

The Balladeer

Monthly newsletter of Acoustic Routes, Wellington's folk music club

Acoustic Routes

www.acousticroutes.org.nz

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1. Blind Date concert, August 22, 7.30pm

This month's concert at the Ruby Lounge is a bit different. It's our annual Blind Date concert, where randomly grouped volunteers get to show what their arranged collaborations have produced in just a month. Blind Date acts are often surprising, sometimes amazing, and always entertaining! (The photo shows "Ruthless" doing their version of *I wanna be sedated* at last year's Blind Date concert.) So come along to the AGM and stick around for this fun demonstration of creative musical cooperation. Rumour has it that the outgoing committee may also perform a number or two.

We are confident that all the Blind Date acts will be good, so there's no competition for "Best Act". But just to give participants something to shoot for, there are three awards, with appropriate trophies, up for grabs:

- The Linda Sorenson Chocolate Fish Award for the best original song
- The Golden Plectrum Award for the best instrumental break
- The Bob Cooper-Grundy Award for the best dressed band.

The Blind Date concert will be at the Ruby Lounge, Bond Street, Wellington, on Sunday, August 22 at 7.30pm, following the AGM.

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2. Acoustic Routes AGM August 22, 6.30pm

Please make time to come to the Annual General Meeting of Acoustic Routes (Wellington Folk Centre). The committee has worked hard all year for your club and the best acknowledgement of our work would be your active participation in the AGM.

The general purpose of the AGM is to:

- receive the 2010 annual report and financial statements
- elect the officers (president, secretary, treasurer)
- ratify the 2009 AGM minutes
- elect the committee (up to five members)
- appoint the official auditor.

Other business will include:

- confirmation of the new subscription rates (see below)
- confirmation of two new honorary life members for the club
- nominations for election of the J A Pan Award for 2010
- discussion of the club's evolution this year and in the future, based on the questions listed below.

Note that you need to be a financial member to vote at the AGM, or to stand for office - but you can pay up on the night!

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3. What do you think of it so far?

Since the last AGM, Acoustic Routes has been through many changes - including the venues for our events, the nights they happen, and how we communicate with you. The committee would like some feedback from members on what you think of it all so far. So please give some thought to the following discussion points, which we'll raise at the AGM on August 22.

1. Are you satisfied with the new venues, the start times, and the nights?
2. Are there enough Acoustic Routes events (normally one blackboard session a month and one concert a month)?
3. Does the format of each kind of event work well and provide enough variety for members? Is the club providing enough performance opportunities, and are they the kind you want?
4. Is a functional, up-to-date club website important to you, or would you be just as happy with a static website that's only updated once or twice a year, plus regular email updates? Is the Balladeer important to you and to the club, or would you a Facebook approach be better?
5. What do you think about exploring the possibility of creating a more united umbrella for the Wellington folk music scene, instead of the present rather fragmented situation? How might this happen?

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4. Come to Riverslea, August 6-8

Don't forget that the annual Acoustic Routes midwinter getaway at peaceful Riverslea Lodge, Te Horo, is from Friday 6 August (from 6pm) to Sunday 8th August (after lunch). Relax, play music, walk by the river, catch up with folkie friends. Maybe run an informal workshop if you've got something to share (talk to Anne).

Bring bedding for bunkroom accommodation, and your own food including something for a shared meal on Saturday night. Tea, coffee etc provided.

The cost is \$90 for the weekend, \$45 for one night, or \$25 if you just come for the day.

Enquiries and bookings to annemcgregor@xtra.co.nz or 233 8567.



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5. Club notes from the president

Wow, the musical calendar just seems to be on the exponential rise! July has been such a busy month, and August is shaping up to be something similar.

We are rapidly approaching the end of the folkie year and the AGM. After all the incredible changes that this committee has brought in over the last 12 months, I think it is time to for

us all to pause and reflect on where we are at and where we might be heading.

We have changed venues, reduced our running expenses, reduced the frequency of club events, changed the time and the days we meet, increased the profile of the club at the Wellington Folk Festival, introduced the membership card, and gone electronic with the Balladeer.

These things were all signalled as desirable in the Acoustic Routes strategic directions paper developed by the previous committee, and confirmed by your response to last year's questionnaire. The changes have taken a lot of effort on our part. We have come up with a few discussion points for the AGM, so that we can get the feedback that we need. Please do think about these questions and let us know what is working well and what tweaks are required. If you can't come to the AGM, feel free to send your thoughts to one of us or to me directly.

Not surprisingly, my plea for people to put their hands up for the committee or the presidency has not generated a flurry of responses as yet! Remember you can nominate other people, or yourself. We particularly need an editor for the Balladeer, and our website also needs someone who can give it a bit of zip and keep it up to date. Remember, if no-one comes forward, we simply won't be able to do those things.

Regarding the president's role: maybe jumping straight into it seems too much, but is there anyone out there who would consider coming on the committee this year with a view to becoming president the following year? That's a pretty good offer - I am looking forward to the gush of emails and nominations!

My annual report will be available at the AGM. That's August 22 at the Ruby Lounge at 6.30 pm.

We have a lovely Blind Date evening coming up, following the AGM. At the final hour you responded to the call brilliantly, and we have a really great lineup of 16 singers/instrumentalists, arranged into four groups. Some are well-known musicians and some less well known, but all are fabulously committed and talented. Thank you everyone who put their names into the hat. We shall look forward to seeing your collaborations and watching the evening unfold!

And of course before that we have the Katipo blackboard session on the 11th.

See you there!

Cheers, Mary

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6. The Balladeer needs a champion

You may have heard previous Balladeer editors speak about the task as if it were a sentence of hard labour. Well, it was, kind of, when the Balladeer was a paper publication. But one of the great advantages of the new electronic form, and in fact one of the main reasons for the change, is that the job of putting the newsletter together is now much simpler: it requires no layout skills, is less dependent on others meeting deadlines, and is far less time-consuming overall.

The work involved is basically just generating and/or collecting the text and pictures for the Balladeer each month; putting it into a standardised Word format; forwarding it to a couple of people to check and proofread; making the corrections; and finally sending it on to the mail-out person in time for distribution at the end of each month.

What the position does call for is:

- enthusiasm for the Balladeer, Acoustic Routes and "the folk scene" generally
- a willingness to be on the committee and attend meetings once a month
- basic Microsoft Word, email and internet skills
- the ability to write the odd review, announcement or article (or the ability to persuade someone else to)

- respect for the monthly deadline.

If this sounds like you, don't be shy. Stand up and declare yourself at the AGM!

Or if you can think of a member (or potential member) who fits the bill, twist their arm. Please. Because unless someone does step up for this position, all our efforts to keep the Balladeer alive will have been in vain, and that will be the end of it. Full stop.

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7. Nominate the most improved performer

The J. A. Pan Trophy is another tradition of the AGM. It's awarded to the club member voted the most improved performer of the past year by the members present. Folk club legend has it that the trophy was originally a cheap plastic cup with the word "JAPAN" written on the base. It has evolved into a lovingly maintained artifact hand-carved by Murray Kilpatrick, which has been extended several times to accommodate more winners' names.

The winner holds the engraved trophy for a year, and is entitled to perform a floor spot at a club concert. Last year's winner was Ken Stiffler, who enjoyed having the trophy on his mantelpiece but was unable to take up the performance opportunity.

Nominations can be made at or before the AGM, so have a think about it. Remember, the award is for the most improved performer, not necessarily the "best".

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8. Club night at Katipo Cafe, August 11

The second Wednesday of every month is our club night at the Katipo Cafe, upstairs at 76 Willis Street. Car parking in nearby streets is free after 6, so come early and catch up with friends before the concert. Meals are available till 9; snacks, drinks and coffee all night.

The music starts at 7.30 with a blackboard concert, where anyone can put their name up to perform one (preferably rehearsed) item. Later in the evening there's an informal jam session or singaround. No door charge, but a koha is appreciated.

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9. About Acoustic Routes

Acoustic Routes (Wellington Folk Centre Incorporated) is a club for people who enjoy playing and listening to folk and acoustic styles of music.

We have two main events each month: a blackboard concert and singaround at the Katipo Cafe, upstairs at 76 Willis Street, on the second Wednesday of the month at 7.30pm, and a concert at the Ruby Lounge, 14 Bond Street, on the 4th Sunday of the month at 7.30 pm, with featured performers and support acts.

Membership costs \$25 a year for individuals, \$40 for couples or families, or \$15 for students and beneficiaries. It entitles you to door charge discounts at Acoustic Routes events and also at events put on by most other folk clubs. Members get priority access to performance opportunities, and can have input into the club's activities. To join, see the person on the door at club events, or email treasurer@acousticroutes.org.nz

Acoustic Routes publishes The Balladeer by email at the start of every month, to keep members and other interested people informed about club events and news. Members are welcome to submit relevant news, views and reviews.

The club also publishes a monthly update of folk and acoustic music events in the Wellington region, which is emailed around about the 15th. Anyone can submit listings to this update for appropriate concerts or events.

To subscribe to (or unsubscribe from) either of these publications, to correct your email address, or to submit copy, contact publicity@acousticroutes.org.nz

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