

The BLUESLETTER

2ND EDITION - APRIL 2011

Drop us a line at bendigoblues@gmail.com



UPDATE | BY BEN CAMERON

THE STORY SO FAR

Hello music lovers and welcome to the second edition of the Bluesletter, the official newsletter of the Bendigo Blues & Roots Music Festival.

Since our first edition hit the streets back in February, a fair bit of water has flowed under the old blues and roots bridge.

The big news is that both Geoff Achison & The Souldiggers, and the sublime Josh Owen Band will headline the Rosalind Park event on November 26.

"It's great news for the festival," festival director Colin Thompson said. "Acts don't come any classier than Geoff Achison or Josh Owen and their respective bands, who are impossibly good at what they do, and that's a fact."

Then there's the little subject of \$10,000. The Bendigo Bank have come to the party in a big, big way, tipping in ten grand for the festival, which is very, very exciting. Cheers to the bank, your support is absolutely amazing and very much appreciated.

On the publicity front, the festival has continued to catch the ear of some influential local media, with ABC Radio looking to commence a promotional partnership with the festival, that could mean national exposure on Triple J.

The Bendigo Weekly, in particular b.entertained, has also offered ongoing in-kind support, which will keep its music loving readers up to date with all the latest festival developments. But back to the muso stuff.

Easter looks like being a big few days for the festival, with three acts already booked to grace the festival bill in November, set to provide an early sample of their goods on Easter Monday.

Stringybark McDowell (Geelong), Tom Tuena (formerly Shepparton now Melbourne) and Josh Owen (Melbourne) will form a killer line up that should please a wide demographic of taste.

The Metro has also come on board the festival train with hefty sponsorship, and will host our next fundraiser; it'll be a "ten bands for ten bucks" affair" on Sunday May 8.

Local whiz kid Jordan Allen is locked in, as are Bel & Jon, Jacob McGuffie, Michelle Meehan and Joel English... along with the Melbourne maniac who's getting a lot of attention in the United States: Mike Eltrington.

The May 8 fundraiser is also going to showcase some of the phenomenal Bluegrass talent that will be on offer come November, with Bluestone Junction making a special guest appearance.

Performing the final set of the night will be local blues legends The Croakers, featuring the mighty talents of Glen 'Kinga' Roy, Roger Davies, Rob King, Jimi Williams, Tony Spizzica and the lovely Marni Sheehan! (The rest of the May 8 Fundraiser line-up is still being locked in as we go to press, so keep your ear to the ground to find out who else will be on the bill!)

Other important dates to lock in your blues and roots calendar is "Back 2 Back Blues" at the Basement Bar (17 View Point) featuring Mike Eltrington and Bones Blackwood on April 1 and 2, while Springybark McDowell plays April 15 at the very same intimate and vibe-ridden venue.

A few weeks later the Blues on Bull (Downtown Bendigo's Rock & Blues Festival) will hit Easter Saturday afternoon (April 23, 2pm until 6.45pm), featuring Talisa "TJ" Jobe, Cold Snap, Bones Blackwood and Andrew Higgs Band.

That same evening "Bonesy" will play the Basement Bar while Andrew Higgs Band will play a gig at the Golden Vine Hotel (135 King Street Bendigo) with Deano Stanton performing a solo opening set at the Vine show.

All in all, the Bendigo Blues & Roots Music Festival continues to build steady momentum, thanks to your support.



Josh Owen Band
Photos by Mick Griffin.



Michelle Meehan | Photo by Bill Conroy.

INTERVIEW | BY JAKE SCHATZ

JOSH OWEN BAND

The delicious, funky soul grooves of the Josh Owen Band have frequently left many a musician scratching their heads as to how they are not a household name.

Owen is a Melbourne-based performer who has been playing music for the bulk of his life.

"I started playing violin as a kid, but my teacher was pretty horrible so I swapped to guitar" Josh laughed.

"I've been taking music seriously since my late teens."

On a grand scale, some of Owen's biggest influences include Bob Marley and Jimi Hendrix, but it's within the music of many local bands that he finds the biggest inspiration.

"Watching local musicians play has the greatest effect on me. Seeing what my friends play on a more personal level and studying their craft is something I love to do" he said.

His infectious smooth vocal style and guitar mastery sees him as an incredible soloist in his own right,

but as a trio the Josh Owen Band are a dynamic force to be reckoned with.

Jason Heerah is the band's nominated drummer, and is definitely not just there to keep the time.

As virtuosic as he is explosive, his unfathomable drumming ability is revered all around the country. It seems almost unfair that he should also be blessed with a beautiful soul voice, which he puts to good use in the band.

Bassist Luke Hodgson adds the final dimension, laying down funky grooves and an incredible harmonic intelligence.

The band released their debut LP 'The Long Way' last year and it has been met with exceptionally positive reviews. A superstar trio, we are very happy to have The Josh Owen Band on board to headline the Bendigo Blues and Roots Music Festival this November.

COL'S MESSAGE

Thanks to all for the positive response to the first edition of the Bluesletter (February 2011). We've had so many emails from people showing support of all kinds... it's very encouraging to know that this festival is a worthwhile undertaking in the opinion of so many people out there.

While funding is in the process of being secured from numerous sources (as mentioned in the Bluesletter edition #1), we are of course still happy to field offers of cash and in-kind sponsorship from any and all interested businesses and groups who wish to become part of our humble festival in its inaugural year and beyond.

I'd also like to invite people to visit www.planbig.com and show support for our festival plan, as well as for my suggestion/plan of a permanent stage facility in Rosalind Park. Go to <http://www.planbig.com.au/Permanent-performance-stagefacility-in-Bendigo-CBD>

It's another project that is close to my heart and to those of the committee, our support crew and those in the wider arts and music community of this region.

I'd just like to make a quick mention of a show that would be well worth you attending (if you're reading this in time to do so of course) and that's the Relay For Life benefit gig at the Golden Vine on Saturday April 9.

It's an annually held event and this year has a slight Roots kind of twist, with featured artists Joel English, TJ, Deano Stanton's band and Urban Creatures.

All proceeds from the door are donated to the Cancer Council's Relay For Life anti-cancer campaign through the Bendigo Bank's Bendigo Centre Relay team. The door will be manned yet again by Bendigo Bank's Customer Help Centre team and the door charge is a mere \$10.

Great value for great entertainment; and all to support a great cause - so why wouldn't you go?!

For those Blues enthusiasts out there looking for a casual play, or keen to witness some improvised musical magic, the Bendigo Blues Club (headed by Roy and Sue Webb) run a twice monthly Blues Jam that shouldn't be missed.

Get along to the Newmarket Hotel on the first Saturday afternoon of every month for the fully electrified Blues Jam (drum-kit and some backline provided)... and: the Golden Vine Hotel on the third Saturday afternoon of every month for the acoustic Blues Jam. For the uninitiated, these are probably the most welcoming and fun jam sessions you're ever likely to take part in or witness. And to witness is to take part! We get fantastic singers, brilliant players and live music enthusiasts from all over the region (and beyond) regularly coming along to enjoy the vibe these Blues Jams emanate. Be amongst them and check it out for yourself!

Don't forget: no matter what the cause, what the occasion, or what your tastes, going out and enjoying live music is its own reward!

Finally, it's very exciting for us to be able to announce that Bendigo Bank, having recognised the value in what our Festival committee and crew is striving to achieve, has committed to providing a \$10,000 sponsorship towards the cost of getting this festival off the ground in 2011.

There are already so many overdue thanks to be handed out to the many people who've donated their time and talents, and those who've already kicked in with sponsorship dollars to help this project along, but this contribution by the bank cannot be overlooked as a huge boost to what we will be able to achieve with the inaugural Festival in November 2011.



Tully Sumner | Photo by Mick Griffin.



Photo courtesy of B Entertained.

MUSICIAN PROFILE | BY BEN CAMERON

TULLY SUMNER

Full name: Tully Sumner

Born in: Melbourne

First musical instrument played: Piano

Other occupation apart from music: Gardener/ Environmental Officer.

Biggest influence on music career: My parents; apart from having a great record collection, both are great singers and as a kid growing up I just absorbed a lot of music all the time.

Favourite Bendigo musician: Tyson Hodges, I dig his guitar style.

Favourite World musician: Fela Kuti for sharing Afrobeat with the world.

Three dream dinner guests: Jim Henson creator of The Muppets for his limitless imagination, David Attenborough for his adventurous inquisitiveness and Ricky Gervais for bit of a laff!

Describe yourself in three words: Not without flaws.

Describe your music style in a sentence: Old time blues and folk.

Favourite song of all time: Amazing Grace, beautifully simple and succinct.

If you had one wish for the world what would it be? Equilibrium

Why are you excited to play the Bendigo Blues & Roots Music Festival? I grew up in Kyneton and played around the area throughout my youth. It's great to come back to my old stomping ground and give a little bit back to the community.

If you could jam with any one musician who would it be? Gillian Welch.

Best gig: Woodford Folk Fest New Years Eve. The place was buzzing with amazing positive energy and the people were all so high.....on life of course!

Favourite venue to play: The Toff in Town is pretty plush, I also like Open Studio in Northcote for its cosy intimacy.

Strangest experience you've had on stage: I did a duet with Kermit the frog, we sang the rainbow connection. Yes, it really happened. He wasn't the real Kermit though, just an impersonator.

What's the worst song request you've been hit with? Khe Sahn, not that its a bad song, its just that I don't know the words.

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