

Old favourites revisited



MUSIC

Artist: Neil Murray
Album: Sing The Song:
The Essential Neil Murray
Reviewer: Paul Simpson

NEIL MURRAY is one of Australia's most respected singer/songwriters and has contributed to contemporary Australian music for two decades.

On October 7, his new album, *Sing The Song: The Essential Neil Murray*, was launched in Australia.

It is a collection of 32 songs covering two CDs, including *Good Light In Broome*, *Lights Of Hay*, *Calm & Crystal Clear* and *My Island Home*.

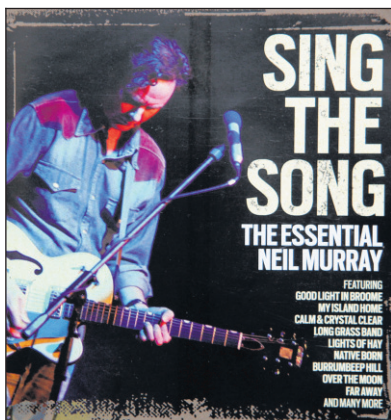
Although he was born and raised at Lake Bolac in Western Victoria, he is forever entwined with the Northern Territory, and more specifically Papunya, where he went as a young man in 1978.

It unleashed a creative wave in his spirit and he became the solid song-writing genius and guitar player in the Warumpi Band, probably the first major Aboriginal band to make the country's music scene cast their eyes with interest to what was happening in our desert lands.

One of Neil's earliest memories in Lake Bolac is his grandfather showing him some "blackfella stones" on the farm and telling him the owners of the stones were long gone. This memory set him pondering about the fate of those traditional occupiers of the land.

Travelling to the Northern Territory in 1978, Neil began a journey of discovery that led him to Papunya, where he worked for many years.

He returned to Lake Bolac to discover more about the Aboriginal people of his area and



Neil Murray

met up with Banjo Clarke, Tina Saunders, Bernice Clarke, Lenny Clarke, Archie Roach, Shane Howard and Amy Saunders.

Neil launched his solo career in 1989. Six years later, he won the APRA Song of the Year Award for *My Island Home*, first recorded by the Warumpi Band and later an international hit for Christine Anu.

Myall Creek is a song about a ceremony in 2000 at the site of the 1838 massacre of Aboriginal people attended by "a descendant of the murderers, a descendant of the slain".

In *Tom Wills Would*, he describes the pivotal figure in the creation of Australian football and his "cranky ways".

"If I'm shunned and ignored by the mighty who preside/I'll not curry for their favour I'll not bootlick at their side".

Neil's novel *Sing For Me Countryman* gives an insight into racial relations.

Neil has been the subject of the ABC's television series *Australian Story* and has featured in many documentaries on Australian music. Neil works with all ages in song-writing workshops and frequently performs at festivals and special events, often including lengthy spoken word recitals in his performances.

PAUL SIMPSON