

A lot of the songwriting for Ways and Means goes back to August 2002 when Peter Luscombe, Bill MacDonald, Dan Luscombe (hereafter referred to as Danel), Dan Kelly (Dank) and myself began jamming once a week in a rehearsal room. Dank and I were sharing a house and had a few co-written tunes already up and running. Everyone else brought in ideas and by early 2003 we had a stack of music recorded on ye olde trusty beat box. I did a lot of walking around the neighbourhood over the next few months pounding out lyrics for the tunes to my brain. By June we had enough to start work with Tchad Blake who came over to co-produce. We recorded 24 songs over three weeks and drank around 50 bottles of wine. Then in July Tchad and I mixed the record in the lovely west country of England. For trainspotters, Dank's is the right speaker, Danel in the left and Peter, Bill and I are in both.

SONGWRITING
WAYS + MEANS

While we were waiting for the record to come out the five of us, now known as The Boon Companions, collaborated on music for a film by Alkinos Tsilimidos entitled Missing Tom. We also recorded a theme song and nine tracks for a Fireflies, a new TV series, which will commence screening on the ABC this February.

Ways and Means will be released worldwide mid-February and we'll be touring all over the place throughout 2004 going to as many countries as we can.

An updated book of lyrics, published by Allen & Unwin is scheduled to come out in March. It contains all song lyrics written up to this point including the latest album. Some notes on the new songs follow.....

GUNNAMATTA: Is a long surf beach on the Mornington Peninsula in Victoria, Can get wild and rippy. Sharks, too. Started from a riff brought in by Danel then worked up by all of us.

THE OLDEST STORY IN THE BOOK: Always wanted to write a Tom, Dick and Harry story. Tom gets the girl but Harry gets the song. Dick's just glad to be on the road, playing guitar in a band. "June" and "the moon" star in the same song which is probably as close as I'll ever get to rhyming them.

HEAVY THING: The tune and the riff are Dank's. I nicked it offa him before his own band could get hold of it and took it down to Farmer John's.

WON'T YOU COME AROUND?: Inspired way back by Bowie's Sorrow. Not the only song on this record singing of a hard-headed girl.

WOMEN SINGING

THESE ARE THE DAYS: Love Peter's jerk groove on this tune. Great fun to play live when we're feeling it right and nail our falsetto chorus.

BEAUTIFUL FEELING: Every now and then Peter comes into rehearsal with a scrappy cassette of a nasty Casio keyboard line over terribly recorded drums and says "Do you reckon we can do anything with this?" "Yeah, how about we write a song for your wedding to Nat". So we did. Muddy Waters and Omar Khayam help out with the lyrics to the fourth verse.

CRYING SHAME: Made it up one night, all of us, after a Vietnamese meal in Richmond near where we rehearse. Danel's trying to figure out what noises the groove box makes. The lyrics dip the lid to the legendary New Orleans singer, Roy Brown.

SURE GOT ME: Bill's bassline sets this one up with a little bit of Miss You in the bridge. Melbourne football followers (or any Melburnian in fact) may notice similarities between the song's scenario and certain incidents that took place during pre-season two years ago involving a certain Wayne and a certain Kelli, wife of Wayne's best friend but any resemblance to persons living or dead is purely coincidental. It's just another one of those old stories in the book. Tony Mahony, director, made us dress up in matching beige suits and vests and learn synchronised dance steps for the film clip.

TO BE GOOD TAKES A LONG TIME: Vika and Linda Bull covered this song sweetly a couple of years ago but we didn't have the sweetness in us on this occasion. Bruce Haymes guested on the honky-tonk piano and Dunk sawed away on the fiddle.

CAN'T HELP YOU NOW DARLING: Started from a Dunk riff. Continuing the late seventies Stones vibe.

NOTHING BUT A DREAM: New Zealand timber takes the place of Norwegian wood.

LITTLE BIT O' SUGAR: Sitting out the back o' the house with Dunk in the summertime. His friend Ollie came by with some wine. Couldn't be bothered writing any more words.

FORTY- EIGHT ANGELS: Been carrying this tune and the angels since Punt Road in the early eighties waiting for some words to stick. Vaguely remember seeing Elvis singing about forty eight angels backstage in some documentary. Other sources - pictures of Our Lady and Holy Child with the angels in the corner; Swing Low Sweet Chariot; The Go Between's Cattle And Cane; and Serge Gainsborough singing at the end of Je T'Aime what sounds to me like "moi non plus" which I've translated as "me no more". Graham Lee played the pedal steel just like he did on the previous tune.

YOUR LOVING IS ON MY MIND: According to Aboriginal myth in some parts of the country the sound of the curlew (native bird) signifies death. This is a desert song dreaming of the sea.

BEAUTIFUL THING: Wrote this tune for Renee Geyer a while back and it's taken me this long to build up to singing it myself. We approached this record as a kind of Country/Soul album and this song fit the bill.

MY WAY IS TO YOU: Bill's bass is a dark pond the rest of us glide in.

CURLY RED: Love song to a red-headed girl with careless habits.

KING OF FOOLS: There must be a hundred songs called King Of Fools but this is mine.

YOUNG LOVERS: Dunk kept bugging me to stop laughing and just finish the lyrics to this one. Thought I was the first person to get "sit down to take a piss" into a song until Tchad played me Randy Newman's last record. Danel put in the fancy chords.