



TRAVELLING BONES

David Hyams

“Travelling Bones” is the new album from Fremantle based songwriter, instrumentalist and world traveller David Hyams.

The album marks a departure from the celtic inspired fusion of Hyams’ instrumental albums and performances with the Miles To Go band. It’s stylistically more rooted in the folk/country area with bluesy tinges and not a bagpipe in sight - however, the strong connection to the West Australian landscape remains, with stories that include an encounter with an emu on a desolate stretch of north west highway (Roadside Lament), celebration of a Kimberley night (“Shine On”) and the ritual pilgrimage to favorite southern coastal areas (“In This Summer”).

There is something about being in motion that keeps me writing, new places and new experiences and the continual discovery of the vastness of this state’s north west. I had known from the Miles To Go albums that it was the landscapes that got me writing instrumental pieces, so I tried to find lyrics to convey that same feeling, the night sky in the desert, images of the road being stretched out before you every morning. As a few of these started to come I stopped throwing out what I was writing and finally knew I had something to build an album on....

This is the first airing of Hyams’ voice on a record and has been several years in the making. Describing himself as a ‘blocked songwriter’ for many years, over which time he produced numerous instrumental pieces (and was involved in collaborations with many other writers) but no finished songs of his own, a revival of lyric writing came through his work with inmates of WA jails, which lasted 5 years and produced over 55 recorded songs.

When I started the prison project I needed to look at a whole lot of techniques and methods for songwriting, rather than rely on my own experience, as I hadn’t been able to finish a song for about 10 years! When I realised that I was able to help people who had never written before to overcome their own blocks and fears, I knew that I just needed to start using these same methods on myself!

The prison experience was profound and also inspired album songs about the difficulty of re-adjusting to society (“Another Day”) and an inspiring woman who wrote to help overcome a tragic accident (“One Day Gone”).

Songwriting and recording in remote Aboriginal communities in the central and western desert areas also led to further songs inspired by WA's "oceans of wilderness".

Working in regional and remote areas continues to be an ongoing part of Hyams' life and a new project has taken him to Roebourne prison in WA's northwest, where he's producing an album which involves the jail's inmates and the Roebourne community, also featuring several prominent Australian artists.

Travelling Bones was produced by Hyams and primarily recorded at Soundbaker studios in Perth with engineer Rob Agostini. It was mixed & mastered by James Hewgill. Hyams sings and plays guitars, mandolin, dobro and bouzouki and the album features the stellar talents of Roy Martinez (bass) and Angus Diggs (drums) plus Hyams' regular touring line up, classy Melbourne based string players and compelling performers in their own right, Melanie Robinson (cello, vocals) and Jenny M. Thomas (fiddle, vocals).

The songs have been quick to gain recognition with recent nominations for various song contests, including The WA Music Industry Association, (WAM) Song of the Year and Tamworth Songwriters Association.

The album will have its WA launch at the Fremantle workers' club on the 11th May 2013.