

ARTIST
PROFILE

GREG DODD

BY SIMON
WOOLDRIDGE

Greg and his band the Hoodoo Men are making a welcome return to this year's festival riding the success of their recent album, Movin' On – another #1 on the Australian Blues and Roots Airplay Charts.

We can expect Greg Dodd and the Hoodoo Men to draw heavily from *Movin' On* in November with tracks like *Home of the Blues*, *No One Home* and *Everything to Lose* featuring.

And they're looking forward to Festival weekend. "I have played in Bendigo quite a few times over the years," says Greg. "My fave place is the Gold Dust Lounge at the Shamrock Hotel... a very cool vibe down there. Hot, squashy and sweaty! Just how I like it."

This year's festival will probably feel quite *normal* for Greg Dodd and the Hoodoo Men. "I've played some strange gigs in my time," he says, "one was at a sculpture gallery attended by the Murdoch family. Going on after Dame Elizabeth Murdoch was kinda strange I tell you. Another one was in the Olympic Room at the MCG. We were instructed to be whisper quiet, only play

two songs prior to the bounce, then down tools and watch the game (yawn)! When the game finished, we played another two songs. I don't think one person in the entire room knew we were there!"

Greg's passion for the blues started inauspiciously at a party many years ago, "a couple of my mates were jamming a blues shuffle on acoustic guitars. I remember saying to them, "man, you guys can play the blues! Can you show me how to do that?" They showed me their simple shuffle and a few other things that night and I was hooked!" And then he was listening to more: "Early influences were Buddy Guy, Junior Wells, SRV, The Fabulous Thunderbirds, Sonny Terry, Brownie McGhee, and the likes of Lightning Hopkins."

Greg's enthusiasm for the blues is infectious: "Playing blues music is my absolute passion! I love being on stage sharing the experience between audience and band. There's simply nothing better than performing at a gig where everyone is having a great time and feeling the music. After all, blues to me is all about feel!"

"Blues to me is all about feel!"



Greg Dodd PHOTO: JOVIAN PROJECTS

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JOJO SMITH

BY SIMON
WOOLDRIDGE

It's been a roundabout international journey for JoJo Smith from her native New Zealand to her fourth Bendigo Blues & Roots Music Festival this November.

From smoky night clubs in Austria to getting slung in jail in Spain for busking in a subway, JoJo now calls Violet Town home, "clean air and a nice peaceful vibe there" she says.

She's a big fan of our festival, "...thing I like about this festival is it is family orientated and caters for all ages. It encourages and offers stages to younger musicians trying to make their way. I really enjoy collaborating

with other musicians at the festival... it's a joy to be a part of."

JoJo was an early starter in musical terms. "I think I sang before I spoke," she says, "which led me to piano, led me to ukulele, to guitar, to drums..."

Watching and listening to JoJo perform I'm not surprised to learn how much soul music has influenced her. "Four Tops, Stevie Wonder, Marvin Gaye, Donny Hathaway, Roberta Flack... oooh there's a list!" she says enthusiastically.

We can expect JoJo to mine her four album back catalogue in November with favourites *Tempt Me With Love* and *Let Somebody Know* sure to be in her set list.



JoJo Smith PHOTO: RUTH LOTTER

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PETE CORNELIUS

BY SIMON
WOOLDRIDGE

Pete Cornelius doesn't look old enough to have released 11 albums but this prodigious talent from St Marys in north east Tasmania has music virtually in his DNA.

As a young child Pete would "tinker away" on his mother's piano "until getting formal lessons when I was about six. I'd write a few of my own *boogie woogies* and loved that old-school rock n roll, you know, Little Richard, Jerry Lee Lewis etc..."

Later on it was his dad's record collection that sparked some interest, "bands like Deep Purple, Pink Floyd, Santana, Fleetwood Mac, Dire Straits," but it was music from an earlier era that had really gripped him: "what I first really latched onto was that early '50s rock n roll and R&B. I think it was that exciting jumping rhythm, colourful lyrics, great players and amazing sounds! I just wanted to be like Elvis!"

Pete Cornelius likes Bendigo, citing "the people, the venues, the trams, the beautiful cityscape and the heritage" as one of the reasons he's back for a fifth Festival. And he's played in some interesting places, "Probably some of the strangest yet super shows have been at Mardi Gras at Kununurra WA, The Island Party Boat in Brisbane QLD and Satan's Riders Clubrooms in Launceston as a 17 year old!"

It will be great to see Pete Cornelius back in Bendigo in November and hear some familiar stuff like Tumbleweed, Suburban Hell, Drinking the Blues and All My Heroes Are Dead. I'm hoping Pete and his band will play my personal favourite, Been My Gal which contains a line unlike any other I've heard about a relationship break-up: "She stole my tape recorder, now she's on a restraining order."

Pete Cornelius again promises to be one of the Festival highlights.



Pete Cornelius

COL'S 2 BOB WORTH

Thanks for picking up The Bluesletter. Bendigo's live music resurgence has been an exhilarating phenomenon to be part of, and it's showing no signs of slowing down.

Thanks for picking up The Bluesletter. Bendigo's live music resurgence has been an exhilarating phenomenon to be part of, and it's showing no signs of slowing down. The 5th annual Bendigo Blues & Roots Music Festival has again grown and promises to deliver everything you loved about it in previous years and a whole lot more. With almost 50 venues hosting music and over 170 acts delivering more than 400 performances over the 4-day festival, you'll need to get a head-start reviewing the online program to work out how to make the most of this year's festival.

From our free concert in Rosalind Park, to the youth stages, to jams and open mic sessions to concerts at The Capital and Ulumbarra Theatres (hosting our 'main

event' concerts with BB&RMF first timers like: Joe Camilleri and the Black Sorrows, Jeff Lang, Backsliders, Lucie Thorne with Hamish Stewart) there really is something for everyone. The Goldmines Hotel will host Fiona Boyes (another internationally renowned blues performer making her BB&RMF debut), workshops, intimate concerts in Billyroy's Blues Bar and an amazing array of acts in their famous courtyard. The Shamrock Hotel will again host some of the finest blues talent in Australia in the Gold Dust Lounge, on the balcony of The Yard Bird and a very special concert honouring the recently departed BB King. The Bridge Hotel will put on their famous Street Party, which will feature Lloyd Spiegel, Andrea Marr Band and many others. The Exchange will host artists on the boardwalk from Thursday through Sunday and ROCKS on Rosalind brings live tunes back to their courtyard and carpark with another explosive line-up. New venues this year include The Boardwalk at Lake Weeroona with a very special singer/songwriter showcase on the Sunday, The Engine Room, also playing host to singer/songwriter events on the Friday, Saturday and Sunday. The Davidson Brothers finally join the BB&RMF party and are guaranteed

to create a ruckus in the Rifle Brigade Hotel car park on the Friday night. The Discovery Centre will host music and activities aimed fairly and squarely at families. Those wanting to check out venues on the outskirts of town can do so at Marong Family Hotel, Axedale Tavern, the Farmers Arms Hotel and others. We have an all-ages show guaranteed to blow the roof off the multi-storey carpark in Edward Street, headlined by the mighty Jackson Firebird! Again, the vast majority of our program is free entry, but those who can afford to are encouraged to secure seats early for our ticketed events to avoid missing out. Go to our website and click on the "Tickets" tab.

The fun doesn't end in November – we're involved in the Summer in the Parks concert series on January 22 and 29. We host our first Blues Tram event of 2016 on January 23 and The Old Church on the Hill will play home to more singer/songwriter showcases on an ad-hoc basis, so keep your ear to the ground.

Thanks again for supporting live music. It's where you're not just an audience member, you're a participant!

Colin Thompson – Festival Director