

Folk On The Road:

Jeremiah Johnson (Qld) talks about indie music in the time of pandemic

by Bill Quinn with Madison Collier



In late June 2020, Jeremiah Johnson and I tried to do what I term a 'guerrilla interview': an off-the-cuff chat, no interminable plans to talk at some point in the future which may get moved up to 36 times, just a wham bam thank you man for the good talk.

We got snookered twice.

The first time by a dodgy connection from Coconut Grove, NT (me) and somewhere near Mareeba, Qld (Jeremiah), and we gave up after two or three minutes.

The second time worked a charm a few days later, this time from Bellamack, NT (me) and

Cairns, Qld (Jeremiah).

Most of that went out as a live Facebook video which you can view now at www.facebook.com/OverheardProductions but you'll have to scroll down or use the search function.

The process of getting it onto the website - www.OverheardProductions.com took a little longer.

Let's just leave the 'guerrilla' title for Facebook and call this version: Jeremiah Johnson Talks About Indie Music In The Time Of Pandemic.

Bill Quinn: It is Wednesday the 20-somethingth of June (it doesn't really matter that much since it will be in the text), I'm speaking with Jeremiah Johnson in Cairns, G'day Jeremiah.

Jeremiah Johnson: G'day Bill, how you going?

BQ: Very good, now despite the pandemic you've been a fairly busy boy lately, tell us about that.

JJ: Well, I've just been consolidating probably about 40 songs in the music catalogue.

Trying to navigate the rest of the year as far as bookings, and I have just taken a booking for my first live show in Cairns on the 24th of July, so that's very exciting.

BQ: That is exciting, up here in Darwin we're a little bit spoilt because gigs have been back on for a little while, and we try not to chuck it in other people's faces, but what's it been like there in Cairns,

how have people been feeling about not having live gigs, both as performers and also the punters?

JJ: I can only speak from my point of view and that is that it's been a really weird feeling to not be able to pursue your work and to not play music in front of people.

I mean, that's what we like to do the most, so as far as the rest of the community is concerned, I'm not sure, but I know that people love live music, they love getting out with their friends, and I'm sure that would be difficult, yeah.

BQ: Yeah, and as I was suggesting to you when we tried doing this a few days ago, you're one who is fairly prolific and you travel a great deal to do it, don't you?

JJ: Yep, all states of the country, up until COVID yeah and I've played just about anywhere and everywhere, I've played in Darwin since I think maybe 2006, I first started playing up there in various places, in and out of there depending on how well things go on touring.

BQ: Have you been climbing the walls a bit while you haven't been out and about?

JJ: No, I've been incredibly busy.

Because of Covid we've come to a place near Mareeba, which is just outside of Cairns, and I've been working on a property in exchange for rent.

So in between song writing I've been out on the brush-cutter or out on the chainsaw, keeping myself busy that way and you know just keeping up with family and all the other things.

BQ: The one thing that I hear from a lot of musicians, and I've seen it fall into a few categories,



there are some unfortunately who go back to their bedrooms and say, "Well it's no good, I can't do my gigs, I can't do my music."

Meanwhile, other people have been grasping the opportunity to either go online or to write a lot of music.

Have you been doing either of those two, either writing more music or doing livestreams?

JJ: I've only done one livestream, and I had to go into town to do that because we were out of reception.

But it hasn't stopped, if anything, it's probably been a little bit of a relief, because the touring schedule that I have revolves around me coming up with new material quite quickly, and there's a fair bit of demand on myself I feel at the end of each year to have new material.

This has actually given me

a chance to slow down and to consolidate what I have and then to return gracefully back into that workload with new material and material for a couple years to come, I'd say.

BQ: And are your partner and child saying, "Oh, we remember you. That's what you look like!"?

JJ: Yeah, well I did grow this isolation beard, if you're referring to that, I actually came into contact with the neighbours on the neighbouring property and I walked out and started chatting with them for about 10 minutes, and then realised I've got a face full of hair and I did have to apologise for my hygiene appearance.

BQ: Now, going back to the livestream thing, you did something called The Kitchen Sessions. What was that all about?

JJ: That's correct. That was an incentive that was put together by Roz Pappalardo,* from women in docs, and Roz Pappalardo & Her Wayward Gentlemen.

She's a work horse that woman, incredible, incredible woman.

Roz put it together absolutely free.

She wanted to try and unite the artists with the community, and soon after that, it became a bit of a variety show, where they were able to livestream to other small businesses, say restaurants.

Fantastic thing for the community, and it was all by donation.

* **Fun fact:** A contractor working with me brought this interview in to text-based life and she had a fair old crack at the spelling of Roz's name, but when I went online to double-check for myself, the new laptop turned it into: Alardoroz Papp -

which would make a great stage or band name.

BQ: Right, now you're someone who gets very involved in the Cairns musical community, can you give us an idea of the barometer of how they're feeling about everything going on?

JJ: I think probably everyone is equally concerned and it's really hard to say, Bill, because as you know, some artists do fairly well and would have had some savings behind them, and other musicians or artists are living week to week.

Those week to week ones would have felt it very hard, I can assure you that.

BQ: Do you see there is a bit of a light at the end of the tunnel, or are you concerned with where the pandemic might continue to go and what do you see as the immediate future of music up there?

JJ: That's yeah, a long-winded question, we're a \$111 billion dollar industry and then

when you trickle it all the way down to the people playing in cafes or small venues, we're usually the ones first to go and we're the ones operating on smaller budgets.

It's going to be a while before we get back on our feet, and it may not be until this time next year, I think, for a lot of sole traders and small business people operating in the music industry.

BQ: Okay, talking a bit about Jeremiah Johnson for a minute, where are you up to with recorded music, have you got anything in the works, and what's the immediate future for Jeremiah?

JJ: I'm recording a lot in the place that we're staying and I don't have any aspirations of recording a full band album for at least another 12 months.

So my focus is purely me: one microphone on the voice and one microphone on the guitar.

And holding on the strength of song-writing which is a great challenge for me, and it's really honed in what I do and it's actually improved a lot of areas, because I don't have the other distractions.

BQ: It's interesting you say that because I've been noticing a lot with the livestreams and music people have been putting out prerecorded, it's really going back to stripped-back, raw presentation of music, isn't it?

JJ: Yep, and primarily I think that gets lost with great production tools that we have available to us in our home studios.

Or we go to a studio, and the producer's got some amazing new reverb that they want to try out, and it can dominate an album, and sometimes the actual song itself may not lend itself to that kind of thing.

Whereas I just kind of feel like - and everyone says it - if the song is great, it pretty much doesn't matter how it is recorded.

And that goes right back to the early recordings of blues artists in the 1920s where that music was so heavily influential on western music, and is still incredible to listen to today, when you go back and listen to those catalogues.

BQ: Last night here on ABC Darwin they did their usual weekly request segment, and

while there was some amazingly produced music coming out (and I put out a bid for Harry Manx and good on Rebecca McLaren, she played 'Bring That Thing'), but then someone bobbed up and said can you do this one by Woody Guthrie, and it was exactly what you're saying: it was a scratchy old recording, just Woody and his guitar, and that was about it and maybe a condenser mic if that.

JJ: Exactly, yeah and I guarantee it would have been fantastic lyrics, well thought-out structured music, and it would have been great.

BQ: Yeah, and I guess with having wonderful videos that people produce, it's more of a case of, "Hey, Reg! hold my phone will you? And point it in my direction".

JJ: Yeah, the candid videos are probably just as, or more important, for me.

If I've developed any kind of relationship with a film maker in the past, it's been about making a good film clip, so that comes back to sound, that comes back to audio, and that comes back to the song as well.

If you've got a strong idea, it's gonna come across really strong as a film clip.

If you've got a really good song and it's well-structured, it's gonna come across well as a recording.

BQ: Well Jeremiah, we wish you and all the musicians and artists up there in Far North Queensland all the best with whatever happens in the next little while, and mate, thanks so much for doing this interview with me.

JJ: Thank you so much, and a big hello to everyone up there in Darwin.

I really miss it up there, it's been a couple of years, I think it's been two years since I opened up, I played right at the start of the opening of the Fringe.

It was such a wonderful year up there, and I miss the people and I miss Darwin and the Northern Territory dearly.

BQ: I reckon one of the first people to react to this will be someone from the Fringe, the lovely Hannah who is one of the work horses.

I think Roz Pappalardo and Hannah Illingworth might be sisters from different misters, and the Fringe does kick off here next month, and mate any time you wanna come back I'm sure there'll be a spot for you.

JJ: Ok, thanks Bill.

BQ: Good onya, thanks Jeremiah.

For more of Jeremiah's music and life/live adventures, go to www.jeremiahjohnson.com.au and www.facebook.com/jeremiahjohnsonaus.



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Bluegrass News

by Lindsay Mar



Interview with Paul Brown
Old-Time musician, broadcaster and educator, Paul Brown, visited the Dorrigo Folk and Bluegrass Festival in 2018 and accepted our invitation for an interview.

In this issue of Trad&Now we present something of Paul himself, whilst our next instalment will present Paul's view of the Stanley Brothers and Ralph and if they should be thought of as Bluegrass.

T&N: First time to Australia,

Mr Paul Brown, we have been spinning your records for so many years, we are so glad for you to be here.

PB: No happier than I am, I've been trying to get to Australia more times than I can count, it is great to be here, and our first performance at Dorrigo has been a great experience.

T&N: When did you get off the plane?

PB: It is hard to remember, but about a week ago and then we spent time around Newcastle

to get used to the time change and then we came up to Dorrigo and we are here enjoying this festival.

T&N: What are some of the differences or similarities you see between your part of the country and this one?

PB: Well, it is interesting, one thing that I noticed in the way of similarities is some of the landscape, especially the Blue Mountains area, has reminded me of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

T&N: Whereabouts were you in the Blue Mountains?

PB: Well I was looking at them from the distance, in the horizon, and there is a lot of the feeling of this area reminds me of home.

T&N: Exactly where is home?

PB: Home for us is Winston-Salem North Carolina, on the eastern slopes of the Blue Ridge and we live just south of the Virginia state line, just south of south-west Virginia.

T&N: What is the nearest big highway there?

PB: The nearest big highway is Interstate 40 east west and north-south would be Interstate 77.

T&N: Is that where you grew up?

PB: I grew up in New York state, a fair distance from there, in a small town, my Mom was from Virginia, her family and my Dad's family were immigrants into the US at the beginning of the 20th century and late 19th century, my Mom's family

has been in the US since the 1600s.

T&N: And whereabouts in New York was home?

PB: Briarcliff Manor, right along the Hudson River, north of New York City and south of Poughkeepsie.

T&N: When did you move to North Carolina?

PB: I knew by the time I was an teenager that I was heading south to where my family had come from and I moved in my late 20s.

T&N: Was that for music or for family?

PB: A combination, I wanted to understand where my Mom had come from and I wanted to understand more about the music that we had been singing and playing ever since I was a child and was different to the families that surrounded me where I was raised.

T&N: So you found yourself an odd-ball in New York?

PB: In a way, musically, yeah, I knew different songs and different tunes, and was the only banjo player in my school, everyone else was playing guitar.

T&N: What music were the other kids playing?

PB: What was popular on the radio at the time, some folk music and a lot of rock, and right about that time the Beatles came in a big way and the Rolling Stones not long after were popular and then there was folk music, the Kingston Trio and various groups with the Seeger Family, the New Lost City Ramblers, the Weavers and such as that, I was not aware that the New Lost City Ramblers played for Old-Time until they had been out there for twenty years.

T&N: But they are from New York too.

PB: Yeah, but my friends would play whatever was popular on the radio, if we had a music show at school, I was the only one on stage with a banjo and a mountain song because that was what my Mom knew and I learned from her.

T&N: Were the Beatles any influence on you?

PB: Well yeah, I loved their music and interestingly the Rolling Stones resonated with me because as far as I was concerned, they were one of Great Britain's finest Blues bands of their era, my Mom was quite a white country Blues singer and I was interested in that music and I really enjoyed it, so that is what I was grown up with, that just told me that kind of music could continue.

T&N: So, when you got up on stage, I imagine from your Mom, she was a big influence.

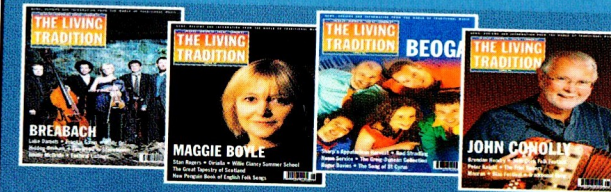
PB: Oh yeah, she sang songs from her childhood all the time in the house.

T&N: Give us some examples.

PB: Well, she sang some that people know like "The Lonesome Road Blues" (and sings) "I'm going down that long lonesome road, going down that long lonesome road, and I ain't goin' to be treated this a way", she called it "Going Down That Road Feeling Bad", she sang a wonderful old song called "Going Down to Tampa, Settle Down" which I recorded a number of years ago with Mike Seeger, it's an Old-Timey African American Blues, she had a wonderful lullaby that is an African American lullaby, if you listen to the words carefully, what it is speaking about is a black woman taking care of a white child and her child has no one to care for it at home,

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it is very short, would you like me to sing it?

T&N: Please do.

PB: We call it the Cow and the Sheep, (sings) "Cow and the sheep going through the pasture, cow says sheep can't you run a little faster, my poor lamb, saved from harm, go to sleep little baby, sheep says cow, I have a sore toe, cow says sorry, I did not know, my poor lamb, safe from harm, go to sleep little baby, little black lamb on the hillside, the buzzards and the flies just a peckin' out it's eyes, my poor lamb, safe from harm, go to sleep little baby".

T&N: Thank you very much, those words are like Old Jimmy Sutton, how do you suppose...

PB: Those words are all over the place and travel

from one song to another, and those verses were made up by people as they went along and they could plug them into any song they wanted to sing, you'll find verses like that in Jimmy Sutton and June Apple and all sorts of songs.

T&N: You said that song was originally about a black woman looking after a white baby and not her own.

PB: Yeah, she was singing the white child to sleep.

T&N: And the cow and the sheep, do they represent the two...?

PB: Yeah, it is possible the black lamb is absolutely her child who is not with her.

T&N: So it would be fair to say that those words originated with that song.

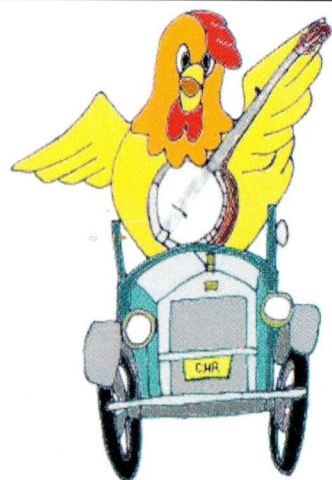
PB: Very possible.

T&N: And then migrated to

some other tunes and songs.

PB: Very possible, one of the things is about the oral tradition, especially in the southern mountains a lot of records were not kept, there is not a whole lot of history, we can surmise, and I am sure that the verse about the little black lamb on the hillside with the buzzards and the flies peckin' out it's eyes is, that is her singing to her own child from where she is, caring for someone else's child, and her child is alone in their cabin at home and where if anything were to happen, she couldn't be there and that is the meaning of that verse, so it speaks very directly about what was going on in the United States in it's early days.

To be continued.

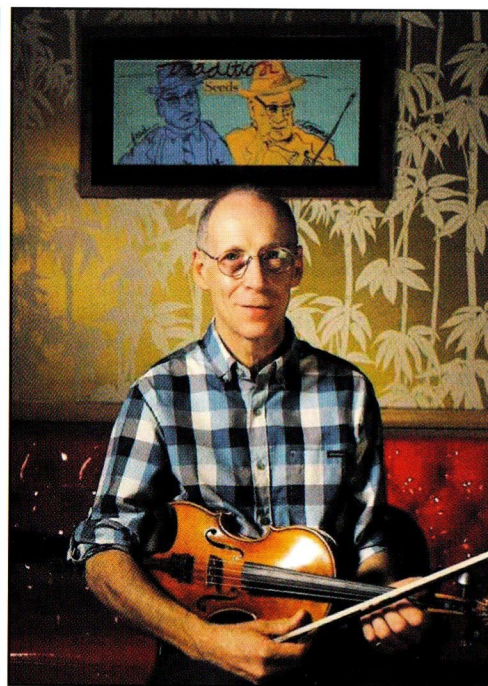


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Festival Watch

The Manjimup Bluegrass & Old-time Music Weekend presented by the Warren Arts Council, Manjimup WA plans a go-ahead for the weekend Sep 25-28 with Old-Time tutors Craig Woodward, Thomas Kendall and Jeremy Marcotte providing instruction on fiddle, banjo and guitar.

The Kangaroo Valley Folk Festival NSW will be reduced to a one day event catering for 500 people on Oct 17.

The Wirrina Bluegrass Festival SA continues it's planning including an invitation to interested performers for it's November event while keeping an eye on the Covid-19 virus with a final decision to go ahead or to cancel to be announced at the end of July.

The Aug Kelly Country Pick, Beechworth VIC, the Sep Guildford Banjo Jamboree VIC, the Sep Folk by the Sea, Kiama NSW and the Oct Dorriggo Folk and Bluegrass Festival of northern NSW have each been cancelled due to Covid-19 considerations.

Other Bluegrass News

Ken Burn's nine part documentary of Country Music remains on SBS Demand until the end of July.

Tony Lake, in June 1990 celebrated 30 years as host of radio show Bluegrass in the City, heard on Caboolture Community Radio QLD.

Pepita Emmerichs, fiddle and mandolin player, originally of Melbourne is recipient of the Australian Bluegrass Scholarship as instigated by the Davidson Brothers, and includes a \$1500 cash grant and a day of studio time with Isaac Barter.

Bluegrass Parkway broke the WA Covid-19 Bluegrass entertainment drought Jun 20 with a performance at the Fremantle Park Centre WA.

The Milk Carton Kids August Australian tour has been cancelled.

Bluegrass and Old-Time Jams

Tom's Bluegrass Slow Jam is a new event at The Hub 6163, 1 Starling Street, Hamilton Hill WA

on last Thursdays of the month.

The Lost Cores host a new weekly Sunday morning jam at The Local Cafe, 36 Paget St Hilton WA.

The Newport Fiddle and Folk Club now hosts a fortnightly Monday night Bluegrass and Old-Time jam at the Newport Community Hub, Newport VIC.

The NSW Narrabeen RSL's first Sunday Sunk Bar Bluegrass jam returns from Covid-19 on Jul 5.

The Hornsby Kuringai Folk Club at Beatrice Taylor Hall Hornsby NSW return from Covid-19 on Jul 17 with an all inclusive jam session that will be limited via social isolation rules to 30 persons who need to be registered with Bob via bobarmst@tpg.com.au prior to the event.

The Bluegrass and Traditional Music Society, Annandale NSW, and the Thirroul Bluegrass jam, Thirroul NSW, plus Jammalong in the Park and Jammalong at UpOpping Canberra ACT events are continuing their Covid-19 break.

Australian Artist Dates

Kristy Cox sings Jul 25 Groundwater Country Music Festival, Gold Coast QLD.

Five Dime Limit play Jul 28 Mountain Pickers Association, Ferntree Gully Bowling Club VIC.

The Davidson Brothers play Aug 7-9 Black Mountain Mixtape, Black Mountain National Park, Rossville QLD.

Burning Bridges play Aug 25 Mountain Pickers Association, Ferntree Gully Bowling Club VIC.

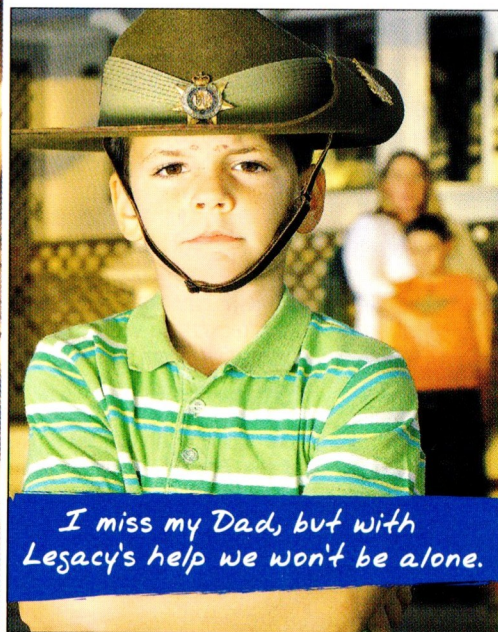
Transcription

This month we have the Big Sciota (locally pronounced See-o-tee), named after the Ohio River tributary.

Big Sciota

Traditional - inspired from the playing of Russ Barenburg and Bryan Sutton

Musical notation for 'Big Sciota' in G major, 4/4 time. The score consists of four staves of music with guitar chords indicated below the notes. The chords are: G, C, D, G, G, D, C, Em, D, G, G.



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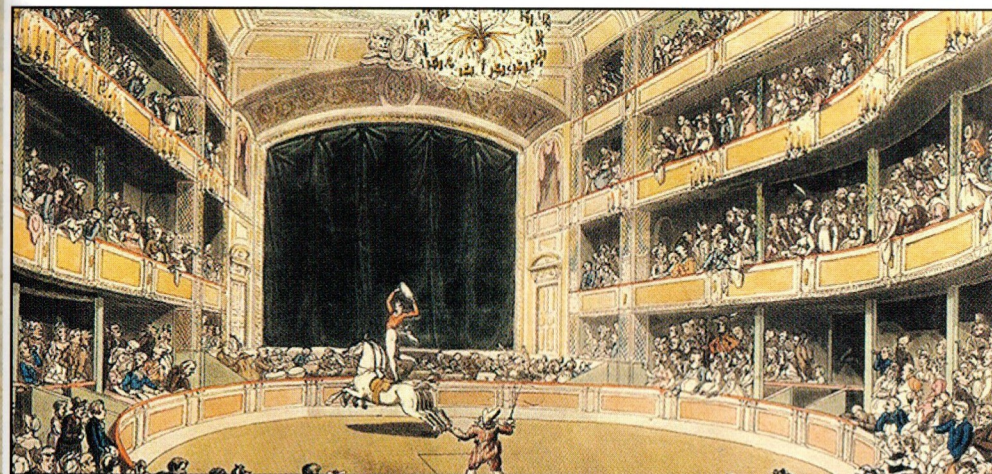
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The Death of Captain Cook: a grand equestrian dramatic spectacle

Courtesy Australian Colonial Dance website



Astley's Amphitheatre in 1807

The Death of Captain Cook was first presented as a 'grand serious ballet' in Paris in 1788, with an English adaptation in London's Covent Garden Theatre the following year.

Although it seems curious to tell Cook's story in ballet, the concept of it being converted into an equestrian drama in the circus, seems even more bizarre.

This is exactly what the flamboyant Phillip Astley offered to audiences in London, Dublin and Paris.

Astley is regarded as the founding father of the circus.

He is credited with developing a new form of entertainment by combining equestrian and acrobatic acts, clowns, tightrope walkers, jugglers, pantomime, dancing dogs and music to create spectacular performances.

At seventeen, Philip Astley enlisted as a light horseman in

His Majesty's Royal Regiment of Light Dragoons, and his natural ability as an equestrian was quickly recognised.

He was given the task of training new horses for the regiment, and learnt the latest methods to improve the effectiveness of cavalry horses.

He distinguished himself in battle with feats of bravery and horsemanship, and was raised to the rank of Sergeant Major.

Upon leaving the regiment, his commander, General Elliott, presented him with the magnificent white charger Gibraltar, as a token of his esteem.

In 1768, Astley established a riding school and began to give performances on his now famous horse.

This entertainment proved to be very successful and he began to consider ways to attract larger audiences.

In 1770, he opened a new

venue, a covered building where he could stage candle-lit performances in the evenings and through winter.

This novel idea was considered so outlandish, that he arranged for "the dome shaped roof to be painted with representations of branches and leaves of trees, and gave the new edifice the airy appellation of 'The Royal Grove' to convey an impression of the open air.

Astley's new approach brought immediate success and he looked for more ways to develop the show.

So, with the originality of genius, for who else would ever have thought of such a thing, he brought out a grand equestrian dramatic spectacle, entitled "The Death of Captain Cook".

The discoveries and death of Captain Cook had caused an extraordinary sensation in England, and theatre impresarios had created the pantomime Omai, and the grand



**THEATRE-ROYAL, PAVILLION. (ASTLEY'S)
NEWCASTLE-STREET, STRAND.**

THIS EVENING and no longer, will be presented, the historical spectacle of The DEATH OF CAPTAIN COOK; or, The British Columbes; portraying the Manners, Costumes, Dances, War Manoeuvres, &c. of the Indians of Owyhee. Capt. Cook, Mr. Jollet; Pareia, Mr. Taylor; Kouh, Mr. Astley, jun.; and Emal, Mrs. Astley. Also (the last time), a comic musical Piece, called KING HENRY the VIIIth, and the COBLER. In the course of the evening the following Songs: 'Knowing Jerry,' and 'Paddy Carey,' by Mr. R. Jones; 'The Sailor's Land Voyage to Edmonton,' by Mr. Isaacs; and 'Wise Conclusions,' by Mr. Johannot. The whole to conclude with (the last time at this Theatre), a comic pantomime, called The DISCOVERY; or, Harlequin's Salutation to John Bull, Paddy Bull, Sandy Bull, and Tarfy Bull. The Pan-

Advertisement for The Death of Captain Cook at Theatre Royal Pavilion, the Strand. The Times. Saturday, Oct. 31, 1812

serious ballet, The Death of Captain Cook, to commemorate the great explorer's life, and to give audiences a glimpse of his travels.

In January 1793, Astley took advantage of the fascination with Cook to produce his own version of The Death of Captain Cook as a grand equestrian dramatic spectacle.

This remarkable piece was so successful, it formed "a very important step in the ladder by which the quondam sergeant-major rose to fame and fortune."

Astley's formula for spectacular entertainment proved to be so popular that he toured widely throughout England and continental Europe, and soon others began to copy his shows.

He maintained permanent amphitheatres in London, Dublin, and Paris, and established eighteen other circuses in cities throughout Europe.

Performers trained by Astley ranged around the globe to America, Australia, and Canada, taking their circus skills with them.

Over the years, Astley's amphitheatre was destroyed by fire three times, and each time he managed to rebuild.

In 1806, he opened another

circus, the Olympic Pavilion in central London, on the corner of Newcastle and Wych Streets, in the Strand.

The Death of Captain Cook was staged there in 1808 and 1812.

It is difficult to trace exactly where the equestrian drama of The Death of Captain Cook was performed.

Circus productions tended to be ephemeral.

In some places the shows were advertised in newspapers, in others with broadsides, so consequently, many of the records have not survived.

One aspect which provides an insight into the performances is the music which was published to cater for the rapidly increasing demand for sheet music to be played in the home.

Music

The visual spectacle was always 'heard through' music, and popular music from the circus performances (as for the patent theatres of the day), was published for the domestic market, ensuring that some part of the experience could be relived at home.

A key factor in the enormous popularity of the circus was the music.

Audiences loved the combination of dance music, favourite songs, rousing choruses, orchestral overtures, and military marches which accompanied the fantastic displays.

Some of the music from the London performances of the Death of Captain Cook was used in the Edinburgh Equestrian Circus and published in a number of collections.

Music from Astley's amphitheatre in Dublin was also published, however none of this seems to relate to The Death of Captain Cook.

It is worth noting that some of the tunes from Astley's circus did become extremely popular and entered into the mainstream culture.

Astley's Ride, Astley's Hornpipe, and the signature tune for one of Astley's performers, Rickett's Hornpipe, are found in a large number of printed collections and manuscripts.

The Scottish convict in Tasmania, Alexander Laing, included Astley's Hornpipe in his music manuscript, as did the ship's musician, William Litten.

The National Library of Australia holds a copy of The Celebrated circus tunes perform'd at Edinburgh this season (1790) which includes two pieces from the pantomime The Death of Captain Cook – the Duke of York's March (2/4), and the Pursuit (6/8).

These tunes are attributed to Shroeter, not Rochefort the original composer of the ballet, leading to the conclusion that they were specifically composed for the circus.

This book of music is particularly interesting as one of the subscribers was Miss Eliza Campbell of Airds.

Miss Campbell married Lachlan Macquarie, and as the governor's wife, became a leading figure in early colonial society.

Bush dance held on-line

by Martin & Jan Falding

The annual Baerami Bush Dance and Campout in the Upper Hunter Valley would have been held on Saturday, May 2, and would have been the 29th dance held.

However, as with many such events, the social distancing requirements currently applying meant that organisers had to cancel this year's event.

However, in keeping with the spirit of making traditional music and social dancing accessible and fun, they had a Baerami



Dance at home on that evening.

It was a free on-line event and held as a Zoom meeting preparing participants for next

year's dance on Saturday, May 1, 2021.

With a small live band playing music, dances explained and walked through, an explanation of the instruments, snippets of commentary and description of the history of Baerami Dance, this was touted as an opportunity not to be missed.

While it was helpful for participants to have a dance partner, and a household that can participate, the dances were organised so one person or couple can dance.



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

0404667614

happyeyes3333@gmail.com

Colonial

Australian Traditional & Bush Dance Society

Have fun and stay fit with a group of singles and couples who enjoy bush and folk dancing and other social activities. Meet Late January to mid-December - 2nd, 4th & 5th Tuesdays, 7.30pm - 9.30pm, Coles Hall, 43A Stephen Tce (cnr Stephen Tce and Third Ave) St Peters S.A. enquiries@atbdsdancesa.com.au

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Attention Dance Co-ordinators and Teachers

Trad&Now is the longest running and only national magazine that regularly includes dance news and contact information to enable dancers to locate dance classes and dances anywhere in Australia.

It does this in dance news pages regularly set aside for that purpose and in the National Club, Dance and Radio Network Directory at the back of the magazine.

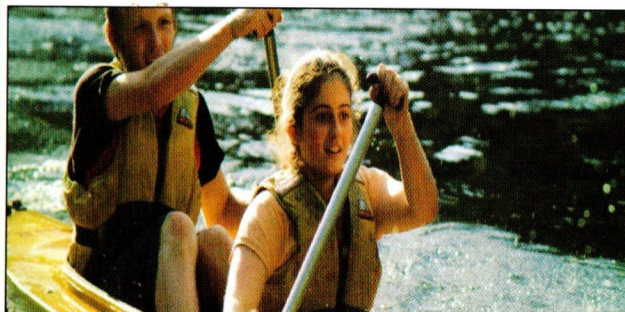
We are now looking to expand the Directory to make it a bespoke Dance Directory published on the dance pages to include a great deal more information and to ensure that the information is kept up to date by having it checked regularly by dance organisers.

By doing this, it is expected that more people will become aware of what dances and dance classes are available and become involved, generally growing the dance movement around Australia.

If you are a dance class or event co-ordinator and would like your information included in the new expanded directory, please complete the form on page 22-23 or on our website at www.duckscrossing.org/tan/Trad_directory.pdf and return it to us, ideally by email to info@tradandnow.com or to the address on page 3, and we will include the information in the next available edition.

Entries in the expanded directory are completely free but we require someone from each organisation listed 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 still only costs \$55 for 11 editions.



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CD and book Reviews



Jeff and DeeJ - Blues By Candlelight

CD Review by Tony Smith

DeeJay (Dorothy Jane Gosper) is amongst other things a 'go-getter'.

She makes good things happen and fronts several jazz, roots and blues bands, including the wittily named 'Hot Flush Blues Band'.

It is easy to imagine this band being a hit around the cabaret circuits, especially in Canberra.

Blues by Candlelight has thirteen very pleasant listening tracks.

Six are original, 4 by DeeJ and 2 by guitarist, Jeff Prime.

The remaining seven tracks include blues classics from various sub-genres.

R.M. Jones' 'Trouble in Mind' for example, might be described as Vaudeville blues.

The title track, 'Blues by Candlelight' by Karen Tyler, tends towards a rootsy feel and the final track, 'Skirt', is billed as 'power blues'.

My favourite is 'Can't Be Satisfied' by M. McKinley.

It was made famous by the renowned Muddy Waters and is one of those classics which

sounds as though it comes from earlier years, when the likes of Leadbelly and Robert Johnson performed revolutionary solos on the bottleneck slide guitar, probably with modified tunings.

Prime's riffs and walking bass embellish this tune very well and DeeJ's harp growls at its best.

The original tracks are a highlight, there is passion but also humour in 'Whoops-A-Daisy' which separates 'the cultured from the ignorant fool'.

There are brooding pieces such as 'Party on the other side'.

Prime's 'Moving On' has a freshness that makes it very Australian, the promise to move on 'when the rain comes' seems like a forlorn hope in the middle of severe drought.

There are mixed emotions in 'On My Own' with the sadness of breaking up, '19 years of you and me packed up in boxes' but also the hope of a new future.

Matt Nightingale on bass guitar and Gavin Kelly on drums, provide the kind of subtle, unobtrusive support any singer would appreciate.

The cymbals in 'Party On the Other Side' for example, create an ethereal atmosphere which helps demonstrate the great variety in the work of these fine musicians.

David Pendragon and Jack Buchanan have been masterful with their production and recording at The Studio in Canberra.

DeeJ bends the blues harp (aka gob iron or harmonica or mouth organ) as well as any player, Australian or American.

The way she warbles her voice would be the envy of any magpie.

Alongside, Jeff Prime bends the strings of guitars expertly, the bending effect in blues is the essence of emotional expression.

Prime's precise guitar playing and DeeJ's deep, clear voice,

make this CD a very listenable blues experience.

DeeJ thanks Jeff for his passion for the blues.

We all should be thankful that this duo works so effortlessly together.



Ecopella - Songs in the Key of Green

CD Review by Graham Blackley

Before diving into the melodic treats featured on this album, it is helpful to read the eloquent liner notes on the inside cover of the CD, as they provide thoughtful insights into the key themes explored on each of the songs.

As you can probably guess from the playful album title, and the glorious green cover, the focus here is very much on environmental issues and in fact, a quick check of Ecopella's website reveals that they describe their ensemble as "an environmental choir".

A glance at the rather large list of singers involved in this opus is quite mind-blowing as there are eleven sopranos, seven tenors, thirteen altos and eight basses.

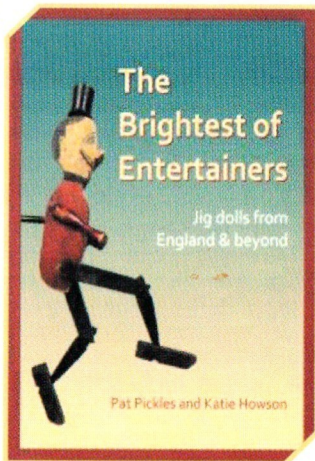
CD and book Reviews

The studio must have been a busy and bustling hotbed of harmonic creativity!

As you can imagine, this album is full of vocal harmonies and they are quite spectacular.

For instance, although packing a punch with its thought provoking political content, "Five Hundred Years" has the type of sunshine drenched sparkle and summery vocal harmonies that infused the work of the Mamas & Papas and Peter, Paul & Mary.

It's a treat to encounter an album that conveys potent political and philosophical messages while lifting the spirits with punchy melodies and joyous harmonies.



The Brightest of Entertainers: Jig Dolls from England and Beyond

by Pat Pickles and Katie Howson, published by East Anglian Traditional Music Trust 2018. Book Review by Tony Smith

In the same year that I gave a paper to the

Australian Folklore Network Conference with the title 'The Jig Doll in Australia: Untapped Potential', two English authors released a book about these puppets.

While jig dolls go under several names, and can be operated by various systems, they are usually jointed at shoulder hip and knee.

When moved up and down, they resemble tap dancers or step dancers.

The English book notes that jig dolls differ from puppets and marionettes in that the operator has no way of controlling the limbs.

Often, they are operated using a stick in the back and can act as percussion instruments, but they are, of interest in their own right, and particularly useful for buskers.

The song 'Whiskey on a Sunday' tells of Seth Davey who was prominent in Liverpool.

The Brightest of Entertainers has been thoroughly researched and is lavishly illustrated with over 100 colour plates and drawings and patterns.

The only reference to Australia is to an article by Dave Johnson and a photograph of him playing concertina while Mr and Mrs White of Blacktown dance on a plank.

I was able to tell of the Man with the Concertina, Steve Wilson, who busks for the Leukaemia Foundation, using dolls of his own design.

His dolls, which resemble politicians, are operated by a string between two posts passing through the dolls.

When I demonstrated a doll from Britain, which operates by a pedal to leave hands free for instruments, Townsville musician, Dave South, saw the potential and adeptly made one of his own named Goombuckly Gus.

The family is growing. Involvement in jig dolls is rewarding.

Children love them and many an infant has stopped in the street to dance with my dolls.

More than a few grandparents have remarked that it would be good to see unsophisticated toys make a comeback, in the words of one grandmother, 'anything without a screen'.

Katie Howson and the late Pat Pickles have outlined the history of jig dolls across Europe and limberjacks from North America very well.

They also have a comprehensive list of resources including books, websites and English makers.

The book is informative and written in plain language.

It is an important document and would be a useful addition to any folklore library.

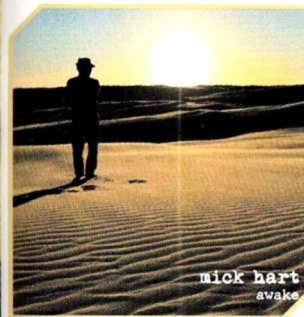
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CD and book Reviews



Mick Hart - Awake

CD Review by Chris Spencer

There is something for everyone in this CD, both a strength and a debility.

While on the one hand Hart is able to write in different genres, making for an interesting listen, but on the other, making the tracks so diverse that some tracks will not appeal.

From my reckoning this is Hart's 7th solo album, not counting a couple of singles and EPs.

Then there are several other recordings he has done within bands and duos, so there is certainly a wealth of experience.

He was nominated for an ARIA in the category Blues and Roots in 2002.

As I suggested in my opening paragraph, he is adept at mixing up the sounds and tempos of the material on this album.

His voice changes from a gritty, gravelly tone, to a reedy tenor, which combine to contribute to a varied album of styles, not much chance of losing interest on this album of 16 tracks.

His bio describes his music as a mix of soulful indie folk,

rock, as well as blues and roots.

He fits into the singer/songwriter category, rather than a folk singer.

Here are some of my observations of the songs on the album: "Peaceful Nest" and "Light My Way" are bluesy, "3am or Anytime" and "Escape" are pop; "Inside of Nowhere" is driven by electric guitar; "Fading Out" features Hart's harmonica playing (as does the sensitive ballad, "Star Bed"), "All then None" and "Time for the News" are both dirty blues but at different speeds!

The album winds down with the acoustic "Back to the Start", while the last track is an instrumental lullaby.

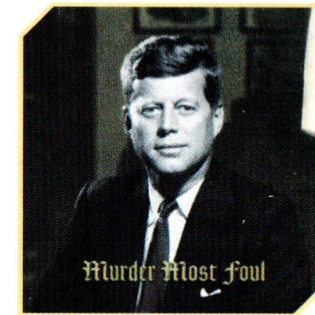
This is an album of integrity, illustrating Hart's experience and talent.

It's an album of confidence, recorded by a musician who is adept at songwriting.

There are several songs that would appear on his best of compilation, but I don't think that this album holds enough appeal for folk enthusiasts.

By all means give it a listen, and perhaps if you are on one of those music sites where you can download single songs rather than a whole album, choose the songs that you like.

I particularly enjoyed "3am or Anytime", "The Way it Is", which is rockier and riffy, and "Just Like it Was".



Bob Dylan - 'Murder Most Foul' (2020)

CD Review by Greg Barnett

Even if you're not a great fan of Dylan's songs, you'd be hard pressed to find fault with not only his wonderful facility with words, but also the sheer amount and quality of lyrics he's poured out over several decades.

In 'Murder Most Foul' he sets a sombre reflective mood in which we view Kennedy's assassination in November 1963 through Dylan's eyes.

An event that must have affected Dylan very deeply at the time, being a singer songwriter and politically super sensitive at the impressionable age of 22.

Did he write this in 2019, or has it been simmering since the 1960s?

How can you not be impressed by such clever or moving phrases as:

"Goodbye Charlie, goodbye Uncle Sam"; "Frankly, Miss Scarlett, I don't give a damn"; "It happened so quickly, so quick, by surprise, right there in front of everyone's eyes"; "Greatest magic trick ever under the sun, perfectly executed, skilfully done"; "What's new pussycat, what'd I say?" [he asks, using lines from Tom Jones and Ray Charles]; "I said the soul

of a nation been torn away and that it's beginning to go into slow decay, and that it's 36 hours past Judgment Day".

Wow!

However, any critique should identify the strengths AND weaknesses of all song elements.

The sentiment and mood are perfect but are they, and Dylan's trademark lyrics, good enough to sustain the song for seventeen minutes?

Frankly, no.

Sticking with the lyrics for now, there are also many disappointments along the way.

In true folk style, the song starts off as a story which clearly intends to take us on a journey:

"It was a dark day in Dallas, November '63, a day that will live on in infamy".

We'll be told about what happened, and be given commentary and metaphor about the 'why' and also the outcome, but the story-telling becomes diluted and confused with arbitrary changes of perspective, and inclusion of information that is either tangential to the story or just stream-of-consciousness artistic licence.

He said:

"Wait a minute, boys, you know who I am?, of course we do, we know who you are, then they blew off his head" [who is he, we, they?]; "You got unpaid debts, we've come to collect" [what debts, who is collecting, is this fact or one of the many conspiracy theories?].

Let's also skim through the many other things which chip the gloss off the whole:

Hackneyed lines: "... slaughter like a sacrificial lamb"; "Beatles are comin', they're gonna hold your hand"; and, "Living in a nightmare on Elm Street".

Rubbish lines: "Rub-a-dub-dub"; "We're gonna kill you with hatred, without any respect" [vs. WITH respect? ... also, with no respect would scan better]; "Hush, little children, you'll understand".

The self-indulgent morass of disconnected references to the 1960s that extends from Verse 3 to the end (making up TWO THIRDS of the song's running time!).

It is an imitation of Billy Joel's 'list' in "We Didn't Start the Fire" and poorer for the lack of tightness and tempo.

Finally, the lyrics are disappointing because of a turgid and slavish adherence to rhyming couplets.

With no rhythmic or musical changes for variety, the lyrics become an unending dirge in which our main focus becomes one of second-guessing the oncoming rhyme.

A faster tempo would have helped enormously.

If there was ever evidence that the three-chord song might be dead, "Murder Most Foul" serves to be the coffin, the nails, the flames and the grave.

Dylan's guitar playing in the past has usually been of great service in delivering the songs, the plate on which his lyrical banquet was arranged, but I doubt that anyone will say he was or is a good guitarist.

If there is a guitar here, the sound is completely drowned by the uninspired and unchanging

CD and book Reviews

piano noodlings.

With the lyrics feeling aged and moth-eaten, one is made more aware that the arrangement too is threadbare and lacking in musicality.

There are no melodic/rhythmic riffs, serving as drink stations, to nourish you through the 17-minute marathon.

Even a 3-minute song benefits from ebbs and flows.

Rhythm, one of the key pillars of music, seems to be hinted at with an occasional faint sound of drums, but nothing else ever latches on and works with it.

I've been quite unable to tap out the beat to determine BPM.

There are no structural changes in the music as Dylan fitfully drifts between C, F and G while his vocal melody and vocal delivery remain unchanged through every couplet (of which there are just too MANY!).

Despite the raft of reviews by press and bloggers, I feel the reverence with which Bob Dylan is regarded has prevented anyone from panning it.

Kudos to the man for continuing his craft and giving more to his many devoted fans.

At age 78, the effort is both uncanny and laudable.

However, would a non-Dylan fan regard "Murder Most Foul" as anything other than of passing historical interest?

CD and book Reviews



Various Artists - *Many a Good Horseman*

CD review by Graham Blackley

This generously proportioned double-CD compilation is jam-packed with traditional folk music from Mid-Suffolk in England, recorded during the period 1958-1993.

The CD booklet proves to be a detailed treasure trove of information for those keen to learn about the performers, the tunes, the songs and about the context in which such songs and tunes were performed.

It provides a glimpse into a world in which everyday people entertained each other in venues, such as local pubs, by singing and by playing instruments such as mouthorgans and piano accordions.

Sounds a bit more interesting doesn't it than being trapped in a soulless pokies infested modern pub staring at some drivel on a flat screen TV?

As the CD booklet helpfully points out, this compilation is comprised of "field recordings", so you can occasionally detect some unexpected background

sounds such as ticking clocks.

A couple of the key benefits of delving into this collection is that it is likely to be an educational experience for the listener and may just help to keep many of these traditional songs and tunes alive.



Lisa O'Neill - *Heard a Long Gone Song*

CD review by Tony Smith

The River Lea label produces albums of pure Celtic sound.

This helps maintain traditional musical forms by encouraging young performers to find or create new audiences.

Lisa O'Neill opens her album with a Sean Nos style rendition of the 'Galway Shawl', a song popularised by Margaret Barry.

Barry and Pecker Dunne were prominent carriers of the Irish Traveller repertoire a generation ago.

O'Neill has a strong, adaptable voice.

Her album title comes from 'Lullaby of London' by Pogue, Shane McGowan, but she is as comfortable with the old songs as the new.

She is also a songwriter and arranger of exceptional talent.

O'Neill has performed with many great singer songwriters and acknowledges the influence of a variety, including Billy Bragg and Andy Irvine.

What she values in their work is their conviction that what they are doing is worthwhile.

She admires dedicated musicians.

'Along the North Strand' and 'The Lass of Aughtrim' are traditional songs.

So too is 'The Factory Girl', which is given a distinctive arrangement by O'Neill with Radie Peat, who also contributes vocals.

O'Neill discovered a recording of Traveller, Kitty Cassidy, singing the murder ballad 'North Strand' in the Irish Traditional Music Archive, and gives it new life.

'The Lass' is beautiful and poignant and has its origins in Joyce's 'The Dead'.

O'Neill has written 'Blackbird', 'Rock the Machine' and 'Violet Gibson'.

'Blackbird' is pensive and reminiscent of Judith Wright's bird poems.

Many Dublin dockworkers lost their jobs as tasks were mechanised and automated 50 years ago.

I sympathise with their hatred of the machines, as an ancestor of mine was transported from Berkshire for his part in rural protests in 1830.

'Machine has eaten up my job' is one of many simple and direct lines in these songs.

O'Neill uses her banjo to good effect here to create a machine like pulse.

Violet Gibson was born into a wealthy Dublin family but spent her final years in an asylum in England.

In 1926 in Rome, she took a shot at Mussolini, but the assassination attempt failed.

The bullet skimmed his nose. Despite the serious subject matter, O'Neill injects humour into this ballad.

O'Neill also wrote the words for 'A Year Shy of Three', set to a traditional tune arranged by



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O'Neill with Cormac Begley.

This was originally a poem that O'Neill wrote in response to a painting 'The Aran Fisherman's Drowned Child'.

Begley introduced her to the air, 'The May Morning Dew', which fits the poem beautifully.

Begley's squeezebox also gives a distinctive air to the much covered 'Lullaby'.

Production is by the versatile O'Neill and David Odlum.

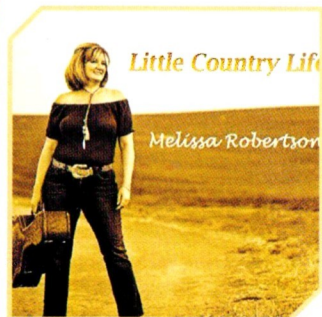
O'Neill plays banjo and guitars.

Other musicians featured include Libby McCrohan (bouzouki), Christopher Capewell (fiddle and harmonium), Radie Peat (vocals) and Cormac Begley (concertinas).

A booklet gives the lyrics and provenance of the songs.

This is the Cavan singer's fourth album and her creativity shows no sign of being exhausted.

Lisa O'Neill is a very special talent.



Melissa Robertson – Little Country Life

CD Review by Ian Dearden

Originally city born and bred, Melissa Robertson now hails from the central west of New South Wales.

'Little Country Life', her third full length release (her debut

release was an EP titled 'Ride Of Your Life' in 2009) places her squarely, both geographically and musically, in the country folk tradition, albeit with a solid rhythm section grounded by producer/engineer Simon Johnson on bass and Trent Simonson on drums.

The title track album opener, 'Little Country Life', places us in the middle of Melissa's world.

She clearly loves where she lives and the person she shares her life with, credited in the liner notes as her husband Andrew.

It's not too much of a stretch then to assume that Andrew is the key protagonist in the album's next song, 'Make Love To Me', although to be fair, the song is not a missive to the marital complaints department, but rather a meditation on the inevitable ups and downs of a long term relationship that has weathered all that life can throw at it.

'Red Head at Heart' is a tribute to all those passionate female rangas out there, featuring some tasty electric guitar picking from the sadly departed Glen Hannah, as well as contributions from multi-instrumentalist Tim Crouch (guitar, mandolin & fiddle).

'Love Like A River' is a gorgeous country love ballad, featuring duet vocalist, Ian Burns, and some sweet, sweet dobro from James Crouch.

'Wouldn't Be Without You' and 'Angel' are both deeply rooted in the country love song tradition, celebrating and acknowledging the joys and support of a loving and long time lover.

'He's A Writer Of Songs' steps a little sideways to musically acknowledge Melissa's musical idol and inspiration, country

CD and book Reviews

singer/songwriter Luke O'Shea, whom she credits with providing the turning point in her musical journey.

'Way Back Home' is a tender insight into the joys, sorrows, hopes and fears of the journey of parenthood.

'Wild Wild Flower' is a delicious paean to love and desire, with James Church's dobro again hitting all the right notes, sitting sweetly with tasty organ and piano from Vaughan Jones.

Melissa's bio on her website acknowledges that she is a survivor of a distressing, abusive childhood, so in 'I Wasn't Meant To', she traces her journey from a childhood of misery to the adult reality of a rich and rewarding life centred on love, music, hope and faith.

'Heart Of Gold' explicitly acknowledges 'the kindest man I've ever known' and his role in her journey to self-discovery and happiness.

Fittingly, the album wraps up with 'In Your Loving Arms', which really says it all – this is the happy place where her journey ends!!

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