

The Balladeer

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

Acoustic Routes

www.acousticroutes.org.nz

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NOTE: This newsletter can be printed out from a pdf located on the website

www.acousticroutes.org.nz

1. Wellington showcase concert I, Meow, 1 May, 7.30 pm

Dunedin's Catgut and Steel have cancelled their concert scheduled for May 1, so Acoustic Routes is celebrating New Zealand Music month with two concerts showcasing Wellington performers. The first great line up is on May Day.

Peter Shaw and Neha Gate

Folk and contemporary music on guitars and banjo.

Fire Ponies



An alt-folk journey of stories bitter, sweet, and sometimes poignant, with melodies to haunt you. Fireponies are a group of friends doing their best to make sense of life with the help of guitars, drums and other things. A pure melting pot of music written and played for the love of it, Fireponies will charm your socks off

with their catchy choruses, storytelling lyrics and damn fine quirkiness.

Baby Boomer Girl

Original songs from Radha Sahar and Bernard Wells.

Uncharted Country

A new grouping of familiar faces, who've come together to explore the musical territory around and beyond old-time country music. Andrea Coop (fiddle), Peter Dyer (guitar), Don Franks (banjo), Jill Brasell (bass) and Mary Livingston (guitar) have been playing and singing together for years in various permutations, including The Song Rustlers, The Last Roundup, Jambalaya, The



Cicadas, and The B53s, as well as about a million jam sessions. And so they bring a formidable accumulation of experience to this new venture. Expect hot licks and heavenly harmonies in songs that chart the rough and rocky road of life.

ENTRY \$15 (\$10 folk club members)

And a fabulous way to get into the groove for the Showcase concert - **Americana jam session, Meow, 1 May, 4-7pm**

Richard Klein and friends have had their Sunday jam running for some time, but had their first Meow gathering in April, with great success. You can hear some of the Wellington region's finest players and singers of Country, Blues, Cajun, Old-Timey, Boogie-Woogie and all-around good time American music - it's an open session so you can join in.

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2. Saul Rayo and Elena Powell in concert, Meow, 15 May, 7:30 pm



Nicaraguan singer, songwriter and multi-instrumentalist Saul Rayo is extremely diverse in his original music as well as tribute shows. He has had a lifelong career in the music industry, writing more than 350 songs. Having collaborated musically with the likes of John Hammond Jr, Joan Baez, and Randy Travis, he has shared the stage with Taj Mahal, Miriam Makeba, John Prine, and John Fogerty, among others.

Elena Powell began pursuing a life in popular music after graduating from UCLA. She started early, learning classical violin from the age of 6. She has released

several albums of her songs and toured solo and with bands. Elena is highly regarded for her songs, voice and virtuoso electric violin playing.

Check out www.saulrayo.com/ for more details.

ENTRY \$10 all comers

There will also be an **Americana jam session** with Richard Klein and friends at Meow, 15 May, 4-7 pm, setting the scene for Saul Rayo and Elena Powell.

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3. Wellington showcase concert II, Meow, 22 May, 7.30 pm

Featuring more local talent.

Parcel

Cool jazz and folk from Murray Kilpatrick, Sue Rose, Marion and Barry Carter.

Feral

Hi from feral, a three-piece of percussion, bass, guitar/harp and vocals. Been together for about 8 years, playing predominantly original music with a few covers when required. Styles range from blues to reggae to country to rock to jazz to punk - all good indie stuff. They have played KLMC music marathon for the past few years and look forward to a session with Acoustic Routes.

Niels Gedge and Friends

Niels Gedge is a New Zealand songwriter who now lives in Plimmerton. His songs draw on the landscapes of Aotearoa to tell stories that reflect on life and the echoes of lives past. He works in Appalachian folk, country, country-blues, spiritual, gospel and soul idioms and will mostly be singing songs from his CD '*Between Two Lines*' which was launched in Wellington last August. The title track is on the National Radio playlist. Niels is joined for this set by the outstanding fiddler Fiona Smythe and Helen Dorothy, another songwriter whose debut CD, "The Going Away" has been acclaimed in Wellington folk circles, and by Derek Burfield on upright bass.

10DD





In our quest for something a little, um, different and inspired by the music of 10cc - a 70s UK band of gifted songwriters with a knack for puns and a warped sense of humour, we proudly bring you New Zealand's own 10dd - pun intended - see logo.

Breathing life into these admired and often quirky refrains, 10dd is an all women's a cappella bevy of equally offbeat characters. Performing "I'm Not in Love", "Art for Art's Sake", "Dreadlock Holiday" and other 10cc tunes you'll recognise, often with surprise.

These ladies really know how to transport you through the emotional roller-coaster of love, jailhouse rioting and Jamaican relaxation with musical finesse and dexterity in a top class tribute to the original band, wowing audiences along the way.

What people have said - I kid you not. . . "Wow - that was REALLY different - in a good way", "Quirky and offbeat - I loved it!", "I want more!", "You guys should so perform at [insert fav venue here]!"

ENTRY \$15 (\$10 folk club members)

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4. Note from the president



Hello Everyone

Wow. March/April have been a fabulous for music what with Col's birthday singaround, Ken Nicol's concert and the fabulous Andy Irvine and Rens van der Zalm. I have also really felt that people are adapting at last to the new routines. . . it does take a while, eh.

So we are now looking at May with two fabulous Showcase concerts (details above) coming up and an additional surprise squeezed in on the 15th.

Meanwhile I am off to 'the Nash' in Canberra with enviable musical treats in store!

See you soon - Mary

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5. Acoustic Routes Monthly Blackboard Session, Mojo Invincible, 6 May, 7-10 pm



Acoustic Routes is now hosting one of the weekly music sessions at Mojo, on the first Friday of the month. It's an open mic format, so come along and put your name down. It's informal and friendly and a good way to introduce yourself and your songs to a supportive audience.

Format is one item each, followed by a short break. Then a chance for a second turn for those who are keen, and/or a jam session depending on the mood on the night.

Mojo Invincible coffee bar, 161 Willis Street.

No charge, but we have a koha jar.

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6. Monthly Singaround, 8 May, 7.30 pm



Come and enjoy the relaxed atmosphere of our home-based singaround session (join the circle and take a turn to perform if you wish).

This month's singaround is at Pat Higgin's place - 99 Nevay Road, Mirimar (above Karaka Bay). You are welcome to bring your own beer or wine. No charge, but a koha is requested to cover tea and coffee, etc.

Directions from Pat (Tel: 04-3884190):

1. People should come through the Miramar cutting.
 2. Straight through Miramar shops along Miramar Ave.
 3. Left in to Para St, then straight along Darlington Road.
 4. Right up the hill on Awa Rd, to the School.
 5. Left into Nevay Rd.
 6. Look for the white fence and the row of cabbage trees (on the LHS) after Napier St. Intersection.
- No shoes, we are protecting our new floor.

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7. Club member profile: Don Franks

DON'T STOP NOW!

I wonder if the Eastbourne nuns who gave piano lessons to seven-year-old Don Franks had any idea of how music would fill Don's creative and political life.

Now a music teacher himself, as well as a cleaner at Farmers, marathon runner, political activist, composer and performer, Don's passion is balanced by his wonderful sense of humour. I found an example in a New Zealand Herald column by Audrey Young.

"After the Press Gallery Christmas Party in 2000 which I had helped to organise, I received an invoice from the piano player we had hired for the evening and it said something like \$20 for piano services, \$180 for having to be in the same room as Rodney Hide. The piano player was Don Franks, a great Wellington identity of the Left, a cleaner, activist, writer, musician and socialist."



While still studying piano Don learned to play the ukulele in his early teens from a Samoan friend. Next he picked up a guitar, followed by the banjo after being introduced to bluegrass by the Hamilton County Bluegrass Band. Even a few wind instruments have been added to the mix, although Don figures you can only be really good at two instruments at the most, since each one requires a lot of practice.

He has been a member of Acoustic Routes since the Holland Street days, and recalls sing-arounds every Friday and a concert with floor spots every Sunday with the likes of Chris Penman, Barry Smiths, Mike Gough and of course Col. He also remembers playing at the Chez Paris, which paid well at \$15 for a two-hour gig.

His major musical influences have come from America, including swing, jazz and old-time country. He has performed everything from Neapolitan music at Il Casino to Dixieland in dance bands, and will be playing in the next Acoustic Routes showcase as part of "Uncharted Country".

Don's political activism started with the Viet Nam War. He later became a union leader at Ford Motors and ran for political office, representing the Workers Party. His social commitment is evident in his two CDs, "Don't Stop Now, Political Songs 1981-2001", and "Safer Communities Together" Blues. His original songs record history from a viewpoint not always included in mainstream history. He can be seen performing two of these originals at political rallies included in the documentaries "Not in My Country" and the recently premiered "Operation 8: Deep in the Forest".

Music and politics were also mixed with theatre, including the Frontline Theatre, and later the Theatre of the 8th Day, where Don met Jill Brasell while both were involved in a production about James K Baxter.

Don's main work now is teaching music, including private piano, ukulele and guitar lessons as well as guitar classes at Tawa night school and Miramar North primary school. Let's hope there is at least one among these students who is as passionate and creative as Don. [by Cathy Dyer]

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8. Review of Ken Nicol concert, Meow, March 27



We first saw Ken Nicol a couple of years ago, when he did a concert in town before being a guest at the Wellington Folk Festival.

As a former member of two of the driving forces of English folk, the Albion Band and Steeleye Span, he came highly recommended. But his appearances here have clearly demonstrated what an outstanding musician and performer he is in his own right.

Ken's guitar playing is what hits you first. It's inspiring to watch him in full flight, whether it be a straight blues, as in his take of "Steamroller Blues" a ragtime piece, a rockier number or heart-felt ballad. His fluid and graceful playing is understated, rather than flashy and belies the skill involved.

But he's also a fine singer, with a warm voice and personable stage presence. And he's no slouch as a song-writer, either, as "The Road Beneath the Wheels" showed. There's a gentle humour underlying some of his songs, like his story of a guitar lesson: "Two Frets From the Blues".

A rollicking set of tunes also had its funny story. He'd originally called them "Ken's Jigs". After being told they weren't jigs, they became "Ken's Reels". Then, the night we heard them, they were "Ken's Hornpipes". Whatever, they were neat tunes. And for something completely different, we got a little ditty on a ukulele, for an encore.



The opening set from Pukerua Bay singer-songwriter Helen Dorothy, was also a delight. Helen has quickly established a reputation for her finely-crafted songs. They're the subtle sort that grow on you with listening and then stay. Many of the songs have environmental connections, and birds, along with colours, are common motifs. Helen's songs are always structurally interesting (something that can't be said of all songwriters), as are her guitar arrangements, using a variety of tunings. [by Kevin Ikin]

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9. Review Andy Irvine and Rens van der Zalm concert, Meow, April 14

This was a special concert by any standards.

There was a full house at Meow and the audience was treated to a cracking performance from these globe-trotting troubadours. Andy and Rens have been collaborating for 20 years now, starting with Andy's 1991 album "Rude Awakening" and later in the band, Mozaik, and as a duo.

This is a highly-tuned musical partnership and that shows through in the intricately entwined instrumentation that graces the songs and tunes. The combination of Andy's bouzouki and mandola and Ren's mandolin, fiddles and guitar was mesmerising, especially when they launched into a Balkan tune in 11/16 or 9/16 timing. (Andy's sound advice: "don't try this at home!"). I could have sworn at times there were four instruments playing, not two.



Andy was also in fine form vocally, the odd little lyrical lapse aside (how does he remember all those words, anyway?). They opened with Marcus Turner's powerful song, "When the Boys are on Parade" and filled the evening with a nicely balanced selection from the Andy Irvine repertoire. We got something from the Irish palette: "Rambling Boys of Pleasure"; the traditional "The Blacksmith" from Planxty days; the personal "My Heart's Tonight in Ireland" and the simply beautiful "Baneasa's Green Glade".

There was a leavening of humour as well, with "The Close Shave", Bob Bickerton's clever down-under adaptation of the "Patrick Street" story, involving cross-dressing con-men fleecing gold miners rather than sailors. And, Andy's saga of a sozzled sojourn in Norway.

It was a deeply satisfying concert, made more so by the sparkling opening set from the local trio, Tandrom. Tango, gypsy jazz, and folk, including a Russian song from Fiona Smythe on violin, Simon Burgess on guitar and vocal and Richard Prowse, on dazzling double bass. There's plenty of verve in this line-up, and I hope we'll see a lot more of Tandrom. [by Kevin Ikin]

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10. Other great events offered by AR friends



Fences Fall Concert, St Peters Hall Paekakariki, Sat 30 April

A concert with a difference takes place in Paekakariki on Saturday 30 April, 8pm, St Peter's Hall. Paekakariki.

"Fences Fall" is a collaborative project by Kapiti musicians who have written songs inspired by the poetry of Michael O'Leary.

Check out more information on his web site

www.earlofseacliff.co.nz/michael.htm

Musicians Dave Berry (The Cattlestops), Helen Dorothy, Kayte Edwards (the Green Parrots), Niels Gedge, Gilbert Haisman, Francis Mills, Brian Romeril (Pavlova) and Al Witham have reworked Michael's poetry into fresh sounding compositions ranging through blues, jazz, folk, and country. Concert-goers will be treated to the

first public performance of these songs as well as other material by the musicians.

The concert will be filmed for a documentary on Michael O'Leary, and plans are afoot for a studio recording of the new songs for release later this year as a CD entitled 'Fences Fall'.

It's \$15 at the door or tickets are available from the Paekakariki Fruit and Vege shop. There will be food for sale and a cash bar as well as BYO.

National folk dance weekend, Wellington Girls College, 4-6 June

This year's National Folkdance camp at Queen's Birthday Weekend (4-6 June) is being hosted by the Wellington International Folkdance Group at Wellington Girls' College in Thorndon.

Besides specialist classes in Bulgarian and French dance, there are socials on the Saturday and Sunday night that are open to all comers.

The Saturday night social is a contra dance with Wellington's own wonderful contra dance band Chili Jam (Bernard Wells, Jonathan Berkahn, Pete Rochford and Mark Howell) and called by Cashy Yates. This will be a rare opportunity for contra dancers from around the country to circle, swing, allemand, do-so-do, and do all the other moves that make up contra dancing. If you can move both feet and count to eight, it's easy to pick up, so do come and join us.

The dance on Sunday will be in the style of a French *bal* (nothing like a formal English ball), led by Kate Grace from Dunedin (ex France). Kate will be teaching French dance during the day, and in the evening will run a bal featuring live music and easier dances. Dance displays from local Wellington dance groups will give weary dancers a break. This social is open to anyone and there's a session on Sunday afternoon that will give an introduction to the dances for the *bal* - ideal for people who like to know what they're doing before they get on the dance floor.

You can book for either the whole thing or individual sessions and socials. Early bird rates apply until the end of April. For full details and the registration form please go to the website:

Website: folkdance.org.nz/camp11/

Email: camp@folkdance.org.nz

Phone: Michele 04 972 2350 or Sonia 027 405 1302.

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11. Are you ready to perform?



Opportunities are available for support acts for many of our monthly concerts. You'll do a 20 to 30 minute spot in the first half of the show, before the main invited guest. It's a great thing to work towards and can stretch you on your musical journey.

Current Acoustic Routes members will be given priority, but we have not excluded non-members. We don't always know who is keen to have a go, so do please tell us if you want to. Talk to a committee member, or drop an email to president@acousticroutes.org.nz

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12. 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 several regular events each month. The second Sunday of the month is the singaround. This moves to a different member's home each month and is a relaxed opportunity to share your latest song or tune, increase your performing confidence, and enjoy the company of other folkies.

The fourth Sunday of the month generally features a concert, usually with a visiting artist and support acts from amongst our membership. These concerts are at Meow, 9 Edward Street, Wellington, until further notice.

We are now also having our monthly blackboard session on every first Friday of the month at Mojo Invincible, 161 Willis St, Wellington. Sing one or even two songs if you wish (10 minutes max per act) to a friendly listening group of like-minded people. It's a great way to try out your latest number without having to prepare for a full performance set. Entry is free (koha accepted).

Membership of Acoustic Routes 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 Peter Denee, who's usually on the door at club events, or email him at treasurer@acousticroutes.org.nz.

Acoustic Routes publishes this newsletter (The Balladeer) at the start of every month, and also an acoustic gig guide for the Wellington region (Acoustic Routes update) in the middle of every month. To subscribe to either, contact publicity@acousticroutes.org.nz

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13. Acoustic Routes contacts

President: Mary Livingston president@acousticroutes.org.nz

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Acoustic Routes update email: Gerard Hudson publicity@acousticroutes.org.nz

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Website: www.acousticroutes.org.nz

Facebook: www.facebook.com/home.php#!/pages/Acoustic-Routes/89128457590

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14. Other regular folk events/contacts in the region

Ceol Alba Scottish Music Club

When: 2nd and 4th Fridays of month
Contact: Lynne Scott, 565 0164 lynne@scott.gen.nz

International Folkdancing

When: Every Wednesday from February to December, 7.30 to 9.15
Where: Tarrant Dance Studios, 125 Cuba St, Wellington
Contact: Cashy Yates (04) 569 1618 cashy@ihug.co.nz

Kapiti Live Music Club

When: 1st Wednesday of month, unplugged, acoustic rounds: 7:30 till 10pm
3rd Wednesday of month, blackboard, 7.30 pm, guest 8.30
Where: temporarily at 69 Rimu Road, Raumati Beach
Contact: Ruth Birnie, enquiry@klmc.org.nz, www.klmc.org.nz/

Levin Folk Club

When: 2nd Friday of month, 7.30 pm, blackboard concert plus guest artist. \$5 entry includes supper
4th Friday of month, 7.30 pm, acoustic night. \$2
Where: Horowhenua, Scottish Society and Pipe Band hall, cnr Bartholomew Rd and Middlesex St.
Contact: Anne Campbell annemc@ihug.co.nz

Mainly Acoustic Music Club

When: 2nd Tuesday of month, 7.30pm
Where: Mayfair Cafe, 166 Main Street, Upper Hutt
Contact: Kevin & Sue Meehan (04) 970 4008
John & Susan Sutherland (04)528 2016

Mojo Acoustic

When: 2nd, 3rd and 4th Friday of month, 7pm
Where: Mojo Invincible, Willis Street
Contact: Ruth Birnie 04 905 3838, ruthbirnie@clear.net.nz
Niels Gedge 970 1170, n.gedge@xtra.co.nz

Morris dancing: Dave Barnes www.morrisdancing.org.nz/

Pukerua Bay Folk Club

When: 1st Thursday of month, 8 pm
Where: 9 Donlin Rd, Pukerua Bay
Contact: Murray or Julie Kilpatrick, (04)239 995, julmur@paradise.net.nz

Wairarapa Folk Club

When: 2nd Friday of month
Contact: Remco de Ket, or Jenny Fremantle 06 370 1021. Email wairarapafolkclub@paradise.net.nz

Wellington Bluegrass Society

When: 3rd Friday of month, 8.30 pm
Where: 54 Richmond Street, Petone
Contact: Andrew Bicknell, (04)477 0069, bluegrass@paradise.net.nz
www.huttcity.com/wellingtonbluegrass
www.myspace.com/thebluegrassclub

Welsh Dragon Unaccompanied Singing Session

When: Every Tuesday from 8pm
Where: Welsh Dragon Bar, Courtenay Place
Contact: Dave Barnes www.myspace.com/davidbarnesn/

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