

Michael Tee

Michael Tee co-founded the independent Sydney-based record label M Squared in 1979, which was run on a shoestring budget from a small recording studio in Sydney between 1979 and 1984. Bands who released material on the label include Systematics, The Makers of the Dead Travel Fast, Scattered Order and Ya Ya Choral. Michael was also a member of Scattered Order and Ya Ya Choral, did sound engineering and booked live shows for M Squared bands. He is currently active as a member of Scattered Order Mk1 and A Cloakroom Assembly.

Andrew Penhallow

Andrew Penhallow co-founded GAP Records in 1980, which licensed the innovative UK label Factory Records for Australia (Joy Division, New Order, Happy Mondays). In 1984 he founded Volition Records, Australia's first dance music label (Severed Heads, Southend, Itch-e & Scratch-e, Single Gun Theory, Boxcar) and that same year established Factory Australasia which he ran until 1992. In 1994 Andrew co-founded the "Boiler Room" dance stage for the Big Day Out and in that same year he initiated the Dance Music Award category for the ARIAs, which Volition artists won two years in a row with Itch-e & Scratch-e and FSOM.

Roger Grierson

Frontman for the punk band The Thought Criminals, Roger Grierson has been a key figure in the Australian and New Zealand independent music scenes since 1975. Having fronted multiple record labels (White Light Records, Green Records, and later Polygram Music Publishing), Grierson finally went on to become chairman of Festival Records in 1998.

Over his career he has been responsible for releasing music and touring artists such as Leonard Cohen, Powderfinger, The Go-Betweens, Beasts of Bourbon, the Buzzcocks, and Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds.

In 2005 Roger Grierson left Festival and retired from the music business. A year later he reformed The Thought Criminals, and in 2007 formed the UnTh!nkables with Phillip Judd from Split Enz.

Clinton Walker

Clinton Walker is an Australian historian and author, best known for his works on Australian popular music.

Born in country Victoria in the late 1950s, Walker began as a journalist for community radio and magazines in the late seventies, before publishing his first book, *Inner City Sound* in 1981 (a revised and expanded new edition was published in 2005). His third book, *Highway to Hell: The Life and Times of AC/DC Legend Bon Scott* (1994) was a best seller in Finland. He is also the author of *Stranded: The Secret History of Australian Independent Music 1977-1991* (1996). *Buried Country*, which is a history of Aboriginal country music, is his sixth book, followed by 2005's *Golden Miles: Sex, Speed and the Australian Muscle Car*.

He has also worked at ABC Television on the documentary series *Long Way to the Top* and *Love is in the Air, Sex with Apes*, as well as co-hosting the live music program *Studio 22*.

Stephen Mallinder

Original member and vocalist of Sheffield electro pioneers Cabaret Voltaire, Stephen Mallinder is also the co-founder of the label Offworld Sounds with Pete Carroll. On this label they released *Bibleopoly* by Sassi and Loco (a side project consisting of Mallinder and Travis Calley from Yummy Fur) in 1997.

Having recently completed his PhD in music and popular culture, he is now teaching at the University of Brighton. He also runs the ADM-OER Project with the University of the Arts London, University for the Creative Arts and the Faculty of Arts Cumbria, releasing open access learning materials in art and design.

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Signal to Noise Sessions

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Circa 1979

Signal to Noise Sessions

Presented by Sydney Festival & Modular

Everest Theatre, Seymour Centre

January 16

From 1979 to 1985, parish halls, abandoned warehouses and run down apartments rumbled and screeched with new sounds during one of the most creative periods in Australia's music history.

Avant garde, post-punk, new wave and early electronic styles of music cultivated a thriving underground scene, heard on Sydney-based labels M Squared and Volition. It was a period when 'little bands', such as Pel Mel, SPK, Voigt/465 and Laughing Clowns were more concerned with artistic expression and experimentation than commercial success.

Circa 1979: Signal to Noise is a celebration of this unique and influential period.

Signal to Noise Sessions

A day of free talks exploring early experimentation in music, film and video, and the cultural influences surrounding one of the most creative periods in Australia's music history.

Key panelists including Tom Ellard (Severed Heads), Andrew Penhallow (Volition Records), Stephen Mallinder (Cabaret Voltaire) and Roger Grierson (Thought Criminals) share their works, insights and experiences from the underground of Australian music.

12pm - Session 1:

World Domination - The Australian Post-Punk Movement

1 hour including Q&A

Australia's post-punk movement sought to 'steal' music back from the experts and promote artistic expression with little concern for mainstream success. It was an era of

tribalism, collaboration and experimentation challenging the foundation of the Australian music industry. This first *Signal to Noise Session* will compare the post-punk era to today's creative community and question why the music received international praise while it was relatively overlooked at home.

Moderator: Marty Wirth

Presenter: Julian Knowles

Panelists: Michael Tee, Jaimie Leonarder, Roger Grierson, Andrew Penhallow, Clinton Walker

1:30pm - Session 2:

Postmodern vs. Modern debate on Remixing and Recycling

1 hour including Q&A

For the past two decades we have been consumed by the culture of remixing, sampling and recycling but what do we have to show for it? Does remixing offer an avenue for artists to explore new ideas or has it desensitised our appreciation for originality? This *Signal to Noise Session* will challenge the ideals of musicians, filmmakers and academics involved in the post-punk era and try to answer the question: what would Roland Barthes do?

Moderator: Marty Wirth

Presenter: Tom Ellard

Panelists: Steve Malinder, Julian Knowles, Phil Turnbull, Ross Harley

3pm - Session 3:

Experimental Film & Video

1 hour 30 mins including Q&A

Although music was the headliner, the post-punk era also saw a surge in experimental film and video. The final *Signal to Noise Session* will feature presentations of rare and previously unseen footage showcasing the groundbreaking ideas and DIY methodology that has come all too close to being forgotten.

Host: Jaimie Leonarder

Presenters: Jaimie Leonarder, Stephen Jones, Ross Hartley

Biographies

Julian Knowles

Since the mid 1980s, Julian Knowles has established himself as a prominent artist in the area of electronic and new music, achieving significant critical recognition for his performances and recordings.

Specialising in new and emerging technologies, his projects span the fields of composition for theatre, dance, film and television, electronic music, sound and new media arts, popular music and record production.

Knowles has an extensive background in the Australian and UK independent music scenes from the mid 1980s as a performer, programmer and producer in bands such as The Shrinking Violets and Even As We Speak, in addition to guest work for Big Heavy Stuff and Swirl.

Although working primarily as a solo artist, he has been a member of the experimental sound art ensemble Social Interiors since the early 1990s and has collaborated with a wide range of Australian and international artists. His work has been presented at venues and events such as the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Experimental Intermedia in New York City, Sydney Opera House, the Seoul International Performance Art Festival and a range of major arts venues.

Tom Ellard

Tom Ellard is an Australian electronic musician most well known as the founding member of electronic and industrial music group Severed Heads. Ellard's first music contributions began in the late 1970s as a teenager, when he was influenced by groups that emerged from the early United Kingdom and Australian punk movement, such as Throbbing Gristle, SPK, Wire and other like artists.

Predating music technology such as MIDI and personal computers, Ellard's early work was performed with tape machines, tape loops and basic analogue equipment.

Through the 1980s Ellard began to take advantage of technological developments such as the music sequencer in combination with looping sounds before sampling.

Severed Heads were probably most well known in Australia for chart success with a 1994 remix of the track 'Dead Eyes Opened' (initially released in the early 1980s), which made the Australian Top 40. Ellard is also noted for his early contributions to the electronic and industrial music movements in Australia and overseas. In 2005, Ellard received the Australian Record Industry Association's ARIA Music Award for the best original soundtrack/cast/show for the soundtrack to the Australian film *The Illustrated Family Doctor*.

Ellard currently resides in Surry Hills, New South Wales and continues to record music and soundtracks and also lectures at a variety of educational facilities on music production in Australia. He is the creator and director of sevcom.com, a website for alternative methods of music distribution and creation.

Jaimie Leonarder

Jaimie Leonarder is an Australian musician, archivist, social worker, film critic, radio announcer and DJ. In the 1980s, Leonarder formed an experimental noise rock band called the Mu-Mesons, and he now works as a DJ for the monthly The Sounds of Seduction night club.

In 2005 and 2006, Leonarder co-hosted the *The Movie Show*, a film criticism show broadcast on SBS, with Fenella Kernebone and Megan Spencer.

Currently, he hosts *The Naked City* (a radio show on FBi Radio in Sydney) along with his wife Miss Death and Coffin Ed. He also hosts the weekly Cult Sinema Monday night at the Annandale Hotel in Sydney and shows films and documentaries at his private cinema, the Mu-Meson Archives.