

IDIOT for August 2011

DINO WODINI

Q.1 What is your real name (optional) or the name you would like to be called?

Dennis Wood. Sometimes known as Dino..sometimes known as Wilbur or.. Woodie

Q.2 What is your age group? 20 - 30. 30 - 40. 40 - 50. 50 - 60. Over 60.

50-60. I was born in the 50's and am in my 50's

Q.3 How did you get started in music?

I remember a long time ago (when our family immigrated to Australia using the £10 assisted passage) that my mother had this strange bellows driven device (I later learned was called a Concertina) she used to play from time to time. It had a multitude of buttons which were obviously notes or keys and as she played this thing, her and my father used to sing all manner of traditional Scottish and English folk songs. This got me intrigued and I remember humming along. (The Concertina is still in my father's garage in its case).

Both my parents were quite wonderful singers (Father – Tenor / Mother – Contralto) and they soon joined the local Gilbert & Sullivan Operatic Society. I used to tag along for their rehearsals and at about the age of 12 or 13, I joined in and played a Cabin Boy in HMS Pinafore and a chorus singer in the Pirates of Penzance.

I had been given a Ukulele as a Christmas present one year and although it was sometimes used to smash the cat on the head it was also used as an instrument by me in a strange sadistic style. At around this time I also was given an acoustic guitar and I attended the local town hall for guitar lessons where the famous Lou Toppano School of Music gave guitar lessons to a very large class of around 20 kids. After the third week I made a conscious decision to quit guitar school. It came about when the instructor asked everyone to play an "F" chord. To my ears, I was the only one to play it cleanly and that was that. Didn't want to be held back. I had the "course book" which had all the guitar chords under the sun like (C, F, G, Am lol!!) and some magic old songs like "Jimmy Crack Corn". Got through the book pretty quickly.

No electronic guitar tuners back then so it was just pick a note and start turning the pegs using the 5th fret and a good ear to tune it. I also tuned my Ukulele to the first 4 strings of the guitar and not the standard Uke tuning.

At some stage, one of the other actor/singers in the G&S Society moved overseas and we took charge of their upright piano for 6 months. Yaay!!!

Having no idea (and still no idea) about how to play the piano, I simply played a note on my Uke and found the corresponding note on the piano and constructed my own 4 note chords that way.

Unfortunately, the chords I created as my C, F & G were mostly black notes.

I blame it all on my parents :)

I was slowly getting suckered into the world of music.

My teens found me singing to Beatles records with a friend from 4 houses up the road (he later became a bit of a Pop Star in OZ in the late 70's). I was playing by "ear" and worked out the chords and started to make variations of the chords up and down the neck.

Inevitably, we got a band started with school class mates and started our first band "The Living End". Some OZ members will no doubt be familiar with the current "Living End" band but WE had it first. We had a bass player called "Briggsy", a lead guitarist called "Jonesy", a drummer called "Cookie", a singer "Burjo" and I was Wilbur. We managed to get a gig once a month at my mother's work Social Dance, the local Scout Hall had a once a month gig and that was about it until I was 17. Local stars (not). We practiced every Saturday afternoon in my parents garage and had a pretty good gathering out at the front gate.

Always learning more each day.

I next got a gig with a band of 'older' guys when I was 17 ½ and started playing in hotels where we backed floorshow artists every Saturday night. This was my first exposure to Musical Charts with 1st Time bars and Dal Segno's and D.S al Codas etc.....enlightenment. Although I could not 'sight read' the notes on the sheet, I had a good ear and could bluff a lot. Still don't read notes to this day but can get a round a chord chart pretty well.

I left my comfortable day job when I turned 21 and relied solely on music as my income. Working with the same hotel band, we left the eastern states and moved to Western Australia for 12 months and played the Walkabout Hotel Chain up and down the west coast.

At this time, my musical tastes were given a 'kick' and I started to venture out and learned some alternate music from bands like Uriah Heap, Wishbone Ash, Edgar Winter Band etc. Expanded my outlook you could say. The band eventually folded due to various reasons and I headed back to Melbourne and safety. We did stop of at Adelaide and do a week at the Old Lion Hotel.

Got a job (boring) and joined another band doing functions, birthday parties and some pretty reasonable hotel residencies. The 70's for me was a great time musically. I played with really good players and

always picked up a few tricks here and there. I really got interested in soul and jazz-funk at this stage and played a lot of Average White Band and similar style music with this band. Restless....moved to UK to follow a girl I fancied. Planned on 3 – 4 months but stayed 5 years. I worked in a Market Research business in Bayswater, London. I became great friend with our German interviewer as I traveled to Germany to do surveys where I operated a special "Eye Movement Recorder" where you show a Doctor a medical journal in slide form and measure his eye movement on video via a series of prisms. Advertising research I suppose. The German guy was a guitarist and singer so we clicked. It came to pass that we made up a "supergroup" or is that "zupergrouppa" of players from the local Wuppertal top bands. We practiced whenever I was in Germany with work and this is when I started to write my own songs. We did a 4 songs (in a 16 track studio) demo and only did one live gig. The band was called "Sydney". We later did a 4 songs recording in EMI studios at Koln for a radio program on Radio WDR. Still no success. What's going on.. In the five years that I lived in Holland Park, London I bought a couple of little cassette recorders and started writing and recording my songs in my bedsit. I say "record" but it was done more in a caveman style. Record a guitar and vocal on one recorder – play that back and record my next guitar and vocal harmony track to the play back – play the 2nd tape back and record a third overdub to the other cassette recorder etc etc etc . Archaic as you can imagine and due to the cassette recorders having a slight speed difference, I ended up retuning each time and after 5 overdubs the song may have risen at least a semitone or a full tone. Also, this was all accomplished using the inbuilt condensor mike. No cable inputs back in those days. Came back to Australia in the 1980's and immediately moved up to Sydney from my home base in Melbourne. The "pop star" I mentioned earlier was doing lots and lots of gigs around the clubs (social clubs but with poker machines and lots of entertainment). I became his Musical Director and my job was to run through the charts with the 'house' band in the backstage area for a 5 minute read through and then go out on stage and play guitar, conduct them, count them in, count them out, cut them off, and generally be a leader. Every gig was a different band with different talents and abilities so it was such an interesting time. We made it through most gigs. Me and "burjo" also did a lot of acoustic duo work in wine bars and taverns just singing old songs from Beatles to Rolling Stones. Them were the days..yep. Managed to live reasonably but not extravagantly from the money playing music gave me for next 5 years. Did a couple of cruiseships and some television appearances with "Burjo". I had a big break from music right into the early 1990's (around 4 years). Didn't play with any one or any where but I did buy a Tascam A244 and started writing songs mainly for my own benefit.

Writing...writing....writing...

In late 1993, I joined a "country" band and we rehearsed and rehearsed and rehearsed and got really good but only did a handful of gigs. What a shame. We were doing songs from Billy Ray Cyrus (no ...we didn't do that song.....but he had some amazing songs on his first album), Garth Brooks, Vince Gill, Hal Ketchum, Dwight Yokem etc. This was 'kick ass' stadium country rock and not C & W. Don't be afraid of Country music lads and lassies. I found it was the hardest form of music to play - well. One tends to get a bit blasé generally, but to play a simple song correctly and with the correct feeling is really hard to do. Good thing that came out of that was the job I work now. I met my boss then as he was the drummer in the country band. In 1996 I flew over to Germany for two weeks to record vocals tracks for an album of my original music which had been re-recorded by my good old friend over there and by session musos (sort of). Unfortunately my debut CD "First Return" didn't have the best sound and I think sold about 100 copies out of the thousand that were printed. Soon after, I joined a band in Sydney that had a residency in a club every Saturday night. We met at 7pm, had dinner and some drinks, played a couple of sets, backed a floorshow artiste, played another set and went home. We didn't practice with each other cos they were fantastic readers and if any one wanted to do a new song then it was case of a chord chart and we just kick it off. By the way, the drummer in that band was at the time the Principal Percussionist with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. He is still with the SSO as well as the Australian Chamber Orchestra. If a fly crapped on a musical charts he would probably read that note as well as the regular ones LOL. During the bands life we each took time of for various holidays, special days etc. The rule was that if you take a night off then you have to find a replacement. It was a "charted" band so I had a list of players I could call on for fill for me. I loved it when the other guys had a night off cos they had even better contacts in the industry and I got to play with some of Sydney's finest musicians over that time. Alas, it all came to an end in around 2006 and despite a couple of guest spots here and there I haven't done any live playing for many years. I miss it a lot. It is such a great feeling to get up in front of any crowd and just...play.

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Thanks Dennis. If everyone gave me an auto-biography, I wouldn't need to ask the questions.

Q.4 Can you list your top 3 music genres?

Soppy love songs (is tha a genre?), jazz-fusion/funk and maybe a little Country

Q.5 Of the three, which do you associate with mostly?

Soppy Love songs. I have always been partial to sad movies and a sad song makes my day. Ha!!!! I think it is more the emotion of the instruments that gets me.

Q.6 What is your talent? Don't be modest.

I play guitar and sing. Now, I don't profess to being a great guitarist or in fact a great singer BUT I will admit that I am an okay player and singer and all through my life of music I have been able to sit in with others and feel comfortable and not out of my comfort zone. I sometimes don't feel comfortable being a solo artist/writer because who can I blame if things stuff up!!!! Who can carry me if I have a lapse!! You know!! I have always been a "band member" and this solo thing is hard.

Q.7 Of the talents you have not listed, which would you like to do most?

I would like to be a better 10 Pin bowler. My average has stagnated to 175 at the moment and I know I can do better. Hmmm. I would also like to be a better keyboard player.

Q.8 From the list of members you know, who interests you most and why?

(doesn't have to be because you think they own the best talent)

Hard call. I think Karmanistic is a very interesting member. His music is totally "out there" and I feel there is a lot of misunderstood brilliance in that head.

Q.9 Have you ever collaborated with another member or members on a recording.

I have not done a great deal of collaborating over the years but I have done songs with Smurf, Papa G, Joom, Karmanistic, Schprocket. Also, we did a couple of massive collabs over at KAE Forum for Old Goat and I think we had about 7 or 8 members join in on a long song. Similar to the joint effort we did on TTM for Smurf some time back. I have also collabs with Frank Donecker of the KAE forum. We did three or four original instrumental songs as a work in progress entitled "Picking Up Pieces".

Q.10 Which of your collabs did you enjoy most and why?

I really enjoy working with Smurf. We have done a few over the years but the last one was last year on a song "Golden Game" for a KAE Challenge. It was enjoyable purely for the sound of Smurf's guitar tuned to an odd tuning and my guitar tuned to Open D and the mix of the two and then the crazy slide part in the middle section. I enjoyed the vocals I put down for this one and just the general feel of the song. Smurf created a fantastic mix.

I also enjoyed working with Papa G on a couple of collabs

Q.11 Have you a favourite mix from our band room? (Could be one of your own.)

I can't think of anything at the moment but I am very impressed with Spiral's music and his mixes. I always have been.

Q.12 What is your ambition both musically and personally?

My ambition or drive is to keep writing music/songs and to share those pieces with all of you guys. Also, I do not see myself being a 'star' or whatever but am more than happy if an existing artist/producer picks up one of my songs and takes it to the top of the charts. I work with a formula in mind - "Write 30 songs and maybe 2 will be great". It's all a matter of numbers.

Q.13 Do you belong to any other indie websites and will you name them?

The only Forums I really visit on a daily basis are TTM and KAE. I stick with what I know.

Q.14 Where do you see TTM in 5 years time? What role can you play in it's development?

I don't really know where TTM will be in 5 years. I hope that I will still be around and I hope that Joom's hard work is repaid. I am hopeful it will get bigger and bigger and we see more musical members join us

Q.15 Who is your next choice for the IDIOT?

Hmmmm..... would like to hear all about Onetrackmind or Gazebo