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[Preentiousness] is the only thing that shocks anymore” (ibid.). It’s good to see Mr Bowie has been listened to by so many in the industry since.

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Smith, G (2005) *Singing Australian: A History of Folk and Country Music*, North Melbourne: Pluto Press

Things do change and they change again; and just because at this moment we have no great body of fine folksong that is bound close to our social life and the times we live in and the way we go about our work, that is not to say there never will be any more. (Lloyd, 1944: 68)

The quote from the conclusion of Bert Lloyd’s wartime pamphlet *The Singing Englishman* pointed to the possibility of the yet-unborn folk song revival in Britain. Lloyd based his prediction on what he saw as the musical needs of a population attempting to build a fairer society. Smith, in his similarly titled book, describes how the folk revivalists in particular came to regard themselves as a creative entity in the political and musical history of Australia. Where Lloyd was reasoning that folk song might not die out, and why a revival might be on the cards, Smith analyses the history of the folk revival in Australia and its connections with contemporary political history, particularly its connections with radical activism:

Ideas such as the folk community and the folk process are not just about cultural production in simpler, bygone communities, but are ideals through which contemporary activists and participants understand their own cultural activity and develop their commitment to maintaining the possibility of ‘authentic’ and unmediated cultural creativity in modern urban societies. (13)

Smith argues that country music and world music producers make many similar claims to be Australia’s true guardians of national song; the voice of the people:

The musics discussed in this book all self-consciously distance themselves from the mass popular music industry, with its reliance on recorded sound and its shallow consumerism. They all invoke the term ‘community’ to describe themselves. The folk and country talk of themselves as ‘the folk community’ and ‘the country community’. Multicultural music activists see themselves as working with or on behalf of various ethnic communities. (195)

Throughout the book Smith unravels the connections between folk and country as genres, as well as the way they have been differentiated. He also points to a coming together of not just those strands but the more recent offshoots of world music:

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At the beginning of the twenty-first century, folk country and world music musicians are sharing stages, repertoires and styles as never before ... They may have their separate and distinctive histories, their core musical repertoires, their characteristic audience demographic and their preferred performance styles and contexts, but within and between these can contemplate difference and contradiction and learn new ways to think and sing in Australia. (201)

Singing Australia offers a unique contribution to our understanding of what Australian folk, country and world music are. It takes us to the beginnings of the folk revival in the 1950s and the organisations that were set up to collect and preserve a neglected heritage. There is a special concern to examine the role of the activist creators of the revival, and how much effort was expended to build self-sufficient institutions such as folk festivals.

Festivals themselves are the result of enormous amounts of voluntary activist energy. The level of direct government assistance has been remarkably small, and their dependence on volunteers distinguishes folk festivals both from commercial ventures and from state-subsidised cultural activities which depend on professional levels of remuneration. (74)

Singing Australia's scope in terms of the music it reviews, the theoretical viewpoints discussed, the performers, audiences and musical evolutions canvassed is incredible. Everything is here: jazz; the Communist Party; Aboriginal music and related struggles; international influences; Irish music; Greek and Balkan influence; bush bands; country; punk; nationalism old and new; the coffee shop and its effects on performance; type of instrument and style of playing; the didjeridu; vocal techniques and accents used in singing. This alone makes it a *tour de force*.

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**Stafford, A (2004) *Pig City: From The Saints to Savage Garden*,
St Lucia: University of Queensland Press**

If Liverpool can be described as the 'fifth Beatle', what has been the influence of the city of Brisbane upon its recording artists and performers? Drawing on interviews with key musicians, radio and management personnel, Stafford, a respected journalist, has managed to construct a history interweaving the political, cultural and musical environments of Brisbane since the 1970s.

A recurring theme is the invention of musicians when faced with little real infrastructure. With few rehearsal rooms, bands claimed a disused Target retail warehouse, where "it was not uncommon for musicians – especially rhythm