

David Bridie Brings The Visual Wisdom imparting knowledge of the scene, and how he's bringing life to latest album *The Wisdom Line* with BMA's Allan Sko

David Bridie is one of Australia's most prolific and beloved songwriters, sporting six studio albums with *Not Drowning, Waving* and seven more with the recently retired *My Friend the Chocolate Cake*. Now Bridie returns to Canberra with a special performance.

The forthcoming album *The Wisdom Line* is David's sixth solo album and brings with it an enthralling, multimedia project exploring themes of Melbourne, asylum, home, the transience of our relationships, and the importance of genuine connections.

Each of the 11 tracks featured on the album will be matched with a music video produced by a selection of local and international filmmakers including Andrew Wiseman, Stephanie Gould (USA), and Matej Kolmanko (Slovenia).

"We did films for each song that extrapolate on the meaning, or the feel, of the song," a cheery Bridie tell me. "I've always done that with *Not Drowning Waving*, but I'd like to think I've got a lot wiser! It was always the plan to do this from the get-go."

Creating an entire visual aspect for an album is no small task. What drove the ambition? A desire to explore the song through a different medium? Or provide something extra for audiences?

"A little of column A, a little of column B," Bridie confirms. "The music industry and how we as artists deliver the songs to our audience through technology and different formats is shifting sands. It's a different way to make the record work."

Despite having a firm grasp on his own music, Bridie was happy to give the visual filmmakers freedom to create.

"I gave each filmmaker the lyrics and a brief with the intention of the song," he says. "In some, there was a back-and-forth, work-in-progress. Most of them was, "Yeah great, just change this a bit." There were only three of them we had to shift direction. I trusted the filmmakers. But when you're doing a collaboration like this, you're letting go a bit."

A joy of collaboration can be the interpretation and surprise that can be given on your own work. This was no different.

"Matej Kolmanko, the Slovenian filmmaker I knew having done a couple of gigs over there, for some reason.... He's fantastic. He did [the film for] *The Abyss*, and found all these archival bits of footage. It's an astonishing film clip. I love it.

"Stephanie Gould used Super 8 footage. It has a washed out look that immediately evokes the past," he continues. "In the song *Book of Revelation* there's all this footage of religious iconography in New York, where Stephanie is based, which I really like. So that's really different to what the song may have suggested."

All this allows for an exciting and immersive live show.

"When people see the live show, there's not a homogenised feel; you get these different interpretations both from personnel, but also their format they're using, and editing," Bridie says. "That's a comment I got from the Melbourne show. And we've spent a lot of time getting the sound right for these, and I'm really happy with how all the elements

are coming together. The Street Theatre will be a beauty too, with a grand piano there as well. That's quite a key element for this record."

As a veteran of the music scene, I took the opportunity to ask Bridie for his musings on what has changed, for better or worse.

"There's a lot," he says. "There was a big gap back in the day between the mainstream and the indie world. Then, post Nirvana, it blurred a little bit. And then with the advent of these reality TV shows, and the Guy Sebastians of the world, the gap has started again.

"I like the DIY nature of music now; it reminds me of things back when I was starting. Bands designing their own covers and singles, and bringing a four-track into the bedroom to record. I think that's a good thing. There's a lot of young indie bands coming through - and I try to hold back from saying this - who sound so like The Go-Betweens or The Dead Kennedys or Echo and The Bunnymen. So the generation gap between young people and their parents is a lot smaller than my generation and their parents. And that's a massive difference."

How so?

"It's not just musical beliefs, but the take on the world; the morality gap between me and my parents is vast, whereas with my daughters it's quite small. There are things I pick up from them that I haven't concentrated on. There was music, film, and literature in the '60s that people weren't honed into, whereas nowadays people are."

With wisdom imparted, the focus turned to the Canberra show.

"I'm really looking forward to the Canberra show," Bridie enthuses. "We're playing every song on the record, with a few songs from *Not Drowning Waving* and *My Friend the Chocolate Cake*. And we will play *Hotel Radio*."

David Bridie, his band, and his amazing visual accompaniment will adorn *The Street Theatre* on Friday, 28 June at 8pm. Tickets are \$45/\$40 concession from <http://www.thestreet.org.au/shows/david-bridie-wisdom-line-album-launch>