The Australian Songwriter

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Chairman's Message

Hey Everybody,

Right now, the National Songwriting Competition 2017 judging is in full swing, so things are hectic around the office, at the moment.

There are so many entries, and they all have to be assessed. Talk about a torrid time for the adjudicators (and Directors as well)!

Don't forget that the National Awards Evening this year is slightly earlier, so get your bookings as quickly as possible. The Hall Of Fame inductee/s and Guest Interviewee/s will be announced soon, so keep an eye open for that as well.

In the interim, please lose yourself in Vice Chairman and e-Newsletter Editor Alan Gilmour's excellent effort. Alan always comes up trumps, and this month is no exception. He has 'hit the spot' once again.

Remember, tell every Songwriter that they should be a Member of the ASA. They won't regret it.

Regards
Denny Burgess
Chairman
The Australian Songwriters Association

Editor's Message

Welcome to the August 2017 edition of The Australian Songwriter.

In this edition, we have interviews with 2016 Country Category winner, Kristy James and Special Guest Artist, Catherine Britt, and profiles on songwriters Gayle O'Neil and Mario Armel. Also, Mark Cawley is back with us again with his usual monthly Songwriting Blog.

The Australian Songwriter welcomes written contributions from ASA members and friends. 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
The Australian Songwriters Association

2017 National Songwriting Awards Announcement

With the 2017 Australian Songwriting Contest now closed, and judging underway, it's time to turn our attention to the **2017 National Songwriting Awards**.

The 2017 National Songwriting Awards will be held on **22 November 2017**, at 6.30 pm for a 7.00 pm start, at Sydney's **Canterbury Hurlstone Park RSL Club**, 20-26 Canterbury Road, (Cnr. Crinan Street), Hurlstone Park NSW 2193.

You'll find free, secure car parking at the Northern Car Park, located just off Canterbury Road, at the Wattle Lane intersection. You will also find parking at the Crinan Street Carpark.

The venue is conveniently located just 15 minutes from the Sydney CBD and Airport.

The venue offers some of the best facilities that we have experienced for lighting and sound quality. Seating in The Starlight Auditorium is limited to 450 people, so you'll need to get in quick.

Please contact the ASA National Office on asanationaloffice@asai.org.au for tickets.

Category winners will be invited to perform on the night. The Lyrics Category winner will have their composition displayed in written form on the night.

The following winners will also be announced:

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

We will shortly be announcing the names of the 2017 inductee into **The Australian Songwriters Hall of Fame**, as well as the 2017 **Special Guest Artist**.

Kristy James: 2016 Winner Of The Country Category

ASA: Kristy James was the winner of the Country category in the 2016 contest we caught up with her for a chat. Welcome Kristy! Your song is called Overdrive, can you tell us what your song is about?

Kristy: Thanks for having me! It's actually one of the first songs I have written. It sounds like it's about a man when you listen to the words, but actually, it's not.

I was going through a time in my life where basically my hands were tied. I couldn't do anything about a particular situation that was going on in my life, and the only thing I could do was write.

I was really angry that this person was doing this to me and it sort of put me in overdrive. I just thought all I could do was to just let it roll for a while and then I am going to get back on top and when I do watch out!

ASA: So, do your songwriting ideas come from personal experiences?

Kristy: Generally, if not my own, its either family or friends who find themselves in a song. I like to write about real situations, unless I am deciding to write a fun song just for fun, then I might think of something else to write about, but mostly they are personal and real experiences.

ASA: What sort of experiences are they? Love, hate etc.

Kristy: I am getting older now so I have had a lot of experiences

ASA: You're getting older? (disbelief)

Kristy: Yes, I really am getting older! for some reason, and I don't know why this happens, but most of my songs are really angry, yet I am a really happy person in my life. I love my life and I am always happy and positive, but everything I write is so angry, or it has a real attitude, it just keeps happening that way.

ASA: Is that how you work through your emotions?

Photo: Kristy (Centre) with presenters, Meryl Gross and Vanessa Lea.

Kristy: It must be! Maybe that's why I am so happy because I can write all the anger out.

ASA: You have a CD out?

Kristy: Yes, I have an EP out, and since the EP, I have another two singles and I am working on some more singles and another EP next year.

ASA: Tell us about some of the other songs on your EP?

Kristy: The other songs on the EP, along with Overdrive, are really personal and written about my life experiences. So, if you listen to that EP, you will get to know my life pretty well, from when I was young, until now. I used songwriting to help make sense of some things I hadn't been blessed with in life, but I am starting to run out of things like that because life is just wonderful now.

ASA: You have gone through all the bad things?

Kristy: Yeah, I have.

ASA: You are a performing songwriter, where do you perform?

Kristy: Everywhere! I live in Lake Macquarie (NSW). I started performing at the Steel City Music Club, and that cemented my country music for me. But as I got older, and decided that music is what I wanted to do with my life, I realised that I really needed to go out and gig, and I couldn't just be with country music. So, I have done every genre, but when I write, it sort of just falls back into real country rock vibe.

ASA: Thanks Kristy, and all the best for tonight.

Kristy: Thank you.

Wax Lyrical Roundup:

Newcastle NSW 10 July 2017, Carrington Bowling Club

Hobart TAS 6 July 2017, The Homestead

Central Coast NSW 10 July 2017, Tall Timbers Hotel

Northern Rivers NSW 24 June 2017, Lismore Workers Club

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.

$120,000 CARNIVAL OF CASH

WEEKLY DRAWS AUGUST 2017, MONDAY - THURSDAY:

Win up to $10,000 cash weekly
Monday – Thursday · Swipe 6pm – 9:40pm · Draws 7pm – 9:45pm

MONTHLY MAJOR DRAWS:

Guaranteed $20,000 cash each month
31 August · Swipe 5pm – 9:55pm · Draws 6pm – 10pm

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!

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 Abbey 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

Songwriter Profile: Gayle O'Neil

It all started on a borrowed guitar at the age of 8. From those early homemade concerts, Gayle graduated to performing as a teenager, at numerous charity dinners, church functions and weddings around her Central Coast NSW base.

Gayle considered it an honour to perform at the Doyalson-Wyee RSL Club's ANZAC Day and VP Day ceremonies.

In 1995, Gayle fell in love with her now husband David and wrote her first song, Bein' With You.

2008 saw the release of Freedom, Gayle's debut EP, comprising five original tracks, produced by Simon Johnson, and featuring Australia's elite Country musicians: Duncan Toombs, Rod Motbey, Mick Albeck & Simon Johnson.

The first Radio Single was Welcome to the Neighbourhood, receiving good airplay. The second, Every Little Memory, earned Gayle a nomination and finalist spot in the Victorian & National Country Music Awards 2010. The third release was Freedom, and a music video by Duncan Toombs on CMC.

In 2013, back from the aftermath of a serious car accident, Gayle penned her own take on Heaven with a new single, My Kinda Heaven and a music video. In 2014, Gayle took out the Silver Saddle Award at the Sydney Country Music Festival and in 2015, she opened main stage.

2016 saw the release of Gayle's long-awaited debut album, Rough Road, produced by Mik McCartin and Michael Muchow, providing the exact amount of magic to each track. The album reached finalist status for the prestigious ICMA Awards in Tamworth 2017, for Most Popular Album. She also won the 2RRR/AAAMUSICLINX Best Independent Female Artist award.

A single, Lift My Spirits, released on 30/1/17, peaked at number 13 on the Country Charts Tracks Top 40. Gayle continues to tour, and now lives full-time on the road with Dave in their tour bus.

Gayle's latest single from Rough Road, Forever By My Side, was released on 17/7/17, and is sure to pull at the heartstrings and gain Gayle even more chart success.

ASA: Can you tell us about your songwriting process? Where do you find your material? Do you often write from personal experiences?

Gayle: My writing process is different for each song. Some songs write themselves like Rabbit in a Cage, which came through after playing around in my heart and my head. Basically, it was a protest song I wrote for my Grandfather, who was being placed in a nursing home. He wasn't ready and neither was I! 'Breath in' was another one that wrote itself after my car crash.

This Head and Heart method doesn't always give me a complete song, so I have to either leave it, or take myself away from everything and try to complete it. This doesn't always work though. I can't just sit down and write a song, I need to have seen or experienced something that moves me in some way like the song Open Arms off my next album…stay tuned.

ASA: Who is your favourite country music performer, and why?

Gayle: I think out of all the artists seen live, the one that really stands out for me would be Beccy Cole. She is just so comfortable and natural on stage. Her cheeky playful personality is just intoxicating. An artist that can make you laugh, make you cry and make you laugh again is special. Simply Bushed are also really good at that.

ASA: Who is the greatest influence on your songwriting and performance?

Gayle: I was not a natural songwriter. My first song, Bein' with You, I wrote for my now husband a.k.a Mr. Wonderful! Before we got together, I had never experienced love anything like it, so I owe my songwriting to my muse, David O'Neil.

ASA: Tell us a bit about your latest album, Rough Road? What is the main theme of the album and how have the songs been received?

Gayle: Rough Road takes you through the darkness of 590 Days and Breath In and brings you out into the light with Lift My Spirits and Free as a Bird. I felt I needed to release Rough Road, not for personal gain, but more as a beacon for others that were experiencing the rougher side that life can sometimes throw at us. Thankfully, there was a light at the end of my very dark tunnel and now I am living a life I only ever dreamed of, travelling around this beautiful country of ours, with the most incredible man by my side in our little Nothing Else Matters bus.

I feel blessed that community radio has embraced my songs. The stations and the awesome folk that work in them, are our main vessel to the listening public. Where would us Indie Artists be without them? The help I speak of was never more evident than with my last single, Lift My Spirits. Those radio gurus helped it onto the Country Tracks Top 40 Chart for 6 weeks, peaking at number 13. Here's hoping my new single release, Forever By My Side, with their help, can have similar success.

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.

2. More ASA Photos from the 1980s

Thanks again to ASA member, and former magazine editor, **Noreen Kane**, for these ASA photos from the 1980s.

The above photo is of the ASA Committee in the mid-1980s. Left to Right: Marie Murphy, Bill Bromilow, Sandro Barbagello, Veena Merchant, Dennis Adams, Noreen Kane and Rob Fairbairn.

This is a photo of the ASA Judges at a 1980s Awards Night. Pretty sharp, hey?

3. Songwriting Business For Sale

Jeni Wallwork is "retiring", and is selling her songwriting business. This is what you need to know from Jeni:

"Hello fellow songwriters!

I am 'retiring' from active songwriting (as if one could ever really do that!) and would like to sell my 'songwriting for others' business, **Jensong**.

I have well over 100 demos of songs, some professionally recorded and others my own demos, in the pop ballad genre. Happy to sell all rights as a job lot.

I got into ASA finals with 'Groovy Mover' and lots of finals positions in the UK Song Contest.

Most of my songs are at www.soundclick.com/jeniwallwork. Let me know if you're interested."

Kind regards and thanks,

Jeni Wallwork: (jeni.wallwork@jensong.com.au).

4. Vale: Dr. G Yunupingu (1971-2017)

Australia's most prominent indigenous musical artist, **Dr G Yunupingu** has died at the age of 46.

The singer, from the remote community of Galiwin'ku, on Elcho Island, 500 kilometers east of Darwin NT, shot to stardom in 2008, winning an ARIA Award for his namesake album.

The album hit triple platinum in Australia, silver in the UK and charted in multiple countries around the world.

Dr Yunupingu's record label, Skinnyfish, described him as "one of the most important figures in Australian music history, blind from birth, and emerging from the remote Galiwin'ku community to sell over half a million albums across the world, singing in his native Yolngu language."

Thanks to abc.net.au.

5. **Ekka's Country Music Showdown**

Our very own 2016 APRA/ASA Songwriter of the Year, **Donna Dyson**, is a judge of the Ekka's Country Music Showdown, to be held on 20 August 2017.

Now in its fourth year in 2017, the competition is growing to be bigger and better every year. The hidden gems of Queensland's country music will be unearthed at Ekka's Country Music Showdown Competition.

Queensland's rising stars will have the chance to showcase their talent and get a true live music experience when they are backed by live band "The Kelly Gang."

This year, the Country Music Showdown is aiming to optimise the experience for young talent, providing them with the opportunity to foster their talent as they grow through music.

Last year's competition unearthed Felicity Kircher, the Junior Category Winner and Heath Milner, the Open Category Winner. Heath went on to become a contestant on the Voice AU, where coach, and music icon, Boy George gifted the talented teen a ticket to Nashville to continue his music journey.

When: Sunday 20th August 2017
Where: Harvest & Hops Stage, Stockmen's Bar and Grill, Brisbane Showgrounds
Categories: Junior Category (12 – 16 years)
Open Category (17 years and over)
Prizes: Prize pool worth over $12,500.
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/events/116935645560773/

Entry Form: http://www.ekka.com.au/entertainment/country-music-showdown/contestant-application

While it is a Queensland competition, they are accepting entries Australia-wide. Many of our entries are from NSW or country QLD.

6. Paul McCartney Regains Part of The Beatles Copyright

Paul McCartney has reached a deal with Sony/ATV to avert a 2018 legal battle over parts of The Beatles catalogue. Sony/ATV bought the late Michael Jackson's 50% share of the catalogue, which Jackson himself had obtained after outbidding his "Say, Say, Say" buddy, McCartney, in 1985. Both sides had a lot to lose, and possibly gain, with the risk of a high profile legal showdown looming.

"The parties have resolved this matter by entering into a confidential settlement agreement and jointly request that the Court enter the enclosed proposed order dismissing the above-referenced action without prejudice," said a letter from McCartney's attorney.

It's possible that both parties, particularly McCartney, were looking at the Duran Duran case, which the band said "flies in the face of a US Federal statute which prevents a contract being used to avoid returning rights to the creators." It's assumed that both parties weighed the Duran Duran outcome in the balance to come up with a "fair" payout to McCartney.

As noted in a previous post "The case stems from Section 304(c) of the Copyright Act of 1976, which created a non-waivable claw-back right for authors to reclaim their ownership interests in any works assigned by them prior to January 1, 1978.

Under that section, an author may reclaim their copyright ownership interest by serving a termination notice on the rightsholder between 56 and 61 years after the copyright registered. For the songs that McCartney wrote for The Beatles' first studio album in 1962, and which Sony currently owns (after purchasing the copyrights from Michael Jackson's estate last year for $750 million), that means 2018 is the first year McCartney can begin clawing-back his ownership interests."

McCartney sued back in January to ensure that he would not be in breach when he decided to reclaim his rights. Sony/ATV hardly pushed back, and it looks like both parties worked together to come up with this settlement. It's a sad day for those who relish in a good old-fashioned entertainment industry tussle.

Thanks to Forbes Magazine.

7. Songwriters Workshop In The Mountains

Songsalive! Australia and the Tamworth Songwriters Assoc. present **Songwriters Workshop in the Mountains 2017**, with award winning songwriters, **Allan Caswell** and **Roger Corbett.**

When: Saturday 2nd and Sunday 3rd September 2017

Where: Victoria & Albert Guesthouse 19 Station Street, Mount Victoria, Blue Mountains - http://www.victoria-albert.com.au

Cost: $140.00 per attendee and includes the following:

- Saturday critiquing session 12noon-3pm followed by workshop 3-6pm **with Allan Caswell and Roger Corbett.**
- Performance opportunity Saturday night 2nd September
- Sunday 3rd Sept. 9.30-5.00 The workshop continues followed by co-writing group sessions and performances
- Price includes morning tea and lunch on Sunday.

Rooms are available at the Victoria & Albert on Saturday night at specially discounted rates, with a cooked breakfast included.

Please call Roxanne or Duncan if you want to book a room, we need to know in advance.

This will be **a two-day special event** where you will have the opportunity to be coached by two of the best songwriters in the country.

You too can be part of the musical atmosphere; we are planning a performance night on the Saturday evening, PA and amps provided. Allan and Roger will be singing a song or two...so come on up! Its sure to be a lot of fun.

To find out more about the not-for-profit organisations hosting this event visit:

- Tamworth Songwriters Assoc. at www.tsaonline.com.au
- Songsalive! Australia at www.songsaliveaustralia.org.au

How to attend or find out more information:

Just give **Roxanne Kiely (0411 465 332)** or **Duncan Hill (0409 718 391)** a call

HURRY AS SPOTS FILLING FAST !!

8. Nominations Now Open for the 2017 Grant McLennan Fellowship

Nominations are now open for the 2017 Grant McLennan Fellowship, jointly funded by the Queensland Government through **Arts Queensland** and **APRA AMCOS.**

Founded in 2007 in honour of the late Queensland singer-songwriter and co-frontman of The Go-Betweens, Grant McLennan, the Fellowship is an incredible chance for local songwriters to take their careers to a whole new level.

The prestigious $25,000 fellowship offers the recipient an opportunity to travel to New York, London or Berlin for up to six months and use the experience of being immersed in a foreign and vibrant musical culture to further develop their own artistic skills.

These three cities were of special significance in Grant's life, and for the last ten years have provided Queensland musicians with the same kinds of transformative experiences that made his music so special.

"I can't wait to immerse myself in a city that is constantly whirring with activity" says 2016 recipient **Hannah Macklin** (MKO Sun) who has chosen to undertake her fellowship in NYC this August "…then return to my brownstone apartment in Bedford Stuyvesant, BK and bunker down for daily songwriting sessions."

"It's so important to support and invest in the next generation of songwriters. Grant was one of our best! We're really pleased to be able to recognise Grant's songwriting and ongoing influence through this fellowship." **Dean Ormston**, APRA AMCOS' Head of Member Services.

You must:

- Reside in Queensland and be an Australian citizen or permanent resident
- Be 21 years of age or older
- Be a member of APRA AMCOS
- Have satisfied the reporting requirements of any previous Arts Queensland grants
- Have an ABN
- Only submit one application in each round (e.g. songwriting duos may not also submit individual applications).

Applications close on **September 18, 2017,** with the winners to be announced in December.

Mark Cawley's Monthly Songwriting Blog

Prose and Cons

I'm in Nashville, and although my coaching clients are all over the world these days, there are a couple things I focus on with my lyric writers that are uniquely Nashville. One is to write prose first, the other is to think of a concept (and even better, a second concept). I know that not every type of song you're writing is story-driven, but we're talking Nashville. Much of what comes out of here is still about the story and the concept. So many times, I've gone into a good co-write with an experienced songwriter and we'll sit down and talk. Then talk some more…and more…until something starts to sound like an idea that would be worth writing about. Relatable, interesting, unique, or at the very least, a new way to say something old!

Let's take a minute to focus on prose first. All this means is to write a very brief overview of what your lyric is going to be about. Why bother? It's a great tool to keep you on track. You may have worked on a lyric that looks great on paper, even sounds good when you talk it out loud, (another tool I recommend). But by the third verse, some of those clever rhymes might not be supporting your idea anymore. Going back and going back often to make sure everything still points to the hook is huge. This doesn't need to be anything other than you describing what the song will be about. No rhymes, just a short synopsis.

Title Writing

I love title writing. I'm not talking about gimmicky ideas but more about a fresh take. Coming in with more than a few lines that might become titles. Something I can throw out to a co-writer to see how they take it. One of the beauties of co-writing is sometimes that line that's been sitting around takes on a whole new life

when your co-writer tells you what the line means to them. This can be the beginning of your concept but not the end. A second concept might be the money idea, the one that's not the first thing off the top of your head.

30 Seconds...
I'll give you a great example. I was coaching a client who had done her homework of intentionally finding some lines that might be worth considering. I asked her to read a few. A couple were ok, a few predictable. Then she said, "What about thirty seconds from religion?" I asked her what the concept for this title might be. She thought it could be about someone who's on death's doorstep and would be meeting their maker soon. Yep, I got it. But it also seemed a little predictable. Maybe relatable, but not the most upbeat idea for her lyric.

I asked her to think about another concept or angle and let me know in our next session. Not only did she come up with one, but she had a whole lyric written! This time it was a story about a long-suffering wife whose husband is cheating on her (c'mon, it's Nashville after all!) and she's had it. He used to be a God-fearing man, sat beside her at church every Sunday, but now had lost his ever-loving mind and was living like he was single. When I say she'd had it, I mean to the point of taking this guy out.

So, her lyric tells the story of what he's been up to and the chorus comes to the point. He is going to straighten up and be sitting in their usual spot next to her in church this Sunday, or he was going to the service in a pine box. Either way, he was going to be seeing his maker…30 seconds from religion. Great second concept, and way more interesting and unique than the dying man version. Don't you think?

The Little Big Town hit, "Girl Crush", is another great example of a second concept. Most people who heard the title (and the song) assumed it was going to be about a woman falling for another woman. In truth, the song is about jealousy. A woman whose guy has left her is now with another woman. The woman in the song just wants to be next to the other woman...to be close to her ex. Fantastic concept and one that made the song something way more than novelty. That kind of concept is sometimes the idea that takes a song from good to great.

There are times when your first instinct is the best one and the one you go with in the end. But I would always push the idea of taking your time and letting your sub-conscious work at that other, outside-the-box, second concept.
Have some fun with it!

Mark Cawley
May 19, 2017
Nashville, Tennessee

iDoCoach
inside pro songwriting

iDoCoach is now offering a brand new idea. . . customised workshops as face-to-face or video conference sessions for groups, large or small, in your home, school or college. Email Mark at mark@idocoach.com to get the conversation started on how he can organise a customised workshop for your group today!

2016 Special Guest Artist: Catherine Britt

Photo: Catherine Britt was interviewed by music journalist, Bernie Howitt, at the 2016 National Songwriting Awards

The ASA was privileged to have esteemed music writer **Bernie Howitt** at the 2016 Awards night to interview our special guest artist, acclaimed Country Music performer, **Catherine Britt**.

Bernie: Lovely to see you Catherine, welcome aboard.

Catherine: Thanks for having me, lovely to be here.

Bernie: We have a room full of songwriters, and I am sure they all want to be taken on your journey from an 11 year old discovering her Dads record collection, through to Nashville and Golden Guitars, that's quite a trip!

I thought we would start by talking about mentors. You were very young when you came to music, after being introduced to your Dads record collection. Tell us what was in his collection?

Catherine: Dad played a bit of everything when I was growing up. It was not only the type of music that I would end up singing, he also played blues, jazz and world music. One day it would be Hank Williams, the next it could be Eminem, so it was a very diverse love of music, but he would tell me good music is good music, and there were no boundaries to good music. He told me to look out for the talent and not just the genre.

Bernie: I guess that's what has stayed with you throughout your career, you haven't really been pigeon-holed into any one sound at any time?

Catherine: I think that's sort of been a deliberate thing on my part. I would hate to be limited to one genre. I obviously am labelled as a country artist, and I am proud to be, because I love country music, good country music. I think I have been really lucky in that my fans understand that they might get a bit of blues, rock or folk even bluegrass, at my gigs and also when I write my music.

Bernie: So, if we go back to when you heard those sounds your Dad was listening to and you decided you wanted to write yourself, for those people here that are aspiring songwriters, tell us about that moment when you opened yourself to other people to hear your music. How was that for you?

Catherine: Yes, I think that's the most intimidating part of your songwriting career: who to play your song for when you first write them? It is a daunting thing to have someone hear your heart and soul being poured out on to a piece of paper while playing a guitar. Originally it was my Dad who was my sounding board, someone I very much trusted when it came to music. Later on, I was very fortunate to be taken under the wing of Bill Chambers, who was then another sounding board for me. For me it was very much that I would play it for Dad then I would call Bill and sing it to him over the phone, and if they both liked it, then I knew it was good.

Bernie: Then you started working with Kasey Chambers very early on.

Catherine: Yes! Kasey and I met around the same time that I met Bill. She was a very heavy influence on me, not only that, but she was someone who took care of my career very early on. Kasey helped me write my first single and sang on it with

me, then took me out on the road for my first tour when I was about sixteen, which was great. There was no better way to learn the ropes than from somebody who has been on the road their whole life.

Bernie: I remember seeing you on that tour a long time ago! You then get a record deal and an album, how does that come about?

Catherine: I did an EP first as a stepping stone, and to get a foot in the door, I put a single out, so I would have something to sell at the gigs. That was all due to Bill Chambers saying he thought I was ready to make a recording now. He said you have got enough songs now, so let's go. The album just went on from that, and that was the first big step. A couple of years later, I had a couple of more songs, and it was time to make an album.

Bernie: And then Elton John gets told about you, you're sitting in Campsie, and all of a sudden you are picked up and lorded by one of the world's biggest superstars. How did that feel?

Catherine: Very surreal! I think that everyone in the music industry knows how in the music business, that something new weird and extraordinary can happen. One day, you can be doing nothing, and just shopping at Woollies, and the next day something like that can happen.

For me that was the experience. I was starting out, I had released my debut album, I was about sixteen, working at Domino's Pizza. I had left school and was wondering if I had made the right decision in dedicating my life to music when I received that phone call.

I almost didn't believe it at first, after all why would Elton John be interested in what I was doing? But it turned out to be true. It was fantastic, and we made a wonderful friendship, and we still are good friends and he is wonderfully supportive of my music and songwriting. When we ended up doing the duet in America, it was him that chose one of my songs to sin,; and as a songwriter that meant the world to me.

Bernie: Talking about America, that is a big step.

We have talked about opening your music up to people, what was it like going over there to live and market your music? What was it like opening your soul up to Nashville?

Catherine: Nashville is a whole other kettle of fish. You are basically going into a market where you are basically selling ice in the Artic. You are nothing new. You're just another young blonde aspiring singer songwriter.

Yeah, it was a different thing for me, because I never really had aspired to do that. I had just got this wonderful opportunity through Elton to go over there. Because he had got me the record deal, so I thought I had better go and see what it was all abou,t and ended up staying for about six years signed to RCA records.

The first thing they put me in was a co-writing situation, which was interesting. I love it now, but the first time I did it, it was the most horrifying confronting thing I have ever been a part of. But I ended up writing some great songs over there, and making some wonderful songwriting friend, and now I co-write all the time, so I am

glad I did that. It opened me up to not being inside myself, and always writing songs about me all the time, which can get quite boring after a while.

Bernie: So, I guess it's taken you out of your comfort zone and you have been prepared to push yourself beyond that.

I guess we will finish up by talking about life lessons, from dusty roads and bone shakers. It's a long journey that you have been on. You have had health issues, and you have lived a lot of life. Can you tell us about what lessons you have picked up along the way?

Catherine: Probably, the biggest thing I have learned in my 20 years in the business, is that your career is really up to you.

I think a lot of people think, as I did when I was younger, that people will come to them and make their dreams come true and they will give them all the money to do it. That's not saying it can't happen, and it did happen to me, but it doesn't always work out that way, and it really is up to you to care about your career, because no one is going to care about your career as much as you do, and if you're not willing to invest the time and money into it, then why would anybody else?

Bernie: Well, we have had the opportunity to hear firsthand, someone who has lived it and done it, and achieved it, and shown it's possible to go from Newcastle to Nashville. So, thank you Catherine for sharing part of your story with us.

Mario Armel: International Guest - 2016 National Songwriting Awards

Mario Armel was one of the many international guests who attended the 2016 National Songwriting Awards.

Mario achieved a Top 30 placing in the 2016 Australian Songwriting Contest with his song, We Can Make It, a co-write with Jacques Mario Gentil.

Mario's achievement was big news in Mauritius, and the Mauritius Government was happy to provide the air fare for Mario to attend the Awards.

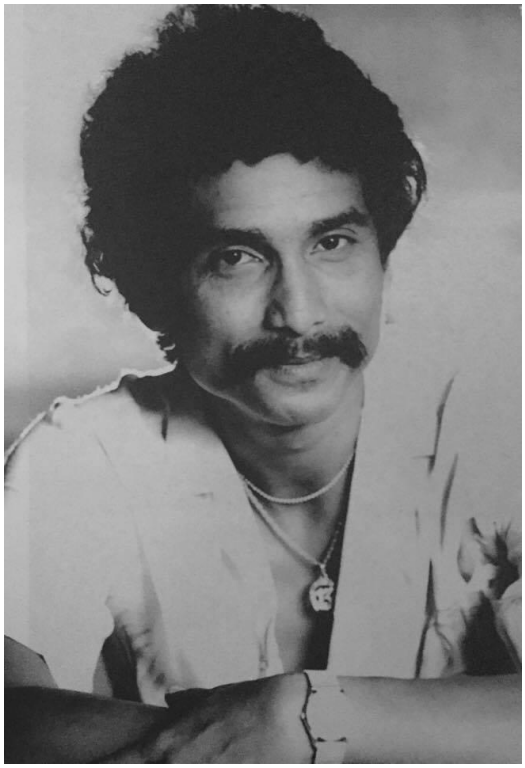
Thanks to **Jacques Mario Gentil**, a former APRA/ASA Songwriter of the Year, and, also a Mauritian Australian, for providing us with the following story on Mario.

Photo: Mario Armel at the 2016 National Songwriting Awards.

"Born of Mauritian artist parents, Mario Armel will live an unusual musical itinerary, made of adventures, disappointments and successes that will lead him from the local Mauritian scenes to the islands of the region – Réunion Island and Madagascar and further, to South Africa, Ivory Coast, Paris, London, Sydney, Kuala Lumpur. He will know love, friendship, betrayal, the years of lean cows, unfulfilled promises of glory, eternal beginnings always carried by his love for music and adventure. He has tried all genres, from mainstream pop to séga, the traditional folkloric song of Mauritius.

Now 70 years old, happily married with 5 children, Mario is enjoying the status of a Mauritian renowned superstar. After a life of wandering, he evokes the serenity found amongst his own while living his forever passion: music. His career as an artist was full of pitfalls but also of moments of unforgettable happiness.

When he was 17, Mario joined the Traveller's Band for a short time, after which he joined another, Diamonds, covering some French and English 60s hits. However, his first choruses, Mario Armel hummed them when he was only 18. Then, in the company of the 'Night Birds', his own band, while performing known hits, he started to write songs in French, English, Creole and Hindi. From then, Mario travelled, had much success, and then landed as a producer.



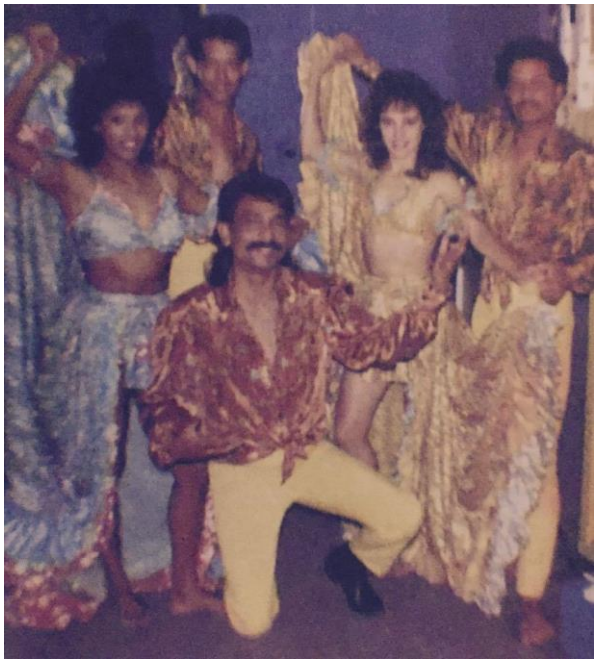
1967 was the year that mostly set up the singer's career. As he entrusted it, some twenty years ago in the columns of Scope magazine, his beginnings were difficult in Réunion Island, in the company of the Night Birds. "At that time, very few people believed in us in Mauritius, to send us to Réunion Island to perform for the French Republic Bastille day. Once we found our way to the sister island, the band from day one encountered difficulties in sound set up and financially. So, we applied to play at Hotel d'Europe and it is from there that the adventure began.

"The band picked up French and English hits in its repertoire, made a name and got placed three consecutive years at the head of a competition for bands of Réunion Island. The recognition and notoriety that Mario Armel knew in Réunion Island, he said he has never known in his native island. "I am proud to be Mauritian. But I do not hide that it is Reunion which made me who I am and allowed me to advance. "

In 1971, Mario released his first vinyl single, a cover song called 'White is White'. "My covers made me famous" says Mario, "however my very own and first song was titled Kiss Kiss, Kill Kill, a disco song inspired from a movie I watched. My next songs were Try Me, Come Let's Do It Together, I'm Going Home and Don't Tell Me Why." Performing at a theatre, where the crowd required some police officers attending, Mario threw in a new song titled in creole and translated: 'I'm The Kid with No Fear of Police'. From then, he decided to write in Creole and that's when his first original 45 rpm vinyl was released titled Coi Coi and Maria Theresa.

The Mid 70's saw a new band formed from selected musicians, which Mario took with him to South Africa, 'The Hot Sounds of Mauritius'. To sign a contract with the President Hotel, the latter needed to break its own apartheid rule and accept both black and white at this hotel, originally reserved for the white. That's when Mario started on an international level. The Hot Sounds became the very first Mauritian band to have an album signed with CBS in 1975, with Mario's songs Coi-Coi, Ki Fer To Drogue (Why You Take Drugs) and Sascha, together with couple of covers, My Way and No One To Depend On. They were called 'the best new discovery sound'. A second album followed signed with CBS and was titled Lalabye, which included Mario's own hit song Anita My Love.

That song reached third position on the German Hit-Parade, which however Mario knew nothing about while the producer benefited of all the royalties. The song was however written in English, French and Creole, which met a great success on the Mauritian airwaves and they toured the islands of the Indian Ocean. "This was one of the most beautiful times. I lived my passion thoroughly. Since I had a passion for watching Indian movies in cinemas, I also did a Hindi version of my song. Those were the days of happiness, until I returned to Mauritius."



In 1978, after returning to his native island, he decided to record Anita My Love in Creole. It didn't please his fans. "In my songs, there is emotion. I am a singer with text. It is a pity that some people did not appreciate Anita My Love's lyric back in 1978, but appreciate it today, "says the author, composer and performer.

In 1980 back in Mauritius, 2 new creole songs were released titled Carri Posson (Fish Curry) and Zoubeda, which were recorded in Réunion Island. Mario then headed to Abidjan in Ivory Coast, West Africa where he and an African band appeared on TV about twenty times and they released an LP signed with WAM label (West African Music) and distributed by Warner Bros WEA with sales over 35,000 copies.

In 1987, Mario released a new album titled Mario Armel and headed to France where he met influential music people promising him success in exchange for sexual advances, which Mario refused. He recorded The One We Cherished, after which the producer decided to release his own version, first as a duet in French with another artist which Mario didn't agree. And the contract was cancelled and The One We Cherished was never released.

In October 1995, Scope magazine titled Mario Armel, 'the avant-garde artist'. The article goes back to 1967 and reveals the difficult beginnings of Mario Armel and the Night Birds in Mauritius and Réunion Island, the opportunity to talk about the rich and brilliant career of this singer.

Throughout his journey, he has met with famous music names such as Charles Aznavour, the late Keith Moon, drummer for The Who, who advised Mario to end his contract with his manager Gerald Perks. Mario Armel also met Yannick Noah, famous French Tennis player who was also a recording

artist. In South Africa, he got to meet Johnny Mathis who happened to sing his praises from the stage. In 1978 Mario met with Paul Murphy who was the man behind the Beatles first success who proposed Mario to perform a duet with Patrick Hernandez and so they organized a concert at the Plaza Theatre in Mauritius.

This avant-garde artist in 1979 composed what he calls séga fantasy. A title came out with a theme and melody that sticks. Carri Posson (fish curry), this song travelled through time. There are two versions. One in Tamil, which ended up being banned from the radios, the humour displeasing the wide Hindu community of Mauritius, and the version that everyone knows today, which I wrote in anger while in Ivory Coast in 1981. "

When Armel talks about his misadventures, he prefers to laugh. He has evolved and gained artistic maturity. He now officiates as a producer and conducts his recording and rehearsal studio, Islandio2000 Records. But the man remains dashing. And he has good reasons for: "Throughout 55 years of music career, I have experienced many difficult moments. I have overcome many hardships and I am proud to see what I have achieved. And my journey continues."

More recently Monde Agite, (Agitated World) was released, an album made up of original songs where Armel focuses on today's state of the world and politics. One of the Creole titles, To La Voix, To Sime, To Lamizik ('Your Voice, Your Road and Your Music') sums up the political context of the album.

After 55 years of emotions and songs, Mario Armel revisited his musical journey and unveiled a new opus with a new album, A Star is Born, an interpretation of nine of his greatest hits by participants selected through a song contest for that occasion. "These cover versions of my songs are modern and reveal amazing new voices. I enjoyed working on this project. It also allowed me not to lose my songwriting skills and to continue to create" says Armel.

On this album is also a bonus track the only one sung by Mario Armel himself, and as a duet with ASA Songwriter of the Year 2013 Award Winner, Jacques Mario Gentil, established in Australia. The song was titled We Can Make It, which the two songwriters penned down after reconnecting after 30 years in Melbourne, when Armel came for a show. It started after a conversation about whether, after so many years, original performing artists could still make it in the music business.

It took two years in the making, the vocals being recorded in Australia and Mauritius. They not only wanted to achieve a soul pop touch of the late 70's- early 80's but also the fusion of Armel's own melody creative sound and musicianship showcased through his chord progressions and Gentil's ear for modern songwriting techniques and experience. The song made the Top 30 finalists in the Contemporary Pop/ Dance Category of the ASA National Songwriting Contest last year. Mario Armel has always promoted the Mauritian culture in other parts of the world, and the Ministry of Arts and Culture of Mauritius was pleased to fly Mario Armel to Sydney to attend the ASA National Awards 2016.

Information adapted from:

- 'Le Mauricien' Newspaper - 20 November 2015;
- Mario Armel - Les Accords Posés Sur Terre' (Chords Laid Down on Earth) a biography by journalist Robert D'Argent (2005).

Thanks to **Jacques Mario Gentil** for this article.

The Load Out

When you come home at night, from a hard day at work, wouldn't it be lovely to grab a cold drink, and sit under a painting of some of your favourite guitars?

Hmmm, this could be your perfect opportunity.

Although it's just a painting, they look like, (left to right), a Fender Strat, a Gibson Les Paul (modified), a Gibson Memphis, a Fender Tele and a six-string acoustic.

That just about covers every guitar fantasy you'll ever need!

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.

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2016 APRA/ASA Australian Songwriters of the Year

Donna Dyson (QLD) and Damien Leith (NSW)

2016 Rudy Brandsma Award Winner

Alex Tobin (NSW)

2016 PPCA Live Performance Award Winners

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 (The Little River Band)
2005: Russell Morris
2004: Harry Vanda, George Young & Stevie Wright (The Easybeats)

2016 Australian Songwriting Contest Award Winners:

Donna Dyson & Damien Leith (QLD & NSW) (Australia Category)
Karen Guymer (VIC) (Ballad Category - Joint)
David King & Jessica Allen (NSW) (Ballad Category - Joint)
John Blok (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 (QLD) (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 ASA co-founder, 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
2004	Trish Delaney-Brown	Callee Mann
2003	Contest Not Held	Contest Not Held
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

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