



The Year In Review

2008 ARIA Awards Eligibility Period: 4 August 2007 - 25 July 2008 inclusive

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October 2008

October 2008 is dominated by two era-defining events in Australian music.

First, of course, is the star-studded 22nd annual ARIA Awards ceremony, staged at Sydney's Acer Arena on October 19. It's an evening that belongs to a new breed in Australian music, a collective of extraordinary young musicians whose music has spent the past year dominating charts and hearts both locally and across the globe.

The night itself is punctuated by stunning live performances from award debutantes/major nominees Gabriella Cilmi, The Presets, Geoffrey Gurrumul Yunupingu, Sam Sparro and Faker. There are also great performances from The Veronicas, ARIA veterans The Living End, as well as this year's special international guest, Pink. The broadcast of the event on Network Ten keeps over 1.1 million music fans across the country glued to their TV screens.

As for the awards themselves, The Presets took out the prized quinella of Best Group and Album of the Year [for 'Apocalypso'], as well as snaring the Best Dance Release award. [The Presets had previously also received the ARIA Artisan Award for Producer of the Year, 'Apocalypso' won Best Cover Art for Jonathan Zawada, and 'My People' won Best Video for Kris Moyes.]

In this year's other major results, Geoffrey Gurrumul Yunupingu [who dominated The Deadly Awards earlier this October] takes out the Best Independent Release award, in addition to winning Best World Music Album in September. Nick Cave is named Best Male Artist for the second time. But, as all of Australia now knows, the 2008 ARIA Awards are dominated by one name and one song - Gabriella Cilmi with 'Sweet About Me'. Cilmi, the young Melbourne songstress who turned 17 in the week leading up to the awards, takes home an incredible six ARIAs, including Best Female Artist and Single of the Year. It's the third biggest one-night haul by any artist in the history of the ARIAs. The following day, Cilmi's crowning as Australia's new queen of pop dominates national headlines and news bulletins. It's almost unanimous - a star is born.

Aside from the ARIAs, the other big news this month is the release of new music from the most successful Aussie musical export of all time: the legendary AC/DC. 'Black Ice', the first new AC/DC album in eight years, dominates international charts when it finally hits stores. The new record, released only on CD and vinyl [no downloads], breaks all sorts of sales records as soon as its released, being accredited triple platinum in its first week of release. The record instantly tops the charts in an incredible 29 countries, including the UK and the US ['Black Ice' sells 784,000 copies in week one in the US alone.]

With so many young acts back home for the ARIAs, a bunch of other up-and-comers head overseas in the hope of perhaps one day emulating Accadacca's feats. Brisbane's Boat People head for shows in the US, while Melbourne's British India set sail for the UK. The British-based/Perth-bred techno hit-makers Pendulum go across the Atlantic to tour through both North and South America, while Angus & Julia Stone support Martha Wainwright across Europe before heading back to the States.

Meanwhile closer to home, down in Melbourne, over 300 local artists pledge to perform in a month-long line-up to help celebrate the 130th birthday of the legendary Esplanade Hotel - The Espy - in St Kilda, the longest continuously running music venue in Australia.

If there's lessons to be learned this October 2008, it's that Australian music -past, present and future - is all sounding pretty great right now.

Singles

Young NSW rock trio Short Stack get their first taste of Top 40 success when their debut single, 'Shimmy a Go Go', reaches #31 on the Motorola ARIA singles chart. Meanwhile, following regular hits fronting The Rogue Traders, Natalie Bassingthwaight's debut solo single, 'Alive', also manages to crack the Top 40, at #39. But the biggest local single this month belongs to Australian Idol runner-up Jessica Mauboy, with 'Running Back' climbing to #3 by the end of October.

Albums

The traditional ARIA winners bump sees recently-released albums from several Australian acts climb back up the charts this October - most notably The Presets' 'Apocalypso', which reappears at #4, while the enchanting 'Gurrumul', by Geoffrey Gurrumul Yunupingu, makes it all the way to #3 [having previously only got as high as #18]. Aside from AC/DC's 'Black Ice' [#1], other new local releases this month to make their mark on the album charts include the latest from Augie March, 'Watch Me Disappear', which debuts at #4; 'Chimney's Fire' from Josh Pyke debuts #3; 'Curiouser' from Brisbane's Kate Miller-Heidke comes in at #8; 'Walking On A Dream' by Empire Of The Sun [a side-project featuring Sleepy Jackson's Luke Steele and Pnau's Nick Littlemore] also debuts at #8. Meanwhile, Shannon Noll scores his fourth successive hit album when his greatest hits set, 'No Turning Back: The Story So Far', peaks at #7.

ACCREDITATIONS

The Veronicas - Take Me On The Floor (single) - GOLD

Troy Cassar-Daley - Born to Survive: The Best of Troy Cassar-Daley -- GOLD

Geoffrey Gurrumul Yunupingu - Gurrumul - GOLD
AC/DC - Black Ice - 3 X PLATINUM
Midnight Oil - 20,000 Watt RSL - The Midnight Oil Collection - 4 X PLATINUM
Bindi Irwin - Kid Fitness Vol. 2: Jungle Dance Party (DVD) - GOLD

September 2008

The nominations for the 22nd annual ARIA music awards were announced early this month and they provided a perfect snapshot of what's been another brilliant year in Australian music.

It's hardly a surprise that young Melbourne songstress Gabriella Cilmi topped the nominations count going into the October 19 ARIA Awards ceremony, tagged as a finalist in six major categories. Her massive debut single, 'Sweet About Me', has been one of the key tracks of 2008, not only in Australia but in countless other territories around the world. It's obviously going to be a big night for Cilmi, who turns 17 a week before she makes her first walk down the ARIA red carpet.

Another pop debutante making an indelible mark on 2008 is the Sydney-born, LA-based Sam Sparro. Like Cilmi, Sparro has simultaneously launched himself on the local and international charts. The young dance maestro goes into his first ARIAs with five nominations. A slew of other artists receive four nods in the nominations, including The Veronicas, The Presets and Angus & Julia Stone.

Also receiving four nominations and undoubtedly the surprise star of the 2008 ARIAs lead-up is the unique and gifted talent of Geoffrey Gurrumul Yunupingu. A former member of Yothu Yindi, the blind Aboriginal folk singer was suddenly elevated into the national limelight and, at the end of the month, he also won the ARIA Fine Arts Award for Best World Music album for his debut solo release, 'Gurrumul'. Other winners at this year's ARIA Fine Arts Awards included Andrea Keller [Best Jazz Album for 'Footprints'], Richard Tognetti [for Best Classical Album, 'Bach Sonatas For Violin and Keyboard'] and Chris Lilley [Best Soundtrack/Cast/Show album for 'Summer Heights High'].

In other music news this September, the legendary AC/DC added a new record to their cannon when, coinciding with Father's Day, six classics from the band's back-catalogue all re-entered the Top 50 of the Motorola ARIA Album chart. They became the first Australian act ever to have six titles in the top 50. No doubt they'll add to that with the release of their new studio album, 'Black Ice', on October 18.

On the subject of classic Oz rock, two other legendary local bands announced reunions this month. The Models played a round of club shows late in the month, while The Saints revealed plans to join Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds as part of a new traveling national festival, All Tomorrow's Parties, next January.

Meanwhile in modern Aussie pop, it's another big month for Kylie Minogue. Tickets go on sale for Australian dates of her X2008 [which will be staged in December] and they sell-out in a record two minutes. It's also revealed that Kylie will receive an incredible £1 million for a one-off show in Dubai, performing at the opening of a luxury resort. It's little surprise then that Kylie features high on the annual BRW richest entertainers list, coming in second only to The Wiggles.

In semi-related news, former pop star Jason Donovan announced he's been back in the studio working on his first album in 15 years. 'Let It Be Me' is due in November.

In other news this September, The Veronicas announced they are in negotiations about going into production of their own reality TV show; and the editors of US music bible Billboard place Savage Garden's 'Truly Madly Deeply' at number 30 on their Hot 100 All-Time Top Songs list.

Singles

Empire Of The Sun, featuring Sleepy Jackson's Luke Steele and PNAU's Nick Littlemore, scored a hit with their debut single, 'Walking On A Dream', reaching #31 on the Motorola ARIA Singles Chart, while Ricki Lee scored her seventh straight hit with 'Wiggle It' coming in at #11. Vanessa Amorosi also adds to her hit list with 'The Simple Things' coming in at #39, while Sam Sparro's latest, '21st Century Life', reaches #52. Going one better, End Of Fashion's 'Fussy' reached #51.

Albums

Melbourne blues & roots artist Ash Grunwald sees his fifth album, 'Fish Out Of Water', peak at #43, while NSW Central Coast rockers Something With Numbers see their third long-player, 'Engineering The Soul', enter the charts at #20. 'Havilah', the latest offering from Melbourne rockers The Drones, comes in at #47, while the new one from veterans You Am I, 'Dilettantes', enters the charts at #12. But the highest charting new local release this September belongs to Brisbane's The Butterfly Effect, who again just miss out on topping the album charts with their latest effort, 'Final Conversation Of Kings', entering at #3.

ACCREDITATIONS

Sneaky Sound System - Kansas City (single) - GOLD
Faker - This Heart Attack (single) - PLATINUM
Sneaky Sound System - 2 - GOLD
Pete Murray - Summer at Eureka - PLATINUM

August 2008

This August, of course, is a month dominated by the thrills and drama of the Beijing Olympics, but that's not to say the Australian music biz doesn't throw up a few thrills and spills of its own.

Released too late for inclusion in this year's ARIA Awards, but certainly already in the front-running for the 2009 ARIAs, Sydney dance outfit Sneaky Sound System rampage this month's Motorola ARIA album charts with their sophomore long-player, appropriately and simply entitled '2'. After their self-titled debut spent over a year in the Top 50, '2' not surprisingly debuts at No. 1 [ending an unexpected five-week lock-out of the top spot by the Mamma Mia soundtrack]. In doing so, the Sneakys's '2' becomes the sixth Australian album chart-topper of 2008 so far.

The big rock & roll news of the month is the break-up of the ARIA and Grammy Award-winning trio, Wolfmother. Official confirmation of the split hardly comes as a surprise to anyone who sees the group perform their headline 'comeback' show at the sold-out Splendour In The Grass festival in Byron Bay in the first week of this month. The trio had spent much of this year working on a follow-up to their 2005 self-titled debut album, which has sold over two million copies worldwide. But a formal announcement is made in the days following their Splendour appearance that both Chris Ross and Myles Heskett have quit the group due to "irreconcilable personal and musical differences". Singer Andrew Stockdale intends to replace them and continue working under the Wolfmother moniker.

Over in the pop world, another group suffering stress fractures is Young Divas. The hit singing group, made up of ex-Australian Idol contestants, loses another two members this month with Paulini and Jessica Mauboy both announcing they are leaving to concentrate on their solo careers. Meanwhile, a new season of Australian Idol is launched, proving the slightly re-jigged format still has major pulling power for both wanna-be contestants as well as television viewers, with more than 1.8 million Australians tuning in for the opening night of season six.

In other music news this August, Delta Goodrem briefly returned home to announce national tour plans for early next year. Proving she's lost none of her local appeal after spending most of 2008 in the US, Delta receives a rapturous reception at a series of in-store appearances along the east coast. An estimated 4000 fans gather to see her perform in a shopping centre in Melbourne.

Also still receiving endless accolades, Gabriella Cilmi is named New Cool Kid On The Block at the annual Dolly Teen Choice awards in Sydney. It's also announced that she's inked a deal with a major US label which will see her debut album released State-side in 2009. Meanwhile, her debut single 'Sweet About Me', which has already gone Top 10 in 10 countries, is labelled song of the year by, of all people, Oasis's Noel Gallagher.

In what is undoubtedly the musical comeback of the year, this month sees the release of the first new AC/DC song in eight years. 'Rock & Roll Train' is made available via the Internet as a taster to the band's new album, 'Black Ice', due in October. Incredibly, anticipation of the new Accadacca material sees five of their classic albums simultaneously jump back into the top 100 of the Motorola ARIA album chart.

On a sad note, this August sees the loss of two legendary figures of the Australian music scene: Country music pioneer Reg Lindsay, 78, and Christie Allen, 53, best remembered for her late-70s hit, "Goosebumps".

Singles

A relatively quiet month for new Australian singles sees Delta Goodrem score another hit with 'I Can't Break It To My Heart', the fourth single from her 'Delta' album, entering the Motorola ARIA singles chart at #13, and the latest single from The Veronicas, 'Take Me On The Floor', coming in at #13 and peaking at #7 by the end of the month.

Albums

A huge month for new local album releases, none bigger than the second album from Sneaky Sound System, appropriately entitled '2', which debuts at the top of the charts [ending an unexpected six week lock-out of the #1 spot by the Mamma Mia soundtrack]. Other big chart entries this August include 'Teeth Lost, Hearts Won', the second album from Brisbane trio The Grates, coming in at #6, while 'V', the debut effort from Sydney's Van She, reaches #10. A couple of other relative newcomers also have their first taste of chart success with Melbourne rockers Carpathian seeing their 'Isolation' album enter the charts at #19, and Perth sisters The Sunny Cowgirls peaking at #37 with 'Dust Will Settle'. Meanwhile, Xavier Rudd's new album, 'Dark Shades Of Blue', comes in at #5, and The Whitlams's new best-of set, 'Truth, Beauty and A Picture Of You', lands at #3.

ACCREDITATIONS

The Veronicas - This Love (single) - GOLD

Sneaky Sound System - UFO (single) - PLATINUM

Gyroscope - Breed Obsession - GOLD

The Whitlams - Truth, Beauty and a Picture of You: Best of The Whitlams - GOLD

Angus & Julia Stone - A Book Like This - PLATINUM

July 2008

July 2008 kicked off with Australian music's most emotional night of the year - the ARIA Hall of Fame.

In its short four-year existence as a separate event from the ARIA Awards proper, the annual ARIA Hall of Fame ceremony has developed its own tradition in providing Aussie musicians and music fans alike with countless golden, unforgettable moments. And the 2008 event, staged on the first evening of this July in the opulent heart of Melbourne's famous Town Hall, is absolutely no exception.

The legendary 78-year-old Rolf Harris steals the show [and the following morning's headlines across the nation] with his graceful and tearful induction speech, worthy of a great prodigal son. But each of the night's other inductees into the ARIA Hall of Fame - Dragon, Russell Morris, The Triffids, Max Merritt - all have their own powerful and joyous moments too. Musically, the night opens with The Living End paying tribute to the 50th anniversary of the release of Johnny O'Keefe's 'The Wild One' - the recording which officially marked the start of Oz rock. The rest of the night's incredible support cast of performers includes an all-star band [performing with Russell Morris on 'The Real Thing'], Kasey Chambers [performing with Max Merritt], The Seekers [performing 'Tie Me Kangaroo Down Sport' with Rolf], Tim Freedman [performing Rolf's hit 'Two Little Boys'], The Church's Steve Kilbey [standing in for The Triffids' late, great frontman, David McComb], and many others. A truly magical musical night and an uplifting start to what will turn out to be a fairly crazy month.

One of this month's many surprising news stories is the return of '90s local boy-band CDB. Not only has the vocal troupe reformed, they've also scored a new deal with Universal Music.

Without doubt the most leftfield music tale this July is the extraordinary announcement that Sir Elton John has taken more than a passing interest in Sydney dance pop duo PNAU. Introduced to the group's music by actress Toni Collette whilst on tour in Australia, the superstar has taken PNAU under his wing, getting them signed to the same London management company that personally handles Elton's own music affairs.

For the more religious Aussie music fans, this July is a month like no other. In amongst the World Youth Day celebrations and Papal tour, host city Sydney sees one of the largest concerts ever staged in this country. Following an outdoor mass service, artists Guy Sebastian, Paulini and Damien Leith perform to an audience estimated to number well over 150,000 pilgrims.

In other feel-good news, one of Australia's first ladies of song, Olivia Newton John reveals that she secretly married American businessman John Easterling at her Mailbu home on July 4. A few days later over in Nashville comes news that multi-ARIA Awards winner Keith Urban and wife Nicole Kidman have welcomed daughter Sunday Rose into the world.

Aside from the success of the 2008 Hall Of Fame, ARIA celebrates another milestone this month. The official weekly ARIA music chart turns 25 years old. The very first chart was published on 10 July 1983.

Singles

Gabriella Cilmi follows up her monster debut single 'Sweet About Me' with the release of 'Don't Wanna Go Now' which enters the chart at #31. Sneaky Sound System also return with a new single, 'Kansas City', which debuts at #15, while the title track off The Living End's new album, 'White Noise', peaks at #12. Also of note, 'Black & Gold', the three-month-old debut single from Sam Sparro, has continued its slow crawl up the charts, reaching #4 by the end of July.

Albums

A couple of relative newcomers with foreign names make the most spectacular debuts on the Motorola ARIA Album charts this July. Perth alt-rockers Birds of Tokyo come in at #3 with their second full-length album, 'Universes'. Similarly impressive, young Melbourne outfit British India enter the charts at #5 with their sophomore effort, 'Thieves'. But the highest Aussie chart entry of the month is shared by two slightly more veteran acts. The Living End are back with their fifth studio album, 'White Noise', which comes in at #2, the same position reached by the latest CD from Hillsong, 'This Is Our God'. Other notable releases this month include The Vines' 'Melodia' (#12), Holly Throsby's 'A Loud Call' (#34), and the self-titled debut from expat Sam Sparro, which had reached #30 by the end of the month.

ACCREDITATIONS

Sam Sparro - Black & Gold (single) - GOLD
Rogue Traders - I Never Liked You (single) - GOLD
Faker - Be The Twilight - GOLD
Justine Clarke - I Like To Sing - GOLD
The Living End - White Noise - GOLD
The Presets - Apocalypse - PLATINUM
Gabriella Cilmi - Lessons To Be Learned - PLATINUM
Icehouse - Man Of Colours - PLATINUM

June 2008

June 2008 starts out with Australian acts claiming six of the Top 10 spots in the first Motorola ARIA album chart of the month - four of them [Gabriella Cilmi, Pete Murray, Vanessa Amorosi and The Presets] are in the Top 5. Certainly 2008 has already marked itself as another classic year in Australian music. Great new music is being made by a diverse variety of local talent long-standing records are being broken all over the shop.

Over on the Motorola ARIA singles chart, the biggest hit of 2008 so far, Gabriella Cilmi's "Sweet About Me", is carving out its own slice of history. The 16-year-old Melbourne singer's debut single ends up spending five weeks at the top of the charts [as well as six weeks at No. 2], making it the most successful local single by a local act since Silverchair's 'Straight Lines' [four weeks at No. 1 in early 2007] and the most successful song by an Australian female artist since Merril Bainbridge's 'Mouth' [six weeks in the top spot back in 1995].

Whilst it might now be over a year old, Silverchair's "Straight Lines" continues to break records. After dominating last year's ARIA Awards, the song is again celebrated at the annual APRA songwriting awards, staged this month in the ballroom at Sydney Hilton.

Over 30,000 APRA members voted 'Straight Lines' - which Daniel Johns co-wrote with The Presets' Julian Hamilton - as the Australian Song of the Year. Daniel is also again named Australian songwriter of the year. It's the third time in his remarkable career that Daniel has been bestowed this title by his peers and he becomes the only person to have received it three times. And helping create another record, 'Straight Lines' is also named the most broadcast Oz song of the year. Seemingly having the time of his life, Daniel's acceptance speeches on the night turn out to be a bit too rock 'n' roll for the mainstream media but that doesn't stop his famous face being plastered all over the next day's news.

Other winners on the night include Sally Seltmann [who co-wrote the international hit '1234' and is named Breakthrough Songwriter]; Rogue Traders [Dance Work of the Year], John Butler [who won his third Best Blues & Roots Work award]; Troy Cassar-Daley and Don Walker [Best Country Song]; Jade MacRae [Urban]; and Kenneth Schroder [Jazz]. Legendary artist manager Roger Davies is presented the Ted Albert Award for Outstanding Services to Music.

Also this June we learnt the full list of this year's inductees into the ARIA Hall of Fame. And talk about diversity - Russell Morris, Dragon, The Triffids, Rolf Harris and Max Merritt. This latest group of legends will be formally inducted during a star-studded ceremony at the Melbourne Town Hall on the first night of July.

In other music news, Natalie Bassingthwaite announced she's leaving the Rogue Traders after an incredibly successful tenure as the group's lead singer. Natalie is set to pursue a solo career.

In Melbourne, Midnight Oil's '10, 9, 8 ...' tops a critic's poll of the Top 50 best Australian albums of all time, while The Living End announce their return with an energetic performance in a city street. In Sydney, the music industry's annual charity lunch, the Golden Stave, raises \$680,000 and lays witness to the official live comeback of The Angels.

Over in Nashville, Troy Cassar-Daley is presented with the 2008 CMA Global Country Artist Award in recognition of his contribution to the genre. Across in London, rockers Airbourne [from Warrnambool, Victoria] win Best Debut Album at the Metal Hammer Awards for their 'Runnin' Wild' LP, while Nick Cave [from Warracknabeal, Victoria] wins MOJO magazine's Album of the Year prize for his most recent epic, 'Dig, Lazarus Dig!!!'

Yes, it's all going on in the world of Australian music, right across the globe. And that's just the first half of 2008.

Singles

Aside from Gabriella Cilmi dominating the top of the Motorola ARIA singles chart, it's a quiet month for new Australian singles with the biggest new local release being 'Are You With Me' by Sydney dance outfit The Potbelleez reaching #31.

Albums

While recent big Aussie releases still dominate the top end of the Motorola ARIA album chart, new releases this month include Vanessa Amorosi's comeback album, 'Somewhere In The Real World', which comes in at #4, and 'Summerland', the latest disc from Sydney hip-hoppers The Herd, which enters the chart at #7. 'Postcards', the debut from Sydney alt-rockers Sparkadia, reaches #23.

Accreditations

Axle Whitehead - I Don't Do Surprises (single) - GOLD
Vanessa Amorosi - Perfect (single) - GOLD
The Veronicas - Untouched (single) - PLATINUM
Vanessa Amorosi - Somewhere In The Real World - GOLD
AC/DC - Plug Me In (DVD) - 6 x PLATINUM

May 2008

It's May 2008 and to capture a full perspective of what's happening in Australian music this month, it's necessary to look way beyond our own horizons.

Over in the UK, the British music charts came under a full-blown assault from Aussie artists and ex-pats who share a string of Top 10 hits.

An unknown here at home, newcomer Sam Sparro - a Sydney-born, LA-based, UK-signed dance artist - sees his self-titled debut album climb to #4 on the UK album charts on the back of a hit single, 'Black and Gold', which reached #2 on the UK singles chart. The name Sam Sparro will undoubtedly sound familiar to many Sydney-siders. That's because this Sparro fellow borrowed his professional name from a legendary long-running Sydney radio character named Sam Sparrow.

Joining Sparro high on the UK charts is another band of ex-pats named Pendulum. Born-and-bred in Perth, the young members of Pendulum long ago relocated to London to pursue their musical dreams. The electro outfit's commitment was rewarded big time this month when their new single, 'Propane Nightmares', reached #9 on the UK singles charts, and their second album, 'In Silico', peaked at #2 on the UK album charts. The album then goes Top 10 here in Australia.

Gabriella Cilmi, the 16-year-old phenomenon out of Melbourne, is also right up there in the UK. On the homefront her debut album, 'Lessons To Be Learned', reached #2 on the Motorola ARIA album chart, while her debut single, 'Sweet About Me', returned to the top spot of the singles chart. The young singer falls just short of replicating this phenomenal success in the UK with the same single reaching #7 and the album #8. Cilmi is also a hit in New Zealand where the single and album respectively reach # 7 and #6 on the Kiwi charts.

Of course, young Cilmi has some way to go to match the success and status of Melbourne's greatest ever pop export, the incomparable Ms Kylie Minogue. In the ever-evolving life and extraordinary career of this great international pop and fashion icon, May 2008 brings with it some truly unique milestones. On May 28, Kylie turned 40, which is mind-blowing to anyone old enough to remember when she released her debut single, 'Locomotion', way back in 1987. [Cilmi was still four years away from being born.] But that's not the only big event in Kylie's month. A few weeks earlier in Paris, the French government presented her with its highest cultural award, Ordre des Arts et des Lettres - Order of Arts and Literature. The presentation coincided with Kylie choosing Paris for the opening date of her KYLIE X2008 European tour, which will play to half-a-million fans before moving to Australia later in the year. Kylie is also set to receive an OBE from the Queen Elizabeth in July.

Back here at home, a few other Aussie music legends also made the headlines. ARIA Hall of Famer Jimmy Barnes released a warts-and-all account of his career thus far as the first instalment in a new series of books entitled 'Icons of Australian Music'. Meanwhile, Normie Rowe, another member of the ARIA Hall Of Fame, found himself at the centre of a national controversy when it's alleged the Australian government drafted him into the Vietnam War under false pretences. [The reports are later proven to be wrong.]

And from his base in the UK, Nick Cave - the most recent inductee into the ARIA Hall Of Fame - announced his plans to have a life-sized bronze statue of himself, half naked and on horseback, erected in the centre of his hometown of Warracknabeal in country Victoria.

Meanwhile ARIA announced the first two acts to be inducted into the Hall of Fame at this year's ceremony at Melbourne Town Hall on July 1, namely Russell Morris and Dragon. They will be joined by another three legendary artists whose names will be revealed as the event draws closer.

In other music-related news this May 2008, twins Jess and Lisa from The Veronicas come in third and fourth [in that order] on FHM magazine's annual poll of the world's Top 100 Sexiest Women; Guy Sebastian, the original Australian Idol, marries his long-time sweetheart Jules Egan in a highly-publicised ceremony in Sydney; and Sydney chart-toppers The Presets, currently on tour in the US, sell-out every date of their up-coming national Australian tour.

Also, in an Australian first, The Whitlams record a new album with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and give it away through a Sunday newspaper. Alternatively, everyone has to pay for Pete Murray's latest album, 'Summer At Eureka', but that doesn't stop it from becoming the singer/songwriter's third album in a row to top the Motorola ARIA album charts - which is the perfect way to top off what has been a truly remarkable month in Australian music, right around the world.

Singles

A quiet month for new local singles. The most notable new release this month is 'When We Were Kids', the debut single from Melbourne rockers The Galvatrons, which just sneaks into the Top 40 at #39.

Albums

Pete Murray's 'Summer At Eureka' debuts at #1 in the last week of May. Pendulum's 'In Silico' makes it as high as #9, while inventive Sydney hip hoppers Bliss N Eso officially go mainstream as their third album, 'Flying Colours', comes into the charts at #10. Other big Australian releases this month include several covers albums: Damien

Leith's 'Catch The Wind: Songs of A Generation' [which reaches #2]; Carl Riseley's debut album, 'The Rise' [#5]; and Kate Ceberano's 'So Much Beauty' [#9].

Accreditations

The Presets - My People (single) - GOLD
Ricki-Lee - Can't Touch It (single) - PLATINUM
The Potbelleez - Don't Hold Back (single) - PLATINUM
Gabriella Cilmi - Sweet About Me (single) - PLATINUM
Damien Leith - Catch the Wind: Songs of a Generation - GOLD
Gabriella Cilmi - Lessons To Be Learned - GOLD
Aussie Army Band - Salute to the Aussie Digger - GOLD
Pete Murray - Summer at Eureka - GOLD

April 2008

It's April 2008 and you'd be forgiven for thinking something almost supernatural is happening in Australian music. The Australian Prime Minister has a Top 10 hit. Another unknown Aussie singer looks like he could win American Idol. The Angels are coming back from the dead. A duo of local duos top the Motorola ARIA Album Charts: One's a husband and wife team from the country playing country, the other's a proto-electronic rock outfit straight out of Sydney's alt-music scene. And that's just the stuff that made the headlines.

This April on the Motorola ARIA singles chart, 'Sweet About Me', the debut single from 16-year-old Melbourne singer Gabriella Cilmi, completes its month-long climb to the top spot. But its April's other massive local hit, 'From Little Things Big Things Grow' by The Getup Mob, that most excites the nation's historians.

This new version of the Paul Kelly and Kev Carmody classic - starring both Kelly and Carmody alongside a cast of famous and not-so-famous Aussie singers - was produced to commemorate February's historic "Sorry" speech by Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, bits of which feature prominently in this new recording. The single was officially launched by the federal government's Minister for Environment, Heritage and the Arts, the right honourable member for Kingsford-Smith, Peter Robert Garrett. Ironically perhaps, it's been over 20 years since any sitting member from the government's front bench has featured in a hit single that's climbed as high as #4 on the national charts. And that was 1986's "The Dead Heart" by Midnight Oil, with lead vocals by Minister Garrett. Garrett's other official duties this month include launching the APRA's inaugural Song Summit in Sydney which draws over 900 people across three days.

Back on the official Motorola ARIA album chart, last month's chart-topping appearances by Perth's Gyroscope and Melbourne's Cut Copy are followed up this April by a huge number one debut from Sydney's The Presets. Coinciding with the duo's show-stealing spot on the national V music festival, their second album, 'Apocalypso', instantly becomes one of the biggest new releases of the year. In the very same week, alternative Sydney rockers Cog storm in at #2 with their second album, 'Sharing Space'. There's no denying there's a massive new wave coming through in Australian music and it's taking in all shapes and sounds.

The other local duo to top the charts this month is husband and wife team, Shane Nicholson and Kasey Chambers, with their debut collaborative album, 'Rattlin' Bones'. Whilst it's Nicholson's first visit to the top, it's Chambers' fourth straight #1 album.

In other local music news and gossip this April: Jimmy Barnes wins an ASTRA Award as the most popular male host on subscription television; The Veronicas' Lisa Origliasso announces her engagement to former Australian Idol heart-throb Dean Geyer; and MTV Australia stages its annual awards in Sydney.

Over in the US, readers of the guitar player's bible, Guitar Player magazine, vote Tommy Emmanuel as the world's best acoustic guitarist, while on national US television, on the biggest talent quest on Earth, a Perth ex-pat singer named Michael Johns looked like the odds-on favourite to take out this year's American Idol competition before getting unexpectedly eliminated in the final eight.

How's all that for variety? In history's page let every stage look back upon April 2008 as a truly historic, if somewhat bizarro month in Australian music.

Singles

The star-studded re-recording of 'From Little Things Big Things Grow' by The GetUp Mob is officially the biggest local single release of the month, peaking at #4 on the national charts. Other local pop artists adding to their personal tally of hits this April are The Veronicas with 'This Love' [#14], Vanessa Amorosi with 'Perfect' [#23], and The Rogue Traders with 'What You're On' [#30].

Albums

Alongside the huge charts debuts from Kasey Chambers & Shane Nicholson ['Rattlin' Bones', #1], The Presets ['Apocalypso', #1] and Cog ['Sharing Space', #2], other big releases this month come from Adelaide outfit The Audreys ['When The Flood Comes', #20] and Aboriginal folk singer Geoffrey Yunupingu, who comes into the charts at #21 with his beautiful debut album, 'Gurrumul'.

Accreditations

Mr G - Naughty Girl (single) - GOLD
Faker - This Heart Attack (single) - GOLD
The Presets - Apocalypso - GOLD
The Beautiful Girls - Learn Yourself - GOLD
Kasey Chambers & Shane Nicholson - Rattlin' Bones - GOLD
Paul Kelly - Live Apples (DVD) - GOLD

March 2008

March 2008 and the Australian music scene experiences a bloom of diverse local talent making spectacular debuts at the top end of the Motorola ARIA singles and album charts.

On the singles side, debut releases from three new solo artists instantly make their presence felt. Sixteen-year-old Melbourne singer Gabriella Cilmi comes into the chart at No. 13 with 'Sweet About Me', but the song quickly works its way upwards [eventually all the way to No. 1]. It also becomes a top 30 hit in the UK.

Meanwhile, dance maestro Paul Mac helps out a peculiar character named Mr G, a drama teacher previously best known for his work in high school musicals, and together they score a Top 10 hit with a controversial track, 'Naughty Girl'. Axle Whitehead, the former Australian Idol contestant and music Video Hits presenter, also cracks the Top 10 with his debut single, 'I Don't Do Surprises'.

Over on the album charts, a new generation of Australian rock acts are starting to break through in the biggest way possible. Perth's Gyroscope debut at No. 1 on the Motorola ARIA album chart with their third studio release, 'Breed Obsession'. Two weeks later, Melbourne's Cut//Copy replicate the feat when 'In Ghost Colours', the group's second album, also debuts at the No. 1 position.

The biggest official ARIA party this March honours local chart-toppers from 2007. The 6th annual ARIA #1 Chart Awards recognises a dozen local artists for scoring at least one #1 in 2007, with five acts - Silverchair, Delta Goodrem, Missy Higgins, Kylie Minogue and Damien Leith - each scoring two #1s across ARIA's singles, album or DVD charts.

Still waiting to make their mark on the top end charts, but having definitely won over the hearts of the nation's music critics, is Sydney duo The Mess Hall, who this month are awarded the prestigious Australian Music Prize (the AMP) for their sophomore album, 'Devil's Elbow'. The Mess Hall became the third recipients of the annual prize, following in the path of previous winners The Drones and Augie March.

Also lauded this month for his on-going contributions to music is legendary Australian concert promoter, Michael Chugg. Not only is Chugg presented with a Lifetime Achievement Award - the Bottle award - at the International Live Music Conference in London, but back here at home, his remarkable life in rock 'n' roll is the focus of an episode of ABC-TV's brilliant Australian Story series. All the while his company is busy staging this month's five-day Byron Bay Blues Festival, attended by over 70,000 music fans, and also taking the festival out on the road to another four locations around the country.

In other tour news, Keith Urban is back in town on another sold-out run of shows around the country, while the month also sees the inaugural staging of an all new country music event in the Snowy Mountains - CMC Rocks The Snowys. Further down south, 10,000 gather for the Port Fairy Folk Festival in Victoria, which marks the official comeback of Weddings Parties Anything with the group's first major performance in a decade.

In other notable music news this March 2008, the great Nick Cave becomes Dr Nick Cave when he's made an honorary Doctor Of Laws by Monash University in Melbourne, the same campus he dropped out of as a youngster to pursue music. Another of our most celebrated ex-pats, Olivia Newton John comes home to thank her loyal gay audience with an early morning appearance at the annual Mardi Gras party in Sydney, while the Big Gay Day concert in Brisbane draws a line-up that includes Anthony Callea, Kate Miller-Heidke and Melissa Tkautz.

Singles

Following on from a relatively quiet start to the year thus far with local releases, March sees an explosion of new acts rampaging the charts. The biggest hits of the month all come from debutante artists. Gabriella Cilmi comes in at #13 with 'Sweet About Me' on its way to topping the charts; Mr G's 'Naughty Girl' reaches #8; and Axle Whitehead's 'I Don't Do Surprises' makes it to #8. As far as proven hit makers go, Ricki Lee scores her third consecutive Top 10 when her latest single, 'Can't Sing A Different Song', similarly comes in at #8. Also claiming Top 40 hits this month, Kate Alexa's cover of the song 'Teardrops' peaks at #26, while Pnau's 'Baby' reaches #34.

Albums

Perth's Gyroscope and Melbourne's Cut//Copy both score their first chart-toppers with their respective albums, 'Breed Obsession' and 'In Ghost Colours'. But proving it's not just the youngsters that can dominate the charts, Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds score the highest chart position of their 25-year career when their latest long-player, 'Dig Lazarus Dig!!!', makes it all the way to #2. Also proving eternal popularity, The Slim Dusty Family's 'Reunion' reaches #15, while the Hillsong United church singers score yet another Top 10 album when 'With Hearts As One' peaks at #8.

Accreditations

Kisschasy - Opinions Won't Keep You Warm At Night (single) - GOLD
Ricki-Lee - Brand New Day - GOLD
The Panics - Cruel Guards - GOLD

Kate Miller-Heidke - Little Eve - GOLD

February 2008

February 2008 was the month that saw Keith Urban win yet another American Grammy for Best Male Country Vocal Performance for his song "Stupid Boy".

In statues of an entirely different nature, the great AC/DC frontman Bon Scott was remembered 28 years after his death with the unveiling of a life-size bronze statue in Perth. The event was marked with a concert featuring other legendary Australian rockers including Rose Tattoo, The Screaming Jets, The Angels Band, Noiseworks and The Party Boys, the latter's line-up including two ex-AC/DC members in original singer Dave Evans and bassist Mark Evans. Bon's statue will be permanently erected at Fisherman's Wharf in Fremantle, near where the great Scottish-born singer grew up and near the cemetery where he's buried.

Meanwhile, up in Queensland, they were also celebrating their own with the unveiling of the Brisbane rock 'n' roll Walk of Fame through the city's Brunswick Street Mall. The first ten immortalised in the pavement were Powderfinger, Savage Garden, The Saints, The Go-Betweens, The Bee Gees, Keith Urban, Regurgitator, Custard, Railroad Gin and Blowhard.

This February was also tinged with sadness for the passing of another two legendary figures in Australian music: country music legend Smoky Dawson, 94, and leading local jazz bassist and producer Jackie Orszaczky, 59.

Smoky Dawson was inducted into the ARIA Hall of Fame in 2005 for his incomparable contribution to the development of local music. In a startling multi-media career dating back to pre-WWII, Smoky started taking his unique brand of Australian music out to the world long before an Australian music industry even existed. A public memorial in Smoky's honour was staged in Sydney and featured performances from a who's-who of Australian country music, including Lee Kernaghan, John Williamson, Johnny Chester, Beccy Cole, Melinda Schneider and many, many more.

The gifted Jackie Orszaczky moved to Australia from his native Hungary in the early 1970s and quickly made his presence felt in the local scene as Marcia Hines' music director at the height of the diva's pop star years. As well as driving numerous jazz combos over the years, Jackie was arguably the most in-demand studio bassist in the Australian recording scene for decades, appearing on literally hundreds of Australian recordings of all genres. A tireless live performer, Jackie played his final show a little over a week before losing his battle with leukaemia.

Following on from a frenetic start to the year in local music, this February had a more tranquil and reflective mood to it. As a whole new generation of local Australian acts seemed poised to dominate the charts in months to come, February 2008 was a month where we paused to reflect on just how far we'd come, and how our brightest days still lay ahead.

Singles

A quiet month in terms of local singles releases, but notable for Kylie Minogue just missing out on a Top 10 hit with her latest single, 'Wow' peaking at #11.

Albums

It's still the calm before the storm with major new album releases, but the gifted Lior confirms he's now a major player with his third album, 'Corner of an Endless Road', entering the charts at #13. Similarly, Melbourne rockers The Getaway Plan make their presence felt with their debut album, 'Other Voices, Other Rooms', coming in at #14.

Accreditations

Delta Goodrem - Believe Again (single) - GOLD
Kylie Minogue - 2 Hearts (single) - GOLD
Rogue Traders - Don't You Wanna Feel (single) - GOLD
Evermore - Light Surrounding You (single) - PLATINUM
The Veronicas - Hook Me Up (single) - PLATINUM
Sarah Blasko - The Overture and the Underscore - PLATINUM
Sarah Blasko - What The Sea Wants, The Sea Will Have - PLATINUM
Rogue Traders - Better In The Dark - PLATINUM
The Veronicas - Hook Me Up - 2 x PLATINUM
Delta Goodrem - Delta - 3 x PLATINUM
Troy Cassar-Daley - Born to Survive (DVD) - GOLD
Hillsong - Mighty To Save (DVD) - GOLD
Hillsong - For All You've Done (DVD) - GOLD
Hilltop Hoods - City Of Light (DVD) - GOLD

January 2008

January 2008 and what a way to start a new year of Australian music. This month's highlights include a home-grown country music superstar being named Australian Of The Year, the biggest music festival ever leapfrogs its way across the nation, and over in LA, an international gala celebrates an Australian pop icon.

The new year is kick-started by an unexpected jolt. Only days into 2008 comes an official announcement that one of Australian music's glamour couples, Natalie Imbruglia and Silverchair's Daniel Johns, have decided to end their four-year marriage. It's part of the ARIA Awards proud history that this young couple first came together at the 1999 ARIA Awards ceremony in Sydney. The pair named career demands and distance (Imbruglia is based in England, Johns mostly here in Australia) as the primary reasons for the split.

But the show must go on. Within weeks, Johns (sporting an all-new peroxide hair-do) and his Silverchair bandmates are one of the headlining acts on the annual Big Day Out festival. Other local artists featured on the bill include Paul Kelly, Grinspoon, Operator Please, The Hilltop Hoods, Regurgitator, as well as international headliners Bjork and Rage Against The Machine. For the first time in the Big Day Out's 16-year history, every single event is a complete sell-out with a combined audience of 230,000 Aussie music fans attending the five shows staged across the country. Another 45,000 attend the sold-out show in Auckland.

On a slightly smaller scale but no less potent, another live music highlight of January 2008 is the Cannot Buy My Soul series of concerts held at Sydney's State Theatre as part of the Sydney Festival. The shows saw the likes of Paul Kelly, Missy Higgins, Tex Perkins, Steve Kilbey, Clare Bowditch and Sara Storer join forces to celebrate and sing the songs of Aboriginal songwriter, Kev Carmody.

Also in Sydney this January, the former members of legendary West Australian outfit The Triffids came together for their first performance in Australia in almost two decades. The four performances, featuring guests including Steve Kilbey, Rob Snarski, Mick Harvey and Youth Group's Toby Martin, paid homage to the music of the Triffids' late great frontman, David McComb.

Over in Los Angeles our international diplomats choose to celebrate the start of Australia Day week by throwing a party in honour of one of our most successful and enduring exports, Ms Kylie Minogue. The annual G'Day USA black-tie gala has become a highlight of Hollywood's social calendar. Guests at this year's event included Hollywood superstars John Travolta and Harrison Ford.

Tragically, a few days later, on January 22, Australian entertainment - as well as the Hollywood establishment - is shaken to its core by news that the brilliant young West Australian actor Heath Ledger has died in New York. Obviously best known for his work on the silver screen, Ledger had a great passion for music and had directed a handful of music videos for artists and friends ranging from Ben Harper to N'fa of 1200 Techniques. Ledger had also recently started a record label with his good friend Ben Harper and their first signing was a young artist from Perth named Grace Woodroffe.

In happier news back here at home, Australia Day 2008 becomes one of the biggest days in the life of country music star Lee Kernaghan. Not only does the multi-ARIA Award winning artist pick up another three prizes at the annual country music awards in Tamworth - taking his career tally of Golden Guitars to 27, a record second only to Slim Dusty - but on Australia Day, the Prime Minister bestows Kernaghan the title of Australian of the Year in recognition of his on-going charity work for those living and working in the nation's drought-damaged bush. Also honoured this Australia Day was legendary rock manager John Woodruff (Savage Garden, Baby Animals), who was made a Member of The Order Of Australia [AM].

Singles

Traditionally the quietest of months for new releases, the only major hit single by a local act this January is Rogue Traders' 'I Never Liked You', which peaks at #9. Country star Col Finley makes it to #31 with his latest, 'Get Your Country On'.

Albums

The biggest new album of the month belongs to country star Adam Brand who comes in at #10 with his latest long player, 'Blame It On Eve', while Australian Idol supergroup Young Divas reach #34 with their second set of disco covers, 'New Attitude'.

Accreditations

The Potbelleez - Don't Hold Back (single) - GOLD
Choir of Hard Knocks - Songs of Hope and Inspiration - GOLD
Kisschasy - Hymns For The Nonbeliever - GOLD
Melinda Schneider - Happy Tears - GOLD
Angus & Julia Stone - A Book Like This - GOLD
Split Enz - One Out Of The Bag (DVD) - GOLD

Guy Sebastian - The Memphis Album - 2 X PLATINUM
AC/DC - Plug Me In (DVD) - 5 X PLATINUM

December 2007

December 2007 begins with seven new releases by Australian acts dominating the Top 10 of the Motorola ARIA album chart. Australian artists also dominate the end-of-year charts - a fitting conclusion to what history will look back upon as a red letter year in Australian music.

Topping the first chart of this final month of 2007 is 'X', the 10th studio release from our long-reigning queen of pop, Ms Kylie Minogue. It's her third local No. 1 album, her ninth to make it into the Top 10. All around, December 2007 marks yet another extraordinary month in Kylie's remarkable 20-year recording career. Other highlights include a duet with Paul McCartney on British TV, as well as a starring role in the Dr Who Christmas special. Kylie heads home to Melbourne for Christmas to learn she's made it onto the Queen's New Year's honour's list to receive an OBE.

It's definitely all about the ladies this December in Australian music. The first big rock festival of the summer, Sydney's Homebake, is dedicated to the women of Australian music and is headlined by a reformed Divinyls, their first major concert appearance in over a decade. The night before the show, singer Chrissie Amphlett bravely appeared on national television to reveal her five-year battle with multiple sclerosis.

In other news, Delta Goodrem announces her engagement to Irish boyfriend Brian McFadden, Ricki-Lee reveals she has signed a recording contract with British super dance label Ministry of Sound, while former Australian Idol winner Casey Donovan gets her recording career back on track with the release of a new independent EP, 'Eye 2 Eye'. Over in the UK, a new young talent from Melbourne named Gabriella Cilmi is invited to perform her as-yet-unreleased debut single, 'Sweet About Me', on the BBC's esteemed television music program, Later With Jools Holland.

It's no surprise that end-of-year statistics perfectly reflect just what an amazing year it's been for so many local music artists. Albums by four Australian acts - Missy Higgins's 'On a Clear Night' (No. 4), Powderfinger's 'Dream Days at the Hotel Existence' (No. 6), the John Butler Trio's 'Grand National' (No. 7) and Silverchair's 'Young Modern' (No.9) - feature prominently in the Top 10 of 2007's biggest selling albums. Silverchair's omnipotent 'Straight Lines' single also makes it to No. 4 the list of overall highest selling singles.

Furthermore, figures from the Phonographic Performance Company of Australia show that six of the top 20 most broadcast songs in 2007 were also locally produced, with the most popular new Australian song being Eskimo Joe's 'Black Fingernails, Red Wine', closely followed by Silverchair's 'Straight Lines'.

Big songs, big year. Farewell, 2007 - what a classic. Now bring on the hits of 2008!

Singles

A relatively quiet month for new singles with most of the big shots already fired in the lead up to the final charts of the year. There is one major exception with Delta Goodrem releasing the second single from her Delta album: 'Believe Again' shoots straight in at #2, making it her 11th Top 10 single.

Albums

With Christmas just around the corner, the album charts are jam-packed with local produce throughout December. Aside from Kylie Minogue coming in at #1 with 'X', Jimmy Barnes is back on the first chart of the month with 'Out in the Blue' coming in at #3, while the Young Divas make it to #10 with their new self-titled album of covers. The following week, Tina Arena makes a long-overdue return to the local charts with her first English album in seven years, 'Songs of Love & Loss' - also a covers album - entering at #4. Finally, 'The Winner's Journey', the debut album from this year's Australian Idol, Natalie Gauci, features the songs she performed on the show and peaks at #12.

Accreditations

Natalie Gauci - Here I Am (single) - GOLD
Young Divas - New Attitude - GOLD
David Hobson - The Promise - GOLD
Delta Goodrem - In This Life (single) - PLATINUM
Human Nature - Get Ready - PLATINUM
Keith Urban - Greatest Hits: 18 Kids - PLATINUM
Jimmy Barnes - Out In The Blue - PLATINUM
Tina Arena - Songs of Love and Loss - PLATINUM
Guy Sebastian - The Memphis Album - PLATINUM
David Campbell - The Swing Sessions 2 - PLATINUM
Natalie Gauci - The Winner's Journey - PLATINUM
Delta - Delta Goodrem - 2 X PLATINUM
John Butler Trio - Grand National - 3 X PLATINUM
Powderfinger & Silverchair - Across The Great Divide (DVD) - 2 x PLATINUM
AC/DC - Plug Me In (DVD) - 4 x PLATINUM

November 2007

Up in Queensland, country music star Lee Kernaghan was named that state's Australian of the Year. There was also another national election this November as the country chose its fifth Australian Idol. In a close call, it went to Melbourne's Natalie Gauci over Sydney's Matt Corby.

Meanwhile, pop princess Kylie Minogue completed her comeback with the release of her tenth studio album, *X*, and her tenth Australian #1 single, '2 Hearts'. In what was an incredibly busy month for Minogue, even by her hectic standards, she also starred in her own TV special in the UK [which features a comic on-screen reunion with Jason Donovan], released a tour doco, announced a new European tour, and launched her own social networking website, KylieKconnect.

Another of our iconic female artists also made a comeback with the London-based, French-singing Tina Arena turning 40 and preparing to release her first English album in seven years, 'Songs of Love and Loss'.

A reformed Crowded House finally returned home for a national tour, while Silverchair set off for their third US tour this year. On November 22, music fans around the nation paused to remember the 10th anniversary of the tragic death of INXS's legendary frontman, Michael Hutchence.

For ARIA itself, basking in the glow of what was quite possibly the most successful ARIA Awards ever at the end of last month, November '07 went down in history as the month when the sale of digital-only singles first counted towards the official Motorola ARIA singles chart. Immediately, Australia had its first ever digital-only hit single - a live recording of John Butler Trio and Keith Urban's memorable performance of 'Funky Tonight' at the recent 21st ARIA Awards, which debuts at #11.

Singles

Aside from Kylie Minogue [with her record-breaking tenth chart topping single, '2 Hearts'] and the John Butler Trio/Keith Urban combo cutting their own slice of local chart history this November, the success of this year's ARIA Awards has the most dramatic flow-on effect on the first chart of the month. Most remarkably, new ARIA winners Sneaky Sound System see all four of their singles move up into the Top 50 at once. 'UFO' lands the highest at #15. Meanwhile, another single proving it's got a long-life is The Veronicas' 'Hook Me Up', which finally hits the #1 spot six weeks after its release. Of the month's new releases, Ricki Lee makes the best impression with her new single, 'Love Is All Around', debuting at #5.

Albums

A rush of pre-Christmas releases sees new local albums rampage the Motorola ARIA Album charts. Human Nature celebrate turning 18 with the release of their third Motown tribute album, 'Get Ready', which debuts at #2. The Veronicas back-up their huge hit single with their second album, also entitled 'Hook Me Up', debuting at #2. Guy Sebastian's fourth studio album, 'The Memphis Album', comes in at #3, while legendary Idol host Marcia Hines releases a new album, 'Life', which enters the chart at #21. Other notable releases this November, Keith Urban's 'Greatest Hits' enters at #7, David Campbell's 'Swing Sessions 2' comes in at #8, Matt Tilley's 'Three's A Crowd' at #14, and 'Yes Yes Vindictive', the debut album from the Gold Coast's Operator Please, entering at #28.

Accreditations

Human Nature - Get Ready - GOLD

Keith Urban - Greatest Hits: 18 Kids - GOLD

Jimmy Barnes - Out In The Blue - GOLD

Bob Evans - Suburban Songbook - GOLD

Guy Sebastian - The Memphis Album - GOLD

David Campbell - The Swing Sessions 2 - GOLD

Matt Tilley - Three's A Crowd - GOLD

Xavier Rudd - White Moth - GOLD

Jimmy Barnes - Max Sessions: Live At The Opera House (DVD) - GOLD

The Angels - Wasted Nights: The Definitive Greatest Hits (DVD) - GOLD

The Veronicas - Hook Me Up - PLATINUM

Shannon Noll - Turn It Up - PLATINUM

Kylie Minogue - X - PLATINUM

The John Butler Trio - Live At Federation Square (DVD) - PLATINUM

Sneaky Sound System - Sneaky Sound System - 2 X PLATINUM

Powderfinger - Dream Days At The Hotel Existence - 3 X PLATINUM

Missy Higgins - On A Clear Night - 3 X PLATINUM

Silverchair - Young Modern - 3 X PLATINUM

AC/DC - Plug Me In (DVD) - 3 X PLATINUM

Human Nature - Reach Out: The Motown Record - 6 X PLATINUM

October 2007

This month was marked by the 21st Annual ARIA Awards, and what an unforgettable birthday party it was - a history-making celebration that proudly reflected the diversity and success of contemporary Australian popular music.

It was a night of high glamour [Daniel Johns wore silver, Delta wore gold, a famous actress turned up on the red carpet in a sheer dress] and wonderful live performances from an extraordinary array of veterans and newcomers alike.

The ARIAs have grown into such a huge, national event that even smack-bang in the middle of a federal election campaign, pictures and reports from the ARIAs make it on to the front page of newspapers across the country and into gossip columns all over the world. The live broadcast on Network Ten drew over 1.5 million viewers and was the #1 show for the timeslot in the key 18-49 demographic.

The great Silverchair kicked off proceedings with a dynamic performance of their already classic hit, 'Straight Lines', and in many ways, it would turn out to be the trio's night. The 'Chair put the icing on their comeback by taking home five ARIAs, including several of the biggies such as Album, Single, and Group of the Year awards. It makes them the 'winningest' act in the history of the ARIA Awards, a title previously held by John Farnham ever since the first ARIA Awards ceremony back in 1987.

The ARIAs, held in Sydney at Acer Arena on October 28, topped off another great month in Australia music. It was a month that saw Delta Goodrem confirm her status as one of our all-time greats when her third album, simply entitled 'Delta', followed its two multi-platinum predecessors straight to the top of the Motorola ARIA album chart. Even the album's cast-offs would prove to be hits: a song Delta co-wrote for the album but chose not to record ['Eyes On Me'] was picked up by Celine Dion.

Also making a return to the limelight this month were several other legendary Australian female performers. The Baby Animals, featuring Suze DeMarchi, announced they would soon be making a comeback after a dozen years apart. We also got to hear Divinyls's first new music in just about as long, while ex-pat Tina Arena returned home with a new recording deal with EMI Music Australia and plans to release her first English album in over six years. In her absence from us, Tina has become both a mum and a huge star in France.

Also this October, tragedy struck a young band from Melbourne called Electric Jellyfish. In the middle of a self-funded tour through America, an accident involving the band's tour bus in Cleveland claimed the lives of guitarist Hayden Sweeney and his wife Bridget O'Brien. Other members of the band were also seriously injured.

Meanwhile, a benefit concert was held at Melbourne's Palais Theatre in honour of LA-based Aussie music legend, Max Merritt, who is fighting a crippling auto-immune disorder. The 'Concert For Max' featured an array of over 100 acts, including John Paul Young, Ross Wilson and Renee Geyer. It drew more than 2500 friends and fans and raised over \$200,000 for Merritt's on-going treatment.

Also displaying local music's charitable side, the second Legs 11 festival, which raised money for breast cancer awareness, was staged in Sydney's Domain and headlined by Missy Higgins. Then on the very last day of October, Powderfinger officially ended its own exhaustive national touring duties with a special show at the Sydney Opera House in honour of the victims of breast cancer. It was a magical way to end an historic month in Australian music.

Singles

The Rogue Traders score the biggest new local single of the month with 'Don't You Wanna Feel' spending four straight weeks at #10. It's a good month for other local dance acts too, with Sneaky Sound System earning another top 40 hit with 'Goodbye' peaking at #36. King Cross-based The Potbelleez see their new single, 'Don't Hold Back', chart at #27. In the rock world, multiple ARIA Award winner Silverchair's single 'If You Keep Losing Sleep' hits #16.

Albums

It's a Delta month on the album charts with the songstress's self-titled third album debuting in the top spot. Another big record comes in the shape of Rogue Traders' 'Better In the Dark' hitting #4. Claire Bowditch, 2006 ARIA Award Best Female Artist winner, is also back with her new album, 'The Moon Looked On', which charts at #29. Country and crooners are also represented, with Adam Harvey's 'I'm Doin Alright' coming in at #38, and Eran James' 'Ten Songs About Love' reaching #43.

Accreditations

Ricki-Lee - Can't Touch It (single) - GOLD

Rogue Traders - Better In The Dark - GOLD

Josh Pyke - Memories & Dust - GOLD

The Cat Empire - So Many Nights - GOLD

Mike & Michelle Jackson - Ain't It Great To Be Crazy - GOLD

Delta Goodrem - Delta - PLATINUM

The Angels - Live At Narara / Beyond Salvation Live (DVD) - GOLD

September 2007

This month sees the nation wrapped up in footy final fever, but it's an upcoming competition of an entirely different nature that has musical hearts aflutter.

Early one morning in the middle of the month, music industry reps and musos gathered at the Sydney Theatre for the announcement of the nominees for the 21st ARIA Awards, to be staged at Sydney's Acer Arena on October 28. Walking away big winners from the preliminary event was dance act Sneaky Sound System with ticks in six of the major categories, a worthy representation of the Sydney outfit's remarkable breakthrough year. Close behind was the John Butler Trio with five nominations, followed by Silverchair, Powderfinger, Kate Miller-Heidke and Gotye with four each; Josh Pyke with three; and Missy Higgins along Queensland teenagers Operator Please with two nominations apiece. The morning also saw the presentation of the four ARIA Artisan Awards, with Josh Pyke sharing the title of Producer of the Year with Wayne Connolly for their work on Pyke's debut album 'Memories & Dust', while Connolly also got the Engineer of the Year award. Also walking away from the Nominations Event as winners: Silverchair's 'Straight Lines' collected Video of the Year for directors Paul Goldman and Alice Bell, and Powderfinger's 'Dream Days at the Hotel Existence' won Best Cover Art for design company Debaser. And so, the scene is set for Australian music's night of nights.

Another national awards night making the news this September was the 12th Annual Deadly Awards, handed out at the Sydney Opera House. The great Jimmy Little was honoured as the inaugural recipient of an award that will forever carry his name - the Jimmy Little Achievement Award for Contribution to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Music. On the other end of the age spectrum, teenager Jessica Mauboy - last year's Australian Idol runner-up and recent inductee into the Young Divas - was named Entertainer of the Year. Other prizes went to Kev Carmody for Album of the Year [for 'Cannot Buy My Soul'] while Queenslanders Black Image were named Band of the Year.

September also saw the return of some of our biggest artists from long breaks out of the spotlight. Delta Goodrem was home for the release of her new single 'In This Life', which went straight to the top of the Motorola ARIA singles chart. It was, quite incredibly, her eighth chart-topping single - and she's still only 22! Also back was The Waifs, whose new album 'Sun Dirt Water' came in at number 2 on the Motorola ARIA album chart. Also making a long-overdue return to the singles chart was Vanessa Amorosi with 'Kiss Your Mama'.

Back home this month were The Veronicas, who had a new hit on their hands with the single 'Hook Me Up', but also kept themselves busy unveiling a new line of kids' clothing. Meanwhile, acts like The Living End and The Drones were busy making waves in the UK, while Augie March were over in the US making good on lots of media interest in their indisputably unique sound.

Back here in Australia, official figures released by ARIA this month show that demand for local music continues to grow, with retail sales of locally-produced albums now accounting for 35 per cent of all music appearing in the top 100. Five of the top 10 selling albums for the first half of 2007 were by Australian artists - Powderfinger, Silverchair, Damien Leith, Missy Higgins and the John Butler Trio. And that was just the first half of 2007.

Singles

While Delta's new single 'In This Life' was the only new local hit to reach the top spot of the Motorola ARIA singles chart this month, several others weren't too far behind. Shannon Noll's latest, 'Loud', came in at #3, The Cat Empire's 'No Longer There' peaked at #12, and the John Butler Trio scored yet another top 20 hit with 'Better Than' coming in at #16. Vanessa Amorosi's comeback single 'Kiss Your Mama' peaked at #15.

Albums

Another typically stellar month for new local album releases. The Waifs returned after a long break and went straight back into the business of selling lots of records with 'Sun Dirt Water' coming in at #2 and settling in for a long stay at the top end of the charts. Ben Lee, 2005's ARIA Awards Best Male Artist, released his latest album 'Ripe', which entered the chart at #11, while Shannon Noll's third long player, 'Turn It Up', peaked at #3. Adelaide rockers The Hot Lies saw their debut album 'Ringing In The Sane' go to #35 nationally, but the debut album of the month prize goes to 'A Book Like This' by folksy brother and sister duo Angus and Julia Stone, which came in at #6.

Accreditations

Delta Goodrem - In This Life (single) - GOLD
TV Rock vs Dukes Of Windsor - The Others (single) - GOLD
Gotye - Like Drawing Blood - GOLD
Slim Dusty - Pubs, Trucks & Plains - GOLD
Hillsong - Saviour King - GOLD
Hillsong - Saviour King (DVD) - GOLD
Paul Kelly - Stolen Apples - GOLD
The Waifs - Sun Dirt Water - GOLD
Hilltop Hoods - The Hard Road Restrung - GOLD
Shannon Noll - Turn It Up - GOLD
Damien Leith - Where We Land - PLATINUM
Slim Dusty - One Night In May (DVD) - PLATINUM
Wolfmother - Please Experience Wolfmother (DVD) - PLATINUM

August 2007

For anyone old enough to remember, August 2007 marks, believe it or not, the 20th anniversary of Kylie Minogue scoring her first Australian No. 1 single with a cover of the Little Eva classic hit, "The Loco-Motion". It was the biggest selling single of the 1980s and, until the Australian Idol phenomenon, the biggest selling Australian single of all time.

While Kylie and her pals celebrated this landmark event in the UK, back here in Australia the fifth season of the Australian Idol phenomenon went to air. If anyone doubted the format still had pulling power after five years, the show's first night ratings - which saw over 1.6 million viewers across the nation tune in - should have put those doubts to rest once and for all. Indeed, it's incredible that this talent show and its extraordinary impact on the local music scene still has its nay-sayers all this time on.

Case in point this month: last year's Idol winner Damien Leith returns with his first proper album, 'Where We Land', and it immediately goes straight to the top of the Motorola ARIA album chart. The new record sees Leith co-writing with the likes of multi-ARIA Award winner Alex Lloyd and former Wa Wa Nee frontman Paul Gray (who is also keeping himself busy this August as the band leader of the Countdown Spectacular 2 tour which tours arenas around the country.) Another ex-Idol star making her presence felt on the charts this month is Ricki-Lee Coulter, whose new single 'Can't Touch It' debuts at No. 2.

Of course, young wannabe pop stars can still launch a music career without going on Idol, as the Gold Coast teenagers Operator Please reminded everyone this month when their quirky debut single, 'Just A Song About Ping Pong' entered the Motorola ARIA singles chart at No. 15. They were immediately feted by big wig music types in the UK, as well as locally and the young band was invited to open the annual Splendour In The Grass festival in Byron Bay in front of 17,500 music fans. Other local talent represented on this year's Splendour bill included Powderfinger, Grinspoon, Hoodoo Gurus, Hilltop Hoods, The Waifs, Airbourne and Blue King Brown.

In what proved to be another monster month for local talent, August also saw the return of a few home-grown megastars who, for one reason or another, have been a bit quiet for the past couple of years. Most notably the now UK-based Delta Goodrem came home this month, with a sexy new look and a comeback single entitled 'In This Life', due for release in September.

Also British-based, ex-Savage Garden frontman Darren Hayes scored a top 20 hit in the UK this month with his new single 'On the Verge of Something Wonderful'. Yet another multi-ARIA award winner back home this month was US-based Ben Lee, who also brought with him a new single, 'Love Me Like the World is Ending'.

And on the subject of ARIA Awards, over 1000 music industry types took time out this month to lodge their votes for the 21st ARIA Awards, set to take place at Sydney's Acer Arena on October 28.

Right at the end of this August, two of Australia's biggest rock bands set off on what was billed as the biggest Australian rock tour in decades. Silverchair and Powderfinger kicked off their two-month Across The Great Divide tour in the 'Chair's hometown of Newcastle at the end of the month, playing the 'Finger's hometown of Brisbane a couple of nights later. The tour will play to over 200,000 local music fans before it's over.

One thing is certain this August 2007 - for pop idols and rock stars alike, it's an amazing time to be an Aussie muso.

Singles

A big month for Aussie music across the board is reflected in the diversity and depth of talent appearing on the Motorola ARIA singles charts. There's the usual contingent of established artists making their presence felt. Missy Higgins scores yet another hit single with 'Where I Stood' peaking at #10. Ben Lee's new one, 'Love Me Like The World Is Ending' makes it to #18, while The Waifs' comeback single 'Sun Dirt Water' reaches #32. The Oz Idol contingent is well represented with Ricki-Lee's 'Can't Touch It' spending a couple of weeks at #2, while Guy Sebastian notches up another Top 40 hit with 'Cover on my Heart', while former Idol finalist Lisa Mitchell sees her debut EP 'Said One To The Other' come in at #27. The biggest newcomer of the month is Operator Please whose debut single 'Just A Song About Ping Pong' peaks at #12 and settles in for a long stay just outside the Top 10. Another newcomer to the charts, although they've been around for a few years, are Adelaide rockers The Hot Lies, whose single 'Emergency! Emergency!' makes it to #34.

Albums

A similarly diverse bunch makes up this month's album debutants. Damien Leith proves his durability by topping the charts with 'Where We Land', almost a year on from winning Australian Idol. The next biggest local album of the month is the first solo offering from George's lead singer, Katie Noonan, with 'Skin' coming in at #6. A couple of acts from Melbourne's indie fraternity also have a strong showing with Midnight Juggernauts' 'Dystopia' entering the charts at #21 and Architecture in Helsinki reaching #30 with 'Places Like This'. Meanwhile, Something For Kate's retrospective 'The Murmur Years' enters at #26.

Accreditations

Grinspoon - Alibis and Other Lies - GOLD
Damien Leith - Where We Land - GOLD
Slim Dusty - One Night In May (DVD) - GOLD
Rockpalast - Cold Chisel (DVD) - GOLD
Bindi Kidfitness with Steve Irwin and The Crocmen - PLATINUM
Choir of Hard Knocks - Choir of Hard Knocks - PLATINUM
Crowded House - Time On Earth - PLATINUM
Grand National - The John Butler Trio - 2 x PLATINUM
Cold Chisel - The Last Stand (DVD) - 2 x PLATINUM
Double Allergic - Powderfinger - 3 x PLATINUM
Internationalist - Powderfinger - 5 x PLATINUM
Crowded House - Recurring Dream: The Very Best of Crowded House - CROWDED HOUSE
Silverchair - Straight Lines (single) - 2 x PLATINUM