

CLASSIC KOORI

Best Of Koori Classic 20 Country & 20 Rock'n'Roll
The Early Years Aboriginal Collection

BY LORRAINE PFITZNER

KOORI CLASSIC is the series that launched Australia's great Aboriginal music.

Born in the glow of the famous Min Min light, **ROGER KNOX** arrived in Tamworth from the infamous Toomelah Mission. After singing at the legendary Joe Maguire's Pub he was encouraged by local artist **GENTLEMAN GEOFF BROWN** and Hoedown DJ **JOHN MINSON**.

He toured the Northern Territory, Queensland and Western Australia with Brian Young in 1980 then the following year set out for more of the same but was almost killed in an air crash. He received first, second and third degree burns to seventy percent of his body. The rescue plane also crashed. That same year he lost his mother, father and twenty-one year old sister. Two years later he was not the first Aboriginal artist to record but he was the first to record modern music with a strong Aboriginal content, soon to be labeled 'Koori Music'.

Roger is represented on this album with five songs from his first LP recorded at Enrec Studios in 1983. He has a love for rock 'n' roll and has included *Brown Eye Handsome Man* and *Johnny B Goode*. Roger's band **EURABA** with **BUDDY KNOX**, **MICHAEL KNOX**, **GEORGE GRAHAM**, **STEVE GRAHAM** and **LLOYD HIPPI** was the backing for many of these sessions and session muso's included **RANDALL WILSON**, **LAWRIE MINSON** and **PIXIE JENKINS**.

There is a great version of **HARRY WILLIAMS'** *Bluegums Calling Me Back Home*.

In 1985 the Koori-Classic series commenced with Volume 1 featuring **SARINA ANDREW** (daughter of Auriel) with *Jolene*. The late **MANNY WEST** sings *You're An Angel Disguised As A Girl* and **IAN MOONIE ATKINSON** (who only released one EP recorded at Hydra studios) sings *Tell Me My Lying Eyes Are Wrong*.

MAC SILVA has a great version of *Malabar Mansion* as well as *Midnight Special*. These songs were recorded during the time when Mac, Roger and **VIC SIMMS** were doing shows in the prisons.

Mac passed away in 1986 but his name lives on in Sydney's Mac Silva Centre hostel for homeless Aboriginal men.

Vic Simms was the first Aboriginal Rock 'n' Roll star making his debut in 1957 sharing the bill with another first-timer, the future superstar **COL JOYE**. Many appearances on **BRIAN HENDERSON'S** *Bandstand* followed and a Festival Records hit, *Yo Yo Heart*. Vic travelled extensively with Col & the **JOY BOYS** and his songs on Koori Classic include his own version of Col's first record, *Goin' Down Town To See*

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ENREC

Miss Brown and *Hey Sheriff*, which introduced Sydney artist **JOHNNY REBB**.

Koori Classic Volume 3 features the girls too with **TRACY LEE GRAY** singing **ALLAN CASWELL'S** *Used To Be A Gold Song* and also *Streets Of Tamworth* and *I'm Not Your Jukebox* written by journalist the late **MORT FIST**.

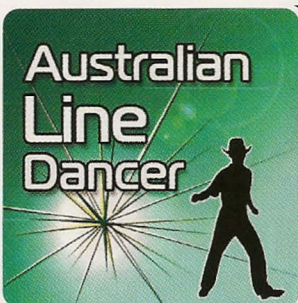
SHARON MANN from Rockhampton in Queensland released *Reach Out* in 1991. She is featured with *I'll Step Down* and *Take Me As I Am*.

Other stars include **BUDDY KNOX**, **MOP & THE DROPOUTS** and **JOHNNY HUCKLE**,

A Gospel song is included from Roger's gospel cassette *The Gospel Medley*.

This reissue has a wealth of our indigenous talent and I am thrilled to see it being made available again thanks to Rouseabout Records.

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