

But as we age, parallel processing becomes more critical.

Now it's no longer a matter of style, it's a matter of survival — getting across the creek at all.

Randomly dying brain cells are like stepping stones being removed one by one.

Those who had only one well-worn path of stones are completely blocked when some are removed.

But those who spent their lives trying different mental routes each time, creating a myriad of possible paths, still have several paths left.

As the study shows, we need to keep as many of those paths active as we can, while also generating new paths, to maintain the complexity of our neuronal connections.

In other words - Intelligence — use it or lose it.

Intelligence

What exactly do we mean by "intelligence"?

You'll probably agree that intelligence isn't just a numerical measurement, with a number of 100 plus or minus assigned to it.

But what is it?

To answer this question, we go back to the most elemental questions possible.

Why do animals have a brain?

To survive?

No, plants don't have a brain and they survive.

To live longer?

No, many trees outlive us.

As neuroscience educator, Robert Sylwester, notes, mobility is central to everything that is cognitive, whether it is physical motion or the mental movement of information.

Plants have to endure whatever comes along, including predators eating them.

Animals, on the other hand, can travel to seek food, shelter, mates, and to move away from unfavourable conditions.

Since we can move, we need a cognitive system that can comprehend sensory input and intelligently make choices.

Semantics will differ for each of us, but according to many, if the stimulus-response relationship of a situation is automatic, we don't think of the response as requiring our intelligence.

We don't use the word "intelligent" to describe a banana slug, even though it has a rudimentary brain.

But when the brain evaluates several viable responses and chooses one (a real choice, not just following habits), the cognitive process is considered to be intelligent.

As Jean Piaget put it, intelligence is what we use when we don't already know what to do.

Why Dancing?

We immediately ask two questions:

Why is dancing better than other activities for improving mental capabilities?

Does this mean all kinds of dancing, or is one kind of dancing better than another?

That's where this particular study falls short.

It doesn't answer these questions as a stand-alone study.

Fortunately, it isn't a stand-alone study.

It's one of many studies, over decades, which have shown that we increase our mental capacity by exercising our cognitive processes.

Intelligence - use it or lose it.

And it's the other studies which fill in the gaps in this one.

Looking at all of these studies together lets us understand the bigger picture.

The essence of intelligence is making decisions.

The best advice, when it comes to improving your mental acuity, is to involve yourself in

activities which require split-second rapid-fire decision making, as opposed to rote memory (retracing the same well-worn paths), or just working on your physical style.

One way to do that is to learn something new.

Not just dancing, but anything new.

Don't worry about the probability that you'll never use it in the future.

Take a class to challenge your mind.

It will stimulate the connectivity of your brain by generating the need for new pathways.

Difficult classes are better for you, as they will create a greater need for new neural pathways.

Then take a dance class which can be even more effective.

Dancing integrates several brain functions at once — kinesthetic, rational, musical, and emotional — further increasing your neural connectivity.

What Kind of Dancing?

Do all kinds of dancing lead to increased mental acuity?

No, not all forms of dancing will produce the same benefit, especially if they only work on style, or merely retrace the same memorized paths.

Making as many split-second decisions as possible, is the key to maintaining our cognitive abilities.

Remember, intelligence is what we use when we don't already know what to do.

We wish that thirty years ago the Albert Einstein College of Medicine thought of doing side-by-side comparisons of different kinds of dancing, to find out which was better.

But we can figure it out by looking at who they studied, senior citizens 75 and older, beginning in 1980.

Those who danced in that particular population were former Roaring Twenties dancers (back in 1980) and then former Swing Era dancers (seniors participating in the 1990s), so the kind of dancing most of them continued to do in retirement was what they began when they were young: freestyle social dancing - basic foxtrot, waltz, swing, and maybe some rumba and cha cha.

I've been watching senior citizens dance all of my life, from my parents (who met at a Tommy Dorsey dance), to retirement communities, to the Roseland Ballroom in New York.

I almost never see memorized sequences or patterns on the dance floor.

I mostly see easy going, fairly simple social dancing — freestyle lead and follow.

But freestyle social dancing isn't that simple!

It requires a lot of split-second decision-making, in both the Lead and Follow roles.

At this point, I want to clarify that I'm not demonizing memorized sequence dancing, or style-focused pattern-based ballroom dancing.

Although they don't have much influence on cognitive reserve, there are stress-reduction benefits of any kind of dancing, cardiovascular benefits of physical exercise, and even further benefits of feeling connected to a community of dancers. So all dancing is good.

But when it comes to preserving (and improving) our mental acuity, then some forms are significantly better than others.

While all dancing requires some intelligence, this study encourages you to use your full intelligence when dancing, in both the Lead and Follow roles.

The more decision-making we can bring into our dancing, the better.

Who Benefits More, Follows or Leads?

In social dancing, the Follow role automatically gains a benefit, by making hundreds of split-second decisions as to what to do next, sometimes unconsciously so.

As I mentioned, this role doesn't "follow"; they interpret the signals their partners are giving them, and this requires intelligence and decision-making, which is active, not passive.

This benefit is greatly enhanced by dancing with different partners, not always with the same person.

With different dance partners, you have to adjust much more and be aware of more variables.

This is great for staying smarter longer.

But Leads, you can also match this degree of decision-making, if you choose to do so.

Here's how:

Really pay attention to your partners and what works best for them.

Notice what is comfortable for them, where they are already going, which signals are successful and which aren't, and constantly adapt your dancing to these observations.

That's rapid-fire split-second decision making.

Don't lead the same old patterns the same way each time.

Challenge yourself to try new things each time you dance.

Make more decisions more often.

Intelligence: use it or lose it.

The huge side-benefit is that your partners will have much more fun dancing with you when you are attentive to their dancing and constantly adjusting for their comfort and continuity of motion.

And as a result, you'll have more fun too.

Full Engagement

Those who fully utilize their

intelligence in dancing, at all levels, love the way it feels.

Spontaneous leading and following both involve entering a flow state.

Both leading and following benefit from a highly active attention to possibilities.

That's the most succinct definition I know for intelligent dancing - a highly active attention to possibilities.

And I think it's wonderful that both the Lead and Follow role share this same ideal.

The best Leads appreciate the many options that the Follow must consider every second, and respect and appreciate the Follow's input into the collaboration of partner dancing.

The Follow is finely attuned to the here-and-now in relaxed responsiveness, and so is the Lead.

Once this highly active attention to possibilities, flexibility, and alert tranquillity are perfected in the art of dance partnering, dancers find it even more beneficial in their other relationships, and in everyday life.

Dance Often

The study made another important suggestion, do it often.

Seniors who did crossword puzzles four days a week had a measurably lower risk of dementia than those who did the puzzles once a week.

If you can't take classes or go out dancing four times a week, then dance as much as you can.

More is better.

And do it now, the sooner the better.

It's essential to start building your cognitive reserve now.

Someday you'll need as many of those stepping stones across the creek as possible.

Don't wait — start building them now.



Dance Directory

Wongawilli Dance Club

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

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

Lazarka International Folk Dance

Traditional dances from around the world. Meet each Tues at 5pm - 7pm & each Thurs 9am - 11am at the Community of Christ hall, Taree 6552 5142

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.

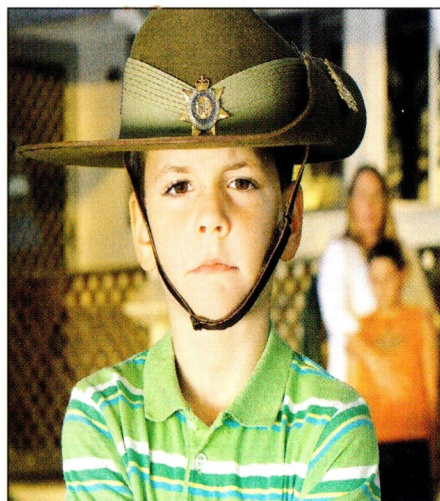
We are now looking to expand the Directory to make it a bespoke Dance Directory published on the dance pages to include a great deal more information and to ensure that the information is kept up to date by having it checked regularly by dance organisers.

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/Tra_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.



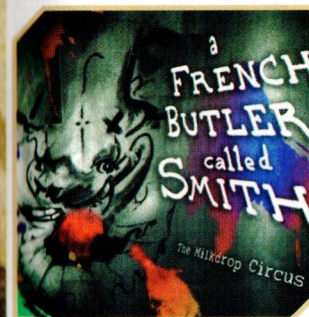
I miss my Dad, but with Legacy's help we won't be alone.

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CD and book Reviews



A French Butler Called Smith - *The Milkdrop Circus* CD Review by Graham Blackley

With a crystal clear production that reveals the depth and breadth of this combo's diverse musical palette, *The Milkdrop Circus* grabs and maintains the listener's attention from opening instrumental, "Send in the Clowns", to epic closing track "Los Ochos".

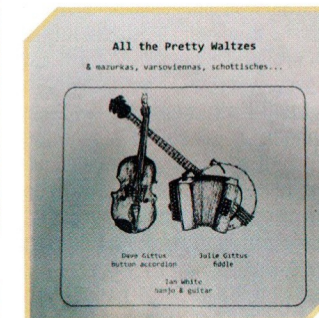
Like *The Cat Empire* (who I suspect may share some of their musical predilections), *A French Butler Called Smith*, is adept at lifting flagging spirits and instigating toe-tapping cheerfulness, with a rootsy sound that embraces a variety of influences and genres.

It's actually challenging to maintain a dour demeanour, or a sluggish disposition, with jaunty tunes such as the funky "Spam Jam" grooving from the speakers and splashing colour upon the day with parping horns, slinky melodies, jazzy excursions and energetic percussion.

The band must go down a

treat in sweaty clubs and jam-packed festivals, as the music they create is festive in spirit and execution.

Thanks must go to *A French Butler Called Smith* for providing such a delightful and heady surge of sonic adrenaline.



All the Pretty Waltzes

CD Review by Tony Smith

No less an authority than Russell Crow reckoned on television recently, that the pandemic lockdown was good for decluttering his head and letting him relax.

Listening to *All the Pretty Waltzes*, you can achieve the relaxation without the inconvenience of the lockdown.

Dave Gittus (button accordion), Julie Gittus (fiddle) and Ian White (banjo and guitar), are a trio who celebrate Australian settler dances.

As well as waltzes, they bring to life mazurkas, varsoviennas and schottisches.

A fourth person, who is consistently present in these pieces, is Dave De Hugar.

Dave has collected an enormous range of songs and tunes and presented them in playable arrangements.

A large percentage of tunes labelled 'Australian traditional' could also be subtitled 'collected and arranged by Dave De Hugar'.

This is an unpretentious CD with little sleeve information, apart from the names of the players and their instruments and the names of the tunes - what you might have enjoyed in a country community hall in the horse and buggy days.

The music also evokes images of a family sitting around the wireless, children after their baths sitting on the floor by the fire colouring in, while the parents enjoy a Sunday night wind down.

Although the tunes have been selected because each holds a special place in the hearts of the players, they have grand general appeal.

They are far from a narrow selection.

Whether listening to the music as background to other activities or swinging your partner around the kitchen, you will enjoy the variety here.

There is influence from New Mexico (Waltz de Cadena), Sweden (A Swedish Waltz and Boda Waltz) and contemporary America (I Always Knew That You Were the One) as well as predictably, Ireland (St John's Mazurka, Kitty's Fancy and St Ann's Mazurka).

Otherwise, the tracks are of traditional Australian tunes.

Some are popular like Rita Baker's Schottisches; and Bill Large's Second Waltz, while many players will be rushing to add *The Tassie Tunes* and *The Three Varsoviennas* to their repertoires.

The balance of the instruments is pretty well perfect.

I particularly enjoy the banjo and the way it produces a ground which in other ensembles might be provided by a bass (bush or otherwise).

The accordion and fiddle carry the melodies in ways faithful to the nature of these pieces.

CD book Reviews

The minor sound of Boda Waltz brings the accordion into its own and the fiddle is always sympathetic to the fact that these are dance tunes.

Anyone who has attended Dancefest at Bundanoon knows that tunes come to life when they set dancers in motion.

It is always easy to imagine Julie Gittus watching the dancers and subtly interacting with their movements.

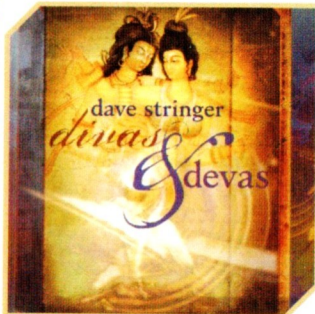
I could sometimes wish one of the performers might grab the microphone and sing words to a song Home Sweet Home for example, for the sake of variety.

This did happen in such dance venues, but it is not necessary.

In a nice touch, the players list the Australian makers of their beloved instruments.

Whether you call these bush tunes or settler tunes or the tunes of colonial Australia, this CD is an important historical resource.

No-one will be made wealthier by these 'pretty waltzes' but lives will be enriched.



Dave Stringer - Divas & Devas

CD Review by Graham Blackley

If you are approaching

the frayed edges of a stressful and ragged week, and you wish to engage in deep and restorative relaxation, you will relish this spellbindingly beautiful album.

It is well equipped to quieten the buzzing mind and to bring a restorative stillness to the busiest of lives.

Multi-instrumentalist, Dave Stringer, is joined by a talented bunch of vocalists and musicians, who collectively generate a deep and meditative atmosphere that is likely to both relax and enliven the listener.

If you are tired of bands who stick to guitar, bass and drums, this album provides an intriguing and refreshing alternative as it features a wide and diverse range of instruments (such as mandolin, tablas, flugelhorn, dulcimer and djembe) being used to harmonious effect.



Mirrabooka - Sweeter

CD Review by Tony Smith

Mirrabooka is a lovely spot on the Central Coast of NSW, on Lake Macquarie rather than the storm ravaged coast.

The Mirrabooka quartet thank the local ukulele club for support, and one uke does feature on this album of what might be termed, happy blues.

Liz Kitney has written eight songs, Glenn Ewing three and Rosie Ewing one.

These three, and Rob Kitney, cover all the vocals in one balance or another.

Rob concentrates on drums and percussion, Liz packs a uke, mandolin, guitar and mandolele, Glenn plays guitar, bass, mandolin and some fine harmonica and Rosie adds flute and melodica.

They are joined by Leon Gaer on bass, and thank especially Ross Ward, for his work on slide guitar, which they say is the 'icing on the cake'.

No wonder they called the album Sweeter.

The opening and closing tracks, 'Hold On to What You Got' and 'Tumble and Burn', are reminiscent of Motown.

The harmonies are very good, and the female voices are just right for this genre.

The lyrics are simple, but these tracks would all make excellent dance music for an occasion such as a high school social or a wedding, where people are happy, excited and relaxed.

'Dream Lover' has a laid back 1960s feel and the title track, 'Sweeter', sounds tropical with bongo and electric guitar.

'A Man's Gotta Do' echoes the title off an Australian movie starring John Howard, set in Kiama.

'Walk Away' is a heartbroken 1930s style blues that features walking bass runs.

It is not a suggestion that you walk away from a relationship so much as a lament that your partner walked away from you.

'Black Dog' features guitar arpeggios and 'Whispered Words' is an upbeat track in Paul Kelly style.

'Better Than I Do' has a distinctly country feel while 'Feeling Blue' is classic boogie-

CD and book Reviews

woogie rock and roll.

'I Got My Man' takes us back to country style and 'Under the Blue Gum' is perhaps the funkier song on the CD.

While it might seem that the mixture of styles on Sweeter could make the CD seem derivative, Mirrabooka presents every one of these songs very professionally.

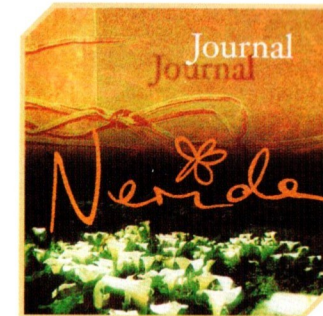
Although the CD cover credits the songwriters only, a feature of the album is the perfect arrangements, which mean that the songs achieve maximum impact.

I suppose that the same collegial approach was taken to the arrangements, but there is no confusion here, just very good teamwork and collaboration.

Ukulele does not feature that strongly as an instrument, but the album is infected with the joyous way in which uke groups approach their music.

When there is such obvious enjoyment in the making of music, this inevitably translates into listening pleasure.

The album is sweeter, lighter and happier than most rhythm and blues.



Nerida Cuddy - Living Desert

CD review by Hugh Worrall

The most striking things about this record are Nerida's lovely vocals, the high quality production and musicianship, and the spiritual themes in the lyrics.

The songs definitely feel like they are in the folk, singer-songwriter tradition.

But they are also infused with world music sounds and textures, particularly some lovely Celtic themes.

The music is built around Nerida's voice and guitar and coloured with tin whistles, violin, bodhran and cello.

I particularly enjoyed the rich sound and rhythms of the bodhran.

The production qualities of this recording are very high, with lovely sounds on all the instruments and the vocals.

The subtle use of electronic instruments hints at a modern, world music sound too.

The words are clear and easily understood.

Nerida builds her songs around themes of nature, spirituality and relationships.

Nerida isn't afraid of talking about God in her songs on this CD and what that means for her.

She says, "I look on my life as a journey, a road winding round mountains and gullies and vast red plains ... and in front the

One who leads out way".

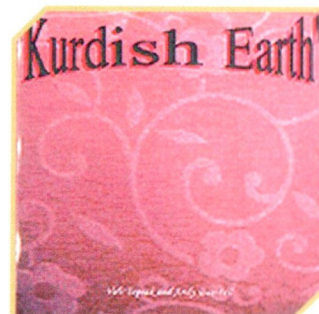
The final song, Living Desert, is a beautiful acapella song, which uses evocative desert and earth spiritual metaphors; "my roots have grown deep ... anchoring in the earth ... but anyone knows ... it's what's inside that counts ... I'll wait for my Maker to come".

It reminded me of the themes of some old gospel songs which describe a longing for a better life with God after passing.

This is a really interesting, well produced CD, which I enjoyed listening to.

It's a short CD with only six tracks, but it is priced lower than a full-length CD.

You may have seen Nerida Cuddy playing at some of Australia's best folk festivals and this CD gives you a really nice introduction to her.



Veli Toprak and Andy Busuttill - Kurdish Earth

CD Review by Greg Barnett

This is obviously a passion project, as the folded cover slip has three pages of political statements about Kurdish history and their current plight.

The music is all middle eastern rhythms, scales, instruments, song structures and singing styles/ornaments.

The first track blew me away. While I have no natural empathy, musically, I appreciated

and detailed percussion and the richly toned instruments.

An oddity is that the credits mention 'tamburas' but, instead of that Indian drone instrument, the strings on this CD are plucked.

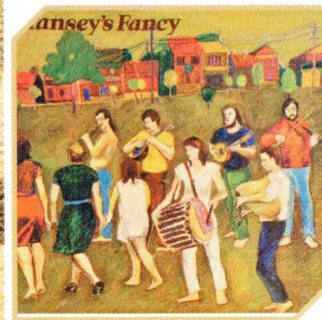
I think the description instead should have been 'tanburs', the double-stringed tembûr/tanbour common in Turkey.

All tracks, which seem to be covers, are expertly played and beautifully arranged, recorded, mixed and mastered.

To widen the appeal, Veli and Andy, would greatly benefit by supplying us with English translations.

An enjoyable (if ethnically esoteric) listen, I would have loved to have been more engaged by that extra dimension of understanding what I was listening to.

Reviewer Greg Barnett, born in the UK in 1951, is a guitarist/pianist, singer-songwriter and producer.



Tansey's Fancy

Vinyl LP Review by Michael Atherton
AM

The eponymous album, Tansey's Fancy, was released by the group in 1982.

Like Doydavme, Sirocco, Churinga and Mara, Tansey's Fancy was at the vanguard of multicultural musical expression in Australia.

These groups created a new wave of folk music that

augmented the traditional anglo-celtic basis of earlier expressions.

Tansey's Fancy released only one album, and it is a standout for its boldly eclectic repertoire, that pushed the boundaries of genre and style.

The group comprised master musicians, whose collective experiences and interests, resulted in a unique blend of music for which its rubric of being a 'folk band with a difference' is deserved.

The collective vocal calibre of Mara Kiek, Davood Tabrizi's expert drumming, Linsey Pollak and Kim Sanders' saxophone, gaida and flute skills, Doug Kelly and Llew Kiek's endlessly creative plucked instrument playing, and Adrian Coleridge's fiddle and mandolin, all shine on this album.

The cover art, by Richard Birmingham, highlights both the eclecticism and urban context of the group's performances.

The painted image captures the cosmopolitan environment of inner urban Sydney, in which the musicians are in a park playing for dancers.

The tropes of diversity and engagement have moved on from the bush and rural scenes of the anglo-celtic tradition.

It reflects an optimistic multicultural harmony, promoted passionately under the prime ministership of Gough Whitlam.

Group member Linsey Pollak's influence, is prominent in his contribution to the Tansey's Fancy repertoire.

In 1982 he invited musicians and community to gather every Sunday to play Macedonian music in a Newtown park (inner western Sydney).

I recall attending on one occasion, enjoying the exuberant dancing and camaraderie.

The varied repertoire on the album comprises five Balkan

CD and book Reviews

dance-songs, three medieval monophonic songs, two Scottish songs, one Irish reel and one English song.

The first track is an arrangement of 'Aque Serven'.

This is a medieval cantiga, a Galician-Spanish song, celebrating the life of the Virgin Mary.

The group embeds the song in a lively dance, featuring the soprano sax and drumming skills of Davood Tabrizi.

It forms a prelude to the entry of the multi-tracked texture of Mara's vocals.

There is an immediate sense of the blending of jazz improvisation with the trajectory of a medieval dance.

'Aque Serven' is followed by 'Šar Planina', which is the name of a mountain located on the border between Macedonia, Kosovo and Albania.

The mountain has symbolic meaning in the Balkans and has featured in music for several centuries.

The track begins with the sound of goats and bells, followed by an ezgija, a traditional flourish on the bagpipe, calling people to dance.

It transports the listener to the shepherd communities of the Balkans and the traditional village sounds of the gaida (bagpipe) and tambura (long lute).

Mara's voice is augmented by Linsey's vocals in a song in 7/8, a prominent asymmetrical signature in Balkan music.

The album continues with a pairing of a well-known Irish reel, 'The Burning of the Piper's Hut' and the deeply moving

CD and book Reviews

Scottish song, 'The Blantyre Explosion'.

The Irish reel offers the gorgeously recorded sounds of mandolin, cittern, 12-string and fiddle.

The track increases in tempo throughout the repetition of A/B format of the reel, to capture the excitement and spontaneity of dancing.

This forms a prelude to the song, 'The Blantyre Explosion', again carried by the same plucked string texture.

This is a song of historical significance.

It describes a terrible accident in Blantyre (Lanarkshire), Scotland in the nineteenth century when 207 coalminers were killed.

The youngest victim was a boy of 11, and the accident left 92 widows and 250 fatherless children.

Mara varies her vocal timbre to project a throaty tone and subtle dynamics to express the emotion.

She sings in an accent typical of the British folk-rock revival, as heard in the plangent voices of Steeleye Span's, Maddy Prior and Tim Hart.

Two other dance-songs are included in the album, 'Zensko Oro' and 'Eleno Mome'.

Once again, the arrangements are for the typical village instruments of gaida, tambura and tapan, augmented by saxophone and flute.

Another dance song is 'Jove Male Mome', it's from Bulgaria-Macedonia and features the complex time signature of 18/8 (3+4+2+2+3+2+2).

Contrasted with the Macedonian repertoire is the surprising medieval song in Latin,

'Unicornis Captivatur'.

The lyrics are imbued with the complex symbolism dealing with the capturing of a unicorn.

Tansey's Fancy approaches the material like an English folk song.

There is a hint of Kate Bush in the mysticism and an inkling of Greek demotike in the vocal style accompanied by guitar and flute.

Perhaps the most surprising track in the eclectic mix of this album is the rendering of 'The Twa Corbies'.

This is a Scottish version of the English song, 'The Three Ravens'.

It comes at the end of the album, inviting another meaning of 'folk music with a difference'.

The track begins with clap sticks and a menacing bass guitar ostinato, leading to Mara intoning the macabre murder mystery of the 'The Twa Corbies'.

The arrangement dwells on blood and gore through the grunge electric guitar and a growling tenor sax.

The music pushes folk into jazz and hovers on the boundaries of atonality.

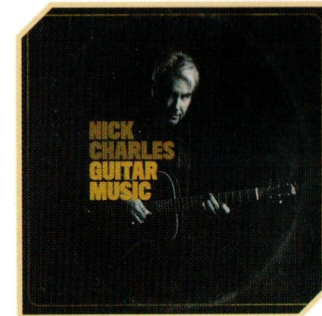
It is an extraordinary track, which sees Tansey's Fancy presaging what might be called gothic folk, well ahead of anything from Steeleye Span or Pentangle.

One can only speculate where the group might have gone had they stayed together!

If you like diversity and surprises and are attuned to the sudden shifts of repertoire, Tansey's Fancy is a treasure waiting for you.

Some track notes and lyrics would have been a welcome addition emphasising the importance of documentation.

Nonetheless, the album is a significant milestone in Australian music, possibly never emulated anywhere else.



Nick Charles - Guitar Music

CD Review by Tony Smith

If you review music for long enough, a few constant themes emerge.

One of the most obvious is that Australia has musicians who compare favourably with performers from anywhere around the world.

Nick Charles fits easily into this category as his finger style guitar is absolutely first class.

Guitar Music is a mundane name for this pretty special CD of thirteen diverse tracks.

Charles is joined here by Liz Frencham, who plays bass and sings on 'Wine', a song she composed.

"Block the chimney, bolt the door"; "Pull the phone from its socket"; "Grab that bottle off the shelf"; "Make way for the ruby red rocket"; "Wine, wine, wine, nothing sweeter than wine"; "Wine, wine, wine, slay me blind".

Charles' other guest is Pete Fidler, playing mandolin on 'Mexican Waters' and dobro on 'Girl from Tingha'.

The latter track was co-written by Charles and his sister, Paulette Gittins.

The song describes how their mother overcame sadness to enjoy happier times.

Like all great ballads, it has lyrics that are simple and unpretentious, but

together they build an unforgettable picture.

"The dusty haze on a summer day"; "And the stars of a Tingha night".

The contrast between the country lanes, where cattle graze, and the hard streets of Sydney, leaves the listener yearning for those quieter places.

More singer-songwriters should honour their Mums in this way.

John Dengate's 'Bare Legged Kate' has become a folk standard and 'Girl from Tingha' has similar potential.

It is free of sentimentality but full of love and respect.

Other songs on the CD include 'Monday Morning Blues' by Mississippi John Hurt.

Charles has a natural talent for interpreting blues classics, with a fresh approach stimulated by his unique renditions of the guitar work, which complements

the lyrics.

There is also 'Anji' by Davey Graham, 'Last Steam Engine Train' by John Fahey and Sam McCool and 'Sleepwalk' by Santo and Johnny Farina.

'Sleepwalk' has a relaxed feel reminiscent of the work of the great jazz guitarists of the 1950s and 1960s.

As always in a Nick Charles collection, some of the tracks were written by the guitarist, and these show his flair for composition as well as arrangement.

It is always a pleasure to see how his craft is developing between CDs.

On this collection are 'Dana Point', 'Gulaga' and 'Everything is Somewhere'.

'Wild Dog Hill Lament' has some of the drama displayed by Spanish writers for the classical guitar.

'Room 19' is an ideal finishing

CD and book Reviews

piece, which has you thinking of swinging along the road bound for somewhere pleasant.

Tingha perhaps or the Tingha you know.

Quite a few words might be appropriate to describe Nick Charles' guitar style.

They would have to include 'sprightly', 'fluid', 'confident' and 'listenable'.

On top of all that you get 'Girl from Tingha', which in this arrangement embellished by Fidler's dobro, is the most outstanding song you will hear for a long while.

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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