

folklife news

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WHAT'S ON

EDITORIAL

The April/May edition of *Folklife News* is here in your hand, the festival season is over, and winter is all but upon us. The last two months have been full up, and contained in this issue are reports on some of the goings on.

Dr Gwenda Davey reports on the Moe Folklife project that she has been working on; Erika Reimann gives a punters-eye view of the National Folk Festival; we speak with Afro-Caribbean dancer Kofi Walker; John McAuslan gives us an overview of the Brunswick Music Festival as well as a review of Alistair Hulett's collaboration with Dave Swarbrick; and Dr Fred Pribac shares some critical thoughts about Melbourne's world music scene.

The foodways section however, is conspicuously absent due to a lack of contributions. We have lots of readers willing to share their music and dance with us, but craft and foodways we need a little help with. Any traditional recipes, culinary customs, or handcrafts you want to write about, we want to print, and share with others. Help us out for next time.

Alan Musgrove
Editor

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The Victorian Folklife Association (VFA) is dedicated to the protection and promotion of the cultural heritage of Victoria, in particular, to those informal, unofficial aspects of our heritage which are folklife. Our mission is taken from the 1989 UNESCO Recommendation on Safeguarding Traditional Culture and Folklore which requires action by signatory nations to identify, preserve and conserve, protect and disseminate traditional culture and folklife.

THE COMMITTEE 1996-98

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June Factor
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(Office bearers will be elected at the next meeting.)

Folklife News is published bi-monthly. We welcome contributions of letters, interviews, reviews, plus comments and suggestions.

The Editor reserves to the right to edit or reject material offered for publication.

Disclaimer

The views expressed in *Folklife News* are not necessarily those of the editor or of the Victorian Folklife Association.

The Victorian Folklife Association is supported by Arts Victoria.

AROUND THE STATE

BEECHWORTH

Once again the Golden Horseshoes Festival, held over Easter, drew thousands of visitors to the town. We were especially lucky to have several hundred South American folk choose our town to hold their annual festival this year.

Their traditional costumes, dancing and music combined to add extra colour, vitality and excitement to the Golden Horseshoes Festival. Hundreds of people took up their invitation to join them at the Stanley Recreation Ground on Easter Saturday night. There we were treated to a concert with Latin bands **Corporales, Urucandombe, Contigo Peru, Taquiraris, Tinkus, Cuece, Marinera, Apurima, Bolibia Mia** and others.

We hope they enjoyed our festival as much as we enjoyed theirs and that they will return next year.

**Cath O'Connor
Beechworth**

Cath also tells us that plans are underway for the 2nd annual Beechworth Celtic Festival to be held on November 15, 16 and 17. It will feature pipe bands, instrument makers, Welsh choirs, sessions, Celtic arts and crafts, a country market, heritage bus tours, a street parade and historical re-enactments. It sounds truly marvellous.

Anyone seeking more information about the goings on in Beechworth can contact Cath O'Connor on (057) 28 6555 or John Harvey on (057) 28 2674

**So, that's the news from Beechworth.
where's yours? Ed.**

AUSTRALIAN FOLK FESTIVAL TO BE HELD AT KIAMA

The Wongawilli Colonial Dance Club, organisers of this festival, have been involved in a number of festivals in the Illawarra region of N.S.W. since 1987. The aims of the club are to promote, preserve, and perform Australia's heritage (European not Koori) of music, song, dance and poetry.

Kiama has been selected for its proximity to the large population areas of Sydney, the Illawarra, Shoalhaven and the Southern Highlands.

The festival will utilise the Kiama Showground Pavilion, situated next to the picturesque Blowhole, and surf beach (very bracing in June).

Performers to be featured include **Denis O'Keefe** and **Alan Musgrove** from Victoria, **Rob Willis** from Forbes, **Dave De Hugard** and **Bob McInnes** from Robertson, **John Broomhall** from the Illawarra, 'old timers' **Eileen McCoy** and **Cornelius Brandenburg** from the Far South Coast, **Jacko Kavans** and **Heroines Riding Bareback** from up north, the **Illawarra Stringybach Orchestra** from Illawarra Conservatorium of Music, and the ubiquitous **Wongawilli**.

This year's featured instrument will be the mouth organ. There will be sessions featuring this most compact and versatile instrument.

For further information contact **Bev Murray (042) 360701**.

NATIONAL FOLK FESTIVAL CANBERRA APRIL 5-8

A punter's-eye view

Easter 1996 was looking fairly plain until some friends offered me a bunk in their on-site caravan at the National Folk Festival. I have been to the Port Fairy Folk Festival a couple of times and have worked for the Brunswick Music Festival for the last eight years, but until now, I had never been to a National. The thought of a musical 'first' was irresistible, and two calls to the R.A.C.V. later, we were in Canberra.

The setting was Exhibition Park, which is the Canberra Showgrounds, so there was earth underfoot and trees about the place. To find our caravan we followed the signs to the Sheep and Goat Pavilion.

Thirteen venues operated simultaneously, keeping the inveterate stickynose mighty busy. Buskers, street theatre and impromptu sessions abounded outdoors while indoor performances were staged in both existing buildings and in temporary venues erected specifically for the Festival. The standard was very high across the board and acts too numerous to mention, so, what follows should be considered as 'edited highlights'.

The legendary **Poet's Breakfast** began the day in the Wine Bar, which then provided a daily menu of acts programmed there. This was a good opportunity to see performers you might otherwise have missed, in a more informal setting.

It did mystify me however, when some time on Saturday, the 195ml glass I has been drinking from metamorphosed into a 170ml glass and stayed that way until at least Sunday night. Most puzzling, considering I paid the same for both sizes.

Bearing in mind that it would be humanly impossible to see everything, my rough plan began with spending most of the first afternoon enjoying the sunny Canberra weather out of doors at the **dance stage**. Highlights here included the **Apollo Hellenic Dancers**, who made me feel as though I was back home in Brunswick. There is something both stately *and* passionate about Greek dance which warms the heart and spirit. The **Xochipilli Mexican Dancers** were spectacular: a blaze of costumes, and 'La Bamba' danced faster than anyone could possibly sing it! My favourite dance was one performed by women in long white lace dresses with acres of skirt who balanced lighted candles on their heads as they moved gracefully around the stage. There was also a cheeky love dance in which a man and a woman deftly manoevered a red sash with their feet so that when they finally held it aloft it was tied in a bow.

Doonooch Aboriginal Dancers come from the Snowy Mountains area, and the dances they do mostly depict the animals and birds in their part of the country. One engaging dance called 'the Honey Tree' illustrated their people's surprise on encountering European bees (which sting) as opposed to native bees (which don't). The group have also created a special dance celebrating their region called 'the Ski Dance', the movements of which I will leave to your imagination.

Molongolo Mayhem are a lively and boisterous Morris Dance group from Canberra who dress in

eccentric raggedy costumes and who, I suspect, train for years to avoid being brained mid-dance by the very large sticks they wield, which provide the percussion for the dance.

Speaking of occupational hazards, one of the **Chipolatas** had broken his leg in two places falling from a 10ft unicycle (ouch!) and was in plaster. The trio was unfazed by this, and proceeded to entertain us thoroughly with their vibrant repertoire of street theatre. A spot of audience participation here: some hapless volunteer lying flat on his back while a **Chipolata** juggled firebrands over his inert form. Will people never learn to be properly spooked by the word 'volunteer'?

The **Toothfaeries** were (understandably) billed as 'Brisbane's favourite dance band'. They play such infectious and exciting original material it is impossible to sit still. I happened upon the two guitarists doing an acoustic set in The Attic: different songs but obviously originals of the same calibre. "Really well constructed songs" I heard a nearby songwriter say admiringly. Another band which caught my attention was the **Tinkers**, a dynamic young band who play traditional Irish music. Youth, energy and talent - it's a heady mix.

The aptly-named **Sleight of Hand** (also dubbed the Canberra Hot Boys) play Bluegrass with a vengeance. The picking and playing was so devastating that a certain percentage of the performance was destined to be drowned by wild applause. Brunswick band the **Cajun Aces** played waltzes and two-steps with an authentic Louisiana flavour, and they were received with such warmth and enthusiasm that I felt a little ashamed of how blasé we can sometimes be about the wealth

of talent right under our noses.

Alistair Hulett is a singer/songwriter who mines a rich Scots tradition to write contemporary songs with a political flavour. Always passionate, always inventive, Alistair has just recorded a new CD with Dave Swarbrick which could be his finest work to date.

Folk legends **Fairport Convention** were impressive with their dynamic playing, sheer professionalism and lovely tight arrangements. I confess to a constriction of the throat when they did 'Crazy Man Michael' which is one of my favourite songs. **Eliza Carthy and Nancy Kerr** hail from the north of England and shine as fiddle players and exponents of classic English folk harmony singing. Eliza is particularly endearing on stage which adds to the pleasure.

The **Session Bar** was a vast but not forbidding room with very reasonably priced whisky behind the bar. Musicians, singers and interested parties gathered there and at any one time there could be eight or nine separate sessions blazing away. There were hearty singing sessions, full-on Irish sessions and one young lady from British Columbia with a fantastic voice sang with the lads from **Sleight of Hand**. It was a place to expect the unexpected.

The **Marketplace** provided food and drinks, distractions and temptations, and even a kitchen sink! Overall, the food was healthy, not expensive and portable enough to wander around with. I spent around \$57 on food and coffee over the four days. There was some wonderful handmade clothing and millinery; there were instrument makers, jewellers and New Age therapists. It was not my fault that I found The Very Knitted Hat for me. I was disappointed at the number of

stalls with ordinary imported Indian and Indonesian clothing and jewellery. It generally enhances my enjoyment of my hat to have nattered with the knitter.

Between Thursday night and Monday, around 30,000 people passed through the gates. Streets and venues were busy but not overcrowded, and wherever you looked, there were people of all ages thoroughly enjoying themselves.

There was a concurrent **Kid's Festival**, young people having their own sessions around the place and a seven year old saxophone player making a small fortune busking. Kids hung around the edges of adult sessions playing their instruments and even the babies cried in key.

Hats off (even my special one) to the festival organisers who hopefully realise what a symphony they have created and are not about to stop. It was a firm reminder to me of the fundamentals of life: walking on earth, exchanging warmth and friendship with other human beings, good food and the time honoured joys of alcohol, and the periodic necessity of celebrating and honouring the threads of human connection which are traditionally and universally expressed through communal music, dance and song. I'll be calling soon to book my caravan for next year.

Erika Reimann

THE BRUNSWICK MUSIC FESTIVAL

We're such a lucky bunch during the first four months of the year. The music, the craic, the festivals and then we all fall down. It's an exhausting time for all, but pain is gain and all that. There were some great festivals this season, many of which I did not get to, and some I did. Brunswick offers no choice for me. I have to be there, and I was very glad I was. Of the six I have had the pleasure to be involved with, I would have to say that 1995 would have to have been our most prestigious, with guests like Isabel Parra, Psarandonis, Waterson, Carthy, Donal Lunny, Roy Bailey, the Backsliders; and I could go on, but 1996 was just so much more relaxing.

There were some outstanding performances from Neil Murray and Roy Bailey, the superb playing of Martin Hayes, those wonderful 'house full' signs on the last day with the Chocolate Cake. The idea of presenting a concert series of this kind of music in an inner city environment is not new of course.

Brunswick Festival had great beginnings in 1989. A glorious plot hatched by Peter Leman, George Galiatsos, Dan Burke and Uncle Dobe Newton, and made possible by the Brunswick Council, God bless 'em.

I joined the 'team' in 1991 and all that remained of that illustrious group was the only full time member, Peter Leman, the Community Arts Officer. Since then we have thrived and survived. Peter has himself departed the scene, and the 1996 festival was

the first without him. His work in this area has been so valuable, not just in establishing a music festival, but in moving a whole series of initiatives in visual arts, multicultural arts, theatre, dance, kids festivals, Koori festivals, the Street Party and Brunswick Recordings. It is of course, always a team effort and he also had a bunch of decent comrades round him and the real support of the majority of Council.

Well, local democracy has been returned. Like magic it has appeared, and as after every festival, I'm thinking about the next one in 1997. Of course we are going through the usual period of uncertainty, the acquittals, the funding applications, the implications of the dreaded CCT (Compulsory Competitive Tendering), the festival 'actuals'.

We're very optimistic that the new Moreland City Council will again support the Brunswick Music Festival, and the Sydney Road Street Party must surely get their endorsement. The Street Party had such a good feeling over it despite some of the trammies having minor nervous breakdowns. The inclusion of the Koori zone on the street was a huge success, but the dance stages will have to be upgraded. The youth music and the community involvement were fantastic and some wonderful music and street performances all contributed to a really nice day. We may have had 20-30,000 people on the street during the whole day.

Probably one of the most pleasing aspects of it all was that it was obvious we had a real strong local crowd. We were not inundated with cars or parking complaints. People walked and cycled or used public transport.

When I flick through past years' programs I can only reiterate we are surely spoiled.....which gets

me back to where I started, I think. To get on our mailing list is so simple folks - call (03) 9387-3376, fax it to (03) 9380-8234, or write to PO Box 477, Brunswick VIC 3056.

The Brunswick Music Festival is supported by The Australia Council, The Moreland City Council, Arts Victoria and everybody that buys a ticket.

The Sydney Road Street Party is supported by the Moreland City Council, Arts Victoria, Vic Health, and in 1996, the Sydney Road Development Committee.

John McAuslan
Festival Director

THE MOE FOLKLIFE PROJECT

The City of Moe is the first of three towns in Victoria's La Trobe Valley; the towns of Moe, Morwell and Traralgon. This region is the centre of the state's brown coal mining and electricity industry. You can't see most of the industry until you cross the Haunted Hills between Moe and Morwell. What you can mostly see from Moe are the beautiful rolling green hills to the south and the snow caps of Mt Baw Baw to the north.

Moe has about 17,000 people, most of them brought in as immigrants from all over the world by what was the powerful State Electricity Commission, to work in the mines and power stations. It has more elderly, more single parents with dependent children and more overseas born than the other towns in the La Trobe Valley. It has lower incomes than the rest of the Valley or Victoria in general, and more unemployment

than the Valley or Victoria.¹ It is one of Australia's most multicultural towns, and one of its most harmonious.

In colonial days, Moe was a tiny stopping place for travellers on their way to the gold rushes at Walhalla. It stayed a small settlement until 1946, when the Housing Commission of Victoria began to build houses in Moe and its suburb of Newborough. It grew and lived vigorously between 1946 and 1986, when the restructuring, retrenchments and privatisation of the Victorian electricity industry began to bite into Moe's prosperity. During 1995, the Victorian Government's restructuring of local government resulted in the amalgamation of the Cities of Moe, Morwell and Traralgon into the La Trobe Council, creating further uncertainty and problems of identity for Moe.

Moe was one of two areas in Australia chosen by the Commonwealth's Department of Communication and the Arts for pilot projects in cultural mapping during 1994; the second area was Katoomba in New South Wales.² As a follow-on to the Moe mapping project, the National Library of Australia and the Department of Communication and the Arts funded the Moe Folklife Project, Australia's first such project. Dr Gwenda Davey from the National Centre for Australian Studies at Monash University was appointed the project's director, and six Moe residents were appointed as research assistants. The project selected six forms of traditional folklife for study, namely handicrafts, music and dance, foodways, children's games, storytelling about working life and customs and celebrations.

The Moe Folklife Team worked between October 1994 and

February 1996, carrying out oral history interviews and taking photographs. A professional photographer also took a smaller number of exhibition quality photographs shown at the final project event at Old Gippsdown, Moe, on April 20.

The final report on the Moe Folklife Project has been written by Gwenda Davey, and will eventually be available in print and on the Internet.

Moe has proved to be a profoundly talented town. Its residents produce an abundance of traditional handcrafts, including some highly unusual forms such as Norwegian Hardanger embroidery and Dorset buttons, and better-known crafts such as lace-making, weaving, spinning and woodwork. Moe's diverse ethnic groups have strongly maintained their own food traditions, many of which are associated with calendar events such as Christmas or Easter. Such occasions also feature religious and festive customs which were documented amongst Moe's Serbian, Dutch, German and Greek communities.

Given that Moe was for many years largely a company town, where employment was dominated by the all-powerful State Electricity Commission, it is not surprising that many stories told about working life concerned the SEC, sometimes sarcastically described by locals as 'safe, easy and comfortable'. Such is no longer true, if it ever was. Many Moe residents still mourn the destruction in the 1970s of the beautiful garden city of Yallourn, razed for the brown coal underneath the town. The Moe Folklife Project found a considerable number of songs written about Yallourn and its passing, an interesting and poignant part of the town's musical culture.

It was a requirement of the funding provided by the Department of Communication and the Arts that the project should consider ways in which Moe's traditional culture could contribute to the town's cultural and economic development, and a number of recommendations were made. These concerned industrial heritage tourism, gourmet food tourism and a promotion of the town's rich cultural traditions. Moe is one of the few places in Victoria which still celebrates Guy Fawkes Day on the 5th November, with the obligatory bonfire!

Gwenda Davey

¹ Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (1991 Census). Quoted in *Profile of the City of Moe*, Latrobe Regional Commission. Prepared by the Gippsland Research & Information Bank, Monash University, Churchill 3842.

² *Mapping Culture: a guide for cultural and economic development in communities*. Commonwealth Department of Communication and the Arts, AGPS, 1995, p.42

NEXT ISSUE of *Folklife News*:

COPY DUE JUNE 7
OUT JULY 5

Please submit material on disc (Word 4 or 5 for Macintosh preferred) **and** hard copy.

PLASTIC BALKAN?

These very interesting thoughts are shared with us by singer, musician, author and scientist, Dr Fred Pribac, subsequent to some conversations on the subject of world music and acapella singing. While he agrees that the community interest in these areas is a positive addition to Australia's cultural life, he also has reservations, which he outlines in the following article.

My earliest memories are of the communal singing of my European relatives at household parties. These community events continued, unabated, throughout my childhood and into adulthood. Singing was spontaneous - it was never contrived. We sang our folk and popular songs, and even songs borrowed from other cultures, but our songs were always understood, and chosen (or adapted), for their relevance to 'our' culture, and their relevance to 'our' family. We never gave this business a high-falutin' name like 'acappella' - it was just 'singing', and it was 'fun'.

This living community singing wove the sounds of the old folk songs of Slovenia and Istria into the fabric of our minds and hearts. These songs were family songs and tribal songs. When we sang them they bound us together, they expressed our history, our values, and our culture. They connected us to our 'dreamtime'.

These days, European, and particularly Balkan songs are, understandably, becoming increasingly popular amongst the many new acapella and world music groups. Often these groups perform programs of diverse songs from many cultures, in many languages, often out of

context, and usually without continuity of theme. To my mind, having been nurtured on a more direct gut connection to European song, this amounts to little more than vocal line-dancing.

I have heard songs sung without feeling, without reference to their tribal and cultural values, without comprehension, and even mispronounced. When sung like this, these treasured songs cannot speak to our hearts. They cannot become a vital part of us.

Have you ever cringed to hear an Australian singing with an obviously fake Irish brogue? Have you squirmed through a commercial American rendition of 'Waltzing Matilda'? Has the sight and sound of a soft, white, well-to-do Australian, cooing through a desperate, down-and-out blues struck you as ludicrous?

That is the effect that many (not all) of the modern Australian renditions of traditional European songs have on me.

To these acapella and world music groups I say, "Do you own your songs? Where is the gut connection with your material?" Think carefully on what you sing, why you sing, and how you sing it! At the very least, make sure you get the pronunciation right!

Dr Fred Pribac

If any readers have opinions on this subject or any other they would be most welcome to express them and send them to us at Folklife News.

INTERVIEW

KOFI WALKER TALKS ABOUT DANCE

Although only relatively young, Afro-Caribbean dancer Kofi Walker is in great demand around the world. He first visited Australia in 1994, and has returned this year for a series of performances and master classes. He has recently completed a three year diploma course in dance theatre and production. His expertise extends to Latin American dance but his preference is for his own Afro-Caribbean culture. He has also worked fusing Afro-Caribbean and Aboriginal styles. While in Australia in 1995/96, he has been featured at the South Australian Folk Festival, the OSIBI African Cultural Festival in Canberra and done a two week tour of Tasmania, among other things. Folklife News caught up with Kofi while he was in Victoria for performances at the Boite and Port Fairy Folk Festival. The following is a transcript of that interview.

WHAT MADE YOU GO AND STUDY TRADITIONAL DANCING?

KOFI: I had a background, in that I was in a performing arts group (in high school) and dance was my strongest point. I auditioned and was accepted (into college). I have decided that's what I want to do because as I educate myself more in dance as a subject and its historical importance to my culture, then I have to go back and study the traditional forms that were always part of the community. A lot of people overlook the history and think, "Oh well, it has always been done" - they don't know where it has come from or why it is being done.

IS IT A RURAL OR AN URBAN ARTFORM?

KOFI: The traditional forms are rural. Most often you have to go to rural areas to find it.

WERE YOU AWARE OF THE TRADITIONAL JAMAICAN CULTURE WHEN YOU WERE GROWING UP?

KOFI: Yes, it is fair to say I was aware of it because it is a very community thing. It is a very social thing in Jamaica, so I was very aware of it, but not necessarily a part of it. There are tons of different dances within Jamaica. We are talking about ten or twenty, maybe forty different dance forms done in Jamaica itself. If I go to the country for a summer holiday I would follow my grandmother to a session. I've grown up with it and I'm aware of it but I didn't necessarily start practising the dances until I went to study at college.

WHAT ARE THE ORIGINS OF THE DANCING YOU DO?

KOFI: According to my research, the Kumina Rhythm, which is a drum rhythm, is found in west Africa. Some of the words of the song have been found in the languages of west Africa. The dance itself is quite obviously an African step and the form of the dance is quite African in nature. It is a religious, ritual dance and began happening in Jamaica when indentured labourers from west Africa came over to work. It is often done to communicate with the ancestral spirits and the spirits of the sky or the land. There are three elements of worship - the earth, the sky and the ancestors.

WHAT ABOUT THE CONNECTION BETWEEN SONG AND DANCE?

KOFI: Song and dance I usually work with a lot, because with the dance there is a song that tells a story, and with the dance there is the music, so they are linked closely together. I usually use drama, music and dance together to give the whole picture.

WHAT INSTRUMENT TRADITIONALLY ACCOMPANIES THE DANCE?

KOFI: In Africa it is the drum, the marimba and various other instruments, and likewise in the Caribbean.

WHY IS THAT?

KOFI: The majority of the Jamaican community are of African descent. The history of the island is that the islanders first inhabited it, then the Spaniards came, the islanders were completely killed, and the Spaniards then needed more labourers, so slaves were imported from Africa. The British took over and continued, and sugar became the leading industry. The slaves eventually out-numbered the slave owners and masters, and whatever culture these slaves had in Africa, they brought with them, which featured the drum as the main instrument but also the tambourine and clap stick. As people came into a new environment, without clothes or proper tools, they started using the tin drum, or what you call the kerosene tin, beaten with the hands, because there was no drums to use. They created their own instruments because they had to make do with what they had. But I mainly use the drums, because I love the drums. At one point the drums were banned in Jamaica because the

slave masters thought they were doing evil. They thought that soon as the drums started beating, it was Voodoo, or Obeah, as we call it in Jamaica.

ARE THE RITUAL DANCES SEASONAL?

KOFI: It would be seasonal. For example, the Kumina is done when the community gets together over the summer for a social event, but once the Queen of this dance is there, then that social session can turn out to be a ritual session. It's very spontaneous. Some of the dances are sessions that run once yearly. You go there and find certain dances being done, and it would happen at that particular spot every year. But other dances are done within the community, whenever there is a death, or a birth, or sickness or whatever.

IS DANCE WITHIN THE COMMUNITY STILL HAPPENING?

KOFI: It is still happening. It wouldn't happen a lot in the city. You'd have to go to the rural areas to learn more about the dance. When I perform to an audience (outside of the community), I tell them, "This is the dance, this is where it is from, and this is why it is being done." If I am doing the Kumina step within Jamaica, people would know that it is the Kumina step; likewise, if I am doing Reggae dance they would know that, just as, in Australia, if I was doing Bush Dance, as opposed to Corroboree, people would know the difference.

IS THIS DANCING AN ENDANGERED THING?

KOFI: Yes. I think it is an endangered thing because there is a great demand for change within society. We've got all these new

buildings going up, land being used for commercial stuff, and parks being torn down, so there is less community spirit in terms of wanting to go out into the park and socialise. The more there is demand for commercial events, the less the demand will be for the traditional practices. If young people are constantly being pressured for sex, drugs, clothes, then the more they will think about fashion; -what's in now- and the less they think of what was. It is old fashioned.

YOU HAVE DONE SOME WORK WITH INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIAN DANCERS. ARE THERE SIMILARITIES IN THE DANCE?

KOFI: The earthiness of the dance is very similar. The physical movement itself is very similar in terms of how people move: the crouching, the bending and the imitation of animals. In Haiti there is a particular dance which is an imitation of the snake, to the Goddess Dambalah, and that is an imitation as with the Aboriginals imitating kangaroos or crocodiles. In terms of the beliefs, we have similar beliefs too, with the use of different trees and the 'dreaming' which are used in religious practices in the Caribbean. I am really lazy. I have been gathering a lot of information but I haven't sat down to write anything on it. I still want to give myself more time to absorb it and have a better understanding of the Corroboree dance.

ARE OTHER PEOPLE DOING WHAT YOU ARE DOING AS A DANCE EDUCATOR?

KOFI: I wouldn't be as presumptuous as to say I am a one off. I have met a lot of other people in Jamaica, or wherever, who are trying. I didn't want to

teach. I went through college thinking "I hate teaching." It is a new love that is developing in me. I didn't know I actually wanted to teach until I came to Australia, did a couple of workshops, and researched the similarities between Aboriginal and Afro-Caribbean dance, and realised how endangered dance as a whole is. Less and less young people are interested in traditional folk dancing. People had great need for knowledge of the Caribbean folk dance and so I started to teach and do a lot more workshops. The more I do workshops, the more I realise how important it is to not just teach the steps, but the meaning behind the steps, where it's coming from, and the works. I am fully aware of a lot of so-called educators going around and teaching this neat little African stuff. That is happening here in Australia, and I must say, a lot of it is a rip off. A lot of these people really can't teach. That is why I'm really happy to be doing what I'm doing. The stuff they are giving is not the genuine article because the people (teaching it) do not even know its origins. I've worked with people, and even sent them my tapes well in advance, and said to them, "Give me the Kumina rhythm" and they give me something else, but yet they have a lesson plan that says they're going into a particular school to teach music from their culture. Now, if I come and ask for two or three different rhythms from your own culture, and you don't know it, and you're teaching in school as an educator, then something is wrong. That is my experience and my main criticism.

WHAT ATTRACTS PEOPLE TO YOUR WORKSHOPS?

KOFI: I think it is more the African sound that they're aiming at. It can be a real disappointment for some people. I am a very strict teacher, because I walk into a

room, full of knowledge (I want to share) and sometimes a lot of them come to dance. I am not doing a workshop to just come in and do steps, but to tell you a little of what I know, and I am doing that out of respect for my ancestors and out of respect for my culture. There is no way I'm going to teach you one and two steps and have you walk out of the room trying to do one and two steps. You can always go to a folk festival and do that. That's what folk festivals are for - you go and partake and have big fun. With workshops you are there to educate people. I've been to workshops where people don't know what to say, and are playing drums, and don't know how to educate people about them.

WHAT ARE YOUR PERSONAL OBJECTIVES?

KOFI: My main objective is to do a fusion of Afro-Caribbean dance with traditional Aboriginal dance from Australia. Visiting Arnhem Land two years ago made me realise the need for re-educating people to the importance of the traditional, and to promote spirituality within the dance

CD REVIEW

**Saturday Johnny
and Jimmy the Rat**

**Alistair Hulett and
Dave Swarbrick**

Alistair dedicates this CD to the great traditions that have influenced and inspired him in his musical endeavours, the same traditions of course that have likewise kept so many of us entertained and fascinated for years.

As with all real traditions, it is continuing and it is always moving and changing. Alistair pays tribute on this recording to those traditions, the big ballads of Scotland, Ireland and England; the singing and amazing song writing of Ewan McColl; the writing and being of Hamish Henderson; the interpretative genius of Dick Gaughan and many more. And right beside him, the other half of the title and an important part of those influences, Dave 'Spider' Swarbrick. Swarb has been living in Australia, but he still mainly works outside Oz with the likes of Martin Carthy, but he is returning to tour with Alistair to launch this recording on a national jaunt at the end of May and into June.

Now, **Saturday Johnny and Jimmy the Rat**. The opening track is the title song, a great wee yarn about a couple of tinkers/ winos/ tramps/ beggars or buskers, but the kind who are there by choice, rather than necessity, unlike many who took to the streets via the Reagan/Thatcher eras. The tune is a great one, reminiscent of Hamish Henderson's 'Farewell To Sicily', a pipe tune accompanied by very nice guitar and fiddle.

Only two of the tracks on the CD are credited traditional, and the remainder are Alistair's own songs, with the exception of **The Yellow Bittern**, written by an eighteenth century Irish poet, Cathal Buidhe. It's a beauty of a song, with a big noble tune and such powerful poetry (and its a translation!). The Scots and Irish have a passion for creating wonderful songs dedicated to the 'taking of the dram', and this is one of the best. The two traditional songs are the **Forfar Sodger** and **The Earl Of Errol**, the latter a classic 'mini series' type ballad of the Scots gentry and their predilection for political intrigue, skulduggery, deceit, deception, rape and kidnapping.

Eight of the eleven are written by Alistair, all firmly based in the tradition, and strongly laced with his proudly defiant stance for the working folk, the disadvantaged, the underclass, the dispossessed, the emigrant, and the refugee. They are all good songs and listeners will have their particular favourites.

Blue Murder is a McColl style setting, voice and fiddle relating the grim story of the blue asbestos workers and their families in West Australia. Swarb's playing is just great on this track; he never plays the same thing twice, and with all those totally individual and identifiable trade-mark licks. His playing throughout the CD is a pleasure indeed. Mind you, I reckon they left out the last verse!

Behind Barbed Wire is another stand-out track for me. The song is based on the disgraceful story of Asian refugees held in camps outside Sydney and Darwin. Alistair is joined by a couple old Hooligan mates on this - John Deery on uilleann pipes and Lindsay Martin on violin. Both are Sydney musicians and I guess this track would have been recorded in Sydney as both

Melbourne and Sydney ABC studios get credit.

For me this is the best of Alistair's songs on the album, with a fairly unusual tune structure and some very good poetry. Swarb must have had the night off when they recorded this, as I can't hear him. **The Old Divide And Rule** and **The Tattie Howkin** are two wee stoaters that drive along just lovely.

The Migrant's Lullaby is also a favourite of mine. He's written a swag of songs but the ones that really get to me are ones written from a more personal point of view. The song uses childhood experiences within a migrant Turkish family in Melbourne, with all the destructive pressures of having to survive as 'outworkers' in the rag trade. Topical indeed, with its story of exploitation by an industry savagely deregulated and which systematically forces its workers out of the factories and into the sweat shops and their already overcrowded homes.

There's lighter stuff here as well. Just to hear Dave 'Spider' Swarbrick play with such verve and inventiveness is worth the price. It's all there folks, a fine piece of work indeed, recorded in a few sessions, with Paul Petran of **Music Deli** credited as producer, and mixed by Tony Hargreaves. You're hearing it live! It's got punch, its got passion, great licks, great songs, and a great musical partnership.

So buy it, or better still come to the launch and then buy it!

June 1 at the East Brunswick Club Hotel in Melbourne, folks!

See *What's On* for details...

John McAuslan

WHAT'S ON

Music

**Melbourne
Scottish Fiddle Club
St John's Anglican Church
Burgundy Street
Heidelberg
Sun May 12, June 9 July 14
2pm beginners 3pm others.
Contact: Judy Turner
(03) 9459 2076 or
9207 7020**

**Traditional Irish Singing
Workshop
51 Belmont Road Ivanhoe
Sat May 18
2-4:30pm
\$28.00
Contact: Kathryn Clements
(03) 9499 4759**

**Friday Night Concert
with Fay White
Brown Hill Hall
Fri May 17 8pm
\$7.00 & \$5.00
Contact: (053) 32 7872**

**Singers' Workshop
Brown Hill Hall
Sat May 18 1:30-4pm
\$10.00
Contact: Cora
(053) 328 222**

**Winter Solstice Celebration
Old Colonists Club
Lydiard St Ballarat
Sat June 22
Contact: Peter
(053) 31 5365**

**Australian Fiddle and Music
Workshops
56 Bennett St Alphington
Sun May 19 June 16 July
21 2pm
\$3.00
Contact Greg O'Leary
(03) 9387 3705**

**Alistair Hulett and Dave
Swarbrick CD Launch
East Brunswick Club Hotel
Sat June 1 8:30pm
Contact: John McAuslan
(03) 9387 3376**

Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eirann
Irish Music and Dance sessions
Irish Welfare Bureau
Gertrude St Fitzroy
Every Wed 8pm
 Contact: Paddy O'Niell
 (03) 9312 6058

Fiddlers Workshops
Community Hall
Knaith Rd East Ringwood
3rd Wed of month
 Contact: Harry Gardner
 (03) 9870 8998

Peninsula Folk Club
Frankston East Community
Centre
cnr Beach St & Cranbourne Rd
Frankston
1st & 3rd Sun of month
 Contact: Lorraine Sly
 (059) 74 2214

Brian O'Keefe Concert
U.K.S.A. Clubrooms
146 West Toorak Road
South Yarra
Fri May 24 7:30pm
 Contact: U.K.S.A.
 (03) 9866 1722

Irish Night
Elephant and Castle
McKillop St Geelong
Every Thur 8-12 midnight

Geelong Beginners Music
Classes
3YR Offices
Every Thur 8pm
 Contact: Ivan
 (052) 66 1230

Pancakes on Tuesday
Jam Session
Pancake Parlour
Moorabool St Geelong
Every Tue 8pm
 Contact: Ivan
 (052) 66 1230

Blackboard Concert
Wintergarden Restaurant
McKillop St Geelong
Every Fri 8pm
 Contact: Ivan
 (052) 66 1230

Ringwood Folk Club
Community Hall
Knaith Rd East Ringwood
Every Tue 8pm
 Contact: Alan Gardner
 (03) 9497 1628

Bendigo
Bush Dance & Music Club
1st & 3rd Fri
 Contact: Julie or Mary
 (054) 39 6317 or 42 1153

Picken' at the Piggery
Footscray Community House
Moreland St Footscray
3rd Fri of month
 Contact: Janet or Nick Dear
 (053) 68 6888

Boite World Music Cafe
Mark St Nth Fitzroy
Every Fri & Sat
 Contact: Roger King
 (03) 9417 3550

Four Ports Folk Club
Warrnambool area
1st Fri of month
 Contact: Doug O'Keefe
 (055) 62 2693

Selby Folk Club
Selby Community House
Minak Reserve Selby
1st Fri of month
 Contact: Bob Farrow
 (03) 9894 4372

Dance

Dawnsyr Cumreig Melbourne
60 Ivanhoe Pde Ivanhoe
Every 2nd Mon 8pm
 Contact: Roger
 (03) 9499 6566

Bullockie's Bush Ball
with Jackson's
Geelong West Town Hall
Sat May 4 7:30-11:45pm
 Contact: Andrew Morris
 (052) 21 7066 or 44 2485 (bh)

Australian Traditional Dance
Harvest Moon Band
St Ambrose's Hall
Dawson Street Brunswick
Sat May 18
8-11:30pm
\$5.00
 Contact: Alan Musgrove
 (03) 9489 0568

Modern American Square
Dance Workshops
Community Centre
Dunkley Ave Highett
Every Fri 7-10:30pm
\$3.00
 Contact: Clem Parkinson
 (03) 9553 4603

Colonial Dancers Classes
St Michael's Hall
McPherson St Nth Carlton
Every Wed 8pm
 Contact: Brian or Margot
 (03) 9481 7713

Geelong Colonial Dancers
Beginners Classes
Uniting Church Hall
Noble St Geelong
Every Thur 7:45pm
 Contact: Andrew Morris
 (052) 24 1428

Ringwood Bush Dance
Uniting Church Hall
Station St Ringwood East
1st Sat of month
 Contact: Alan Gardner
 (03) 9497 1628

VFMC Woolshed Ball
with The Gay Charmers
Central Hall
20 Brunswick St
Fitzroy
Saturday May 25 8pm
 Contact: Alan Gardner
 (03) 9497 1628

Mid Winter Ball
with Emu Creek
Northcote Town Hall
Sat June 29
8pm-1am
\$12.00
 Contact Barry or Margot
 (03) 9484 4130 or
 9481 7713

Festivals

Brucknell Bush Music Camp
Brucknell Scout Camp
May 31, June 1 & 2
\$20.00 per head plus
camping fee
 Contact: Anne O'Keefe
 (055) 62 9565

5th Ausdance Folk Dance And Music Camp
Anglesea Victoria
May 17, 18 & 19, 1996
 Contact: Marie Feigl
 (03) 9534 2860

Australian Folk Music Festival
Kiama N.S.W.
June 7-11
 Contact: Bev Murray
 (042) 36 0701
National Celtic Festival
Geelong Performing Arts Centre & surrounds
June 7-10
 Contact: Dianne Wisby
 (052) 25 1232

Craft

Handknitters' Guild
Sale of Handknitted Garments
Hampton Uniting Church Hall
Service St Hampton
Sat May 11
9am-12 noon
 Contact: Heather Graham
 (03) 9481 4877

Radio

3RN 621 AM
Nightly Planet
 Robyn Johnston plays local and international folk music.
Monday—Friday:
 11.05pm-1am

Music Deli
Steve Snelleman & Paul Petran
Saturday
 7.10pm-9pm

3LO 774 AM
Australia All Over - Folk, country and chat with Ian 'Macca' MacNamara.
Sunday
 5.30am-10am

3CR 855 AM
Local and Live
Marion Cincotta and friends play local artists, both recorded and live
Tuesday
 10.30pm-Midnight

The Boite World Music Show.
Friday
 Noon-2pm

3ZZZ 92.3 FM
Voices of Our World
Tuesday
 Noon -1pm

Irish Programmes
Saturday
 11am-Noon
Sunday
 6-7pm

3INR 96.5 FM
That's All Folk
 Rhonda Cadman.
Sunday
 5-6pm

3RRR 102.7 FM
Old Folk Show
 Rick E Vengeance
Tuesday
 2-4 pm

3PBS 106.7 FM
The Boite
 Multicultural Music.
Wednesday
 1.30pm-3.30pm

Global Village
 Acoustic music from around the world
Sunday
 3-5pm

FOUR PORTS FOLK CLUB INVITES YOU TO BRUCKNELL FOLK WEEKEND

May 31st, June 1st & 2nd

WORKSHOPS SESSIONS DANCE AND THE BIG BUSH CONCERT

INTERSTATE GUESTS: JOHN DENGATE Twenty years as an Australian songwriter **and**
CHRIS SULLIVAN One of Australia's leading folk collectors

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Guitar & Mandolin (Denis Tobener) **Tin Whistle** (Bob Ballantyne/Colin O'Keefe)
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ENQUIRIES AND TICKETS: Anne (055) 62 9565 Colin (055) 62 227 Doug (055) 62 2693



NATIONAL CENTRE FOR AUSTRALIAN STUDIES
 Director: Professor Peter Spearritt

GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN AUSTRALIAN FOLKLIFE STUDIES
CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

The Department of Employment, Education and Training has provided the National Centre for Australian Studies at Monash University with funding to develop a Graduate Diploma in Australian Folklife Studies. It is hoped to begin the course in 1997 at Clayton, Melbourne.

The Graduate Diploma in Australian Folklife Studies will provide Australia's first tertiary training in the area.

The Graduate Diploma is open to candidates with a recognised bachelor's degree. Some places will be available to those who do not hold a degree but have several years appropriate experience.

The Diploma will take one year full-time or two years part-time. It is proposed to offer six subjects, including research methodology.

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN POSSIBLY STUDYING FOR THIS DIPLOMA, PLEASE FILL IN YOUR DETAILS BELOW.

Name:

Address:

Existing qualifications:

- | | | |
|---|-----|----|
| I am interested in taking the course in Melbourne | Yes | No |
| I would be interested if the course were offered by correspondence (distance education) or Open Learning on television or radio | Yes | No |
| I would like to be sent further information | Yes | No |

Please return this form to Dr Gwenda Davey, National Centre for Australian Studies, Monash University, Clayton, Melbourne, 3168. Phone (03) 9905-5242 and FAX (03) 9905-5238.
 Email to gwenda.davey@arts.monash.edu.au