

# MICK GEYER

MUSIC GURU 1953 - 2004



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## **FULL TRANSCRIPT OF DOCUMENTARY #2**

**First broadcast on PBS-FM Tuesday 11 April 2006, 7-8pm**

Nick Cave interviewing Mick Geyer in 1996:

NC: Mr Mick Geyer, my chief researcher and guru, he is the man behind the scenes. How important is music to you?

MG: It seems to be a fundamental spirit of existence in some kind of way. The messages of musicians seem to be as relevant as those of any other form of artistic expression.

MUSIC: John Coltrane - Welcome (Kulu Se Mama)

LISA PALERMO (presenter):

Welcome to 'Mick Geyer: Music Guru'. I'm Lisa Palermo and this is the second of four documentaries paying tribute to Mick, a broadcaster and journalist in the Melbourne music scene in the 1980's and '90's. Mick died in April 2004 of cancer of the spine. He had just turned 51. He was a friend and mentor to many of us here at PBS, and as you'll hear from recent interviews and archival material, his influence was widespread.

In the first program we heard about the beginnings of his passion for music, his contribution to the PBS magazine WAVES, and his love of the in-depth interview. Now we'll explore Mick's influence as a radio broadcaster, and his vision for the role that PBS could play, through recollections of musicians and PBS colleagues, with examples of his radio shows.

We began with Nick Cave turning the camera on Mick in a 1996 video recording and we'll end this program with a taste of Mick's interview style - with Wim Wenders and Blixa Bargeld. Soon we'll hear about his involvement in the feature film Ghosts of the Civil Dead from Producer Evan English and musician Mick Harvey. But first, Greg Geyer.

Greg Geyer:

I can tell you how he got involved with the Bad Seeds and all those guys that was through PBS, this is my understanding of it anyway. And it also is backed up in Waves magazines that they produced in '85 and '86. One say in '85 shows someone else doing an interview with Nick Cave, and although Mick put the magazine together he wasn't involved in that interview, but by the next issue Mick was doing the interview with Nick Cave and promoting Nick as the most lively act around at that time. But Mick and I had been to see the Birthday Party for example at the Seaview Ballroom in '81 or something like that, and we were just outsiders looking at that amazing phenomenon. And a little bit later, like in '85 I think, they were making Ghosts of the Civil Dead in Melbourne and they used PBS's studios to do some of the soundtracks and stuff like that. And although Mick had sort of known them before that, it was then that they really started to collaborate a little bit, and then Nick couldn't help but notice Mick's obsession with all this music and all the research he had about who was connected to who. So after that I think Nick was doing some book readings at Melbourne Uni and dragged Mick along to play a bit of music in the gaps, and I think that was their first outing together. Yeah, that was one aspect where he got involved in that. But through that general scene obviously the musicians that were using PBS were many. Well it all happened really through PBS, didn't it?

MONTAGE: (Ghosts of the Civil Dead - Original Soundtrack)

Mick Harvey:

He was certainly very much on the scene I remember by the time we did the Ghosts of the Civil Dead soundtrack, I remember him being around and even conducting some kind of interview with us with regard to promotional usages, he was just around by then anyway.

He was constantly talking about creative areas and talking about what *you* were doing creatively to you, and what he had to say was usually very interesting and he was just influential in that way. And it was great having someone around who made you feel like you were part of a great big unstoppable snowball of culture or whatever it is that's going on, because that's certainly how his general conversation would run. But he was just an enthusiast; he just wanted to talk about stuff y'know, which was fantastic.

MUSIC: Blixa Bargeld, Nick Cave & Mick Harvey - Wanted Man (Ghosts of the Civil Dead - Original Soundtrack)

LISA:

Evan English - Producer of Ghosts of Civil Dead

Evan English:

Well Ghosts of the Civil Dead the feature film that was made here in Melbourne really started life in about 1984. The research period was in earnest between '85 and into the shooting phase in '87, and in that haze arrived Mick Geyer. I think that he probably would have come via Nick Cave, who was a friend of mine at that time and I'd brought into the Ghosts of the Civil Dead project, or indeed Hugo Race, who was also involved in Ghosts of the Civil Dead and playing with the Bad Seeds I think at that time. And so as a consequence really of that kind of interconnection Mick started, well he took an active interest really in what we were doing and what we were attempting to do, even within the research phase.

A journalist in the domain of the Bad Seeds, of Nick Cave, could really indicate some personality defects; it was often a kind of guise really to infiltrate the inner sanctum of the Birthday Party, or indeed the Bad Seeds or of Nick Cave's consciousness. Mick on the other hand I never would have put in that category, he was a laconic kind of character, an interested observer, both in the film Ghosts of the Civil Dead and indeed in the career and the trajectory, effectively the music, that was being made by Nick and Mick and so on. So he became a friend of the production and he was a constant visitor really to the set, both the factory in Port Melbourne and in the flat, and indeed he was welcome. He was a spirit, he was a smoker, he was a Chandleresque kind of creature of the night, he was kind of easy-going and didn't rush in to express his opinion but had quite an interesting opinion when he was asked for it.

I remember him, John and I would be going through some scenes late at night, and he's sitting back there kind of listening to this thing, I think it's illustrative of the regard that we had for him.

LISA:

Now here's Mick Geyer presenting a special feature on Ghosts of the Civil Dead on 3PBS in June 1989

MUSIC: Lilly's Theme, "A Touch of Warmth" (Ghosts of the Civil Dead - Original Soundtrack)

Mick Geyer - on air 1 June 1989:

Well that's Part 1 of the Special of Behind all the motivations of Ghosts of the Civil Dead. You're just hearing Lilly's Theme, and Lilly of course is the character that Dave Mason plays in Ghosts of the Civil Dead, which opens on the 9th of June at the Kino Cinemas. It's a harrowing movie but one with much information, much provocation and it's a great film.

Okay, I should add that next week at 8.30 pm we'll be playing the second part of that Special on Ghosts of the Civil Dead, and immediately following that at 9.30, John Hillcoat the Director of Ghosts of the Civil Dead and the Producer Evan English will both come in and talk a little bit

about the film. But after having travelled throughout Europe and North America as well as South America selling the film, they're about jack of it, and having returned to Melbourne they'll appreciate the chance just to play a few songs and talk about things other than prison. It's time for everybody to get out at one stage or another. That'll be happening next week, here at 3PBS FM.

This is Mick Geyer, up until 11 o'clock tonight I'll continue playing you some music, since there's so much music, so much prison songs still to play, and we're going to listen to Big Bill Broonzy singing the Cell 13 Blues.

MUSIC: Big Bill Broonzy - Cell 13 Blues (PBS archives)

Graeme Osborne:

Hi, this is Graeme Osborne here. I came back from the UK and I set up a business here to import and distribute jazz and blues records. Somebody at PBS in their wisdom got hold of this fact and thought that I might be a suitable candidate to join the ranks of jazz presenters on PBS, and went through the initiations that we all did, and started doing jazz programs. I guess that was back in the mid '80's.

Little did I know at the time, that lurking in the corridors of PBS was one Michael Geyer, who was always on the look out for allies, for kindred spirits I guess, in his steady assault on mediocrity in all areas. He approached me and we found that we had lots of things in common, musically, in literature, the arts - we generally got on very well, to the point that over the next few years we, on occasions, did some 'graveyard shifts' just for the hell of it. They were amazingly eclectic affairs, it was sort of like a 'fly by your seat of pants' affair - one of us would play a track and that would inspire the other to either play something in sympathy with that track or something in total antipathy to it and sparks would fly.

MUSIC: Sun Ra and his Intergalactic Arkestra - Angelic Proclamation (It's After the End of the World)

Graeme Osborne:

I thought my tastes were small 'c' catholic, eclectic until I met Mick. He swamped me. I mean his tastes and interest in music just seemed limitless, and that was because really, Mick I guess at base was interested in the message an artist was trying to convey. And no matter what the medium might have been, if they had an important enough message in Mick's mind and they managed to convey it through a particular musical medium, then that was fine, it didn't matter if whether it was jazz, reggae, gospel, country, classical, whatever. For my part, I came more from a straight jazz background, some would think the jazz police. Well, Mick certainly helped me break that one down.

MUSIC: Jazz Composers Orchestra featuring Cecil Taylor - Preview (Jazz Composers Orchestra)

Chris Wilson:

We did a number of radio shows together Mick and I, on PBS in the early days, in a tiny little studios above the Prince of Wales, we did the avant garde jazz show one time and nearly got banned, you know. And we did some specials about Van Morrison, another one was Prince and we would just play obscure stuff that we could find of their music.

MUSIC: Prince - God (The Hits / B Sides)

Mick Harvey:

I did a radio show with him once too on PBS. He invited me in, in typical Mick Geyer fashion, he said "Hey, come in and play some music". And I said "Oh yeah that'd be great", I'd just come in, won't even talk, or y'know, just whatever, just play some favourite stuff. But the way Mick was, it was all the same to him, playing music and talking about it in depth was inseparable. And so of course he immediately started in with in-depth questions and wanting

to talk and I was just saying "Forget it, just play the next record", and, it was a bit of a disaster actually! (laughs).

LISA:

And things got worse when a listener rang in!

Unidentified PBS listener/caller as quoted in Static Magazine, Issue 'minus 2', Sept/Oct 1989 p33:

Listen - I've heard some Nick Cave records, and I thought "This is really powerful music" and when I heard that someone who had played in a band with Nick Cave was being interviewed on PBS I expected, you know, some really telling really profound stuff. But the guy I'm listening to on the radio is playing Roy Orbison and fucking German classical music. As far as I'm concerned, the guy doing the interview sounds more like Mick Harvey than the guy he's interviewing.

MUSIC: Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra - Mozart: Rondo from Serenade in G, K525 (*Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*)

Mick Harvey:

I think I was at a point where I was really tired of analyzing things and having to talk about the music and go over all of those things and I just felt it was a nice idea to actually just play some music and not really think about it or prod at it or y'know, try and open it up in any way. But of course with Mick his entire process was bound together with that kind of, that's what he did, basically.

MUSIC: Talking Heads - Brownie's Theme (True Stories - Original Soundtrack) PBS Archives

Mick Geyer - on air 16 April 1987:

The track was from Talking Heads soundtrack to the movie True Stories, which is presently running at the Longford. The track was entitled Brownie's Theme, and although none of the Talking Heads are actually on the track, it is credited to them. Brownies' Theme. The track before that that you heard was the Golden Palominos featuring the vocals of Syd Straw, the track was I've Been the One. And at a minute to 5, it's about time to play you tonight's Film & Theatre Guide ... (fade)

Sophie Best:

My name's Sophie Best and I started doing programs on PBS in 1985 when I was a wide-eyed teenager and that was around the time I became aware of Mick obviously. I used to listen to his shows and he had such amazing musical knowledge and I found it kinda dazzling as a youngster just listening to this incredible range of music but also that very kinda husky voice. I just thought he had the loveliest voice on radio, and I just used to kinda get lulled by it, and so I always used to listen to his programs. It certainly opened my ears up to jazz and to a whole range of other musics that I'd just never heard before. And I guess it made me think of that music as being Bohemian and alternative, rather than I think in my mind I thought of that music as being something stuffy and something that your father would listen to, and it was kinda obsolete. And to hear someone who was youngish, presenting this music with so much flair, and so much passion, and presenting it not in an obvious way, like he would pair music up together that was not in a conventional way, so for a young person like me, it made me hear it with different ears. His programs made me see that there was a world of music out there beyond just alternative punk/rock. He played stuff that he thought was cool, it wasn't to do with prevailing fashions.

MONTAGE: Bruce Springsteen - Johnny 99 // Merle Haggard - Send Me Back Home, Branded Man (Merle Haggard Live) // Conversation with Lightnin' Hopkins - (International Artists - Epitaph for a Legend) (PBS Archives)

Mick Geyer - on air 1 June 1989:

A couple of minutes after 10pm Thursday night the 1st of June, we just heard from Lightnin' Hopkins, a Conversation with Lightnin' Hopkins from an album entitled, International Artists - Epitaph for a Legend, and indeed Lightnin' Hopkins is one of the greatest. If you haven't checked him out yet, get a hold of any record and then find the real good ones. Before that we heard two songs from Merle Haggard Live, Send Me Back Home and Branded Man and we started that set off with Bruce Springsteen and a tale about crime and punishment entitled Johnny 99

#### Sophie Best:

I remember seeing him at station meetings, expressing really forthright views and um, bucking the establishment which I admired. I mean he also just seemed an incredibly cultured person to me in terms of you know his involvement with the art world, and his obviously fierce intellect which came through in everything he did, in his broadcasting and his writing, and in the way that he worked within the station. He was obviously someone who thought deeply and was very perceptive and had a great deal of insight into music and into broadcasting and into all of those things. So yeah, again I guess I admired him for having that level of engagement that was kind of beyond my reach.

#### MUSIC: Tom Waits - Big in Japan (Mule Variations)

#### Richard Martin:

My name is Richard Martin and I was a staff member at 3PBS FM, joining the station in October 1987 and that's where I first got to meet Mick Geyer. My first impressions of Mick is that he was one of the more flamboyant characters around the station at the time and I was fascinated by his radio shows he was broadcasting and his very apparent wide range of knowledge of music and particularly contemporary music.

I can recall when I first gained a deeper appreciation of that, was having to do an interview. I cornered him and said "look I've got this interview coming up and can you give me a bit of a guidance as to some of the questions that might be worth asking?" and he was straight onto it. Getting the research questions from Mick firmed up in my mind that he was a bit of a switched-on cat, and he was associated with some of the names that were prominent at the time in the alternate rock world, and Mick was definitely friends with quite a lot of them.

But one of the things I loved about him is that he actually had a quite sort of, and not in an offensive way, quite a cantankerous air to him at times. He was not shy in putting forward his opinions on musicians and music. I can recall a few times, just sort of taking a break out of station meetings, or times around the station where we would have chats, not maybe one-on-one, but with a group of people and I would sit back and quite enjoy the range of ideas and inspirations that he had and also his ability to take on people, who might have been a little bit set in their ways. And I think that was one of the great qualities of Mick, like he had an ability to sort of maybe introduce new thoughts to people to try and get them out of their egg shell a little bit, cause he was well out of the egg shell! You know on his radio shows he would drift into all sorts of other areas of music, you know he had a depth of appreciation of different styles but could mish-mash it in a way in his shows that made them quite unique radio programs to listen to.

#### MUSIC: Sacred Cowboys - Bangkok (Sacred Cowboys mini-LP)

#### Mick Geyer on air - 16 April 1987:

How far can too far go? That was the Sacred Cowboys with an Alex Chiltern track called Bangkok off their almost lost mini album. The reason for playing that is that the track before, by Tav Falco's Panther Burns, was indeed produced by Alex Chiltern. And I thought I'd play another track off that album, which is called The World We Knew ..

#### Rodney Shah:

My name is Rodney Shah and I'm here talking about Mick Geyer. He was there before I was at

PBS which was about the mid 80's. Mick was there, and he was pretty good presence around the place. One of the I first things remember Mick saying when I was doing a recording with him was, I thought I'd done pretty well, but Mick said nuh, we've gotta do it again, you're boring, you need some vim and vigour, we want vim and vigour. He said that to me for a month maybe.

Mick was straightforward guy, he told you where he stood. He wasn't belligerent or anything, he was always, his point of view was always well thought out. He was always using his head. Mick's ego wasn't way out in front, to be the centre of attention. If Mick was around, you knew he was there, or what he was doing, but he never had to be, "hey guys, I'm here, look at me, look at me", it was much more laid back attitude to things, yeah.

When I was a paid employee of PBS and a few of us got shafted by the station, and I think the only reason I got up and a told these people where I stood, where I thought they stood, was Mick giving me a bit of a push in that way. I think it was along the lines of don't be angry about it, do something about it. Mick showed you can do things like that.

#### MUSIC: Masada Ensemble - Katzatz (Live in Seville)

##### Rodney Shah:

Some of the music Mick got me into specifically is John Zorn, great saxophonist who I'd never heard of at the time, I listened to punk rock music, lots of alternative underground rock and roll, but never listened to much Jazz, I thought it was what old people listened to, it was what my Mum and Dad listened to. But Mick soon set that right, he showed me there's lots of cool Jazz out there, lots of other cutting edge, avant-garde interesting jazz musicians who I still listen to and hunt out every now and then to this day. Still a fan of John Zorn of course, thanks Mick.

##### Natalene Muscat:

My name is Natalene Muscat and I am a long term supporter of PBS, and I was employed there as the Subscriptions Administrator from 1987 to 1993, and during that time I formed a strong and long friendship with Mick. And I do believe at that time he was maybe a Category Coordinator or definitely was a significant type around the station, he was certainly doing his various music programs. And I was drawn to his amazing knowledge of music and he had this incredible style and just seemed to be the cool dude at PBS.

His passion for music came through in so many different ways and he really shared that with everybody. He introduced me to Diamanda Galas, who in some ways I would say, quite changed my view of the world.

##### Mick Geyer - on air 16 April 1987:

Continuing with some more film music here of a sort, this is an album called The Big Gun Down, that has been put together by John Zorn and he's playing the music of the film composer Ennio Morricone, and amongst many other people, this track features the vocals of Diamanda Galas.

#### MUSIC: John Zorn / Diamanda Galas - Metamorfosi (The Big Gun Down - John Zorn Plays the music of Ennio Morricone)

##### Natalene Muscat:

My enduring memory of Mick Geyer is running in to do a radio show in his black jeans and his suit jacket and his brown RM Williams boots, with records under arm swinging by my office. He had a secret stash of records in the bottom draw, "oh I need records, I need records, quick, quick, stuff!", and then flying past to his show, and while it all appeared really shambolick on the surface, it certainly had no sense of disarray once he was on air and broadcasting. Another thing about Mick was he did a lot of Reggae Shows as well and he used to always walk around saying "Praise Jah" to everyone, which I always found quite amusing.

MUSIC: Lee Perry - Dreadlocks in Moonlight (Arkology)

Moira Drew:

My name is Moira Drew. I started presenting Reggae shows on PBS in about 1984 maybe early 1985, and Mick was one of the first people I really got to know at PBS. The Reggae show at that point was on a Saturday night, between 8 and 10, followed by the Jazz Party Show presented by a variety of people over the month, but Mick was one, Graeme Osborne was another, and quite often the changeover from my Reggae show would be to either Mick's program or Graeme's Jazz program following. And just because I s'pose Mick's the friendly guy that he was, we got talking over the changeovers. He was interested in Reggae music and finding out more so, quite a few times I'd be lending him records and he'd bring them back and comment on them and mainly that was our first sort of point of contact. The African show was one that he was particularly interested in too. Mick I think was one of the first people that I heard play Ali Farka Toure on the radio, Malian blues singer, and it was a long time before he became as well known as he did.

MUSIC: Ali Farka Toure - Timbarma (Ali Farka Toure)

Moira Drew:

At that stage PBS was a much smaller station and people were a lot more involved on a day to day basis and Mick being there in the Waves office during that time, and those opportunities for talking, he was always talking and finding out about things and he always had something to say but he always had a good ear and if he was interested he'd ask and he'd listen and do something constructive with the information more often than not. So a really valuable conduit to a lot of things that went on at PBS.

MUSIC: Abdel Aziz el Mubarak - Tarig Ash Shoag (Abdel Aziz El Mubarak)

Suzette Watkins:

I'm Suzette Watkins. I was an announcer at 3PBS, a volunteer from about '86 through til about '99, I think it must've been. I was Chair of the Board for 1988. I probably met Mick almost straight away. I was doing a firstly folky-acoustic type show and eventually that morphed into The Global Village. Mick was around - he was one of those people who was into everything and was always around, always offering help, always interested in everything.

What he did for me I think it was probably his fault that I ended up in 'world' music. He gave me an album to listen to, and it was an album of griots and it was Don Cherry and a bunch of of, I don't know where they came from, I have the album still, (MD - Mandingo Griot Society). Mandingo Griots yes that's the one, and he leant me this album and I fell in love with it, but it was such an accessible way to get into world music, going in through African music and particularly that particular style - the Mandingo Griots - and it was just gorgeous.

MUSIC: Mandingo Griot Society - Sounds from the Bush (Mandingo Griot Society)

Suzette Watkins:

He already knew so much about what we are now calling 'world music'. He'd obviously done his listening and was obviously so enthusiastic and he loved that music so much that he wanted everyone else to get involved with it as well and that's I think one of the great joys, because he infused you with the same enthusiasm that he had. He made you want to go out and find more, which in turn lead you to go on air and enthuse in the same way, maybe about different things, but enthuse other people. Say, I want to get my knowledge, my enthusiasm, my interest over to everybody on air, and it's something I'm still doing.

Mick Geyer on air 1988?:

The Muddy Waters Blues Band supporting Junior Wells and also featuring the guitar of Buddy Guy and this recording also features Otis Span highlighted and it's one of the finest records

I've ever heard.

MUSIC: Jr Wells & Buddy Guy featuring Otis Span with Muddy Waters Blues Band - I'm So Glad (PBS Archives)

LISA:  
In the late 1980's, as a unique specialist contemporary music station, there were major issues that PBS had to address; the move to 24 hours broadcasting, a transmitter now reaching all of Melbourne, and JJJ about to hit the Melbourne airwaves.

Richard Martin:  
The regular monthly station meetings were very vibrant and colourful lively meetings through that period. And I believe it would have been around July 1988 that Mick presented a paper called "Living up to the Moniker of being a Progressive Radio Station". And it had his views and ideas of raising the profile of programming and taking PBS to the next level that it deserved to be now that it was able to broadcast 24 hours, 7 days a week and wasn't restricted at all which it had been previously when the transmitter was located at the (Royal) Women's Hospital in town. Mick became very active in the Programming Review Committee to look at changing the whole nature of the programming grid, and I recall him being he was a very considerate person in the sense. He was interested in the newer presenters and he sort of went out of his way I think to include everybody in some way in radio shows and giving them a spot on air.

It was a very exciting time because, when the transmitter was relocated which I think was either the beginning of November or October in 87, it was going to be you know like the rebirth of the station in many ways. There was a new manager who was appointed Mazz Knott, and she actually developed quite a strong friendship with Mick. Two people coming from very completely different directions, but at the same time a very common interest in their passion for the radio station and its survival.

MUSIC: John Lee Hooker - Money (That's What I Want) (Chicago Blues - That's My Story)

Suzette Watkins:  
He did a lot of work with the Board on re-organising programming at one point. He came at things from a different angle often, it wasn't necessarily comfortable, but it was always fun and always interesting.

Moira Drew:  
My main long term memory is working with him on the Program Review Committee, over a period of about 6 months or something, no longer. Really sort of intense work, intense discussion, a lot of time and effort and time just sort of spent in the same group of five of us .. you know talk, talk, talk. His ability to assimilate information was amazing, and to communicate it, but it was always with that integrity and common good as the end goal. It was a pleasure to work with him, and in that sort of group environment I don't think I've worked with anybody since who's been as honest and inclusive in that sort of situation.

Natalene Muscat:  
Other kinds of projects that I worked with Mick on, or was involved in, really was as a staff member was the notorious programming committee upheavals of the late 1980's. They were pretty heady times with some pretty heated debates and he was quite fearless and throughout that whole process, he really kind of valued the role he had as the lead kind of Programming Committee member and you have to admire him for that. Mick's primary motivation was always the sound and it was always about the music and I think that that is evident in the history of PBS and indeed what's on air today as well.

MUSIC: Venom P Stinger - song title unknown (PBS Recording)

Rodney Shah:



There was a live music week, I remember, quite a large project, everything we did at PBS at the time had to be either a live recording, band playing live to air, just as long as it was live, and Mick was quite involved with that getting some very cool bands coming down to play 'cause, yeah Mick knew all the right people.

MONTAGE: Thing - song title unknown / Untitled Red - Aquatic (PBS Recording)

Richard Martin:

Around the time of the whole Programming Review process went on and the new programming grid came in, there was a week that was dedicated, Live Music Week, and I know Mazz (Knott) had a big input in that and she was liaising very closely with very important people at the time, like Cameron Paine and Mick and others.

In fact I've got a magic moment during that week when X played; this shows the whole diversity of Mick, like he's really into a band, I don't know how you describe the Crown of Thorns, Chris Wilson style of music which has that kind of bluesy element through, and then you've got this other band like X, and I mean they were seriously cranking it up to '11' in the studio, distorted going overdrive and it was electric and there was Mick in the background, big smile on his face. So, he was right into it and he was very actively involved during that week, I mean it was all a part of the strategies being put in place to try and create a very solid identity of the station.

MUSIC: X - TV Glue (At Home With You)

Mick Geyer - on air 16 April 1987:

OK, the track that you just heard was of course the great band 'X' and that's off their album At Home With You. Now they're due to have an album out very shortly. The single that will be lifted off it is Dream Baby, the old Everly Brothers track, that'll be out in the next couple of weeks, so we've got something to look forward to there, but their music certainly doesn't date at all, does it?

MUSIC: TISM - Saturday Night Palsy - (PBS/TVU Live Simulcast from The Old Greek Theatre, Richmond. 21 October 1988 - PBS Archives)

Natalene Muscat:

The gig that he organised with the Old Greek (Theatre), with TISM, was a really big event. It was simulcast on PBS at the same time, which was you know, cutting edge stuff in those days.

Garry Havrillay & Mick Geyer on air (PBS Studio), 21 October 1988:

MG: It's a particularly exciting night tonight given that Public Radio and Public TV in Melbourne are presenting the first (Public/Community broadcasting) simulcast ever in Australia. Bit late for a Bicentenary Event perhaps.

GH: The whole air here is electric, it's wonderful.

MG: There's thousands down in Richmond of course. This is the biggest event they've had in Richmond since Mick Jagger played there about 5 days ago.

MONTAGE: TISM - I Drive A Truck [inc. simultaneously staged 'debate'] (PBS/TVU Live Simulcast - PBS Archives)

Garry Havrillay & Mick Geyer on air (PBS Studio), 21 October 1988:

GH: We just heard from This Is Serious Mum in simulcast with TVU on Channel 47, and Mick, some wise words for us.

MG: Yeah, it's wisdom you're after Garry, I'd have to say that was the most important media debate ever conducted in a forum since Kerry Packer met Bob Hawke and Rupert Murdoch for lunch. This Is Serious Mum obviously starring, somehow I believe they must have set up the event there down at the Greek Theatre in Richmond...

MUSIC: TISM - Defecate On My Face (PBS/TVU Live Simulcast - PBS Archives)

Richard Martin:

It was around the time of the 10th anniversary celebrations at the station and the introduction of Public TV was just starting to kick off, and Mick was a big fan of Crown of Thorns. And I just recall him back at the station we were looking at the broadcast and there were pizzas and beer and heaps of people around and we were all looking at the replay of the live recording that went to air on public TV. And I just have this fond moment of, on the TV with Chris Wilson with his Crown of Thorns and Mick just sort of in the room, not smug, but just content. Like there was an amazing contentment as he was watching artists that obviously he'd associated with and had known for quite awhile, on a TV screen, knowing that it had been broadcast live to air. Gosh back then I'm sure the viewing audience was miniscule, but it didn't matter, the point is that it was going out, it was recorded, and it was a magic moment to him.

MUSIC: Chris Wilson & Crown of Thorns - The Changeling (PBS/TVU Live Simulcast - PBS Archives)

Rodney Shah:

The last time I saw Mick though, I was just wandering down Chapel Street, and I looked across and thought, gee's I know that guy, that's Mick Geyer, haven't seen him for awhile. The thing that struck me was, there's Mick and ah yep, he still dressed well, I liked that. Always looked good did Mick.

Natalene Muscat:

I can just see him still running in with scarves and things, and he just had this crazy sense of fashion, that I don't think I've seen really since then either. He was certainly a very stylish man and one who, like I've said, is really keen to share his passion with music and impart what he knows and his wisdom on anyone who wants to hear it. And I often have fond memories of him holding court at PBS and at various gigs, cigarette in hand and drink in the other and holding court with various Melbourne types at the time.

MUSIC: Conway Savage - Streets of Laredo (Rare Songs and Performances 1989-2004)

LISA:

Ian Stanistreet was PBS Station Manager until February 1988.

Ian Stanistreet:

What I guess I saw was Mick as the interviewer for all seasons. I vividly remember that we would get requests for interviews all the time but they would be from such a broad range of musicians and musical styles. Mick was always there to be able to, you know, if nobody else was available to do it or had no idea of the background of the musicians, then Mick was the person because he was completely unintimidated by the music industry and he had such a broad understanding of different music styles, and art and literature that he seemed to be able to really easily achieve a rapport with anybody that he interviewed. And that made of course his interviews very interesting; he brought people out a lot easier than many other people. So, I guess I saw that aspect of his connection into the music industry, although he became much more active a little later on I guess, in doing work as a manager and assisting various musicians in the development of their careers. But yeah for him it was pretty obviously a labour of love, he loved it all and he did it well.

Mick Geyer - on air 16 April 1987:

That'll follow a track from the great Don Cherry, who of course apart from playing trumpet with rock bands such as Lou Reed and Ian Drury, is perhaps more well known as a jazz musician, first with Ornette Coleman, latterly with Old and New Dreams, and in between with any number of people from Coltrane, Sonny Rollins and a literal cast of thousands. Great musician, also plays a lot of 'Third World' musics, African, Eastern, the whole shebang. This track is kind of cute, it's about the only way it can be described, it's entitled Rapping Recipe,

but I play it because he does drop a lot of names of worthy jazz musicians.

#### MUSIC: Don Cherry - Rapping Recipe (Homeboy)

#### LISA:

You are listening to a tribute to Mick Geyer on PBS 106.7 FM. More now from long-time friend & guitarist Barry Palmer, and then PBS volunteer & sound engineer Cameron Paine.

#### Barry Palmer:

Someone would bring up a subject like a book and Mick would start talking about it straight away. And I know sometimes he'd skim, but I wondered about Mick's, first of all what kind of memory he had, I dunno if he had photographic but he certainly had something profound. With film, I mean his knowledge of film, I remember I think it was an interview with Greenaway? But there was just nothing that the guy could talk about that Mick couldn't elaborate on, and I just know he wasn't like a crammer, he wouldn't sit around and study up for someone.

#### Cameron Paine:

I used to listen to him on the radio a lot. I thought he did amazing, amazing shows, and I don't know whether he spent hours researching or he just pulled this stuff out of his arse, but he always delivered it with such, I don't know, his style was so laconic, it was just like, it would just roll off his tongue. And we're a community radio station and I mean I've done a little bit of time in front of the microphone myself and it's hard yakka. And Mick used to just sort of, like often he'd just start talking without his microphone on, so he didn't really engage with the technology, but in terms of sitting and talking knowledgeably *about* someone, or knowledgeably *with* someone, this didn't seem to faze him at all.

#### LISA:

Wim Wenders visited Melbourne in March 1988 to promote his film *Wings of Desire*.

#### MONTAGE: Wings of Desire (*Les Ailes du Desir*) - Original Soundtrack

#### Mick Geyer - interview with Wim Wenders - March 1988:

MG: There's a number of areas I want to get into Wim, some general about film making and more specifically to do with *Wings of Desire* - the extensive use of black and white. How did that come about and for what purpose was that?

WW: The *State of Things* was obviously black and white, *Paris Texas* was obviously in colour, and *Wings of Desire* came as an idea, the very first idea to make a film in Berlin came as black and white idea so to speak, and then with the story that entered into that very first idea, the angel falling in love, came the idea of switching from black and white to colour with the 'birth' so to speak, of Daniel. So it is the first time that I mixed both in a film. Not the first time that this has been done.

MG: There's this rather marvellous sense of tone with the black and white that is undoubtedly due to Henry Alicante, (WW Oh yeah - Alicante) which reminds me of that line of Dylan talking about his recording of *Blonde on Blonde*, it had 'that mercury sound' and there seems to be something particularly romantic even about just the use of black and white, the silver lining almost?

WW: Henri is like the great old master of black and white. You have to know that he is 80 yrs old. He started as an assistant in the silent era, and he worked with some of the great cinematographers of the '30's as assistant, and his own first film as a director of photography is a landmark in black and white photography, *Beauty & The Beast*. So when I considered doing *Wings of Desire* in Berlin and in black and white, I thought Henri was the only choice for that, one of the best. And he had retired already and when I told him about the film and different aspects of the photography, he was very eager to do it. And actually he really opened up his treasure case once more and it was really amazing what he invented, the sort of lighting. That's why the film sometimes looks like a French film of '40's or so. It's strictly up to him. And of course we used a very special process. We shot in black and white, and the film is printed in colour, so you have the contrast of the black and white image but it has a sienna or

brown tone to it that makes it rather warm, and sometimes during the night scenes just a little blueish, so that is why maybe the Dylan quotation is really nice.

MUSIC: Nick Cave & Bad Seeds - The Carney (Wings of Desire - Original Soundtrack):

Mick Geyer - interview with Wim Wenders - March 1988:

MG: Did the Carney come as a response to your theme? That fits so perfectly with the theme of the circus.

WW: The record just came out about the same time when we were starting to plan this movie. So as I talked to Nick about a collaboration for *Til The End of the World*, and I felt that he was a little disappointed that it was not going to happen. And I liked *From Her To Eternity* a lot in the context of this thing that I was writing. And then I listened to the new record and I thought *The Carney* was just unbelievable, I mean it's a great song and it fitted so well into this circus world.

MG: So it was just such a neat combination

WW: So he was performing *The Carney* - or just the end of *The Carney*.

MG: So it was actually as a result of the other film. Obviously, there is that element too of the stranger in Berlin.

WW: Yeah.

LISA:

Mick Geyer with Wim Wenders. Also visiting Melbourne in March 1988 was Blixa Bargeld, who was a guest on the *Sex Beat Show*. He was accompanied by Mick in what could possibly be described as a hijack!!

Blixa Bargeld and Mick Geyer - guests on PBS Sex Beat Show presented by Jacquie Smith - March 1988:

Jacquie: We started off with Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds and *Knocking on Joe from The First Born Is Dead* album. Next up we're going to hear something from Mr Blixa Bargeld; he'll be in after this track with his Press Agent, Mick Geyer.

MUSIC: Einstürzende Neubauten - Keine Schönheit ohne Gefahr | No Beauty Without Danger (Fünf auf der nach oben offenen Richterskala | Five on the open ended Richter scale)

MG: Okay, *Einstürzende Neubauten* that particular track was, and a track which translates in English as 'There's No Beauty Without Danger' I believe. For the German translation, we'll get that in a second. But taking over from Jacquie for a minute, This is Mick Geyer.

Jacquie: Good evening Mick.

MG: Good evening Jacquie, how're you doing?

Jacquie: Good, good (laughs)

MG: We've got Blixa Bargeld in the studio with us tonight. He's the singer and guitarist with *Neubauten* and the lyricist and musical composer, or part thereof. He'll correct any of this in a minute. Blixa, welcome to PBS.

BB: Hello

MG: That track, *No Beauty without Danger*, that we just heard, it sounds like it's a general aesthetic of *Neubauten*.

BB: (pause) Yes, indeed it is.

MG: And can you explain further this, no beauty without danger, and that as a general ..

BB: Well it came out in a live performance, just the way it is on the record.

MG: And that's just sort of an impromptu vocal

BB: Sort of. I played it in Nuremburg ... we played in there once, and that's where this song first appeared suddenly, and on the way back in the plane I wrote the lyrics ...

BB: ... went to Number 1 in the album charts doing that.

MG: There seems to be something about England's attraction to compilations. I'm sure if Doris

Day happened to put out a compilation, she'd do quite well.

BB: (dumbfounded) Doris Day?

MG: Well, anybody that's quite old, but ... Mute is a label that you have much in common with. You record.

BB: Yes, I ...

MG: Here in the studios of PBS, is Blixa Bargeld

Jacquie: If you've just tuned in

BB: Of Einstürzende Neubauten yes. What Mick Geyer is trying to say, is that one of the members of Einstürzende Neubauten plays guitar in this band,

Jacquie: And he's our special guest

BB: No, no, no that's not me. He said that before, he said I'm singing and playing guitar. But I hardly don't play any guitar with Neubauten, I just play guitar in Nick Cave & the Bad Seeds, but we've got a guitar player and this guitar player is playing guitar with the new line-up of Crime and the City Solution as well. That's what he's trying to say!

MG: It's probably pertinent to um ...

BB: His name is Alexander Hucker, Alex Hucker, right ...

Mick Harvey:

And that's typical of Mick, just throw up the question, get some response, just keep it happening. And that was, kind of what he was about really. Completely fearless, bold in every circumstance. That's something very unique to him.

LISA:

Mick Harvey wrapping up this second of four documentaries paying tribute to Mick Geyer. In our next program we'll hear about Mick as a friend and catalyst to many musicians, and about the legendary Geyer tapes, those finely crafted compilations of musical enlightenment.

MUSIC: Einstürzende Neubauten - Sand (Halber Mensch)

LISA:

Thanks to the many people involved in this project, including Sophie Best, Greg Geyer and Graeme Osborne for material from their archives, and to Nick Cave for the use of the video interview he recorded with Mick.

Mick Geyer: Music Guru was produced for PBS-FM by Moira Drew, with Garry Havrillay, Bill Runting, Jenni Crowley and me, Lisa Palermo. •



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