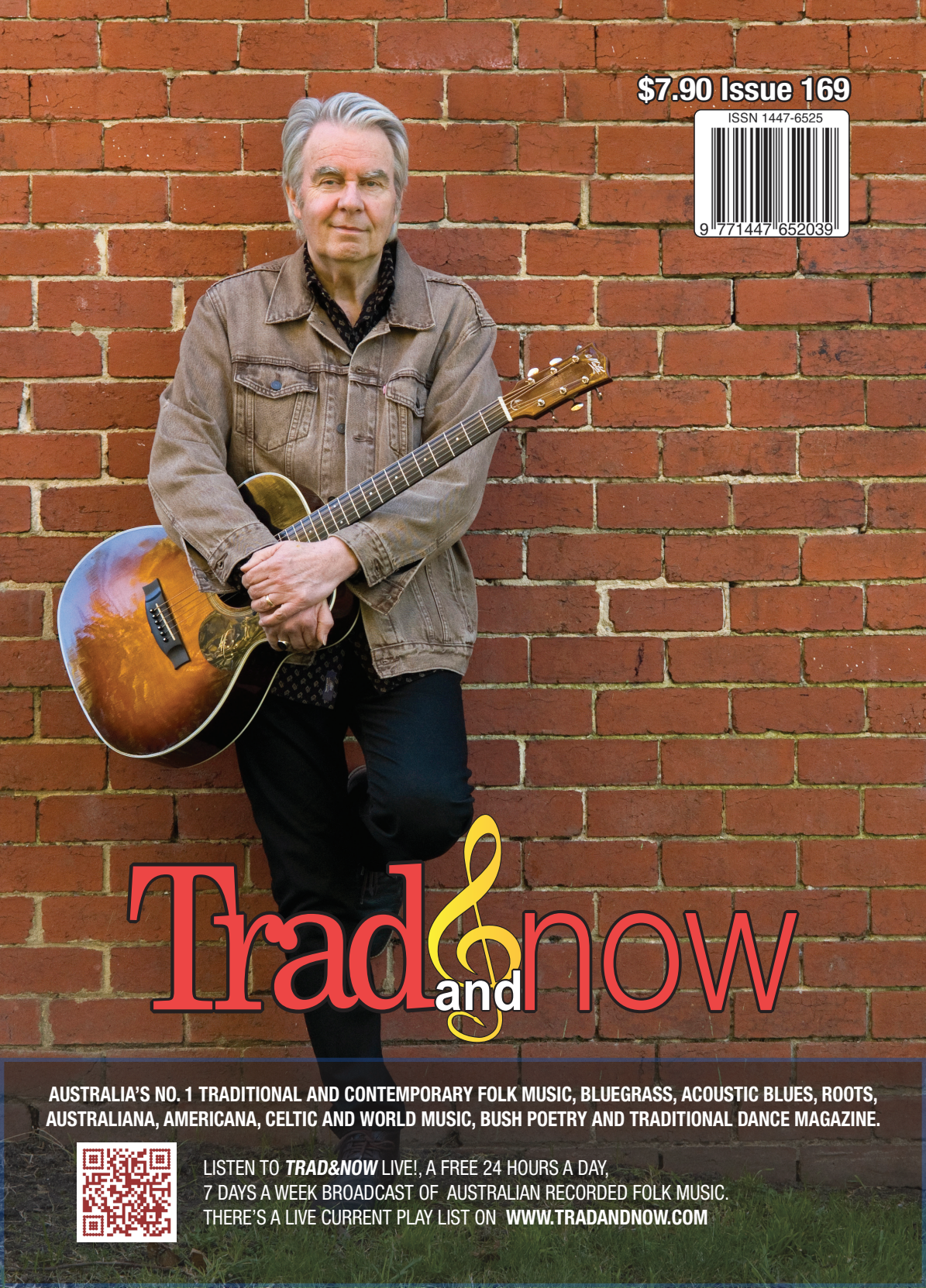
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Ducks Crossing Publications
Phone 0410 522 070

Find us on

Trad&Now is published by Ducks Crossing Publications,
1 Boona Lane, Saratoga
NSW 2251, Australia
Ph: 0410 522 070
www.tradandnow.com

Printed by Innovative Print Solutions
ISSN 1567 6525 - Registered for transmission by print post PP 100004905

Trad&Now magazine was presented with the Australian Folk Music Annual Award for Contribution to Folk by Folk Alliance Australia in 2022.

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Next edition: ***Trad&Now:*** 170
ADVERTISING BOOKINGS AND EDITORIAL DEADLINE: **APR 20**
PUBLICATION DATE: **APR 28**

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Marilla wows them at VFMC

by Don Fraser. Photos Trevor Voake



The main act at the Victorian Folk Music Club's first concert of the year, held in February, was Marilla Homes, a local lady from Yorta Yorta country in northern Victoria, up on the Murray.

About 70 patrons attended this first event.

To our loss, she currently resides in Sheffield UK, but nevertheless blesses the homeland with regular visits where she displays a wide range of musical interests on tours all over the country.

She is a singer, a teacher, performer, does musical theatre, is in an a'cappella duo, does well-being workshops, remedial therapy, has five CDs to her credit, and seems to be very well connected with many of the leading local folk performers.

Her bubbly outgoing personality connects well with audiences.

Her opening piece was appropriately performed by her opening her piano.

She has this keyboard that folds up into about four pieces.

Never seen one of those before, but it has an impressive sound.

Her song was a kind of an invocation to ancestors backed by a mystical drone on this piano.

Her vocal abilities were immediately obvious.

She also does opera.

In 1917, Maud Buttler was a bit ahead of her time as 'she dresses as a soldier and wants to go to war, she jumped the ship to cross the foam'.

Marilla got the audience involved.

The old traditional English folk song, The Death Of Queen Jane, followed.

Sheffield of course is famous for its steel, water wheels and industry in times gone by.

A short history on Sheffield and its contribution of its steel to the Brooklyn Bridge was presented.

There's an air of music hall about Marilla's performance.

She s good at getting the audience involved in saucy choruses.

Except for the fold-up piano, she presents a'cappella most of the time and has a powerful voice.

Settlers Wife is about the pain and sorrow of the early bush women and their part in keeping things going.

This was followed by a jaunty Heading Out Of Melbourne on the road to Yarrawonga, going to



Marilla was joined by the ladies that performed earlier

see her ma.

Next a song about caring for a partner suffering the effects of asbestosis, He Fades Away.

Then a comical song of a girl trying to break free from the confines of the family to find a partner.

All the ladies appearing in Spot Acts came up to help out with Le Tricateurs.

These were the ladies noted for their knitting skills gained at various 'public events' in France in Louis' time, 'like those women at Versailles we will sing and march and cry'.

An encore was requested and Marilla obliged with an aria from Bizet's Pearl Fishers.

Quite a spectacular finale to another great Concert at VFMC.

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New faces in the street are ones to remember

by Annie Johnsson



Faces in the Street (l to r): Rowan Cole, John Fraser and John Zak

Faces In The Street is a new Melbourne based Folk trio who are originally born of the acoustic duo The Keynes Brothers.

Their debut LP 'Bring Back Tomorrow', out on March 21, marks their transition from acoustic origins to a more progressive Indie Folk genre, and their expansion from a two piece to a trio.

Founded by John Fraser (vocals/guitar) and Rowan Cole (vocals/mandolin/guitar/mandola), the Keynes Brothers drew inspiration from folk, rock, and country blues.

Fraser and Cole have co-written an extensive catalogue of songs exploring life's challenges, the human condition and the power of hope and perseverance.

In 2024, the pair were joined by John Zak (bass/guitar/synth) who brought country, swamp blues and Latin jazz influences into the band's repertoire.

Faces in the Street is the natural evolution of a band that remains focused on storytelling and vocal harmonies within an evocative soundscape of acoustic and electric instrumentation.

The band name was taken from Henry Lawson's poem of the same name.

'Bring Back Tomorrow' provides a window into the past decades' life journeys and observations of songwriters John Fraser and Rowan Cole.

The album was produced by Cameron McKenzie and recorded at Station Place Studios, Glenhuntly, Victoria, except for 'Old to New', which was engineered by Craig Newman and recorded at Dewey Studios, Moorabbin, Victoria.

'Bring Back Tomorrow' highlights the impacts of socio political change viewed through a personal, reflective lens.

The songs provide insights, hope, and optimism in challenging times.

The album opener, 'It's Not Me', is a breezy acoustic song exploring the effects of group think on an unsuspecting community, and features the bass and cello from Cameron McKenzie.

The title track up next follows a similar theme.

The protagonist lamenting the dangers of echo chambers, this time captured in a fast paced folky style.

'Hope' is a more personal song, a beautifully crafted and evocative story of relationships and the impact of time, while 'Lifters and Leaners' is a thoughtful portrayal of the horrors of neoliberalism and how it can leave people behind.

'Time Machine', set to a resonant mariachi beat, is about the power of music to evoke strong memories and help overcome the challenges that all people face, while 'Hope You're Ok' is a lilting consideration of the challenge of modern relationships.

The suffering of ordinary people during the global financial crisis is the subject of the next track, 'House Falling Down'.

'It's For Free', with its country swing rhythm, is a tale of how fear can imprison hearts, and how human relationships can be reduced to the status of transactions.

The final two tracks, 'Old To New', a mournful insight into climate grief, and 'Together', a stark commentary on neoliberalism, set to an acoustic soundscape of light and dark colours, are both a call to action in dangerous times.

'Bring Back Tomorrow' indeed.

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Maria straddles her Irish Australian heritage

by Peter Stanley



Maria Forde was the guest artist at the Peninsula Folk Club's February concert.

Maria is a great supporter of our Club and we are happy to have her back again!!!!

As an Irish Australian, Maria Forde has always straddled both sides of her heritage in her song-writing.

Incorporating the sweet melodies that are the trademark of the Irish musical heritage, with observations of Australia, along with her personal experiences, Maria has blossomed into one of Australia's premier songwriters.

Her first album, "Will You Dance With Me?", features the title song, written for a friend's wedding, that has become a theme for weddings, in Australia and internationally, by Maria's original and various cover versions.

The trend, in Maria's writing, to incorporate both her Irish origins and Australian sensibilities, are heralded by "Waltzing Matilda, My Darling", a song about the torn spirits of the immigrant to both their country of birth and their adopted land, Australia.

Her sophomore release, "Dark Island" like the title, exhibited noir attitudes, as Maria broached topics such as child abuse, the innocence of childhood, and family relationships.

Eric Bogle writes, "Maria Forde is a fine singer and a gifted songwriter.

"Like all good songwriters, her lyrics often reflect an understanding of, and compassion for the human condition, with all its triumphs and disasters, all its bright peaks and dark corners.

"At her live performances, she presents her songs with sincerity, passion and more than a dash of humour, and these very human attributes, along with her fine singing voice, is why she invariably establishes such a seemingly effortless rapport with her audiences."

Digital albums welcomed

The Trad&Now Live! streaming service now also welcomes digital albums, both for sale on the website and to upload for guaranteed airplay.

Until now, only physical albums recorded in Australia and held in stock for sale on the website have been added to Trad&Now Live!

However, given the way the music industry is continuing to head, this is now open for digital albums as well.

The album still needs to be available for sale on the Trad&Now website but I will not need to be holding stock on consignment unless it's on a USB or download card.

The album will be listed and displayed as if it were physical, priced accordingly and clearly labelled digital.

Cover artwork, if any, will be shown and all tracks will need to be supplied as MP3s for uploading.

Digital albums can still be reviewed as well, and the review published both on the website and in the magazine.

Payment received for orders, less the 30% consignment commission, will be passed on to the artist to deliver direct to the buyer.

All of this will mean that artists will still get the same exposure for a digital album as they would have had for a physical one with the same airplay guarantees.

A consignment form will still be needed to facilitate payment and the presence of other contact details.

This form can be downloaded from the Trad&Now website or by contacting Trad&Now at info@TradandNow.com



Nick Charles represents Australia in the 2025 International Blues Challenge

To blues performers, blues enthusiasts, and music fans who love and revere the rich tapestry of the genre, the city of Memphis, Tennessee holds legendary status.

Most of the greats of blues from the past walked and played at Beale Street, Memphis, at seminal points in their careers.

The street has dozens of iconic clubs, and the blues literally seeps through the architecture and landscape.

It was with this background and legacy in mind that I approached the 2025 International Blues Challenge.

Winning the Melbourne Blues Appreciation Society challenge enabled me to compete with nearly four hundred artists from blues societies from around the world, a great honour.

That competition is a great preparation for Memphis.

As the competition unfolded on the first night, every competitor solo, duo or band, had to play a twenty-five-minute set in one of the many small venues, to a packed crowd and a judging panel of three.

The second night was a repeat process for all the acts, in the same venue but a different judging panel.

We all had to arrive at 5pm for the contest to begin at 5.30pm and subsequently watch as our venue's fourteen contestants performed.

It was intense and nerve-racking.

A very, very quick sound check, a time exacting performance and a departure from the stage as quickly as possible.

If your performance went overtime, you would lose points and too far under time the same, so a tight rehearsed set, including concise and considered chat with the audience was paramount.

Once the heats were completed, there was a long and nervous wait to see who would proceed to the semi-final stage.

They chose a couple from each venue and informed us all in the early hours of the morning.

It was a long night!

Thankfully, I went through to the semis, and I can tell you that was the greatest sense of relief I felt that week.

Just getting through round one to me, was an achievement.

It was also very pleasing to hear that Melbourne band, Nardia, progressed to the semi-finals.

Getting to round two was something of a vindication for the journey and great support of the people back home.

My semi-final was in a larger bar, with a bigger and louder but equally appreciative audience.

Once again, a minimal sound check, three judges and a rigorous time checker.

As your set winds down, you have a two minute, a one minute and a thirty second warning sign.

It is a challenging proposition for musicians, as nearly all of us regularly play long shows of multiple sets.

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Trad&Now Live! is ideal for listening to while working, walking, driving or relaxing. It can be heard on your phone, computer, laptop, car radio or any device with internet access.

We are so used to taking our time, considering the next song, and engaging through a show, a totally different mind-set.

The pressure was right on for all the semi-finalists, as only one or two from each of the multiple semis were to go through.

Those demanding time restraints really take you out of your comfort zone!

From all the semis, in about half a dozen venues, they had to choose five acts for the grand final.

So now came the big nail-biting wait, to see who would progress to the fabulous Orpheum Theatre for the main event.

Boy, did they keep us waiting!

Around two o'clock on Saturday morning the news came through (of course I hadn't slept) that I had made it.

Just to add a little more intensity, I found out that the final was to begin at mid-day, not in the evening as I had imagined.

I had to arrive for the event at 11am.

Did I sleep?

You must be kidding!

There was again a profound sense of relief that I had made it through to the finals.

Nardia, I am delighted to report, also made it.



They performed brilliantly.

For the final, all acts had to perform an even shorter set.

Now just twenty minutes!

What to leave out?

Just time for four songs and some brief story telling.

After much deliberation, and still I'm unsure if I chose the right combination, I went on around mid-way through the afternoon.

My set list having become Three Lines Deep (a shuffle), The Photo (my award- winning song back home about Robert Johnson), my slow blues called My Father's Books, and finally my biographic shuffle called Sonny and Brownie.

It was over in a flash, and I amazingly finished with about 5 seconds to spare!

Interestingly my slowest number, My Father's Books, garnered the most applause and the crowd response to it was quite wonderful.

What followed was yet another anxious wait, this time ending with me being awarded the Solo/Duo Guitarist of the Year.

There you have the saga of the 2025 International Blues Challenge.

I have a lovely plaque, a cigar-box guitar trophy and a deep sense of satisfaction!

I would have to say that the feeling that lingers mostly is the satisfaction of having performed under the unbelievable intensity of the event.

I'm deeply indebted to The Melbourne Blues Appreciation Society and all the fans and friends who helped me along this great journey.

Time to sit back and reflect… hang on, I've got two gigs on the weekend…..



New album fuses Gamelan music with jazz

by Therese Virtue



Gamelan DanAnda & Firetail at Sing Sing East Photo: Adelista Widjaya

Boite organisers issued a huge congratulations to all the members of Gamelan DanAnda and Firetail on the release of their new album, 'Anglayang'.

The album highlights the beauty and sonic opportunities through cultural exchange.

It was the result of the support and initiative by The Boite's former director, Zulya Kamalova (1969-2024).

The project's sound brings together Balinese gamelan's intricate rhythms with Firetail's jazz fusion, characterised by Carnatic rhythms and powerful percussion.

This fusion allows for a shared rhythmic vocabulary, creating a unique musical experience.

In 2023, Zulya Kamalova initiated a forum called 'What if Music...'.

The discussion brought together musicians, arts administrators and venue owners to discuss the role of culturally diverse music, arts and intercultural collaboration in telling Australian stories.

Amongst the artists she had approached to be a part of the forum were Firetail, a jazz electro-fusion ensemble, Balinese gamelan orchestra, Gamelan DanAnda, and Australian/Indonesian artist, Ria Soemardjo.

She had also approached them with a collaborative opportunity for audiences to consider: 'Does Balinese gamelan meeting electro-jazz fusion sound like Australia?'

From there, a blossoming relationship began and a culmination of the pieces were performed in June 2023 and later to a sellout concert at the Primrose Potter Salon at the Melbourne Recital Centre.

They have now released an album as the result of Zulya's support and initiative.

For the uninitiated, gamelan is a family of percussion music from Indonesia, primarily featuring gongs, metallophones, and drums.

Gamelan DanAnda specialises in Balinese gamelan.

The album is pressed on gold vinyl so that it matches the project's instruments, and looks like a gong, with every detail being considered.

"We commissioned a beautiful lino cut from Balinese artist, Septa Adi, that melds Balinese and Melburnian iconography..." says Gamelan DanAnda Creative Producer, John Cheong-Holdaway.

After a string of acclaimed and sold-out performances, Gamelan DanAnda and Firetail launched the album with a live performance at the 2025 Brunswick Music Festival on Wednesday 5 March at Quad Club.

Club and Venues Directory

If you are a functioning club or venue and would like more people to know about you, then become included in this Directory. See pages 76 and 77 for more information. Directory entry is free to subscribers.
See 'What's On Around the Clubs' for specific event detail

NSW - Bush Music Club (1115-178)
Founded 1954 to promote Australian folk tradition through collecting and popularising songs, dances, music and folklore. Music & song sessions Mon 5-9pm
Beecroft Bush Dance – 1st Sat most months
Pennant Hills Dance Workshop – each Mon night.
Ph: 0466 877 423
www.bushmusic.org.au
bmcmail1954@gmail.com

NSW - Goulburn Club (2054-171)
The Goulburn Club is a heritage venue promoting music and art, focusing on local and touring performers presenting alternative music, folk, blues, jazz and roots.
Bush trad sessions - 1st Fri 7.30pm, Celtic trad sessions – 3rd Fri 7.30pm
secretary@goulburnclub.com.au
Ph: 02 4821 2043
www.goulburnclub.com.au

NSW – Hornsby Ku-Ring-Gai Folk Club (127-174)
Presents traditional and contemporary folk and acoustic music and poetry.
A cosy and welcoming atmosphere with floor spots welcomed.
Every 3rd Friday from 7pm.
Team@hkfolkclub.au

NSW – Humph Hall (2288-171)
Humph Hall at Allambie Heights, is used as a rehearsal and performance space for Loosely Woven.
Since opening in 2009, it has also hosted performances by hundreds of artists from around Australia and across the globe.
Wayne@HumphHall.org

NSW – Illawarra Folk Club (1765-169)
Club comprises local musicians, dancers, poets, storytellers and culturally minded folk.
Concerts 1st Fri City Diggers Club, Wollongong.
Ph: 1300 887 034
info@IllawarraFolkClub.org.au

NSW – Jack Duggan Folk Club
Few folk club at Bathurst meeting at the Jack Duggan Irish Pub on 3rd Wed 7.30pm
jg.watson@hotmail.com

NSW – Loaded Dog Folk Club (1726-173)
Sydney's finest acoustic folk venue, showcasing the best acoustic folk music.
Normally 4th Sat 7pm
Tritton Hall, Hut 44, Addison Road Centre, 142 Addison Road, Marrickville
Ph: 0492 977 202
KXBears@Gmail.com.au

NSW - The Shack (1700-182)
Presents folk, world and acoustic music in a cabaret atmosphere.
1st Sat, Ted Blackwood Hall, Warriewood.
Ph: 0413 635 856
RhondaLMawer@Gmail.com
www.ShackFolk.com

NSW – Sutherland Acoustic (2311-173)
Folk club operates out of Gymea Tradies.
Concert night with invited guest artists and walk ups on 2nd Thur.
Session night on 4th Thur.
JG.Watson@Hotmail.com

NSW - Toongabbie Music Club (2148-191)
Welcome all performers from beginners to professionals. Musicians, Singers, Poets and yarn spinners.
Since 1983 performed at festivals, charities, etc.
Meet 2nd & 4th Fri (except Jan) 7:30pm and 3rd Wed 11am at Scout's Hall, Northmead
Ph: 0439 831 531
allendavisguitar@gmail.com

NSW – Troubadour Central Coast (2028-174)
Regular concert – 4th w/end Everglades Country Club
Club performer's night – 2nd Sat Empire Bay Hall
Sessions – 1st Fri Anglican Church Hall, Woy Woy 7pm
Ph: 4342 6716 or 0407 917 117
www.Troubadour.org.au

NSW - Wagga Acoustic Session (1935-170)
Not meeting at present.
Ph: 0431 246 023
Hootwhistle@gmail.com

NT – Top End Folk Club (2286-180)
Traditional Music Workshop - 2nd Sat 2-4pm @ Darwin Community Arts, 1 Travers St, Coconut Grove.
Tunes session - 2nd Sun 4.30-8pm @ Last Supper Pizzeria, Cavenagh St, Darwin.
https://www.facebook.com/topendfolkclub
secretary@topendfolkclub.org

Qld – Brisbane Unplugged Gigs (the BUG) (1362-169)
Music concert held every Tues evening featuring two acts after a 30 minute blackboard concert.
Has been running for 20 years in various venues but now at New Farm Bowls Club.
www.BrisbaneUnpluggedGigs.org

Qld – Folk Redlands (1602-176)
Folk club running for over 17 years.
2nd Sun from 11.30am at Cleveland Bowls Club.
FolkRedlands@Yahoo.com
https://folkredlands.org

SA – The Cellar Folk Club (1698-172)
Has been meeting for over 30 years in Port Lincoln on 1st Sat. All welcome, free entry, play and enjoy acoustic music of all sorts.
Ph: 0428 886 870
TheCellarFolkClub@Gmail.com

SA – Hats Inc. (2307-168)
Hats Courthouse (Auburn) is a multi-award winning organisation delivering a curated program of cultural events and regular live music concerts.
Ph: 08 8849 2420
Admin@HatsIncSA.com

SA – Port Pirie Folk Club (2204-169)
Meet weekly in homes to play music.
Also 3rd Wed from 1pm at Arts Now Here, Warnertown.
Ph: 0408 334 086
Mabiena.mb@Gmail.com

Vic – The Boite (347-169)
Presents a regular program of concerts featuring fabulous culturally diverse music from around the globe.
See website for upcoming events.
www.Boite.com.au

Vic – Camberwell Chorus Singers (1348-172)
Chorus singing sessions, 3rd Tues.
Covers folk, country, blues & pop. Instruments welcome.
8pm Tower Hotel, Melbourne

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Trad and Now awarded Best National Music Magazine – Australia

In February, United Kingdom, based LUXlife Magazine unveiled the winners of the Creative and Visual Arts Awards 2024.

Trad and Now was awarded Best National Music Magazine – Australia.

Al Global Media Account Executive, Kaven Oscar Cooper said: "The creative and visual arts are vital components of our society, providing a unique platform for individuals and communities to express their emotions, thoughts, and ideas.

"Artists often use their craft to communicate cultural, social, and personal narratives, offering ways to connect and unite that we may never have imagined.

"Capturing the very essence of our identity, values, and history, the creative and visual arts preserve traditions and stories that may have otherwise been lost over time.

"Featuring a variety of traditional artists and graphic designers, innovative clothing and accessory designers, and exceptional hosts of workshops, classes, and celebratory cultural festivals, the Creative and Visual Arts Awards showcase the most passionate, dedicated, and the very best players in the industry.

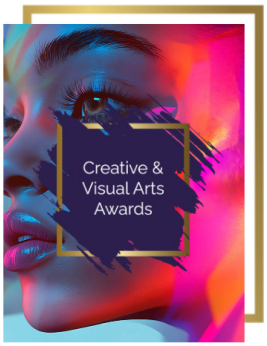
"Each entrant has earned their position in this programme by demonstrating a creative flair and love for their craft that makes them shine bright amongst the crowd".

Awards Coordinator, Laura O'Carroll, commented: "The first year of the Creative and Visual Arts Awards has been an exciting time for us all.

"Our winners have truly redefined the arts sector, and I am immensely proud to celebrate their many accomplishments through this new programme.

"It has been a long journey from initially being nominated, undergoing the research and judging stages and finally being recognised for an award.

"We are now at the stage



where your award can be shared with the world.

"I cannot wait to see what this group of creative visionaries have in store for 2025 and beyond!"



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
Mar 28: Ron & the rest of 'Em'
Apr 4: Garth & Friends
Apr 25: Round Midnight Duo
May 2: Garth and Friends
May 23: Trev Tak
May 30: 5th Friday Folk

Hornsby Ku-Ring-Gai Folk Club – 7pm
Mar 21: Dan Challis
Apr 11: Anousha Victoire & Jamie Pollock
May 16: David Spira's White Horse Band
Jun 20: We Mavericks
Jul 18: Mike Martin
Aug 15: Felicity Dowd
Sep 19: Two Voices in the Crowd

Illawarra Folk Club – Fraternity Club
Mar 23: Darren Coggan; Linda Mizzi trio; 3pm
Mar 28: We Mavericks; Rusty and Marko; 7pm
Apr 6: Pete Denahy; Olivia Coggan; 6pm

Loaded Dog – 7pm
Mar 15: North and Elsewhere; Pump & Pyro
Apr 12: Cymbrogi; Jesse McCormack (Tas)
May 24: Blue Mallee; Go Twos

The Shack
Apr 5: The Full Irish; Chrome; Blue Mallee
May 3: Traditional Graffiti; Cameron Jones Trio; Mark Eastern
Jun 7: Nadya Sings Piaf; The Shruti Brothers; Ben Osmo

Troubadour Central Coast 7pm
Mar 23: Sydney Women's Choir
May 25: Warren Fahey
June 28: Deziah and Date
July 27: Paper Collar Pickers; Bruce Watson
Aug 23: Traditional Graffiti; Mal Webb and Kylie Morigan
Sep 27: Cope Street Parade
Oct 25: George Mann (USA)
Nov 23: Hayfield Mountain Hermits; The Inadequates

QLD

Unplugged Gigs (the BUG) 7.15pm

Mar 11: Alexander Mills; Caroline Hammond Trio
Mar 18: Cigany Weaver; Duncan & Jack
Mar 25: Avalon Swing; Amanda Gilmour
Apr 1: The Goodwills; Sue Wighton and the Margaritas
Apr 8: Mystery Dogs; Amaidi
Apr 15: JC & The Tree; Gallie
Apr 22: Haystack Mountain Hermits; Jodie Murtha

VIC

Victorian Folk Music Club – 7.30pm
Mar 11: Geoffrey Graham
Apr 8: Nerrida Cuddy
May 13: Joshua Batten
Jun 10: Thursday's Child
Oct 14: Dan McKinnon

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

Eli Paperboy Reed to tour with The Harlem Gospel Travelers and The Meltdown

by Erin Jameson



Marking 20 years since his debut, Eli Paperboy Reed has announced that he will celebrate his milestone with an extensive Australian tour in May 2025, including an international headliner position at Blues On Broadbeach.

Known for his sweaty, searing performances and his raspy, soulful voice, Reed will bring his sensational new show to our shores, featuring special guests and recent Grammy® nominees, The Harlem Gospel Travelers (HGT), who will also perform their own shows.

Now with famed indie label Yep Roc Records as his home, and nine acclaimed albums to his name, Reed also produced HGT's latest album, Rhapsody

The album earned the nod for Best Gospel Roots Album, making the unique trio the first openly queer group to be nominated for a Grammy Award®.

Despite their name, the group members hail from across New York City, uniting through Harlem's Gospel For Teens program, where they were mentored by Reed.

Offering an exhilarating live experience that will be unique to Australian audiences, The Harlem Gospel Travelers will join the line-up for the first leg of the 20 Years Of Eli Paperboy Reed Tour.

In these shows, HGT will deliver their own dynamic gospel funk sets as well as joining Reed on stage with their sweet, fervent vocals.

Also joining the lineup are The Meltdown, Melbourne's purveyors of southern soul

NEW BLUES ALBUM coming April
by Maureen O'Brien featuring Pat Eyre
follow@; maureenobrien.bandcamp.com
for release news



The Harlem Gospel Travelers

from the Great Southern Land, featuring rich instrumentation with a blend of Stax and Motown vibes.

Members of The Meltdown will also form part of Reed's and HGT's respective bands.

They will travel with Reed for his entire tour, which for the second leg, extends throughout Australia.

Of his forthcoming third return to Australia, Reed says, "I can't wait to get back to Australia and reconnect with my fans over there and hopefully make some new ones too.

"My passion for performing is stronger than ever and my brand new show is guaranteed to get everyone dancing and sweating.

"We're gonna have a great time, I promise you that!

"I'm also honoured to be one of the headliners at the iconic Blues On Broadbeach, sharing the stage with some phenomenal local and international artists."

Two decades after busking in Harvard Square and honing his craft, this trailblazing soul man continues to write, sing, and perform on his own terms, delivering electrifying performances that connect deeply with audiences.

He adds, "I could never have imagined that 20 years ago, when I was starting out, playing for tips on the streets of Boston, that music would take me where it has.

"The lessons I've learned over the last two decades have made my music more mature and my live show the best it's ever been.

"I can't wait to see what the next 20 years bring."

This soul stirring celebration promises to push gospel and soul into bold, exciting territory.

"It's been twenty years since I've had a real job", laughs Eli Paperboy Reed from his Brooklyn apartment.

In some ways, he's not joking, though those two decades have been chock full of the round-the-clock hustle that it takes to make a career in the fickle music industry.

Indeed, Reed has found a way to maintain a famously high standard for both his critically acclaimed albums (nine and counting) and his notoriously sweaty, searing and soulful live sets.

None of this was a foregone conclusion.

Reed cut his teeth in the early 2000s, first in the juke joints of Clarksdale, MS where he moved after graduating high school in 2002, and then with the southside Chicago Church of

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Soul legend, Mitty Collier.

By 2005 though, Reed was back in his hometown of Boston, driving a van delivering flowers in the mornings ("the best job I ever had") and spending his free afternoons busking in Harvard Square, Cambridge for tips.

He put in the proverbial 10,000 hours playing guitar, harmonica and singing for 3-4 hours a day, as long as it was above 50 degrees F.

He had just "released" his first album, the optimistically titled "Sings Walkin' and Talkin' (and other Smash Hits).

It was recorded all live to analogue tape in mono and Reed scraped together the money to press up 300 CDs.

Around the same time, he put his first band together, composed of an oddball collection of musicians who could play everything from avant garde jazz to modern gospel.

They all coalesced around Reed's rough and ready guitar playing and astonishingly soulful voice, making for an exciting, unpredictable and potent blend.

The band's live show, and in particular Reed's singing, began to get noticed around the Boston area and came to the attention of musician and producer, Ed Valauskas, who worked out of Q Division Studios in Somerville, MA.

What "Ed V" (as he was known) didn't know was that Reed was prepared for this moment with a batch of newly penned original songs and an unshakeable sonic sensibility.

The two clicked, Reed stepped into the studio with his band in tow and the tape rolling and proceeded to make magic.

"Roll With You", Reed's first album of all original music, was released in 2008 and the world began to stand up and take notice.



The Meltdown

Soon there were calls coming in from everywhere

Television shows in the U.K. and France, festivals in Australia and a jaw-dropping list of national and international tour dates.

"Roll With You" was critically lauded and Reed's blow-off-the-roof live set at the famed SXSW music festival in Austin, TX brought major labels calling.

A deal was inked with Capitol Records in 2009 and saw the release of "Come and Get It" the following year, along with more dates, more festivals and more positive press.

At the same time, Reed added another arrow to his quiver: Licensing.

Songs from "Come and Get It" began to show up in movies, television shows and commercials.

The album's follow up, 2014's "Nights Like This" recorded this time for Warner Bros. followed the same trend, all while Reed continued to wow audiences on five continents.

In 2015, the music industry, and major labels in particular, were in freefall and Reed fell victim to the death rattle.

Some fans balked at the poppier sound of "Nights Like This" and without the support of a major label, Reed returned to his home base of Brooklyn, NY to regroup.

He was down, but not out.

In a span of six weeks, he wrote an entire LP's worth of material that became the album "My Way Home".

It's an album that's both back-to-basics and startlingly current and it began Reed's relationship with famed indie label, Yep Roc Records, a partnership that continues to this day.

With the whirlwind of the major label experience behind him, Reed emerged older, wiser and more mature as a songwriter and performer.

Parenthood also gave him a newfound perspective.

His daughter Stella was born in 2016 and son Oscar in 2019.

He returned to the south to record his seventh full-length "99 Cent Dreams" at the legendary Sam Phillips Recording studio in Memphis, TN.

This time around he was

joined by soul legends The Masqueraders on background vocals.

The title track was given an unexpected boost, with a feature by hip-hop pioneer, Big Daddy Kane! No Depression who wrote: "Reed never disappoints and on 99 Cent Dreams he takes his musical game to a new level, elevating us with it".

"With every step forward, Reed attempts something new, different and untested".

The COVID lockdowns of 2020 inspired him to fulfil a dream he'd had since the very beginning, to record an album's worth of songs by country music legend, Merle Haggard.

Reed's versions of The Hag's classic songs like "Workin' Man Blues" and "Mama Tried" brought another milestone.

This was an invitation to perform on the venerable stage of Nashville's Grand Ole Opry, where he brought the house down.

Reed was one of the very first of the new wave of singers and songwriters to embrace unabashedly soulful music and he's still doing it his way, two decades on.

He's celebrating that milestone with a 20th anniversary reissue of the album "Walkin' and Talkin'" from 2005, this time on vinyl.

"Listening back to those songs and my 21 year-old self" he says, "is a strange sensation.

"I can hear the wheels turning, the speed picking up, taking me in the direction I wanted to go, but I didn't know where it would lead me or how long it might take to get there."

Twenty years on, Reed is still singing, playing and writing his heart out, heading towards the next stop.

Touring with Reed are The Harlem Gospel Travelers

With their 2024 album, the recently Grammy Award® nominated Rhapsody, the extraordinary vocalists Ifedayo Gatling, Dennis Bailey, and George Marage are able to fully explore the entire range of music that influenced them.

The follow-up to their acclaimed 2021 release Look Up!, the record is a dive into a lesser-known but hugely important era in the evolution of gospel music.

Starting in the mid-1960s, local gospel groups and singers began incorporating elements of popular soul and funk styles.

In 2006, Chicago based reissue label, Numero Group, released Good God! A Gospel Funk Hymnal.

HGT's longtime friend and mentor, Eli Paperboy Reed, approached the group with the idea of digging through the Numero catalog and recording some of the gospel funk material, reinterpreted in their own way, from the high energy, old school soul of "God's Been Good to Me" to the hip-hop inflected "Get Involved".

The Harlem Gospel Travelers story began when Gatling and Marage met while studying under Reed's tutelage.

The group put out their debut LP, He's On Time, to rave reviews in 2019, earning them high profile fans like Elton John and landing them festival slots everywhere from Pilgrimage to Telluride Jazz.

Originally a quartet, they brought in Bailey and reconfigured as a trio prior to recording Look Up!, their first album of all original material.

At a moment when the world is reconsidering the concepts of genre and category and who's allowed to participate in which traditions, HGT are squarely on the cultural pulse.

"We always found it difficult to stay in this one lane of what people think gospel is supposed to be", says Gatling.

"This record allowed us to hear people that were innovators in their own time, pushing how gospel music sounded, and now we've created this project that is message wise gospel, but the feeling and the sound can be whatever you want it to be."

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Richard Thompson, The White Horse Band and Me

A Personal Muse

by Scott Thomson

Richard Thompson (RT) entered my life as surreptitiously as one of his fine guitar accompaniments.

It was the early 1970s.

My friends and I, all teenagers, used to play snooker and listen to our records every Friday and Saturday night.

There was a sea of heavy rock ' n ' roll to wade through as the lads brought a steady stream of Led Zep, Sabbath, and Deep Purple albums for our listening pleasure.

In the mix, someone brought the 'History of Fairport Convention' because they were intrigued by the cover, and the rest is history.

I was hooked.

It seemed, strangely, that folk music could be cool.

I knew I liked Fairport, particularly when Sandy Denny was singing, but why?

Well, Sandy was very good, and that's a worthy enough reason, but as it turns out, although I didn't know it at the time, she was, and still is, the definitive voice of the British folk-rock scene that emerged in the late 1960's.

But it was more than that.

When you listen to 'Who Knows Where the Time Goes', it's the tasteful electric guitar behind Sandy that makes it the classic that it has subsequently become.

Who was responsible?



Well, RT of course.

At the time of first listening, this small detail eluded me.

I just liked the song.

At 19 years old, RT wrote the seminal, 'Meet on the Ledge', which is now the closing song for the Cropredy Festival in the UK.

What a cracking song!

Check out a wonderful modern version of the song by Counting Crows, lovely.

But I digress.

Sandy and Ian Matthews did the singing on the original because, apparently, RT preferred to hide behind the amplifiers at this stage.

He also wrote 'Genesis Hall' about this time, with that great line alluding to his father's occupation: 'My father he rides with your sheriffs, and I know he would never mean harm'.

Richard's dad was, indeed, a policeman down in London from Glasgow, where he no doubt had learned why policemen were necessary.

'Crazy Man Michael' followed, written with the help of the fiddle whiz, Dave Swarbrick, and he showed you could still write a medieval folk song in the 1960s.

Incidentally, check out Natalie Merchant's version of the same.

Maybe better than Fairport's, I suggest – whoops, controversy!

You will note that Richard is a Thompson, with a 'p', unlike me.

But this wasn't always the case.

Most Scots spell the name 'Thomson'.

The story goes that his great-grandfather ordered a brass plaque for the front of the house, which was misspelled with a 'p', this kind of thing happens all the time to us Thomsons.

Rather than order a new one, he just changed the spelling of his name!

You have to laugh, that's a very Scottish thing to do.

My 'Thomsons' all hail from Lewis, then Glasgow, and

on to Edinburgh, so I wonder sometimes if we share a common link?

Maybe. But there are a lot of Thomson's in Scotland!

Richard had a 'kind of' middle-class upbringing in North London and became something of a guitar nerd, shunning the American blues-style guitar hero road happily adopted by some of his peers (think Eric, Peter, Jeff and co), searching for something uniquely British instead.

His Fairport pals were in for the ride and shared the vision, particularly Ashley Hutchins, a major mover and visionary behind Fairport, and of course, he went on to do the same with Steeleye Span.

Arguably, Fairport was at its best with Sandy, Dave Swarbrick, Simon Nicol, Dave Pegg and RT in the lineup.

Alas, this collection of big egos (I'm talking about Sandy, Richard and Swarb) didn't last together long, with Richard preferring walking on a wire as a solo artist and Sandy wanting to spend more time with her Australian boyfriend, Trevor Lucas, and avoid flying.

Richard remained friends with Sandy, despite the latter almost destroying the furniture when RT advised he was leaving the band.

Sandy was known to have a grasp of the English language that would make a seaman blanch, and RT copped a blast.

However, he went on to play on some of her albums and regularly bunked at her flat post-Fairport.

Richard proceeded to record Warner Brother's worst-selling album of all time, 'Henry and the Human Fly', which has been subsequently regarded as an idiosyncratic classic.

With RT dressed as a human fly on the front cover (what was he thinking?), it's definitely quirky.

You can tell the real folkies, they all have 'Henry' buried in their record or CD collection somewhere (I do myself).

Richard chose to sing on Henry, which may have contributed to its desultory sales figures.

However, there are some RT classics in there, including 'The Poor Ditching Boy' (the Trads do a fine version) and Shaky Nancy, which I first heard sung beautifully by Dave Burland.

Anyone remember him?

After the nadir of 'Henry', Richard spent time as a working musician, filling in as a studio guitarist.

For example, he played on albums by John & Beverly Martyn, 'Stormbringer' and 'Bless the Weather', Nick Drake on 'Bryter Layter' and 'Five Leaves Left', and Sandy on her solo offerings.

He also found an excuse to hang around with Sandy's friend Linda, and soon they were a duo, marrying in 1972, and starting a tempestuous, incredibly productive period as Richard and Linda Thompson.

Linda was Richard's voice, and what a voice!

The songs Richard wrote for her to sing are arguably the best of them all.

There were six Richard and Linda studio albums, and the list of great songs is long indeed.

'A Heart Needs a Home', 'Walking on a Wire', 'Wall of Death' (check out REM's version), 'Shoot Out the Lights', 'Never Again', 'Bright Lights', 'Down Where the Drunkards Roll', such great stuff.

They went back to basics and toured UK folk clubs

At that time, that meant up to three gigs a week, and a reasonable living, believe it or not.

Richard later said that he had never felt richer than that period of his life.

Those were the times when folk clubs met once per week all over the UK.

A creative cauldron for aspiring musicians.

No wonder so much good music came out of that period.

Richard and Linda also found the time to produce three children and join a Sufi commune.

Linda, interviewed much later, was asked what life lessons she gained during this time.

She replied, 'not to enter sects' or something like that.

Richard stayed a Sufi for the rest of his life and remains so today.

Listen to 'Dad's Gonna Kill Me', from the Sweet Warrior album.

His unique slant on the US intervention in Iraq through the eyes of an American GI is interesting.

As a Sufi, I wonder what he really thinks about that, as well as most other Middle Eastern conflicts.

The Richard & Linda show sadly did not last, and after 10 years of marriage, they went their separate ways.

But they had one last tour together to honour, in the USA, the highlight of which was Linda kicking Richard in the shins on stage.

Richard moved to the States, married another, Nancy Covey, and built a new career.

He also found his voice.

He teamed with Capitol Records and produced some great albums and some of his best songs, including 'Beeswing' and 'Vincent Black Lightning 1952'.

Modern ballads, I suspect these will be sung forever.

'Vincent' was a massive underground hit on Public Radio in the USA, apparently at one point, their most requested song ever.

Richard's guitar playing, on acoustic or electric, was always something out of the box.

Now that he had developed his voice, that gave the songs, and the playing, justice.

He played differently to most, with a key element being the combination of flat pick and finger picking that gave songs dynamic range and variation, except for 'Vincent', which uses a combination of fingerpicking and fingers.

The use of part chords and unusual harmonic dissonance added to the mix.

One of my favourite YouTube clips is Richard playing 'Vincent' with Susanne Vega and Louden Wainwright III on stage with him.

The look on Suzanne's face is priceless, no mug herself, she looks bemused.

Louden, however, looks like he wishes he was somewhere else.

Richard is loved by the folkies, but is no folk purist.

He has always operated, comfortably, between folk and rock genres.

He has pushed the boundaries, and if you haven't seen his '1,000 Years of Popular Music' DVD, you should.

Here, he navigates with aplomb between medieval



baroque, folk, country, pop, and rock'n'roll, all with an acoustic guitar, and able assistance on voice and keyboards from Judith Owen, and percussion by Debra Dobkin.

He has a great sense of humour, too.

Just watch his cover of 'Whoops, I Did It Again' for the Britney Spears impersonation.

He's still releasing albums, the latest is 'Ship to Shore'.

Maybe it's the third marriage, this time to Zara Phillips, that keeps him going, but I prefer to think it's just innate creativity.

We haven't seen him in Australia for quite some time.

Maybe he hates air travel as much as I do and he's long overdue.

Richard, if you ever read this, get yourself down here, we miss you!

You are a living legend.

And so, to 'The White Horse Band'.

In 2024, my good friends from 'Cap in Hand', Dave Spira and Nigel 'Muddy' Walters, kindly asked me to sing 'Vincent' for them at a Newcastle Folk Club gig.

The audience response was very positive, and we had such fun that the seed of an idea emerged.

Why don't we put together a band to produce a show featuring the great songs of Richard Thompson that we all know and love?

We Thomsons had actually done something similar, back in the day, with our old band 'Beeswing'.

Thus, the White Horse Band (WHB) was formed from an amalgamation of Cap in Hand (Nigel and Dave), 'The Thomsons' (Jenny and I), and Traditional Graffiti (Nige and Brad Newhouse).

Brad freely admits, somewhat sheepishly, that nobody ever smuggled Fairport Convention albums into his snooker parties and thus he was brought up on a steady diet of 70's rock'n'roll.

Well, at least it wasn't 80's disco.

Brad is coming up to speed nicely after a WHB management decision to delete all but RT music from his playlists.

The White Horse Band had their first gig in December 2024 at the Django Bar, Camelot Lounge in Marrickville.

The place was packed, and what an atmosphere!

The gig was so successful that Django asked the WHB back for later this year.

The WHB plans to take the show to folk clubs and festivals near you.

If you have a favourite RT song, let us know, and we might just squeeze it into the set list.

Loosely Woven to celebrate its 30th Anniversary year in style

by Wayne Richmond



Loosely Woven was originally 'conceived' following a 'live-to-air' broadcast called 'Live from Narrabeen' on the local radio station then known as Radio Manly-Warringah.

This broadcast took place on Saturday, February 4, 1995.

Performing were: Amanda Gillard (flute); Bob Foggin (violin); Wayne Richmond (keyboard & concertina); Graeme Moore (guitar); Matthew Harders (guitar); Rhonda Mawer (vocals & guitar); Judie Eddington (vocals); and, Nicky Lock (vocals).

Immediately following the broadcast, Judie Eddington suggested that it might be fun for us to put on a public concert.

We all agreed that was a great idea but then someone said that we'd need to give ourselves a name.

The previous month's Live From Narrabeen concert had featured a Christian rock band called 'Tightly Packed' so a friend suggested we call ourselves 'Loosely Woven' - thus Loosely Woven was 'conceived'.

Some time later, on September 20, the concert took place in Warriewood Surf Club and Loosely

Thirty years later, Loosely Woven has evolved somewhat.

What happens now is that three times a year, 15-25 musicians (instrumentalists and singers) under the banner of Loosely Woven, put together a brand new public concert program and perform it 9-12 times just for the fun of it, never for money.

However, we are very happy for others to use our performances as a fundraiser.

Over the years, our concerts for Amnesty International, for example, have raised well over $40,000 for that wonderful organisation.

The content of these concerts is chosen by the participants and always covers the full gamut from folk to pop and even opera arias/duets - anything goes!

We perform these concerts all over the place, mostly in Sydney,



but occasionally in regional areas, and in 2017, we even did a series of concerts in New Zealand in collaboration with some New Zealand musicians.

In addition to these three, brand new public concerts, we also do 22 performances every year in retirement villages.

By the way, Loosely Woven is always ready to welcome other instrumentalists and singers who would like to join us!

To celebrate our 30th Anniversary, this year 35 performers will be staging five performances of an 'all afternoon' extravaganza we are calling 'Loosely Woven Unwound'.

All of these performances are free to attend!







Scam warning

by Trevor Voake

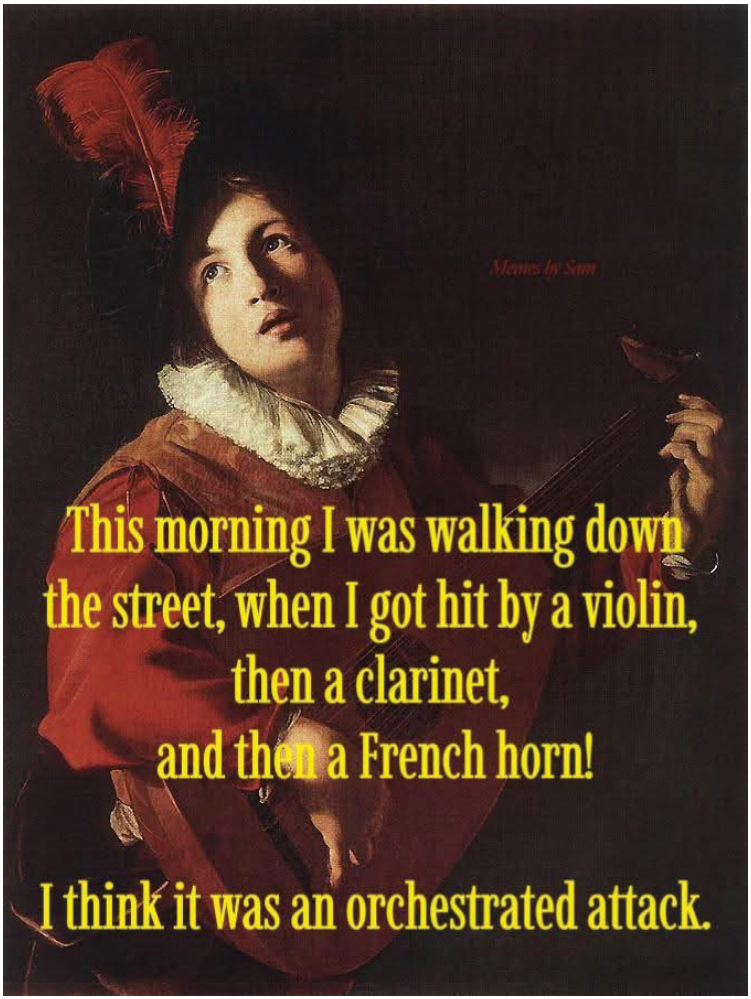
An email has recently been received allegedly from the Victorian Folk Music Club telling a person that their membership has expired and to click on a link in the email to pay their membership.

This is a scam and did not originate from the Victorian Folk Music Club.

If you receive an email appearing to be from the Victorian Folk Music Club asking for any sort of payment via the email, delete it immediately.

The Victorian Folk Music Club does not send out emails asking for payments via a link in an email.

If you wish to renew your membership or pay for books etc, then either pay at a club night/function (cash or card) or go to the club's website and pay via the payments page.



Festival organisers thrilled with attendance figures



Organisers of the 38th Illawarra Folk Festival thanked everyone for attending and for helping to make it such an epic event.

"We were really thrilled with the attendances on all three days, and for the positive vibe around Bulli Showground", organisers said.

"Everyone, audiences, performers and volunteers, seemed to be having a good time.

"People seemed to appreciate the hard work of our artists selection committee for coming up with an amazing program with plenty of variety and acts that appealed across the generations.

"They really got people up on their feet, from the hundreds of people dancing to the reggae beats of The Strides and The Andrew Gurruwiwi Band on Friday night, to the spontaneous standing ovations for the legendary Eric Bogle after each of his two-hour Songbook concerts.

"We Mavericks obviously struck a chord with their Heart of Silver album launch show on the Sunday afternoon, because Lindsay and Virginia were the highest-selling act at the Merch Shop with their CDs, T-shirts and bags.

"Thanks also to all the performers, from overseas, around Australia and from the Illawarra.

"You made the festival special with your talent and enthusiasm.

"Last but certainly not least, a huge thankyou to our army of volunteers, who made the festival possible.

"For many, it is a year-long commitment, and we are already starting to plan the 2026 festival.

"Perhaps there are things you thought we could do better.

"If so, we'd really appreciate feedback as we are always looking for ways that we can improve the festival.

"We hope to see you back at Bulli next January", organisers said.

Illawarra Folk Festival













Festival News & Reviews













Plenty to see and do at Newstead

by Pete James Wreford Dawson



Mal Webb

The Newstead Live Music Festival on Dja Dja Wurrung Country near Castlemaine kicked off on Friday, January 24, with the vivacious Girl Friday & The Sepia Tones at the outdoor Troubadour venue.

Half an hour later, local lad, Grim Fawkner, took the stage at the air-conditioned Community Centre for a tight bluesy set, as he had won the Live & Local Studio Award 2024.

Another local, Maggie Rigby of The Maes, played an emotive show at the Troubadour later in the evening, and the rather blunt way she started her composition, 'Best Love in the Universe' made the audience sit up and take notice.

With five main festival stages and two free stages, Live & Local and the Courtyard, plus several tiny venues scattered about for workshops and instrument displays, the little town was full of festive splendour.

Saturday dawned and Live & Local gave up and coming artists a chance to strut their stuff in public, and a chance of winning a 'proper' gig at the following year's festival.

Last year, it was Sage Roadknight with her delicate style that won the opportunity to perform on all the main stages, while this time it was Jeremy Beggs who scored a gig in 2026 and Bendigo band, Funkle, were winners of the Studio Award.

Zoe From Earth's eclectic repertoire and the bluesy sound of Andrew Borg made for some quality entertainment, with Jeremy Beggs taking the gong this year, so look out for him on the bill in 2026.

In the Courtyard, Vox Mundi played a very energetic set in several languages and for an eleven year old lad, he is looking at a brilliant future as a musician.

He later jammed with Mal & Kylie in the Courtyard, adding two more professional musicians, including Jan Wositzky, Tenzin Choegyal and Neil Murray, that have mentored the young fellah.

From Clunes, Talbot, Ballarat and Castlemaine came a band of young teenagers calling themselves Rent Is Due, that

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played their premier public performance with a handful of solid rock covers.

The kindergarten is renamed Lilliput for the duration and Saturday arvo was an assortment of artists on the bill, including the sultry Vanessa Estrada who blended the Chilean traditions learned in her birthplace with contemporary rhythms.

Les Thomas, a Melbourne singer of heartfelt, emotive stories, followed her and was accompanied by the very tasteful guitarist, Josh Jones.

Destined to become a classic is Les' limerick, 'The Ghost Of Melbourne City' a tongue-in-cheek tale of chicanery in the dark streets.

Then the wild and passionate duo of Mal Webb & Kylie Morrigan took the tiny stage blasting out with trumpets, trombones, fiddles and other stringed instruments.

Despite handing the organisation of the main outdoor Troubadour venue to the festival some time ago, elders of the folk world Andrew and Heather Pattison were in attendance, as Andrew is still the MC.

That evening the Troubadour featured Karlo Arc, a sincere songwriter originally from the Philippines, hard folkers Whiskey Dram, singing some searing sea shanties, plus Tim Scanlan & Mana Okuba, a dynamic duo playing fast and furious ditties on guitar and fiddle.

On January 26, several of us debunked to Djaara Park in Castlemaine for the Survival Day concert featuring that smooth operator, Kutcha Edwards, a previous participant in Newstead Live.

Sunday was a pretty warm day, but the shuttle bus made it easy for punters to get around to the venues spread out around the town.

To help counter the heat, a pool party was scheduled with three acts, including Mal Webb & Kylie Morrigan who finished their show by leaping in the pool and playing an aquatic number.

Monday morning, I caught another set by Les Thomas at the Community Centre and he invited Trudy Fatnowna Edgeley to join him and Josh on a new composition, 'Never Be Silenced'.

Trudy comes from Far North Queensland and is of Yidinji & Malaita origin and released her debut album, 'I Am Here' in 2024, which encompassed her family's history.

Festival director, Kelly Skinner, was happy with the long weekend's activities and was especially happy that people enjoyed the free Live & Local and Courtyard gigs, as they give people a taste of the festival proper.

It is also a great way to discover new talent!



Kylie Morrigan

Cygnet Folk Festival did not disappoint

by Cathy Hutchinson - Courtesy Drumbeat



There were many happy campers who settled into life at Burton's Reserve for the Cygnet Folk Festival in southern Tasmania.

On Saturday morning, after a lovely hot shower, and perhaps a cooked breakfast, courtesy of the local Scouts, tent residents on waterfront real estate found themselves bird watching as a multitude of Black Swans, Masked Lapwings and Native Hens and their chicks went about their daily hunting and gathering along the foreshore.

The sun was very warm early.

Occasional Black Cockatoos were heard squawking as they flew overhead.

At the Town Hall, the dance program began with the Jolly Hatters Morris Dancing, followed by the Tasmanian Heritage Fiddle Ensemble's Bush Dance and a Flat Footing workshop with Martha Spencer from the US.

The Tasmanian Heritage Fiddle Ensemble played a varied repertoire of tunes outdoors at the Cygnet Old Bank, flowing off the stage on both sides.

Entertainment abounded in Loongana Park, from the Sands' family juggling, hula hooping to performers on the stage playing to constant crowds mingling in the shade enjoying food from the stalls and the ambience.

I have always loved the generosity of the festival providing performers and the Loongana Park stage.

Jaron Freeman-Fox taught an Old Time tune, Halifax, re-tuning to GDGD in the Old Time tradition.

If I had not met so many passersby whilst standing in the food line, I would not have waited over an hour for food which ran out just as I got to the head of the queue.

I was very hungry and lamented the concerts I had missed and was equally disappointed when another food vendor forgot my order and took a further half an hour and three tries to find out what was happening with it to eventually produce a small meal.

It was on to more dancing at St Marks Hall followed by two more late night dances at the Town Hall.

As I was moving between the two, I caught the tail end of the captivating Northern Lights concert with Silver Sepp and Kristiina Ehin from Estonia.

The Interceltic Ceili with Mana Okubu and Tim Scanlan was invigorating and exciting.

Crowds of energetic dancers danced with enthusiasm and vigour!

Amaidi played for a Trad Dance Party with the most excellent music and dance rhythms to end the night.

However, being programmed at the same time as Austral, Elephant Sessions and Homebru, meant that the dance crowd was smaller, but their wonderful enthusiasm did do justice to the fantastic music and effort Amaidi put into the gig.

The township was so quiet, after leaving the Town Hall, with none of the constant traffic, heat, rush and bustle of the day.

I chanced upon a beautiful little session outside the Porthole Café, which was a lovely way to end the day.

It began as an Old Time session and gradually morphed into more of an Irish session with some very fun Scottish tunes thrown in.

It was a melting pot for

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sessioners, including performers, in the cool, velvety air, creating the only sounds in the stillness.

When I left, at a late hour, it was refreshing not to be confronted with the drunken cat calls from behind the security fences of the Bottom Pub, or the loud brash counter culture next door.

The moon, high in the sky by then, lit the way back to my tent home.

Smiling to myself, I mused how lucky I was to be able to participate and contribute to this wonderful event, being careful not to trip on the guy ropes which seemed to have formed a



web in the shadows around the campsite.

A late night warm shower had me all set up to fall asleep in the tent, with visions of the day, friends old and new, concerts, tunes and dances running through my head as I drifted off to sleep between the hum of the nearby cool store refrigeration unit and the stark call of a Masked Lapwing out over the mud flats.

And that was just day one!

I n the words of the festival's Artistic Director, Erin Collins, the program said Welcome to "Future Folk" and at the final concert of the Festival, Erin said that they were looking at the future of Folk.



So true, and it's very inspiring to see so many young, vibrant, energetic and highly skilled performers on the stage.

They stand highly regarded alongside many long time performers who have sometimes influenced them, paved their way, and who are still honing their skills and creating, enriching and weaving, the colourful, textured tapestry of folk traditions.

Thank you to Erin Collins, the Cygnet Folk Festival committee, staff, volunteers, and all the performers who created the festival for 2025.

Whilst many Folk Festivals face an uncertain future, this one was a gem and may there be many more to follow.

It was good to experience the wonderful program, imagined, shaped and tweaked over many months, from the applications received early in 2024!

Folk performers came from Scotland, Canada, Estonia and many more places, with a large number of Australian performers, both local and interstate.

It was an amazing festival of varied quiet and sensitive performances, to upbeat tempos, dance rhythms, a place of learning new skills, poetry, spoken word and song.

Thank you to the local Scouts and the Cygnet community for having us as guests in your town.



Alpine Pick declared a resounding success

The Great Alpine Pick (GAP) was held in Harrietville, Vic in February.

Organisers were pleased with their event offering many thanks to all those who came along to make this 14th year of the Great Alpine Pick a huge success.

The weekend started with the 'Meet and Greet' sausage sizzle and drinks at the Cricket Club.

All the sausages were sold and we helped fill the cricket club's coffers at the bar too.

Those who took instruments and voices played in circles until close, when they headed back to camp for more music.

The jamming in the rotunda never seemed to stop and some fine musicianship was on display.

The Saturday night concert was held at the Mountain View Retreat Hall and was a night to remember.

Lonesome Still opened, accompanied on bass by Bruce Packard and Mark Pottenger, filling in in-absentia for Ian Vaskess' dobro, admirably on mandolin.

Pepi Emmerichs (Rain of Animals) joined them for the last two songs on fiddle and what a fiddle player she is.

Celebrating 50 years of the "Old and In The Way' album, they finished with 'Midnight Moonlight', with both Mark and Pepi tearing the house down with their instrumental prowess.

Pepi must have been channelling Vasser Clements.

Next up, Rain of Animals.

Theo and Pepi blew the audience away with superb songs and tunes, many original, driven by performances on fiddle, mandolin and guitar worthy of awards in Nashville.

If you were there or weren't, don't miss them at the last Tuesday club night on March 25.

Pete Denahy closed the evening.

If you've seen him before, you know that he never misses the mark.

He opened with a number of his comedic songs which had the audience in stitches.

He debuted a new song, 'The Last Time I Saw Slim Dusty' and seemed a touch emotional when he introduced it.

Accompanied by Jeff Mercer on guitar and vocals and Bruce Packard for the last few numbers, he not only made us laugh, but mesmerised us with incredible musicianship.

We would like to thank Angus and Marcus for doing an excellent job on sound and Bruce for providing lighting worthy of Rod Laver Arena.

Due to rain, the Sunday morning 'chalkboard' concert was delayed an hour.

Several attending musicians signed up and entertained a welcoming audience as the weather improved.

A special 'thank you' to Mark Pottenger for supplying the sound.

The weekend has been declared a resounding success.

Do not miss out next year.



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MUSIC VICTORIA

Concertina Convergence was a lot of fun

by Mike Martin



After driving back from Newstead Vic Live Music Festival, a great festival that continues the spirit of smaller Folk style festivals, I arrived home to a phone call from Steve Wilson and Dave Johnson, organisers of the Australian Concertina convergence, asking me if I would fill in for Dave De Hugard.

No one can fill in for Dave De Hugard!

He is a mentor of mine from years back and had to cancel his performance/presentation.

So back I go into central Victoria, 7 hours drive, to partake and provide a presentation.

Not knowing what to expect, I arrived on the Friday night to a session at the back of the Star Hotel, Yackandandah, and was pleasantly surprised to be greeted by about 30 people with a passion for the concertina.

This is probably not everyone's 'cup of tea', but to those present, it was.

A round robin affair where concertina players young and old from far and wide SA, Tas, NSW, Vic provided a variety of styles from a variety of concertinas from around the world of different configurations and sizes.

English, Anglos and Duets.

Quite the introductory session to celebrate not only the convention but World Concertina Day on the Saturday.

The programme for the weekend was well thought out, presented and delivered at the Senior Citizens centre next door to the Star Hotel.

The Saturday program started with Dave Johnson and Garry Lovejoy presenting the doubling style characteristics of some of the early Australian dance players such as Dooley Chapman.

This was followed by Wayne Richmond demonstrating harmony and playing tunes in parts.

We all then went out on the main street of Yackandandah, en masse, to play and promote World Concertina Day to the public.

Quite what the public thought, as they passed through a congregation of concertinas, seemed to be represented by the facial expressions of WTF?

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The afternoon presentations were again well presented and attended.

There was Steve Wilson giving tips on song accompaniment on both English and Anglo.

Dave Hornett, a concertina maker from Tas, gave a wonderful presentation for concertina maintenance, tuning and empowering players to understand how and why it works.

I followed with 'Joe Yates, The tunes and the man'.

I had the pleasure and honour to collect from Joe in the late 1980's.

We were then treated to a collection of videos showcasing 'Masters (monsters) of Concertina' players.

Blew us all away while we conspicuously put our concertinas away!

The last event, on the Saturday night, was the main concert.

A blackboard style performance of whoever wanted to jump up.

An incredible array of concertina music and songs.

Very impressive.

A big shout out to the 16 performers that took the plunge.

Sunday began with a brief history of the concertina and it's development by the pioneer manufacturers.

This was followed by Ray Simpson from the Nariel Band's presentation of playing for dancers.

At this time, we broke the record for the number of people playing concertina while dancing the Galopede.

Carole Hellman finished the Sunday presentations with 'Waltz-along with Carole'.

The late Sunday session then commenced.

The convergence was a treat, exhilarating, inspiring, educational and most of all, a lot of fun.

I'm so glad I went.

For those interested in any style of concertina playing, performing, making or just a die hard enthusiast, I highly recommend next year's gathering.

Congratulations to all the volunteers that continue the passion of keeping it live and alive.

Look out Folkies, it's growing.

The 'Teacup' is overflowing with passion!

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Dashville is well worth a look for music fans

by Jefferson Lee

From the 10th Dashville Skyline late in 2024 to Gum Ball in April 2025, Dashville is a unique venue in the heart of the Hunter Valley of NSW near Maitland.

Admittedly, I had never been to Dashville before the last Skyline festival.

About a decade ago, a landowner called "Dash" was convinced by two talented musically minded sons to convert his 200 acre property on the edge of the Hunter Wineries into a purpose built music venue.

With a lot of thought and planning, what they created is a unique venue that now hosts large annual and smaller local music events less than 3 hours' drive from Sydney and much closer still to Maitland and Newcastle environs.

Camping is under a forest of thin Eucalypt saplings in a semi-circle around the main entrance, all on very level ground, with the shortest of walks to the music happenings.

The dry leafy undergrowth means you need to make sure that you don't camp on top of the occasional bull ants' nest.

The rest is fine with shade, breezes and plenty of birdsong.

The festival site itself is like an extended country house with surprising comforts of balconies, comfy chairs, a mild sloping hill down to the main stage with an erected huge screen.

The second main stage is centred on a verandah with a mosh pit up front, then outdoor seating and soft grass sitting space for hundreds.

The festival ran on, alternating between these two venues after every set.

There was a lot going on in a more acoustic back tent as well.

The sandpits and kids playgrounds cater for the mixed bag of week-end family day trippers and music fanatic season ticket holders.

The atmosphere is super friendly, convivial and welcomes all comers.

As Jo Corbett said (T&N164), the 10th Dashville offered "a bumper crop in its line up".

From touring American blues outfits like 'Lucius', 'psychedelic country' performers 'Rose City Band', commercially successful and brilliant 'Hurrah for the Riff Raff, to Australian icons like Shane Howard to Ross Wilson, to indigenous soul Emma Donovan, the Rocky songster William Crighton, U.K. folkie Grace Petrie, Victorian Ella Hooper, the wonderful Emily Barker and the toast of local Hunter Valley acts of various descriptions, the range of performers suited all tastes.

I can only give samples here like 'Field of Crows' on Saturday afternoon, with their 'Crossing Over the Divide' song, where this big boys band with lots of heavy guitar riffs invited you to imagine a road trip on motorbike or from behind a truckie's wheel as you negotiate the upward bends on the open road.

"This gig was like driving in the outback in a 1971 Valiant!" they yelled at the finale of the set.

Emily Barker, a female folkie local with a lot of mileage behind her was one of my favourites for the festival.

She used a staccato voice delivery to great effect.

She had a Joni Mitchell narrative style with underlying guitar drone-like picking and Ani De Franco guitar riffs with a downward strumming guitar with her voice weaving in and out like a bird or a pixie.

Despite all the comparisons here, someone even mentioned Sarah McLaughlin to me, Emily's overall effect is unique and soul soothing to boot.

Andy College, as billed, came across as a Country balladeer.

His lines on 'I can never

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tell the truth' had me thinking Glen Campbell (Galveston?) as he evolved in to a crooner on choruses.

His rockier numbers with guitars riffing everywhere on 'Don't we ever splash along?' had me thinking Paul, or even Dan Kelly.

His love songs, with high pitched voices and riffs, were reminiscent of The Hollies or Barry Gibb.

Sorry for all the unfair comparisons, but I'm doing the basics and trying to give a feel for where the music took me in my head.

Grace Petrie was like Judy Small revisited for me.

She is my definite live favourite performer for 2024.

She lives up to her name weaving gentle, heartfelt, well constructed songs on passionate and meaningful issues, delivered with guts and determination.

Her songs range from her own lesbian identity like in 'Black Tie' or 'The last man on earth', to the criminal behaviour of Tory U.K. political leadership, to her fabulous re-working of Dylan's 'Blowing in the Wind' to update it to include Gaza and other war futility.

This one had a massive following on You Tube.

William Crighton, from the NSW Riverina, was undoubtedly the best act on the main stage.

His lyrics on political change and Australian history are all knockouts.

His backing band was solid and tight with some well known superstars in their own right.

His voice carries well and is melodic.

He had the punters up dancing when they went towards the stage for a closer look.

Well done Mr. Crighton!

Hurrah for the Riff Raff.

They got a good promo with the female lead singer interviewed on ABC Radio National's 'Music Show' just before the festival.

The song, 'The Flood', was folk, country, rock and blues all in one.

'Nothing Stops Me Now' was Indigo Girls meets Jackson Browne meets Ellen McElwane.

The band is built around the female lead, who was a knock out, voice wise, although my blues fixed friends didn't rate the group as highly as I did.

Ho Hum!

The Sunday Nite sing song and its aftermath is like a huge shindig, with many festival performers cramming the stage to take turns in doing a song from someone famous.

Of course the raucous audience are almost delirious by this stage of the festival and merrily sing as well.

Apart from all the talented locals there are celebrity blow-ins.

It also gave up and coming talented performers like Piper Butcher another shot as she and Georgina Winchester ripped into the Waifs song 'Crazy Train'.

Melody Poole did 'Blue' by The Jayhawks.

Matt and Jess did 'Black Diamond' by Jordie Lane.

Henry Rollands did a Willie Nelson song 'Working on Country Roads'.

Shannon sang a Mia Dyson song, and all this was the after show!

Meanwhile, the punters in the know were watching some very interesting cross-overs and collaborations all weekend in the back tent, the Willy Wag Stage, where groups like Magpie Diaries revealed their musical magic.

This Festival maintained a critical mass throughout.

The numbers were somewhere in the 3,000 plus area I felt.

Terrific line up.

Great atmosphere.

I heard from locals that the coming Gum Ball attracts an even bigger crowd.

Something to look forward to next month.

Fleurieu Folk Festival 2025 update

by Valerie Corfield

We are excited to share our plans for the Fleurieu Folk Festival 2025.

However, two significant external factors have required us to alter the format this year.

The first issue is that Willunga Oval will be unavailable for our scheduled weekend due to the installation of an underground watering system.

During this time there will be no camping or venues on the oval and restricted access to the entire park due to large equipment on site.

The second issue is that our major sponsor, the City of Onkaparinga, has paused its Grants Program for 2025.

As a result of having only partial access to the Recreation Park and significantly reduced funding, the Festival Committee has assessed how we can continue to bring a festival experience to you, our dedicated patrons, in 2025.

After investigating many possibilities, we have determined that the best option will be a spectacular 12-hour one day Fleurieu Folk Day on Saturday, October 25, in our Festival Hall venue (Rec Park Stadium), featuring the cream of South Australian musicians.

Lock Saturday October 25 into your diary!

We will be inviting performers to apply to perform in this exclusive program and will release the line-up once contracts have been finalised.

Throughout the year, other exciting smaller events will complement our fantastic Fleurieu Folk Day.

We look forward to seeing you at all of our events during the 2025 Festival year, each of which we believe you'll thoroughly enjoy.

We will be back, refuelled and re-energised for a full three day Fleurieu Folk Festival in 2026!



Maldon Folk Festival was one of the best

by Pete James Wreford Dawson

In 1974, Ian Huxley, Peter Cuffley and friends explored the need for a folk festival in Central Victoria, resulting in the inaugural Maldon Folk Festival (MFF).

Since the late 1950s, Nariel Creek, near Corryong, had been the only regional festival in Victoria.

The National Folk Festival was originally to have been held for first time in 1967 at Kilmore.

However, Melbourne became the host after the number of people expected began to outnumber initial expectations.

For several years, the National rotated around the larger capital cities and Alice Springs until the 1990s, when it found its permanent home in Canberra.

For the foundational 1974 MFF, a makeshift stage was created using hay bales on the back of a truck at the Bill Woodfull Oval, with approximately 180 people in attendance.

Artists included Stan Gottschalk, who had recently arrived from the USA, along with Ian Huxley and his 'scratch band'.

Over the ensuing five decades, the MFF has burgeoned, garnering the Australia Day Event of the Year Award from the Mt Alexander Shire Council for its 1994 event.

The 2012 festival received the same accolade.

With superb weather, the 2024 four-day event kicked off on the Friday evening with Dja Dja Wurrung elder, Uncle Rick Nelson's earthy Welcome to Country song.

I then meandered about, dipping my ear into the various eclectic venues, including The Troubadour Wine Bar in the park, run by Andrew and Heather Pattison, Vintage Machinery Museum, Anglican Church, Maldon Hotel, RSL, Progress Hall and other spots around town.

The Kangaroo Hotel hosted an open mic setup in the leafy beer garden, organised by Maldon muso, Mick Bowden.

The long weekend was overflowing with quality folk, bluegrass, country, some rock, jazz and blues, plus loads of dance and interactive musical instrument workshops.

Kokatha First Nations singer-songwriter, Sonia Smith from the West Coast of South Australia, lives and works on Kaurna country in Adelaide.

In five recitals throughout the festival, Sonia shared the story of her life, "from rock bottom times lost in addiction, to the clean and sober warrior woman she is today".

Supported by Nhunggabarra, Kooma and Muruwari songman, Glenn Skuthorpe and his band, with drummer Dave Branton and Mike Haynes on bass, Sonia also conducted a songwriting workshop, and performed with Glenn as a duo on the Monday gigs.

Mutawintji's Park Ranger, Leroy Johnson & The Waterbag Band regaled the crowd with cordial campfire songs and heartfelt ballads.

Leroy is a Barkindji Malyangaapa man, with strong connections to the lower Baaka (Darling River) communities in far western NSW, who combined stringed instruments with yidaki/didjeridu and vocal harmonies for a fusion of country music with ancient and modern stories, accompanied by his Broken Hill musicians.

Felicity Urquhart & Josh Cunningham, a duo with consummate performance style and experience, both with their songs and the in-between comedic chat, filled the Progress Hall to overflowing.

A couple in life, as well as musical partners, their love for each other was obvious in the tender interplay between them.

I had met Katankin (Helen Catachin) at the 2023 MFF and was pleased to see her on the bill again; this time to launch her album, 'Said the Starling'.

Her evocative and often deeply haunting songs displayed Katankin's creative abilities as a wordsmith and fingerpicking guitarist.

The Rigby family has long been associated with MFF, and this year was no exception,

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with Andy Rigby heading up the Kyneton Street Band, which paraded the streets pumping out Afro-Latin rhythms.

Andy was also involved in the wonderful Instrument Makers Exhibition that showed that old crafts are still alive.

Suzette Herft, Enda Kenny, Nick Charles, Fred Smith and Alana Wilkinson were just some of the surfeit of skilled singer songwriters expressing their tales of love, the land and the various leaps and tumbles one experiences in life.

The 2024 line-up also featured New Zealand's Jenny Mitchell, Albi & the Wolves, Scotsman Alan Reid, Michael Waugh, Alana Wilkinson, Robyn Martin, The Nightingales, Rhiz & the Sugarplums, Sadie Mustoe, Out of Hand, Kevin McCarthy, Saije, Bread and Drink and Painted Rooms, Mast Gully Fellers, Réiltín Collective, The Duck Downpickers, Fiona Ross, Freya & Tom McGowan, Bush Sessions, A Bit of English, Emu Creek Bush Band, Harpers Bizarre and Rudy the Music Man.

Kayla Thomas was another fresh-faced singer I had come across in 2023, when she released her debut EP, the emotive 'Tiny World', so I was pleased to see she had performances throughout the long weekend.

Other performers included poet and writer Steven Whiteside, who launched his new book, Snow, Fire and Gold.

The eternal wanderer, Campbell the Swaggie (Campbell Irvine) was in attendance, as usual, spruiking his own version of classic bush ditties on street corners.

Roaming the streets, as well as playing in the venues, were Michael the Balloonologist, comedian and storyteller Eric Purdie, bush poets Geoffrey Walker Graham, 'The Rhymer from Ryde' Graeme Johnson and Lorraine McCrimmon, plus the O'Shea Academy of Irish Dancing, The Britannia Morris, The Connected Circus and The Woodend Warblers.

Shady camping and caravan spots were well patronised at the Football Oval, Caravan Park and in the bushland reserve at the base of the spiritual Djaara Mount Tarrangower.

Festival director, Pam Lyons, declared, "It all went extremely well, as the crowd numbers have increased since Covid, unlike many other festivals, and the standard of the music has also been raised."

Already the programming for the 2025 MFF has begun with The Bushwackers, Gina Jeffreys, 19-twenty, Claymore, The Sweet Sorrows (Eire), Saoirse, Paul Wookey and many other acts firstly announced.



The first Maldon

Festival Directory

See pages 76-77 for more information on how you can have your festival listed in this Directory. Entry is free to subscribers.

APRIL

ACT – National Folk Festival (1226-171)
The heart and home of folk culture, music, dance and art in Australia, an immersive experience and celebration of all things folk.
Held every Easter, Thursday to Monday, Exhibition Park, Canberra
info@FolkFestival.org.au
See WWW.tradandNow.com/festivals for more detail

NSW – St Albans Folk Festival (1265-169)
Always held on the weekend closest to ANZAC Day and is home to quality traditional and contemporary folk music, sessions, workshops, dance, poetry and children's activities.
www.StAlbansFolkFestival.com.au
AntWoolcott@Gmail.com

Vic – CresFest (1309-176)
The small town of Creswick, halfway between Ballarat and Daylesford, comes alive in the first weekend of April each year with music, dance, theatre, talks and a plethora of activities for kids.
Ph: 0438 560 741
JudyTurnerMusic@Gmail.com
www.cresfest.com.au

Vic – Man from Snowy River Bush Festival (663-189)
Held annually in Corryong. Poetry competitions, themed concerts, poet's breakfasts, featured artists, bush & country music, horsemanship events.
TheRhymerFromRyde@Bigpond.com
See WWW.tradandNow.com/festivals for more details

JUNE

Vic – National Celtic Folk Festival (1331-168)
This winter folk festival showcases some of the world's most culturally rich performers.
Held in Portarlington on the June long weekend, the program offers a diverse range of art forms, along with the many interpretations of Celtic and Folk culture within the Australian setting.
Mail@NationalCelticFestival.com
See WWW.tradandNow.com/festivals for more details

AUGUST

NT - Top Half Folk Festival (329-180)
Join us from 1-4 August, 2025 to celebrate the 53rd THFF returning to the Top End.
Venue TBA
https://www.facebook.com/tophalffolkfestival
secretary@topendfolkclub.org
See WWW.tradandNow.com/festivals for more details

NSW - Sydney Folk Festival (92-174)
A World of Music in the Heart of the City to be held on 15-17 Aug
Join the e-News list: **www.sydneyfolkfestival.com.au**
Ph: 0427 958 788
See WWW.tradandNow.com/festivals for more detail

SEPTEMBER

NSW – Folk by the Sea (17-173)
Annual event based in beautiful Kiama on the south coast of NSW and held on 22-24 Sept.
35 acts in venues within walking distance of each other.
Ph: 1300 887 034
WWW.FolkByTheSea.com.au
See WWW.tradandNow.com/festivals for more detail

NSW – Irish &Celtic Music Festival (2315-169)
Annual event held on the 3rd week of Sept celebrating the arts across traditional Celtic and Australian music, poetry, spoken word and dance.
Enjoy Celtic markets, performances, crafts, exhibitions and buskers.
Ph: 0429 608 566
Janno499@Bigpond.com
See WWW.tradandNow.com/festivals for more detail

Qld – OzManouche Festival (2290-169)
Festival celebrates jazz manouche and is held on the last weekend in Sept annually in Brisbane.
The festival presents concert performances and masterclasses featuring Australian musicians and international guests.
Ph: 0418 113 7831
info@ozmanouche.com

WA – Manjimup Bluegrass & OldTime Music Weekend (2126-175)
Annual bring your instruments weekend and learn from and jam with professional and amateur bluegrass and old-time musicians – make music and friends.
Sept long weekend.
info@ManjimupBlueGrass.com
www.manjimupBluegrass.com

OCTOBER

NSW – Kangaroo Valley Folk Festival (1873-170)
A 3 day celebration of music, poetry and dance in Australia's

most beautiful valley on 20-22 Oct
www.KangarooValleyFolkFestival.com.au
See WWW.tradandNow.com/festivals for more detail

NSW – Dashville Skyline (2313-170)
Long weekend annual folk/country festival near Maitland.
Mail@Dashville.com.au
www.Dashville.com.au
See WWW.tradandNow.com/festivals for more detail

NSW – Dorrigo Folk & Bluegrass Festival (2212-169)
Dorrigo comes alive with 3 days of concerts, workshops, dance, jamming, impromptu performances and children's entertainment. 25-27 Oct.
Features some of the very best performers in the Folk, Bluegrass and Old-Time genres.
Festival@DorrigoFolkBluegrass.com.au
www.DorrigoFolkBluegrass.com.au
See WWW.tradandNow.com/festivals for more detail

NSW - Wingham Akoostik Music Festival (1955-169)
The festival brings a burst of activity to the mid-coast for three brilliant days on Wingham Showground with on-site camping and walking distance to town centre.
Three day event on the third weekend Oct.
hello@akoostik.com.au

SA - Fleurieu Folk Festival (1134-169)
An annual three day family friendly multi-staged event set in the historic township of Willunga SA
admin@fleurieufolkfestival.com.au
See WWW.tradandNow.com/festivals for more detail

Vic – Out on the Weekend (2348-169)
Annual Americana extravaganza highlighting amazing local and international artists at Seaworks, Williamstown on Oct 14.
Denise@LovePolice.com.au
See WWW.tradandNow.com/festivals for more detail

NOVEMBER

Vic – Maldon Folk Festival (1323-169)
Annual intimate four day festival always held over the weekend before Melbourne Cup Day, continuing into the Mon.
Maldon is a historic, National Trust Classified township.
Quality folk, bluegrass, a little jazz, and a little blues music, and dance and interactive workshops at affordable prices.
Ph: 0421 643 478
www.maldonfolkfestival.com
See WWW.tradandNow.com/festivals for more detail

Vic – Mountaingrass (1569-172)
For over 30 years players and lovers of Bluegrass & Appalachian Old Time Music have gathered in November in the high country of Victoria, near the NSW border.
Presented by Australasian Bluegrass & Old Time Music Assoc. on the 3rd November weekend in beautiful Bright.
Info@ABOTMA.org.au
See WWW.tradandNow.com/festivals for more detail

NSW – Majors Creek Festival (1690-173)
A well-known, family friendly event with an interesting and exceptional line up of performers held in a delightful rural village annually on the second weekend.
Majorscreekfestival@gmail.com
See WWW.tradandNow.com/festivals for more detail

SA – Wirrina Bluegrass & Acoustic Roots Festival (2314-169)
Acoustic music festival (Nov 22-24) within a few hours' drive from Adelaide held on the 4th full weekend in November.
Music camp 19-24 Nov.
Ph: 0428 263 795 (Text preferred)
WirrinaBlueGrass@Gmail.com
See WWW.tradandNow.com/festivals for more detail

Qld - Maleny Music Festival (2330-169)
Folk, country, blues, poetry, sessions, camping, stalls, bars, street performers.
Ph: 0492 076 881
Mail@MalenyMusicfestival.com

DECEMBER

Qld – Woodford Folk Festival (2329-174)
Australia's biggest Folk Festival held annually from Dec 27 until January 1 inc.
Also produce The Planting, Lake Gkula Camping & Festival of Small Halls.
Reception@Woodfordia.com
www.Woodfordia.org
See WWW.tradandNow.com/festivals for more detail

JANUARY – 2026

NSW – Illawarra Folk Festival (1950-168)
NSW's largest folk festival includes the sounds of folk, indie, world, roots, bluegrass, Balkan and Celtic music as well as poetry, comedy and dance.
Held at the Bulli Showground in mid January.
Ph: 1300 887 034
info@IllawarraFolkClub.org.au
See WWW.tradandNow.com/festivals for more detail

NSW – Numeralla Folk Festival (968-177)

A free, homespun festival in the beautiful Numeralla Valley where the rivers meet.
Held around the Australia Day weekend.
Music, dance, poetry and relaxing by the rivers.
Fran.Numeralla@Gmail.com

Tas - Cygnet Folk Festival (2241-168)
Showcases local and international music, dance, poetry, workshops, kids' entertainment and a festival marketplace; set in the breathtaking scenery of Tasmania's Huon Valley.
2nd weekend of Jan each year.
info@cygnetfolkfestival.org
See WWW.tradandNow.com/festivals for more detail

Vic - Newstead Live Music Festival (2269-169)
A celebration of traditional and original folk and acoustic music and spoken word, including kids' shows and sessions around the town.
Held in a welcoming village in Central Victoria on the last weekend in January.
newsteadlive@gmail.com
See WWW.tradandNow.com/festivals for more detail

FEBRUARY

NSW – Bush Traditions Autumn Gathering – Gunning (383-181)
Music, song and chat in the showground hall.
Free camping. 3rd weekend.
WWW.Bushtraditions.org

WA – Nannup Music festival (1398-172)
A weekend of discovery, a time to gather and immerse in the beautiful surroundings of SW WA.
Labour Day long weekend – 1st weekend of march.
Phaedra@NannupMusicFestival.org
See WWW.tradandNow.com/festivals for more detail

MARCH

NSW – Cobargo Folk Festival (2328-169)
An annual festival event since 1996 (Covid excepted).
Held on the first weekend of March.
ZenaJArmstrong@Gmail.com
See WWW.tradandNow.com/festivals for more detail

Vic – Port Fairy Folk Festival (100-169)
Established in 1977 and has grown to become one of the highest regarded festivals both in Australia and on the international festival circuit.
Has won numerous awards and is inducted into the Australian National Tourism Hall of Fame.
Held on the March long weekend every year.
Admin@PortFairyFolkfestival.com
See WWW.tradandNow.com/festivals for more detail

Vic – Lake Bolac Eel Festival (2364-168)
Biennial festival held in Autumn to reflect the traditional eel migration.
Family friendly days by the lake featuring live music, art, environment, history and culture.
Next held 21-22 March, 2026.
Festival@EelFestival.org.au
www.EelFestival.org.au
See WWW.tradandNow.com/festivals for more detail

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Cobargo shines five years on

by Trudy Van Laar

My first time at Cobargo Folk Festival was in May 2022, the first festival after the fires.

It was a smaller festival, just getting back into the swing of things, however there were still plenty of great acts.

The thing I remembered most was how cold it was!!

It was absolutely freezing at night with the temperatures getting down to 3 degrees Celsius.

So very different to Cobargo 2025, with temperatures in the high 20's and hot hot hot!!

What blew me away most was how the festival has grown in size.

Many more stages and acts and most of all the number of people.

We arrived on the Thursday and already the camping had been booked out.

Obviously, a testament to how great the Cobargo Festival has become, despite the fires, or maybe because of.

A real feeling of community abounds at Cobargo and the survivors of the fire have certainly come to terms with the traumas faced, showing their strength and resilience.

With so many acts to see, one person cannot possibly get around to see them all.

Having just been to Illawarra Folk Festival, Bundanoon Folk Festival and Folk by the Sea at Kiama, I decided not to see the great performers I saw at these festivals, with a couple of exceptions.

This gave me the opportunity to see many performers that I had not seen before and had little knowledge of, and I would have to say, that I enjoyed every act that I saw.

I would like to give my take on the performers that I saw in a brief summary for each one.

Day 1

Michael Menager Band - what a fantastic way to start the festival!!

There are 3 truly great musicians that make up this band and they certainly lived up to their spiel in the program.

A great blues vibe with great lyrics and feelings in the songs.

Nice!

Robyn Martin Band - I had no idea what to expect with this band, but they certainly wowed me.

So smooth, great groove with lovely songs that were very lyrical.

Robyn had a fantastic backing band with a horn section that really added to the sound.

Old Man Luedecke - I had heard of this Canadian musician and knew only one song of his, which I loved.

So this inspired me to see him live.

For a one man show he really knew how to entertain, with his songs about life and love.

Would have loved to have seen Old Man Luedecke again over the weekend but alas ran out of time.

The Inadequates - well I have to admit this was the 10th time I have seen The Inadequates, which just goes to show my bias towards these high powered, energetic, funny, fantastic young musicians with gorgeous vocal harmonies.

And they are all cute to boot.

Spooky Men Chorale - always entertaining!

A great crowd pleaser, these spooky men always perform to a totally packed venue.

Standing ovation.

Blue Guru - impeccable musicianship from these three fabulous artists.

I really enjoyed the variety of songs and instrumentals.

Skerryvore - You couldn't help but get off your chair and dance to this fast paced Scottish dance music.

Very popular band getting a huge crowd.

Personally, I don't love bagpipes, but you have to hand it to these Scotsmen, they know how to play them!

With three of them blaring out their bagpipe sounds, adding to the fever in the crowd, I have to admit I was quite partial to them by the end of their show.

Day 2

Kevin Welch & Heath Cullen - wow, wow and wow!

I can't speak highly enough of

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these two wonderful musicians.

Personally, this was the best act so far, so good that I went to see them again on Day 3.

Wonderful lyric driven songs with a fantastic groove.

My kind of music.

Love these guys!!

Blues Dancing - Taking a little break from the music to do some sexy blues dancing.

To my surprise, we had live blues music by Moondog.

Excellent dance instructors with excellent live blues music.

Enjoyed this class very much.

Shortis & Simpson - good old sing along songs, with guest artist, Keith Potger to do some Seeker's songs too.

Something different and a bit of fun.

Geese Fly South - these guys played some awesome bluegrass with great vocal harmonies.

Quite enjoyed this band.

Sam Fletcher - young new talent, singing his own folk songs from the heart.

A pleasant surprise.

Penelope Swales and the Stranded Assets- always good to catch a bit if this group.

Great musicians with punchy lyrics and lovely harmonies.

Nigel Warne - A newbie for me.

Excellent young talented blues musician with a very different style.

I really liked his songs and melodies, but for mine, I found his beautiful guitar too grungy and would have preferred to hear his songs on an acoustic guitar.

Radical Son - wow!

Where did this guy come from?

What a beautiful, earthy voice and he sings with such emotion.

Easy listening songs presented with this great voice, made for a special concert.

Farhan Shah & SufiOz - spellbinding show.

Had the crowd up dancing and singing along.

Terrific, very different and had an excellent crowd response.

Day 3

5 Years On – a special show put together by Shortis & Simpson to commemorate the trauma of the 2020 bushfires and the community response to them.

What a wonderful experience this was.

Every performance was emotional, moving and heartfelt.

All songs and stories were from the heart.

The show ended with Radical Son walking amongst the crowd singing Stand by Me, with all the performers on stage.

This didn't leave a dry eye in the house I am sure, as my eyes were full of tears as I left.

Well done Shortis & Simpson.

Max Joy & the Honey Lovers - if you like hip hop songs with a dance beat this is for you.

Max performed with great energy and they had great harmonies.

The dance floor was full.

Personally not my cuppa tea though.

Kevin Welch & Heath Cullen - just had to get more of these guys before the festival ended and what a way to end the festival for me.

I was floating on a cloud when I left them, with enough beautiful music to get me through to the next festival.

Being able to camp onsite with our many friends from the Central Coast, and new ones made at the festival, made it so much more enjoyable.

The amenities were all new and very well maintained.

Well done Cobargo Festival and a huge thank you to all the volunteers that make these events possible.

They couldn't do it without you.



Nigel Wearne

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Cobargo 2025



Skerryvore



Keith Potger



Enda Kenny

Festival News & Reviews



Mayhem finale at the Five Years On concert





Geese Fly South were joined by six notable bluegrass musicians

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 (264-171)
Fiddles and piano – Play for Scottish Country, Ceilidh, colonial and bush dances. Perform concert brackets at **festivals.**
Stringfiddle@gmail.com

ACT – Monaro Folk Society (2225-168)
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 – Bush Music Club (1115-178)
Dance workshops at Pennant Hills, Mondays Feb to Dec except holidays, 7.30pm.
Learn bush dances in a friendly atmosphere.
BMCMail1954@Gmail.com

NSW – Sydney English Country Dancers (2194-176)
Group aims to teach and learn traditional and contemporary English country dances.
4th Saturday, Strathfield.
ChristineTherese Miller@Gmail.com
www.SydneyEnglish CountryDancers.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@atbds dancesa.com.au
http://www.atbds dancesa.com.au/

Vic – Victorian Folk Music Club (1471-168)
Family dance 1st Sat; Concerts 2nd Tues; Sessions every other Tues.
Enquiries@VFMC.org.au

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The history of step dancing in Australia

by Dr Heather Blasdale Clarke

From the earliest days of Captain Cook's explorations in the Pacific and the beginning of white colonisation, Australia's history abounds with step dancing.

It was fashionable on the stage, in dance schools, and in the community, and musicians around the country played for people to dance "a bit of a step".

The first white settlers to Australia brought with them their popular culture and this was quickly established, with dance featuring as a favourite pastime.

As the colony developed there was a significant gender imbalance though this did not abate the enthusiasm for dance.

There are plenty of stories about men gathering in pubs to dance (and drink) and as the Gold Rushes brought even more men to the colony, dance competitions became prevalent.

This coincided with the clog dancing craze in Britain with many migrants bringing steps to the new land, and dancers from the Antipodes travelling to compete in the old.

Prime examples of this are Harry Macklin Shaw, the boy from Lancashire who became the clog dancing champion of Australia and the forbear of Craig Revel-Horwood.

Theer's also the darling of Sydney, Bella Perman, who competed for the championship of England in 1898.

Dr Heather Blasdale Clarke examines the story of step dance in Australia and the vestiges that remain of a once vibrant culture and presented her findings at the SteppingOn Conference, Cecil Sharp House, on November 16, 2019.

British settlement began in Australia relatively recently, only about two hundred and thirty years ago and consequently, we have a well-documented history.

On the surface, this does not extend to the art of dancing, but there are many records which inadvertently give an insight into what was once an important pastime.

To begin, let's travel back a little further to the days when the ancient Greek philosophers debated that there must be a continent in the southern hemisphere to balance the landmass in the north and because this would be on the underside of the world, so to speak.

The people there must look quite different and this supposed country became known as the Antipodes.

If you think about this for a moment you realise it means anti - opposite and podes - feet.

In many evil times, there are some intriguing illustrations of what this was supposed to look like, some depicting the inhabitants as having their feet back to front, and in one case, just one foot held high in the air while the body was upside down.

Now, I assure you, just in case you're wondering, this isn't in fact true, and since we're discussing step dancing today, I thought it was a point worth clarifying.

When Captain James Cook set out from England in 1768, he wasn't sure what he would find, but he found no one with back-to-front feet, and instead, found Australia.

Cook himself was remarkable because he encouraged his crew to dance hornpipes and country

dances in the belief not only that it kept them fit and healthy but also kept them happy.

It was common practice for sailors to dance and it had long been a regular part of shipboard life.

Cook was exceptional because he recognised the benefits of dancing and actively supported it in his regime for looking after the crew.

He also used dancing as part of the cultural exchange as he travelled to the South Seas, and although most accounts focus on the dances of the indigenous people, there are also descriptions of his men dancing hornpipes to entertain the locals and accounts of the local people imitating them, often with great hilarity.

In 1788, the first consignment of convicts arrived in Australia to establish a penal colony.

Within days of them arriving in Botany Bay, there's an account of the seamen going ashore and dancing to the music of a Fife to the delight of the locals.

Shortly after this, the first accounts of the convicts dancing with the Aboriginal people begin to be described, although it's impossible to know exactly what

dances they shared.

It seems highly likely that steppe dancers would have been part of these exchanges.

I've been studying the history of dance in Australia for about 30 years.

In 2018, I completed a doctoral research project focusing on convict dancing in the early colony.

This entailed discovering what the lower orders were dancing in the British Isles in the period between 1788 and 1840.

The term lower orders was used at the time to describe what we'd now call the working classes or the common people.

The majority of the convicts came from this group.

The evidence suggests that step dancing was a significant part of their popular culture.

There are no images of convicts dancing, but there are many illustrations which depict the lower

orders dancing.

Transcripts from the Central Criminal Court in London, the well known Old Bailey, provide a fabulous resource for finding information about common people.

it is noted as one of the most extensive resources for this type of information.

There is a surprising amount of detail about dancing.

Much of it relates to social dancing, but there's also details about step dancing, including accounts of people dancing on the shutters of sellers, a favourite spot for step dances.

Once people were convicted and imprisoned, it didn't stop them from dancing.

There is a body of evidence to prove that they did just so.

Charles Dickens wrote a story called the warden's room where he describes one of the inmates dancing a hornpipe.

Dickens himself had first-hand experience of prison life.

As a child, he had visited his father in the Marshalsea debtors' prison.

It is rare to find illustrations of prisoners dancing though there are several reports to confirm that dancing was a common activity.

Dancing was such an integral part of life that the term was used metaphorically to describe other things for those who fell seriously foul of the law.

Their death throes at the end of a hangman's noose were known as the gallows jig or the Paddington frisk.

In Ireland, it was known as the Kilmainham minuet but those unfortunate enough to be one of many on a hanging day, they were said to be dancing at the sheriff's ball.

For those convicts who avoided the gallows, there was transportation to the colonies.

Even prisoners awaiting transportation still found opportunities to dance.

There are accounts of them dancing on the hulk's used to house those awaiting departure from Britain.

One of the surgeons who cared for convict Peter Cunningham remarked on the nonchalance of some of the prisoners who turned the jingling of their chains into music to accompany their singing and dancing as they were moved from the Hulk's and loaded onto the ship.

A precedent for this notion of dancing in fetters dating came from the late 1600s when dancing in chains became an act in the theatre.

It gained popularity when it was used in The Beggar's Opera and was well-known into the 1800s.

Some of the surgeons responsible for the convicts' well being actively promoted dancing as a daily activity and this is recorded in their journals.

Given the limited space on board, it seems likely that step dancing was one of the most prevalent types of dance.

When convicts arrived in Australia, their dancing was noted in police reports published in the newspapers, not that dancing was illegal, but the times and circumstances surrounding it often led to it being mentioned.

It was usually associated with drinking, creating a public nuisance, being out after curfew or dancing in a disorderly house.

Individuals were commonly noted dancing hornpipes, jigs, flings and reels.

In an extract from the Sydney Monitor of 1838, John Peppermill was charged with dancing a hornpipe in George Street, one of the main streets of Sydney, against the peace of our sovereign lady and received the unusually harsh penalty of fifty lashes.

Punishments were more often a charge of five shillings paid to the poor or an hour in the stocks.

Even after the main convict era ended in 1840, traces of their dancing remained.

In 1915, the Brisbane Truth recalled that some of the dame's who on occasion needed some kindly police attention were relics of the convict system.

These poor souls were usually quiet in their conduct and subdued in their manner, but on festive occasions, they were apt to demonstrate their ability to step dance in outting socks or other apparel, which at their time of life, could scarcely be accepted as fascinating undress.

One well known character of this class was an old woman named Hannah Rigby who used to live alone in a hut nearby.

She died at 77 years of age

in 1853 of apoplexy induced by her terpsichorean liveliness and general conviviality at a wedding in the house next door to her humble establishment.

Over time, transportation ended and there were fewer convicts and more free settlers.

The links to Britain were very strong and our culture followed what was happening there, despite life being very different.

The gender balance was still considerably more male, particularly in rural areas and step-dancing was very popular amongst the men who worked as shearers, stockmen, boundary riders and bullock drivers.

There are many tales of these men gathering in pubs or in campsites to drink, dance and tell yarns.

One story tells of a Shearer who would shear one sheep, take a break and dance a few steps, then start on the next sheep and so on throughout the day.

Another fellow danced on fence posts to drive them into the ground and in a droving camp, the cook entertained by dancing a hornpipe on top of a box as twelve hundred sheep and four hundred cattle looked on in astonishment.

There was often a competitive edge, and it was common for doors to be taken off their hinges and laid flat on the ground to provide the appropriate platform.

The author, Banjo Patterson, described such an event at a country race meeting in 1906.

The competitors, described as youngbloods, wore their best finery, a cabbage tree hat well tilted back and secured by a string under the nose, gaudy cotton shirt and tweed trousers of loud pattern, secured around the waist by flaring red or green sashes.

They began by ambling with a sort of strutting walk once or twice around the circumscribed platform, then with head well back and eyes closed, dashed into the steps of the dance, each introducing varied steps and innovations of his own.

Throughout the 19th century, the dances were usually described as horn pipes, jigs, step dances or breakdowns as well as Highland flings and Irish.

In 1832, there's the first record of a clog dance where, in the theatre, a clog horn pipe was danced on a rope.

Accounts of clog dancing become increasingly common, mirroring its popularity in England.

The National Library of Australia has an extensive resource of digitised newspapers.

A recent search revealed over 20,000 references to clog dancing in Australia.

There are reports of all manner of clog dances, Lancashire dances, hornpipes and the Liverpool double country club dance.

From the 1880s, the clog waltz begins to be mentioned.

There are many reports of competitions in Melbourne in 1869.

There was a great intercolonial clog dancing competition which attracted 18,000 spectators.

For all its popularity, there are very few tangible records of this tradition

So, it was significant in 2016, when the family history program, Who Do You Think You Are? examined the forebears of the celebrity, Craig Revel Horwood.

It was discovered that Craig's great-great grandfather, Harry Macklin Shaw had been the champion clog dancer of Australia in 1871.

His family still had his championship medal.

This is the only known artifact to remain of the club dancing tradition in Australia.

The BBC contacted me and asked me if I would talk to Craig on the show and teach him a few clog steps.

I was able to find a step dance tune, a horn pipe, which had been collected in the area where his great-great-grandfather had lived and danced and this was the one we used in the show.

It was a wonderful opportunity to be involved.

Craig has since become the patron of the research team.

He also created a modern production called 14 Days for the Ballet Boys, featuring a club dancing scene based on his family history.

Clog dancing competitions weren't solely for men.

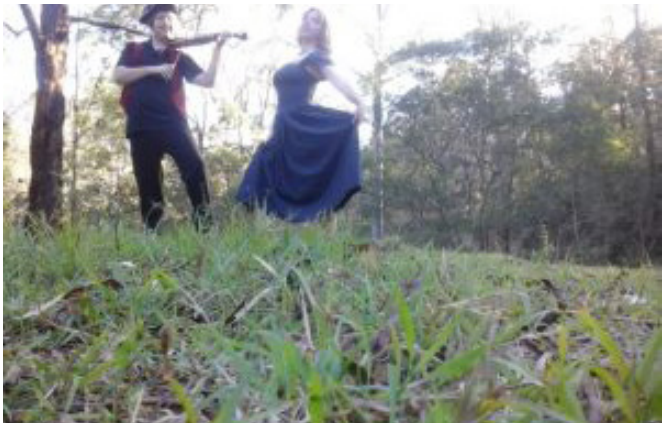
One noteworthy female dancer was Bella Hermann.

Bella was the clog dancing champion of Australia and she performed on the stage with her two brothers.

In 1898, Bella was in London and challenged reigning world champion, Minnie Ray to a clog dancing contest.

There are a number of newspaper accounts and it seems Bella danced 12 steps over eight minutes, including a twizzle, but Minnie kept the title.

Caroline Radcliffe has written a chapter about this competition in the book, Step Change, which was published in 2001.



At the beginning of the 20th century, just as in England, step dancing was a popular form of dance for the working classes.

In Australia, it was common for a night's entertainment, particularly at a dance, to include an item of step dancing.

In dancing schools, the standard repertoire included a cloak hornpipe and waltz, an Irish jig, sailor's hornpipe, a Highland fling dance and a reel, probably with percussive steps.

There is some evidence that a distinctive Australian style may have developed.

This is represented in the names of dances such as the Melbourne clog dance and the Sydney flash.

However, most of the dances came from Britain, because a large proportion of the population still regarded the UK as home and wanted to keep the ties to the old country.

Just as modern ways began to arrive and affect the folk traditions in England, so the popularity of these dances began to fade in Australia in the 1900s.

Here the collecting of folk music did not start until the 1950s.

It was not until the 60s that Shirley Andrews began to collect dances. and then only social dances.

By the time I began to look for the old step dances in the 1980s, there was hardly anyone who remembered them.

On the positive side, collectors had been gathering the tunes and stories connected to step dances, so we do have a selection of these preserved in the national library and readily available through the bush traditions wiki site.

Apparently in Australia, there is very little step dance.

Outside the modern competitive Irish and Highland Dance Studios, it is easy to find a class that teaches tap-dancing or even Appalachian clogging, but there is no awareness that Australia ever had a vibrant culture of step dancing which was central.

Localised traces do remain, kept alive by people like Margaret Winnett in Sydney, who teaches and performs old style traditional step dances.

Margaret has, in her repertoire, Irish and English clog walls, known as the milkmaids' walls, which were taught in Irish and Scottish dance schools up until the 1970s but have since

Disappeared.

At some stage, this club wall began to take on a local identity and lost its connection to the English tradition.

In summary, from the first days of British settlement, Australia had a lively culture of step dancing brought by the convicts and free settlers.

Throughout the 19th century, step dancing in its various forms continued to be a popular and widespread leisure activity.

Following the trends in England, club dancing became a major form of entertainment in the 20th century.

Interest in these dances changed and they largely disappeared.

Today, Irish and Highland dancing remains prevalent in Australia, particularly for school-aged children.

They are danced at a highly competitive level which tends to emphasize athletic virtuosity and few continue to dance when they reach adulthood.

These dances are rarely seen outside the world of competition and are not part of the general folk scene.

If we want to re-establish the step dance tradition in Australia as a non competitive folk art, we will need to follow the Scottish example where they have reintroduced dances which have survived in Cape Breton or draw upon the enthusiasm for revitalizing step dances.

In the South of England, there is an interest in these traditions in the upcoming generation and it would be a fine thing if we could collaborate with others interested in this field to bring the dances back to our folk culture.

The history of step dance tunes in Australia

The Australian bush tradition is rich in collected step dance tunes.

References to step dancing come from our earliest records with Captain Cook's crew, sailors with the First Fleet, and convicts in the fledgling settlement.

In the 1820s, 'shuffling the brogue' was one of the prime recreations in the 54 licensed public houses in Sydney.

Often, public houses were not purpose built, but rather the front room of a private dwelling given over to the business of selling food and drink, and providing an important social hub.

The chairs and tables were arranged around the edges of the room, leaving the centre free for dancing.

However, the space was usually limited, perfect for step dancing rather than for large group dances.

Step dance is the natural response to inspiring music: tapping out the rhythm of the tune with your feet.

This was predominantly a working class mode of dance which was discouraged in polite society and in the ballroom due to its noisy and percussive nature.

It is an informal, improvised style which can be danced anywhere.

Even instrumental music is not essential as the tune can be held in the dancer's mind or whistled or sung.

It's best danced on a wooden floor with footwear which will generate a robust sound.

Leather shoes, hobnail boots or clogs are ideal.

Accounts describe people dancing on barrels, fence posts, cellar flaps, and special step boards, as well as more regular places like woolsheds and pubs.

Throughout the colonial era and into the beginning of the 1900s, step dance continued to be a popular pastime.

Shearers, bullockies, bush-rangers, country bumpkins, and larrikins in the big smoke, all enjoyed "a bit of a step".

Women also engaged in step dance, though not so publicly.

In the 1950s, when collectors began recording our folk music, they found a wealth of step dance tunes.

Unfortunately, few of the dances were recorded.

Shirley Andrews, the pioneer of folk dance research in Australia, felt that step dance was a male-dominated culture, although this wasn't always the case, and decided not to study this area.

She regretted this decision later in her life and was very supportive of my efforts to research the subject.

However, it wasn't just in Australia that step dancing failed to be collected.

In England, the founding father of the folk revival, Cecil Sharp, early in the twentieth century, didn't feel the need to record the social stepping he encountered because it was so commonplace.

A hundred years later it had all but vanished.

I have been researching this subject for over 30 years, receiving a grant from the Australian Folk Trust in 1993, and providing workshops at Festivals and folk gatherings over this time.

This research focused on the more formal aspects of step dance such as the Irish Jig, Sailor's Hornpipe and English clog dances, all of which had been extremely popular in Australia.

In May 2016, I became aware, through the work of Jo and Simon Harmer, that improvised step dancing had been a mainstream recreation throughout England until the 1940s, and is still preserved as a living tradition in East Anglia and Dartmoor.

I had believed that this form of step dance only existed in Scottish and Irish (as Sean-nós) communities, so to discover it is also unmistakably English is an important revelation with significant implications for Australian dance history.

Here is a small sample from a much larger collection of advertisements and anecdotes about step dancing in Australia.

One never now hears of the "scalpers'" ball, and yet it was one of the fixtures of the outback.

Scalping was a definite calling then.

It had its regular followers, just the same as shearing, fencing, or droving does.

"Scalpers" implies that the men were only after the scalps of animals, but the term embraced the big army of kangaroo shooters, "possum chokers", bear hunters, and suchlike, and it was the skin that was wanted.



A stockman step dancing to the music of the concertina

Probably the finest shots in the world with rifle or gun could be found amongst the "scalpers" of the outback camps.

However, to get back to the scalpers' ball, the music supplied was mostly that of the concertina or accordion.

Sometimes an old fashioned fiddle would come to light, and it was wonderful how some of those old chaps would enjoy those old-time quadrilles, lancers, mazurkas, polkas, schottisches and waltzes, but enjoy them they did.

The master of ceremonies was generally some dandy trapper, a real lady killer…. and he was generally the best dancer, and his word was law in the dance room….

The dancing was sandwiched with recitations and bush songs or probably some of the old fellows, and even the young fellows, would give a step dance between the other entertainments.

In those days, step dancing was wonderfully popular out West, and contests were held between champion step dancers of one faction against another faction.

So it was with the scalpers.

They had their champion step dancers, their champion waltzers, and suchlike, and at the annual ball there was always plenty of money to back these champions against all-comers.

Very often, the matches or contests would spread over a series of dance nights until the final championship mopped up all the money.

Then the contests would stop.

The decision of who was the best dancer would generally be left over until the next year.

I don't remember who was the actual champion dancer amongst the 'possum trappers, and it is too late to worry over it now.

We have few remaining traces of the dance in Australia, despite the great wealth of reports, anecdotes and collected step dance tunes.

The three examples we have (to date), are clearly consistent with the styles manifest in England, Scotland and Ireland.

The first video shows the late Paddy Dawson of Franklin, Tasmania, demonstrating his step dancing to the collector, Rob Willis.

Rob Willis, Oral History and Folklore Collections, National Library of Australia, writes: "This is the only example of step dancing from a traditional performer I have ever filmed.

"The Dawson family of Franklin have been recorded extensively by both the National Library of Australia and other individuals in Tasmania.

"This sequence was shot on a couple of visits to the Dawsons, (Edie and Paddy), the first in their home (apologies for shaky footage – a bit crowded) and the second in the Franklin Hall, where in the company of Peter Ellis and a keen group of Tasmanian dancers (big thanks!) we reconstructed many of the 'lost' dances of Tasmania.

"Paddy was well in to his eighties when we filmed and although he was very enthusiastic we had to take into consideration his age and fitness.

"The sequence in the Franklin Hall best demonstrates elements of his style even though he noticeably tires towards the end.

"Many thanks to the Dawson family for their contribution to the preservation of Tasmania's folklore and heritage".

The second example comes from country Victoria: Maureen's Irish shuffle collected by Peter Ellis in 1998.

Peter can be seen joining in in the second half of the video.

A third example comes again from Tasmania, as danced at house parties on the East Coast.

This video was produced by Rob Willis in 1994 while recording musician John Sturzacker.

John's daughter, Sandra,

remembered several unique dances that she learnt as a child from older members of her family.

Sandra demonstrated this step dance and also a very energetic Cobblers Dance, known as the frog dance in other regions.

Any tune can be used for step dancing, though those with strong rhythms are more driving than others.

The two volumes of Folk Songs of Australia have a number of tunes listed and accompanying information.

Between 1953 and 1961, John Meredith collected two tunes specifically identified as a step dance tunes from the notable musician, Sally Sloane

You can hear a recording of Sally playing the tune on the National Library of Australia website

http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-214802380/listen/0-0~0-95

Ian Hayden has a transcription of the tune on his website

The Music of Sally Sloane

https://sallysloane.wordpress.com/tunes/step-dance/

Sally also labelled Harvest Home as a breakdown or step dance tune

http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-214819494/listen/0-486~0-555

Transcription https://sallysloane.wordpress.com/tunes/harvest-home/

A number of tunes in Sally's repertoire have been identified as commonly used step dance tunes including St Patrick's Day in the Morning, The Blackbird, Ring the Bell Watchman, Garryowen and various untitled jigs and hornpipes in the collection.

A selection of step dance tunes is available on the Bush Traditions website:

George Cadman One Step
Jacko's 1st Kiama Hornpipe
Jacko's 2nd Kiama Hornpipe
Step It Out Mary
Uncle Adam Ebert's
Schaefer's Half Figure

This dance form is fun and easy to learn.

It's completely informal with no set routines to remember.

The basics can be learnt in half an hour and can be used not only for a bush dance, but in other dance forms currently popular in Australia such as contra and Irish set dancing.



1887 Step dancing in Norfolk, England, a scene also common throughout Australia at this time

Performers' Directory

See pages 76 & 77 to see how performers can have their information added to this directory

Alanna and Alicia (1924-170)
Twin sisters Alanna and Alicia sing original folky, jazz songs. Known for their fine songwriting and sweet harmonies they regularly perform around the festival circuit.
0416 546 410
maudeesmail@iinet.net.au

Asleep at the Reel (629-173)
Join the dots between Celtic music and contemporary Australian song in a wonderful melding of Celtic influences and Australian stories.
M.Cryle@UQ.Edu.Au
www.AsleepAtTheReelBand.com
See WWW.tradandNow.com for more detail

Bruce Watson (217-175)
Multi-award-winning singer/songwriter whose performances are highly entertaining as well as moving.
Bruce is a regular at festivals and is a folk icon.
jandbwatson@gmail.com
www.brucewatsonmusic.com

Cameron Jones (2290-169)
Guitarist, composer, festival director and educator specialising in the percussive rhythms and bright, expressive melodies of gypsy jazz music.
He introduces songs with tales of original time and place and brings a rare depth of understanding and authenticity to his performances.
www.cameronjones.co
cameron@cameronjones.co
See www.TradandNow.com for more info

Chasing the Moon (2309-174)
Sydney based 6 piece band delivering a feast of hot club swing infused with Latin sounds and a dash of folk and blues.
Regulars at Leichhardt Bowling Club and at Foundry 616.
PPK@ChasingtheMoon.com.au
WWW.ChasingtheMoon.com.au
See www.TradandNow.com for more info

Chloe & Jason Roweth (940-179)
Performing and recording artists of traditional and original Australian music. Regular on-line performances.
0429 911 663
JasonRoweth@me.com

Chris O (222-172)
Singer songwriter based in Tas.
Pens originals and plays vintage music with an acoustic folk, blues and roots flavour.
Plays on lap-slide, banjo, uke and guitar drawing on a lifetime of encounters echoing global traditions.
COkunbor@Hotmail.com

CJ Shaw (2297-169)
ARIA Award nominated musician and educator who has spent 20 years writing, recording and performing songs.
'All Sorts' is his latest album.
CJShawMusic@Gmail.com
www.CJShawMusic.com

Ecopella (99-175)
Causing harmony to the environment for decades, sharing passionate choral pieces for the well being of our planet and its protectors.
Rehearsals in 7 locations in NSW & ACT.
Miguel@Ecopella.org
WWW.Ecopella.org

Edward Nass (147-181)
Solo folk singer with ballads about everyday life with strokes of humour, heart and a dash of quirkiness.
Songs resonate with the shard experience that binds us all.
EJNass@Gmail.com

Enda Kenny (649-168)
Multi-award winning singer, songwriter and guitarist.
Touring nationally and internationally for over three decades.
Professional entertainer. 8 albums.
Ph: 0402 280 430
www.endakennyMusic.com
See WWW.tradandNow.com for more detail

Evan Mathieson (1773-182)
Singer of songs, builder of autoharps.
Player of autoharps, guitars, blues harps and the kazoo!
Evan loves to share his wide range of worthy songs, both in performance, and/or leading sessions, from the unaccompanied tradition to Jug/**Jazzy/Blues.**
www.evanmathieson.com.au

Lyn curates the whaling songs and other insightful writings of folk icon, Harry Robertson.
www.harryrobertson.net

Faces in the Street (40-175)
Australian indie folk band.
Focus on vocals and harmonies.
Music@FacesintheStreetBand.com

Fred Smith (101-170)
Write songs, cracks jokes.
"Fred Smith is simply the **best** folk/country musician working in **this country ….." (Bruce Elder, SMH).**
0403 816 311
FredSmith100@Yahoo.com
See WWW.tradandNow.com for more detail

Gary Banks (1967-176)
Australian singer songwriter who lives between Australia and Ireland each year. Released four critically acclaimed CDs since going solo in 2012.
Banks.Gary.K@Gmail.com

Glenys Anderson Duo (314-172)
Award-winning singer-songwriter. She is warm & witty with a great voice. Her songs will move you to tears one minute and make you laugh the next.
0428 329 926
glenys@counsellor.com

Hoya (20-180)
Sydney based quartet made up of Margaret and Sonya Bradford, Gwyn Cleeves and Ian Knight.
Their CD, Inspirational Women, includes songs and stories of remarkable Australian women, many of whom remain unknown.
The CD is an excellent resource for women's studies.
MargieB639@Gmail.com

Ian Dearden (210-172)
Passionate and entertaining singer, songwriter, composer and multi-instrumentalist.
IDearden@icloud.com

Jackie Marshall (1015-168)
Fully independent songwriter, performer, recording artist, writer, producer, composer for experimental and hybrid theatre, mentor, educator and experienced creative project manager with a keen interest in therapeutic applications for music making.
Community@JackieMarshall.com

Joel Smoker (576-182)
Singer, songwriter, artist, blogger, author based in WA.
See Red Dirt Arts
Joel.Smoker@Bigpond.com

John Ralph (1420-183)
Guitar. Mandolin, banjo, voice. Original and traditional music from the UK and Oz played with a contemporary feel but with roots firmly in the tradition.
Ph: 0405 523 144
JohnDRalph@Hotmail.com

Maggie Somerville (2238-179)
Singer songwriter who performs regularly at the VFMC as well as various folk festivals.
Performs her own material usually solo but sometimes with others.
Ph: 0429 386 044
Maggies88@Bigpond.com

Mandy Breeze & Doug Kelly (1954-174)
Beautiful 'handmade' traditional music of the British Isles performed on trad and modern instruments – Irish Bouzouki, nyckelharpa, guitar synth, bodhran
0402 685 744
Simplefolk@Soundcolour.com

Mark Lucas and the Dead Setters (1718-169)
Australian roots music, a sense of place.
In singer songwriter Mark Lucas' world, you'll encounter ghosts of the past and yearning spirits of the present, making themselves known in a variety of familiar locales, together with a motley cast of misfits and dreamers who could fit in just about anywhere that there's people and stories to tell.
Info@songsmith.com.au

Mark Thomann (2343-168)
Writes and performs folk, country, roots and blues songs.
Mark.Thomann@Outlook.com
See www.TradandNow.com for more info

Mary-Jane Field (2265-168)
Writes and performs songs based on folk music traditions from South America and Australia, drawing on her life there. Also recites her poems and has a collection of short stories and vignettes on offer.
0402 961 329
MJMartha@Optusnet.com.au

Maureen O'Brien (1405-172)
Award winning singer-songwriter, performer, 10 albums recorded, Folk, blues, jazz, comedy.
Also a published author, playwright and stage director / producer.
www.Maureen.com.au
Bookings@Maureen.com.au
See www.TradandNow.com for more info

Mic Conway (568-170)
ARIA Award winning multi-talented performer also known for his work with Captain Matchbox, Circus Oz, ABC for Kids, National Junk Band and more.
Mic@MicConway.com
www.MicConway.com

Mollimor (802-170)
Blend Celtic traditional and original tunes and songs with driving, edgy or mellow rhythms to produce a unique and varied sound.
Ph: 0410 080 806
Mollimor.KH@Gmail.com
See www.TradandNow.com for more info

Nerds & Music (425-184)
Original wordy comic songs by Novocastrian nerds led by Clark Gormley.
GormleyClark@Gmail.com

New Holland Honey Eaters (2011-184)
Play and si9ng a wide range of roots music from the old time southern tradition from string bands to jubilee quartet and more.
Stan@StansPage.com

Newport Bush Orchestra (1334-173)
Community group playing Australian trad tunes and songs.
Available for bush dances and performances.
Rehearse 2nd & 4th Mondays.
New players welcome.
Davelsom@Bigpond.com

Nick Charles (744-168)
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.CharlesGuitar.com

Penelope Swales (87-169)
Strong female fuelled contemporary folk.
Punchy, topical material with infectious loopy grooves as well as tender thoughtful songs.
Currently featuring Mal Webb and Kylie Morrigan.
Penelope@PenelopeSwales.com
See www.TradandNow.com for more info

Penny Davies & Roger Ilott (7892-183)
Acoustic folk duo featuring 12 string guitar, mandolin and harmony vocals.
Original songs and folk songs, songs of substance.
Ph: 07 4683 7184
Restless_Music@yahoo.com.au

Pete & Sue McMahon (249-173)
Full time professional folk and country musicians, bush poets and producers.
Over 80 years' experience in all aspects of the acoustic music industry.
Ph: 0414 319 588
www.PeteMcMahon.com.au

Peter Campbell (1127-182)
Infectious indie-folk that brings audiences uplifting, challenging, vulnerable and often hilarious calls to healing and connection as much as calls to action.
Music@PeterCampbell.au
www.PeterCampbell.au

Peter Willey (144-184)
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

Phil Bates (2040-175)
Sings traditional and contemporary folk songs with fingerstyle guitar and occasional banjo accompaniment. Based in Newcastle.
Philip.Bates6@Bigpond.com
Ph: 0427 543 474

Rare Treats (2000-199)
Beautiful vocal harmonies in a mixture of rare mostly undiscovered songs, some originals and songs for you to dance and sing to.
Trio with sometimes a fourth member featuring a wide range of instruments including keyboard, banjo mandolin, guitar, ukulele, percussion, slide guitar and mandolin.
0418 649 477
HurleyST@Bigpond.net.au
See www.TradandNow.com for more info

Ryebuck Band (52-171)
Have been playing for concerts and dances for longer than they would like to admit.
0400 786 494
G.Alex.Bishop@Gmail.com

Simple Folk (1954-174)
Trad British and Celtic ballads featuring the singing of Mandy Breeze, trad and modern instrumentals – Irish Bouzouki, nyckelharpa, guitar synth, bodhran
0431 427 898
Simplefolk@Soundcolour.com

Steve Tyson (52-170)
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 (1623-180)
A 4-piece acoustic swing and western swing band with 2 acoustic archtop guitars, fiddle & double bass & harmony vocals.
Playing regularly around Brisbane, SE Qld.
0402 504 099
Julie.witney@bigpond.com

Traditional Graffiti (2294-173)
5 piece multi-instrument band specialising in traditional, contemporary & humorous British folk songs and tunes, with heaps of audience interaction.
JMilce@Sherborne.com.au

Tripple Effect (2312-180)
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 (2059-169)
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

Warralakin (1357-174)
Hear the music, listen to the stories, smell the dust.
Warralakin music is Australiana song and verse from the road less travelled.
Ph: 0404 629 125
WarralakinMusic@Gmail.com

For more information on these artists, most have CDs for sale at www.TradandNow.com

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

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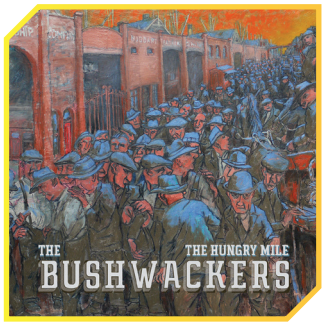

The Bushwackers - The Hungry Mile

CD review by Tony Smith

The tracks on this umpteenth album (30th?) of the iconic Bushwackers band include 'Leave It In the Ground', 'Dirt Under My Nails', 'Another Trip to Bunnings', 'The Hungry Mile', 'Waltzing Australia', 'Australian for Broken Heart', 'Easy Does It', 'Denis O'Reilly', 'Giant of A Man', 'The Backblock Shearer', 'Republic Day' and 'Oh How the Memories Have Flown'.

This CD of about 46 minutes duration was recorded and mixed by Roger Corbett at The Valley Studio in Springwood.

The picture on the front cover has the same name as the album and is by Bill Nix.

No doubt all the arrangements are by the Bushwackers, but it would be good to know a little more about the provenance of the tunes.

Certainly, the band does not claim to have written all the songs and tunes, and several are familiar.

'Denis O'Reilly', which tells of the wanderings of an Irishman who came to Australia to seek his fortune in the gold rushes, is certainly a traditional song/tune.

Nevertheless, there are various versions.

The same applies to 'Backblock Shearer', at least one version of which was apparently collected by John Meredith.

Anyway, not everyone cares about the origins of the tunes and such questions should not interfere with the listening enjoyment.

Several tracks show a proudly Australian temper and some reveal a broadly left political stance.

The working class songs 'Dirt Under My Nails' and 'The Hungry Mile' show a distinct sympathy with the battler.

The title track refers to the long road down towards the docks where, in the depression years especially, men would line up in the hope of being thrown a scrap of stevedoring work.

No wonder the Waterside Workers Federation and Maritime Union of Australia

CD book Reviews

became so strong.

'Giant of A Man' refers to Prime Minister Whitlam, who made many Australians feel proud after years of conservative rule and subservience towards Britain and the USA.

'Republic Day' touches on another long term pre-occupation of the Bushwackers – the only question now is when.

'Leave It In the Ground' expresses current environmental concerns over the mining of fossil fuels and will appeal to a new generation of activist: 'You can't eat coal and you can't breathe gas'.

'Waltzing Australia', by Colin Buchanan, is a song of welcome and a celebration of immigration and multiculturalism.

'Oh How the Memories Have Flown' is a wistful ending and would make a gentle last dance.

The musicians are Dobe Newton (vocals, whistle, lagerphone, bodhran, bones, spoons), Roger Corbett (guitars, mandolin, harmonica, vocals), Clare O'Meara (accordion, fiddle, vocals), Mark Oats (fiddle, vocals), Mark Corbett (guitar, banjo), Michael Vidale (bass) and Andy Gatus (drums).

James Church (dobro), John Williamson (vocals) and Sara Storer (vocals) are special guests.

The Bushwackers also thank the 'Bush Choir' whose members read like a list of the stars of country music.

A couple of the songs have a country feel about them, giving the album a broader appeal than the overtly political tracks might.

As well as their CDs and live performances, the Bushwackers have toured internationally, representing Australian bush music to the world.

Also their books of songs and dance music have been invaluable sources for other bands and for schools.

'Easy Does It' is an instrumental which begins with a distinctly Scottish sound.

There is some fine fiddle and accordion playing on this track.

Overall, the arrangements are such that they highlight a variety of instruments and ensure variety and listening interest.

'Easy Does It' also reminds us that the Bushwackers were pioneers of the bush dance revival half a century ago.

To achieve such longevity, the Bushwackers must be doing something right!



Eric Bogle - The Source of Light

CD review by Tony Smith

After 40 years in the business of entertaining audiences with his original songs, Eric Bogle is drawing on a range of emotions here.

This 2022 album of 15 tracks contains memories, celebrations and some serious warnings about the future.

As well as Bogle's witty and incisive lyrics, there are contributions from several friends.

Above all, this album showcases the outstanding and diverse capabilities of Emma Luker.

Emma's special talents became obvious when this Fiddle Chick began to provide beautiful string lacings to his songs, seemingly with no or very little rehearsal.

On this CD, Emma also does arrangements and vocal backing and designed the album cover.

'The Armageddon Waltz' and 'When the Last Tree Falls' warn about environmental hazards while 'The Flag' is an outlet for Eric's anger about fascism.

These warnings note the complacency giving rise to even further catastrophe.

For the title track, a beautiful song with poignant fiddle backing, Eric raises the issue of children dying in wars, not just historically but today in Yemen and elsewhere as we watch: 'Suffer the children ...'.

'Embers' is about memories and sometimes, regrets.

'If She Ever Dreamed' is about the special Nancy in Eric's life.

It contains a lament really for the way we treat our mothers as only existing in relation to us and our needs.

'A Cottage in the Country' is perhaps about dreams we all have.

It has an unusual chorus: 'Hah-ha-ha-happy', increasing the 'ha's' as the pot kicks in, which only Eric Bogle could carry off.

'Song for Susan' is indeed for Susan Foster, a leading light

in Canberra folk dancing circles, who died of Leukaemia in 2021.

A fine fiddle interlude is a highlight of this track.

'Catching the Wave' is about letting go and is dedicated to musician John Thomson.

The phrase is taken from John's last post when he announced he was stopping medical treatment and allowing the wave to take him to the shore.

John's friends, English singers While and Matthews, give a poignant rendition.

'The Border' was written by John Campbell Munro.

'Mind the Gap/ A Dear John Letter' are dedicated to Eric's dear friend John: 'gone but never forgotten, who was a constant collaborator.

'Mind the Gap' is a Luker instrumental and the Letter is from Eric's heart.

Besides Bogle and Luker, the musicians include Pete Titchener, who also recorded and produced the album, Damien Steele Scott, Jon Jones, Richard Coates, Peter Franche, Gina Jeffreys, Rod McCormack, Mike Haynes, Chris While, Julie Matthews, The Sherrahs, Anthony Stewart, Anthony O'Neill and The Bogle Pub Choir.

Eric Bogle wrote most of the songs except 'The Border', a love song for his homeland by John Munro, Emma's instrumental 'Mind the Gap' and 'The Girl in the Photo' (Pete's Mum – sung by Gina Jeffreys) and 'Eric's Never Written a Song About Me' by the difficult to rhyme, Pete Titchener.

The a capella song 'If I Should Wake' with its beautiful harmonies reverses the well known hymn which ponders if I should die before I wake.

Hopefully, those sleepers and sleepwalkers who hear Bogle's warnings will wake before it is too late.

As usual, Bogle puts his insights fearlessly.

As always, he shows a fine understanding of the best principles found in any spiritual system, specifying those emerging from a genuine Christian ethos.

With 'The Old Dog's Song', Bogle advises: 'Singing is the best exercise your mouth and larynx can get, not to mention your heart, spirit and soul, so sing for your wellbeing and for the sheer joy of it.

'Age is no barrier'.

'I'll sing while I still have a voice/ I'll sing while I still have a choice/ I'll sing in the hope for a bright day/ I'll sing to help keep the shadows away/ Make the rafters ring, and sing, sing, sing'.

Hear! Hear!



Jan Preston - Pianoland

CD review by Tony Smith

Of the twelve tracks on this album, eight were penned by the livewire Jan Preston.

Two others are collaborations by Preston with Garner and Charles, and there are classics by Jacombs and by Raye.

The tracks written by Preston are 'Pianoland', 'Back to the Boogie', 'The Piano has the Blues', 'Trout Blues', 'Winnie Played the Rag', 'Trouble with my Wings', 'When the Border Opens' and 'Lowdown Blues'.

Tha Jacombs number is 'You Can Count on Me' and the Raye

track is 'Down the Road Apiece'.

Preston and Garner wrote 'You Have My Love' and Preston and Charles wrote 'A Little Bit More'.

Preston (piano and vocals) is joined by Craig Renneberg (bass), Andy Byrnes and Mike Pullman (drums), and Nick Charles (guitar).

Chris Mawer and Liza Ohlback provide vocal backing support.

Preston is very familiar with the idiom.

She has classical training and has excelled in many genres.

Boogie, ragtime and blues are at her fingertips – no pun intended.

'Winnie' is Winifred Atwell, a honky tonk pioneer who must be admired by any piano player.

There is a good mix of songs and three instrumentals.

Preston's voice is ideally husky for the blues.

The riffs on 'When the Border Opens' are especially impressive and the final track, 'Lowdown Blues', has a smooth slower jazzy feeling and makes a relaxing finale.

You can hear and almost see the two hands speaking to one another in this original piece.

Most of the tracks are upbeat, so by the end, I was ready for the more gentle final track.

This is pure piano.

Like great composers such as Chopin in the classical world and Scott Joplin in the ragtime era, Preston writes genuine piano tunes.

Some players try to take the keyboard away from its areas of natural fit, but wise players let the keys be their guide.

As always, I'd be keen to know whether all the tracks are

Folk Radio Directory

Attention radio presenters. See pages 76-77 for more information on how you can have your program listed in this Directory. Entry is free to subscribers

Australia Wide – Trad&Now Live!
Free 24/7 streaming service of all genres of Australian folk music recorded in Australia and available for sale from the Trad&Now website.
Available anywhere that has an internet connection.
See a constantly updating playlist and programming information on the website.
Specific genre one hour programs on the even number hours from 4AM to 10PM.
www.tradandnow.com

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

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Australian & overseas folk/bush, festival & performer updates
Every Saturday 2–4pm
rodworthing1@gmail.com

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Presents a variety of music featuring Australian, Indigenous and overseas artists.
Genres include Celtic, Country, Blues, Folk and Contemporary.
Sunday 9am-noon.
LMFMRadio1@Gmail.com

NSW – One of the Folk 92.3FM Bathurst
"Music for Folk" program.
Every Saturday 12-2pm
FestivalofFolk@Gmail.com

NSW – Worldwide Folk – VOX FM 106.9
Illawarra Folk Club presents a wide variety of folk style songs and tunes from Australia and beyond.
Every Sat. 2-4pm
RustyBucket@Live.com.au

SA – Radio Adelaide Folk Show 101.5 FM
Presents a selection of Anglo/Celtic, North American and Australian traditional, retro and contemporary folk music.
Presenters include informative notes on tracks played and often invite guest musicians.
5-6.30pm (SA time) Saturdays. Also on Radio Adelaide website
Jane.Bower@Bigpond.com

SA – Some Folk 5ZZZ 91.1FM
Eclectic selection of folk music presented every Thursday from 3-5pm ACST from McLaren Vale by David and Julie Cavanagh.
DavCav42@gmail.com

Vic – Mostly Folk, Fun & Friends 94.1FM Melbourne
Focuses on Australian performers in the folk genre featuring music, poetry, artist interviews, folk events and CD launches.
Every Wednesday 6-8pm and streamed on **3wbc.org.au**
WBCRFolk@Hotmail.com

Vic - Radio OCR FM 98.3 FM Colac & District
Australian smorgasbord is airs in South Western Victoria.
Presenter plays Australian folk and blues artists.
Every Tuesday, 11am-1pm.
(03) 5232 1991
moonlightau@gmail.com

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

played on the same instrument, and if so, what is the make and age of Preston's preferred piano.

As the piano is not a portable instrument, Preston must have encountered a range of standards and 'tunings', especially in smaller venues.

No doubt she is always relieved to return home where her grand piano awaits.

The sleeve pictures a steel-framed upright by C.Bechstein of Berlin.

Recording and production credits belong to Preston at Annandale Studios, Andy Byrnes at Huntley Street and Phil Punch at Electric Avenue.

Preston describes Pianoland as 'The world of black and whites', a down to earth variation on ebony and ivory, where 'everything's all right'.

It certainly is for the listener.



Manifold's Lute: music, poetry and reflections

CD review Tony Smith

This 2023 audio CD of some 47 minutes in length was produced largely as a review copy for Restless Music podcasts of The Australian Cultural Library's John Manifold Fellowship.

It features interviews with Doug Eaton and Garry Tooth about their memories of Manifold, who was an influential figure in the Australian folk revival, especially in Queensland.

Anyone interested in Australian folk music would be familiar with John Manifold's 'Penguin Australian Song Book'.

Manifold identified and perhaps personified a tension in folk music between, on one hand, recording songs and tunes and rendering them in sheet music, and on the other, allowing them to flourish or perish according to how they are taken up and sung and played by the general folk.

It is one thing for musicians to record their songs, beautiful as they may be, and then to think no further about how they might have changed the course of folk music.

It is another for reviewers to consider albums in isolation.

The musicologists take the process a step further.

That is why biographers such as Keith McKenry, and archivists such as the folklore unit at the National Library and producers such as Penny Davies and Roger Ilott are so important.

Without them, we would not appreciate the debates and tensions within the folk community.

Manifold and his wife held court at Wynnum Qld, and it was not just folk musicians who were welcome.

They also ran a meeting of the Brisbane Realist Writers Group.

Realism was a generally left wing stance taken by writers who sought to describe the everyday experiences of ordinary people, so it fits neatly with an interest in genuine folk music.

The CD includes recitations, mostly by Penny Davies and Lee Williams, of works by Thomas Shapcott, Rodney Hall, Oodgeroo Noonuccal, Judith Rodriguez, David Malouf and Manifold.

Here you will learn of the history of two important Brisbane bands, the Moreton Bay Bushwhackers and the Bandicoots, and hear The Hillbilly addicts perform 'On the Queensland Railway Line', 'Bubble and Squeak' and Ilott's 'Rosewood Waltz'.

Manifold also expressed firm opinions about the style accompanists should adopt, no guitar plectrums for example, and dabbled in instrument building.

His most favoured guitar had a round back like a Portuguese guitar and so was dubbed a lute.

Bill Scott also receives some mentions, which is unsurprising given his great role in preserving and performing Queensland folk songs.

There are three Manifold's Lute Podcasts on the Restless Music site.

This divides the 38 items into easy listening lengths.

As is usual with Restless Music productions, Manifold's Lute is professionally produced and clearly written.

It is an important oral document in the history of Queensland and Australian folk music.

CD book Reviews

Trad and now

All of the CD reviews published in Trad&Now are also published as part of the CD description for each title in WWW.Tradandnow.com

CD book Reviews



MEKL

CD review by Tony Smith

Apparently MEKL is an acronym of Miss Eileen and King Lear.

The duo consists of Eileen and Lear Hodgkins, and this album is self-named.

They are siblings and part of the much larger multi talented and multi instrumental Perch Creek Family Band that readers may have seen performing for many years at Woodford Folk Festival.

Eileen plays guitars and sings.

Lear plays guitar, sings and plays drums and percussion.

The ten tracks are 'Tangled World', 'New Mexico', 'Castlemaine', 'Oh Lover', 'Held by the Air', 'Way Way Down', 'Time Runs Away', 'Montaigne', 'All Outa Luck', and 'Sunday'.

All songs were written by the pair except, that for 'Held by the Air', they share writing credits with John Healy and Robyn Bennet.

MEKL thank those on the production side including Edwin White, Greg Steele, Craig Pilkington, Callum Barter, Steve Smart, Cat Black and James Chandler.

They acknowledge support from the Victorian Government through Creative Victoria.

Apart from some printing in gold, the album cover is purely black and white, from the photos of the duo to the white on shades of black in the lyrics sheet.

This has quite a dramatic effect, especially as neither musician looks directly at the camera.

Supporting musicians include White, Pilkington, Chandler, Camilla Hodgkins, Jonothan Dreyfus, Bill O'Connel, Will Morrissey, Donald Stewart, Nic Ryan Glenie, Jono Colliver, Isaac Barton, Helen Mountfort, Mo'Ju, Georgia Spain, Oscar Lush and Narayana Johnson.

It is easy to believe that MEKL might be big in the USA.

They have the track 'New Mexico' and there is an Americana feel to some of their songs.

The opening track 'Tangled World' is a gentle pop song.

Others feel decidedly poetic.

In the slow bluesy song 'Way Way Down' for example, there is a neat water metaphor which mentions drowning: 'When the tide comes will you hold tight my hand/ I'll be blue water you'll be white sand ... I'll be the sun, you'll be the gold on the sea'.

Then in 'Time Runs Away' a similarly slow opening introduces a faster and stronger second verse which is entirely consistent with the mood of the piece.

There are images of light in 'Montaigne', of candles, stars, sunset and darkness.

The track includes a slightly quirky instrumental break which matches the refrain.

Perhaps it references the French philosopher and/or the Australian singer.

For me, Lear's 'Castlemaine' is the pick of these tracks.

It has a slightly unusual approach to the chorus which slips onto the verses: 'That I had ever seen/ I had ever been with/ I had ever dreamed of'.

This is closely followed by Eileen's 'Oh Lover': 'Everybody's got so much to do with us these days/ everybody's got so much to say on the way that we move'.

'Held by the Air' features perhaps the best harmony on the album: 'I felt then/ none of my friends would fail/ and if we fell/ we'd be held by the air'.

The final song, 'Sunday' has rather less optimism and tells of bluebirds, sad and lonesome sounds and the bitterness of love.

These singers have clear diction which is important for the delivery of their interesting lyrics.

We are sure to hear more of Eileen and Lear Hodgkins.



The Royal High Jinx - Murder Motel

CD review by Tony Smith

This 2019 album of 11 tracks by this lively Melbourne band provides 36 minutes of listening pleasure.

The band consists of Silas Palmer (voice, piano, keys, drums, bass), Sarah Busuttil Palmer (voice, violin), Terry Cole (voice, mandolin) and Jen Hawley (voice, guitars, ukulele).

The tracks are: 'Lost On A Train', 'Into You', 'Dark Corner',

'Murder Motel', 'Magic Moment', 'Room Service', 'Oh Yay', 'Joe, Jane and the Juice', 'Friday', 'I Won't Stray' and 'Love Letters Roasting'.

The band's style is slightly Balkan swing, somewhat steam punk, borderline Klezmer and definitely a highly accomplished quartet focussing on fun.

The brightly coloured sleeve augments this impression.

Another feature of the sleeve is a 'cartoon' of the quartet by Viccas.

A lyrics sheet is provided for the songs.

'Dark Corner' and 'Room Service' are instrumentals brought to life by very expressive violins that squeeze the emotion out.

At times you can imagine a clarinet weaving around the melody in these more serious gypsy style pieces.

The opening track 'Lost on a Train', with its command to 'wake up', is highly frenetic and gives a good sample of the energetic tracks to follow.

At times the lyrics seem to lack seriousness and designed to fit the music, but at others the words take over.

'Into You' is an example: 'I had a little fall when we first met/ I fell a little further on a jet/ But the worst was yet to come when I fell from the sky/ You could have saved me but you didn't try'.

Sometimes the tango beat is slower and burning, while at other times it is fast, as on 'Murder Motel'.

'Oh Yay' is a lovely tango in which the bass features.

Quite a few tracks imagine a setting in which couples are dancing.

On 'Friday' you should 'dance a little more, sing a little more'.

Unwind, relax, top up your energies.

The tune is a variant of 'Sway' which gives it immediate appeal and takes the group into the world of niche Latin American dance forms.

The slightly mysterious 'Joe, Jane and the Juice' is suggestive of chemical stimulants: 'The three best friends I choose/ are a cup, a roll, a silver flask ... Joe can leave you shaking/ Jane can make you stare/ Juice wakes you up in strangers' beds'.

For me, the final track is perhaps the best song.



It is very accessible with a repeated chorus: 'Love letters roasting on an open fire/ Memories float into the sky/ Embers gently twinkling up so high/ Love letters roasting on an open fire'.

This song does everything right, including the final line, which the vocalist ends on the perfect pitch.

What a good note on which to end an album.

However you seek to classify the music of The Royal High Jinx, the band's obvious enjoyment is paramount and must infect any listener.

They stick to the conventions and swing into these tracks with confidence and style, but with humility and good humour about the lyrics.

Every ensemble could do with a little of the vibrancy, fun and energy displayed by these accomplished musicians.

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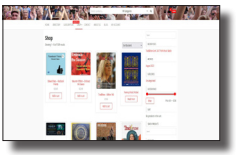

Phone 0410 522 070 or email info@TradandNow.com if you need more specific information.

Poets Directory

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.

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

Poets at the Petersham Bowlo (NSW) (2289-169)
Open mic soiree – 3rd Thursday. 6.30PM
Poems, short stories, comedy & music.
Free admission.
Facebook: Poets at the Petersham Bowlo

Rhymer from Ryde (663-189)
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
www.TheRhymerFromRyde.com

Vanessa Craven (2059-169)
Award winning musician. Has a published book of poetry.
AcousticSessions@Mmnet.com.au
www.AcousticSessions.com.au

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

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Live Review: Jordan Rakei at Concert Hall, Sydney Opera House

by Shaun Colnan – MusicNews.com



Jordan Rakei's Sydney Opera House debut was a culmination of everything he has worked toward: a masterclass in musicianship, storytelling and soul.

Few artists command a stage with the kind of effortless sincerity that Jordan Rakei does.

Returning to Sydney for a long-awaited performance at the Opera House's Concert Hall, the New Zealand born, Australia raised multi instrumentalist delivered a night of intricate, soulful compositions that spanned his impressive six-album catalogue.

From the moment the first notes rang out, the audience was enraptured by his singular blend of R&B, jazz and electronica, all elevated by his unmistakably warm, expressive vocals.

Opening with, Learning, Rakei set the tone for the evening with an intimate, almost meditative transition into an a cappella jam.

His voice, rich and resonant, filled the cavernous space with ease.

"So good to be here - none of us have ever played here or even stepped foot in the building," he admitted before promising to attempt playing songs from across his entire discography.

The audience was more than ready for the journey.

He launched into, Mad World, from his 2019 album, Origin, bathed in scattered lamp light and deep red overhead hues.

Backed by a formidable band, the interplay between drums, percussion, electric guitar, keys and synth, created a lush sonic tapestry, while a bouquet of native flora atop the grand piano added a grounded, organic touch.

The atmosphere shifted with, Freedom, where an aquiline striation of blue light washed over the stage.

Here, Rakei stepped out from behind the piano, his presence at the front of the stage amplifying the song's slow building ecstasy, driven by an anaphoric vocal passage that left the room spellbound.

Speaking candidly about the inspiration behind, The Loop, he reflected on the resentment and anger that fuelled its lyrics, dedicating, Royal, to "all the angry people in the front row".

A slow but hard hitting confessional, it pulsed with vulnerability, drawing the audience further into his world.

A mood shift followed with, Wind Parade, a deep purple lit, funk infused number that loosened up the room and allowed the band's groove to shine.

Picking up a guitar, Rakei paid homage to his formative years in Brisbane.

"Walking to school for the last three years of high school I played three artists religiously: Jill Scott, D'Angelo and Bilal," he recalled.

As he began, State of Mind, a technical hitch saw his guitar strap detach, but rather than falter, he continued singing while a sound technician fixed it.

The moment encapsulated his poise and professionalism, nothing was going to break the spell he had cast over the audience.

Clouds emerged as a standout, a stripped-back vocal centric piece that evolved through three distinct sonic spheres, deep introspection, ascent and eventual soaring catharsis.

Then came, Wildfire, its electric purple lighting engulfing the stage in an atmospheric haze.

The song's falsetto laden breakdown was brief but utterly sublime.

Reflecting on his move from Brisbane to London 11 years ago, he reminisced about his early struggles with the city's relentless grey weather.

"Guitar music like Jeff Buckley and Radiohead was my shining light out of that first melancholy year," he shared, leading into Eye To Eye.

His delivery was tender, his voice carrying the weight of that emotional transition with understated power.

Stripping things back completely, he moved to the microphone alone for, Flowers, allowing his vocals to take centre stage.

Then, with the line "You cannot compare yourself to me," the energy shifted as he transported us back to his, Cloak, days with, Talk To Me.

The intensity and groove of this track felt like a refreshing contrast to the more introspective moments of the night, a reminder of Rakei's versatility as an artist.

Returning to, The Loop, he introduced, Cages, as a song



Jordan Rakei Photo: Jordan Munns/Sydney Opera House

Bluegrass News



Story and photos by Lindsay Mar

Valé Len Newland



Len Newland, mandolinist, vocalist and long standing member of Hot Foot and the My-T-Fine Stringband, and stalwart member (since 1976) of the Bluegrass and Traditional Country Music Society of Australia (BTCMSA) was farewelled by Sydney pickers at a memorial service at Banjo Patterson Park, Gladesville, on Sunday Mar 2.

Len had passed on Sep 4, 2024 at his Cooma, NSW, home after a long illness.

He was born on Oct 22, 1949 and besides Bluegrass, Old-Time, Bagpipe and Folk music, Len was a keen Toastmaster, model train enthusiast of extreme gauges, N-scale and Live Steam, and a connoisseur of a good curry.

He travelled to, and enrolled at, an Indian TAFE just to find out how to grind and mix his own spices.

He is survived by his ex-wife Dot and his younger brother Stuart and his family.

Len in my estimation, was one of the most important people on the Australian Bluegrass and Old-Time music scene, and here is the reason why.

I first encountered Len at a square dance in 1980 or '81.

The band, Hot Foot, comprised Rod Jones fiddle, Judy Jones banjo and calls, Len Newland mandolin, Dot Newland bass and Jim Rush guitar.

By the next time I met the band in 1992, Jim had dropped out to join Acoustic Shock and in order to keep the essential rhythm guitar in the mix, thus keeping the band viable, Len laid

down his favoured mandolin and assumed guitar duties.

Len had put his own interest aside for the sake of the band, as had Dot, whose first instrument was not bass.

The needs of the group came first.

There is a lot of confusion today about how to assemble a group, but not back then.

When building up a group from one to five members, the most essential instrument is the rhythm guitar.

If there is only one performer on stage, it will almost certainly be the guitar, everything else is added subsequently.

Conversely, if you systematically reduce the size of the group, the last instrument ever removed is the rhythm guitar.

Len had set aside his favoured mandolin to ensure that the group possessed that essential rhythm guitar.

As most are aware, Rod and Judy Jones were two of the founding members of the BTCMSA in 1975 and have done much of the work ever since.

This included the monthly Sydney get-togethers and concerts, Cumberland County Rag and Bulletin, a weekly radio show "Bluegrass Special", co-founded the Harrietville Bluegrass Convention and made many trips to the USA to personally learn about Bluegrass and Old-Time music, and make many of the individual contacts and relationships essential to the running of the likes of the Harrietville Convention.

It would be fair to say, that Bluegrass in Australia today would sound very different without Rod and Judy Jones.

Nearly every Bluegrass or Old-Time event in Australia derives much flavour from their efforts.



Len Newland at Banjo Patterson Park early 2009

But whilst Rod and Judy had been travelling and visiting the USA, it was often Len and Dot Newland who assumed the duties at the BTCMSA, particularly with Annandale get togethers, the radio show and publication contributions.

At the time, Len underpinned the BTCMSA as much as he did Hot Foot.

Bud Bryson's Chicken Hot Rod Show on Sydney radio in 1991 made me aware of the Australian Bluegrass scene.

Hankering to learn banjo like Doc or Merle Watson, or perhaps even Earl Scruggs, I attended Howard Miller's Summerfest where Judy Jones was hosting a banjo workshop.

Judy had won the banjo contest at Galax Fiddler's just a few years before and I quickly realised that to enjoy the best banjo available and see Len on mandolin, that I should set aside my own banjo and join the band as a guitar player.

It was what was needed.

With some effort, I got into some sort of shape as a rhythm guitar player, Judy providing timing advice and encouragement and Len ideas of timing relating to rhythm (not the same thing) and other nuances and idiosyncrasies of Bluegrass and Old-Time music.

Rod Jones was not short on advice about history and where various tunes and other such things came from.

They spent many hours sharing senior experience and memories (including their US visits) with a junior player.

In 1999, I accompanied Rod and Judy for my first visit to West Virginia where late friend Joe Dobbs commenced to take me on visits over the next decade to see very senior players where the listening skills that Len had conferred upon me become even more useful.

The knowledge from Len



Billy Strings

was now compounding in West Virginia and Kentucky.

That knowledge and experience became very useful on radio and indeed in the writing of this Trad&Now column over the years.

Recent visiting US Bluegrass artists have commented that Australian Bluegrassers seem to have a better understanding and appreciation of Traditional Bluegrass than most other places in the world.

Much of that can be attributed to our senior players, Len being a prime example, of recognising the needs of the community and group before themselves, grafting some hard work before playing, maintaining open mics and stages, clubs, publications, radio broadcasts and above all, putting younger players in contact with and appreciation of the Bluegrass and Old-Time traditions.

Australian Bluegrass and Old-Time should be grateful to their contributions.

Thanks Len, rest in peace.

Australian Bluegrass and Old-Time would not sound the same without you.

Festival watch

The Yackandandah Folk Festival, Vic, Mar 21-23 includes in its lineup, the Brother Brothers (USA), Grassy Strings (India), Hardrive Bluegrass Band (Vic).

Mountaingrass Nov 14-16, 2025, Bright Vic invite Bluegrass and Old-Time musicians to make an expression of interest for stage performances before Mar 31.

The National Folk Festival, ACT Apr 18-21 artist lineup includes the High Street Drifters, Hunter & Suzy Owens, G'Old Time Stringband (session at the Grandstand Bar), John Flanagan, Craig Woodward and the West End Bluegrass Jam.

The Mulgowie Bluegrass & Old-Time jamming weekend Apr 17-21 (Easter) will be centred at the Mulgowie Hall, Lockyer Valley, Qld.

Other Bluegrass news

Kristy Cox's "Let It Burn" album has won a Golden Guitar for Bluegrass Recording of the Year at the recent Tamworth Country Music Festival.

The Country Music Association of Australia (CMAA) are conducting a census or survey of Country music artists and fans via surveymonkey. To take part, visit the CMAA website



The Brother Brothers

country.com.au and go the "News" section for 16 Jan 2025. We aren't sure what the CMAA will do with all this information, but encourage readers to speak up for Bluegrass.

Jam news

Sydney NSW jammers are reminded that second Sundays are on at the 2-5pm Ian Knight Old-Time Session, Hut 44 Addison Road Community Centre, Marrickville.

On third Sundays the Surry Hillbillies Bluegrass Jam is on at the Nocturne Bar, Surry Hills, NSW.

String Along Sessions with Josh Bennet is a new Tuesday 7pm fortnightly jam at the Clayton Wesley Uniting Church, Beulah Park, Melbourne Vic.

The next two sessions will be on Mar 25 and Apr 8.

The jam will be structured in two 45 minute sets with a refreshment break in between, and there will be a cover charge.

US artist dates

The Brother Brothers continue their Australian tour Mar 20 Smith's Alternative Canberra ACT; 26 George Lane, St Kilda Vic; 27 Trades Hall, Ballarat Central; 29 Archie's Creek Hotel Vic; 30 Northcote Social Club Vic.

Billy Strings, the flamboyant flatpick guitarist from Michigan who has ruffled a few feathers in the Bluegrass scene of America with his Millennial take on Bluegrass, will be touring Australia Jul 15 Margaret Court Arena, Melbourne Vic; 17 ICC Sydney Theatre, Darling Harbour NSW; 19 Riverstage, Brisbane QLD.

Australian artist dates

The Cartwheels celebrate 20 years together, Mar 15 at the Northern Arts Hotel, Castlemaine, Vic.

Rain of Animals are the special guest band of the Mountain Pickers Association Mar 25, Fern Tree Gully Bowling Club Vic.

The Water Runners play Mar 28 Gasoline Pony, Marrickville NSW.

Midnight Chicken play Apr 6 Smith's Alternative, Canberra ACT.

Runaway Dixie tour Apr 6 Willaston Football Club SA; then in Vic 9 Nhill Seniors Club; 10&11 Horsham RSL; 12 Ballarat Victoria Bowls Club; 15 Warrnambool City Bowls Club; May 10 Strathmerton Town Hall; 12 Casterton Golf Club; then on 14 Bordertown Tatiara Theatre SA.

Bluegrass Parkway perform in WA Apr 11-13 Playmakers Festival Fairbridge; May 15 Honky Tonk Blues Bar, Fremantle; 27 Lyric Underground Maylands.

Scroggin' entertain Apr 11 Smith's Alternative, Canberra ACT.

The GoTwos play May 24 The Loaded Dog Folk Club, Annandale NSW.

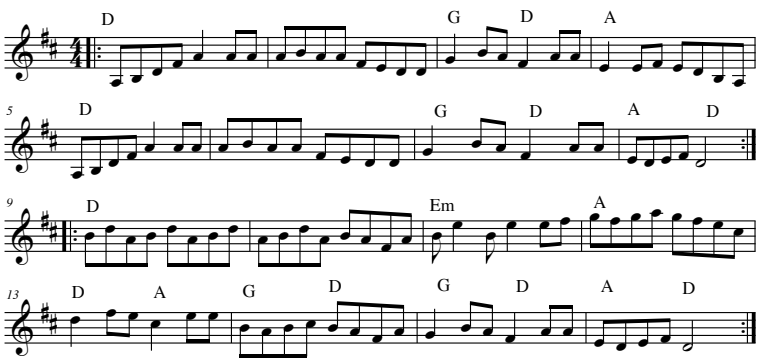
Transcription

Whiskey Before Breakfast is the first tune that Len Newland taught me.

It was at the Robertson Hotel in the NSW Southern Highlands back in 1993 and this is the way he played it.

Whiskey Before Breakfast

transcribed by Len Newland



Trad&Now Live! has a one hour Bluegrass and old-timey music hour at 8PM every evening. The music changes every day.

Music Industry and Organisations Directory

ACT – Monaro Folk Society (1779 -171)
Run a variety of folk music and dance workshops and other events in Canberra.
Tuesday night music group session
info@MonaroFolk.org.au
www.MonaroFolk.org.au

Australasian Bluegrass and Old Time Music Association (ABOTMA) (2282-169)
NFP organisation formed in2013 to support the teaching, performance and promotion of these genres of music in Australia and New Zealand.
Present the annual **Mountaingrass Music Gathering in Vic.**
Info@ABOTMA.org.au

AustralianBluegrass.com (478-169)
A website bringing Bluegrass & Old-time music news and event information from all over to Downunder.
Editor@AustralianBluegrass.com

Concertina Shop Australia (2300-172)
Buy, sell, consign, trade your concertina.
Ph: 0432 346 821
www.ConcertinaShop.com.au

Damien Gerard Studios (2292-169)
Recording studios est. for over 30 years recently moved to West Gosford, NSW – SSL Console, Neve 1073s, Pro Tools, 2" tape, mastering, large live rooms, huge amount of outboard, backline, classic instruments.
Ph: 0416 143 030
Marshall@DamienGerard.com.au

Foghorn Music Group (2292-169)
Record label, PR company, music publishing, music consulting, CD and vinyl manufacturer.
0416 143 030
Marshall@FoghonRecords.net

Folk Alliance Australia (587-173)
Umbrella organisation for folk music in Australia. Offer bespoke insurances for folk music, deals for websites, advocacy and information, small grants, youth development present the Australian Folk Music Awards.
Secretary@FolkAlliance.org.au

Folk Federation of NSW (32-199)
Champions the folk arts in all their diverse forms, supporting folk artists and bringing folk music and folk arts to the widest possible audiences.
FolkFederationofNSW@gmail.com
https://FolkFedNSW.org.au

Fusion Boutique (2294-169)
A multi-award winning booking, producer, promotion and event management business presenting premier live music in a wide range of Blue Mountains NSW venues.
info@FusionBoutique.com.au
www.FusionBoutique.com.au

Greyrose Photographics (497-171)
Festival event photographers and writers with 25 years national and international experience.
No event too small or too far away.
Greyrose3@Bigpond.com

Guitar Factory Gladesville (1275-200)
Guitar specialist store. Agents for most leading brands including Lowden, Collings, Dana Bourgeois, Ome Eastman, Gold Tone, GFI.
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www.GuitarFactory.net

Listening Through The Lens (2306-173)
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Team@ListeningThroughTheLens.com
www.ListeningThroughTheLens.com

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www.Undercovermusic.com.au

Trad&Now
National folk music and dance magazine published every 6 weeks.
Website has the world's largest selection of Australian recorded folk music for sale as well as books and DVDs.
Ph: 0410 522 070
Info@TradandNow.com
https://TradandNow.com

WA Folk Federation (1418-175)
Umbrella organisation est. 1970 promoting folk music, dance and spoken word in Western Australia.
WAFolk@Hotmail.com
www.WAFolk.org.au

Trad and now

Attention all Musicians, Music Venues, Dance Teachers, Folk and Blues Clubs, Radio Presenters, Poets, Festival Organisers, Music Shops and Music Industry People.

If you fit into any of the above, you need to read this.

Trad&Now is the longest running and only national magazine that regularly includes folk, blues, roots, bluegrass and world music and festival contact information to enable audiences to locate the music events that they may want anywhere in Australia.

It does this in its news and festival pages, in the Gig Guide, and in the past in a National Club, Dance and Radio Network Directory at the back of the magazine.

This has been replaced by a series of seven separate bespoke directories strategically placed in relevant parts of the magazine.

Each directory includes a great deal more information about each entry and the information will be kept up to date by ensuring that each contributor is also a subscriber.

The seven separate directories are categorised under: Music Industry and Organisations; Musicians and Performers; Venues and Clubs; Festivals; Dance; Radio; and, Bush Poets. If you fit into any of these categories and would like your additional information included in the new expanded directory, please complete the form on the next page and return it to us, and we will include the information in the next available edition.

Entries in the new expanded directory are completely free but we require someone connected to each entry to be a subscriber to the magazine to ensure that the information is kept up to date.

The entry will remain in the directory for as long as the subscription remains current and a subscription only costs $66 for 12 months (8 editions) and includes a free compilation CD.

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Dance: **Radio:** **Poetry:** **Performer:** **Festival:** **Clubs:** **Music Industry:**

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Description of activity (up to 25 words):

Regular event (if you have one) takes place:

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Primarily, it is available by subscription at www.tradandnow.com, however, it is also available from newsagents throughout Australia.

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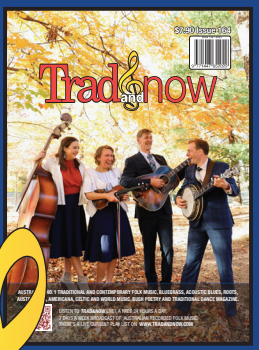



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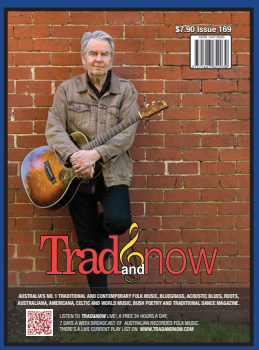

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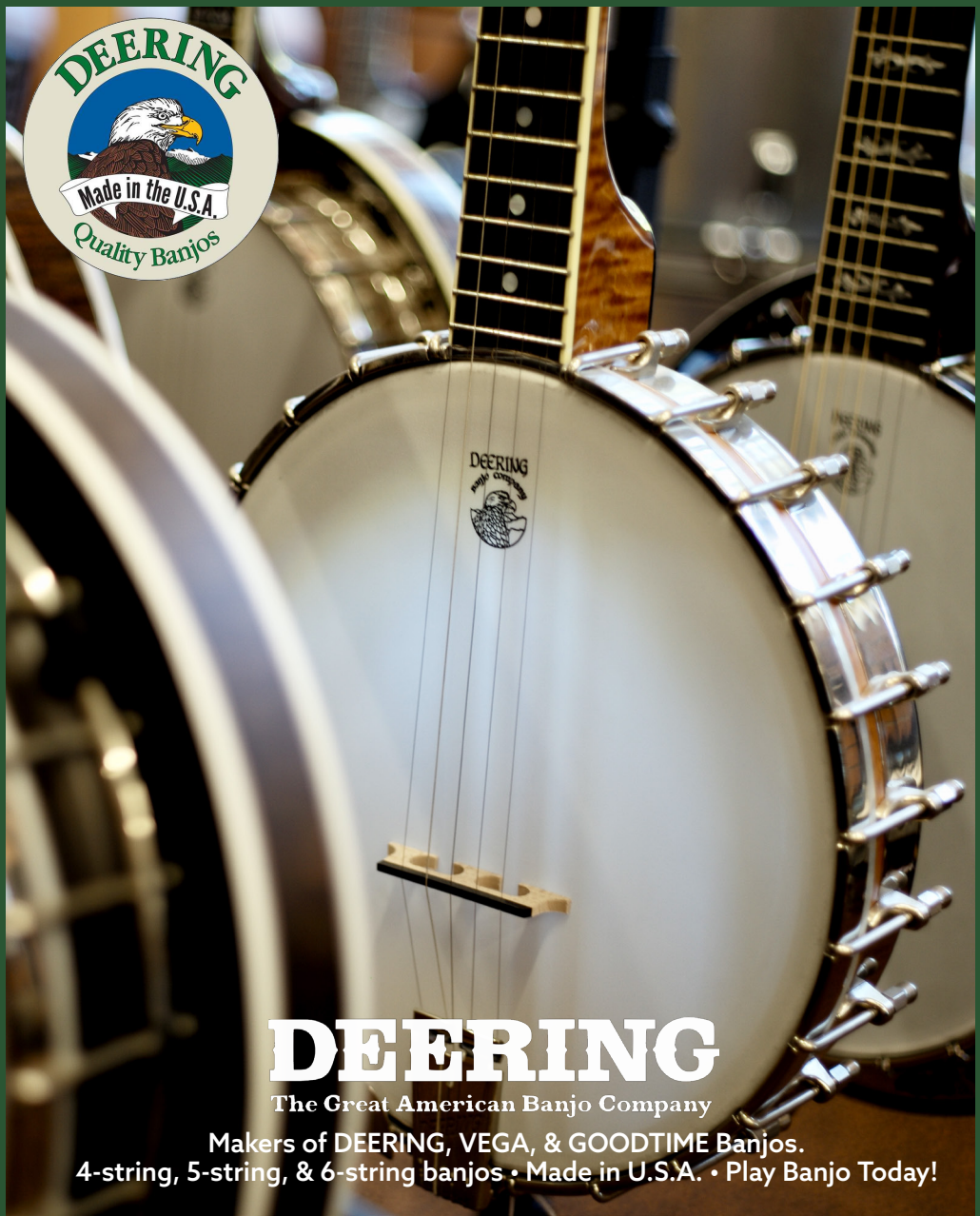

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