

COL'S 2 BOB WORTH

Thanks for picking up The Bluesletter and for taking an interest in Bendigo's burgeoning music scene. There's a lot of news to be shared, so let's get into it:

The Blues Tram - Artists have been booked for the remaining Blues Tram rides this year (up to Festival weekend). The roster is an even split of familiar faces and new talent. Saturday 11 July sees Alawishus Jones's return, this time with his rhythm section The Outright Lies in tow. Tony J King also makes a welcome return for the July Tram. Saturday 22 August sees the remarkable CASS (Cassie Ward & Bianca Maes) paired up with Luke Watt, a well-travelled troubadour now based in Castlemaine. On Friday 25 September we host a special Blues Tram/Underground Banquet event, in partnership with one of Bendigo's finest restaurants, ROCKS on Rosalind. Rocking you through this ride and dinner will be a pair of one-man whirlwinds: Festival favourite Rattlin' Bones Blackwood and Mr Black & Blues himself Michael Pollitt. Tickets can be purchased from Bendigo Visitor Centre (1800 813 513) or via Bendigo Tourism's website, as they can for the Saturday Blues Tram events.

Our big winter Showcase event, 'Ewes, Brews, Stews & Blues' returns to the Goldmines Hotel on Sunday 19 July. We have an incredible line-up, including artists who haven't performed at our Showcases before: Josh Cashman, William Alexander and Luke Watt. Exciting return artists include: Josh Owen, Alister Turrill, Sleepy West, DIGG, Talisa Jobe, Luke Harrington and Andy Garlick. We'll also see the second heat of this year's Lazenby Young Blues Guitarist Award which showcased some remarkable young talent in 2014. 2015 looks equally exciting.

Our Spring Showcase on Sunday 20 September will be at the Golden Vine - thanks to new manager and long-time muso Mick Coates. With Mick's support a stellar line-up of Blues & Roots artists will take the Vine stage. A few of the acts already locked in: Lily & King, Jojo Smith, Dave Diprose, Tony J King and The Swamp Monsters, with many more to be announced. Put that one in your diary!

New Host Venues - With ever-increasing numbers of music lovers attending our Festival each year, so too has the list of host venues. In 2015 we will welcome the following venues for the first time: Old Boundary Hotel; Lakeview Hotel; Boardwalk Cafe; Axedale Tavern; Bendigo Art Gallery; and of course the exciting new 953 seater: Ulumbarra Theatre! And there are still more to be announced.

Want to Support our not-for-profit, volunteer-run Festival? Visit our website to find out about the benefits of becoming a Friend of the Festival. And don't forget to keep an eye and an ear out for what's going on musically around you on a week-to-week basis. There are more brilliant discoveries to be made in more local venues than you probably realise!



ALISTER TURRILL & THE VAGABOND BROTHERS

ARTIST PROFILE

Alister Turrill

BY SIMON WOOLDRIDGE

Geelong-based Alister Turrill has become a distinctive, familiar figure around the Bendigo music scene these past 18 months or so. "Such a beautiful, welcoming town!" says Alister, "I first came for the Blues and Roots Festival in 2013. In three days I played some of my favourite shows to date and met people who I hope will become lifelong friends."

I've seen Alister play a number of times, most memorably at the Gold Dust Lounge at last year's Festival - his distinctive sound captivating the packed late evening bar.

Alister's debut release *Reverence & Resonance*, produced by Lloyd Spiegel, came out in 2013. He regularly plays many tracks off the album though he's keen to warn Bendigo fans "some of those songs have changed pretty dramatically" in their live delivery.

He also has a new single out - *Road to the Grave* which was launched at this year's Port Fairy Folk Festival. "I was ready to try something a little different," he explains, "I formed Alister Turrill & The Vagabond Brothers" with Jaron Mulholland on bass and Toby Johnson on drums. The new band will be headlining the Ewes, Brews, Stews & Blues showcase event at The Goldmines Hotel on 19 July.

"Where did you get your love of music?" I asked. "My parents for sure... from a young age. They have an amazing CD and record collection. They first took me to the Queenscliff Music Festival when I was 11, and I remember seeing Xavier Rudd for the first time. I was in awe! I'd never seen or heard anything like it. But it was a few years later when I first heard Jimi Hendrix and Neil Young that I knew I had to learn to play the guitar." Alister also cites Charlie Parr, Lloyd Spiegel, Chase The Sun, Kim Churchill, Steve Smyth, Nick Cave and Lamb of God as influences.

I'm not alone in being pleased that Alister *did* learn to play the guitar and I'm looking forward to seeing him play long into the future.



PETE GAVIN

ARTIST PROFILE **Pete Gavin**

BY SIMON WOOLDRIDGE

Bendigo's Pete Gavin is a busy man. If he's not working with one of the *four* bands he's in you'll find him coordinating his ukulele groups on midweek evenings or teaching guitar or blues harmonica. Or working with ensembles such as DIGG. Maybe he didn't invent the word "ubiquitous" but he's warmly embracing it.

Pete grew up in Gippsland and Bendigo. Initially influenced by his four older sisters, "my earliest musical memory is dancing around the lounge room to The Monkees. The Beatles and The Bee Gees." Nowadays it's Pokey LaFarge, The Wiyos, Big Bill Broonzy. "Oh, and Dr John... this could be a never ending list actually," he says, enthusiasm shining through.

If you've been to the Festival, or Festival Showcase events through the year or just stuck your head in the door of one of Bendigo's many music venues then you've likely seen Pete play in the Uke Joint Jumpers, Alawishus Jones and the Outright Lies, Slap Back Jack & The Magic Eight Balls or The Tequila Mockingbirds. I know... a busy man!

"Great audiences in Bendigo," Pete says, "open to a variety of music and eager to be entertained."

The Uke Joint Jumpers is a many-piece ukulele ensemble who always look like they're having fun; I'm just never sure how many of them there actually are!

Then there's Pete's alter ego Alawishus Jones. He plays Americana, rag and folk blues with his band the Outright Lies. Their album *Hollerin'* is an atmospheric journey into hard times 1930s America; think Woody Guthrie meets Dorothea Lange.

Slap Back Jack & The Magic Eight Balls is a fairly recent addition to the Pete Gavin portfolio, debuting last November at The Exchange during the Festival. Their raison d'être is authentic '50s rock 'n' roll, playing classics such as C'mon Everybody and Brand New Cadillac. The Magic Eight Balls also features Dean Muller (Cosmic Psychos) on drums and Darren Howell (The Rockin' Donkeys) on guitar.

Wait... there's more. The Tequila Mockingbirds, a "cowboy swing band". Pete is keen to emphasise they are "cowboy, not country", adding "think black and white westerns with yer croonin' cowhand out on the lonesome trail."

Pete's currently working on two records of original material with the Outright Lies and Magic Eight Balls and "another album of ukulele driven barrelhouse blues with the Uke Joint Jumpers". Busy man indeed. And one who has a strong social conscience and community spirit: "I think the world would be a far better place if everyone played ukulele or sang in a choir."

IN BRIEF BY SIMON WOOLDRIDGE



Patrons at a packed Goldmines courtyard a few Fridays ago were treated to fantastic near two hour set by **Lloyd Spiegel**, in Bendigo at the start of a three month tour promoting his new live double CD. Lloyd was joined on stage for a couple of tracks by local favourite **Bill Barber**.

On the subject of the ubiquitous **Bill Barber**... he went into the studio in early July and is looking to have his, as yet untitled, first CD out in September or October.



Greg Dodd and the Hoodoo Men, Festival favourites last year, have a new album, *Movin' On*, out now.



Another new release that grabbed my attention recently was **Benny Walker's** *Through the Forest*. Benny played tracks from his new album recently to a buzzing Old Church On The Hill crowd.

Have you heard about **Friends of the Festival**? There are numerous benefits. For a one-off annual fee of \$95 (individual) or \$225 (family) you can get into over 20 Bendigo Blues & Roots Music Festival events free or half-price through the year and all events at the Festival for free. Additionally - yes, it gets better - Friends of the Festival will receive a merchandise pack valued at \$37 (individual) and \$72 (family). The pack includes some cool, groovy, funky Festival-branded gear - t-shirt, cap, CD sampler, stubby holder, etc. And of course. By becoming a Friend, you'll get that warm, glowing feeling that comes with supporting live music in Bendigo...

Interested? Visit our website www.bendigobluesandroots.com.au to print your subscription order form. We'd love to welcome you as a Friend of the Festival.