

4TH EDITION | APRIL 2012



The BLUESLETTER

Col's Two-Bob COLIN THOMPSON

WELL, THE FIRST BENDIGO BLUES & ROOTS MUSIC FESTIVAL IS DONE AND DUSTED AND (BY ALL ACCOUNTS) WAS A SMASHING SUCCESS!

The feedback we've received, from punters, participating venues, and the musicians who took part, has been overwhelmingly positive (see overleaf for some examples). We look forward to continuing to work with all of our partners, sponsors and in-kind supporters from last year, not to mention so many brilliantly talented musicians and the volunteers who made BB & RMF in the first place.

As far as 2012's Festival goes, you can look forward to official line-up announcements later in the year, but be assured, the program will again be as outstanding as it was last year, only more various and with even more familiar names involved. But for now, please mark down the second weekend in November in your diary or calendar (**Nov 8th, 9th, 10th & 11th**) as that's when **Bendigo Blues & Roots Music Festival #2** will take place, with another all-day, family-friendly, free-entry concert as the centrepiece to the program, this time to be staged in Civic Gardens adjacent to Bendigo's magnificent Town Hall!

In the meantime: **Saturday April 14th** will see the **Rifle Brigade Hotel** (137 View Street Bendigo) host the first BB & RMF

Showcase event for 2012, with 15 acts performing from **12pm till 8pm**. There will be a stage and a fabulous bar set up in the temporarily converted carpark beyond the beer garden, with a massive help from our good friends at Bendigo Beer. Performances in the Al Fresco area in front of the pub at the top end of View Street, will further enhance the atmosphere in Bendigo's Arts Precinct during the afternoon. An amazing array of local and visiting talent is yours to enjoy for a measly cover charge of \$10. If you wish to donate further to the cause of supporting BB & RMF 2012, there will be a raffle and our handsome merchandise will be available to purchase, so you can take home a souvenir or two!

Bull Street will again host a Blues & Roots Showcase concert on **Easter Saturday** afternoon (**April 7th, 2pm till 6pm**), featuring: Bones Blackwood, MTB, Blues Mountain and Cold Snap. The same site will host a cruisy-bluesy "Chill Out" recovery session on **Easter Monday** (**April 9th, 1pm till 5pm**), featuring the talents of Talisa Jobe, Luke Owens, The Jefferson Smith Band and The Old Buzzard Medicine Show. A huge thanks to the Metro/Puggs Irish Bar for keeping this great Easter tradition alive

There's also the "Turning Music Into Gold" Mini-Fest at the **Goldmines Hotel** from 1pm till 6pm on **Easter Sunday** - and - **Happy Jack's Hootenanny** at **Happy Jack's Reserve** in Lockwood South, with live music from **1pm till 8pm** on **Saturday April 28th**. So April



Mike Elrington

Photo by Mick Griffin

MIKE ELRINGTON ARTIST PROFILE BY BEN CAMERON

Mike Elrington is luckily a talented recording artist. Fortunate because one day many years ago in South Central Los Angeles, a bunch of his own CDs probably saved his life. But more on that later.

For the man known for his blistering guitar work, gut-wrenching pipes and inventive word-smithery, the 30-year-old's love for music, like many of his generation, Elrington's love of music began with 80s hitmakers Dire Straits.

"I first got involved in music as a three year-old kid when I heard 'Money For Nothing,'" Elrington remembers.

"I loved the sound of a guitar so much I begged my folks to turn my make-believe guitar, a squash racquet, into a real guitar.

"Unfortunately I didn't get that real guitar until I was 11 and then got some lessons in my last year of primary school in Adelaide.

"Music became my main focus in life after realising I couldn't play NBA basketball or be an Olympic level rower for Australia. "It also felt much better being a musician as opposed to an athlete."

The decision to replace the racquet with a guitar bore fruit years later when he won the High School Battle of the Bands competition in 1999, at Marryatville High School in Adelaide, before graduating to Adelaide's premier live music venue, The Governor Hindmarsh Hotel, where he supported many a local and interstate blues and roots acts.

Continued overleaf

is shaping up as a huge month for fans of home-grown, grass-roots, music events... get amongst it!

For blues performers of all ages and experience levels, don't forget the **Bendigo Blues Club Jam Session**, held the first Saturday of every month from 2pm in the beer garden at the **Newmarket Hotel**; for a fun play and/or an enjoyable listen!

Be sure to check out what's on at the venues who support great live music on a weekly basis. These gutsy businesses are the lifeblood of the live music scene and they deserve YOUR support!!

Thanks again for picking up our Bluesletter for a read. Please do visit our website and join our email list if you wish to receive updates on upcoming BB & RMF related events: www.bendigobluesandroots.com

Drop us a line:
bendigoblues@gmail.com

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Congratulations to you and your tireless crew for hosting a fantastic weekend and events prior for the 1st Bendigo Blues & Roots Music Festival. I hope this is the first of many more...

Julie Gardner

Spent most of Saturday in the intermittent rain in Rosalind Park, (after sneaking home to pick up my umbrella). Worth every raindrop to hear a wonderful array of talented musicians. Congratulations to the organisers; looking forward to next year.

Ken Rookes

Fantastic weekend. Well done to all involved. I had a great time and can't wait for next year's "blues tram"! Oh yeah! Gold dust lounge was awesome! Fantastic Lloyd Spiegel. Say no more.

Lisa Roulston Croft

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MIKE ELRINGTON

ARTIST PROFILE BY **BEN CAMERON** CONTINUED
FROM OVERLEAF

A year later he moved to Melbourne, and recorded his debut solo album *Too Good to be True*, a mix of Blues, Rock and Pop, overseen by ARIA award winning producer, Peter "Reggie" Bowman.

It's a partnership that has endured, and opened the door for Elrington to establish himself in the Australian independent blues scene.

"Reggie has been an absolute dream to work with over the last eight years," Elrington says. "Every time I work with him I feel like he makes me just that little bit better at what I do as an artist."

"He has an astute ability to get to the heart of what the artist is trying to say and then captures it all so honestly in terms of his production presentation."

"He is one of few producers out there that has total faith, confidence and commitment to all the artists he works with, no matter what genre or

personality. "He just 'gets' it."

Elrington went on to complete his first tour of the US in 2005, headlining a sold-out show at the award winning Biscuits & Blues in San Francisco, while San Francisco's Blues Revue Magazine lavished the praise, saying he was one of the most exciting acts to come out of Australia in years.

"I have toured the US three times now and have learnt more and more each time I go," Elrington says.

"I guess because the nature of touring over there is quite intense and arduous, it really taught me how to work extra hard on the road without the comforts of being at home."

"In a country like the states you really have to think on your feet and adapt quickly... like when you run out of gas in Compton, South Central Los Angeles, and have to give away CDs to armed gangsters."

"True story! Kid you not!"

Safely back home in Australia, Elrington has become a familiar face around Bendigo's music haunts.

"I am a regular visitor to Bendigo and probably play there one or two times each month," he says.

"I enjoy the laid back nature of it and especially love the Basement Bar, that place is like a home away from home for me."

Elrington was also a festival favourite at the inaugural Bendigo Blues & Roots Music Festival in November last year.

"It's great to see regional towns getting behind blues/roots music and putting festivals on for it," he said.

Mike Elrington plays the Rifle Brigade for the Bendigo Blues & Roots Music Festival showcase on April 14.



Bluestone Junction

Photos by Mick Griffin



Rattlin' Bones Blackwood

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Last weekend I travelled from Sydney to experience the first festival. This festival will become a real drawcard to music lovers like myself looking for a bluesy weekend away from home. I'll be back next year!

Sarah Allen

Worth taking every hit from the rain. A great showcase of music for the afternoon. Every performer brought something unique and special. Great job to Colin and crew putting the inaugural BB&RF together and creating an outlet for the creative and talented musos.

Ken Richie

I was also blown away by the overall spirit and enthusiasm shown by artists and audiences alike. To me, the whole town was buzzing with positive vibes for the whole 3 days of the Festival

Marc Leon

We will definitely be back. We head up to the Byron Bay Bluesfest annually and Bluesfest every Easter. We plan on doing the same each year in Bendigo. Great to have a festival that celebrates the local Blues scene.

Rachel Mines Smith

With such a huge event to coordinate I think everyone involved did an incredible job and the festival spirit was certainly alive and well. I was made to feel very welcome and the audiences were fabulous too..

Geoff Achison



Andrew Higgs



Andrea Marr

A great debut!

MICK GRIFFIN

THE INAUGURAL BENDIGO BLUES & ROOTS MUSIC FESTIVAL LAID IT ON IN MAGNIFICENT STYLE, CATERING FOR MUSIC LOVERS OF ALL AGES AND MUSICAL TASTES, MARKING BENDIGO AS A PREMIER MUSICAL CITY.

From Thursday's launch party held at the Gold Dust Lounge, right through to Sunday evening, our city was ringing with glorious music, and while adhering to the blues and roots label, it encompassed a deliciously overwhelming array of musical styles.

Try this on for musical diversity: we experienced the rustic acoustic blues of Archer, Dave Diprose and Alawishus Jones, explosive hard edged rock and blues from the likes of the Black Aces, Jackson Firebird, the Andrew Higgs Band, Soundhole and the Vagrants, soul fans had their appetites sated by class

acts, Josh Owen and Taylor Sheridan, while those seeking some exquisitely folk tinged material were treated to sublime performances from Alanna and Alicia Egan and Michelle Meehan.

Attracting big name acts on the blues and roots scene such as Geoff Achison, Lloyd Spiegel, Pete Cornelius and the Devils, the Andrea Marr Band, Jungal, Nick Barker and Shaun Kirk was a mighty accomplishment for any festival in its first year, and speaks volumes for the faith that is being invested by elite performers in the future of Bendigo's very own music festival.

While there was rain for Saturday's show-piece concert in Rosalind Park, it did nothing to dampen the spirits of musical die-hards who rapturously enjoyed a seamlessly run event. Class acts, a great sound, lots of smiling faces and a genuine sense of communal energy saw the concert exceed all expectations.

For me, the real beauty of an event such as this is the breaking down of musical boundaries and live music being laid out for those that are unaware, or previously uninformed, as to what is so readily available to them.

It's a beautiful thing to see fans of music styles far removed from the blues and roots scene attend gigs throughout the festival and rave excitably about new musical finds.

Personal highlights for this reviewer include Sweet Baby James and Rob Evers from Adelaide, regular Bendigo visitor raucous Bones Blackwood, the gorgeous Alanna and Alicia Egan, Genevieve Chadwick, whose performance style is pure dynamite, that freakish force of nature Shaun Kirk and the incomparable queen of the blues, Andrea Marr.

Can't wait to do it all again in November 2012!

THE BENDIGO BLUES & ROOTS MUSIC FESTIVAL IS SPONSORED BY

