



## FULL TRANSCRIPT OF DOCUMENTARY #3

First broadcast on PBS-FM Wednesday 12 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 third 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.

His interests and activities were centred on his love of music, and as you'll hear from recent interviews and archival material, his influence was widespread, but remained largely outside the public view.

In previous programs we heard about the beginnings of his passion for music, and his role at PBS FM, behind the scenes and on the radio. Now we'll explore Mick as a catalyst and friend to many musicians, through conversation and the legendary Geyer tapes, those finely crafted compilations of musical enlightenment and education.

In this program we'll hear for the first time from: musicians Dave Graney & Clare Moore, Jex Saarelaht, Hugo Race, Tex Perkins, Warren Ellis, Kim Salmon, Brian Hooper, Charlie Owen, and Penny Ikingier; and from friends Beau Cummin, Mariella del Conte, Stephen Walker and Warwick Brown.

First up we heard part of a 1996 video recording where Nick Cave turned the camera on Mick. And here's Nick again, on the line from London.

Nick Cave:

I can't really recall the first time I met Mick. Mick always seems to, always been there in some kind of way. But it was definitely in the Birthday Party days for me. I think I did stuff with him for radio, and I knew him from the radio, from PBS, and I can't really remember anytime in my career that Mick wasn't actually there. He always seemed to be there sittin' in the corner of the band-room with a can of beer in one hand and a Camel cigarette in the other, talking and talking. He talked a lot. And over the years we became very good friends.

We basically had a conversation I think that lasted about 25 years, which was about all and everything, but mostly about art, and mostly about music and literature and paintings and this sort of stuff. Some stuff that I'd discovered that I wanted to tell him about and some stuff that he'd discovered and he wanted to tell me about. And I think anyone that you talk to about Mick, will talk about his generosity with his ideas and with these things that he discovered, which he really basically spent his life looking for, which were the beautiful things in, in art, and he opened my eyes to a wealth of things, and I think he did to a lot of people, I suspect.

A lot of us have the privilege of having the Geyer tapes. I don't know if you've seen any of these, but these are cassettes that he would send out to various people which were kind of compilations of rare and obscure and wonderful things that he'd discovered, musically. And I was constantly going around to peoples' places all over the world and saying, "hey you've got a Mick Geyer tape there". And that was very much what he was about in a lot of ways, was discovering things and passing them on to other people, which reflected an enormous generosity of spirit.

LISA:

Later we'll hear Nick Cave asking Mick about those compilation tapes.

MUSIC: Dr John - Gris Gris (Gris Gris)

Peter Jones:

Mick's mixed tapes - they were great, they were so good, 'cos they were mixed tapes, from classical music to like delta blues. It's like the essence of the music is all the same, but just how it comes out is, sounds a little different, but the spirit of it is the same really, so that was good to hear and learn. I think the Dr John Gris Gris album, I think that was on a tape and I heard that and just kinda went, "Woah, what is that?" And I started getting into New Orleans and I ended up going to New Orleans to see what it was like and that was quite amazing.

Jex Saarelaht:

I'm Jex Saarelaht, I met Mick I guess in about 1985 or 86, I had a six piece Jazz band called The Jextet. And I think it was our drummer Peter Jones who introduced me to Mick, and I think Mick was running Waves at the time, which was the PBS magazine. He organised some interviews and promotion in the magazine. Very soon after meeting him it was like we were old friends, he just had that ability to just be really natural and open and warm and he started sending me tapes, which I believe is something he did for a lot of people. And then at some point he called me into the old PBS studios in Fitzroy Street, and did an interview for what I thought, I was led to believe he was writing a book, or that was his ultimate plan, but he was, I understood he was interviewing a whole heap of musicians.

MUSIC: The Jextet - Roll Over Baby (PBS Live Recording)

Jex Saarelaht:

The thing I loved about Mick was his openness to all different types of music, he wasn't a policeman for any particular style, he wasn't averse to listening to anything, he was open eared and open minded, and it was sort of contagious when you were around him. He reminded you constantly of the wide variety of great music and that there was no need to shut anything out because it was labelled something that wasn't in your camp. Particularly with jazz, over the years I found that at times there's been a lot of people who the word sometimes is just enough to scare them off, they don't want to know about it. They have their idea of what that means and tend to think of it as being something intellectual and daggy and I don't know what. Mick was never bothered by anything like that, he just listened to the music and if he liked it, he liked it. He wasn't ever scared to say that he liked something if he did and I admired that. But yeah, Mick always had an opinion and was interested to hear other people's opinions, so there was never any quiet spots.

Hugo Race:

I met Mick for the first time at PBS, it was the first time I'd been in there. I went in there to get interviewed, for the PBS magazine, 1985. And that time I had a band called The Wreckery and we'd just made our first EP, and it was all very thrilling to release it, and we were on the promotional path, and he did a very thorough investigation as well. I was very impressed by his erudition.

MUSIC: The Wreckery - Passion Fall Down (I Think This Town is Nervous)

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#### Hugo Race:

In this profession you talk to hundreds of journalists and most of them you don't necessarily recall, things get blurry, but somehow Mick was never in that category. I have the sensation that I kind of knew him from that point on as a friend, not just as someone that I'd met, and that could be that after that interview we went down Fitzroy Street to The Prince or something and had a few beers, and then it's kinda like you feel like you've known each other since whenever, forever. He was involved in heaps of things simultaneously. I can think of dozens of things where our interest in music and film and writing and history intersected, and he was always feeding information and prompting exploration and discovery continuously.

#### Mariella del Conte:

My name is Mariella and I first met Mick in the 80's when he'd turn up to my flat with a 6-pack of beer and various compilation tapes that he'd made of obscure blues artists mainly, all of which were pretty new to me and people around me, who were musicians and artists. He was very into just throwing a tape your way and going "what do you think about that?" or sometimes not even asking for feedback, but just I guess wanting to share music which is basically what it was about.

#### MUSIC: The Beasts of Bourbon - The Low Road (The Low Road)

#### Tex Perkins:

I met him at the Prince Of Wales at a sound check, I think it was the Beasts of Bourbon in 1989. Mick appeared, said he had a radio show and basically he gets various music artist type people to come down and play a bunch of music and talk about it. And I said "Oh certainly", and turned up at PBS with a bunch of cassettes, very grubby cassettes without things written on them, and actually half the things that I had chosen to play I had no idea who they were. One by one Mick just went, "Oh well that's Max Roach actually and that's KD Lang actually". And so, Mick was always very kind of, played the knowledgeable guy. I always wondered what actually Mick was, what was his vocation in life, how did he actually make money, and I still have no answer to that question, but he seemed to spend a lot of time knowing stuff. And if you ever had any sort of obscure musical questions, Mick was the guy. Even if you didn't have the obscure musical questions Mick was the guy to tell you about it.

So, that was my first meeting with Mick. I remember him also being very surprised at my selection. It was a lot broader than he expected. So that sort of sparked a bit of an ongoing relationship with Mick. And once you made that relationship he would continuously furnish you with music, and I actually still have a Mick Geyer collection, it's a series of cassettes, in between 20 and 30 cassettes that every time that I'd see him he'd hand me a couple more, and I'd go away and listen to them over the next few months and then there'd be questions, "Mick who the hell is that?", and then of course Mick'd go on to a very long explanation of the history of whoever artist that you'd questioned. That was another aspect about Mick, he was endearingly long winded!

#### Warren Ellis (of The Dirty Three and The Bad Seeds):

The first time I met him was in the early nineties. I think I was at the Beasts of Bourbon at the Palace, and I was a few sails into the wind and running across the road and this arm grabbed me and sort of pulled me off the road and said "you're a bit too good a fiddle player to get yourself killed right now", and that was Mick Geyer. And then we started talking on the bottom of The Esplanade there, he said "whaddya like to listen to"? Couple of hours later I went home, and that was how I met Mick.

He was always there at concerts. Jim and Mick Turner had known him from their involvement in bands before that, and he was just always around, you know. Wherever there was music Mick seemed to be there and the music that you liked, Mick was there, he was just always there.

LISA:

You're listening to a tribute to Mick Geyer on 106.7 PBS FM. So far in this program we've heard from: Nick Cave, Peter Jones & Jex Saarelaht, Hugo Race, Mariella del Conte, Tex Perkins and Warren Ellis.

MUSIC: Kim Salmon and The Surrealists - Melt (Just Because You Can't See It Doesn't Mean It Isn't There)

Kim Salmon:

He was in the PBS studios, I think it must've been 1991! I was there with other members of The Surrealists to do an interview with Craig Kamber and Craig didn't show up for his interview! And Mick was a person who I recognised, and he noticed us looking rather lost. So he asked if he could help and his suggestion was that maybe he could do an interview with us, but he didn't really know anything about the Surrealists, and he managed to do a very in-depth and probing interview that was like, I was very taken aback and very impressed by the professionalism of it and how he managed to adapt to the situation.

What I think of him as, and I'm sure a lot of people have said, is not so much a teacher but an educator, he was really quite gifted in that area. If he found that you were interested in something he would automatically say, "well here's something else you might be interested in" and he might not only suggest things that would expand on what you already knew but even challenged it. That's where he was coming from, and that's sort of what a really good teacher does. So, he found that I had a bit of an interest in jazz, but like I'd only really dabbled, just got my toes wet basically. And within a week of him finding that out he had this tape for me. These tapes are really infamous but there was a tape and it had the World Saxophone Quartet, it had, it wasn't just jazz but there was kind of a jazz link up with everything. There was Thelonious Monk, there was Albert Ayler and a whole lot of stuff that I didn't know about, but there were other things that you wouldn't normally think of as jazz but they seem to be connected, you could kind of find a thread, it helped, it expanded my idea of what jazz was. I mean, it helped light the way, I think. I think he had a real gift for that and he would've done that with countless musicians in Melbourne. I mean he should've been on some payroll, he was so good at educating people.

LP: That's true.

KS: And it wasn't just with music, it was with literature and politics.

LP: Culture.

KS: That's what especially came through. I had this idea that, well he gave me a couple of tapes, he might've given somebody else a tape or two, but they're everywhere.

MUSIC: Thelonious Monk - Ask Me Now (The Complete Genius)

Kim Salmon:

When I went to his funeral, it was really inspiring to hear all the testimonies about just how much he did for people. It wasn't just, like he was more than an educator. I heard stories about how he organised cricket teams and was very fair about how they operated and the champions weren't the ones that were gonna get the go all the time. It was the sort of cricket team I wish I'd been allowed to be in when I was a kid because you know I gave up on sport because I never got picked and somebody like that would've made a difference I think. Not that the world's lost a great cricketer, in me.

Brian Hooper (bass player with Kim Salmon and the Surrealists and the Beasts of Bourbon):

I met Mick when I was a nervous young man playing with Kim Salmon and I'd come in probably for my first radio interview in Melbourne and Mick happened to be the host. He turned out to know quite a lot about us and surprised me, and I guess ever since he's surprised me in a lot of other ways too, his knowledge and his contacts.

Mick has been involved with just about everything I've been involved with either directly or indirectly. He tended to take me aside and, not coach me, but tell me what he thought about

performances, and direction we should, might like to look at, in terms of records to listen to and such-like. I believe he did that for lots of other people. Obviously with the Beasts Of Bourbon he'd be at our concerts, stuff I did with Roland Howard, he'd just turn up and be involved, whatever level he thought was appropriate.

Charlie Owen (Guitarist):

I can not remember how I met Mick. When I moved to Melbourne in I think it was 1990 or something, I suppose I met him probably through Conway (Savage) or maybe Maurice Frawley. But he was sort of a character around that I slowly got to know because of his inimitable style, he sort of set himself apart from the crowd. He wasn't a fashionable character, he was a stylish character. I liked that about him. Part of my attraction to Mick and his way of being was, his interest in music wasn't based on any fashion or any current music, he was genuinely interested in music from all walks. And I suppose, I don't really know that many people who I can have a conversation with about the Art Ensemble of Chicago.

MUSIC: The Art Ensemble of Chicago - Whatever Happens (The Alternative Express)

Charlie Owen:

But he wasn't a wanker, he had style about all that and it was good to have somebody on the radio and around in the music world that could look at music and talk about music as an art form. You could talk to him about the conceptual element of music in society, and really, really rewarding conversations and helpful in making music too. Being able to talk with other people who aren't necessarily musicians about those sorts of things, are really important to the whole of music growing and changing, so that musicians aren't influenced by success and they should never be. Obviously we are, but it needs to be counteracted by a level of art in music. And that's what he brought to music.

Penny Iking (singer and guitarist):

My partner at the time Charlie Owen, he would be on tour a lot, and Mick was a real saviour because I initially didn't know, it took me a while to make friends in Melbourne again. But he was someone who was always very accommodating and generous, and would take you out or get you involved in social things, and I'm not the only person, female, that would say that about him, he was great to all of us. When you're dealing in a circle of musicians it can be very cliquey, but he was someone that always took into account people's partners as well and treat them well. And I'm sure if it'd been the other way round and most of the musicians were female and they had male partners, I'm sure he would've been generous as well, but it was just the nature of the business. And often these musicians would go on tour or whatever and so their girlfriends or wives or whatever would be at home, alone!!! So he was always very charming and would organise social things for the ladies, for the rock widows! You know, take you out to dinner or ring you up or have you round for dinner or invite you to dinner parties, and it was really a very special role he was fulfilling.

At that stage when I first met him I was playing guitar in bands, I didn't have a solo career like I do now. And certainly he was someone who was very positive, and as he was such a good listener too, he could offer you significant feedback as to how you were approaching your music. I didn't necessarily agree with him all the time! But once I started my solo career he was extremely supportive and very proud of me.

MUSIC: Penny Iking - Kathleen (Songs from the Deep)

Warwick Brown:

I'm Warwick from Greville Records and yeah I was a good friend of Mick's for quite a long time. How did I meet him? I don't really remember but I do remember in the early days he would always be at gigs and at pubs and in record stores, and it was a much smaller scene I guess back in the 80's so everyone kind of maybe knew everybody else at least by face. One of my earliest memories of him is coming home late one night and finding him and Roland Howard drunk on my doorstep, but I really got to know Mick really well because he ended up

working for a really cool little distribution company, all they sold was old black American music, doo-wop, gospel, blues, jazz, and in the early 80's mid 80's no-one was really listening to a lot of that stuff. But Mick was one of those really cool people in that he loved a lot of punk, alternative, but he also had a really healthy love and respect for everything else as well, which I clicked with him on that.

He turned me on to things like Lee Scratch Perry, I remember him raving to me about Charles Mingus and Coltrane, doo-wop, Gospel music. So, I was running a record shop and he was running a distribution company, but I think most of the time that we got together was to talk about what we liked ourselves. And he was very enthusiastic too, he obsessed about convincing you that so and so was really awesome and you had to have this record. And he had that way of being not only just a fan and really in love with the music but he was also able to articulate what was great about it and why you should hear it and you know he had a lot of knowledge about stuff and you know one of those handful of guys where you'd walk away thinking I've really gotta hear that record, I've gotta hear that person, and that was good for me. you know. God help you if you disagreed with him though!

#### MUSIC: Dave Graney - Night of the Wolverine (Night of the Wolverine)

##### Warwick Brown:

He managed quite a few people, I can't remember who in particular, but I'm sure Dave Graney, Chris Wilson. You know those sort of people would play in the shop, and through Mick, who'd be releasing a record and he'd be the manager, so it was always easy. He was really into helping out the shop, he loved us and vice versa, and so we were able to organise things that were beneficial.

##### Dave Graney & Clare Moore:

DG: Clare and I met him in late 1988, Mick did an interview with me at PBS. I don't know what his role was then, seemed to be directing traffic around at PBS at the time. So we met him around, and then continued kind of enjoying his company. He was an odd person.

CM: He was a bit outside the rock scene so it was interesting to go, and we could talk about the trials and tribulations of the music business as we saw it and get his view on it, which was good. It was just sort of nice to talk with somebody who wasn't part of the whole scene at that time, our particular small rock scene I mean.

#### MUSIC: The Moodists - Thirsty's Calling (Two Fisted Art)

##### Dave Graney & Clare Moore:

DG: We'd been away for five years so most of the people we knew were friends and that we'd known from before from the old St Kilda kind of post-punk crowd. But, nobody could remember where Mick came from, where he fitted into that scheme of things, and I think that's how Nick Cave seemed to enjoy his company later on as well, because they didn't have a shared history. Mick was an outsider, who'd seemingly been in Melbourne but had been in more of a jazz and art, literature kind of field of interests.

CM: We used to go round to his place and just hang around and listen to records and stuff, and we didn't actually have a manager at that point and I guess we thought it might be good to get somebody we knew who was into the idea, somehow the subject came up at one point.

DG: Yeah, after we met him we'd been back to the UK for about 6 months in 1990 and further things went strange with this British record company. Eventually we did a recording with the ABC here which became a live thing we put out called Lure Of The Tropics, and that was coming out and this album we'd done in the UK all coming out at the same time, two albums in 1992 all of a sudden, and I rang Mick up and asked would he be our manager kind of thing, and he was our manager until 1995. Our scene was very rich, our music was full of things Mick could relate to and pull things out of. He was kind of tuned into my kind of lyrics and

mythology and that kind of thing. He knew we weren't kind of normal rock band. So he was great at distilling some of the madder things we did, but later on we worked with a large record company and Mick's relations with them were quite incredible, the way he would fuss over details and that, because he was very strong on representing to the last little nuance our ideas about promoting things and that. He loved fighting with record companies.

CM: That and writing very good promotional material for us! Yes he would have very long phone calls with the record company. The other good thing though was that Mick wasn't into the idea of being a career manager, like he wasn't looking around for other people to manage, he just wanted to concentrate on one thing at a time, so that was good.

DG: In the end I think we were asking Mick to do things that weren't his strengths. That's why we finished managing with him. We wanted someone to take a load off of our kind of things, y'know like a straight kind of manager, but Mick was more into the Andrew Loog Oldham style of being a manager, if you know what I mean, you know! Like he loved stories of the Rolling Stones going in to talk to a record company and all wearing dark glasses and all sitting there and not saying anything and just letting their manager talk. Mick would've liked us to have been more like that but we weren't like 19 year old spotty teabags.

CM: Ha ha !! He did enjoy the theme though.

DG: Oh yeah.

CM: Like the night that he was at the Continental and Michael Gudinski was buying him drinks all night because Michael Gudinski thought that Mick was Dave!! He of course didn't let on until at least the eighteenth drink!! (laughs)

MUSIC: Dave Graney with The Coral Snakes - The Stars Baby (You Wanna Be There But You Don't Wanna Travel)

Dave Graney & Clare Moore:

DG: And often you'd see Mick, he'd like to hang around with people like the Bad Seeds, who liked his devil-may-care, kind of cigarette ash all over the place, kind of smoke-in-his-hair style. And often you would see other people who worked, like tour promoters and record company people, look at the way Mick moved between these worlds of the administrators and the world of the insiders, the artists, and you could see their kind of jealousy.

Hugo Race:

I think he had a really easy natural touch with people, it sounds so banal but he could communicate with people on equal terms very successfully irrespective of who they were or where they'd come from, and because of that it helps people to drop their masks and pretensions, and I don't know how he did that. He knew a lot of people. He was very highly regarded by everybody that I knew. And there's another aspect which is that he was so well informed that he had a way of dropping information or ideas sort of into your hands without you even realizing that, and then because of that you kind of looked at him in a slightly different way. But because he never tried to come on as a superior being in any sense, it all had a kind of natural evolution.

He had a very great impact on me in the sense of musical education, because when I first started going with The Wreckery I had this idea that I wanted to do a really kind of primal rock, somewhere between what I thought was the blues and kind of stripped back John Lennon Plastic Ono Band, that was kind of, my teenage dream! However in fact I really didn't know very much so it was actually Mick who would say "but have you heard this?", and that's when you'd end up with the compilation cassette tapes which would kind of like fill in all these gaps, and they used to just turn up. I've got a lot of them, still, and here was someone who had this background knowledge of exactly where you wanted to go to but didn't really have access to the material to make it possible. And of course this was really significant because in the

eighties there was no internet so it was very, very hard to find out anything. So to meet someone who could lay music on you and also photocopied magazine articles, and in so doing just kind of like push everything along a little bit, get people better informed and enable them to use influences properly rather than in a superficial way.

#### MUSIC: Amina Claudine Myers - Do You Wanna Be Saved? (The Circle of Time)

##### Hugo Race:

It kind of went further because Mick was also politically aware, so he could make connections or he could allow you to make connections, to increase the depth of actually how you appreciate music and how you reuse it as a musician. An example of that would be that he introduced me to the American writer Studs Terkel, who wrote articles that linked in directly with your understanding of American rock and roll music. It created a background effect so as that you could put the music that was influencing you in some kind of context and also helped you to appreciate the double meanings, particularly of a lot of black music, black American music. And then there came Nelson Algren, then there came a whole series of things, so his understanding of pop culture, was not only musical it was also literary.

I didn't have anything particular to offer him, the best that I could do would be to provide a little amusement and company, so we would wind up at each other's houses sitting around way into the night just 'chewing the fat', and drinking beer and stuff like that.

##### Tex Perkins:

Mick was great, in the early nineties he was all over the place. He used to do our press releases for the Cruel Sea, and the Beasts of Bourbon. Again, incredibly long-winded! Like, I remember This Is Not The Way Home album by the Cruel Sea, I asked Mick, "do you want to knock up something", I gave him a test pressing of the album, have a listen and write something and he comes back with 20 pages! (laughs) And then I just said "look send it all out!" (laughs again) And then I remember quite a few of the initial response to the album was about the press release! I used to get Mick to write press releases or anything that needed a bunch of words. He was always good at expressing abstract ideas.

#### MUSIC: The Cruel Sea - This Is Not The Way Home (This Is Not The Way Home)

##### Stephen Walker:

Well I became aware of Mick as a listener to PBS and also when I started at Triple R. And it's strange of course with radio, you don't know what the person behind the voice actually looks like, and you might've been in the room with them a number of times, and it's only when somebody actually says "oh, that's Mick Geyer" that you realise. Sooner or later we ended up at quite a number of the same gigs, we were big fans of Harem Scarem and The Wreckery and bands like that. And then a couple of years went by and I ended up moving into St Kilda and lo and behold I was actually around the corner from Mick. He also lived with Lowanna, who was a great cook and loved to seemingly cook for all these rat-bag males who would drop around and want to chew Mick's ear off and vice versa, so I ended up being a dinner guest there quite a few nights. And well, Lowanna had a boy who was a couple of years older than my son, but they were both in part of the roller blade craze at the time that was hitting St Kilda, so they were both doing that. So Mick and I found ourselves in the situation very often of sort of sitting on a seat or sitting on a wall somewhere while the boys practiced their roller blades, smoking and maybe drinking a beer and continuing some sort of discussion or argument or information interchange that we'd had perhaps at various gigs around the place over the previous years. So we ended up spending quite a lot of time together.

##### Dave Graney:

It was great to go 'round to his place, he had this brilliant flat with Lowanna in St Kilda, beautiful sunlit large penthouse apartment. He lived in a very aristocratic style that was very, cool. But he had tons of vinyl, beautiful, a life's collection of great vinyl, y'know you talk about anything and he would go and pull out some incredible album, in jazz, blues, and country.



Mainly jazz, and very weird blues!

MUSIC: Captain Beefheart - Grown So Ugly (Safe as Milk)

Dave Graney:

We were in a record shop and I started talking about this Captain Beefheart song called Grown So Ugly that I really liked and I wondered about the person, I'd heard the original version by this guy, Robert Pete Williams. And the next week Mick would give you a cassette of everything by this Robert Pete Williams guy, very strange esoteric country-blues singer.

MUSIC: Robert Pete Williams - On My Way From Texas (Newport Folk Festival)

Dave Graney & Clare Moore:

DG: But he had more of a role, people like Henry Rollins who was very close to Mick, not like a mentor, but he was a vast store of information and opinion about a wide variety of things - art, visual art, which I'm quite ignorant of; literature, film, and cricket, things like that.

CM: We only found that out like recently though, didn't we? We had no idea

DG: He would always be making tapes for people, he'd have two or three cassettes going quite distractedly while you were talking to him. And videoing things. He loved Paul Keating.

Cameron Paine (PBS volunteer and sound engineer):

I think anyone who's known Mick, other than fleetingly, will have been the recipient of a 'Mick Geyer compilation cassette'. And they're extraordinary things, I mean at their most stripped away, it's simply a car tape, but Mick talks to people through those collections and I suspect a lot of the time he spent with me exploring my notions of politics and society and the arts and stuff like that, was actually milking out ideas for how he could build compilations. Now I know there are hundreds of people who have received these cassettes.

Barry Palmer:

I dunno where he found the time to listen to all those records, and make all those compilation CDs for everybody, or tapes back in the old days. He'd be 10 songs in and go "hmm, don't like the flow" and start again from song number 3. That's okay in CD-land when you've got PCs and you can just quickly do an edit, but tape is real time.

LP: They were like little miniature radio shows I guess, for which he had a talent.

BP: Incredible radio shows.

LP: With the cassettes, did he make them in bulk or did he individualize every single cassette?

BP: No, the cassette was made for you, they were all your own cassette. And my ones, Mick'd give me cassettes and he'd never write the people's names on it, who the artist was, and he'd throw on some real doozies for me and it was up to me to come back and ask him which artist. And it would always interest Mick which ones would interest me and I would come back and ask about. And then the next thing, it was obviously deliberate, that'd be the last person I'd get. I remember he was the first person that played me the Pixies, and he's the first person that played me the Sex Pistols, and as soon as I told Mick I loved it, that was it, no more Sex Pistols! As soon as I loved the Pixies - no more Pixies! It was rather bizarre, yeah.

LP: All about new stuff.

BP: All about new stuff.

MUSIC: Pixies - Gigantic (Gigantic/River Euphrates)

Tex Perkins:

The Mick Geyer collection of cassettes that he would give me each time I saw him over the years, even though I was quite broad-minded, there was a few places I hadn't gone yet, and one of them was Van Morrison. And Mick slowly sort of peppered these tapes with Van Morrison tracks, subtly sort of trying to get me in there, 'cos as far as I was concerned Van Morrison was "oh please, Brown Eyed Girl and sort of FM radio, kind of middle of the road sort

of stuff". But there was one particular track, which was off an album called Veedon Fleece, and he put on a track called Streets of Arklow. I'm not sure whether I realised it was Van Morrison, but I questioned that track, and said "ooh, wow, that's a good track". "Ah, Van Morrison!" And suddenly the door was open on Van Morrison, and I still absolutely love that record it's probably one of my top ten records.

MUSIC: Van Morrison - Streets of Arklow (Veedon Fleece)

Penny Ikingier:

When he was in Switzerland he used to do a lot of compilations cd's for me and send them over, which was great because I love listening to different styles of music and I can't necessarily afford to buy everything that I hear. So there'd be CDs with all sorts of music from around the world and through different generations, styles, epochs.

There was a Leonard Cohen song called By The Rivers Dark that I really loved and that was a special gift for me that someone had given me, that piece of music.

MUSIC: Leonard Cohen - By The Rivers Dark (Ten New Songs)

Henry Rollins (Black Flag, Rollins Band):

I will miss Mick as long as I'm breathing. I can't not, 'cos whenever I look at my record collection a good fraction of it is from Mick's suggestions. When I look at my books, books that Mick has suggested to me are all through the collection. He made me about 17 or 18 90-minute cassettes, of just all kinds of stuff, and at some point when I get some time, I'm gonna put it all into a digital hard drive, just so that I have the Mick analogue library at my disposal.

Greg Geyer:

He'd be doing his reading or making videos, later on, while he's doing all this he's got a few tapes going, 'cos he's listening to the music anyway and while he's listening to it. It's probably what motivated what he was listening to, 'cos he's trying to put together music to communicate with people, it's like writing letters for him really, I think.

Beau Cummin:

My name's Beau Cummin. The way I fit into the picture is that Mick went out with my mother for a good part of 13-14 years. I first met Mick, I think he came round when I was probably 3, maybe 4 years of age, and along with my father became a sort of father role as well, in the way that I mostly lived with my mother, so that was with Mick as well.

Mick & I used to, when I was quite young, probably like 5, when I could be picked up by Mick, we used to have this crazy handshake that lasted for a hell of a long time and he used to spin me around at the end of it. Those type of things you remember quite vividly.

He basically I suppose taught me a lot, appreciation of movies, music, and probably mischief! Well, I mean as you know Mick managed Dave Graney, so we used to go out at one two in the morning putting up posters illegally on bridges all over town. We had some pretty crazy times, like going to various shows, and just basically my appreciation of music is so much broader since I knew Mick. Just through the sheer fact that he'd make me sit down and listen to it, and that's even going into movies, especially like the Marx Brothers, I'm a big fan of those characters, and Mick brought that straight to my attention.

Mum was telling me that, when Mick first came into our life I was really unsure about him, but it didn't seem like it was that long until I came to liking Mick 'cos he was just a really loving guy, he always had time for the kids. We lived in a street in Northcote where there was probably 15 kids in the street and they'd all come round and Mick was always a host to them all and never got tired of someone's company, and even if he did he probably wouldn't let you know.

MUSIC: Miles Davis - Bitches Brew (Bitches Brew)

Beau Cummin:

I don't think Mick ever had the same thing on, like the same thing a couple of times in the day, it was always something different that he'd put on. Whether that was 'cos there'd be a different person around and he'd wanna show them something different or just for I suppose for his own amusement. But I remember there was a lot of Van Morrison, a lot of Tom Waits...

GG: He loved Van Morrison.

BC: ...quite a bit of Miles Davis, a lot of jazz.

MUSIC: Miles Davis - Bitches Brew (Bitches Brew)

Beau Cummin:

Nick Cave would come when the Bad Seeds came out to tour, they were round almost every night for dinner, and Mick was a real host. I think he always loved being that, that he could show everyone a good time. There was never anything spared to show someone a good time. I mean it probably drove mum a bit mad after 13 years, to tell you the truth, but at the same time she's a host as well and that's probably why they suited each other so well. But, yeah there was always somebody staying at our house.

Barry Palmer:

Anybody that knows Mick well would know that his house was your house. If anybody was in town and they were a friend of Mick's there was a bedroom there for them. Mick would just have you round all the time, you would walk in and from the time you got there, the care that he'd go into to making sure you had a nice time was unusual. And Mick didn't have the world, I mean it wasn't like he was showering gifts upon you, it wasn't about that. It was about the conversation, cups of coffee, countless cups of coffee, and if there was a beer to be had Mick would have plenty of 'em, they'd be icy cold, they'd come out of the fridge. Mick never asked me to leave. He should've a few times! That would've been good for both of us! But no, if I went around there at 4 o'clock in the afternoon and wanted to stay until 4 o'clock the following morning and keep talking, well then that's what would happen. And I certainly not that generous I'm sure with my time.

MUSIC: Betty Davis - Talkin' Trash (Nasty Gal)

Peter Jones:

You go to Mick's place and it was just videos and books and CDs and records and he'd sort of go somewhere and pull something out and go let's have a listen to this. And he'd make this really strong coffee out of this Nescafé Espresso, it was one thing I couldn't work out, I'd thought, just get a little machine and make real coffee Mick. "Nah, this'll be alright", he'd put two big spoonfuls in and he was the first person who taught me that you've gotta put the milk in before the water. You've gotta put the instant coffee in, then the milk, and when you put the hot water in the milk kind of boils a bit, so it's got this different taste. Yeah, that's Mick.

Tex Perkins:

There were a few parties around at Mick's place, I can remember Henry and various Bad Seeds and Dave Graney and Roland Howard and all those sort of St Kilda old school types were often around at Mick's.

Warren Ellis:

Tex Perkins or Chris Wilson could be there, or Barry Palmer, or, and that's actually where I seemed to meet a lot of people, it was either there or you know with Mick in some kind of band room of some description. He always just seemed to have somebody around there. And Mick would be up there with his, "have a look at this", talking to somebody, and come out and say, "I'll be with you in a minute, have a listen to this", put a record on in one room, and then see somebody out and then come and see you. It was just amazing. And he just had this fantastic resource centre there in his house as well - books and films. I remember how happy

he was when the internet started working, things like Amazon and that. Mick just loved that because he could find all these things, you know, he just loved looking for things - things that moved him you know. I mean I had no idea that he was so sick, even talking to him throughout that time and he was still kind of offering some food for the table.

#### Hugo Race:

Mick seemed to seek out company. He must have spent a lot of time on his own writing and listening and reading, that is obvious, but beyond that he really enjoyed to be in people's company and the more of them the better. He was very much at ease in a social scene.

There was a period when he was living in St Kilda where his apartment actually became the 'hub' of a social scene where people drifted into that place and out again over a period of years. And it provided a place and a time where people could get to know each other a little bit better and maybe trade ideas or see if collaboration was in the air or not, or develop enmities or problems, one with another. But at least it was an arena where people could interact, and he seemed to be very, very comfortable with that. It wasn't contrived, it just happened that way and because he had this very natural grace with different people it made him a facilitator.

#### MUSIC: Conway Savage - Storms of Life (Rare Songs & Performances 1989-2004)

#### Mariella del Conte:

Conversation with Mick was actually probably the most important part of the friendship with him because you had to be able to converse on his level, his conversation was quite, I don't know, mesmerising. He could speak for hours. You always started off speaking about a particular thing but then the conversation just roamed around and had a life of its own and Mick was able to drive it I suppose, and it was always fun. He was serious in the impetus behind his conversation but he could always laugh about things, like he wasn't a serious person in that way. Nothing ever felt really concrete, and that's perhaps a rare thing, because people are always making definitive statements about things, and that can be boring.

#### Stephen Walker:

He also was a big, very social, much more social than I was and just seemed to like to hang in public and have conversations at a bar, that seemed to be where he really loved life.

He was a great backstage dude and, so I might be at a gig or something and I hadn't actually seen him, and it would only be when perhaps I went backstage for some purpose or other and there would be Mick holding court so to speak.

#### Cameron Paine:

A lot of people would never have seen Mick Geyer in a band room, other than the artists - and he finds a chair in a corner and he usually crosses his legs by putting his right foot on his left knee and he will sit there usually with a newspaper of some description, whether it's a street rag that he picks up or a copy of The Age that he always seemed to have tucked away in his jacket pocket. And he'll sit there just quietly ignoring, or apparently ignoring, what's going on in the room until somebody strikes up a conversation with him and by the end of the night he'll have 12 or 14 people clustered around the chair that he's sitting in, yakking away.

#### Nick Cave:

He loved to sit down and have a drink and talk, and converse, which is a kind of dying art, but he kind of hung in there with it! He was a man of character, and in the very best way. Old Mick. Yep

#### MUSIC: Burning Spear - Slavery Days (Harder Than the Best)

#### LISA:

To end this program, back to the 1996 video interview with the roles reversed, as Nick Cave

interviews Mick.

Nick Cave Interviewing Mick Geyer in 1996:

NC: What always struck me in the tapes you used to give me - you used to make me a lot of Blues tapes, and a lot of Gospel tapes, and a lot of what I know about Blues and Gospel music comes from those tapes. But, you used to always used to sneak into these tapes, particular musicians that really used to stretch my patience to a degree - like Reggae - you knew I was never a fan of Reggae for example, but you would sneak in these pieces of Reggae which, after repeated listening, I gradually came to understand as great pieces of music - and I always thought that was quite interesting, I always thought you did that on purpose.

MG: Yeah - It was very deliberate, it was just to get up your nose a bit with things - when you think that there's a world which perhaps doesn't offer you much - to basically challenge you with it. I'm particularly pleased to know that it's worked.

LISA:

You've been listening to the third program in the series 'Mick Geyer: Music Guru' here on PBS 106.7 FM. In our next program, you'll hear the more personal reflections on his legacy, also part of an ABC Radio National Arts Talk program where Mick talks about the Meltdown Festival in London.

Thanks to the many people involved in this project, including Sophie Best, Levels Audio Post in Los Angeles, Rachel Willis and Mute Records in London, Greg Geyer for material from his archives, and to Nick Cave for the use of his interview 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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