



The Bluegrass Truth

with Hamish & Lachlan Davidson



If the bluegrass industry was a pressure cooker, it would be blown to bits every year with the rising standard of bands on the scene and the calibre of artists cutting bluegrass records. The International Bluegrass Music Association hosted the 22nd International Bluegrass Music Awards on September 29 at Nashville's legendary Ryman Auditorium as part of their World of Bluegrass convention. Hosted by legendary mandolin player and band leader Sam Bush, the 2011 IBMA Award Show was a

Emerging Artist of the Year in 2007, played 'Me and Paul Revere' during the Awards Show - a song Martin wrote from the perspective of Revere's horse. In Martin's acceptance speech he commented that while half of the punters at his shows know nothing about bluegrass, "They all leave loving it, and maybe they seek out other musicians." Other winners included The Gibson Brothers, for Vocal Group of the Year and Album of the Year. The Boxcars, a new combination of

Awards. Michael Cleveland was named Fiddle Player of the Year for the ninth time, and his band received the award for Instrumental Recorded Performance of the Year. Bryan Sutton received the Guitar Player of the Year award for the sixth time, and Adam Steffey collected Mandolin Player of the Year for the eighth time, and Banjo Player of the Year was tied between Kristin Scott Benson and Ron Stewart.

Tom T. Hall's touring bands, not to mention to ripper slide guitar solo on Dierks Bentley's #1 single 'What was I Thinking.' Kristy Cox has just returned from Nashville after recording a new album titled *Miles and Time Zones*. We've been lucky enough to preview the album and it is a knock out! We can't give too much away, but we can say that there are duets with Kristy's producer Jerry Salley

forms. The Harrierville Bluegrass and Traditional Country Music Convention is on shortly. The event will take place in Victoria's high country from the 17th to the 20th November. Contemporary string group Crooked Still (USA) are returning to Australia for the second time this year to appear at the Woodford Folk Festival in Queensland. The Tamworth Country Music Festival this coming January will once again see many bluegrass bands strutting their stuff. The Davidson Brothers will again host the Bluegrass Breakfasts daily at the Wests Leagues Club. Steve Passfield's Handpicked Breakfast will be happening at Wests Diggers. Jerry Salley (USA) had so much fun this year he's looking to return again, and for the first time at Tamworth, look out for Melbourne's Mustered Courage, far north Queensland's Hillbilly Goats and The Roys (USA). The Port Fairy Folk Festival in March 2012 will feature the Peter Rowan Band (USA), the Davidson Brothers, The Pigs, Abigail Washburn (USA) and the April Verch Band (Canada). April Verch and her crew will also stick around for a month a play a bunch of dates country-wide. We've also heard an

unconfirmed rumour that Chris Hillman and Herb Pedersen may be touring Australia in March 2012, so stay tuned for more on that! The Punch Brothers, who venture where no string band has gone before, will perform at the Adelaide Festival Centre's Adelaide International Guitar Festival on the 10th of August 2012. New York's charismatic Punch Brothers are at the frontier of an emerging form of country-inspired chamber music. Their instrumental prowess and exquisite ensemble have won them countless fans in concert halls, live music clubs and cyberspace. Punch Brothers' inimitable set lists span Bach and Mozart through tender original songs, chamber suites and traditional bluegrass, to covers of Radiohead, The Beatles, The Strokes and many more. Unbound by notions of genre, their collaborative, porous approach to music-making results in an extraordinary dynamic performance, laced with breathless emotion and humour. In Australia for the first time, Punch Brothers features serial collaborator Chris Thile (mandolin and lead vocals), Noam Pikelny (banjo), Gabe Witcher (fiddle), Chris Eldridge (guitar), and Paul Kowert (bass). "...this top shelf acoustic quintet is a virtuosic revelation." - Boston Globe



Steve Martin & The Steep Canyon Rangers

celebration of the 100th anniversary of the birth of Bill Monroe, the Father of Bluegrass. On the strength of a busy touring schedule, national television appearances and the release of a new album, *Rare Bird Alert* on Rounder Records, Steve Martin & The Steep Canyon Rangers took home the Entertainer of the Year award. Martin, who always included banjo picking in his early stand-up comedy routines, has become more serious about recording and performing bluegrass and has now released two albums of original music. Martin and The Steep Canyon Rangers, a young group based in North Carolina named IBMA's

veteran musicians, were named Emerging Artists of the Year and Instrumental Group of the Year. Balsam Range, Song of the Year for 'Trains I Missed.' Legendary artists Doyle Lawson, J.D. Crowe and Paul Williams took home two trophies for Recorded Event of the Year and Gospel Recorded Performance, for 'Prayer Bells from Heaven.' Russell Moore of IIIrd Tyme Out and Dale Ann Bradley took home awards for Male Vocalist and Female Vocalist of the Year—the fourth time for each. Rob Ickes, of Blue Highway was awarded his 13th Dobro Player of the Year award, the most trophies any individual instrumentalist has received in the history of the IBMA



Randy Kohrs

Randy Kohrs is a musician who people need to know about. Originally from Iowa in the USA, Kohrs is a killer dobro (slide guitar) player and vocalist who has a number of exception records out now. He has played on over 500 albums, including albums by fellow Aussie artists such as the Davidson Brothers, Kristy Cox, Travis Collins, Ronnie Rae, Melinda Schneider and Amber Lawrence. Currently, he's working on a more commercial type country album which may be titled "Wild Card" after a song co-penned by Kohrs and Ronnie Bowman. It's a traditional country meets blues meets the Black Crowes kind of CD. Kohrs won the 2008 Grammy Award for Best Bluegrass Album as the producer of Jim Lauderdale's *Bluegrass Diaries* album. Country music fans may recognise him as a member of Dolly Parton's or



Sam Bush & Kristy Cox

and fellow South Australian Kim Warner. While in Nashville she also participated in IBMA's World of Bluegrass and got to mix with bluegrass royalty. The Davidson Brothers have established the Australian Youth Bluegrass Scholarship to encourage and nurture singers and musicians who demonstrate exceptional talent and dedication in the field of Bluegrass Music. There are many young people in Australia who possess rare musical gifts, and a small nudge in the right direction may help pave the way toward their musical dreams. The recipient of the 2012 Australian Youth Bluegrass Scholarship will win a cash prize of \$1,500 and a recording package generously donated by the folks at Pacific International Music. Applicants must either sing, or play a bluegrass instrument - Mandolin, Acoustic Guitar, Fiddle, 5-String Banjo, Dobro or Bass. Visit www.davidsonbrothersband.com for more information and application



The Punch Brothers