

FIDDLERS FEAST

In brief

'Fiddlers Feast', formerly the Fiddlers Festival has grown from humble beginnings at the Tamworth Country Music Festival in 1996 into **Australia's Premier Fiddle Band**. Featuring some of the best fiddlers and violinists around, 'Fiddlers Feast' is a group playing an eclectic collection of music from Jazz, Swing, Blues, Celtic and Country to Contemporary; "a powerhouse of Australian Celtic music that flies down bush tracks, over blue mountains and zips down the Australian city highways".



Fiddlers involved with "**Fiddlers Feast**" under the musical directorship of Marcus Holden have included George Washingmachine, Mark Oats, Lindsay Martin, Andrew Clermont, Pixie, Ian Cooper, Clare O'Meara, Ray Schloeffel, Jane Brownlee, Nigel MacLean, Mick Kerin, Daniel Weltlinger, Adrian Keating, Jessica Randall, and many more.

What began with four has seen over 40 fiddlers involved with various productions around the country. Several tours to Japan as well as high profile appearances back home have inspired a whole new generation of fiddlers and groups like the "Hawkesbury National Fiddle Festival, Golden Fiddle Awards" and the "Southern Cross Fiddlers", dedicated to the fiddle as an alternative to the classical stream of tuition and performance.

"**Fiddlers Feast**" appears regularly at major events and festivals around Australia including Woodford Folk Festival, Port Fairy Folk Festival, Gympie Muster, Tamworth Country Music Festival, the Brisbane Festival, Adelaide Arts Festival, and the Famous Spiegeltent. "**Fiddlers Feast**" has toured with the support of the Federal government for the Playing Australia Touring Program, NARPACA and Queensland Arts Council Touring program, have been guests of the Brisbane City council for their 150 year celebrations and were invited to perform at Expo in Nagoya, Japan by DFAT in 2005. In August 2006 "**Fiddlers Feast**" was part of the Australian contingent at the "Inter-Celtic Festival, Lorient" in Brittany as part of the "Year of Oz" and is planning a return trip to in the European summer of 2009.



Their award winning CD, **FRENZEE**, released 2006, is a rip-roaring collection of all sorts of fiddling from Country to tongue-in-cheek classical, from twisted jazz tracks to rock and reel with a plethora of weird and wonderful music and guests from all parts of the harmonic spectrum. "**Fiddlers Feast**" is proving to be a show that breaks barriers between the genres of music promoting Australian fiddle playing as a unique and distinct world music style.

FIDDLERS FEAST

- biographies

MARCUS HOLDEN

Marcus Holden began studying the violin at the age of 8 in Canberra. His formative years were spent playing classical music as a member of the Canberra Youth Orchestra and from the age of 11 he toured and recorded with choirs, groups and the CYO culminating in a tour of Europe in 1974.



In his late teens, with an interest in rock, jazz and blues sparked by the newly amplified violin, his career as a solo fiddler began. Moving to Sydney in 1979 to study jazz at the NSW Con, Marcus quickly became the city's premier fiddle session player, recording well over 400 award winning records, films and jingles working with Australian icons such as Jimmy Barnes, Ross Wilson, Diesel (Mark Lizotte), Mark and Tod Hunter, Ross Ryan, John Williamson, Graeme Connors, Richard Clapton, Daryl Braithwaite etc!

As his experience increased he began to pick up skills as a composer, producer and recording engineer. In 1996, feeling the need to develop other abilities besides the supporting role most often offered to him, Marcus along with three other legendary fiddlers (Ray Schloeffel, Pixie Jenkins, and Andrew Clermont) formed a loose group of lunatics known as the Fiddlers Festival, a group which is now acclaimed as Australia's premier fiddle band.

Marcus also runs a successful recording studio "Bloody Dog Studios" where he produces much of his most recent work including the Fiddlers Festival's 4 CDs. More recently he has been performing with Orchestral stage production Scotland the Brave with major orchestras around Oz, New Zealand and North America. See www.marcusholden.com for group, recording, production and composition details.

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www.fiddlersfestival.com

FIDDLERS FEAST

- biographies

MARK OATS

Mark Oats has been playing violin since the age of four, growing up in Austinmere, NSW.

As a teenager he became interested in Irish fiddle and during his twenties after completing a mechanical engineering course at Wollongong Uni, he lived and worked in Europe for several years as a musician, perfecting his unique style of Celtic fiddling.

Returning to Australia, he became and still is Sydney's premier Celtic fiddler, performing in just about every Irish pub in the city. He has been a member of the legendary Aussie bush band the "Bushwackers" for over ten years, has toured with Irish dance shows such as Celtic Reign, and is in as a session fiddler all over Australia.

As well being popular at festivals around Oz, he performs with his own band "Finn MacCool" and tours Europe regularly.



CLARE O'MEARA

Clare O'Meara, multi-instrumentalist, vocalist, songwriter and one of the hardest working musicians around, began her musical career at the age of five. Studying classical violin and piano, performing with orchestras in her teens, Clare made the transition into every other conceivable music style, including Country, Rock, Celtic, Folk, Funk, Pop and added few more instruments along the way; Accordion, Guitar and Mandolin. She is renowned as Australia's premier female fiddle player. She has toured recorded and performed at every major Oz Music Festival including live TV performances with Country Music Stars Lee Kernaghan, Gina Jeffreys, Slim Dusty, Tanya Kernaghan, Troy Casar-Daley, Beccy Cole, Tania Kernaghan Troy Cassar-Daley, Beccy Cole, James Blundell, Adam Harvey, Shanley Del, Felicity, Brian Cadd, the Feral Swing Cats, the Brewster Bros. and more.

She is a member of the of the legendary Bushwackers, and has toured China twice with James Blundell and Japan and Europe with Fiddlers Feast. She is in demand as a session fiddler, singer and and pianist and more recently has developed skills as a composer. She also the musician we know who has a wine (Clare Terese Chardonnay) named after her.

FIDDLERS FEAST

- biographies

GARRY STEEL

From the age of seven in the gold mining town of Kalgoorlie, Western Australia and ever since, Garry Steel and his elder brother Kirk have been in great demand as keyboard, organ, piano and accordion players for some of Australia's best known performers and recording artists. Aussie Rock legend Jimmy Barnes, invited Garry to play on his album *Flesh and Wood*. He has recorded and toured internationally for 4 years with John Williamson and has also recorded with Broderick Smith and the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra on Pixie Jenkins *True Blue Classics*.



Garry established many fans and musical relationships through his 4 year stint (1994 -1998) as a member of the house band at the legendary Kings Cross Bourbon and Bar Beefsteak with Rodney Ford and John Coker. He is admired by musicians and audiences alike for his natural ability in so many different styles of music.

While playing accordion in Irish Band "Settlers Match", who were supporting the "Furies" on an Australian tour, George Fury commented "Where'd you be learning to play the box like dat? You play like a true Irishman!" Soon after Garry was asked to tour the US with one of the best known Irish-American entertainers, Paddy Noonan. Garry has performed with Lee Kernaghan, Slim Dusty, Pixie Jenkins, Galapagos Duck and Graeme Connors, and has been a permanent member of "Fiddlers Feast" since it's inception in 1996.



ANDREW CLERMONT

The borders of music tumble as multi-instrumentalist Clermont challenges the moment with his unique ability as a chameleon, whether on Violin, Viola, Guitars, Mandolin, Bass, Tenor Banjo, Didgeridoo, Dulcimer, or Voice; all played with equal fervour and style. From cutting crazy tunes with the jester of Jazz guitar Ian Date, to duelling with violin demon Ian Cooper, or wringing the last musical drop from jazz violinist George Washington, Andrew has recorded and performed with the likes of Jeff Lang, Paul Kelly, USA's Tom T. Hall & Kate Campbell Pat Drummond, Norma O'Hara Murphy, Brent Parlane, Elizabeth Lord, Greg Champion, and Beccy Cole. He also performs with Indian music guru Dya Singh - finding that uppermost level in the ragas. Amongst a myriad of recordings for others, he has an acclaimed solo CD 'The Longing', and releases with groups 'Totally Gourdgeous, the 'Lawn Mowers' and 'Fiddlers Feast'.

FIDDLERS FEAST

- biographies

RODNEY FORD

Born in Atherton Nth QLD, Rodney started on trumpet age 14, studying at the Conservatorium of Music in Sydney. He played in various classical groups until joining the army band at 18. Whilst in the Army he taught himself clarinet and also started fooling with the drums, he received his first offer of a gig as a drummer before he owned a kit or sticks. He returned to the Sydney Conservatorium and enrolled in a jazz course on clarinet and drums, eventually choosing to play drums because they were heavier to carry.



Rodney has played & recorded with many artists, ranging from Tommy Emmanuel, John Williamson, Mark Isaacs, Roger Frampton, Errol Buddle, Don Burrows, Herb Ellis, Barney Kessel, Jamey Abersold, Eberhardt Weber, Galapagos Duck and Crossfire. He was resident drummer for J.C. Williamson in shows such as "Man of La Mancha", "The Wiz" and "A Chorus Line".



JOHN COKER

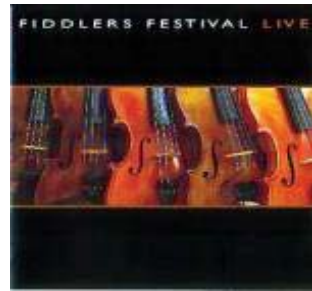
John arrived in Australia from New Zealand in 1969 to play bass in Ricky May's band. After two years in Surfers Paradise he moved to Sydney and worked around the hotels and clubs. He played on two Daly Wilson Big Band albums and co-led the house band at Rooty Hill RSL for three years. In 1978 he joined Marcia Hines band touring extensively with her before joining Jon English. He was with Jon eight years, the last three years as musical director, touring Scandinavia twice with numerous trips around Australia and New Zealand. During this time he played bass on four of Jon's albums, co-writing several of the songs and material from Jon's rock opera "Paris".

After Jon he joined Julie Anthony and toured Australia, then completing both the jazz and arranging courses at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. He has prepared arrangements for many TV and cabaret acts, has backed many international artists and worked at the famous Bourbon and Beefsteak Bar for fourteen years while also performing on the Sydney Showboat on Sydney Harbour. He is currently working with many artists around Sydney such as Marty Rhone, Eddie Youngblood, (Elvis Show), Deane Bourne (Roy Orbison), Maureen Elkner (Dusty Springfield), Jon St. Peeters, and John Rowles. In January 2005 he organized a very successful trip to the Nelson Jazz Festival in New Zealand with his Jazz - Blues band "Razoo Too."

FIDDLERS FEAST

- Discography, Contact

Live



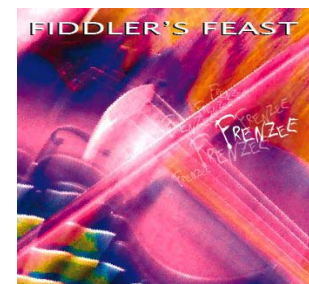
Strung Out



Get Reel



Frenzee



Bookings:

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