

Wolfe Words

Writing, Publicity & Media Strategy



Media campaign: Jessie Lloyd's Mission Songs Project

February 27, 2017 June 1, 2017

The Songs Back Home is a collection of Australian Indigenous folk songs performed from 1900-1999 on Christian missions, settlements and native camps where Indigenous people were relocated. As part of her Mission Songs Project, Jessie Lloyd has spent the past two years faithfully exploring the journey of Indigenous Australian music, connecting traditional with contemporary, and charting continuing cultural practice and oral traditions well into the 21st century. The songs, largely hidden from the outside world, comprise rare and almost-forgotten stories, shedding light onto the history and experiences of Indigenous people, their families and communities. Jessie launched *The Songs Back Home*, the first of the Mission Songs Project collection, in March 2017 at the Brunswick Music Festival and is touring the album throughout the east coast of Australia.

“The 20th Century songs composed and sung on Aboriginal missions and settlements are records of our history and history and tell us about the emotions and aspirations of their composers. Jessie Lloyd’s research to find these songs is a profoundly important contribution to our nation and music.”—*Professor Marcia Langton, AM, Mission Songs Project advisor and contributor*

“Mission Songs Project presents contemporary folk songs that continue the ancient song lines of this country. The songs speak of the daily lives of the First Peoples who were relocated from their traditional homelands to the missions.”—*Archie Roach, AM, Mission Songs Project advisor and contributor*

The Songs Back Home CD reviews:

“...a significant release both as a cultural artifact but also for its pure enjoyment factor... full of love and life and hope, sung with great emotion at a level rare in many contemporary albums... As a listener you feel part of the circle and included in the experience. The songs take you through a range of emotions—sadness but also overwhelming joy, compassion, love and many others.” — *Steve Britt, Rhythms magazine, May/June 2017*

“... a great addition to recordings of genuine Australian folk music... a triumph for Jessie Lloyd.”— *Tony Smith, Trad & Now magazine, May 2017*

“Islander rhythms, campfire country and defiant humour celebrate simple joys. Melancholy ballads chart a journey of blood, sweat and tears... you’ll almost hear the kettle boil as a closing home recording of the elders invites us to sit down with these unsung survivors.”—4.5 stars, *Chris Lambie, Fairfax (The Age, Sydney Morning Herald, Brisbane Times)* ([read the full review \(http://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/music/album-reviews-20170512-gw3bxs.html\)](http://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/music/album-reviews-20170512-gw3bxs.html))

“This album defies categorisation in an exciting and innovative way. This contrasting material, with its mix of optimism, happiness, humour alongside sorrow and hardship, characterises the main artist Jessie Lloyd’s wish to promote conciliation through music.”—*Ethnomusicologist, Dr Muriel E. Swijghuisen Reigersberg, Loud Mouth (The Music Trust)* ([read the full review \(http://musictrust.com.au/loudmouth/the-songs-back-home-the-mission-songs-project/\)](http://musictrust.com.au/loudmouth/the-songs-back-home-the-mission-songs-project/))

“...profoundly moving... the entire collection is sublime.”—4.5 stars, *Stephen Fitzpatrick, The Australian* ([read the full review \(http://www.theaustralian.com.au/arts/review/album-reviews-mission-songs-holy-holy-dave-warner-orchestre-afrisa-all-our-exes/news-story/b63b405cc848b562172e06398cb609ce\)](http://www.theaustralian.com.au/arts/review/album-reviews-mission-songs-holy-holy-dave-warner-orchestre-afrisa-all-our-exes/news-story/b63b405cc848b562172e06398cb609ce))

Mission Songs Project, Jessie Lloyd media interviews:

- [Songs Give Insight Into Life In Aboriginal Missions \(http://www.abc.net.au/7.30/content/2017/s4663907.htm\)](http://www.abc.net.au/7.30/content/2017/s4663907.htm), by Monique Schafter, ABC TV 7.30, Thursday 4 May 2017 (organised by Mel Lake, Bird PR, [Campbelltown Arts Centre \(http://c-a-c.com.au/\)](http://c-a-c.com.au/))
- [Singer and song-collector Jessie Lloyd \(https://www.thesaturdaypaper.com.au/2017/04/15/singer-and-song-collector-jessie-lloyd/14921784004488\)](https://www.thesaturdaypaper.com.au/2017/04/15/singer-and-song-collector-jessie-lloyd/14921784004488), by Karen Middleton, The Saturday Paper, Saturday 15 April 2017 (organised by [Bettina Richter, National Folk Festival \(https://www.facebook.com/missbettinamedia/\)](https://www.facebook.com/missbettinamedia/))
- [Jessie Lloyd: On A Mission \(http://musictrust.com.au/loudmouth/inside-the-musician-jessie-lloyd-on-a-mission/\)](http://musictrust.com.au/loudmouth/inside-the-musician-jessie-lloyd-on-a-mission/), The Music Trust, Inside The Musician, Thursday 6 April
- [Jessie’s mission to seek out old music \(http://citynews.com.au/2017/arts-jessies-mission-see-old-music/\)](http://citynews.com.au/2017/arts-jessies-mission-see-old-music/), by Helen Musa, Canberra City News, Wednesday 5 April (organised by [Bettina Richter, National Folk Festival \(https://www.facebook.com/missbettinamedia/\)](https://www.facebook.com/missbettinamedia/))
- [A musical mission \(https://issuu.com/seventhstreetmedia/docs/brag_707/12\)](https://issuu.com/seventhstreetmedia/docs/brag_707/12) by Shaun Cowe, The Brag, Wednesday 5 April (organised by [Bettina Richter \(https://www.facebook.com/missbettinamedia/\)](https://www.facebook.com/missbettinamedia/))
- [Aboriginal mission songs \(http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/musicshow/the-music-show-saturday-1st-april-2017/8400046\)](http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/musicshow/the-music-show-saturday-1st-april-2017/8400046), Saturday 1 April 2017, ABC Radio National Music Show with Andrew Ford
- [Indigenous Songs To Shed Light on 1900s Mission Life \(http://www.abc.net.au/newsradio/content/s4639310.htm\)](http://www.abc.net.au/newsradio/content/s4639310.htm), Monday 20 March 2017, ABC News Radio, with Marius Benson

- [Songs of a Stolen Generation are found anew by Jessie Lloyd](http://www.theaustralian.com.au/arts/music/songs-of-a-stolen-generation-are-found-anew-by-jessie-lloyd/news-story/2b70370ead1c5be31d3b177686d6176e) (<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/arts/music/songs-of-a-stolen-generation-are-found-anew-by-jessie-lloyd/news-story/2b70370ead1c5be31d3b177686d6176e>), by Stephen Fitzpatrick (<https://twitter.com/svfitzpatrick>), The Australian, Thursday 9 March 2017
- ABC Radio Melbourne with Clare Bowditch (<http://www.abc.net.au/radio/melbourne/programs/afternoons/afternoons/8312978>), Tuesday 7 March 2017 (interview starts around 42:30 mins in)
- ABC Radio Overnights with Trevor Chappell (<http://www.abc.net.au/radio/programs/overnights/overnights/8288360>), Monday 27 February 2017 (interview starts around 2 hours 13 minutes in)
- Jessie Lloyd, Music Treasure Hunter (<http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/away/mission-songs/8280084>)—Radio National, AWAYE! with Daniel Browning, Sunday 25 February 2017
- Songstress Jessie Lloyd takes music on a mission (<http://www.sbs.com.au/nitv/nitv-news/article/2017/02/21/songstress-jessie-lloyd-takes-music-mission>), SBS NITV Online, Tuesday 21 February 2017
- Early Indigenous folk songs collated, promoted by Mission Songs project (<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-12-30/project-aims-to-collate-early-indigenous-folk-songs/8153990>), ABC Radio National AM with Nance Haxton, Friday 30 December 2016

Reviews of the live Mission Songs Project show:

National Folk Festival, April 2017 *Rhythms magazine*: “Stand-out artists of the Festival included National Folk Fellow **Jessie Lloyd** for her **Mission Songs Project** who, with a line-up of top Indigenous artists, presented a rare collection of early Australian Indigenous contemporary songs that were performed on missions and settlements. All Jessie’s shows were packed out.”
<https://rhythms.com.au/2017-folk-festival-glowing-success/> (<https://rhythms.com.au/2017-folk-festival-glowing-success/>)

Port Fairy Folk Festival, March 2017 *Chris Lambie, Rhythms magazine*: “Daughter of Joe Geia, Jessie Lloyd, travelled the nation to talk with elders for The Mission Songs Project. ‘The Songs Back Home’ is a collection of Indigenous folk songs performed on Christian missions, settlements and native camps from 1900-1999. Not a moment too soon, Lloyd has revived these unique songlines before they’re lost forever. The warm and articulate performer shared the lead on family yarns and glorious harmonies with Emma Donovan, Deline Briscoe and Jessica Hitchcock.”
<https://rhythms.com.au/port-fairy-folk-festival-2017-thats-wrap/> (<https://rhythms.com.au/port-fairy-folk-festival-2017-thats-wrap/>)

Blue Mountains Music Festival, March 2017 *Elizabeth Walton, Timber & Steel*: “The Mission Songs Project brings new life to the voices of the stolen generation and indigenous Australians who were splintered from their cultures when they were made to sing in a foreign language. Today, traditional languages are so far removed from their vernacular that singing in English has become the mainstay, the local languages have become the foreign tongue. Yet everything has its resurgence if you can claim it before it achieves vanishing point. The stories are heartfelt and beautifully sung – perhaps not with the campfire instruments of their natural settings, but the end result is one that adapts well to the contemporary stage and travels to a diverse and broad audience – for The Mission Songs Project, this is mission accomplished, and accomplished incredibly well.”
<https://timberandsteel.wordpress.com/2017/03/21/2017-blue-mountains-music-festival-the-wrap/> (<http://—https://timberandsteel.wordpress.com/2017/03/21/2017-blue-mountains-music-festival-the-wrap/>)



***The Songs Back Home* album information**

Artist: Mission Songs Project / Jessie Lloyd

CD title: The Songs Back Home

Synopsis: 10 songs selected from a collection of Australian Indigenous songs from 1900 to 1999, focusing on the Christian missions, state-run settlements and native camps where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were relocated. Curated, arranged and produced by Jessie Lloyd.

Album Credits:

Produced by Jessie Lloyd

Recorded at The Aviary Recording Studio, Melbourne

Engineered, mixed and mastered by Colin Leadbetter

Artwork by Joe Geia and Creative Design by Lyn Geia

Project Patrons and Advisors – Prof Marcia Langton AM and Archie Roach AM

Singers and Musicians:

Jessie Lloyd – vocals/ukulele/acoustic guitar

Monica Weightman – vocals/acoustic guitar

Leah Flanagan – vocals

Karrina Nolan – vocals

Jess Hitchcock – vocals

Iain Grandage – piano/piano accordion

Ed Bates – pedal steel guitar

Rob Mahoney – double bass

Archie Roach – vocals/acoustic guitar (track 11)

Lillian Geia – vocals/ukulele (tracks 10 & 12)

Lynelda Tippo – vocals (tracks 10 & 12)

Alma Geia – vocals (track 13)

Track Order:

1. Own Native Land 2:53
2. Outcast Half-Caste 2:35
3. The Irex 3:32
4. Down in the Kitchen 2:03
5. Hopkins River (feat. Monica Weightman) 3:25
6. Old Cape Barren (feat. Jessica Hitchcock) 3:25
7. Middle Camp 3:00
8. Surrare 2:20
9. Port Fort Hill 2:49
10. Now Is the Hour Medley (feat. Lou Bennett, Leah Flanagan & Mere-Rose Paul) 4:23

Bonus Tracks:

11. Hopkins River – Archie Roach 2:14
12. The Irex – Geia Sisters (Lillian Geia and Lynelda Tippo) 1:11
13. Down In the Kitchen – Alma Geia 0:38

Dedicated to Alma Dawn Geia (1921 – 2016)

About the Mission Songs Project

Mission Songs Project is an initiative to revive contemporary Australian Indigenous songs from 1900 to 1999, focusing on the Christian missions, state run settlements and native camps where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were relocated.

Searching for the secular songs that were sung after church, Mission Songs Project looks to explore the day to day life of the mission days, from cultural identity to love and loss. These unique songs consist of almost forgotten stories that can now shed light into the history of our Indigenous elders, families and communities.

Mission Songs Project faithfully explores the musical journey of Indigenous Australian music as Jessie Lloyd connects the traditional with contemporary, revealing the continuation of cultural practice and song traditions into the 21st Century.

missionsongsproject.com (<http://missionsongsproject.com>)

Mission Songs Project advisors and contributors:

Archie Roach
 Marcia Langton
 Peena, Cedric, Lillian, Delphine and Joe Geia
 Lynelda Tippo
 Frank Anderson
 Paul Gorden
 Jeremy Beckett
 Karl Nuenfeldt
 Chris Sullivan
 Aaron Corn
 Clint Bracknell
 Elverina Johnson
 Will Kepa
 Seaman Dan
 Cessa Mills
 Roger Knox
 Kath Mills
 Stephen Pigram
 Baamba Alberts
 Rosie Smith

Jill Shelton
 Emma Donovan
 Deline Briscoe
 John Wayne Parsons
 Luana Pitt
 Tiriki Onus
 Monica Weightman
 Robert Champion
 William Barton
 Marlene Cummins
 Warren Roberts
 Johnny Nicol
 Mindalaya Read
 Eugenia Flynn
 Leah Flanagan
 Karrina Nolan
 David Williams
 Jessica Hitchcock
 Vonda Last
 Eddie Peters
 Maxine Briggs

Mission Songs Project Sponsors and Supporting Programs:

State Library of Victoria – Creative Fellowship 2016
 National Library of Australia – Folk Fellowship 2017
 South Australian Museum – Tindale Collection, AA346 Board for Anthropological Research Collection
 Archie Roach Foundation
 Australia Council for the Arts
 Creative Victoria
 Australian Performing Rights Association

Jessie Lloyd Bio:

Originally from the tropics of North Queensland, Jessie Lloyd is an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander musician who performs a broad collection of Australian Indigenous songs. A vocalist, guitarist, bassist and ukulele player, Jessie earned her formal qualifications at Abmusic in Perth, WA in 2002.

An award winning composer, performer and creative entrepreneur, Jessie is a cultural practitioner of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music. Dedicated to the continuation of cultural traditions through the presentation of both contemporary and traditional Indigenous music.

Jessie has travelled Australia in search of hidden songs to present this rare Indigenous narrative. From the Bass Strait to the Torres Strait and across the Arafura Sea, Jessie has spent time with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander senior song men and women, uncovering precious stories and songs from the mission days.

<http://www.jessielloyd.com> (<http://www.jessielloyd.com>)

Song synopsis:

1. OWN NATIVE LAND Composed by Albert 'Albie' Edward Geia

This song was written by Albie Geia shortly after leading the 1957 strike on Palm Island with six other Indigenous men. The strike was against the discriminatory treatment of Indigenous people, after a petition to the superintendent demanding improved wages, health, housing and working conditions, was ignored. As punishment, Albie and his family were removed to Woorabinda, Qld.

2. OUTCAST HALF-CASTE Composed by Micko Donovan and Mary Deroux

This song was written by Micko Donovan and Mary Deroux of northern New south Wales about growing up half-caste, a now derogatory term, used to describe Indigenous people of mixed heritage. The term was one of many devised in the policy to assimilate or 'breed out' Aborigines, and part of the misinformed theories of the 'survival of the fittest' that were deployed to result in Aboriginal extinction. Micko was raised on a mission and learned to play music from the local missionaries.

3. THE IREX Composer unknown

The Irex was the boat that transported Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who were forcibly removed from the mainland settlements governed by the Native Affairs officers or missionaries to Palm Island Aboriginal Settlement in Queensland. The Palm Island settlement was known as a 'punishment island' for those who committed misdemeanours on other government settlements or missions. A strike was organized by the Aboriginal residents in 1957 to protest the brutal conditions.

4. DOWN IN THE KITCHEN Composed by Alma Geia

This song is from the children's dormitories on Palm Island, Queensland. It was composed by one of the residents, Alma Geia, in the 1920s. This innocent tune gives some insight into the living conditions of children who were removed from their families and placed in the segregated dormitories and how they made light of tough times.

5. HOPKINS RIVER Composed by Alice Clarke

A song brought to the project by senior songman Archie Roach. This song comes from Framlingham mission in southwest Victoria, which was founded near the Hopkins River. It was from here that Archie was forcibly removed from his family which inspired him to write his classic song "Took the Children Away". Hopkins River was written by Archie's grandmother's sister, Alice Clarke.

6. OLD CAPE BARREN Composer unknown

The Tasmanian Aboriginal community have a long history with Cape Barren Island but the last 200 years has been the most brutal act of genocide and oppression. The islanders have always maintained a strong presence and connection to Cape Barren, including cultural practices such as mutton birding. This beautiful song paints a picture into the old days, full of love and loss. It is an honour to have our Tasmanian brothers and sisters represented in Mission Songs Project.

7. MIDDLE CAMP Composed by Eric Craigie

Middle Camp was an Aboriginal camp set up on the fringes of the township of Moree in New South Wales. It was one of three camps and was closed down at some point by the local shire. Composed by Eric Craigie, this song is a protest ballad about displacement from his home when Middle Camp was closed. The lyrics and tune are full of optimism, resilience and determination, and love of the old community of the camp.

8. SURRARE Composer Unknown

A song from the Torres Straits, Surrare is a song about hunting a seabird that is sung in Ailan Kriol language. The Western Island language name for seagull is 'Saora Leh' and pronunciation has changed over time in various places. The final verse is Cowral Mut, a 'curry feathered small bird' and it sings of hunting inland as opposed to hunting coastal. This track incorporates all three versions although excluding the Western Island language words in the 3rd verse. The song was made popular by Joe Geia on his first solo album Yil Lull.

9. PORT FORT HILL Composer Unknown

A song from Darwin during the Second World War, Fort Hill was a location where the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men used to scout for enemy ships and spies to keep the town safe. During the

post-war years the Australian Half Caste Progress Association held weekly fund-raising dances at The Sunshine Club in a decommissioned Army barracks. This was one of the songs that was performed during those times.

10. NOW IS THE HOUR MEDLEY Traditional

This song, also known as the Maori Farewell, is a heartfelt tune adopted by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on missions in the early 20th century. The Maori wives sang it to their husbands as they left to fight in WWI. It was then shared among the ANZACs including Aboriginal soldiers. The hymn Search Me Oh God was composed by a missionary from New Zealand using the same melody and is well know on many Aboriginal missions. Guest vocals are by Lou Bennett, Leah Flanagan and Mere-Rose Paul.

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