

South Australian Showcase 2004

The main objectives of Showcase are to encourage the continued pursuit of excellence and professionalism in country music, actively seek and help develop new talent and also to focus both the Government and community attention on our genre as an integral part of the Australian music culture. This has been achieved through Australia's only professional development program in country music.

This special concert is the only event of its kind, in any genre of music, held in Australia and is literally a showcase of South Australian talent, designed to recognize the outstanding skills of SA's country music performers and to present the best of this State's emerging artists.

Showcase provides a vital professional development opportunity for these talented new artists and gives audiences the opportunity to see and hear the stars of tomorrow.

Our special guests are not only brought in for performances but they also mix with and mentor our young artists backstage as part of their assignment. This year's Showcase headlined leading Australian singer/songwriters Brian Letton and Mark Tempany, the South Australian queen of country music Carol Sturtzel, as well as highlighting some of the state's most promising artists.

The SA Showcase also gives SACCM the opportunity to announce the winners of the SACCM Industry Award, The Rocky Page Memorial Scholarship and the APRA Songwriting competition. The prestigious 2004 Industry Award was presented to the founding Chairman of the Council and sponsor John George, for his outstanding service to the country music industry in South Australia.

The Showcase concept has proved to be an exceptional opportunity to highlight and foster new talent in our state and genre. It continues to be the annual finale to artists' progress through our talent quest programme and a stepping-stone to future success in the entertainment industry. This year's Showcase saw the largest audience in 6 years and a record number of entries in the Song of the Year competition. It is certainly gaining a high reputation Australia wide within the music industry.

The Showcase Band is made up of specially selected musicians from the country music scene and was again directed by Anthony Stewart, with Starmaker Finalist Alison Hams on bass, award winning guitarist Craig Stringer on lead guitar, Paul Orchard on drums, Kevin Bergen on steel pedal, Jamie Baldwin on fiddle, and the backing harmonies of Tracy Stewart and Steven Sherrah. This showcase band helps make our artists' performances one to remember.

The artists are selected because of their outstanding performances throughout the last 12 months. These artists were; Senior Champion - Leah Briggs, Junior Champion - Catherine Sumner, 2004 Rocky Page Memorial Scholarship winner - Tammy-Lee Latham, Emily Reed, Warren Milera, Lee Brocky, Candy Latham and Sarah Griffin.

It is important to note that many outstanding country music artists have been through the South Australian talent circuit and scholarship system which has been the stepping stone for their careers. Jedd Hughes is now a Golden Guitarist, a recording artist and much in demand in Nashville; Bradley Bergen is now playing with Beccy Cole and Adam Harvey around Australia, and Jake Nickolai was finalist for the 2004 Golden Guitars, (Best New Talent) with his debut single 'Faster' (ABC country).

With the likes of Beccy Cole and Kasey Chambers leading Australian Country Music in Australia, it truly shows how South Australia is producing some of the nations leading performers.