

# SONGSPEAK

Songwriters Composers and Lyricists Association Inc Newsletter

#140 December 2020



Inside:

President's Report

FOOM 2020

Reviews and articles



# SONGSPEAK

## THE EDITOR'S BIT

Popping from one of my letters a few days ago was a flyer from a local (very optimistic!) wine wholesaler. Its main graphic featured a pool ball, number 8, big and black... I got the message, just as the rest of the world has been doing for months now, and - in many cases, sadly - for months to come.

All the more reason to keep singing and writing and making your music, say I. SCALA has had the objective of encouraging this for over 30 years, and our newsletter is intended to assist in that noble ideal.

If I may therefore draw your attention to Thursday December 17th, those attending the Wheatshaf Hotel then will be pleasantly surprised. There'll be a presentation of the Robert and Jane Childs Award, where our founding members have been asked to nominate a singer/songwriter they wish to acknowledge for excellence in the writing /music field. Who is this to be? I have this (metaphorical!) cat in bag, but won't let it out... Be there to see and celebrate!

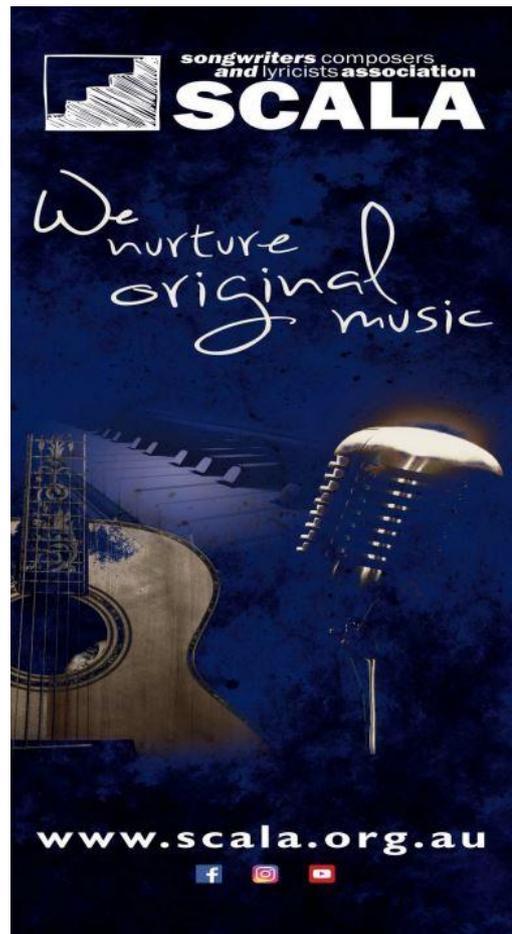
Now that – for the foreseeable future at least – SA has eased pandemic restrictions, it's great to see several SCALA members taking their songs and music out a little. For example, a few nice folks helped the Hills Circle of Friends in a fundraiser at Littlehampton recently; others are to play in another good cause at the beautiful Sinclair Gully Winery on Dec 13th.

Before signing off, I wish to say thanks and farewell on SCALA's behalf to some Board people taking time off to tackle other tasks needing attention. Many, many thanks to Marta Bayly, Rowey Garcia, Ronnie Taheny and Ali Thorstenstein. These SCALA Board members have, mostly over several years,

been instrumental in web design and maintenance, email updates, graphics, liaising with various companies in FOOM and membership, booking performers, etc ,etc... 'You get the picture?' as the song goes! All the best, and see you in song mode somewhere soon!

A warm welcome to new 'Boardies' who kindly accepted nomination at the October AGM: Sue Baker, Marie Brazier, Hayden Coonan and Donald McRobbie. Best wishes to you in your work for SCALA.

– *Geoff Hastwell, Editor*



## PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2020

### *An abridged version of the Report given at SCALA's AGM in October*

Along with the rest of the world, SCALA has experienced a challenging year. With covid-imposed lockdowns, many SCALA activities were curtailed or stopped, our Showcases included.

Now things appear almost back to normal, though covid-safety rules remain at our host venue, the Wheatsheaf Hotel. Fortunately, this year's FOOM wasn't too badly affected by the 'new normal', and again ran smoothly and happily. (See report in this newsletter.) SCALA is most grateful to Patrick Stapleton, whose innovative live stream of FOOM heats and final is available on computer.

We continue to build an impressive catalogue of live music, in both audio and video. Ideally, a digital archive could be developed, but this would require much know-how and ongoing maintenance. (Every time I nostalgically remember the 'CD era', I also think about those boxes of CDs taking up scarce space in my shed!)

SCALA extends deep gratitude to retiring Board members Marta Bayly and Rowey Garcia. Kindly, Marta is continuing her oversight of the SCALA membership base with Love Admin. and Rowey, despite her busy graphic design business, may still be able to help SCALA with website support.

Our 'Melbourne Refugees', Josh Hibovesky and Ali Thorsteinsen, are invaluable Board helpers - Ali in her liaison with the Wheaty, and Josh for his superb photography of SCALA activities. (Examples in this very newsletter - ed.) He's been seen approaching unsuspecting audiences with the 'SCALA Steps' box, seeking spare cash in these days of 'plastic money'...

Emma Grieger has been wonderful with FOOM organising and management, and Alex Black ensures SCALA is well abreast of events locally and further afield, putting some hard yards organising the annual Thebartonia at the Wheaty. To me, it's crazy for any group to consider it 'the go' to be administered only by an older demographic. Emma and Alex demonstrate clearly why this should never be the case.

I thank Greg Wright, SCALA Secretary, for keeping us up to speed – if not for him, none of us would know what we were doing or things we're supposed to be doing next! And then there's his ongoing and major work with FOOM!

Jack Moore, SCALA Treasurer, gives sterling service in managing our finances. He knows where SCALA's money is and always offers good advice on how it can be used in SCALA's best interests. Moreover, Jack can often be seen greeting patrons at the Wheaty as affable 'door patrol'.

Paula Standing has worked quietly and efficiently to make sure all performers are organised, re-arranges bookings when crises arise, liaises with the Wheaty and is just a dependable, no-fuss member.

Geoff Hastwell keeps SCALA workshops and open mics going at the Box Factory and gets the word out about SCALA with newsletters and on his travels around and (when permitted!) beyond SA!

Late breaking news – at a recent meeting with the Wheatsheaf management, Paula and I were informed that SCALA is welcome back in 2021! The hotel is pleased with numbers each fortnight and considers SCALA's ideas for the venue creative and worth supporting.

Looking to the year ahead, we simply hope for a better one, so SCALA can continue its mission in a world moving far beyond the flabbergasting events of 2020.

– **Simon Molloy, SCALA President**

Thanks to contributors to this edition:

Ali Ayliffe  
Marie Brazier  
Emma Grieger  
Geoff Hastwell  
Josh Hibovesky  
Adrienne Lovelock  
Simon Molloy  
Harry Shulten  
Greg Wright

Layout and design: Adrienne Lovelock

## MUSIC THAT THE LISTENING AUDIENCE MAY NOT OTHERWISE HEAR

*That's what ThreeD Radio and the Hoot are all about, says Ali Ayliffe*

Many of you will already be familiar with the Hoot, ThreeD's live to air, open air radio show which has been going to air on a Monday night for over 23 years. Its aims are very similar, and certainly fit well with those of SCALA.

ThreeD is a radio station whose purpose is to bring to South Australians progressive music that the listening audience may not otherwise get to hear. Its specific intention is to be an avenue, a forum for developing musicians as well as experienced ones to have their music played to the local audience. That is the basis upon which ThreeD gets its broadcast licence. ThreeD takes its commitment to bringing the music of South Australian artists to its listeners seriously.

The Hoot is one of ThreeD radio's two regular weekly live to air programmes. The other takes place in the studio on a Wednesday evening; ThreeD invites local bands and artists in to talk about their work and perform their music. The sound quality is managed by a team of people who ensure that the quality is excellent, and the artists can take with them a recording of the show. This show is called "Live from Studio Three"

The Hoot is quite different, and offers a different opportunity for local artists. It is also live to air and may resemble an open mic but there are important differences.

It is not by invitation or booking. People who wish to participate simply turn up on the night. The Hoot takes place in a public park (Linde Reserve) over the road from the radio station. Open air. Audience members bring picnic rugs to sit on. Performers just turn up, bringing their instruments with them and a song they have prepared to sing.

The radio show starts at 8 pm, but from about 7.30 onwards there will be a ThreeD announcer collecting names of people who would like to perform. The announcer then emcees the show and determines the order of performance.

Performers often join in on one another's songs if the chords are familiar, or form a backing group to make it even better.

Everybody is welcome to come, put their name down and perform at the Hoot. There are no auditions but there are some expectations in the interest of making a good radio show.

While covers of other people's songs are permitted, we encourage performers who perform their original songs, as this is what ThreeD is about. Variety of genre, texture in the instruments used and the songs themselves, all those things make for good radio.

There are skilled musicians who regularly attend, and who often support the newcomer if the idea of live radio is a bit daunting at first. Just ask.



*Photo credit: Ian Fisk*

## NEW CD BY JACK ROBINS – 'NOTES'

*Reviewed by Geoff Hastwell*

Most readers of this review will be interested in song writing, and/or making music to accompany lyrics. All right then, to adapt Mr Cohen, please accept 'my word on this, or none of it is true': you simply must obtain a copy of 'Notes' as soon as you possibly can!

If that strikes you as peremptory, so be it ...

But every one of these ten tracks, with the quality musicians and mastering that accompany Jack Robins' lyrics and vocals, may provide a singer-songwriter with enough inspiration to help her/him take their songs to a new and much higher level...

No, I'm not in advertising and have no financial stake in writing this!

And if - possibly at gunpoint - I were asked to suggest a genre 'label' for these songs, I'd say 'Southern Gothic', along the lines of T. Williams, C. McCullers or T. Letts. (Feel free to look details up...)

A few credits, as listed on the beautifully understated cover of 'Notes': recording and mastering by Dave Lokan at Big Sound Studios; lyrics, vocals, guitars, electric bass and banjo - A. J. Robins; drums - Andy Pryzgonsky; double bass - Stephen Loss; fiddle - Emma Luker; pedal steel guitar - Greg Blanch.

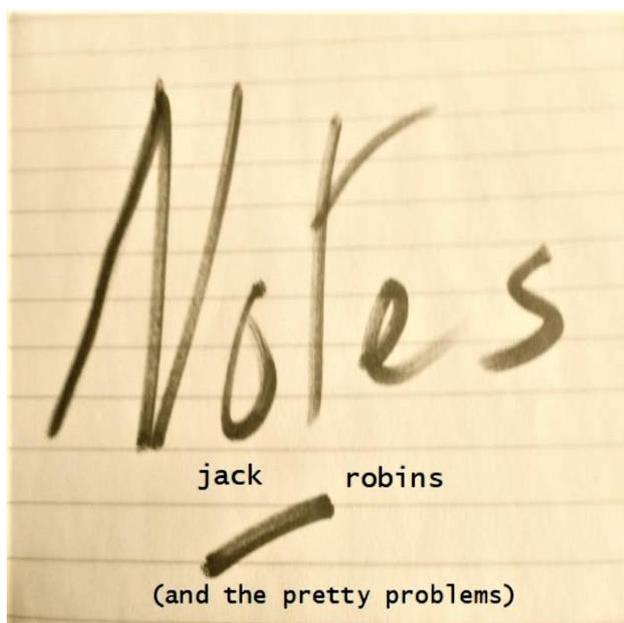


Image from <https://jackrobins.bandcamp.com>

To state that 'Notes' has a 'country influence' is correct; to anyone asking if this means the CD is filled with standard country licks and lyrics, I'd respond, clearly and loudly - NO!

Mostly without exception, the songs here go way past safe and sound, and take us into territory that commercial music may not be aware of, and - if it were - would go a million miles out of its way to avoid. But Jack is a clever operator. An unwary person about to play 'Notes' (or pull it down from 'the cloud!') would observe the opening song is entitled *The Wandering Kind*, and prepare for a sentimental ode to one more 'ramblin' man'... This impression would be supported by images like 'tearing me apart' and sweet fiddle and pedal-steel work. But it's not that simple at all, as we're given the core dilemma for the protagonists when the narrator finally laments - 'I'm crazy if I leave, but dying if I stay...' Yes!

*Walking On* might seem a natural progression, but now Jack really wants us to stop and think - and dare I say, feel. His narrator is looking back on a life not always lived wisely or well, and regretting how he's opted to simply run away when sadness or problems entered. The grief and self-pity are made visceral with the fiddle, snare drum and guitars, and also by Jack's true, strong tenor.

Then, a strange title indeed - *Mr Hard Eye*. Owing more than a little to the late John Prine, music-wise, a darker lyric cuts through jaunty fiddle and banjo when minor-key sections point to insanity and possible incest in a family. For a brother, an aunt and uncle, a grandmother and a mother and father who 'saw the lights die', mental equilibrium too often 'comes and goes...'

With *If*, Jack has his accelerator on the boards, if not through them! The narrator claims he doesn't care a jot about a certain person, while every beat and syllable and image of the song communicate the exact opposite! ... Word play, strong rhyme and anguish make this a stand-out song on a stand-out album. Not so much country here as blues. And the delivery of that last line... Ah yes, the narrator misses a certain lady very, very much!

The dark thread (did you look up 'Southern Gothic'?) continues in *Love at Home*. Many years ago, Suzanne Vega gave us *Luka*, well

... *continued from previous page*

before child abuse was in headlines. Jack Robins takes up the theme with insight and compassion in this song. I won't - for a change! - risk giving too much away, but must praise a brilliant use of double-meaning in lines such as 'I know they meant no harm' and 'darkness only ends in light' ...

Clever wordplay and beautiful music continue through *Neatly, Gently, Sweetly*. The beguiling 3/4 time-signature and pedal-steel might tempt one to dance, but hang on a sec - this is a Robins lyric! No surprise then, that the love in question has a bleaker side, and from both the man's and the woman's perspective, it's so susceptible to decay.

Thank goodness then (!) for *Cheating Moon*, possibly an easier song to access. At gigs, Jack jocularly introduces it by admitting his fear that the title must surely have been used by another writer - then adds, wryly, that all his research on the matter has yet to produce an example! But this unashamedly country-based lyric and melody, in Mr Robins' deft control, takes us well beyond C&W cliches. 'Don't tell me your lies tonight' is aimed at both the moon and the lover.

It's a very creepy landscape we enter with *The Pink Crimplene Gown*. (You *still* haven't looked up 'Southern Gothic...?!') I won't say anything at all about the story, but simply point out the inescapable fact that human beings can be very complex and very deadly when they run off the rails... (Rubbish, you say, while the daily news is saturated with reports of our own soldiers' actions in a far-off country...) As for a pedal steel guitar, played well, being able to elicit strong emotion - please use this song as a fine example!

*In a Letter* is short, sharp and eviscerating in its bitterness. Again, riding on that lively fiddle work, the content is deceptively conveyed. The narrator is going to need more than a little time to recover from a break-up, as the chorus reiterates: 'You said I should know better - you wrote that in a letter' Simple, but an earworm that neither listener nor narrator can let go easily.

The last song on 'Notes' is, for me, its most mystifying. However, *This Will Pass Over* is perhaps in need of a rethink on mix, as - even with volume and tone adjustments - I found it difficult to catch every word easily. There is a deep sadness evident in its setting - a small, hot desert town; in the characters - at least

one is given some substance to alleviate pain; and in the chorus - is it ironic or sincere in predicting 'this will pass over, one fine day...'? And that brilliant fiddle - memories of Ms Rivera on 'Desire' came flooding in for this reviewer.

So, dear singer/musician/reader, all I need to do in winding up is repeat my plea from the opening para - be sure to beg, buy or borrow a copy of Jack Robins' 'Notes', soon!



Photo credit: Helen Lewis



## SCALA FESTIVAL OF ORIGINAL MUSIC (FOOM) 2020

- *Greg Wright and Emma Grieger*

FOOM has been held annually since the competition first ran in 1994. That's around 100 live heats conducted over 27 years, and thousands of songs submitted across various categories. It is quite an achievement! But this covid year presented a huge challenge in organising the contest, particularly our Live category. Audience restrictions were lifted just in time for the Live heats to go ahead in August.

Due to limited numbers and earlier closing times at The Wheatsheaf Hotel under covid rules, four heats were run with a maximum of 12 songs each, and we commenced performances at 7:30pm. Live streaming of heats (except #1) and the Finals was facilitated by the talented Patrick Stapleton. A big shout out to him from the SCALA team!

SCALA again used SongCentral for collection of all category entries, distribution to judges, and collection of feedback and sending on to the songwriters. A huge task and we thank Sue Duchesne on a very smooth operation for this year's competition.

Entry numbers were on par with previous years, although there was a concerning drop in female entries for the Live category, something we need to think about when promoting next year's competition.

The full list of FOOM winners across all categories is listed here.



*SCALA sponsor - home of  
'SCALA Live at the Wheaty'*

### Winners and Highly Commended

*Songspeak* takes great pleasure in publishing the winners and highly commended entrants in FOOM 2020. Note the word 'Festival' in this comp title, emphasising SCALA's aim to celebrate original songs above the hyping of music in an 'industry' sense.

I know at least one entrant listed here has never sung in public and had no thought of entering any contest until this FOOM. Not bad!

#### LIVE

##### Winners

Lucas Day - 'End of the Day'

Dieter Horvath - 'Christmas (on Wednesday)'

Frank Ferguson - 'Pull it Together'

##### Highly Commended

Jamie Newton - 'Normal Man'

Nick West - 'Too Far for Me' (and *People's Choice* winner!)

#### RECORDED

##### Winners

Larissa Lock - 'Black & White'

Allan Crew and Charles Edwards - 'It Can Only Be the First Time Once'

Larissa Lock and Josh Rogers - 'Moonlight'

##### Highly Commended

Michal Bundac - 'D'Arcy's Hips'

George Begbie - 'Home'

Sunitra Martinelli - 'If I Was a Man' and 'When I Was Young'

Allan Crew - 'Who We Are' and 'Not the Only One'

Larissa Lock and Josh Rogers - 'Tunnel Vision'

#### INSTRUMENTAL

##### Winner

Donald McRobbie - 'Rocket Science in the Rain'

... continued from previous page

**Highly Commended**

Tony McCall - 'Baba Went Walking'  
Emma Knights - 'Song for Cocoa'

**LYRICS**

**Winner**

Marie Brazier - 'Ghost (I'm a Refugee)'

**Highly Commended**

Tony McCall - 'Death Unwinds You'  
Cait Barrett - 'Why, Lord. Why?'

**ALDO ZOTTI ZANY LYRIC AWARD**

**Winner**

Simon Molloy – Left-handed Guitar



Frank Ferguson, Dieter Horvath, Nick West, Lucas Day – Live Section winners and People's Choice winner

**Huge gratitude to our FOOM judges, who've again given SCALA and all involved their time and expertise without stint.**

**They are listed and thanked and acknowledged here:**

- Emily Bettinson
- Robert Dunstan
- Quentin Evers
- Bryan Foley
- Chiara Gabrielli
- Georgia Germein
- Sue Germein
- Robyn Habel
- Luke Harrald
- Alana Jagt
- Ashlee Karlar
- Simon Kither
- Jen Lush
- Tara Nash
- Derek Pascoe
- Luke Penman
- Courtney Robb
- Grayson Rotumah
- Corey Stewart
- Ronnie Taheny
- Deb Thorsten
- Anne Wiberg
- Cal Williams Jnr
- Mick Wordley
- Darren Zaza

**We are very thankful for Patrick Stapleton and Steven Hughes who live-streamed the Heats and the Grand Final this year as we had a restricted live audience limit.**



**Find us on Facebook and join the conversation:**

- ... News about upcoming SCALA events
- ... Connection to SCALA songwriting workshops
- ... Participation in the SCALA Songwriting Network

## LYRICS SECTION WINNING ENTRY:

### GHOST (I'M A REFUGEE) – Marie Brazier

*(Intro)*

Help me please I was some-one, had a place  
Held head up high, paid debts, a happy face  
So many like me, forced to flee, a cruel war  
A horror film could not show what we all saw

*(Verse 1)*

Left so fast I couldn't say goodbye  
Abused and accused that I was a spy  
Torn and crushed this shy young guy  
Keeps asking self why, why, why?

*(Chorus)*

Ghost, I'm a ghost, I must be a ghost  
Searching for a new place, a kind host  
Forced out of my home, now to roam, alone  
Left with nothing but these clothes and my phone

*(Verse 2)*

Like a ghost I move on where can I go?  
Subsist on scraps moving to and fro  
Told to go here, there, maybe it's safe  
Find fences, guns, no choice for this waif

*(Bridge)*

I once belonged and had a home where I could settle  
Yet all I see now is miles and miles of barbed wire  
metal

*(Verse 3)*

Where can I go, so to and fro, this fearful ghost?  
Looking for a new home, life, accepting host  
To belong, be safe, not locked in, hide away  
Want a place where I can live and have my say

*(Chorus)*

Ghost, I'm a ghost, I must be a ghost  
Searching for a new place, a kind host  
Forced out of my home, now to roam, alone  
Left with nothing but these clothes and my phone

*(Bridge)*

I once belonged and had a home where I could settle  
Yet all I see now is miles and miles of barbed wire  
metal



Find us at [www.scala.org.au](http://www.scala.org.au)



*SCALA sends sincere thanks to all our sponsors We appreciate your support!*



## JUDITH CROSSLEY MEMORIAL SONGWRITING AWARD 2020

During her life, Judith Crossley was a prolific songwriter – and always keen to encourage others to write. Her head and her shoulder bag were always full of ideas for songs, and if she thought she could bring an idea and a potential songwriter together, she would. “Here!” she’d say, pulling out a photocopied page, “You should write about this!”

The Award named in her honour is for a song written about South Australia in a style that suits acoustic performance. The finals are usually conducted at the Fleurieu Folk Festival held in late October.

This year, the Fleurieu Folk Festival was cancelled in response to the covid pandemic, along with countless other music festivals across the country. The Judith Crossley Award, however, went ahead – conducted entirely online.

As usual, entries were submitted electronically and 10 finalists were selected from the wider field. Those ten entries were then passed on to the 2020 judging panel – Jen Lush, Adrienne Piggott, and Steve Lennox, all well-respected songwriters on the Adelaide music scene.

The Judith Crossley Memorial Songwriting Award winner for 2020 is Paul Irving, for his song “Sweet Uraidla”, a spirited celebration of life in the Adelaide Hills, a well-crafted song with an ear-worm chorus.

The two runners-up were Kate Battersby (“Dingo”) and Michael O’Callaghan (“Port Willunga Skies”). Kate’s song takes the point of view of a farmer from rural SA for a challenging and insightful look at community perspectives. Michael’s song tells the story of an Aboriginal man born near Port Willunga who fought heroically in World War One but later died in obscurity.

The Judith Crossley Memorial Songwriting Award organisers thank SCALA for its support and its generous sponsorship.

– **Adrienne Lovelock**



2020 Judith Crossley Memorial Songwriting Award winner Paul Irving with Award convener Adrienne Lovelock at Fleurieu Folk Festival’s ‘Arvo on the Oval’ in October.

**SCALA is a global songwriting organisation dedicated to encouraging, supporting and nurturing songwriters, composers and lyric writers of any style or genre.**

**SCALA membership is open to anyone with an interest in songwriting, composition and lyric writing. If you join our growing songwriting community you will receive:**

- \* Free entry to ‘SCALA Live at the Wheaty’ fortnightly live music event\***
- \* Discounted entry fees for the annual Festival of Original Music (FOOM) song competition\***
- \* Regular event updates\***

***Which membership suits you? Individual – Concession – Band***

**Joining’s easy: just jump onto the website [www.scala.org.au](http://www.scala.org.au) and click on the link.**

## SOME THOUGHTS ON WRITING SONGS

### ***Geoff Hastwell looks back at a songwriting workshop presented by James Keelaghan.***

James who? you may be asking. Well, let's go back to a time long gone when our local folk music scene was alive and well, running events from its HQ on the corner of George St and South Rd., Thebarton. I attended several of these offerings, and had the pleasure of meeting Canadian singer-songwriter James Keelaghan, at the workshop he gave for the Folk Centre about ten years ago.

In that period of history, James was a hard travelling man with back-pack and guitar and a list of speaking and singing engagements in several countries. In the back-pack were his own songs, CD-based, to bolster the small income he made through singing songs and talking about writing songs.

Now of course, with the era of streaming platforms well and truly here, and many folks who somehow don't make it to a 'non-superstar' gig, people like James find it more difficult to make a living.

But what they write and what they sing can still, I believe, be of great help to anyone stepping onto the road of song. I'm very glad indeed that while on one of my rare tidy-ups recently, I came across the notes I'd scribbled at James' workshop, all those years ago.

### **Pressure ...**

... can be helpful, not harmful, said James early in his address. To elucidate a tad, he meant the pressure a songwriter brings to bear on her/himself. In aiming to produce a desired amount by a certain time/date, and keeping determinedly on task, more writing and better songs can occur. (I remember Francesca de Valence's challenge at her workshop in 2019, where she suggested we try a song per week for an entire year!)

### **Power Writing ...**

... is simply the ability to scrawl down ideas, riffs, images, titles onto your page/recording device to re-work and edit later. And if that shyest of beings, your Muse, enters and hovers near, don't waste a second. Get as many words and tunes down as fast as you can, knowing her next visit may not be for some time.

### **Injecting a Buzz ...**

... into a new song can be more than useful, said James. Why not consider an unusual rhythm segment or major to minor key change that almost startles a listener? The humble capo 'can be your best friend' stated our mentor, because it might help produce that earworm or song key which simply anchors an audience. When in song-writing mode and feeling stuck, deliberately play a verse super fast/slow, or sing it in a very high or very low key was a suggestion made...The result may not make it to the final version, but who knows...? The sheer 'light up' value of such experimenting should not be underestimated.

### **A Key to Write In ...**

... is perhaps not too crucial, felt James. He writes most of his songs in G, but of course, this is first draft only! Further work will help get the best key for a particular song. Our teacher gave a salient example in Irving Berlin, who composed the first draft of every song he wrote in C, with no flats or sharps at all!

### **Feedback ...**

... is important, James felt, but a writer/singer must judiciously select the person/s she/he will invite to supply it! Relatives and friends who may hold back for fear of giving hurt are not to be sought out; on the other hand, the critic who can only ever see negatives might be equally avoided.

### **Choruses and Bridges ...**

... are useful devices, but have different functions in a song, was James' view. Both, used well, grab a listener and take her/him into a song's essence. A bridge brings that little 'fillip' or break to a song, but a chorus has the extra task of hammering home the 'message'. Intelligent insertion of a lyric bridge or chorus can add much piquancy to a song; and if carried on an equally-judicious melodic shift, the device can be very helpful. 'Where Have All the Flowers Gone?' and 'Cat's in the Cradle' are excellent examples of *ironic* development of a chorus/refrain

### **Narrative Songs ...**

... are really a folk singer's 'bread and butter' in songwriting, stated James. He gave us an example with his ballad about a US 'smokejumper', or firefighter who parachutes into a fire-front to lay firebreaks!

*... continued from previous page*

This ballad moves through five distinct phases, felt its writer: 1. Establishing the main and secondary characters; 2. Showing the task and danger they will face; 3. Building the danger, and their fear as the fire takes an unexpected turn; 4. Desperate means of escape used by the one survivor; 5. Winding-up, 'falling action'.

### **Point of View ...**

... must be very carefully considered, James pointed out. He prefers the first person (through the subject's eyes, ears, voice) view over the third person (God-like narrator) view, as it offers freedom to build detail and character, develop drama that grabs, and is simply - for him - more satisfying to write.

### **Historical Touches ...**

... in any song are great, said James, and in the folk genre, absolutely vital. Yes - good research, apposite vocabulary and catching of a particular era are excellent, but even an effort to respect and echo music of the chosen period can help verisimilitude. How many of us know that 'Ashokan Farewell' was composed in the 1980s, not in the American Civil War period?

### **What's true; what's not?**

When your song 'goes out' to the world, it matters little if events depicted in it happened or not, averred James. Indeed, any writer discovering that his/her listeners believe the story depicted actually took place should feel chuffed. Many of Paul Kelly's songs hit this lofty standard, for example, the narrative (POV of young boy) about the family driving one night, the boy pretending to sleep but overhearing his parents going through 'an issue'. Lots of folks swear that the writer of 'Only 19' MUST have seen service in Vietnam, but they are wrong!

So it goes. One day, maybe I'll be lucky enough to run into James Keelaghan again. Till that time, I'll simply pass on SCALA's best wishes, and hope that the song-writing thoughts he presented so long ago might be of use to you now ...

## **'MR HARRY' REMEMBERS ...**

### ***Harry Shulten and the Ed chat***

Nineteen Sixty Four was the year that three of the 'Fab Four' came to Adelaide. Harry ('Mr Harry') Shulten, living in the northern 'burbs a long way from Centennial Hall, was then a stripling of ten and thus may not have been entirely responsible for his parents' choice of Chrissy gifts that year.

However, Harry and his young brother received a small guitar each, a significant event, Wryly, Mr H recalls that these weren't exactly Gretches, but "the cheapest of instruments, to the point of being unplayable..." Yet play 'em the Shulten brothers did, even foregoing after school TV, including 'The Three Stooges', to practise!

At the nearby Elizabeth South church hall the boys started music lessons, led by a nice old gent who was "never seen with a guitar but knew a bit from his orchestra work." Every pupil was encouraged by their teacher, but the poor man could not quite convey the message that the sheet music distributed was meant to be paid for by the parents...

It was perhaps inevitable that the Shulten boys would be invited (dragooned?!) to present a spot at their end of year primary school concert. It was November, 1965, and the whole country was in the throes of preparing for the change to decimal currency in the New Year. The rollicking folk song, 'Click Go the Shears' had been tweaked by government decree with new lyrics to help inculcate the message. Harry and his brother had learned and rehearsed the song and were happily belting it out at the concert. It was going beautifully, but then, for reasons long-forgotten, the singers were overtaken by a fit of the giggles. It was a big fit. Naturally, the boys anticipated such self-indulgence would not please their audience. They were wrong. Even as the duo made a mirth-filled exit, thunderous applause filled the auditorium. The Shulten brothers were stunned, but also enthralled. As cliché has it - that night was the start of something big...

*(to be continued.)*

***SCALA was formed on 22 November 1987. Since then, it has run continuously as a not-for-profit volunteer-based organisation nurturing songwriting and songwriters.***