

**INTERVIEW**

SHIRLEY LYNN – HER KIND OF PARADISE

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Early writing days for Shirley began as a teenager with a few songs penned. In more recent times music is something that she works at every day. If she's not performing or practising, she's writing, collaborating, revising or rewriting.

Shirley has been playing in and around Cairns and beyond at venues and events always sharing a joy of music. Shirly launched her debut EP "It's About Time" at the end of 2012, her duo Silktones released their debut EP "Liberty" in 2014 and her band Blue Tonic recently filmed for Balcony TV at The Jack Hotel are currently recording an album comprised of songs from the multiple songwriters in the band that will be launched later this year.

"My Kind of Paradise" written by Shirley. is a song inspired by the magic of a North Queensland coastal landscape where the rainforest meets the ocean's edge – paradise indeed. "My Kind of Paradise" is about this and more. It is a song about seeking to find paradise within. Shirley writes songs about her love for life and North Queensland. She utilises song writing as a medium for shaping her own voice as she seeks to develop the craft and find varied ways to express thoughts, ideas and storylines.

I asked Shirley about her early songwriting efforts and she enthused "I remember experimenting with writing songs in my teenage years – it was an emotional outlet – a means for

personal expression trying to find my own voice, releasing tensions and highlighting moments at the time. As I began to listen more intently to the lyrics of some songs, I realised how people of the day were writing songs about just about anything. I loved the creative licence that such gave window to and over the years I have become more compelled to keep crafting away working with various storylines – concepts, themes and ideas. In more recent times, I have found myself writing songs about a love of life and my North Queensland home.”

Having now been at the songwriting game for many years and winning multiple songwriting competitions I wondered in what ways her songwriting had evolved over the years..

“Access to information, knowledge and know how about songwriting is so accessible these days. There’s no end to what’s available and I saturate myself attending and participating in forums, music camps, workshops, short courses and online programs. I read books and blog posts embedded with videos. I enter competitions, gain feedback and engage in collaborations with others. I’ve helped facilitate short workshops on songwriting sharing insights into what I’ve learned so far along the way.”

“I’ve travelled some distance since first writing songs in my bedroom as a teenager when I had no formula, prescription or specific insight into how to go about it when I just followed my intuition and produced some basic outcomes that gave me a sense of satisfaction – enough it would seem for me to return to the craft to continue on a path to develop and refine my own skills and processes and that’s what I continue to do every day. The more you learn, the more you realise there is to learn.”

Shirley is currently recording an album with her band Blue Tonic

“I’m really excited about this project currently underway. For me personally it will make up the trilogy to my collection – “It’s About Time” by Shirl, “Liberty” by Silktones and now “Impressions” by Blue Tonic.”

“This full album of songs will be a first for the band with songs written by all members of the band. It will be a compilation of creative songwriting works from all of us, Peter Grayson, Trevor Gane, Jim McCabe, Dave Lonagan and myself. The album will highlight the eclectic mix of songwriters that we are. With varied styles it will offer you an impression of what Blue Tonic originality and projection is about – diversity and difference.”

“The album currently underway is being recorded and produced at Pete Grayson’s recording studio – Tonic Sound, Yorkey’s Knob and when completed will be launched later this year.”

And is Shirly seeking fame and fortune or is she just doing it for the love of music?

“Music for me is driven by my passion to be creative, expressive and a lifelong learner. I open myself to a world of possibility and so far the outcomes have exceeded my expectation. I’ve always been prepared to give things a go and to take action toward the things that I aspire to do. When I’m not enjoying the challenges of this mode anymore then there will be other things to steer toward. Life is too short to settle for less.”

“The universe delivers in its own sweet way and as I continue to gain affirmation for my work I tread this journey into my life’s tapestry. I have grown belief in myself from times when I have truly struggled. I continue to reshape my thinking and have become thick skinned enough to focus on my own primary values rather than choose alternative mind babblings that lack support for my concerted effort.”

“I am always grateful for the opportunities that enable me to push my boundaries and that is as significantly an inner journey for me as it is external as well. Life is my biggest teacher and I’m still active to its listening.”

Todd Macalpine

Pic by Mimi Tannaka

People can keep up to date with information about Shirley Lynn Music on her website:

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