The Australian Songwriter

Issue 124, May 2017

First published 1979

The Magazine of The Australian Songwriters Association Inc.

In This Edition:

- **On the Cover of The ASA**: **Karen Guymer** and **Jacques Gentil** at the 2016 National Songwriting Awards
- Chairman's Message
- Editor's Message
- 2017 Australian Songwriting Contest Announcement
- Karen Guymer: Joint Winner of the 2016 Ballad Category
- Wax Lyrical Roundup
- Glen Naylor: 2016 Winner Of The Lyrics Category
- Sponsors Profiles
- Jacques Gentil: 2016 Winner of the Spiritual Category
- Members News And Information
- Mark Cawley's Monthly Songwriting Blog
- Dene Menzel: The Choir In The Cloud
- James Linderman: The New York Songwriters Circle 25th Anniversary
- The Load Out
- Official Sponsors of the Australian Songwriting Contest
- About Us:
    - Aims of the ASA
    - History of the Association
    - Contact Us
    - Patron
    - Life Members
    - Directors
    - Regional Co-Ordinators
    - APRA/ASA Songwriter of the Year
    - Rudy Brandsma Award Winner
    - PPCA Live Performance Award Winner
    - Australian Songwriters Hall of Fame
    - Australian Songwriting Contest Winner

Chairman's Message

Hi Everybody,

This month, Vice Chairman and e-Newsletter Editor Alan Gilmour, has put in a lot of hard work to bring you a super missive. Alan really deserves a great deal of appreciation for all the time he spends each month, getting the magazine together. He also has a hugely popular radio program, so he is a hard worker, and we at the ASA value him no end. Well done (as usual), Alan!

This month, your Board is still in negotiation with various venues in Sydney regarding the 'National Songwriting Awards Evening' for 2017. The night becomes more popular with each passing year, and we must be sure to secure a setting that is able to accommodate all the people who want to attend, as well as having the facilities that an evening of such importance demands.

The whole process is protracted because the Australian Songwriters Association is a not-for-profit organisation, and so is dependent to some degree on Sponsors, etc. Therefore, the Board, especially Secretary Clare Burgess, has to put in a lot of hard work to negotiate a favourable outcome. Details will be published in due course. A big thank you must also go to Director, and Regional Coordinator, Gary Luck for all the effort he puts in. He spends endless hours corresponding and organising all our superb RCs, so that the ASA can have amazing 'Wax Lyricals' all over Australia.

Meanwhile, the ASA 2017 'Australian Songwriting Contest' is in full swing, with bigger and better prizes than ever before, so don't forget to get your entries in. See you at the 'Wax Lyricals'.

Denny Burgess,
Chairman

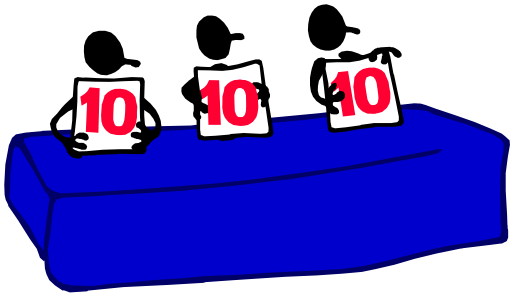
Editor's Message

In this edition, we feature interviews with more of the winners in the 2016 Australian Songwriting Contest, Karen Guymer, Glen Naylor and Jacques Gentil. There's also a great story on Dene Menzel's Choir In The Cloud and James Linderman's interview with NY songwriter, Tina Shafer. Songwriting coach, Mark Cawley, also joins us for the first of his monthly songwriting blogs.

The Australian Songwriter welcomes written contributions from ASA members and readers of the magazine. If you have anything that you would like to say about yourself, other songwriters/musicians/artists/new releases or upcoming events, simply send your contribution via email to the Editor at alang@asai.org.au.

Alan Gilmour,
Editor and Vice Chairman

2017 Australian Songwriting Contest Announcement



The 2017 Australian Songwriting Contest is now open. The contest offers great prizes and is open to both ASA members and non-members. The 2017 contest contains 13 individual songwriting categories:

- Australia
- Contemporary Pop/Dance
- Folk/Acoustic
- International
- Open
- Songs for Children
- Youth
- Ballad
- Country
- Instrumental
- Lyrics
- Rock/Indie
- Spiritual

The Australian Songwriters Association (ASA) is a national, not-for-profit, member-based organization, dedicated to the support of songwriters and their art. Founded in 1979, the ASA today has a large, vibrant and diverse membership across Australia, and is well established and highly regarded.

The ASA's Australian Songwriting Contest is the country's largest and longest running competition (37 years!) for professional and amateur songwriters. Songs are judged on originality and craft. Songs do not have to be performed by the songwriter, but it must be original, and not signed with a publishing company at the time of entry.

Membership of the ASA and entry into the Australian Songwriting Contest is open to Australian citizens and permanent residents only, with the exception of the International Category, which is open to citizens of all nations. Entries must be in the name of individual songwriters, whose responsibility it will be to list any co-writers, and liaise with them as necessary, if the material progresses through the competition.

Sponsors of prizes and supporters of the organisation include APRA/AMCOS, PPCA, Hal Leonard, Noteflight, Maton Guitars, James North Productions, Australis/Ashton, MAXXDBXXX-Sonic Management, Syntec International, Grover Allman, Ausmidi, Band in a Box, YOYO Management, Fast Track Talent Showcases, Magesongs School of Songwriting, Q Music, Song Central, Australian Institute of Music (AIM), Black Pearl Studios, iDOCoach, Katie Hardyman Music, University of Griffith, MMS Retail, KIX Country Radio Network, Wests Tigers Rugby League Ltd, Wests Ashfield Leagues Club, TrakVan, Rhythms Magazine, MusicNSW, Mackin Websites, Video Recordings Australia, Aerios Productions, Project TV and BDO.

The ASA uses up to 60 well-qualified people from the music industry in a unique multi-tiered judging system in which each entrant's identity is hidden. This precludes any tendency for the judges' decisions to be influenced by any factors outside of the song itself.

A very exciting feature of this year's Australian Songwriting Contest, is that, courtesy Hal Leonard and Noteflight, EVERY SINGLE ENTRANT WILL RECEIVE A CODE FOR 3 MONTHS FREE ACCESS TO NOTEFLIGHT!!! This is valued at $99.95, and regardless of results, every songwriter who puts a song in the competition will receive this benefit.

Following the judging process, first place-getters are invited to perform at the ASA's gala National Songwriting Awards, which is an important fixture on the Music Industry Calendar. The Lyrics Category winner is the only exception to this, but they will have their composition displayed in written form on the night.

All first place winners will receive a 3-year Noteflight Subscription (RRP $185) courtesy Hal Leonard and Noteflight.

All first, second and third place-getters will receive other prizes, and all Top 10 finalists will be recognised on stage at the Awards, as well as receiving a Certificate of Placing.

All entrants will have 3 free months free access code for all Song Contest entrants, valued at $99.95 sponsored by Noteflight.

Songwriter of the Year
Judged from the 1st place getters of each category. Separate entry is not required.
Sponsored by APRA/AMCOS. Winner receives: $3,000 cash for APRA and an Easys Trophy.

Rudy Brandsma Award
All entrants **who are ASA members** qualify for nomination to receive this great honour.
Sponsored by Maton Guitars. Winner receives: Maton SRS60C worth $1899

PPCA Live Performance Award
Judged and sponsored by PPCA, for the best live performance at the National Songwriting Awards. Winner receives: $500 cash

www.trakvan.com/asacontest/

www.songcentral.biz/asa

Karen Guymer: 2016 Joint Winner Of The Ballad Category

Photo: Karen Guymer performed her winning song, Love Dances In The Rain, as a duet with Jacques Gentil.

Melbourne singer/songwriter, **Karen Guymer**, was a joint winner of the Ballad Category in the 2016 Australian Songwriting Contest, with her song Love Dances In The Rain. We caught up with Karen for a chat.

ASA: Welcome Karen! You seem to be a regular at the top of the list each year. How do you do it?

Karen: I guess the shortest answer would be attention to detail. When you write a song, you get your first draft, and most of the time you have to revisit it on a number of occasions, and it's that attention to even the minor details. Sometimes it can come down to the rhyming in a song, when you are singing with your guitar, you may think it is rhyming, but when you sit back and look at it objectively, you can discover you have being trying to make it rhyme. Sometimes you will need to rework some of the words, even remove lines if necessary, it's that attention to detail I think is my secret.

ASA: Love Dances In the Rain is a lovely title, what is the song about?

Karen: It's a love song, but it goes deeper than that. It is talking about how in life, especially in relationships, you can have ups and downs, and no more than when it comes to love. The rain is a metaphor for things that can go wrong, but love will

always win. So, love dances in the rain, as terrible as life can get, love will always shine through.

ASA: Lovely sentiment! In the performance, I have heard it sung as a duet. Was it meant to be a duet?

Karen: Yes, it was. I did do the rough version myself with my voice because I didn't really know how to source another voice to sing it at the time, but I did look overseas, and found two American artists with wonderful voices, to do the duet version, but for me, here in Australia, to promote myself, I used Rick Hart, who was a previous Songwriter of the Year winner, and Rick has a wonderful country voice, so he and I did a version.

ASA: For tonight's performance, you are performing the song with your real life partner, Jacques? You are obviously continuing to write, Karen, and you have quite a back catalogue of great songs, what are you working on at the moment?

Karen: I don't write as prolifically as some others. I usually try to do at least four a year. Maybe that's not a lot in some people's books. To this date I have written two, so it's now just all about that attention to detail that remains.

ASA: Lovely to talk to you again Karen, you never know we might talk again next year?

Karen: You never know! The judges have been very kind to me so far. Thank you.

Wax Lyrical Roundup

Regional QLD 24 April 2017, Mary's Commercial Hotel Dalby QLD

Central Coast NSW 8 May 2017, Tall Timbers Hotel Ourimbah NSW

Adelaide SA 3 May 2017, Mint 2, Glenelg SA

Hobart TAS 21 April 2017, The Sepulchre, 47 Davey St Hobart TAS

EXIT

Glen Naylor: 2016 Winner Of The Lyrics Category

Glen Naylor was the winner of the Lyrics Category in the 2016 Australian Songwriting Contest.

Here is Glen in her own words

"Glen first submitted her lyrics into the ASA eight years ago. Three songs were entered and all made the short list. Overwhelmed by this outcome, she set about to find herself a co-writer. Glen says it was her lucky day when she started working with Chris Wilson in Melbourne. Chris is a very talented musician/composer/producer and he plays many instruments.

This collaboration has been extremely successful, resulting in their songs receiving fantastic accolades around the world, particularly in the U.S, mainly in the southern states, the East coast and in New York. They have had several songs broadcast out of New York to radio stations all over America.

Some of the early songs were Aussie kid's songs about Kangaroos, Koalas, native flora and the bush, culminating in Glen and Chris winning 'The Songwriter Salute Award' in Tamworth a couple of years ago, with Children's Song of the Year. The winning song "Where does a Wombat live?" is one of the original three entered into the ASA in 2008, where it made the top ten in lyrics and number five in song form.

Apart from music for children, Glen and Chris write in many genres, and whether it is country, blues or ballads, all have been very well received. However, they both love writing jazz ballads. "Where the Willows Weep" was number five in the ASA and also received a separate certificate from the ASA directors for excellence in songwriting, quite an honour for them!

One of their songs was chosen by Robert Venable in Nashville to be recorded by him. They said it was a great experience. Robert has produced/engineered Grammy award winning and Gold and Platinum artists including the ASA 2016 Hall of Fame inductees, INXS, and he has also produced music for GLEE and Diary of a Wimpy Kid.

Glen and Chris had meetings with music people in New York and other parts of the U.S. and then headed for Nashville. Robert kindly came to their hotel to meet them both, he and Chris then went to the studio where Chris recorded with Robert at his studio in Nashville, a great experience with good result by all accounts.

Glen has done many radio interviews in the U.S over recent times and she has written several articles for various publications there too. She based herself in Nashville a few years ago, and did all of the radio interviews from there. At that time

they were all about the Aussie kids songs, Glen said the Americans are always very warm and welcoming and it was all very exciting, the Americans still love anything to do with Kangaroos and all things Australian.

Another great supporter of their songs is Gary Allen in Nashville. Gary was with the Charlie Daniel's Band, he toured with the late JJ Cale for many years and performed with Eric Clapton, Leon Russell, the Rolling Stones and many more.

Not too long ago when Glen went to Nashville to see Gary, he was called to San Diego to record with Cale and Clapton. Glen said that she would have loved to have gone with him! Glen and Chris won Gary's competition a few years ago and they were always finalists in every contest, irrespective of what genre was entered.

Each year their music takes them overseas to conferences and meetings. Later this year, they are planning a trip to Paris to hang out at all the Jazz clubs. Last year, three of their songs were forwarded to a wonderful French singer Cyrille Amiee, who is based in New York. Cyrille performs all over the world and is regularly in Paris, so they might be lucky enough to see her when they are there.

Glen says that one of their best mates in the U.S is Eugene Foley of www.foleyentertainment.com. Gene has been a great supporter of our music from the very start, he is a highly respected music executive/author, and a true friend of ours, and a great down to earth bloke, who took time out to meet us for lunch when we were there.

In November 2016 after a conference in Los Angeles, we spent a week in New Orleans. Chris took over on the piano at 'The Spotted Cat' club on Frenchman's Street and killed it (not the cat) he had the joint jumping!

Glen and Chris have written two songs about the Anzacs. They were primarily written as a tribute to Glen's grandfather, and his two brothers, who were in WW1, and to all others who went to war for Australia.

Together, they have had many highlights over a relatively short period of time. Each year in the ASA, they have made the shortlist, one year in SEVEN categories and they made the top ten many times and came in at number five, two, and number one in December 2016. Glen says she is probably the oldest person to have won in the ASA!

Final word from Glen and Chris: music can take you to places you can only dream of, keep writing!"

AUSTRALIAN SONGWRITING CONTEST 2016

LYRICS CATEGORY WINNER

JACARANDA BLUE

Gently shed blossoms made a carpet of blue
quiet waters flowed by a hushed lagoon
where we once kissed and never missed
in the shadows of the pearly moon
I remember how it used to be

When blossoms above surge
forming heavenly curves
I'll wait for you
beneath a Jacaranda blue

As sultry panting nights hotly descended
songbirds were calling and imploring
the riot of blue to dance in the wind
tumbling through the warm delights of spring
I remember how it used to be

When blossoms above surge
forming heavenly curves
I'll wait for you
beneath a Jacaranda blue

Then from behind a sundrenched hill
velvet twilight sky weeps with me still
as purple vault of night is falling
I imagine your soft whisperings
and remember how it used to be

When blossoms above surge
forming heavenly curves
I'll wait for you
beneath a Jacaranda blue

And flying high through a rose-tinged sky
our song is so lost and lonely now
I sit here alone and dream of you
beneath a canopy of blue
I can't remember how it used to be

When blossoms above surge
forming heavenly curves
I will wait for you
beneath our Jacaranda blue

GLEN NAYLOR

Sponsors Profiles:

1. **Major Sponsor: Wests Ashfield Leagues Club**

Thanks to major sponsor, the Wests Ashfield Club.

A premier entertainment and dining venue, and home of Wests Tigers and Wests Magpies Rugby League teams, Wests Ashfield is an excellent place to visit in Sydney's inner west.

Not only supporting a host of local sporting and youth-related activities, the Club lifts itself above the rest by also being a "Patron of the Arts", as demonstrated by its incredible ongoing sponsorship of the ASA. All music lovers are encouraged to return the favour by becoming a member of Wests Ashfield, and at very least, indulging yourself by enjoying some of the culinary delights the Club has on offer.

$150,000 CASH & CAR GIVEAWAY

MON, TUES, WED & THURS

SWIPE FROM 6PM | DRAWS FROM 7PM
$10,000 WEEKLY DRAWS

$2,000 Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday
$4,000 Thursday

9 winners each night.
Plus win keys into the major draw
Non-stop draws 7pm – 9:45pm
Swipe to enter 6pm – 9:40pm

$28,800 MAJOR DRAWS

Thurs 1 June & Thurs 29 June

Two lucky members will win their choice of…
A Honda HR-V (valued at $25,500), or a Honda Civic (valued at $23,500) or $20,000 cash.

Plus, a share in over $8,800 cash bonus prizes.

Non-stop cash & car key entries 4pm – 9:30pm
Swipe to enter 3pm – 8:55pm

Terms and conditions apply. See reception for further information. Authorised under permit number LTPS/17?13245. Think about your choices! Call Gambling Help 1800 858 858. www.gamblinghelp.nsw.gov.au. Player activity statement available on request.

2. **Major Sponsor: APRA AMCOS**

Thanks also to major sponsor, **APRA/AMCOS**, for sponsoring, and presenting, the APRA ASA Songwriter of the Year Award at the 2016 National Songwriting Awards. APRA AMCOS generously provides prize money of $3,000 to the winner/s, which this year, were **Donna Dyson** and **Damien Leith**.

If you write music, you should become a member of APRA AMCOS. It's free to join, and once you do, APRA AMCOS can help you make money from your music. Become part of a collective community of 87,000 songwriters!

INVITATION
MUSIC AND THE MIND: A PANEL ON MENTAL HEALTH

WHERE: Camelot Lounge, 103 Railway Parade, Marrickville

WHEN: Wednesday 24 May, 6.30pm (refreshments), 7pm (panel to begin)

RSVP: writer@apra.com.au by Monday 22 May

Recent research has shown that there's a high incidence of depression and anxiety among musicians. With low pay, unreliable work, bullying, stress and other factors all playing a part, keeping your head in check can often be a huge challenge – as can finding support when you need it the most.

To open up discussion about mental health, we're bringing together a few people for a frank chat about maintaining a healthy – and creative – mind. Lead by Joanna Cave (Support Act), the panel will feature psychologist Dr Chris Stevens and artist Hayley Mary (The Jezabels). They'll look at how we can identify mental illness and the steps we can take to support ourselves and others.

Presented by APRA AMCOS and Support Act, supported by MusicNSW.

3. Vocal Arts Studios

Established in 2003, VAS is Melbourne's Award Singing, Music and Entertainment School and the only Australian Partners of The Institute of Contemporary Music Performance in Europe as well as leading trainers for Rockschool in Australia.

All Levels and Ages from Beginners to Professionals; Children, Teens and Adults

Featuring the very best Vocal and Music Teachers in Victoria, with fantastic facilities and personalised attention; VAS is at the forefront of the latest opportunities, and will help you achieve your goals.

The studio is held in high regard across the Music and Entertainment Industries as being the place to be trained with realistic and honest feedback to take you to the next level.

www.vocalartstudios.com. (03) 9994 8066.

4. Black Pearl Studios

Black Pearl Studios offers its clients a truly unique recording experience in a state of the art environment. The studio was designed with the help of world-class theoretical acousticians and environmental sound specialists, and constructed in Melbourne by qualified Victorian builders. The project was completed in January 2012, and since has steadily carved a reputation as a studio of the highest calibre, with a gear list that would attract the envy of the famous Abby Road.

The fully equipped turnkey recording studio boasts two large acoustically designed studio rooms, providing clients with an exceptional creative space and a chance to record with an unrivalled collection of top quality gear. The services available include live recording, mixing and production, with access to on-site services including the legendary Black Pearl mobile studio van.

Black Pearl Studios
9/21 Capella Crescent, Moorabbin, VIC, 3189
Contact: (03) 9939 7209; 0417 356 026
Website: www.blackpearlstudios.com.au
Facebook: www.facebook.com/BlackPearlStudios
Twitter: www.twitter.com/Black_Pearl_100

Jacques Gentil: 2016 Winner Of The Spiritual Category

Jacques Gentil was the winner of the Spiritual category in the 2016 Australian Songwriting Contest. We chatted to him on the night and asked him about his winning song, Babylon.

ASA: Welcome Jacques. You are another of our regular winners, including Songwriter of the Year. What is the secret of your success?

Jacques: Basically, I think my mind is in an ongoing motion when it comes to songwriting. I never stop writing, but that doesn't mean I am physically writing all the time, but I do see ideas for songs everywhere, it's just an exercise I do. I practice the tools and techniques of songwriting all the time. Also because I teach and train songwriters, it keeps me active all the time, so actually I owe it to my students for giving me the chance to educate them with those techniques of songwriting, and I get to practice myself, so I think that's why I get better.

I am rapt to win again, I have not been a category winner for the past two years, however I knew at some stage I would be a winner again.

ASA: Your winning song is called Babylon. Where did the inspiration for that come?

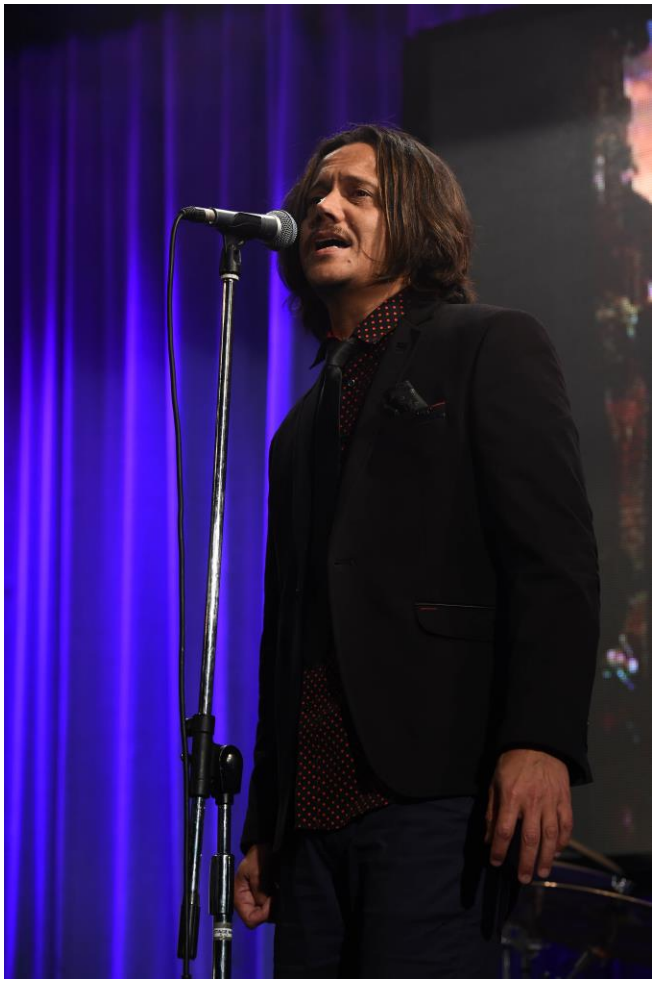
Jacques: The inspiration for Babylon came about because I like to write what would not usually be written by other people. I try to be a bit more creative in that sense. Babylon is a historical story, it's about the fall of Babylon which is repeated in a prophesy in the Old Testament in the book of Revelation. Whatever the interpretation is, I leave that to the listener. It's an interesting concept. I had originally called it "Fallen" and it placed third in last year's contest. Something I hate to do is give a song a title that doesn't appear somewhere in the song. The song is about Babylon, so I decided to call it by that title and it made a difference.

ASA: It did. It won! Of all the musical genres you write, you do write a few spiritual songs, but what is your favourite topic? Do you like the spiritually side of things or prefer the emotional aspect or maybe the historical, what is your preference?

Jacques: It's interesting that you ask this; because actually I don't know, because I will write anything that I think will be good to share. I have spent a lot of time reading the Bible and there is a lot of things my mind has retained, so ideas just come through and I just write about it. I have been told that gospel and spiritual songs are my strength. I have written a lot of them, but it's not the only thing I write. I have even written pop songs that have somehow ended up with spiritual content. You know the saying: garbage in garbage out? So if you take in spiritual things, maybe that's what come out, perhaps that's why.

ASA: In your songwriting school, Magesongs, you obviously have a lot of aspiring songwriters coming through. Do you co-write with any of those songwriters?

Jacques: I do. I aim to help those writers to climb as well. Not everybody is as skilled to be able to grasp it from the word go. I get them to write a song from the beginning to the end over the duration of the course and some do struggle a lot. For me, the song must sound like a winner right from the start, or we are not writing it. I must love the song right from the beginning, not at the end after it has been produced. I must love the song title and its meaning that can develop into something. It can be a struggle. People write in different ways, so it's hard to get used to a different concept of writing, so I may give them an example and I have collaborated with them.



ASA: You co-wrote a song this year with a songwriter from Mauritius. Could you tell us a little about that?

Jacques: Yes, with Mario Amel. He is well known in Mauritius, singing in the late seventies. I used to be a fan of his. He has had a hit in Germany called "Anytime I Love" sung in English, with a Mauritius rhythm.

He was on tour in Melbourne a couple of years ago, and saw me there, and was happy to see me, because I used to gig with him. I invited him home. When he arrived, he saw my awards that I have won. He was rapt and said "you know what I have got this idea for a song". I asked him the title which is "We Can Make It" I asked what it was about, and he told me it was about us as artists, how as we get older, how the music trends change all the time, and people think because we are older, that we are past it. So it's about telling them that we can still make music. I liked the sound of it, so we sat down and swapped ideas, and ended up writing the song together, and it ended up on his album.

ASA: It also made the top thirty this year in the contest, and he is going to be here tonight?

Jacques: Yes, he is here and he is very excited about that. Actually the Ministry of Art and Culture of Mauritius paid for him to come here.

ASA: Well, thank you very much Jacques, and keep up the great work.

Members News and Information

1. Songwriters Meeting Point

Perth WA lyricist, **Patrick McMurray**, is looking to pursue musical collaboration with like-minded composers. Patrick can be contacted at Patrick@patrickmcmurray.com.

ASA member, **Donna Hotz**, is a lyricist who is seeking a composer to help create songs from her lyrics. If you can help, please contact Donna on donna_hotz@hotmail.com.

Sydney songwriter, **Bob Brown** is looking for a co-writer. His musical likes are "ballads/ country/ country rock/ guitar instrumental, but I'm open to whatever project." "I've been in the Top 30 of ASA but never cracked it further in." Bob has sent us some recordings which we are happy to pass on to anyone who is interested. Bob can be contacted on hbmarvin@gmail.com.

ASA member, **Tony Bogan** is a lyricist, who is looking to team up with a musician/composer, to put music to his words.

Tony writes: "I have a collection of around 40 song lyrics I have written of varying ideas or themes (not boring love songs either) and I really want to team up with some good musos/composers ASAP."

"Two in particular I would like to get written with a view to getting someone to sing one of them on a talent show - e.g. The Voice or Who's Got Talent in the UK given their global themes." Tony can be contacted on 0488 443 155 and tonydb71@gmail.com.

ASA Member, **Liz Connolly**, is a vocalist, lyricist and songwriter, looking for a Gold Coast or Northern NSW based songwriting partner who can help write/co-write guitar/piano accompaniments to her songs. Liz has a half a dozen songs in a variety of styles (pop, rock, folk, ballads), that she has completed or semi-completed using electronic songwriting tools. In 2014, her song "Don't be Afraid" was short listed for the ASA song writing competition Contemporary Pop/Dance Category but didn't progress any further.

Liz has co-written with Jennifer Matthews and Paul Harris from Bignote Productions and sometimes her cover band performs her rock/pop song "Hanging with the Boys" at local functions. Liz can be contacted at lizconnollymusic@gmail.com or 0409345133

Looking for somebody? Contact us on alang@asai.org.au.

Mark Cawley's Monthly Songwriting Blog

Mark Cawley is an internationally known songwriter, musician and songwriting coach, and is also an ASA sponsor. We are delighted to be able to publish Mark's monthly songwriting blogs. Mark can be contacted via his website, www.idocoach.com.

Mark **The Best AND Worst Advice For Successful Songwriting**

by Mark Cawley

This is delicate stuff for me. I coach writers all over the world; some with wildly different goals, talents, and dreams. For me it's not as much nuts and bolts as trying hard to find real life examples of a successful path--and an equal amount of cautionary tales.

As with any advice, I would start with considering the source. Is the person qualified to give direction? For me, I always wanted to hear from someone who was in the trenches. Someone who had actually been where I wanted to go. I like to flip to the back of the book and read the credits before I start "how to"-ing.

Just by virtue of doing what I do, as long as I've done it, I've built up quite a stash of hard-earned wisdom (with plenty of mistakes mixed in).

Let's start with the best advice:

1. Jump! When you're stuck, complacent, or just bored creatively; shake things up! For me this has meant actually picking up and moving to L.A., London, and Nashville over the years. Sometimes with no plan and certainly no plan B! It can be scary, but you're an artist and that's what artists do sometimes. They jump into the unknown. Every jump I've ever made has made me a better, and more aware songwriter. It's as important to live and experience things as it is to study and practice your craft.

2. Study the Great Ones. Like most writers I know, I learned by deconstructing songs. How are they put together? Why do some relate to so many people and become hits? Just the process of breaking down songs and putting them back together gets in your DNA as a writer and is bound to make you better.

3. Network. This can be a hard one for us introverts but I promise, those connections you make will come back time and time again to be invaluable. I still connect with writers I wrote with 20 years ago. They're great co-writers but more importantly, great friends and you need friends to survive in this business.

4. Be Fearless. Maybe the best advice I ever got. The best cuts I've ever had came from songs that were written without a "net". If I surprised myself and loved the result, chances are someone else will.

5. Be a good hang. You're in it for the long run and believe it or not, the writing community is smaller than you think! Being prepared, considerate, and a good listener makes you someone people want to work with again. Word spreads!

Now the worst advise:

1) Have a plan B. To do this job you have to not be able to not write. See #1 above.

2) Only write what you know. You can argue this, as I have with several of my coaching clients. "The only true songs are the songs written from my own personal experience". That's the argument . I would argue that unless your life is unbelievably interesting and eventful, the well will run dry quick. Great to write from real life but it's also pretty cool to make something up sometimes!

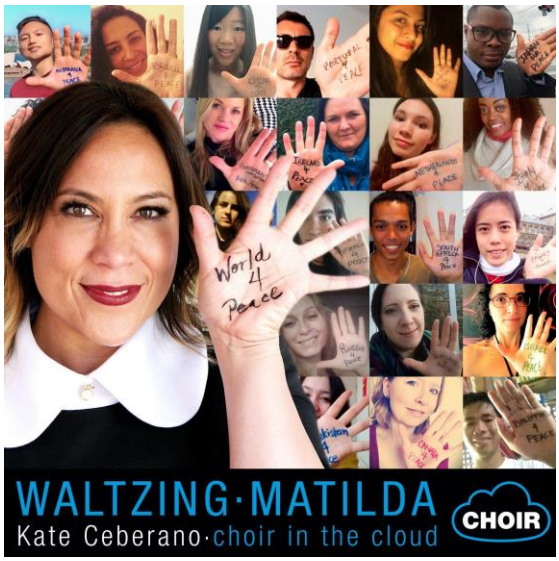
3) Focus on being creative, someone else will do that messy "business" part. I tried that, doesn't work. Be a student of the business, it's your career and no one is going to care about your career like you do.

4) Follow the songwriting rules. Obviously, learn 'em. So you can break 'em! Like any craft, you want to learn the ABC's...but then you want to invent some of your own.

5) Great art requires suffering. I've written some of my best sad songs when I was insanely happy and some of the most upbeat ones when I was down. If you just write every day, you'll experience it all. Promise.

Mark Cawley *is a hit U.S. songwriter and musician who coaches other writers and artists to reach their creative and professional goals through* ***iDoCoach.com****. During his decades in the music business he has procured a long list of cuts with legendary artists ranging from Tina Turner, Joe Cocker, Chaka Khan and Diana Ross to Wynonna Judd, Kathy Mattea, Russ Taff, Paul Carrack, Will Downing, Tom Scott, Billie Piper, Pop Idol winners and The Spice Girls. To date his songs have been on more than 16 million records. He is also a judge for Nashville Rising Star, a contributing author to USA Songwriting Competition, Songwriter Magazine, sponsor for the Australian Songwriters Association, judge for Belmont University's Commercial Music program and West Coast Songwriter events , Mentor for The Songwriting Academy UK, a popular blogger and, from time to time, conducts his own workshops including ASCAP, BMI and Sweetwater Sound. Born and raised in Syracuse, NY, Mark has also lived in Boston, L.A., Indianapolis, London, and the last 20 years in Nashville, TN.*

Dene Menzel & The Choir In The Cloud



Photos: Dene Menzel (Left) and Kate Ceberano and The Choir In The Cloud (Right)

One of the many delights during the judging of the 2016 Australian Songwriting Contest, was listening to **Dene Menzel**'s remake of the classic Australian song, Waltzing Matilda, featuring the vocals of **Kate Ceberano**, and the voices of the Choir In The Cloud, a virtual choir of people from 20 countries around the world.

Dene Menzel has had a 20-year career in the music industry, as a Musician, Music Branding Specialist, Vocal Coach, Choir Director, and is the Author of #1 Amazon Best Seller, "The Voice Factor". Dene Menzel is one of Australia's leading music experts.

Here is Dene's story:

Dismayed by the constant barrage of negativity in world events, an Australian musician and mum brought together a group of 200 people from around the world, between the ages of eight and 65, in an ensemble celebrating global peace.

Producer and composer of the revamped classic *Waltzing Matilda*, Dene Menzel said she embarked on the project to break down preconceived differences in race and religion and encourage respect and tolerance.

"There is too much emphasis on fear and barriers - this tears people apart," said Ms Menzel.

"My five-year old daughter was the inspiration for this project as I really want her to be able to grow up in a better world," she said.

"Music is a great way to bring people together regardless of their background."

"I thought that if I could get strangers from all over the world to sing with each other, that would prove that we're not so different after all, and we can create something beautiful together."

"Through a global casting call I found people as far flung as Ukraine, Germany, Brazil, Portugal, Israel, South Africa and Uzbekistan who wanted to get involved."

"With smart phone technology and the Internet we created a 'virtual choir'."

"I was honoured when Kate jumped on board - she's such a great advocate for human rights and world peace."

"It was so amazing to bring together people that were continents apart into one united voice."

Dene said some of the positives to come out of the experience for international participants were:

Unity: The chance to collaborate with others for a common purpose, regardless of age, race and background.

Privilege: The honour of singing with others from all corners of the world for a worthy cause.

Friendship: The opportunity to connect with other singers and create new friendships.

Achievement: A sense of pride in creating a song together.

Dene said that the song, although modernised to reflect a more current global message, is still easily recognisable as Australia's beloved *Waltzing Matilda*.

Mike Bush, father of 11-year-old Perth participant, Rhylan, draws parallel to the John Lennon classic calling this track the "'*Imagine* of the New Generation".

Waltzing Matilda is available for download on iTunes and other popular digital platforms with proceeds going to human rights charity, UNICEF Australia.

For more detail on this project and how to join Dene Menzel's Virtual Choir visit www.ChoirInTheCloud.com

Youtube link (Short Promo): https://youtu.be/FaQkvTMMF9U

Facebook link (Full Video): https://www.facebook.com/world4peaceproject/videos/1803990549880020/?pnref=story

James Linderman: The New York Songwriters Circle 25th Anniversary

James Linderman lives and works at The Harmony House, a music lesson, songwriting and recording pre-production facility in Newmarket, Ontario, Canada. He sits on an advisory board for The Berklee School of Music in Boston, known as Berkleemusic Ambassadors. In this role he focuses on adapting Berklee campus courses for online learning, and representing and promoting Berklee at music events and conferences.

James is a regular columnist and songwriting blogger for Canadian Musician Magazine and has been a freelance writer for over 30 international music publications. He was named most widely read academic music journalist in the world in 2004, 2005, and 2006. He has a Canadian University (York) and American College (EOSC) education in music theory, composition, and journalism.

Thanks James for this article:

"I have just had the good fortune to get to interview **Tina Shafer** from the New York Songwriters Circle a few weeks back.

This is the NYSC's 25th Anniversary and they have been celebrating it with lots of events, some retrospection, and some goal setting for what is ahead in the next 25 years.

The NYSC is the longest running songwriting event of its kind and there is much to learn from this interview about what that sustainability was built from, and how Tina has been able to help hundreds of songwriters get heard.

There is something truly wonderful about performing your own songs at a songwriters' circle.

First and foremost, it is the graduating event that pulls us up from the open mic night. It seems to many of us who write songs that the open mic night is where we sharpen the skill, and the songwriters circle is where we get to not only show how sharp that skill has gotten but also where our sharpness is celebrated.

Just by being on the bill, in this invited and limited capacity, makes a statement and I believe most of us see it as a sign of ascent.

My first songwriters circle was Bluebird North in Toronto and I sat beside Melanie Doane who had won a Juno (Canada's Grammy) for her album Adam's Rib which was in my top 10 favourites list of all time. It was magical to not only sit beside this artist whose work I so admired completely, but to have her guitar player mention to the audience that I was a hard act to have to follow….priceless!

So if we agree that the songwriting circle is a cherished tradition then we can also agree that the New York Songwriters Circle is the most cherished of all, in this, it's 25th year.

To try and imagine all of the incredible moments that have taken place over that time would be only possible if you had been involved with it for a long time and fortunately I got to ask the host and co-ordinator of the New Your Songwriters Circle, Tina Shafer these 11 questions that will give you a very good idea of what it has been like over the years and where she believes the NYSC is headed in the future.

Q. What did you think of the Circle the first time you went?

A. The first time I went, I was invited to be a performer. I was a songwriter signed to Warner Chapel at the time and performing in a "round", listening to other people's tunes and not having to carry the whole show was a delight to me!

Q. Did you make any significant changes once you started hosting?

A. The format remained the same but I used many of my early co-writers and voice students to perform ...we were all just starting out in the business and it was such a great way to share our music and perform. Some of those artists were: Norah Jones, Jesse Harris, Richard Julian, Nellie McKay, Lisa Loeb, Vanessa Carlton, Billy Porter...

Q. How has the NYSC evolved since you first started hosting it?

A. It became kind of famous out of its own accord, there really was no other "in the round format" in those early days and the amazing talent just brought more of the same in from all over the country, and eventually from all over the world. We soon had ASCAP nights, BMI and SESAC nights, we had SONY nights, Nashville Nights, Pop nights, R&B nights….It was truly an amazing time for songwriters and a few of us started having real success!

Q. What is the significance of hosting the Circle at The Bitter End?

A. The Songwriters Circle was actually the brainchild of the late Ken Gorka, owner and manager of the famous club. I never planned to take it anywhere else once I started hosting it in 1991.

Q. Are your younger writers able to appreciate the significance of the NYSC and the Bitter End location?

A. It really depends, some do, some don't. Most of the time we do let the writers know that it is truly something special that they were chosen to be a part of our community and that the Bitter End represents one of the original spots to hear great songwriting. Really, the vibrations that come from that room are haunting, in a great way. It is a place where the music makes a difference and there is a transformation that comes from listening to a song in its purest form in a place like that.

Q. Is it interesting to go from a "Young Performers Night" to a night of veteran celebrity writers?

A. Yes, it is a shift! Wisdom, craft and experience make for some incredible performances by the more seasoned writers. You really feel like they are our troubadours. They have a voice that is truly their own. In watching the young songwriters, you get to see the "diamonds in the rough" and all that goes with the budding of new talent. Often, many of them are still finding their true voices and their own uniqueness.

Q. What are some of the special showcase moments that made you say, "There it is! That is what this is all about"?

A. Talent is so subjective… but then there are just those few rare artists that you simply *have* to watch, you have to listen. For me that was Jane Kelly Williams, Billy Porter (Tony Winner for Kinky Boots), Nellie McKay, Vanessa Carlton, Rob Mathes, The Story, Jesse Harris, Richard Julian...these artists always made me listen, I just couldn't help it. There was something there that was so pure, you *had* to listen...

Q. Does your own personal success as a songwriter with songs on recordings that have sold over 33 million copies make it easier to attract top tier songwriters when you are assembling a roster that will fill the room?

A. It *is* easier certainly, since I have known some of these songwriters from cowrite sessions and from being a vocal coach, but also from being in the industry for so many years, my own success as a songwriter translated into greater access to hit songwriters for the Circle when we set up those pro nights.

Q. Why the focus on songwriting as a performance art? Why is performing songs by the songwriters valuable?

A. This is a great question! One that I really struggled with when trying to turn the Circle into a company back in 2006 with our famous songwriting contests. For me, seeing the "man behind the curtain" and the process of what goes into making a song out of thin air, was always the most fascinating part.

We songwriters tend to be cerebral, shy people...that is why most of us choose songwriting and then only performing on a safe stage. We take the time to think through our thoughts, emotions and spin a tapestry of words and music into a 3 minute song that capsulizes that. To me that creative process is the great unknown, the greatest miracle.

Q. What would the late Ken Gorka think of how the NYSC has progressed in 25 years?

A. I was lucky enough to know that Ken was very very proud of my work. He told me so and when he passed last March, his wife and daughter came up to me and told me how much he respected my work with the songwriting community through the Circle. It meant a great deal to me.

Q. How should the Circle progress in the next 25 years? What should change or remain?

A. That is the million dollar question! For the most part, through all the years, the one thing that hasn't changed is the **power of great content**. That has always been the consistent factor.

What I would like to see, moving forward, is greater sponsorships so we can offer some form of scholarship support to some of the newer up and coming talent. Right now, the Circle hires a videographer, photographer, sound man and promoters and paying talented people their worth makes it difficult to invest in the future of our Circle and in the future of our writers. It would be great to see some sustainable growth.

We hope that investment will come from a community that wants to continue to have a rich and vibrant culture filled with the beauty of songs performed by the artists that created them!

The Load Out

Official Sponsors of the Australian Songwriting Contest

About Us

The Australian Songwriters Association Inc. is a national, not-for-profit, member organization, dedicated to the support of songwriters and their art, by providing avenues for encouragement and education of developing Australian songwriters, and recognition and promotion of our accomplished members.

Aims of the Association

- To celebrate the art of songwriting;
- To assist and encourage developing Australian songwriters;
- To provide information and general advice to members;
- To create performance opportunities for members;
- To aid the professional development of members;
- To enable members to meet and/or exchange ideas and information
- To facilitate member transition into the established music industry;
- To facilitate delivery of member services at a National, State and Regional level;
- To salute our best songwriters at major industry events such as our National Songwriting Awards Night.

History of the ASA

The Association was founded in Melbourne VIC in August 1979 by the late Tom Louch (1932-2009) and the late Rudy Brandsma (1944-1983), who saw the need for an organisation that would bring Australian songwriters together.

Today the Association has a vibrant membership Australia-wide and enjoys an established and respected role within the music industry.

The ASA's membership is diverse and embraces and explores all genres of music.

Contact Us

Mail:	Locked Bag 18/178 Newtown NSW 2042 Australia
Phone/Fax:	(02) 9516 4960
Email:	asanationaloffice@asai.org.au
Website:	www.asai.org.au
Facebook:	www.facebook.com/asamusicians www.facebook.com/australiansongwritersassociation
Youtube:	www.youtube.com/austsongwriters
Patron:	Glenn A Baker

Life Members:

Tom Louch, Rudy Brandsma, Russell Zimmer, Dominic Crea, Marie Murphy, Colleen Zulian, Alex Bialocki, Brian Henderson Ward and Kieran Roberts.

Directors:

Denny Burgess	Chairman
Alan Gilmour	Vice Chairman, Public Officer, Financial Officer, Online Content Manager and Editor of The Australian Songwriter Magazine
Clare Burgess	Director and Secretary
Gary Luck	Director and Manager of Regional Co-Ordinators

Regional Co-Ordinators

Wendy J Barnes	Yarra Valley VIC	wendyb@asai.org.au
Matt Sertori	Hobart TAS	matts@asai.org.au
Angelo Pash	Sydney NSW	angelop@asai.org.au
Garry Bagnell	Gold Coast QLD	garryb@asai.org.au
Paul Vella	Central Coast NSW	paulv@asai.org.au
Wendy J Ford	Northern Rivers NSW	wendyjf@asai.org.au
Ewan James	Northern Rivers NSW	ewanj@asai.org.au
Mike Cardy	Perth WA	mikec@asai.org.au
Melinda J Wells	Gympie QLD	melindajw@asai.org.au
Lisa Sutton	Dalby QLD	lisas@asai.org.au
Hugh Brown	Brisbane QLD	hughb@asai.org.au
Angelo Pash	Adelaide SA	angelop@asai.org.au
Trevor Shard	Melbourne VIC	trevors@asai.org.au
Kerrie Garside	Sunshine Coast QLD	Kerrieg@asai.org.au

Webmaster:

Dean Mackin, F1 Internet Services, (0409 240 660)

APRA/ASA Australian Songwriters of the Year 2016:

Donna Dyson (QLD) and Damien Leith (NSW)

Rudy Brandsma Award Winner 2016:

Alex Tobin (NSW)

PPCA Live Performance Award Winners 2016:

Kristie James (NSW) and The Bounty Hunters (NSW)

Australian Songwriters Hall of Fame:

2016: Andrew Farris and Michael Hutchence (INXS)
2015: Johnny Young
2014: Kate Ceberano
2013: Garth Porter (Sherbet)
2012: Don Walker (Cold Chisel)
2011: Steve Kilbey (The Church)
2010: Richard Clapton
2009: Ross Wilson (Daddy Cool, Mondo Rock)
2008: Doc Neeson, John Brewster & Rick Brewster (The Angels)
2007: Brian Cadd
2006: Glenn Shorrock, Beeb Birtles & Graeham Goble (LRB)
2005: Russell Morris
2004: Harry Vanda, George Young & Stevie Wright (The Easybeats)

Australian Songwriting Contest Award Winners 2016:

Donna Dyson & Damien Leith (QLD & NSW) (Australia Category)
Karen Guymer (VIC) (Ballad Category - Joint)
David King & Jessica Allen (NSW) (Ballad Category - Joint)
John Bok (VIC) (Contemporary Pop/Dance Category)
Kristy James (NSW) (Country Category)
Tamsin Cantwell (VIC) (Folk/Acoustic Category)
Terry Bennetts (WA) (Instrumental Category - Joint)
Ray Saunders (VIC) (Instrumental Category – Joint)
Michael McGee & Jeff Oxford (USA) (International Category)
Glen Naylor (VIC) (Lyrics Category)
Kelly Cork (QLD) (Open Category)
Tony Murphy, Jennifer Matthews & Paul Harris (Rock/Indie – Joint)
David Hinds & Lyn Hinds (NSW) (Rock/Indie Category - Joint)
Jacques Gentil (VIC) (Spiritual Category)
Anna Van Riel (NSW/NZ) (Songs For Children Category)
Sophia Chesworth (NSW) (Youth Category)

Australian Songwriters Of The Year & Rudy Brandsma Award Winners

The title of **Songwriter/ Song of the Year** was first awarded in 1980, following the establishment of the ASA in late 1979.

The Rudy Brandsma Award was first awarded in 1983, following the passing of Rudy Brandsma that year (*).

	Songwriters Of The Year	Rudy Brandsma Award Winners
2016	Donna Dyson & Damien Leith	Alex Tobin
2015	Karen Guymer	George Begbie
2014	Rick Hart	Robert McIntosh
2013	Jacques Gentil	Dani Karis
2012	Andrew Winton	Melia & Nerida Naughton
2011	Brian Chapman	Katie Hardyman
2010	Kate Rowe	Karen Guymer
2009	Tony King	Kate Lush
2008	Jason Campbell-Smith	Jo-Kelly Stephenson
2007	Simon Shapiro	Brenda-Lee Heathcote
2006	Emma Joleen	Daniel Arvidson
2005	Michael Maher	K'Crasher
2003/4	Trish Delaney-Brown	Callee Mann
2002	Kyls Burtland	Sara Downs
2001	Helen Mottee	Keith Armitage
2000	Andrew Horabin	Tomino Speciale
1999	Alf Tuohy	Mike Kidd
1998	Kyls Burtland	Not Known
1997	Xanthe Littlemore	Michael Waugh
1996	Mark Crocker	Felicity Hunt
1995	Rob Pippan	Sharon Bothe
1994	Danny Hooper & Steve Cole	Nigel Foote
1993	Not Known	Billy Dettmer
1992	Not Known	John Cooney
1991	Not Known	Not Known
1990	Ian Paulin	Jane Robertson
1989	Steve Wade	Not Known
1988	Steve Wade	Steve Wade
1987	Not Known	Not Known
1986	Rob Stambulic	Stu Storm
1985	Ross Nicholson & John Coco	Steve Wade
1984	Not Known	Debbie Bignell & Tony Stark
1983	Chris Lamech & Debbie Bignell	Chris Lamech & Debbie Bignell
1982	Not Known	N/a Commenced in 1983
1981	Not Known	N/a Commenced in 1983
1980	Not Known	N/a Commenced in 1983
1979	N/a Commenced in 1980	N/a Commenced in 1983

This publication is © 2017 by The Australian Songwriters Association Inc., ABN 12 140 838 710, and may not be re-used without permission. The views expressed in this magazine are the views of the writers and may not necessarily reflect the views of the ASA. The ASA acknowledges and thanks all sources from which information for this magazine was obtained.