



TSA Newsletter

March 2017

'First the Song'

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President's Report

Hi all members and friends of the TSA.

The **TSA 2017 Concert & Awards** night was held on Tuesday, 24th January 24 2017 at the Longyard Hotel in Tamworth. It was another great night of Awards and performances. Winners of the **National Country Songwriting Contest**, the **Salute Awards**, the **New Songwriter** and the new **ANZAC section** are included in the newsletter. Congratulations to all the finalists and winners! The night featured performances from the following wonderful artists: Becci Nethery, Sophia Chesworth, Kirsty Lee Akers, Billy Bridge, Rebecca Lee Nye, Steve Passfield, Imogen Clark, Angus Gill, Greg Bain, Travis Collins, The Sherrahs, Johnny Greenwood, all ably held together by Clair Hayes and Angus Gill as comperes. If you missed the awards show you missed a fabulous night with many happy moments.

Without our dedicated judges there would be no competition and although the following are not all the judges we can publicly thank Michael Abrey, Christie Lamb, Alan Gilmour, Ian Pav, William McMartin, Mick Malouf, Dominique Maurice, Kevin Adams, Britton Morrison, Ken Dyster, Stephen Kiely, George Young, Roxanne Kiely, Donna Boyd, Aly Cook, Peter Coad, Kylie Adams-Collier, Jack Pledge, Graham Reid, Vanessa Gordon, Roger Corbett, Lee J Collier and those other judges who wish to remain un-named.

This year TSA will again be at Hats Off in July in Tamworth and we are planning a few new events for the 2018 festival in Tamworth as 2018 will be the 40th year of the TSA. If you have not been to a Hats Off, I implore you come along and see Tamworth in winter, uncrowded and very family friendly. There are many easily accessed events and also many of the top artists.

Your new Committee is Duncan Hill (President), Chris Davies (Vice President, Lorraine Pfitzner (Secretary), Athol Latham (Treasurer), Darryl Bowen, Lydia Clair, Melissa Robertson, Patricia Cruzado, Wendy Wood, Carolyne Morris, Kalesti Butler and Brendan Nawocki. Please watch the TSA website and TSA newsletters for notices to lodge your interest in performing and please help Lydia who does the most amazing job of sorting you all out with opportunities.

Good songwriting to you all – Duncan Hill, President

2017 TSA PRESENTATION AWARDS NIGHTS

*** *PHOTOS* ***





TSA SONGWRITING CONTEST

2017 AWARD WINNERS



THE NATIONAL COUNTRY SONG- WRITING CONTEST WINNERS

NOVICE SECTION

"My Brother" by Phil Crossie

OPEN TRADITIONAL

"The Plains of Nappa Merrie" by Graham Rodger

OPEN CONTEMPORARY

"This Girl" by John Greenwood and Jason Greenwood

ALT BLUES & BLUEGRASS

"Stone To Sand" by Spike Flynn

JOHN P TOOMEY COMMEMORATIVE AWARD FOR YOUTH SONGWRITING

"This Is Me" by Bridie Middleton

LYRICS ONLY

"When The Thirty Three Came Home" by Merv Webster

APRA/TSA NEW SONGWRITER AWARD 2017

"If Only" by Renee Jonas

TSA SONGWRITER'S SALUTE AWARD WINNERS 2017

BEV DANIEL COMMEMORATIVE AWARD FOR TRADITIONAL BUSH BALLAD OF THE YEAR

"Beechworth Gold" by Justin Standley & Ronald Morgan

CONTEMPORARY SONG OF THE YEAR

'Back When I Was Older' by Allan Caswell & Michael Carpenter

CONTEMPORARY COUNTRY BALLAD OF THE YEAR

'Golden Days' by Allan Caswell & Andrew Wrigglesworth

COMEDY/NOVELTY SONG OF THE YEAR

'The Neighbours Turned New Age' by Michael Clare

ANZAC SONG OF THE YEAR

'Raise Your Glass' by Paul Grierson & Chris Rieger

GOSPEL SONG OF THE YEAR

'Walk With Me' by Dianne Coombes

ALT COUNTRY/BLUES/BUEGRASS

'I Should Have Told You' by Michael Carpenter

COUNTRY SONG OF THE YEAR

'Golden Days' by Allan Caswell & Andrew Wrigglesworth

TEX MORTON AWARD

Johnny Greenwood

THE SONGMAKER AWARD

Tony Brooks

**Congratulations to all the finalists and
winners!**

TSA MEMBERS

*** Out & About ***



MATILDA WALTZES RIGHT IN AT THE OASIS DURING THE TAMWORTH FESTIVAL

Singer and songwriter Paul Bonner Jones was upstaged by a special guest at one of his four shows at this year's Tamworth Country Music Festival — his four year old daughter Matilda.

"She's a chip off the old block," her mum, fellow performer Patricia Cruzado said. "It's in her genes on both sides of the family but we don't push her. "It's the first time she's got up like that. She grabbed her little uke and got up. "

Bonner Jones said budding musician Matilda was inspired to join him onstage at the Oasis Hotel after hearing a young girl sing Randy Travis's Forever Amen." She told me, "I want to do that. I want to sing that song to you Dad'," he said. Bonner Jones performed several shows in Tamworth during the 45th annual country festivals, including the Kooty Country Bash concert for people with disabilities, organised by the Tamworth Community Centre and Northcott Tamworth. (courtesy Gold Coast Bulletin)

March 29 at 10:03pm · Tamworth, NSW · 📍

TSA songwriters night at Cattlemans Steakhouse was great again tonight! Wendy Wood, Carolyne Morris, Ruth Jones, Narelle Glover, Tracey Hobday, S j Nich, Kerrie Padden, Curly Bass, Cody Bracken, Andrew McMahon, Brendan Nawrocki, Loren Ryan, Scotty Thallon, Stan Heuston, Judy and Maria, Richard Manning, Ethan Latsinos, Kelly Diamond Crosby, John kruslja.



The TSA 'Songwriter Sessions' (walk up) is proving to be popular at the Cattlemans Bar, Tamworth on the last Wednesday of the month 7pm, free . The next session is April 26, 2017.

BELOW: TSA Showcases proved to be popular at the Dubbo City Bowling Club during TCMF . TOP: Cathy Gunter. BELOW: Popular trio impressed the audience with their original tunes!





VALE – JOHN EDGAR MINSON— by Max Ellis

June 6, 1927 – March 10, 2017

John Edgar Minson, who died on March 10, 2017, was one of the key visionaries who turned Tamworth into Country Music Capital in the early 1970s.

He achieved fame as a broadcaster on radio 2TM. For more than two decades, John presented a nightly country music radio program called “Hoedown” which became the very foundation of Tamworth and 2TM’s drive into Country Music and he played a seminal role in the establishment of a thriving country music industry in Australia.

John came to Tamworth with his wife Ann in 1961, first working as a copywriter/announcer at 2TM and at sister station 2MO in Gunnedah.

Though born in Waverley, NSW, and attending Sydney High School, he spent many of his holidays on a family property in the Brindabella Ranges near Canberra, soaking up all aspects of bush life.

In 1965, 2TM was rocked by the introduction of television and John’s Country Music program was created to meet the challenge of tumbling radio audiences in the evenings.

John the copywriter became Country Music’s “Mr Hoedown” and the half-hour night-time session quickly became popular. 2TM’s clear channel, omni directional signal meant it did not share its frequency with other stations and, as a result, the signal could be heard at night all over Australia. Country Music fans flocked to “Hoedown” with the program even being picked up in New Zealand and New Guinea. By the late 1960s, “Hoedown” had become so popular it was running from 7.30 to 11.00 Monday to Friday.

John gave preference to Australian music, offering exposure to country artists who were battling to be heard. For many of them, airplay on “Hoedown” became the key to success. Listeners too liked the fact that John, a superb communicator, always talked “with” them, not “at” them.

By that time, it was becoming apparent that Country Music offered big possibilities for 2TM and Tamworth. In 1969, John was one of the group at 2TM who instigated the “Tamworth, Country Music Capital” promotion.

On January 28, 1973, 2TM launched the Australasian Country Music Awards and John played a major role in setting up and staging the event. For many years, he served on the judging panel of the Awards and, until he left 2TM in 1987, he did all the detailed preparation of the castings and wooden bases for the famous Golden Guitar trophies.

As the Awards was expanded into the Tamworth Festival, John was intimately involved in every aspect of the project, helping develop ideas like the Hands of Fame, the Roll of Renown and many other innovations. While promoting on radio, he also wrote for Capital News, the publication he helped found at 2TM in 1975.

John and wife Ann were heavily involved with the amateur Country Music scene in Tamworth supporting the early Jamborees organised by the local branch of the Modern Country Music Association later becoming life members of the city’s Capital Country Music Association.

A keen musician, John played his harmonica on many recording sessions including some for Slim Dusty. A number of his songs were recorded, including one by Buddy Williams (The Mighty Moonbi Range).

John designed and built the custom JEM pedal steel guitar and was involved in the Steel Guitar Convention in Tamworth. In 1983, he helped instigate the Harmonica Championships held during the Festival.

In 1978, John was presented with the Country Music Capital Award for services to the industry. In 1988, he was elevated to the Australasian Country Music Roll of Renown. In 1998, he received a Medal of the Order of Australia (AM) for services to the music industry.

For more than 30 years, John Minson played a vital role in helping to establish Country Music as a legitimate and important part of Australia’s heritage. John’s enormous enthusiasm, his tireless commitment, his encyclopaedic knowledge, his multitude of skills and his genuine interest in, and love of, his fellows, played a vital part in establishing both Tamworth as Country Music Capital and the Australian country music industry.

He was loved and respected by all who knew him. Comfortable with stars or country music fans, John had a wonderful way of reaching out and showing genuine interest and compassion for anyone he came across.

Retiring from 2TM in 1987, he and Ann moved to Coffs Harbour in 2001 where he took up building model aircraft. Although out of active Country Music activity for more than 25 years, John Minson is remembered and honoured by all who knew him.

John is survived by his wife Ann, sons Lawrie (and wife Shelley) and James and daughter Kathleen and her daughters Jess and Nikki.



TSA MEMBERS

*** NEWS ***



DR TAOS

Following rave reviews from his new self titled album and tour across Europe, musician Dr Taos is on fire since returning home to Australia.

"It's been great," he said of touring including England, Ireland, Germany, Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary and France. "I've been really well received and the audiences have been extremely appreciative, really getting into my shows, which has been wonderful!

His music has been described as "fusing Celtic folk with British blues rock, matured in sunburnt Australian country oak barrels". Dr TAOS produces his own inimitable style of alternative folk rock blends and his new album has received some great reviews along with radio airplay worldwide.

Q. Who are your influences? Everybody from Mozart to blues players to the Sex Pistols. I have a really wide taste in musical styles. I grew up listening to my Dad's jazz records, Mum's classical records, whatever was on the radio and then started listening to blues, rock, punk, folk, etc, etc which led to pretty eclectic tastes and influences. So trying to pin down exactly who my influences are is pretty hard so I would have to say everybody who makes music, which probably explains why my music is hard to pigeon hole.

Q. How did you start songwriting? Funnily enough I'm not sure. I started playing guitar when I was 8, learning classical initially (which I wish I'd kept up) and I guess I always had songs or melodies in my head so eventually they just started to come out. A lot of songs just come to me and then evolve.

I don't tend to sit down and go, "Right now I'm going to write a song" it kinda just happens.

Q. What inspires you? 'm inspired by everything around me from the incredible amount of insatiable human greed in this world driving war, human destruction and environmental destruction through to the simple pleasures in life that make it all worthwhile, through to the uplifting positivity of those who transcend all boundaries.

Q. When did you career in Europe start?

I recently released my new album "Dr TAOS" and a few people said I should head to Europe as they thought I would go down well there so I sent stuff out to a bunch of people who got back to me and started booking shows which turned into a tour! I had already been to the States with my previous album "*Darkness & Light*" so this time it was Europe. It went really well so I'm keen to go back as the venues said they'd love to have me back again. I also got picked up by radio over there and in the States as well as here too so I'm getting played worldwide now!

Following the success of his Europe tours, Dr Taos plans to return to Europe next year. He's been playing gigs in Sydney since February and you can catch him at the following venues.

Tuesday 11th April: Mr Falcon's, Glebe
Thursday 20th April LazyBones Lounge, Marrickville
His new album is available on CD or download (and T-shirts on the Dr TAOS website too) from the following: <http://drtaos.com>
<http://www.cdbaby.com/cd/drtaos>
<https://itunes.apple.com/us/album/dr-taos/id1152755432> <https://www.amazon.com/Dr-Taos/dp/B01LYGPMUS> www.drtaos.com

The Face Designs and Management

Mobile: 61 (0) 431 666 034 Phone: 612 9344 7242

Email: drtaos@drtaos.com

EDITOR'S NOTE: I managed to briefly meet the mysterious Dr Taos during the 2017 Tamworth Country Music Festival. He's keen to return to Tamworth next year so keep an eye out for his shows in 2018.

TSA MEMBERS

*** NEWS ***



Kalesti Butler is flying high having released her new album – *Airborne* – during this year's Tamworth Country Music Festival.

Born and raised on a cattle station in Queensland's Gulf of Carpentaria, Kalesti says her most vivid memories are during downtime when she would listen to and perform country music with her family. These life-long experiences are where Kalesti draws from to create her brand of country music, reflected in her new album.

While most will know the 2011 Academy Of Country Music graduate for her bush ballads and traditional sound, over recent years Kalesti has wanted to explore the wider musical genre. When asked about her upcoming release, Kalesti says, "I love a challenge and achieving my dreams, I will be stepping out of my comfort zone. I'll be flying."

Working with Robert Mackay from Pacific International Music on the album has only reinforced Kalesti's decision to add to her musical range, she said. "I have Michael Bryers to thank for suggesting recording at the award-winning studio during a discussion at the 2015 Mildura Country Music Festival." *Airborne* has 11 tracks. Kalesti wrote the majority with help from her mum Val, Roger Corbett, Cathy Dobson, Anita Ree, Felicity Urquhart and the remainder balanced out by Bob Wilson, Rain Perry, Lola Brinton, Kevin Bennett and Luke O'Shea.

The 2014 Top 10 Toyota Star Maker finalist says she finds lyrical inspiration in almost anything. For example, the album track, *Pump* was written by Kalesti and mum during lunch at the Mildura Country Musical Festival in 2012.

Mum and daughter were discussing song titles, concepts and ideas as they regularly do, when Kalesti spotted an old fuel bowser. The title was born and the ladies created a heroine jillaroo whose job it was to check the water pumps around the property. The song sings about the funny things that play on her mind that she may or may not see.

Kalesti attended the 2015 DAG Sheep Station Singers Songwriters Retreat where she wrote *Ride Cowboy* with Felicity Urquhart. This track was inspired by her dad who had cancer and was quite ill at the time. Sadly he passed away while Kalesti was on her way to the 2016 Tamworth Country Music Festival. Speaking on the phone when Kalesti was at a half-way pit stop, she had no idea "have fun in Tamworth" would be some of his final words.

Kalesti has been working on the land and singing about it for as long as she can remember. At just three years of age, she made her stage debut at the Charters Towers Country Music Festival and by nine she was crowned the Queensland Champion of Champions.

Accolades have since presented themselves many times over including the 2011 Australian Bush Balladeer Star Quest in Tamworth, 2011 New Talent trophy at the Gidgee Coal Bush Ballad Awards in Pittsworth, 2012 New Talent at the Stan Coster Memorial Australian Bush Ballad Awards at the Bungendore Country Music Muster and winning the 2013 APRA Tamworth Songwriters Association New Songwriter Award.

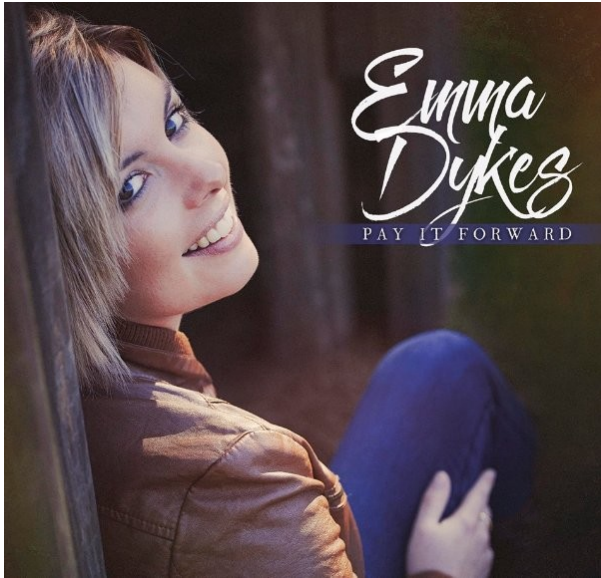
Airborne was launched at the 2017 TCMF. www.kalestibutler.com.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Welcome Kalesti to the TSA committee. She's a dedicated artist and we appreciate her offering to volunteer her time and valuable advice for the betterment of the association. Looking forward to listening to her new CD which includes some great collaborations!

TSA MEMBERS

*** NEWS ***



Her adventurous spirit, experiences as a remote emergency nurse and the love of her family has led singer songwriter Emma Dykes to record her “storybook” debut album.

Emma has often been described by her fans as a cross between Missy Higgins and the Dixie Chicks but with her individual flair and life experiences positively shining through.

She describes her songwriting as the “storybook of my life”.

“Every song has a tale attached and represents specific people, lessons, experiences and feelings I have encountered along the way,” she said.

“These songs are like listening to me sing you the pages of my photo album and I am sure they will hit a note close to home for you as well”.

This approach has led her to currently have one song a finalist and one a semi-finalist in the UK Songwriting Contest and one in the Top 30 of the Australian Songwriting Competitions country category.

Emma’s love for singing and country music can be traced back to days on the backyard swing, with headphones in, singing loudly to Adam Brand and holding onto an oversize cowboy hat in a small coastal town of Laurieton where she was born.

“I grew up with a big, loving, extended family, and our get-togethers were always heart warming and so much fun,” she said.

“My Nan and Pop have been my inspiration for true love; they were each other's first love and spent not a day apart until pop left us at 83 years old. Not only was he a proud supporter of my music from a young age, he was the centre piece of our family and an example of the perfect, true blue gentleman. Man of the House is the story of his life, summed up in the space of a song.”

Now at 28 years of age, after qualifying as a Critical Care Emergency Nurse and travelling around rural and remote Australia caring for people with plenty of wisdom and stories to share, she still has an everlasting passion for making country music.

Her travels have led her to experience some things in life that most 28 year olds could not even imagine. The path that began with nursing led to jobs in mine sites, driving machines with tyres twice her height, working with men and fighting to prove she was as capable as the next bloke, learning about rodeo first hand as the president of a local rodeo committee in Cape York and mustering on horseback.

Emma has always said yes to the opportunities she has been offered.

Her photo, or memory album as she likes to call it, has grown beyond belief. Now her nursing career is but a part time venture that allows her to still help people, travel the country and uncover the secrets of Australians, while her music career, now being her main focus, allows her to share this with her fans.

After graduating from the CMAA Academy of Country Music in January 2016 she is full of fresh ideas and is enthusiastically pursuing this childhood dream.

Emma’s debut album, was released at the 2017 Tamworth Country Music Festival, where she showcased her award winning original songs.

EDITOR’S NOTE:

What an amazing journey and what a great way to share her experiences through a song. Emma is currently enjoying some success with her album with titled track ‘Pay It Forward’ topping the Australian Country Music Hour’s most requested song for a number of consecutive weeks last month.

TSA MEMBERS

*** NEWS ***



Bill Amos is a dedicated family man, farmer and larrikin who is now achieving success as a “late bloomer” singer songwriter.

“I’m a very part-time singer – songwriter,” he said. Raising a family in the back blocks of NSW has always been his priority. “Spending my life raising a family has been the most rewarding thing I’ve ever accomplished,” he said. “I was never a person, who thought that I was anything special at singing or songwriting.”

The self-confessed “late bloomer” was 29 when his wife Debbie discovered an advertisement in the local paper. A newly formed band was looking for a lead singer, and Deb encouraged him to apply. Bill was reluctant at first, because up until then, his only singing career existed of him sitting in a tractor, working on a farm, with the cassette player blaring out songs, while he screamed out a tune along with it.

“Deb did talk me into it eventually, and I became the lead singer of a band,” he said. The group called ‘Hobo’ was born. As the band formed, Bill and one other member started writing songs.

Unfortunately the rest of the band were not interested in doing our own stuff, inciting that popular covers was the way to go, and sadly they weren’t interested in any gigs past the speed limits of Narromine either,” he said. The band stayed together for five years, and when it disbanded, Bill continued his love of music by writing songs

and singing where ever he could, including Karaoke competitions. In 2005 he won the Dubbo Outback Icon and the following year became a judge in the Dubbo Outback Icon where he became a mentor to many young contestants. Bill also started a duet called Himmeus in 2006 with the founder of the Dubbo Outback Icon. In 2008 Bill started a group called Crossing Genres with his daughter Natasha, which they still do today.

In 2006 Bill wrote a song called ‘I Bless The Day I Met You’ which was his first song considered to be radio worthy. It had some success on local country radio stations. It was followed by a song co-written with his daughter Natasha, called ‘Give Me Them Country Girls’ which again was happily received by local country radio stations, and a finalist in the TSA songwriter’s competition.

Bill’s next song, to hit the airwaves was ‘I’m Coming Home’, a finalist in the 2014 TSA comp. Since then, Bill has co-written many songs, with some very talented songwriters, learning along the way, and perfecting the art of song writing. His most successful song to date is ‘Just a Couple More Miles’ which has a video clip and can be viewed on YouTube.

Bill has been working on an album for around three years. Last year he entered 5 of the songs, off his unfinished album, into 4 categories in a songwriter’s competition held by the Australian Songwriters Association. His songs reached the top 30 in 3 categories, Bill has expressed his desire to continue writing songs and hopes that one day he can become more than a (very) part time singer - songwriter.

EDITOR’S NOTE:

I first met Bill during the 2005 Dubbo Outback Icon where I was also a contestant. When he won, (since I was there), I also covered the front page story as I worked as a journalist in Dubbo at that time. It’s great to see his humble journey as a singer songwriter and wish him every success in the future!



Artist Coordinators Report

2017 got off to a great start with over 65 TSA members performing their original songs at approx 110 spots over several venues across Tamworth during the Music Festival in January.

For the past few years each year there's been a shuffle around of venues for our showcases, which we now call the 'TSA Songwriter Sessions'

This year was no exception with the trial of two new venues that worked really well bar a couple of teething issues.

The Tamworth City Bowling club became home to the TSA hosting several songwriter sessions as well as 3 of our new concept 'All Kinds Of Country' concerts featuring 3 invited artists, all shows were well attended. Another new venue this year was Café 2340 where songwriter sessions were held from the morning through to afternoon.

The Pub group continued to be of support with our regular session at the Southgate Inn along with the inclusion of a TSA Alt Country Songwriter Session out at The Pub Hotel.

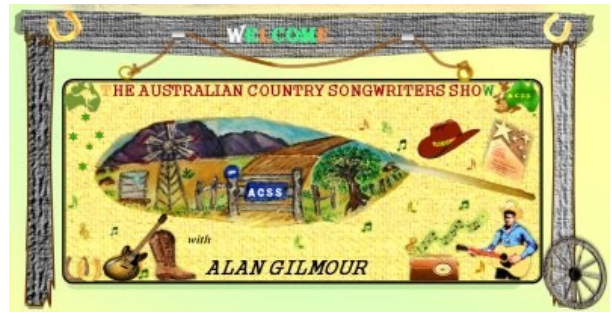
Many thanks to these members for hosting the sessions without you we could not have offered our members these great opportunities.

Becci Nethery, Angela Easson, Kalesti Butler, Lloyd Clarke, Grazy's Country, Dean Burton, Duncan Hill, Stephen Kiely, Kerrie Garside, Catherine Gunther, Sharon Heaslip, Kylie Adams-Collier, Alita Fahey, Rachel Summerell & Jasmine Atkins

I am currently in correspondence with several festivals across Australia to secure more performing opportunities for you all and again will be asking for support with hosting so watch out for info about festivals in your area or if you have any suggestions please let me know. Looking forward to a great year ahead!

Lydia Bowen Clare

artist@tsaonline.com.au



How Do You Get Air Play For Your Songs?

The Australian Country Songwriters Show first went to air on radio station Today'sCountry94one in March 2015. It is a three hour format, on Tuesday evenings at 6.00 pm, and has built up a strong and loyal listening audience.

The show can be heard free-to-air on the NSW Central Coast and Lower Hunter Valley, and over the internet via the station's website, www.TodaysCountry94one.com, or via Tune-In app.

The Australian Country Songwriters Show aims to provide exposure for independent Australian country songwriters who may not otherwise receive air play for their songs. The show currently provides air play for many members of the Tamworth Songwriters Association and The Australian Songwriters Association. The show won a People's Choice Award at Tamworth in January this year for The Most Popular Program on Australian country radio.

So, how do you get airplay for your songs in this competitive radio environment? Simply email your songs in mp3 format to Alan Gilmour at alang@asai.org.au or admin@TodaysCountry94one.com. CDs can be sent to PO Box 3011 Wamberal NSW 2260. Alan will listen to your songs to see if they are suitable for air play, and if so, will play them on the show. All songs are subject to the station's policies on broadcast sound quality.

Weekly play lists are placed on Facebook, so please "Like" The Australian Country Songwriters Show, and you'll see what is coming up.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Don't forget the ASA song comp!

Alan Gilmour





BECOME A FEARLESS SONGWRITER

I'm on a mission. I'm working with writers from all different parts of the world every week, and I'm encouraging them to listen... *less*.

Let me explain a bit. There are some great places to pick up useful tools as a songwriter-- plenty of them. They're online, in books, in groups run by people who know what they're talking about. There are teachers, workshops, and coaches. In Nashville you can just go out on any given night and pick up some serious knowledge about what makes a great song.

It's amazing to have these resources! Believe me, they didn't exist when I started. If I had been able to pick the brain of someone who had actually done what I wanted to do, I'd have been there as long as they'd have me.

So what's the problem? If you only take in information and don't turn it into inspiration, you get more rules than tools. If you listen to every voice before your own, you might even find yourself discouraged when you take a hard look at what you're writing. Doesn't seem to fit the rules. I hear this especially from new writers. They feel they have a gift; writing makes them happy and they go after expertise to take them to the next level. They go to a workshop, usually with writers in the same boat, they connect with the other writers, and hopefully co-write and gather even more information. You know the expression, 'sometimes a little knowledge is a dangerous thing'? This can often be the case. You start to get critiques from other new writers who (hopefully with the best intentions) are passing on the new info they've been getting: *Have to write uptempo positive...*

Titles can't be more than 5 words...Every topic has to be relatable...No artist is going to want to sing something that makes them appear unattractive...Radio is male dominated, don't bother writing something a female artist might cut...The listener has a short attention span so one verse, chorus, maybe post-chorus, no bridge and make everything feel like a chorus...If you write 'heady' you may want to dumb down a bit...Try to write what you hear on the radio.

Most of this is helpful, but if it's what's going through your head every time you start a song it's like inviting a critic to co-write. At best you're liable to get a pretty generic song and at worst you're discouraged before you start.

Sure you want to understand what makes a song great, what sets a song apart from a million others. You want to understand this craft. But if it's only information (and not inspiration) you'll just be competing with the countless writers who got there ahead of you. **So what do you do?**

Take the info you've learned, weigh it, and then *be brave in your ideas*. The only real hope you have to stand out is to find your voice as a writer.

Be fearless.

P.S. Something I wanted to add as an afterthought . Always, always run from the toxic songwriters. Ones who are world weary, jaded, seen and done it all, no idea is good enough type. Guard that sense of wonder and hope you have at all costs and surround yourself with the best and brightest .Seek knowledge, experience and most of all, encouragement! Retrieved from <http://idocoach.com/blog/2015/5/20/become-a-fearless-songwriter>

**By Mark Cawley, Nashville, Tennessee,
May 20th, 2015. Check out idocoach on Facebook!**

2017 TSA PRESENTATION AWARDS NIGHTS

*** *PHOTOS* ***

