

Glen Moffatt: Silly Shirt Stuffing



Glen is one of the few New Zealanders who had to tape the 1AM World Cup games because he was still working at that hour, playing a regular Sunday late night spot at the Java Jive. Regular live work means he knows 200 or so covers, mainly country, but he's found it helpful to have an AC/DC song on hand.

"I think it's from living in Napier. If we've just done a Roger Miller song and some heckler yells: 'Play some AC/DC,' we do. We play 'Highway to Hell'!"

Glen, of course, plays the anthem with violin, steel guitar and wearing one of his trademark satin shirts.

"I like gaudy shirts. It started as a piss-take, but I like it now. I just got six free from an op shop because they wouldn't sell. I have a couple of my mother's creations. My mother sews a good shirt."

He draws a line at cowboy hats. "I've never been a cowboy or [ridden] a horse, so I'd never wear a hat — and my hair's too nice."

He's aware of the dread vibe associated with the MOR country we've seen on telly over the years.

"Many New Zealanders don't understand what country is. They've had Dolly Parton and Kenny Rogers shoved down their throats. In the 70s, country was MOR, stringy, crossover stuff; and Nashville today is like the 70s, all crossover. They all sound the same."

Nashville is no longer Mecca for Glen, but he says: "I'd love to go to Texas and play the bars."

Somewhere In New Zealand Tonight appears on the Montage Studios based Sun Pacific label. Recording the album was a major high for Glen.

"It was my first studio experience. Producer Stuart Pearce was fantastic. Sam Ford engineered, and had to referee on a few occasions."

"A week after [recording finished], I had withdrawal symptoms. I can't wait to do a second album."

It's ironic that at 24 years of age, Moffatt fronts a band of slightly older musicians.

"It adds to the mystique, a young guy over it front, with aging pros behind him. The next youngest is 34. The rest are over 40."

They don't wear silly shirts.

MURRAY CAMMICK

Somewhere in New Zealand Tonight is the title track off Glen Moffatt's debut album. It's a song that reflects on the dilemma New Zealand artists face, in working with music genres born in the USA, while still reflecting our local culture.

Glen can name local heroes in the country field, and American greats and left field writers that have inspired him.

"I really got enthused when Dwight Yoakam, Randy Travis and Steve Earle put out their albums in 1986," he says.

Growing up in Napier, he learned of many of country's great songs from the recordings of kiwi John Hore.

"John Hore was doing Roger Miller, Buck Owens and Don Gibson covers. I was getting all that great stuff second-hand."

He also admires kiwi country writer/performers Ritchie Pickett and Al Hunter. He respects musicians who embrace local culture.

"Wayne Mason has been a revelation. He's never been afraid of writing about New Zealand. I think Don McGlashan's 'Dominion Road' is a fantastic song — I'd love to cover it one day. If Jimmy Barnes in Cold Chisel can sing about Sydney, why can't we sing about New Zealand?"

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JULY

Thu 27	Auckland	Powerstation
Fri 28	Hamilton	Hillcrest
Sat 29	Ohakune	Hot Lava
Sun 30	Palmerston North	Fat Ladies Arms
Mon 31	Wellington	James Cabaret

AUGUST

Wed 2	Christchurch	The Occidental
Thu 3	Methven	Blue Pub
Fri 4	Dunedin	Regines
Sat 5	Queenstown	Vilagrad
Sun 6	Wanaka	Cliffords

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JULY			Thu 20	Wellington	James Cabaret
Thu 13	Wanaka	Cliffords	Fri 21	Ohakune	Hot Lava
Fri 14	Queenstown	Vilagrad	Sat 22	Auckland	Powerstation
Sat 15	Dunedin	Sammy's	Sun 23	Auckland	Windsor Park Hotel
Sun 16	Christchurch	Warners	Mon 24	Hamilton	Hillcrest Tavern