

# SOUND AS EVER

A Celebration of the Greatest Decade  
in Australian Music (1990-1999)

by Jane Gazzo and Andrew P Street

The decade was turning and we could sniff the winds of change. It wasn't a great smell if you were standing anywhere towards the back of the Hopetoun.

– Wayne Connolly

The '90s was a magical time for Australian music. Record labels had money to spend, the Big Day Out and Triple J went national and suddenly everyone was getting a 3-piece together and gigging in the inner-city pubs of their town.

*Sound as Ever* is a celebration and a documentation of this fertile period with never-before-seen photos and archives from the time and never before told stories about the songs, bands, festivals and break-ups from the artists and industry folk who were there.

The book features contributions from Tim Rogers (You Am I), Adalita (Magic Dirt), Angie Hart (Frente), David McCormack (Custard), Kram (Spiderbait), Richie Lewis (Tumbleweed), Ray Ahn (Hard-Ons), Suzie Higgie (Falling Joys) plus many more as well as details behind some of the biggest indie hits of the decade, *Sound as Ever* is a must-have for every Australian music fan.

*Sound As Ever* is named after the eponymous Facebook Group co-founded by Jane Gazzo that is a very dynamic space with over 18,000 members.

Australian music sounds like freedom.  
Freedom to create and express in any way  
we want to.

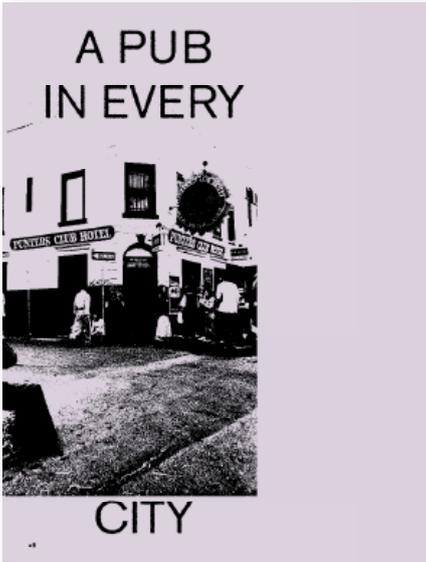
– Rebecca Barnard



## The Authors

**Jane Gazzo** is a music journalist, broadcaster, author and self-confessed music hoarder. She began her radio career on 3RRR-FM in the early '90s. Since then, she has presented nationally on Triple J and MMM as well as XFM London, Capital FM London and BBC Radio 6 in the UK and has hosted music television shows such as *The Sound and Recovery* on ABC TV. She once worked for Courtney Love as her PA, whereby she lasted two weeks. She has never worked as a PA since. Jane is co-founder of the *Sound as Ever* facebook group – a place which celebrates and documents Australian music from the '90s. Her first book was *John Farnham: The Untold Story* and this is her second.

**Andrew P Street** is a journalist, columnist, broadcaster, occasional DJ, author of three books, and failed indie rock superstar. He spent the '90s and '00s in the Undecided and Career Girls while falling into editorial roles at *dB Magazine*, *The Drum Media* and *Time Out Sydney*, and has written for *Rolling Stone*, *NME*, *Australian Guitar*, *Blunt*, the *Guardian*, the *Australian*, and pretty much every other physical and online publication with a freelance budget. He still wishes he said something far more clever to David Bowie the one time he met him. His previous books include: *The Long and Winding Way to the Top: Fifty (or so) songs that made Australia*.



MELBOURNE: THE PUNTERS CLUB

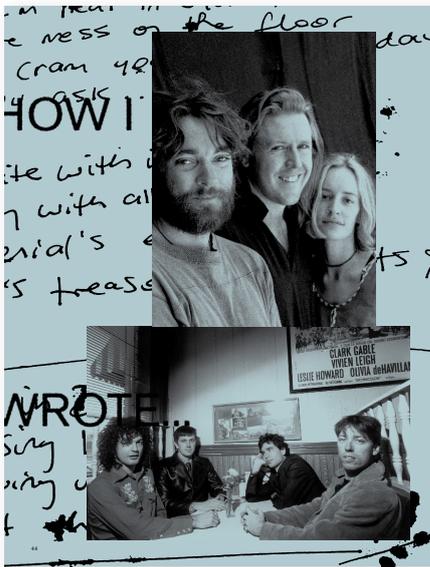
I ONCE DESCRIBED THE BOB MARLYN SCHEME AS JOINING THE CIRCUS BUT YOU GOT TO SLEEP IN YOUR OWN BED.

*By Tony Mott*

It was a long time ago, in the early 1970s, that I was living in Melbourne and working as a journalist. I was writing about the music scene and the Punters Club was a big part of that. It was a place where you could go to see the best of the local scene and it was a real treat. I remember going there every week and seeing the bands that were making a name for themselves. It was a real buzz and it was a great time. I was lucky to be there and to see it all from the inside. It was a real privilege and I was grateful for it. I hope you enjoy reading about it as much as I did.



Opposite: The Punters Club in Melbourne, 1970s. Photo by Tony Mott.



**HEY HE A DORY**  
(EPISODE 1, 1991)  
BY KEAN  
PHOTO: TONY MOTT

We were very young and very unsure when we were being courted by all the major record labels in the mid-80s. Everything we as a band were feeling at the time was captured in that song. My cynicism and sense of being part of a budding war was having me ask questions such as, 'Is this what I have always wanted?'

But I'm happy to say that it is and we are still with the same label which is kind of funny that they put that song out, kinda begging our record companies.

I did take a break on that song. I forced everyone to agree to make it the first single from *Hey and the Big Apple* because I just had a feeling about it. It was so different to anything I'd written before and really made me think about my songwriting.

I'm so proud of it and I'm even more proud to have written the first Australian song to top the *Hotchart 100*.

**APARTMENT**  
(EPISODE 1, 1991)  
BY DAVID MCCORMACK  
PHOTO: IAN MCCORMACK COLLECTION

We were sound checking at the Public Bar in Melbourne for a New Year's Eve gig during the 1994-95 season. There always comes a dead spot in any nightclub where everybody just looks at each other and wonders what to do next.

In a moment of panic, I remembered I had been working on a little guitar riff that sounded a bit like 'Hard to Through the Caspian' by *Creedence*. I played it to the band and within a few minutes we had the basic verse section worked out. We were ready for *The Future* album. *The Young Men of Discipline* which had just come out. The way they had these great riffs that dropped down here and there was just so exciting. So, we just copied that idea for the middle bit of *Apartment*. Just for good measure, *Cherry Plant* started doing all these amazing drum fills at the end of the song. *Arrangement done*.

I don't think I had any lyrics worked out for it until we were in the studio with producer *Chris Dinn*. *Paterson* couldn't get a line happening by singing/improvising all the verses in one go, so *EDF* suggested we do it line by line, phrase by phrase. Sometimes, that made it come together a little bit more.

I was obsessed with *Pete Dinklage* at the time so I was doing my best to sound like *David Thomas*. Particularly his vocal on 'Henry' from *Club Footing* and 'One Less Worried' from *New Plastic Time*.

Also in the mix there is *Cherry Plant* doing his best comical impression of the line alone (heard in *The Baddest*) 'Everybody's Got Something to Hide Except For Me And My Monkey'.



THE BIG DAY OUT



Opposite: Wash diving from the Machinery Square Bridge, Melbourne during Melbourne's Big Day Out (1990) Photo by Andrew Lipari.

Above: Big Day Out, Melbourne 1990 by Stephen Schwartz.

The Big Day Out was undoubtedly a rite of passage for the youth of Australia. Headlined by some of the biggest names in music, it was a day out in the sun with best mates and an introduction to mind-blowing shows and life changing experiences.

For the people who created it, it was a wild ride of legendary line-ups, temperamental artists and backstage shenanigans.

We'd never experienced anything like it before. In the 80s, 'music festivals' were pretty tame affairs—four or five bands on stage and a couple of 'pie and chips' food trucks. The Big Day Out changed all that by tapping into the emerging 'youth culture' with skate ramps, cabaret and improv stages, market stalls, the boiler room (where dance and electronic music was embraced) and international food fairs. It was a lifestyle celebration on steroids!

The first festival was held in Sydney in 1992, headlined by the *Violent Femmes* and *Nirvana* and went national the following year. At the same time, youth broadcaster *Triple J* was expanding its reach, connecting rural and regional kids to the cities and making local artists household names. For the first time in a long time, homegrown talent was considered on par with overseas acts and Australian music was king.

sample pages from *Sound As Ever*

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