

Popular Music Culture

in

Southern Tasmania

1950-85

The State Library of Tasmania

Special Collection Project 2007

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Social Historian, Musician & Musicologist ©

2008, 2018

The formal collection of popular music cultural material in Tasmania – by Tasmanian institutions – has barely begun. While mainland collections and musicologists including John Meredith – have recorded local Tasmania music, little has been done until recently to add to the archives.

With the recent deaths of local musicians Ian Young, Ray Woodruff and Mark Pickering- and this week (November 2010) that of his brother, Roger Pickering - the need to collect memorabilia has become urgent. At present there is no southern institution that systematically collects music or memorabilia, nor has the facilities to allow enthusiasts or researchers to access music in sound booths etc.

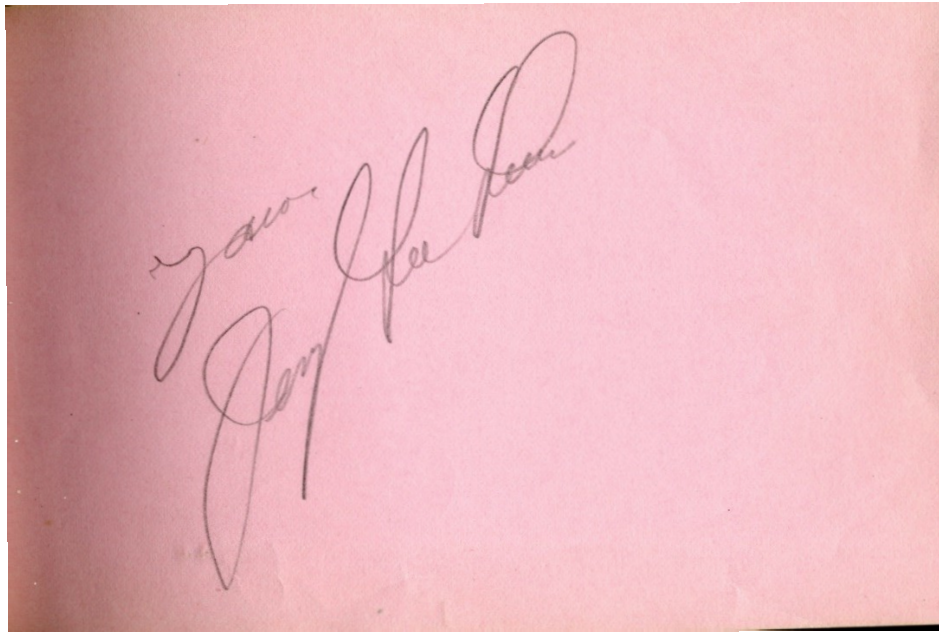
This vacuum was the motive in putting forward the idea of such a project to the State Library of Tasmania's then Tasmaniana Library through Tony Marshall. This was unusual, as most library grants are for the study of existing holdings. The 3 months part time project showed the need for field-work collectors, as in that time I barely touched the surface, but raised the interest and hopes of many current and former musicians - and fans. In concentrated on Rock and Folk music, but, due to time constraints, I didn't venture into country or original Tasmanian folk music, but believe that field should also be looked at, although local enthusiasts are doing so privately.

The collection came in varied formats- as you will see, which require differing conservation and storage approaches, and also raises questions of accessibility, copyright and other issues with which you are all familiar. Documenting and itemising – and returning the items- has been a painstaking process - which is worth a paper in itself!

POPULAR MUSIC, SOUTHERN TASMANIA POST 1950

Tasmania – even Van Diemen's Land - had a strong musical culture- both visible and less tangible, in the form of convict and other working class musicians. In the 20thC and especially post World War II, there has been a vibrant musical culture. While formal music based on the European classical tradition has always been visible and documented, much less so is the popular music of the day. Popular music post-1950 grew despite bemusement, and in some cases, straight out parental denial. In Tasmania, and probably throughout the western world, this was driven by the younger generation, attracted by the less formal approach to popular music typified by black American jazz, and even the European cabaret and music hall traditions. In Tasmania, regional differences existed via radio, with some artists being popular in Launceston and not in Hobart and vice-versa. However, the first visible change here was the arrival of rock 'n' roll on radio stations.

Jerry Lee. The energy in the music was an antidote to a stifling post war education system and parental pressure, and in stark contrast to the popular music beginning to be heard on local radio. Initially only 15 minutes a day on 7HT- then back to Doris Day and Vic Damone. Even more energising were touring acts from the USA which made such a big impact, including Jerry Lee Lewis, whose autograph I collected backstage at the Hobart City Hall in 1959 - starting a love of live, energised music.



"Yours, Jerry Lee Lewis" Hobart City Hall, 1959 (Peter MacFie Autograph Book)

Paul Shirley's Life in Music. In the 1950s and 60s, Tasmania was in the schedule of Mainland touring parties. These include the Lee Gordon Big Shows, with headline acts such as Jerry Lee Lewis, and Johnny Cash, but whose opening acts were Australian (Johnny O'Keefe) and Tasmanian performers, such as Paul Shirley. Now retired south of Hobart, Paul became a mainstay in the Hobart music entertainment industry, both as a performer and businessman, eventually becoming manager of Allan's Record bar and finally 7HO - Channel 6.



Paul Shirley, entertainer, Hobart, Malaysia, Hobart 1956 – 1980 (Paul Shirley)

Posters. Publicity was also home-made - leading to enterprising promotional campaigns and posters, such as this one for the Silhouettes (hand-painted by band-member, sign-writer, long serving Hobart musician, - and former school mate - Terry Lane.



Silhouettes loth banner, Ranelagh Dance 1962 (Donated by Tony Lefevre)

Band. Hobart developed at least 2 distinct suburban styles. The Moonah style was working class, home-grown, based on self-help.



Greg Ferris & The Tasmens in action

Vest. This extended to copying their instruments and dress - down to the home-made vests, part of a uniform worn by each of the *Silhouettes*, a *Shadows*-style band, based on that British pop group.



Silhouettes Vest 1961

Backyard Bass. At first, electric guitars were too expensive for local lads – and electric basses unavailable, so home-made was the order of the day- usually copied off groups' record covers.



Back yard bass guitar, Moonah 1961

Night Clubs. *The Spook Club*, the first and longest running teenage dance club in Moonah, opened in 1961, later known as the *Blue Moon* and *Humpty's*. Others were the *Stork Club*. In addition church youth groups and sports clubs also ran dances - theoretically dry due to the 21 years drinking age.



Spook Club, Moonah, c1963

The Beat Preachers - Port Arthur 1964. A middle class band that grew from class mates at Friends School. After initially copying the *Shadows*, like other bands, they came under the influence of other black American copyists, blues singers and r&b artists, including the *Beatles* and especially the *Rolling Stones*.



Beat Preachers Port Arthur 1964

Beat Preachers 1965. Mimicking the *Stones* 'Mod' style in their first phase, guitarist Richard Hickman's home-made tear-drop shaped 12 string guitar, was copied from a similar instrument used by Brian Jones, the *Rolling Stones* guitarist. A self-taught craftsman, Richard's (known as 'Wrinkle') father was Frank Hickman, master builder, responsible for several ocean going Huon pine yachts that raced in the Sydney Hobart, including 'Carol J.' Other and members were Rob MacFie (bass) Pete Smith (guitar) Graeme ?? (Gretsch), Roger Pickering (drums). (Loaned by Michael Huxtable, Rob MacFie)



Mick Huxtable fronts *The Beat Preachers*, Hobart 1965

Home-made Bass 1966. Rob MacFie, Monica Wastell and the Bass made by Richard Hickman.



Rob MacFie, Monica Wastell & homemade Bass, North Hobart 1966

Brotherhood of Myrtle. With slightly altered membership, repertoire and a very altered image, former *Beat Preachers* changed their name to *Brotherhood of Myrtle*, adopting the later *Stones* scruffy/casual look. The band ran a short lived (dry) night club, *Elpifco's* (from the character, Jesus Elpifco, in John Lennon's *Spaniard in the Works*) at the Domain Tennis Centre. Band members included Mick Huxtable, (singer) Rob MacFie (Jansen bass) drummer, the late Roger Pickering, (son of legendary Hobart jazz musician, Tom Pickering) plus keyboardist, Paul Reid (out of view).



***Brotherhood of Myrtle* at *Elpifco's*, Hobart 1967**

Fender Bass, Rob MacFie, *Brotherhood of Myrtle* 1967. Importing gear from British (Vox amplifiers) and US (Gibson and Fender guitars) became a status symbol, and

helped recreate a distinct sound. After much saving, Rob MacFie's Fender bass arrived in 1967 to much 'ooohing' and 'aaahing.'



The Fender Arrives! Rob MacFie, *Brotherhood of Myrtle*, Sandy Bay, 1969

Medium Cool. University and other influences occurred as bands became aware of overseas political ideas. Derived from the controversial 1969 US film of that name, a reformed band with 3 members from the Brotherhood, the group (despite its American roots) was influenced mainly by British 'Art Rock' bands, such as *Jethro Tull*, *Pink Floyd* and *King Crimson* etc.. Promotional photography became more adventurous and outdoors. Members were Pickering, Hickman, MacFie, Ian Beecroft (flute) and Christine Lincoln (vocals), one of the first female singers on the Hobart rock music scene in 1968. With Mark Pickering added, they began to write their own songs.



***Medium Cool* 1971 (Leader Rob MacFie)**

1812. Arrival of multiple harmonies from USA influenced other groups, using two or more female singers. Members : Ian Young, David Tubby, Dallas ??, plus Robyn Wilkinson/Moore was to have lasting career in entertainment, as was Louise Lincoln (sister of Chris) who joined the band, winning the Hoadleys 'Battle of the Bands' in Hobart in 1969.



1812, in 1968 (Photo Louise and Christine Lincoln)



1812, being funny (Photo Louise and Christine Lincoln)



1812 advertisement

Bootleg Family. Louise went to Melbourne and joined Brian Cadd's *Bootleg Family*, recording several albums, a film soundtrack, and trying out in California - unsuccessfully.



Joining Brian Cadd's *Bootleg Family* Melbourne



Bootleg Girls: soundtrack Alvin rides Again



Bootleg Alvin 45

Trevor Weaver. Singer who started with a school band, then moved to Hobart, established himself in several bands. He now plays regularly as a solo artist.



Trev Weaver's School Band, Kings Meadows, Launceston (Trevor Weaver)



Good Darts, 1970s, Red Lion Tavern Hobart (Trevor Weaver)

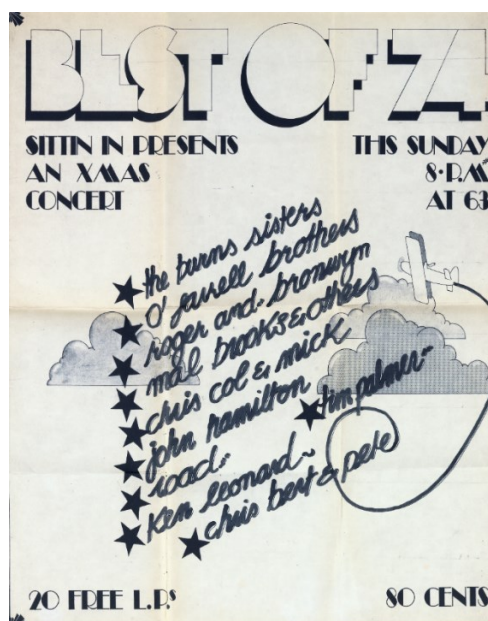


Good Darts, Royal Engineers Building, Hobart (Trevor Weaver)

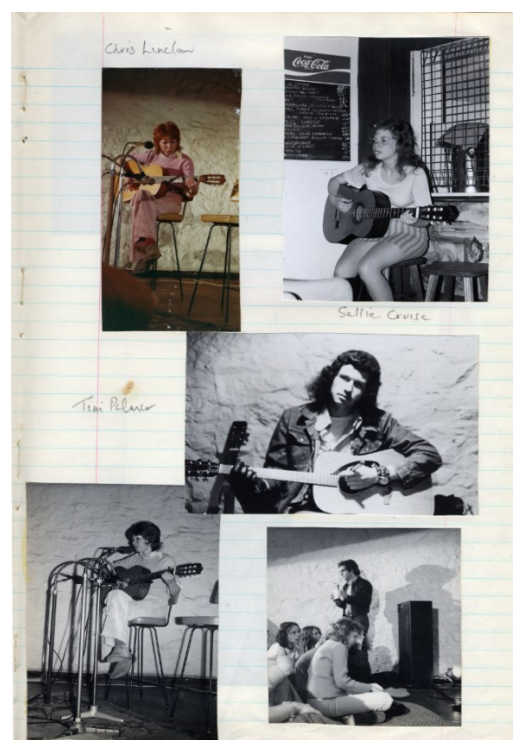
Folk Scene & *Sitting-In Club*.

Hobart & southern Tasmania has developed an active folk music scene. In the 1950s this had grown out of the jazz-based derivation of folk music from the USA and Britain. One of the first folk and jazz clubs was the *ADLIB*, held in the old state library building in the mid-1960s, and featured local singers and jazz bands, mainly in the trad /New Orleans jazz style. A second generation of folk singers began to emerge in the late 1960s, pushed by the new American folk scene of Dylan, singer songwriters such as Joni Mitchell, then CS&N and other multiple harmony groups.

The Sittin-In Club. The club opened at 63 Salamanca Place in 1972, and featured local singers in a 'folk' setting. Like most venues then, smoking was permitted. The premise was gutted by fire within two years, destroying PAs, posters etc.. The scrapbook is all that survives of that club. (Paul and Pam Huxtable – Cruse Family)



Sittin-In Club, Salamanca Place
1972



Folk Singers at *Sittin-In Club* 1972

The Great Divide.

The division between Folk and Rock styles was strongly evident in Hobart in 1969, when new Art-Rock band, *Medium Cool*, first debuted at the folk and trad jazz *Adlib Club*. Despite the high level of sophistication of the group and the complex arrangements, the amplification proved too much for the club's regular members, and the electric band was not invited back.

Christine Sullivan. Based in Melbourne, jazz singer Christine Sullivan began as a folk singer in Hobart, then sang in a trio *Kindling*, then was front singer in groups *Dingo Rose*, *Lady Feelgood* and *Masquerade*, before moving to Melbourne. From her base, Chrissie has performed at *Bennett's Lane*, Melbourne the *Basement* in Sydney, and *Ronnie Scott's* club in London, and numerous Australian jazz festivals.



Chrissie Sullivan & Kindling, Hobart 1977 (Christine Sullivan.)



Dingo Rose, Hobart (Christine Sullivan.)



Masquerade, Wrest Point, Hobart 1979 (Christine Sullivan.)

Hobart jazz singer joins London elite

By
CHRISTINE HEANEY

IN 1975 a young Hobart teenager in a hippie dress sang in a folk trio at Salamanca Place for \$4 a night.

This year, Christine Sullivan, 30, will play a season at one of the world's leading jazz clubs in London.

Jazz legend Ronnie Scott was so impressed by Christine's performance in a Melbourne pub that he invited her to perform a season at his club.

She will join an elite group of jazz artists who have played the club, including Billie Holiday and Charlie Parker.

Christine hopes the performance will be her launching pad to an international career.

"It's the only place to perform. Ever since I heard a Sarah Vaughan album, recorded at Ronnie's, I've dreamed of working there one day," she said this week.

"Now I need to establish myself internationally, to gain contacts and to work hard."

After discarding her hippie garb in the late 70s, Christine left Tasmania to study voice and music with some of Australia's finest teachers.

She returned to Hobart to join a newly-formed band, "Toot's and the Legmen".

The band became one of Tasmania's most popular live acts, but after three years Christine went back to Melbourne.

"I had to move; there was nothing else for me to do here. It was the next obvious stage in my career."

After "paying her dues" during the 80s, the new decade is exciting for Christine. As well as her ever-popular gigs at Mel-



★ Christine Sullivan . . . off to sing up a storm in the UK.

bourne's Limerick Arms Hotel, she has been offered a regular guest on a new Channel Seven variety show.

Christine's jazz/funk style is gradually reaching a wider audience: "Jazz is taking off in Australia, which is a great

thing," she said.

"I was approached recently to do a jazz album which I'm really excited about.

"I want to do it in Australia and hope to include some original material."

To concentrate more on

her jazz style, Christine is also a member of an all female jazz trio, "The Black Adders".

Tasmanians can see that style as she performs with the trio at the Montsalvat Jazz Festival, which will be screened on ABC-TV later this month.

Chrissy Sullivan off to Ronnie Scott's, London (Christine Sullivan

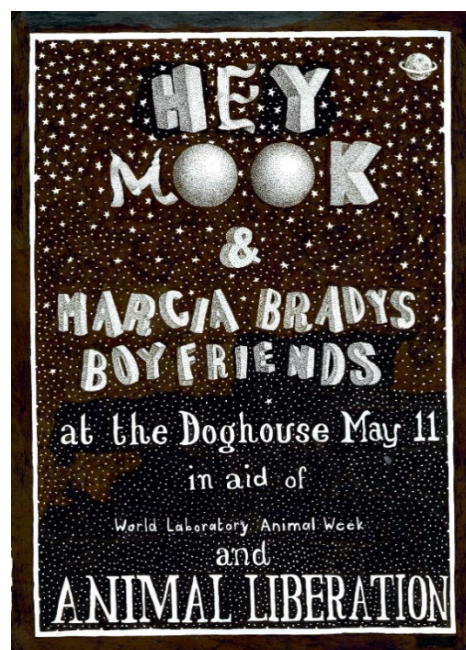
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Humpty Dumpty Re-union 2002. Former members of 1812, *Clockwork Orange*, *Medium Cool*, and other band members reunited at the old *Moonah Club* and - along with other musos from the 60s - celebrated their lives and music.



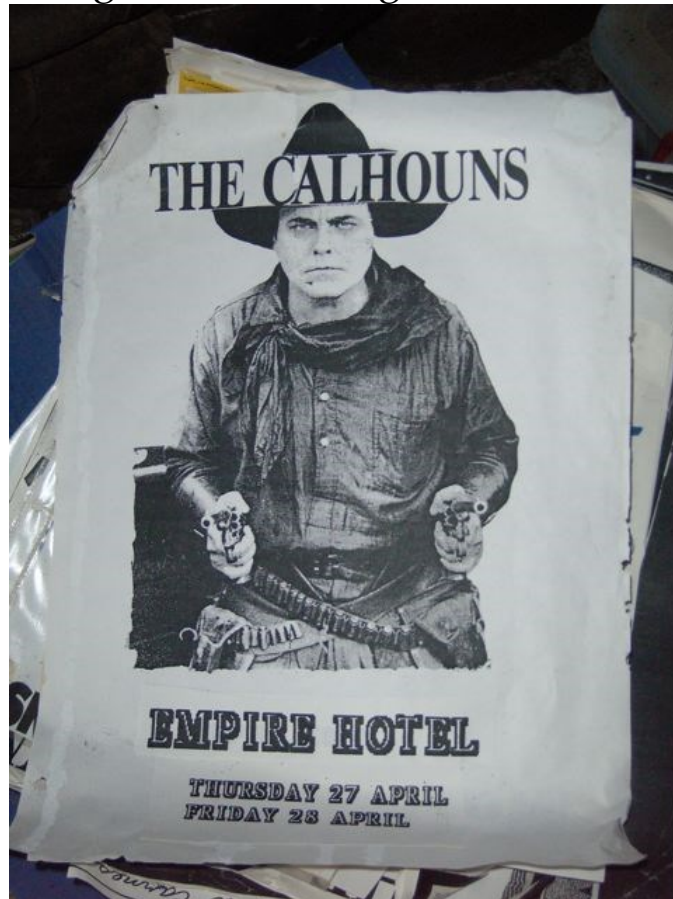
Reunion 1812 & Friends, Moonah 2002

Hey Mooks - Feebes Poster. Current Hobart band, *Hey Mook*, (one of whose members, Kim, is of the Pearce jazz family) continues the live music tradition in Hobart, as does poster designer and former musician, the late Andrew Feebes, who lent over 60 of his hand made band posters to be copied for the State Library of Tasmania rock music collection.

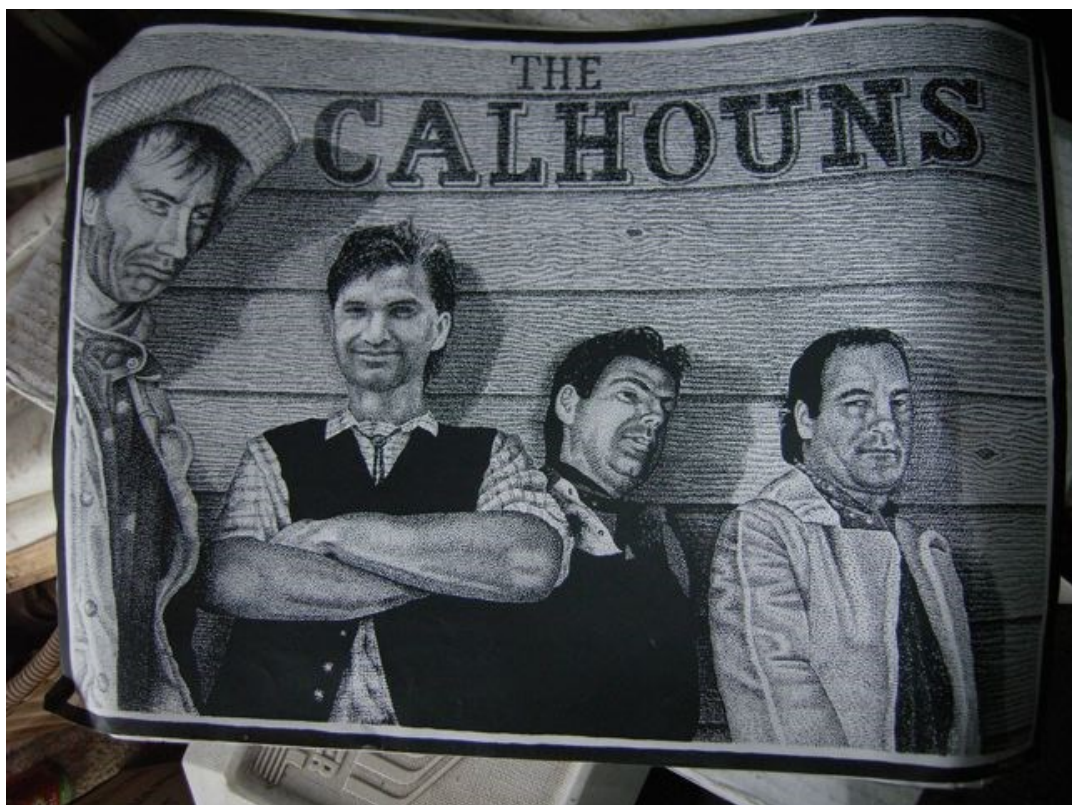


~A Continuing Story~, *Hey Mook* – “Feebes” Poster c1990 (Andrew Feebes)

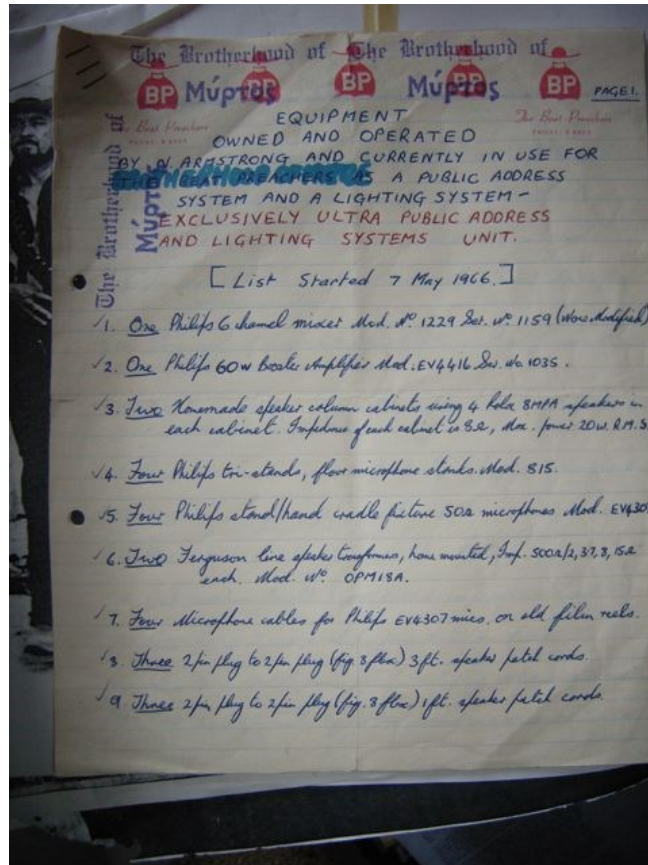
Work in Progress. Gathering Musical Archives.



Gathering for the Record 1



Gathering for the Record 2



Gathering for the Record 3



Gathering for the Record 4

Thanks

I'd like to thank the donors and lenders who generously gave of their time and precious scrap-books and other items for the Music Project. I'd also like to thank Tony Marshall for his encouragement, and look forward to his – and the State Library's- ongoing support for the Project and the collection of popular music memorabilia and history in Tasmania.

Peter MacFie

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