

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originals and traditional songs arranged by the band.

With Scott Thomson (guitar, vocals) are Jenny Thomson (flute, harmonica, whistles, vocals), Barbara Kelly (vocals) and Gary Roberts (bass guitar, mandolin, autoharp, bodhran).

Roberts also shared production credits with Robbie Long.

Recording took place at their boatshed on Lake Macquarie.

The traditional songs are 'Young Henry (The Diver Boy)', 'Braw Sailing', 'Twa Corbies', 'Mary and the Soldier' and 'Suill A Ruin'.

Thomson's compositions are 'George O', 'Another Latte', 'Effie Currie', 'From Kurri to Carey Bay', 'Badlands', 'Future Harvest' and 'Please Can I Play Mary Magdalen?'

The arrangements for the traditional songs show good variety.

'Braw Sailing' for example, has Scott singing the verses and full choruses.

Other songs highlight the female lead.

In 'Mary and the Soldier', the male and female voices take the verses alternatively while the flute weaves throughout.

'Suill a Ruin' features driving bass, fine whistle and expressive voice.

As the notes point out, this is a tale of two lovers, one of whom is destined to become 'cannon fodder'.

The comments about the songs are light and interesting.

About 'Another Latte' for

example, there is a claim that the scenario is purely hypothetical and not about anyone we know.

Just as well really, as the song describes a corporate world in which there are 'dragons to slay, people to betray' and where people become 'too clever by half'.

It is clear on this track also that Barbara Kelly's voice exudes confidence and control as she ad libs with simple 'la la da da'.

For the Scots tunes, the group becomes 'Beeswing Macduff'.

The opening track 'George O' is a powerful anti-war song.

It has driving guitar, great harmonica intro, excellent backing vocals and carries the warning 'don't mess with the men in black'.

Then 'Young Henry' shows Jenny's versatility as it opens with some ethereal flute.

The female voice here is clear and expressive, especially deep in the blues style.

The tragic story of pioneer woman, 'Effie Currie', is one that needed to be told.

Equally compelling is 'Please Can I Play Mary Magdalen?'

Thomson notes here that nothing beats the offstage passion of country dramatic societies.

This is a lovely whimsical track: "I'll wash his feet with my auburn hair" and is perfect sung straight and seriously.

The wandering flute is particularly impressive.

Scott's 'Badlands' reckons that you can "sense history exuding from the pores of every cactus".

'Future Harvest' is a plea to "bury what's dead, yesterday's dream, and turn a new leaf", over a drop of Hunter Valley wine of course.

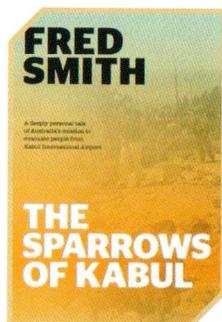
'Kurri to Carey Bay' tells of how miners would go to the lake to wash the coal dust out of their hair and no doubt to refresh themselves enough to face the mines on Monday.

This song has a great lilting tune and very Australian delivery.

While the band might ask 'Who are we?', fans, surely anyone who hears this album, will answer that it does not matter where they fit as regards traditions, pop and rock music.

The lyrics are compelling, the arrangements bring out the best in the voice and instruments and both traditional songs and originals are very listenable.

Every track on First Flight has much to recommend it.



Fred Smith - The Sparrows of Kabul

Book review by Tony Smith

Fred Smith has already made his mark as a diplomat and as a songwriter.

These fields seem so different that it is only natural that he has drawn on his experience in overseas postings to enrich his songwriting and used his talents as a performer in such far flung places as Niugini and the USA.

Now, with a second book published about Afghanistan, it is clear that Fred loves and respects the people of that war

torn country.

His earlier 'Dust of Uruzgan' focussed on the interactions between the local people and Australian military personnel sent to combat the influence of Taliban extremists.

Fred also compiled an album of the same name featuring songs about that experience.

These writings and songs bring Afghanistan to life for Australians.

Despite early contact with Afghan cameleers, most of us thought little about the country apart from alarms raised by the government two decades ago.

Personally, I was watching a skin specialist stitch up an incision in my leg where he had removed a carcinoma and commented that he would be good at embroidery.

He said that he enjoyed sewing and as a boy in Kabul often watched his uncle, a tailor, plying his craft.

Akber has been here four decades and does not have close family there now.

How poignant Smith's memories must be when he worked with so many people who could not be evacuated.

Indeed, he offers 'apologies to those we left behind'.

As you might expect of someone who is a skilful storyteller in song, Fred Smith has a clear prose style and knows the kinds of tales readers appreciate.

Essentially, 'The Sparrows of Kabul' should work as catharsis for Smith in that the memoir recalls the attempt of trying to ensure the smooth evacuation of friendly locals after the withdrawal of US and Australian forces and the entry of the Taliban to Kabul in August 2021.

While the Department of Foreign Affairs worked at debriefing and rehabilitating personnel involved in this frustrating humanitarian task, inevitably there is some residual feeling of inadequacy or even guilt.

Could we have done more?

What, after all, can one person achieve as a cog in a large machine?

Smith's compassion and dedication are clear.

These qualities are obvious in the stories he tells, the ways he writes and the messages between the lines.

He shares the experience neatly with the unedited texts of several emails, some from correspondents whose first language is not English.

He is quick to admit his shortcomings, his tiredness, his inability to shift the bureaucracy, his temptation to surrender and his final acceptance that he had to leave and go first to Dubai, where he was needed at an evacuation centre, and then home.

One simple story expresses Fred's frustration well.

During the crush at the airport, a little girl became separated from her mother and was inconsolable and could not be moved.

Fred left her for a moment during which CS gas caused a stampede of marines.

When he looked for the girl, she had disappeared.

No doubt there were many such events in the crucial four days around the withdrawal.

The book shares a number of Fred's photographs.

One shows him near a 'scrum' of marines and clearly this was a position of extreme personal

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danger.

We can be cynical about bureaucrats and they have suffered very bad press at times, of which 'Robodebt' is but one example.

It seems clear however, that Smith exercised the power he held for the good of the Department's 'clients'.

He writes 'In memory of Allan Gyngell. He was a public servant'.

That is, in the true spirit of the role.

There are also two postscripts and a lengthy poem Fred penned about the 'sparrows'.

Throughout the memoir, Smith is the consummate diplomat, tactful and measured in his statements.

Smith took his responsibilities in Afghanistan seriously and wanted to contribute to debriefings while memories were fresh.

Hopefully, 'The Sparrows of Kabul' will be read and taken seriously by anyone who makes future decisions about Australia's role beyond our shores.

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