

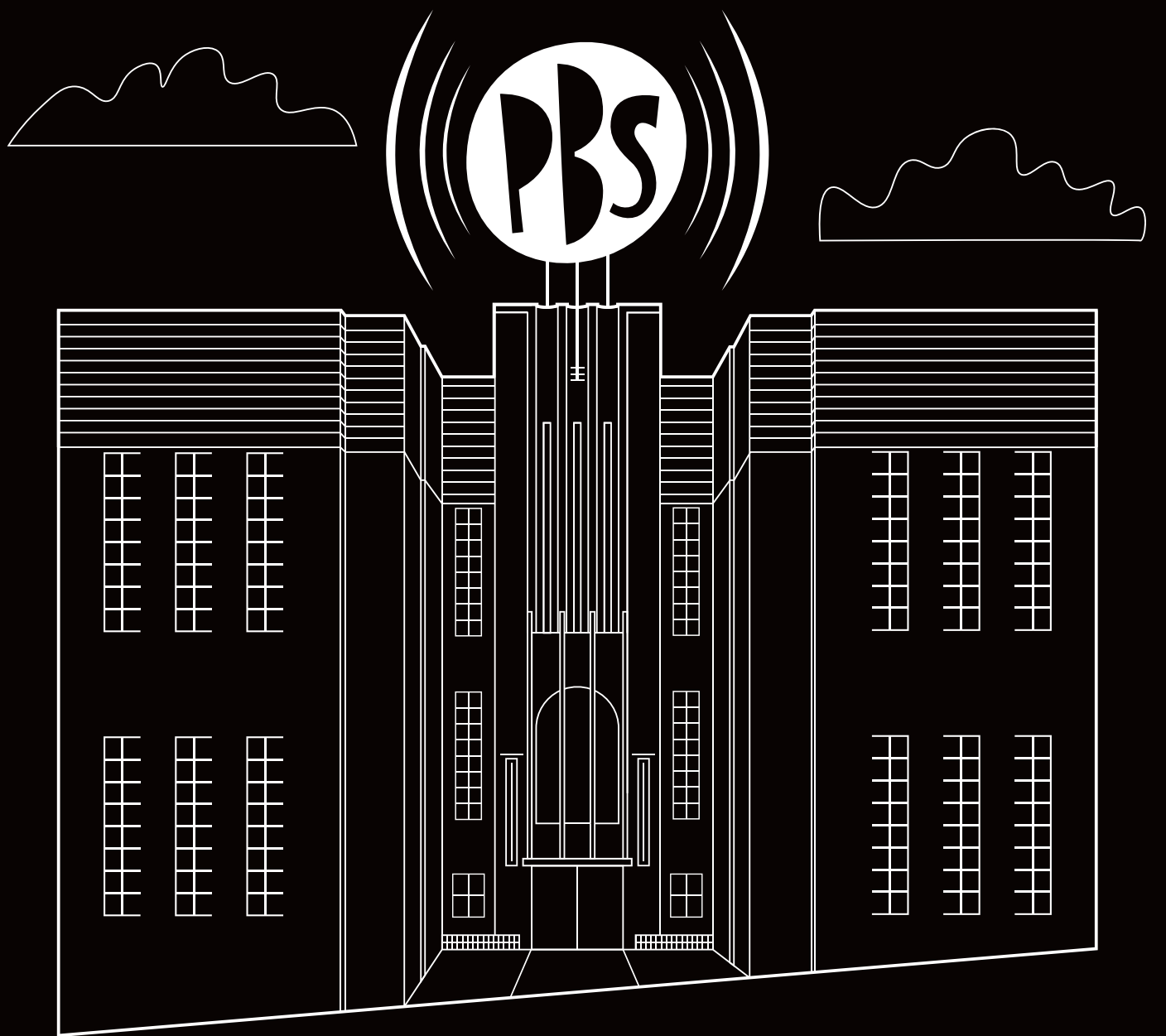


**106.7FM**

PBS Member Magazine

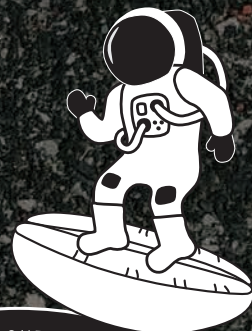
December 2021

# waves





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# RADIO

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ISO SOOTHERS  
MUSIC ADVENTURERS

# waves

PBS Member Magazine December 2021

**Editors:** Aleisha Hall and Meg Butler

**Contributors:** Tull Alred, Adrian Basso, Ryan Evans, Helen Jennings, Ajak Kwai, Stani Goma, Suzi Hutchings, Owen McKern, Michael Mulholland, Lisa Salvo, Bridget Small, Iain Swift, Lyndelle Wilkinson, Andrew Young, Elle Young.

**Cover Art:** Chris Drane.

**Artwork/Layout:** Simon O'Halloran Design.  
simon@sohd.com.au Phone: 0413 703 215.

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Waves is proudly printed on 100% recycled paper by Metro Printing.

**PBS 106.7FM can be found at:**  
PO Box 2917, Fitzroy MDC, VIC 3065  
Phone: +61 (0)3 8415 1067  
Email: [info@pbsfm.org.au](mailto:info@pbsfm.org.au)  
Web: [pbsfm.org.au](http://pbsfm.org.au)

**Magazine Producer:** Aleisha Hall  
[aleisha@pbsfm.org.au](mailto:aleisha@pbsfm.org.au)

**Advertising and Sponsorship:** Sarah Blaby  
[sarah@pbsfm.org.au](mailto:sarah@pbsfm.org.au)

**Membership enquiries:** Michelle Gearon  
[membership@pbsfm.org.au](mailto:membership@pbsfm.org.au)

**Bequest & donation enquiries:** Adrian Basso  
[gm@pbsfm.org.au](mailto:gm@pbsfm.org.au)

PBS' vision is to nurture, inspire and champion Melbourne's diverse music community.

We strive to achieve this through the following goals:

- A thriving, diverse music scene, particularly for under-represented music
- Content with integrity and quality
- An engaged and involved music community
- A successful move to our new home
- Sustainable operations

If you share the vision and goals of the station, you may consider becoming a shareholder of Progressive Broadcasting Service Co-operative, owner and operator of PBS. To find out more, please email [gm@pbsfm.org.au](mailto:gm@pbsfm.org.au)



This magazine is published on the land of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation. We wish to acknowledge elders of this land, past, present and emerging. Always was, always will be.

**PBS 106.7FM**

## A note from the General Manager

Welcome to Waves, the not-so-new name of PBS' member magazine. Waves is the original name of our magazine from when PBS was located south of the river. When PBS moved to Collingwood in the early 2000s, the magazine was renamed *Easey*. With our imminent move to Collingwood Yards, we took the opportunity to refresh things while also looking back on the station's history. A big thank you to Simon O'Halloran Design for the new look. As I write this, we are still in the process of finishing off construction and the technical fit-out of our new digs, while packing up the old one. There's no certainty that we will in fact have moved by the time you read this as COVID keeps on raising its ugly head and has caused construction delays along the way.

Speaking of our history, broadcaster David Heard started with PBS at the very beginning of the station's existence. David's recent passing was really tough on us here at the station and also out in the community - for musicians and listeners alike. Much loved and respected, Heardy was a consummate broadcaster, warm, knowledgeable, and meticulous, producing a compelling program of *Acid Country* every week. A committed lover of live music, you would regularly see him out and about at gigs, listening and talking with that cheeky smile. Heardy was a huge supporter and champion of the alt-country music scene. We will all miss him. Thursday afternoons will never be the same.

As with any complex project, our move to Collingwood Yards has been a journey of ups and downs. COVID added a whole new level of challenges. But in the end, we will have an amazing new station for announcers, staff, volunteers, musicians, members and listeners alike. We will take more time next issue to properly acknowledge the team that got us there but, in the meantime, a big thank you to everyone who donated money towards the move. Without you, this move would not have been possible. If you want to still support this important next chapter of PBS, please visit [pbsfm.org.au](http://pbsfm.org.au).

I'd like to acknowledge some recent departures from the program grid. After 10 years on air on Sundays with *Impressions*, Ross Nable hangs up the mic. For many years Ross was also part of PBS' programming committee, along with being the jazz coordinator, so a huge thank you and best wishes to Ross from all of us. We welcomed

a new baby onto the airwaves, literally, with Ruby Soho giving birth (not in the studios) to Ashby and bringing her into the studio for a show. Ruby has decided to step away from broadcasting to focus on raising her new family. Thanks to Zak for co-hosting with Ruby on *Garageland* for many months too. We also said farewell to Adriana and *Opalakia*. We'll miss Adriana's energy and enthusiasm.

Departures mean the door also swings open for new voices on the PBS airwaves. Welcome to Suzi Hutchings and *Subway Sounds* on Saturday nights at 7pm. We see a return to the station with Claire Dickson and *Good Company* on Tuesday evenings at 7pm. Overnights on Thursday mornings fortnightly we welcome Tomarch and Takla with their new show *TNT*, along with Lucas Packett and his new show *Transfiguration* on Tuesday mornings fortnightly. Check out the centre program guide in this magazine for the full PBS grid.

Thanks again for all your support in being a member of the station and hopefully the next time I write, in the second edition of Waves, we will be firmly settled into our new home at Collingwood Yards.

**Adrian Basso**  
**PBS General Manager**  
[adrianbasso@pbsfm.org.au](mailto:adrianbasso@pbsfm.org.au)



David with Station Manager Adrian Basso and his son Rafferty



Kerrie, Passionate member of *Eternal Rhythm* and Radio Festival first prize winner, thanks to Peter Stevens Motor Cycles





Acid Country live broadcast at the Rainbow Hotel

# Vale David Heard

In September this year, PBS was devastated to share the loss of our longest-serving announcer, David Heard.

It's fair to say that everyone loved Heardy. He was a man of great warmth, generosity and cheeky good humour, and his contribution to Melbourne's music scene and to community broadcasting cannot be overstated. As a founding volunteer David always went above and beyond for his beloved PBS. David was a broadcaster at PBS for over 40 years and *Acid Country* became compulsory listening for music lovers every Thursday afternoon. On top of his on-air volunteering, Heardy also contributed countless hours as a Board member, programming committee member, was a part of the outside broadcast committee and even took minutes at important station meetings.

Above all else Heardy loved music and over a 40-year period nobody did more to support, promote and encourage musicians in the alt-country and roots realm. David gave space to musicians on *Acid Country* every week of every year and took every opportunity to champion the Melbourne music scene. Vale David Heard. We'll miss you. PBS.



David and friends for the 2014 *Acid Country* annual live broadcast



David Heard, Natalie Lupton, Townes Van Zandt, David Dawson and Keith Glass. Eastbourne Dining Room, Fitzroy, Sept 1990. Photo by Leon Labko



David CBA Award Winner!



David with Kasey Chambers and Shane Nicholson in 2013



Reggie Ray, Roger Jones and David



David with Marlon Williams and Melody Pool in 2014



David with Jeff Lang



David with Billy Bragg and the PBS team



David with fellow PBS volunteer Kristine 2018



David with Henry Wagons in 2017



David with Margo Price in 2018



David and Jess Rosenthal



David with Ruby Boots

Dave was a good friend of mine, a friendship of 30+ years. We did the country music shows of PBS & RRR. I present the show *Twang* on RRR. People would often comment about us 'rivals' hanging out together but there was never any of that. We loved country music and would make sure the other was up to date with what was going on. We shared music, our opinions and stories. As far as we were concerned, we collectively were doing our best to keep country music alive in Melbourne and beyond. We would talk for hours about music. I will miss those times. Dave was loved by everyone who met him. He had a gentlemanly manner, softly spoken and a great sense of humour. Life was for living and that he did. I'm proud to have called him my friend, as so many were. Rest in country music bliss my good friend.

**Denise Hyland**  
*Twang* on RRR & Rhythms Magazine

Dave was the first to spin my music in Australia, a moment that changed the course of my life forever. His warmth and humour will echo throughout the Victorian music community indefinitely; leaving behind a unique space that cannot be filled, and an imprint on the hearts and careers of so many Australian country artists. Thanks Dave... for not only giving my music a place in the sun, but for being a good friend. Much love and long may you run...

**Tracy McNeil & The GoodLife**

Dave Heard was a huge champion of our music. He was the first person to give me an interview on PBS, back when the band was just beginning. He was always at our gigs. I'll miss his voice on the airwaves and his smile at the end of the bar, but I'll probably miss him most grinning at me from the crowd.

**Cash Savage**

One of my first times stepping into a studio in Melbourne was to go on Dave Heard's show *Acid Country*. I was always so humbled by how warmly he welcomed me and my band mates into the studio, how comfortable and at home we felt. I'm deeply saddened to learn of his passing, a kinder, gentler and more passionate person I'm yet to meet. His love of country music kept me in love with country music and seeing him pop up at our shows or on our nights off in the usual haunts was always such a lovely surprise. To be honest, Melbourne music won't feel the same without him. You were so deeply loved and cherished Dave, I hope you're up there playing records and swapping stories with Gram right now xx rest well big spirit.

**Freya Josephine Hollick**





David with Jason Isbell



David with Charles Jenkins for the Acid Country annual live broadcast



David with Tracey McNeil in 2018



David with Pokey LeFarge, Stuart Coupe and Sierra Ferrell in 2019



The team at the 2016 Acid Country outside broadcast



David and Phil MacDougall at the PBS Xmas party 2000



David with Owen McKern and First Aid Kit in 2014



Justin Townes Earle with David and the PBS team 2011



Acid Country Live Broadcast, Rainbow Hotel, 2016. Photo by Tony Proudfoot Photography



JVG with David pic at Heardy's 30th Anniversary. Photo by Pete Walker



David at a Cash Savage gig at The Old Bar. Photo by Kurt Eckardt



Acid Country 30th Anniversary. Photo by Pete Walker



David accepts CBAA Award in 2013. Photo by Kris Hithgoda



The legend David Heard



David, 2002 photo by Naomi Macleod



David with PBS staffers at Leaps & Bounds 2015



David's seat at the Labour In Vain

Dave listened. He listened to new artists just starting out, he listened intently to our stories in live interviews, he listened from the bar at our gigs, he listened to everything that was happening in country music in Melbourne. Dave made things happen for all of us, bringing our music to new audiences across the radio waves, making everyone feel welcome and part of the tribe. I know our community will continue Dave's legacy, welcoming and supporting up-and-coming musicians and fostering live country music in Melbourne with kindness and enthusiasm. Viva Acid Country! Vale Sweet David Heard.

Brooke Russell

As musicians, no matter how steadfast your belief is in your art, for you to truly succeed in connecting with an audience, you need people to believe in you, to champion your music. For so many artists, David Heard was that man. Championing non-mainstream music for an incredible 40 years on PBS. David was integral in the growth of the alt-country community in Australia, and many of us including myself owe him a great debt of gratitude. He will be sorely missed, but his legacy will live on in the community he helped grow and the music he helped nurture.

Matt Joe Gow



David in the studio with Lil' Band O'Gold



David with Chris Russell at the 2016 Acid Country outside broadcast photo by Tony Proudfoot

David was someone I greatly admired and looked up to. He was an inspiration. In the early days of my involvement at PBS he took me under his wing, introduced me to people at station meetings, events, and at the many gigs we attended. David was very encouraging and gave me the confidence that I was on the right path to become a regular announcer. Over time David became a good friend. I loved talking to him about our shared musical passions. We compared notes and swapped ideas. I got inspiration from him, and I hoped he got something from me. David leaves a huge legacy at PBS. It's almost impossible to adequately describe the feelings of loss after his 40+ years of involvement at the station. The show I presented after his passing was tough but the many text messages I received during the program showed how much he was loved and admired. Just how much can be best summed up by this message from a listener - "Every week PBS fills my house with music and my heart with joy. It's a measure of the man that I can have a heavy heart for someone I never had the opportunity to meet."

Myles O'Neil Shaw  
5Ft High & Rising



David and Myles O'Neil-Shaw



David drawing a crowd for the Acid Country live broadcast 2013. Photo by Santana Rudge



David Heard, Mick Geyer, Graeme Osborne, Greg Geyer, Farewell party for Ian Stanistreet, 1988. Photo by Bill Runting

Dave ignited the fire and kept the honky-tonk dream alive for us all. His support and passion for the acts we brought through town, both big and small, superstars and nobodies, all received the same love and attention which in turn made the world a little happier and a lot more informed. We will miss him dearly.

Brian Taranto  
Love Police

Dave Heard wasn't complicated. He was fair. He knew what he wanted on his show and there was no hidden agenda that might qualify you for an interview or a spin of your record. Because of that he was totally supportive, and I can't help feeling our local industry has lost a great resource.

I loved running into him in the pubs for the same reason. The exchange was simple and sincere. Your night was always the better for running into Dave Heard. Something has been lost. Vale Dave Heard.

Mick Thomas



# Come Together

Ajak Kwai's show of hope

Author: Lisa Salvo

Ajak Kwai

Ajak Kwai is a singer, songwriter and performer, as well as a radio presenter on PBS and 3CR. She has worked in various creative and community building roles, both within the music industry and outside of it. After fleeing South Sudan, Ajak spent several years in Egypt. She came to Australia in 1999, living in Tasmania for eight years before finally settling in Melbourne in 2007 to pursue her music. I asked Ajak a few questions so PBS listeners and fans of her show *Come Together* could get to know her a little bit better.

## What first drew you to music as a listener?

I used to sing a lot as a kid, singing traditional songs with people. Singing was my strength. I wasn't very good at speaking, but I'd hear a song once and already know how to sing it. I'd remember all the details, so I used to teach everyone else the song. They'd ask me "how does that song go?" and I'd sing it to them. I was very good at remembering songs.

## When and how did you begin writing and performing music?

I wrote my first song when I was really young – I can't remember how old I was. It was very interesting to write a song, but I didn't really tell anyone, I just sang it for myself.

When I joined the church, I went to an Anglican missionary primary school in South Sudan, in Juba – the capital city of South Sudan. After that I went to another religious intermediate school and we had a choir, so I sang in the choir.

When I came to perform I was in Cairo with my cousin – she's a doctor, and we used to write a lot of songs together. We had a group with my two other cousins called The Girls' Band. That was in my 20s. My three cousins eventually moved to America.

## How did you start playing music here?

I met a musician in Tasmania named Martin Tucker who was specialising in African music. I was at TAFE, where I learned English. At the end of the year we each had to present our culture at a concert, so I sang a Sudanese song. Everyone said "Oh wow, that was really good!" and they told Martin "There's this really good singer" and that's how I

started playing music. But I was actually planning to work in tourism – that's what I studied. I wanted to become a passenger attendant.

## So you went from tourism into performing music instead?

Yes, but it didn't seem like a job to me. It was just something you do in your own time, and that's how we do it in Africa – there's no such thing as a professional singer, it's everybody's job, everybody sings, like a hobby.

The first time I performed in Australia with Martin was at a pub. After our set they passed a hat around to the audience asking for donations, and the venue offered us food. I was almost insulted – I wasn't used to money being a part of playing music! I refused to take the money or the meal. It makes me laugh to look back on that experience.

**"there are so many things we can do as people in the world, if we open ourselves up to see others as the same as ourselves."**

**Your show on PBS, *Come Together*, is named after the title track on your second album, released back in 2008. Parts of the song are in English – "Come together, come together, let's change the world," and some of the verses are in Dinka. Can you tell us what the song means to you?**

When I was growing up, I was so protected. I was quite, almost innocent – I don't think there is such a thing as an innocent person, but I was close to that. And even today as a mature woman, I feel that I still hold that part of me. So I don't understand division, and harming people. I don't hold any of that hatred. Though hatred can be taught, and I have learned it, I won't hold onto it – I will fight that, even if someone treats me badly. I do hate the humiliation that comes from discrimination – that's something that can kill me.

With *Come Together* – there are so many things we can do as people in the world, if we open ourselves up to see others as the same as ourselves. I was shocked when I came to Australia and saw people on the street – homeless people, here in Melbourne in particular. It took me a long time to comprehend, because we have such a lot to share in a rich country like Australia. It just made me question. To come together is to join hands. One person cannot do very much, but a lot of people can, and so the song says, "Come together... There are many people hungry in our world today. Let's join our hands and feed the hungry. There are many people homeless today... come together." And individuals have a responsibility as well as the community as a whole, so my philosophy has always been to sing about love and peace, as a people in the world, and for my own country as well. There are so many amazing people, and we can work together.

**Yes, I feel that coming from you when you speak, in your song lyrics, and in interviews. Your nature is very welcoming, but firm in your philosophy of togetherness, and I think you're a really positive influence on those around you in that way.**

**How did you come to host *Come Together* on PBS, and what has this experience been like for you?**

Owen McKern gave me the opportunity to host the show. A lot of us used to host a digital program called *Cross Pollinate*. We'd do one show each month, and that's how I began presenting at PBS. When I suggested the theme "songs that changed the world," Owen agreed this was a great idea and invited me to do the show. I thank Owen very much for giving me this opportunity.

And my experience – I have just been myself along the way. I don't pretend to be someone else, because I think it's important for people to be just themselves. PBS is very good like that – they allow you to be yourself. It's essential to have a supportive platform, because without it, it's very difficult for people like me to be able to share diverse music with others. On PBS we can play a lot of songs that the community don't usually get to hear. And the world is getting smaller as well. Music is a universal language, there are no colours in it.

I'm so grateful that I can share this music with people. I've learned so much about what people are thinking. I'm aware that racism exists, but in music I never concentrate on that, because I feel that it's for healing. Being with people and sharing music here, I'm a part of the community. I think that's why I do it. The new black community can't just be in the western suburbs, you know like, where we're supposed to be, like a ghetto – we're supposed to do things with Australian people. It's important that people like me open the door for the younger people to come into those places which really are scary in terms of race. They are very scary. But in some spaces, like in music and the arts, there are a lot of open-minded people. Those people are our allies in some way.

So I've been resisting sharing only in my own community. Not many people do what I do at all, because they find it hard to come. In particular the South Sudanese people, as we've been so damaged by the media and some authorities. We're not like other people – we are unique and we're new in Australia, so I think it's important that people like me have courage, even if you are hit in the face on the street. I would say I'm really stubborn. I don't think anyone has the right to tell you what you can and can't do. I have the right to be where I go and where I work. Even though it feels like my presence is threatening to the wider community, it's not going to stop me doing what I want to do, and I appreciate that PBS gives us that opportunity. ■

Lisa Salvo is a songwriter and performer. She fronts Melbourne/Naarm experimental pop band On Diamond.

Ajak Kwai presents *Come Together* every Monday from 1-3pm on PBS.

## Come Together Lyrics

Come together, come together, let's change the world  
Come together, come together, let's share our world

There are many hungry  
Many people are hungry in our world today

Come together, come together, let's find a way  
Come together, come together, let's feed the hungry

There are many homeless  
Many people are homeless in our world today

Come together, come together, let's join our hands  
Come together, come together, let's build them homes

I believe in you, I believe in you  
We have the power to change the world  
We have the power to destroy the world  
But we have the power to build peace, people of the world

Come together, come together, let's change the world  
Come together, come together, let's share our world

We can change the world, we can change the world  
If we all learn how to forgive

Come together, come together, let's change the world  
Come together, come together, let's share our world

Ajak Kwai



Lil Hardin Armstrong



# Lil Hardin Armstrong

Behind one great man...

Author: Andrew Young

Lil Hardin was already a successful pianist before she added Armstrong to her name. Her marriage to Louis Armstrong was relatively brief, but it was she who had the ambition and inspiration to turn Louis from an anonymous section man into the most famous trumpet player that ever lived. His innovations and talent were all his own but she gave him the impetus to succeed and inspire generations of musicians the world over.

Lillian Beatrice Hardin was born in Memphis on February 3, 1898. She started playing on the family organ when she was small with a cousin operating the pedals. She was taking lessons at six and soon playing piano and organ in church. Like most devout African American families, both Lil's grandmother and her mother disapproved of the vulgar new music that would become known as jazz.

"You didn't know my mother! No, she hated any form of popular music. She allowed me to buy sheet music you know, *Alexander's Ragtime Band*, she let me buy that, and then I bought *The St Louis Blues*. She found that in my music roll, so she beat me with a broomstick."

Lil's family left Memphis when she was a teenager and moved to Chicago. Ironical, if you consider Chicago, like Kansas City was a hotbed of vice, corruption and... jazz. This turned out to be a lucky move for Lil.

One afternoon Lil walks into Jones Music Store. A salesman demonstrates a piece of music and she asks if she can have a try.



King Oliver's Creole Jazz Band San Francisco 1921. Left to right: Ram Hall, Honore Dutrey, King Oliver, Lil Hardin-Armstrong, David Jones, Johnny Dodds, Jimmie Palao, Ed Garland. Courtesy the Personal Collection of Chris Albertson

She sight-reads that piece and others, demonstrating far greater skill than the salesman. He offers her a job on the spot. The owner walks in and Lil plays some more pieces for her. She is offered three dollars a week. Lil is a dutiful daughter and has to ask her mother before accepting (Buddy Rich did the same thing when he was offered his first drumming job). \$3 a week soon becomes \$8. Now, this isn't just any ordinary music shop, this is *the* store all the black musicians stop by when they are in Chicago. It is also a booking agency for bands. One day Jelly Roll Morton walks through the door.

"So he sat down and he started playing, oh gee, he had such long fingers. He had the piano rocking and he played so heavy and oh, I had goose pimples sticking all over me! After that I played just as hard as I could, just like Jelly Roll did – until this day I am still a heavy piano player."

It wasn't long before an underage Lil Hardin was playing at clubs and cabarets. She joined the New Orleans Creole Jazz Band. She told her mother she was playing at a

"He wasn't anxious to be a star you know. He just enjoyed playing. And he thought I was crazy. Putting his name out, he thought I was real silly."

dancing school for \$22.50 a week. A friend spied Lil playing one night and reported her to her mother. Lil managed to throw her mother off the scent for three months until another do-gooder spotted Lil and told on her. They reached an agreement.

"From nine 'til ten to one I'd be hot Miss Lil, you know, and ten minutes to one my mother would be standing at the door and I'd be so, why don't you wait downstairs, because I didn't want the people to know she had to come after me – after me being so hot all night."

She was at Dreamland when King Oliver and Johnny Dodds, fresh from New Orleans, came in to see her play and poach her for their own group at the Royal Gardens. After six months Joe Oliver sent for Louis Armstrong.

"Everything he had on was too small for him. His atrocious tie was dangling down over his protruding stomach and to top it off, he had a hairdo that called for bangs, and I do mean bangs. Bangs that jutted over his forehead like a canopy."

Not only was Lil critical of Louis' appearance, but his playing did little to impress her. Her main interest was the money! In the 1920s the opportunities for independent young black women to earn a decent living were few and Lil was earning around \$100 (\$1625.02 today) a week with King Oliver.

"No taxes, my mother didn't take any money, nothing you know. I would just buy ice cream and clothes!"

She also bought a car.

It has long been speculated that Joe Oliver wanted Louis in the group so he could keep him under control. Louis called him 'Mister Joe' and tempered his playing so as not to upstage the King. Joe Oliver knew Louis was the better player. When he confessed this to Lil she started to take notice of Louis. She replaced his clothes with a sharper wardrobe and told Louis that Joe Oliver no longer needed to take care of his money for him. Not long after, she divorced her first husband and Louis divorced his first wife. They married in 1924. She devoted herself to making Louis a star. It was discovered Joe Oliver had ➤





Lil Hardin Armstrong



King Oliver's Creole Jazz Band Chicago 1923

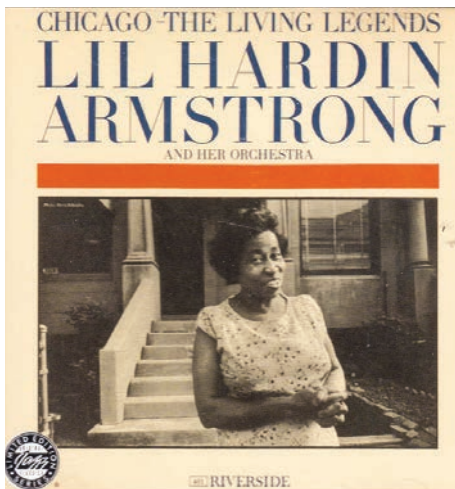
## Lil Hardin Armstrong

been embezzling the members of the band (\$20 per musician per job). Everybody but Louis and Lil quit. Louis idolised Joe and felt he owed him a great debt. Things came to a head.

“Now look we’re married now I don’t want you playing second trumpet. You’ll have to quit Joe and find you a job playing first. You can’t be married to Joe and married to me. Now if you’re going to stay with me you’ll have to play first.”

Louis gave Joe his notice and joined Fletcher Henderson’s orchestra in New York. Hawk-eyed Lil noticed straight away the billing was all Fletcher Henderson with no other names on the marquee. She returned to Chicago and approached Dreamland to put her own band in with her husband featuring. She also demanded a reluctant management pay \$75 a week for him and post sign boards out the front proclaiming *World’s Greatest Trumpet Player*. Musicians from the time recall trucks with loudspeakers driving up and down the streets playing his recordings while spruiking: *Louis Armstrong: World’s Greatest Trumpet Player!*

“He wasn’t anxious to be a star you know. He just enjoyed playing. And he thought I was crazy. Putting his name out, he thought I was real silly.”



Meanwhile Lil buys a house, a whole house – with her own money.

She sends Louis the contract for \$75 a week at Dreamland and the deeds to the property in Chicago. He hands in his notice to Fletcher Henderson. He headlines at Dreamland and his career takes off. Lil and Louis stop working together after re-cording ‘Struttin’ (which Lil wrote) in 1927. They separate in 1931.

Lil Hardin Armstrong wrote hit tunes and led a string of bands, and recorded with other leaders. She toured an all-female band throughout Europe and appeared in several Broadway musicals. As a vocalist

she recorded many sides for Decca. Her solo recitals included works by Mozart, Debussy, Scriabin, Chopin and Weber.

She graduated with a teacher’s certificate from the Chicago College of Music (1928) and received a postgraduate degree from the New York College of Music (1929).

Lil’s share of their 1938 divorce included a financial settlement, properties and rights to the tunes they co-wrote. She stopped playing in public with a few exceptions and became a tailor, designing and making clothes for her friends. She collapsed while playing piano at a Louis Armstrong memorial concert in 1971 and subsequently died of a heart attack. Lil had been working on her autobiography towards the end of her life. Her notes and pages disappeared after her death. ■

Lil Hardin Armstrong quotes come from *Satchmo and Me* recorded for Riverside. Listen back to a Lil Hardin Armstrong originally broadcast on July 24, 2021 via: [pbsfm.org.au/jazz-on-saturday](https://pbsfm.org.au/jazz-on-saturday)

Andrew Young presents *Jazz on Saturday* from 9-11am every Saturday on PBS.



Burna Boy Photo by Nicolas Gerardin

# Burna Boy The African Giant

Author: Stani Goma

It was about midnight when Burna Boy stepped on stage at the New Afrika Shrine on a hot and steamy Lagos night amidst screaming fans. I was about to bear witness to what I now emphatically rate as the most memorable concert that I have ever been to. The energy was incredible and the atmosphere indescribable. I looked around and everyone was singing and dancing. The bar staff, the food stall holders and even the ambulant vendors were joining in. It was more like being at a massive intimate party singing and dancing to your favourite song with Burna Boy. It was a truly magical experience.

As a music venue the New Afrika Shrine stands out for many reasons. The purpose-built open-air venue with a capacity of 2,000 was designed to honour the enduring legacy of Fela Anikulapo-Kuti, arguably one of Nigeria’s most influential artists and worshipped by many young Nigerian artists who seek to emulate his international success. The New Afrika Shrine is also famous for having been visited by a serving French president during an official visit in Nigeria.

Fela’s legacy is celebrated in October every year as part of Felabration with a series of events culminating in a week-long program of live performances at the New Afrika Shrine to mark his birthday. Felabration is now regarded as one of the most prestigious music festivals and rumour has it that many artists offer to waive their fee for an opportunity to perform at the festival.

My first experience of Burna Boy’s live performance was two years prior at Felabration 2017. It’s fair to say that I knew much less about him back then as Wizkid and Davido had the ascendancy, but I found his performance quite fascinating. It certainly had all the elements of a good performance, stage presence, great interaction with the audience and the fact that he was shirtless added a little extra Fela-esque element to his show.

I also detected another aspect that probably contributed to his subsequent meteoric rise. A mix of athletic prowess and a warrior attitude. It was very clear that he was fit, focused, competitive and ready to do whatever it takes to rise to the top. Those qualities are an important asset for any artist let alone one that is trying to stand out in Africa’s most populous city where there is an endless supply of raw talent. ➤





### Burna Boy The African Giant

Damini Ebunoluwa Ogulu aka Burna Boy comes from a family with more than a passing interest in the music business. He is the grandson of Benson Idonije, broadcaster and music critic famous for being Fela’s first band manager, which may incidentally explain why he’s more reluctant than his contemporaries to refer to his musical style as Afrobeats, preferring the term Afrofusion. He is arguably better placed than most to comprehend the essence of the controversy around the use of the term Afrobeats for a genre that musically bears little resemblance to the original Afrobeat sound pioneered by Fela Kuti.

The career of this UK educated artist is managed by his mother who, it seems, is carefully ensuring that he remains firmly connected and grounded as he rides the unpredictable waves of success in the treacherous ocean of show business. His first major international release *African Giant* confirmed his position as an artist to be reckoned with and was rewarded with a Grammy nomination. The album signalled the emergence of a powerful domestic industry in Africa, as the project was entirely completed in Africa and was based on a strategy that focused on the African market as the primary target.

The title of the album was a reaffirmation of his position as an important artist in Africa and a direct response to his name appearing in small font size on the poster of the Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival. It also revealed his strong desire to be taken seriously and his determination to rise to the top. Perhaps not surprisingly coming second best to an artist of the calibre of multi-Grammy award Angélique Kidjo, whom he admired, didn’t go well and he was reportedly gutted for not winning the Grammy that year. It’s worth noting that this triggered an interesting debate about Grammy awards and their relevance, or lack thereof, when it comes to new sounds emerging from Africa.

It is a mark of his dogged determination to leave no stone unturned to reach his goal that in the album that followed, *Twice as Tall*, he enlisted the services of Sean Combs aka P. Diddy as an executive producer. P. Diddy famously declared that he wasn’t making an African album but the album of the year. The gamble paid off as it won him the much-coveted gong. As the saying goes it doesn’t matter whether a cat is black or white, as long as it catches mice.

Released with much fanfare, the album *Twice as Tall* is undoubtedly a massive and daring achievement in terms of the production quality and the wide range of featured guests including Youssou N’Dour, Naughty By Nature, and Chris Martin to name a few. The critically acclaimed release generated a lot of debate around the real reach of Burna Boy’s music or Afrofusion generally and whether it had enough carriage to become a major force internationally without the contribution of big guns from abroad. It certainly raised legitimate questions about the prevailing narrative that the emergence of Afrofusion and Afrobeats music made in Africa was about to claim its rightful place as a major global player.

The recent expansion of major music labels in Africa is a clear indication that they recognise the huge potential that African music represents. However, without significant investment to address the weaknesses in the music industry in Africa, artists will continue to depend on assistance from a major global player to build a sustained successful international career.

Social media combined with easy access to means of music production has contributed to a paradigm shift by producing countless overnight instant success stories in show-business. However, long lasting success in music still requires sustained effort and stamina.



Twice As Tall album cover

The rise of Burna Boy has demonstrated that great talent combined with hard work and grit can achieve success at home and abroad particularly if supported by a dedicated and focused management team despite the enormous challenges and barriers that they must overcome.

Much like athletes, an artist’s individual effort requires a supportive ecosystem to achieve sustained high-level performance on the global stage. In music, the critical elements of a supportive ecosystem include a well-established industry underpinned by optimal copyright laws, competent production, marketing/management teams and a mature digital economy.

In the absence of a local well-oiled music industry machine behind them, individual success stories like Burna Boy face incredible odds to achieve and maintain a significant presence globally. However, Burna Boy has demonstrated that this is not beyond reach and will undoubtedly inspire other artists and future generations.

As a global commodity, music is subject to market forces and international trends. Much like Bollywood in India, the Nigerian film industry, also known as Nollywood, has shown that the global entertainment industry is not immune to major disruptions from local savvy operators. With a population of over a billion people including a sizable

army of dynamic resourceful and creative minds, Africa has the capacity to revolutionise the music industry at home and abroad.

Africa is the future! ■

*This article was originally published on [mamiwatasurf.com](http://mamiwatasurf.com) as Burna Boy - The African Giant [mamiwatasurf.com/blogs/journal/burna-boy-the-african-giant](http://mamiwatasurf.com/blogs/journal/burna-boy-the-african-giant)*

**Stani Goma presents *Flight 1067 to Africa* from 3-5pm every Sunday on PBS.**



	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
6 AM	<b>The Breakfast Spread</b> A MUSICAL ALTERNATIVE Milo Eastwood					<b>5ft High &amp; Rising</b> ALT. COUNTRY Myles O'Neil Shaw	<b>Magic Carpet Ride</b> ECLECTIC MUSIC Ron Dickinson
9 AM	<b>Deeep Space</b> DEEP GLOBAL SOUNDS Lloyd Briggs	<b>Mystic Brew</b> JAZZ & ELECTRONICA Mike Gurrieri	<b>Roots Of Rhythm</b> BLUES & ROOTS Helen Jennings OAM	<b>What The Folk!</b> FOLK & WORLD Susie Lanagan	<b>Ports Of Paradise</b> EXOTICA & JAZZ Palmtree Paddy	<b>Jazz On Saturday</b> JAZZ Andrew Young	<b>The Gospel Show</b> GOSPEL Peter Miles
11 AM	<b>Black Wax</b> GROOVIN' JAZZ Adam Rudegear	<b>Boogie Beat Suite</b> HIP-HOP & BOOGIE MzRizk	<b>Malt Shop Hop</b> DOO-WOP Mr. Doo Wop	<b>Eternal Rhythm</b> SPIRITUAL JAZZ Shio	<b>Riddim Yard</b> ROOTS, DUB, ROCKSTEADY Rick Howe	<b>Fiesta Jazz</b> LATIN JAZZ Saul Zavarce	<b>Blue Juice Radio Show</b> BLUES & SKA Mohair Slim
1 PM	<b>Come Together</b> MUSIC, STORIES, CULTURE Ajak Kwai	<b>Southern Style</b> BLUEGRASS & OLD-TIME Jan Dale	<b>Jumpin' The Blues</b> BLUES & RHYTHM Tom Sianidis	<b>Radio City</b> ROCK & ROOTS Crispi	<b>Tomorrowland</b> BEATS & SOUL Edd Fisher	<b>Switched On</b> KALEIDOSCOPIC & OBSCURE Emma Peel	<b>The Juke Joint</b> BLUES Matt
3 PM	<b>Homebrew</b> AUSTRALIA WIDE Maddy & Kurt	<b>Underground Love</b> UNDERGROUND & DIY Jordan Oakley	<b>Soul Time</b> CLASSIC SOUL Vince Peach	<b>Acid Country</b> COUNTRY & ROOTS Various Presenters	<b>The Breakdown</b> FUNK & SOUL DJ Manchild	<b>Boss Action</b> FUNK & SOUL Miss Goldie	<b>Flight 1067 To Africa</b> AFRICAN MUSIC Stani Goma
5 PM	<b>Headhunters</b> GLOBAL & BEYOND Elle Young	<b>Firewater</b> ROCK & RHYME Claire Stuchbery	<b>The Afterglow Radio Show</b> UPBEAT SOUNDS Lyndelle Wilkinson	<b>Fang It!</b> ROCK & ROLL Ruari Currin	<b>Stone Love</b> STRANGE & LUXURIOUS Richie 1250	<b>Babylon Burning</b> REGGAE & DANCE HALL Jesse I	<b>Global Village</b> WORLD & ACOUSTIC Roger Holdsworth
7 PM	<b>Mumbai Masala</b> INDIAN BEATS Richi Madan	<b>Good Company</b> GLOBAL GOODNESS Claire Dickson	<b>Stardust</b> SHIMMERY SOUNDS Ella Stoeckli	<b>Junkyard</b> ARTIST SPECIALS Michael Mulholland	<b>Twistin' Fever</b> R&B & TRASH Matt McFetridge	<b>Subway Sounds</b> SONGS OF POWER Suzi Hutchings	<b>Soak</b> POST-MINIMAL & ALT-FOLK Hannah McKittrick
8 PM	<b>Hippopotamus Rex</b> HIP HOP Ronin	<b>Pojama People</b> PROG & STONER ROCK Chris Pearson	<b>Shock Treatment</b> GARAGE & ROCK Kev Lobotomi	<b>Sunglasses After Dark</b> PUNK & GARAGE Phil Macdougall	<b>Passing Notes</b> LEFTFIELD DANCE Penny	<b>Fresh Produce</b> HIP HOP Cosi & Walla C	<b>Dizzy Atmosphere</b> JAZZ & IMPROV Gerry Koster
10 PM	<b>The Blend</b> ELECTRONICA Campbell & Emelyne	<b>Burning Bitumen</b> HARDENED METAL Kene Lightfoot	<b>Club It To Death</b> AUS/NZ PUNK & INDIE Peter Bramley	<b>Screaming Symphony</b> PROGRESSIVE METAL Peter & Gary	<b>Afro Turn Up</b> AFROBEATS & AFRO HOUSE Kix	<b>Electric Sunset</b> ELECTRONIC ODYSSEYS DJ Ides	<b>The Sound Barrier</b> AVANT-GARDE Ian Parsons
12 AM	<b>Ear Of The Behearer</b> FREE JAZZ Paul Kidney	<b>Bleeding Black Hearts Revue</b> DARK GOTHY GROOVES Kristen Solury	<b>Synthesize Me</b> PROTO-ELECTRONICA Bridget & Henry	<b>Through The Collapse</b> EXTREME METAL Mitch	<b>Android Discotheque</b> BEATS & BLEEPS Tull	<b>B.P.M.</b> BEATS / BREAKS / MIXES PBS DJs & Guests	<b>Spaces Within Space</b> ELECTRONIC TEXTURES Jazz
2 AM	<b>Got The Blues</b> BLUES Andy Merkel	<b>The Modernist</b> MODERN CLASSICAL Richard 'Cas' Castle	<b>TNT</b> HEAVY ROCK & METAL Tomarch & Takla	<b>Audio Vitamins</b> FUNK & DISCO Jonny Alexander	<b>Irvine Jump!</b> RETRO BEATS Tony Irvine	<b>New Noise</b> Various Presenters	<b>Yellow Brick Road</b> INDIE & UNDERGROUND Henry Osborne
	<b>Transfigurations</b> ROOTS & ROCK Lucas Packett	<b>Shaggin' The Night Away</b> BEACH MUSIC Big Ian Sutherland	<b>Lights, Camera, Action</b> FILM & TV SOUNDS Lucy & Julie	<b>Tyrannocoreus</b> HARDCORE & METAL Ryan Evans	<b>New Noise</b> Various Presenters		<b>Subterranean Chill</b> CHILLED SOUNDS Kit B





Bridget Small

# Synthesize Me

## A chat with Bridget Small

Author: Iain Swift

Bridget Small has been hosting *Synthesize Me* alongside Henry Guala for the past five years. Starting life on the PBS grid as a fortnightly insomnia program, it wasn't long before *Synthesize Me* found its regular home every Thursday morning, 12–2am. One of the most eclectic shows on the PBS airwaves, *Synthesize Me* champions underground oddities both past and present; from lush ambient soundscapes to jarring electronic experiments. We chatted with Bridget to learn more about her and the show.

**Tell me how you first became involved with PBS and the different ways you've been involved with the station?**

I used to listen to PBS as a teenager whilst I was learning to drive around the back-roads of Drysdale, the tiny town I grew up in. I remember getting so obsessed and a friend and I visited the PBS open day when we were about 16! I couldn't believe there were real life announcers floating about the station. When I was eventually living in Naarm (Melbourne), I signed up for my first volunteer shift during Radio Festival in 2016. I met fellow announcer Hannah Thornell during my first shift and she encouraged me to enrol in the announcer course. Beth AQ (former Interviews Coordinator and *The Breakfast Spread* host at the station) facilitated the course and quickly became my radio idol. Milo was also in my course and I remember thinking of him as my rival – I had to get my demo in before him! I then started helping my friend Madi Wright with her show *Be Suburban* (RIP).

A year or so later I also started producing *The Breakfast Spread* with Beth and Nick and then later with Milo. I'm also on the programming committee which has been an awesome insight into how Peebs works.

**How do you go about putting your show together?**

The show is an indication of everything "new" I've been listening to that week. It's sometimes quite last minute if I'm being honest. Henry and I both program an hour each and usually rotate bracket-to-bracket. We also have a rule to never play the same song twice. I find music in lots of different ways but mostly using Bandcamp and Discogs. We like to prioritise playing new releases from local labels too and there's always cool stuff coming out which makes it easy.

**What originally drew you to electronic music? Are there any particular radio shows/gigs/releases that you see as being influential to your taste in music today?**

I remember hearing *Alberto Balsalm* by Aphex Twin when I was a teenager and thinking that was pretty cool. I was almost purely into garage rock, psych rock and shoegaze until I was about 20. *Moontown Records*, which is run by Danny Wild, has also been super influential. I have found that the label has always coincidentally aligned with what I'm listening to. They released some of my favourite tapes from Geelong bands like Turtlenecjk and Sewer Side but then were also releasing the cassette club series that introduced me to more electronic sounds. The Scraps record *TTNIK* they put out has to be one of my all-time favourite releases. I listen to lots of different sounds now, I think being open to new things is super important.

**What does community radio mean to you?**

Community radio is full of really good people that are trusted to fill the airwaves with whatever they please. This is an idea that still amazes me. In a world of algorithms, you can escape by switching on the radio



Bridget Small in Studio 3

"In a world of algorithms, you can escape by switching on the radio and connecting with a presenter on the other end of the line."

and connecting with a presenter on the other end of the line. The platform champions the neglected in such a significant way – inviting the community to represent itself. I feel lucky to be living in a city with PBS and RRR and the many other community stations we are spoiled with.

**Do you have any standout memories from your involvement with PBS?**

I've made so many lifelong friends through PBS and met so many music nerds. Through the station I've had some amazing interview opportunities. I've chatted with some quite remarkable artists including Terre Thaemlitz (DJ Sprinkles), Caterina Barbieri, William Basinski, Ariel Kalma and Alva Noto.

**What is it that makes the music community in Naarm special?**

I think what I love about people in the community here is that openness to share knowledge to make music as accessible as possible. People aren't afraid to trade secrets and share music in both a listening

and making context. Melbourne Electronic Sound Studio (MESS) is an organisation that springs to mind that follows this ethos by making cruelly expensive synthesizers and other electronic machines available for people to use through a membership system.

**Tell me about what you do outside of PBS – what other ways are you involved in music in Naarm?**

I work with a local re-issue label called Left Ear Records with my friends Chris Bonato and Anthony Walsh. The label explores overlooked pieces from the past. I now also work for Program Records, a new record pressing plant in Thornbury. I need some more non-music hobbies... ■

Iain Swift is the PBS Sponsorship and Promotions Coordinator.

Bridget Small co-presents *Synthesize Me* every Thursday from 12-2am on PBS.



# MELBOURNE MUSIC WEEK

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## English Post Punk Post Brexit

Author: Michael Mulholland

In the post-Brexit England era, there has been a flurry of musical activity, with a host of new post-punk bands forming. Anybody who listens to *Junkyard* regularly, knows how much a fan of post-punk I am. I have always been fascinated by the original English post-punk era (1978 – 1982) but have kept my ear to the ground re current post-punk bands. In England, there have been many great new post-punk bands forming, their debut releases have often been spectacular and have attracted critical acclaim, while also achieving great record sales. The following are just a few of the bands that I have picked up over the last year:

### Black Country, New Road

Black Country, New Road is an English rock band formed in London in 2018, consisting of vocalist and guitarist Isaac Wood, bass guitarist Tyler Hyde, saxophonist Lewis Evans, violinist Georgia Ellery, keys player May Kershaw, drummer Charlie Wayne and guitarist Luke Mark. Their sound at times shows influences of artists such as Slint, but they are hard to categorize regarding their music, which is a great thing. Described as experimental rock, it is about as loose a musical genre that could be applied. Their second single called 'Sunglasses' attracted a lot of attention and their debut album *For The First Time* was released earlier this year and is a great debut record.

### The Blinders

I first discovered this band when reading a review in the magazine *Vive le Rock* about their second album *Fantasies Of A Stay At Home Psychopath*, which I immediately bought online. I have since followed up and bought their debut album *Columbia*, as well as their live album called *Live At The Ritz*. The Blinders are an English alternative rock band originally from Doncaster, now based in Manchester, England. The band is made up of vocalist and guitarist Thomas Haywood, bass guitarist Charlie McGough and drummer Matthew Neale. As a three-piece band, they manage to create a big and energetic sound, their songwriting is great and shows influences of artists such as Nick Cave and Tindersticks. Their musicality belies their age, and I look forward to what they do next. ➤





Black Country, New Road  
Dry Cleaning



The Blinders  
shame



#### Dry Cleaning

Dry Cleaning are an English post-punk band who formed in South London in 2018. The band is composed of vocalist Florence Shaw, guitarist Tom Dowse, bassist Lewis Maynard and drummer Nick Buxton. They are noted for their use of spoken word primarily in lieu of sung vocals, as well as their unconventional lyrics. Dry Cleaning released two EPs in 2019 (*Sweet Princess* in August and *Boundary Road Snacks and Drinks* in October), which have since been compiled into a single album. Since signing with 4AD, they released a single called 'Scratchcard Lanyard', this preceded their debut album called *New Long Leg*, which earned the title of PBS album of the week earlier this year. It's a great debut record that has received fantastic reviews and they are yet another great band to watch out for.

#### Squid

I first discovered the band Squid at Strangeworld Records, and subsequently purchased their 12" EP called *Town Centre*. Squid formed in Brighton, England in 2017. They consist of Ollie Judge - lead vocals, drums; Louis Borlase - guitar, bass guitar, vocals, Arthur Leadbetter; keyboards, strings, percussion; Laurie Nankivell - bass guitar, brass, percussion and Anton Pearson - guitar, bass, vocals, percussion. They released their debut album earlier this

year called *Bright Green Field* to critical acclaim. Their sound is hard to describe but shows influences of artists such as Neu! and This Heat. *Bright Green Field* includes elements of jazz, funk, krautrock, dub, and punk. It's not an easy first listen, but multiple hearings really do reward the listener. I love this band and again really look forward to what they do next.

**"You can feel their energy and excitement, they are just waiting to play live on a stage, when that becomes possible in this pandemic world."**

#### shame

shame is a five-piece English post-punk band, originally from South London, England. Their debut album *Songs of Praise* was released on January 12, 2018. This was followed by *Drunk Tank Pink* on January 15, 2021. Both albums were met with critical acclaim when released. *Drunk Tank Pink* is bigger, louder, and more textured than their debut album. It's an album that shows the band being more creative, and it is more complex showing that they are not ready to be pigeonholed in any way. They are very much making music on their own terms and are definitely another band to watch in the future.

I have featured only five bands here, but there are many other bands that have formed in England, over the last couple of years that are great examples of the post-punk music genre. Other post-punk bands to check out are Courting, Yard Act, The Cool Greenhouse, Home Counties, Billy Nomates, Leggs, Fontaines D.C., and Working Men's Club. The original post-punk scene, from the late 70s and early 80s was formed against the backdrop of the alienation and disillusionment of the Thatcher era. Currently in England, against the backdrop of post Brexit and COVID, it's great to see so many creative and interesting bands forming. Their music, at times, defies categorisation, but that is one of the big attractions personally, when seeking out new music. There is real physicality with many of these bands, in relation to their music. You can feel their energy and excitement, they are just waiting to play live on a stage, when that becomes possible in this pandemic world. Hopefully this article will encourage you to explore some of the bands featured here, you will not be disappointed! ■

Michael Mulholland presents *Junkyard* every Thursday from 7-8pm on PBS.

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# A Magical Ride

Ron Dickinson - Legendary  
Multi Genre Warrior of PBS

Author: Bob Esselmont



Ron in Studio 3 at Easey St

PBS announcer Ron Dickinson came from a family with little or no interest in music and he had access to a limited range of radio broadcast choices.

In those post war years and the 1956 advent of TV, radio was heavily concentrated on spoken word: soap operas, quiz programs, drama serials, comedy, magazine style programs, sports etc. Rather than being the constant that we take for granted today, musical programs were special. The ABC was the bastion of “serious” (read classical), and the commercial stations were the home of popular music (light classical and weekly top eight hit parades).

Ron’s musical journey starts with the purchase of a radiogram (an all-in-one radio, plus turntable and speakers) and a movie

soundtrack recording of *A Summer Place* by the Percy Faith Orchestra. This embeds his love of “cheese” or perhaps more kindly called “lounge” music.

Things soon got serious as he joined the communications leviathan of the day, the Postmaster General’s Department (think Telstra and AusPost), as a telegram boy (the modern equivalent is email). He was posted for a couple of years to the ABC to administer the time sheets of the classical music presenters, where he developed a love and knowledge of classical music.

So, for several years classical and orchestral popular music led him to the crossroad of what is most important – the lyric or the tune. Whilst he is not averse to a well composed lyric, his strong preference is for a great melody. Cue ‘How Much Is That Doggie In The Window’ or ‘Oh Mein Papa’.

Always deeply interested in high quality reproduction, Ron, like many others of his generation, got into compiling Hi-Fi equipment: turntables, tonearms, cartridges, reel-to-reel tape recorders, amplifiers, pre-amps, tweeters, and woofers.

Life brought Ron to a critical moment in the mid-seventies when he decided to leave home (chucked out more likely) and, as was the wont of the culturally deprived Australian of the time, took off to swinging London, the only problem being London had already swung and punk was afoot. He can proudly claim to anyone who considers him to be a bit of a “square” that he was in London when the Sex Pistols went off!

When lazing one afternoon in the Lakes District listening to a busker on a Hammond B3 (no secret he adores the B3) he watched several cyclists pass by and catharsis



Ron with fellow announcer Myles O’Neil-Shaw



Ron Dickinson with Bruce Flat Top Rook and Bob Esselmont in 2016

Always deeply interested in high quality reproduction, Ron, like many others of his generation, got into compiling Hi-Fi equipment: turntables, tonearms, cartridges, reel-to-reel tape recorders, amplifiers, pre-amps, tweeters, and woofers.

occurred. So, off he went to buy a bike and commence a two-year, 10,000km journey around Britain and France.

Three years and many croissants and glasses of red later he returned home to Australia to find that the Melbourne community radio station, PBS, had survived its birth and was on its journey to Easey Street via Fitzroy Street.

Ron discovered a vibrant but financially challenged organisation where jazz was king, or at least a senior member of the royal family, and genre specificity a key element in securing a regular show. Apprentices were required to show proof of worth.

Sometime in the early eighties Rockin’ Ron commenced on the midnight to dawn insomnia shift where he spent a couple of years before the program committee allocated a non-genre specific timeslot for a show appropriately titled *Powered By Eclecticity*.

By his own admission Ron was musically naïve and his show was heavily influenced by the general popular music environment of that time which included pop, blues, rock, soul, RnB, and jazz.

Having no clear genre proved problematic as the show had no support from the established genre groupings at the station. It became vulnerable to the ambitions of stronger genre leaning offerings and in the fullness of time became part of the program churn.

By this time Ron’s musical knowledge was growing. With exposure to PBS and its collection of passionate show presenters, he continued to support the station with what became his trademark “fill in anytime, any genre, any show” ethos. This ethos has seen him, for around thirty years, filling in for twenty-five or more different shows including numerous summer fills ranging from jazz to bluegrass and everything in between. Always, always, respectful to the show he was caretaking.

His passion for PBS knows no bounds and during the “big move” in 2001 to Easey Street he joined the squadrons of volunteers who, led by newly appointed General Manager, Roger Jones, transformed a derelict ex-Chocolate Factory to the first truly professional home in PBS history.

In the time before PBS had a dedicated five day a week breakfast show, Ron was one of the five regular presenters doing a day each. Each day was based around different genres to showcase the various aspects of the station’s broad musical palette.

Until recently, Ron lived alone for over twenty years in a three-bedroom house with a garage. Not surprisingly his house was packed with a museum-like quantity of music media: 78s, LPs, cassettes, reel-to-reel tapes, laser discs, CDs, mini-discs, alongside a timeline of sound reproduction technology.

It was every collector’s nightmare when circumstances required Ron to move to a one-bedroom unit. Fortunately, he had a bit of time to prepare for the transition and by digitising all the material he could he was able to preserve large parts of his collection in a form accessible from his new home.

Even though nearly all his physical collections of boxed sets (including his folly, a 261 CD Johnny Cash Collection with miniature reproductions of the original album covers) had to go, with his usual equanimity he took it all in his stride because he still had the most precious thing he possesses, his love and devotion for PBS. ■

**Bob Esselmont is a longtime PBS volunteer, Patron and Friend For Life. He’s also a music fanatic who joins Ron for *Magic Carpet Ride* for a monthly special.**

**Ron Dickinson presents *Magic Carpet Ride* every Sunday from 6-9am on PBS which celebrated its 400th episode on Sunday November 14, 2021.**

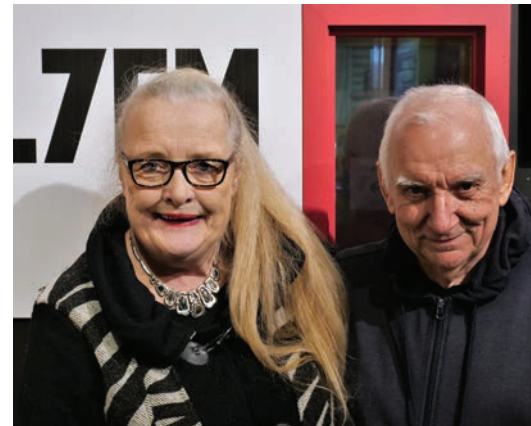




Vika and Linda Bull with Helen



Helen with The Teskey Brothers



Helen with Billy Pinnell



Helen with the late Michael Gudinski

# The Making Of... A Little Magic

34 years of *Roots of Rhythm*

Author: Helen Jennings OAM

Over the last 34 years of presenting *Roots of Rhythm*, the most frequently asked question is how I put the show together.

There is no secret formula, but I have developed an instinct as to what works. I had more of a jazz background at the beginning, but soon got into the blues, particularly in my professional life. I deliberately avoided the jazz/blues tag when I came up with the title *Roots of Rhythm*. It's more blues and roots these days, but I still do jazz interviews. I also made the decision not to have intro and outro themes - instead I choose an instrumental track to begin each show. I can say proudly that I've managed not to play the same track twice - maybe an artist or three, though.

The music audio format has changed dramatically over the years. It was all lovely vinyl in the 80s, then the CD took over until around five years ago when digital downloads became more of the norm,

making up roughly half of new releases now. I was delighted when vinyl started making a comeback - I do love the sound vinyl produces, and I'm playing it more and more these days. I still prefer the physical product to downloads. I love pulling CDs or vinyl from my shelves, drawers, storage boxes and anywhere else I have them stashed in our small apartment. The upside of downloads has been steady access to new releases, particularly from the US, with thanks to fellow announcer Peter Merrett, who is always across new releases.

PBS has championed live music right from the start, presenting lots of live-to-air outside broadcasts (OBs) at festivals and local venues. Most prime-time shows present interviews with live-to-airs and, of course, the long-running and much-loved 'Studio 5 Live' which sees a band perform a live 25-minute set from PBS' Studio 5. I've averaged two interviews per show, most with live-to-airs, for many years, as well as many international phoner interviews, mainly from the US.

I've been privileged to interview many wonderful musicians, both Australian and international. Saying who my favourites are is a hard call, although if pushed, it'd be the three live interviews with Taj Mahal, two live and one phone interview with Tony Joe White and a memorable 45-minute live interview with Long John Baldry - his choice, he was enjoying himself. Terry Bean from Clarksdale, Mississippi was also a treat.

I was honoured to speak with the legendary Mose Allison. I saw him perform in Melbourne - I cited 1983, and he immediately corrected me, saying it was 1984! Lonnie Mack was another personal favourite, and then there were phoners with Sonny Landreth, Jon Cleary, Charlie Musselwhite, Chris Smither, Bob Margolin, Junior Wells, Georgie Fame... and all the wonderful Australian artists, such as Judy Jacques, Joe Camilleri, Judith Durham, Vika & Linda, Fiona Boyes, Colleen Hewitt, who have been so generous with their time.

I've also been blessed to have many legends co-present *Roots of Rhythm* - Billy Pinnell, Margret Roadknight, Geoff Achison, Russell Morris, Derek Guille, the late Michael Gudinski, to name a few.

The main focus for each show has been new releases, then promotions for tours and festivals, and interviews. The regular monthly segment 'Wordy-Gurdy', presented by Melbourne writer and dear friend Jackey Coyle, has been running for over 15 years.

**"Over the last 34 years of presenting *Roots of Rhythm*, the most frequently asked question is how I put the show together."**

When COVID-19 hit Melbourne - it seemed like overnight - we all held our collective breaths, not sure how it would impact PBS. I remember doing a special International Women's Day show on *The Gospel Show* on Sunday 8 March last year with the fabulous Gospel Belles - Kelly Auty, Sweet Felicia and Diana Wolfe - and hosted the Australian singer Deline Briscoe with her nine-piece band for a Studio 5 Live on Wednesday 11, which turned out to be the last live-to-air PBS would present at the Easey St Studios. We locked the front door the next day and it is still locked.

Thanks to the strict lockdown procedures at PBS, we've been able to continue broadcasting in a safe environment. Some announcers weren't able to come into the studios, so PBS worked out how they could broadcast remotely. Being not at all tech-savvy, I was grateful to continue

in-studio broadcasts. This meant no guests were allowed in the studios and all interviews would be conducted by phone.

The main worry was how were we going to survive financially, as 90% of our sponsorship disappeared almost overnight. And how were we going to continue producing great radio without live music? With the 2020 Radio Festival only two months away, how were we going to keep our membership, let alone increase it?

Due to our incredible listeners and the resilience of both staff and announcers, we have not only survived, but have had two record years of membership and donations. The overwhelming support and encouragement from our members and listeners have spurred us on to produce some of the best radio ever.

It's a joy to me that my listener base has increased threefold, with the most amazing comments and support each week, enlivening my commitment to continue broadcasting. ■

**Helen Jennings OAM presents *Roots of Rhythm* every Wednesday from 9-11am on PBS.**



# The Best of 2021

Every year we ask a selection of our announcers to take a look back over the past 12 months and name their top records and their stand out music moments. Enjoy!



**Lyndelle Wilkinson** – *The Afterglow Radio Show*

## ALBUMS

**The Seven Ups** – *The Old World* (Northside Records)

**JAZZPARTY** – *Nobody Gets Away* (Remote Control Records)

**Lady Blackbird** – *Black Acid Soul* (Foundation Music/BMG)

**Sault** – *Nine* (Rough Trade)

**Durand Jones and The Indications** – *Private Space* (Dead Oceans)

**The Bamboos** – *Hard Up* (Pacific Theatre)

And as another bizzarro year comes to an end, my heart goes out to musicians and venues and businesses in the music sector who have been through the absolute ringer. My thanks go to the artists who somehow found a way to just keep on going. There were a couple of windows this year where we got to share moments of live music together. At Cherry Bar with JAZZPARTY – we celebrated Pierre Baroni and *Soulgroove'66* on a soul-filled dancefloor with tears in our eyes. The perfectly timed Boogie Festival

was a huge highlight. We were all so proud to be the only place in the world having a festival at Easter. Brunswick Music Festival had an insane lineup in 2021 with tickets snapped up in seconds. Outdoor gigs were so welcomed this year, like the diverse lineup by the bay of April Sun in St Kilda and the Malthouse Theatre's outdoor stage was just a revelation. Catching Emma Donovan & The Putbacks on a warm evening there was sublime. Sun Cycle at the Sidney Myer Music Bowl was absolutely next level for me with the return of CC:DISCO!, alongside Mildlife, Izy, C.FRIM and Wax'o Paradiso. I will always remember the look of absolute joy on the faces of Melbournians dancing their hearts out in their pods that evening – it was so powerful. But as lockdown found its way into our reality again – along came Mildlife.

On a Sunday night in May – many of us streamed via Bandcamp their 'Live from South Channel Island' event. As I write, I am actually listening to the live double album. It's awesome. I have since caught up on The Bamboos with Melbourne Symphony Orchestra online, a live gig they snuck in back in March which I couldn't get to at the time. What. A. Show. I cried my eyes out after the first song. Heavenly. So, 2021 may not have been the year we wanted but somehow, we have managed to make some pretty special memories. And I couldn't be more grateful.

**Lyndelle Wilkinson presents *The Afterglow Radio Show* every Wednesday from 5-7pm on PBS.**



**Ryan Evans** – *Tyrannocoreus*

## ALBUMS

**VEXED** – *Culling Culture* (Napalm Records)

**Deadlights** – *The Uncanny Valley* (Greyscale Records)

**Jinjer** – *Wallflowers* (Napalm Records)

**Hacktivist** – *Hyperdialect* (UNFD)

**Gojira** – *Fortitude* (Roadrunner Records)

After a year of no gigs, it was amazing to break the ice by seeing Melbourne's Flynn Effect at an intimate gig at Stay Gold in March. This was shortly followed by a local death metal fan's wet dream with the incredible lineup of Whoretopsy, Hollow World, Zeolite and Wallet Inspector absolutely destroying a packed Bendigo Hotel. My first huge gig back was at 170 Russell where a packed venue was treated to some of the best metalcore in the country, with local legends Lune and Pridelands putting on an amazing show before Gravemind finally got to begin their long-awaited headline tour to promote their 2019 album *Conduit*. I got the chance to see two of my favourite local bands; Melbourne's Thornhill and Sydney's Bloom at Stay Gold, before I was fortunate enough to see two of Diamond Construct's headline tour shows with Mirrors at Stay Gold and Sooki Lounge. Sadly, that is where my amazing run of shows came to a halt as the pandemic had other plans. Come say g'day to me at the delayed Polaris shows, Full Tilt Festival and Unify Forever. See you in the pit!

**Ryan Evans presents *Tyrannocoreus* every alternate Friday morning from 2-6am on PBS.**



**Suzi Hutchings** – *Subway Sounds*

## ALBUMS

**Emma Donovan & The Putbacks** – *Under These Streets* (Heavy Machinery Records)

**The Halluci Nation** – *One More Saturday Night* (HALLUCI NATION)

**Madlib** – *Sound Ancestors* (Madlib Invazion)

**Bobby Gillespie & Jehnnny Beth** – *Utopian Ashes* (Sony Music)

**Common** – *A Beautiful Revolution, Pt. 2* (Loma Vista Recordings)

**Little Simz** – *Sometimes I Might Be Introvert* (AGE 101 Music and AWAL)

The last quarter of 2021 promises some stellar releases from First Nations musicians including Baker Boy, Mo'Ju and Lady Lash. Tracks from these artists will make it into my playlists for *Subway Sounds*, along with Indigenous musicians from around the globe such as Ottawa electronic Hip-Hoppers, The Halluci Nation, and other artists who 'speak truth to power' like Madlib, Theon Cross, and Little Simz. My most memorable moment in 2021 was a phone call from Owen McKern (PBS Program Manager) to say I had a show on PBS. After moving from Adelaide in 2016 where I produced a long running music show, I have been keen to be part of community radio in Melbourne. Now I have this amazing opportunity to showcase First Nations music, and other compositions from artists singing about activism, human rights and sounds from the underground mixing jazz, electronica, hip-hop, soul and reggae into potent blends.

**Suzi Hutchings presents *Subway Sounds* every Saturday from 7-8pm on PBS.**



**Elle Young** – *Headhunters*

## ALBUMS

**Izy** – *Irene* (Hopestreet Recordings)

**YL Hooi** – *Untitled* (Efficient Space)

**Emma-Jean Thackray** – *Yellow* (Movement)

**Parvyn** – *Sa* (Independent)

**Various Artists** – *Two Tribes Vol.2* (Agogo Records)

Favourite moment of 2021 was the Hopestreet Records x College of Knowledge album launch. It was a beautiful warm summer night in March, around 800 people gathered in Gilpin Park, Brunswick for a huge evening of funk and soul music as part of Brunswick Music Festival. Performances from neo soul outfit Izy, wonky funk 4-piece Karate Boogaloo, cinematic soul group Surprise Chef, and the pièce de résistance, Emma Donovan & The Putbacks performing the entirety of their sophomore album *Crossover* meant the vibes were high from start to end. We were so lucky to have this event before things turned south only a month or so later. Lockdown has been spent daydreaming about this kind of gig coming back around again. And we know it will!

**Elle Young presents *Headhunters* every Monday from 5-7pm on PBS.**



**Tull** – *Android Discotheque*

## ALBUMS

**The Bug** – *Fire* (Ninja Tune)

**Reptant** – *Return to Planet X'trapolis* (LKR Records)

**Yosh** – *One More Night EP* (Juno Records)

**White Solar Dog** – *White Solar Dog* (Sin Hilo Records)

**Third Space** – *Pattern of Spring* (Pure Space Recordings)

In a year of few parties and too much TV, the best time of this year has got to have been the Acid Slice takeover of *Android Discotheque*. With a live gig set up at Bar 303 but lockdown looking like it would never end, the likelihood of being able to do the event was seeming less and less likely. I was well chuffed when they got in contact and asked if there was anything we could put together on PBS. The outcome was 2 hours of live sets by some of Melbourne's best electronic producers, broadcast live on the PBS airwaves. dyLAB, Son of Zev, Vessa, Delfi and Olivas – all great sets – live and direct on PBS. Listen back via the PBS website now. Great fun! ■

**Tull presents *Android Discotheque* every Saturday from 12-2am on PBS.**



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