

Cobargo Folk Festival 2008 Press Release

This is the Thirteenth Year of the **Cobargo Folk Festival** and organisers have arranged one of the most extensive programs in the festivals history.

Over 200 performers will converge on the **Cobargo Showground** in the last weekend in February and provide a pageant of Australian and international talent

The festival is often themed around a musical instrument or type of music, this year has been declared the “**Year of the Laugh**”, looking at the brighter side of Aussie humour in music and spoken word.

A special Comedy Concert on Saturday afternoon will feature the zany comedians **Alan Glover and S Sorrenson** introducing a line-up including John Dengate, **Bernard Bolan**, the satirical public service group **The Shiny Bum Singers**, and **Mal Webb** of vocal acrobatic fame.

This festival is renowned as a unique, highly entertaining escape into the joys of music poetry humour and dance and participation is encouraged in workshops, sing-alongs, dances, poetry recitals, blackboard concerts and spontaneous sessions around the bar.

One of the star attractions this year is the US folk icon **Peggy Seeger**, of whom the famous Billboard Magazine says: “For decades Seeger has been one of the most authoritative voices in American and English Folk... “ While she is acknowledged as an esteemed interpreter of traditional material and a gifted instrumentalist, she is perhaps best known for her observant and caustic original songs about women”. Peggy has been writing songs since 1959, saying that it helps her to live in the present and is a way of trying to effect change and look anew at the same old problems of poverty, violence, apathy and discrimination.

Our own Australian diva, **Judy Small**, enjoyed herself so much last year she is happy to return and treat us to her own gutsy songs of politics, people, peace, fun, and love. **Judy** is one of Australia’s most respected and best-loved performers. As a teenager she was inspired by the big-voiced women singers who sang about real social issues. After more than 30 years in the music business with her own powerful style, she has joined the ranks of internationally iconic female performers.

From Western Australia comes **Marcus Sturrock**, a wizard multi-instrumentalist with a unique seven steel string acoustic guitar with inbuilt custom acoustic drums. He will join some other brilliant guitarists including **Damien Neil** from Victoria, **Trevor Dunham** from Canberra, and our local genius, **Damon Davies** in the “Glorious Guitars” on Sunday.

Festival goers are advised not to miss the wild gypsy music of **Vardos**. With stagecraft that is equal parts formation dancing, martial arts and Keystone Cops, the violin-accordion-double bass trio play with formidable panache. Based in Melbourne, **Vardos** regularly make trips to Eastern Europe to study with folk and Rroma (gypsy) musicians and have toured New Caledonia, New Zealand, Hungary, Switzerland, the Edinburgh Fringe and recently the Folk Alliance Conference Showcase in Memphis Tennessee.

A new special group for the festival is “**Beautifully Mad**” featuring the virtuosic guitar of Tony King, the honey-like voice of Kris Ralph and the infectious drive of Damon Davies upright bass. The international travellers **Cloudstreet** (John Thompson, guitar and Nicole Murray, Irish flute) breathe new life into the great songs of the Australian, English and Celtic tradition with their superb voices and harmonies.

Traditional Scottish and Irish songs are the specialty of **Braemar**. The crystal clear voice of Eddie Lewis and some of the best harmonic singing in this country will tingle a few spines. **Bluegrass** enthusiasts have not been forgotten. **Sam Martin** is organising some of the best exponents around into what he modestly describes as an Extravaganza which will include John Taylor and Donald Baylor.

High energy Cajun and Zydeco music played in a party atmosphere is a feature of the popular group **Allez-Gator**. While the **Wild Martins** present original music lyrics and instrumentals of Peter Wild and Sam Martin with a few cheeky western swing numbers thrown in.

A major event of the festival is the special workshop presentation of a **Carter Family Tribute** by **The Apple Pleasant String Band**. Bob Hart and Eric Johns (The Silver Strings) are joined by their friends Julie Barnes, Brian Killie and Ian Hobba in this tribute to the “Parents of Country Music” AP, Sara and Maybelle Carter who recorded as The Carter Family from 1926 to 1943. The performance will be a selection of their many songs and a short history of their lives and works. There are seven venues operating simultaneously in the showground with continuous concerts, performances, dance displays, choirs, workshops and instrument forums. There are intimate blackboard concerts and sessions and a separate venue, **The Bunyip**, for the kids who have their own program of entertainment.

The Crossing Youth Music Expo is a venue run by and totally dedicated to outstanding youth talent. Aspiring young performers will be able to attend workshops and learn stage performance and production skills

A full program of dance will be held at the “**Brolga**” venue, featuring displays, workshops and participation in contra dancing and bush dancing.

The **Voices Theatre** is a venue mostly dedicated to choral presentations or special dramatic workshops. Some of this years acts include **Ecopella**, The **Tathra Womens Choir**, **Mandala**, John and Dale Dengate’s, **Family Fun Fears and Frivolity** and a special concert on Saturday by the **Bega Chamber Orchestra** conducted by Geoffrey Badger.

At the showground the facilities include exotic food-stalls a bar and refreshment area, craft and market stalls and a Festival Shop where you can buy performers CDs, magazines, souvenir T Shirts and pottery mugs.

Excellent on-site camping is available for full weekend ticket-holders, with some powered sites. Hot and cold showers are available; the total camping fee being a flat rate of \$15 per person for the weekend.

As usual the festival is proud to present an amazing array of local talent. **Eclectic Kitchen** perform their special musical odyssey “**the Hunting of the Snark**,” an original musical interpretation Jim of Lewis Carroll’s fantastical sea-faring poem composed by David Harris. **Jim Lay** is contributing with **Cobargo Bounce** and the male vocal group **The Mumbulla Dabs** and **Arati George** presents the **Tathra Womens Choir** and **Mandala**

A late night **Jazz Session** proved popular last year and this year has attracted some new groups **Alpha Rhythm** and **Local and Vocal** featuring Charlotte Lyngbye, Robyn Martin, Mark Bolsius, Sam Martin, Michael Menager , David Harris, John Marshal and Peter Wild who will no doubt be joined in sessions by other musicians attending the festival.

A special guest spot by **SONIA & disappear fear** - grammy nominated SONiA has performed at bomb shelters in Israel and at Festivals around the world. Wherever she performs she sings with passion and conviction.

AND one or two surprises in store.

For a detailed program and more details check out the website www.cobargofolkfestival.com.

The Festival is a not for profit incorporated organisation and is run entirely by volunteers.

Graeme Fryer
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Special Presentations

1. Tribute to the Carter Family - The Apple Pleasant Band
2. Family, Fear and Frivolity - Dale and John Dengate and friends
3. Nuclear- No Thank You - With Margaret Walters