



2012 Information Sheet

Update No 2 – March 13th, 2012



Nashville - Sep 12 -15, 2012

The 2012 Americana Festival and Conference (12-15th September), is a 4-day event featuring 40-odd conference panels (at the Sheraton Hotel), special events (films/interviews/keynotes etc), the Awards & Honours show at the historic Ryman Auditorium, and an amazing array of 'roots' talent (everything to the 'left' of the usual country pop/rock mainstream) in nightly 4S-minute showcase spots in 6 venues. In 2011, the event attracted 1200+ delegates from all sectors of the US and international music industry. Delegate & audience numbers are steadily increasing - an excellent result in the general US economic environment.

There are basically two ways to be involved -

- As a selected AMA showcase artist
- As a member of the Sounds Australia program.

(Note: Being selected for an AMA showcase, does NOT preclude you from being involved in Sounds Australia's events. Likewise, if you aren't selected - or choose not to apply, you're welcome to participate in the program).

Sounds Australia has been working with the AMA since 2009 to create a distinctive 'Aussie' presence in the event. In 2010 we presented 8 artists. In 2011, 18 artists, 9 managers and 2 media reps attended.

If you've read my 2011 report (www.soundsaustraliaamericana.com). you'll have read the comments from a number of those who attended last year.

If I could summarise, it's not going to make you instantly famous, but it is a great target event for those with a focus on the 'roots' music area, as nearly everyone involved is a fellow-artist/writer in that genre, or a media/business person with a similar focus.

The AMA has agreed that Sounds Australia will be guaranteed -

- A minimum of 4 official showcase spots (chosen by AMA selection panels)
- An Australia-specific panel in the Conference program
- A Sounds Australia information booth in the Conference Exhibition Hall
- 3 sanctioned 'Australian' showcase events under the event umbrella ('Tamworth Presents A Taste of Australia' @ The Bluebird Cafe; 'Maton Aussie Lunch' @ The Second Fiddle; 'The Aussie BBQ' @ The Basement).

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Last year, in addition to this program we negotiated with radio/web broadcaster Music City Roots to dedicate one of their weekly (Wednesday) live concert/broadcasts (from the Loveless Barn) as a "downunder" special, the week following Americana. The AMA has their own special on the Wednesday of the Festival of course. Last year, Catherine Britt, Ange Boxall, James Blundell, Mark & Jay O'Shea and Henry Wagons were still in town and took part.

We have also negotiated a songwriting 'workshop' (networking, info-sharing etc), with good friends Barry and Jewel Coburn, co-Presidents of leading indie publisher TenTen Music.

No other nation has negotiated such a program with the AMA, so Australia is leading the international field in creating a unique and noteworthy presence. Be assured that's what the Sounds Australia 'banner' is all about - helping artists and businesses to make an impact - rather than some jingoistic flag-waving exercise.

Applying for an 'official' AMA showcase

These showcases are 45-minute spots that take place in 5-6 venues around Nashville every night of the event. There are 5-6 showcases per night, with the venues connected by regular shuttle bus service so fans can move around.

There are approx 105 showcase spots available.

If you're a Sonicbids member, you can apply through them for showcase consideration for free - details on Sonicbids website. (Sonicbids is offering 6 reserved spots).

My suggestion is -

Join the AMA (\$35 artist joining fee), and apply directly via snail mail. By joining you're giving the AMA the support they need to continue to run the event, but it's also an indication of your 'intent'. (Not to mention the access to members etc which you get). Go to - www.americanamusic.org - and check 'membership' and 'festival' tabs at top of page for details on joining /applying.

Whether you apply through Sonicbids or directly through the AMA. PLEASE let me know when you've submitted.

Why?

So I can alert the AMA to the fact that you've done so and they should add you to the list for early consideration.

Most US applicants aren't notified until July. Sounds Australia and the AMA have agreed that potential international artists need as much lead-time as possible in terms of planning, finance etc. They've undertaken to do their best to assess Australian applications ASAP. But I want to make sure they know you should be on the list.

If you are chosen for an official showcase, you'll get a small honorarium payment and full conference/festival registration.

Although the AMA has guaranteed a minimum of 4 Aussie places in the showcase program, they're under so much pressure from their current US artist members, that 'our' number of guaranteed spots is unlikely to increase substantially any time soon. Whether or not artists are selected for the official showcases, they will have access

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to the 3 specific events that Sounds Australia conducts. Depending on numbers, it is likely that everyone will get 2 performance spots (typically 15-20 mins).

If you don't apply - or are not selected to showcase

When we negotiated the first Sounds Australia involvement (2009), we were at pains to make sure the AMA appreciated that for people travelling so far, one showcase spot wasn't enough. Also, there would be a number who choose not to apply for the official showcase program, but want to use the event as a focal point for networking, intelligence gathering, building contacts etc etc.

The AMA was right on side here, hence their willingness for us to create specific Sounds Australia events which they've endorsed as part of the program.

They've also provided a special registration deal for all Sounds Australia participants. Basically, they will extend the 'member' event rego rate to us all (\$300 for non-artists, \$250 - artists) - whether members or not.

This entitles you to -

(a) Access to all conference panel sessions, special presentations etc

(b) Ticket to Honours & Awards Show at The Ryman (a killer!)

(c) Access to all AMA showcases/venues

If you're a member, you can register directly, if not, I'm happy to do that on your behalf. IF you register directly, please let me know, so they're aware of the Australian commitment.

If you're not interested in the conference, you can purchase a wristband for access to showcases (\$50 last year), and/or a ticket to the Awards (\$65 last year).

(Be aware, that with the increasing popularity of the event and thus the number of full delegates, 'spare' Awards tickets are likely to be harder to get separately).

I personally found the Conference very informative, and an excellent opportunity to establish contacts etc.

If you're not sure - have a look at last year's program - Daily Schedule under 'conference' tab on AMA website.

Additional Info

In 2010, Sounds Australia entered into a 3-year contract with award-winning Nashville PR/Promo company Aristomedia, run by ex-pat (and great Aussie supporter) Jeff Walker.

Jeff and his team are tasked with promoting the Sounds Australia involvement and all those artists participating. Their extensive knowledge of the local industry - and their great reputation, guarantees that our artists and events are profiled successfully.

Artists, managers and other attendees will have access to the Sounds Australia information booth in the Exhibition Hall at the Sheraton Hotel (for duration of conference) .. It can be used as a meeting/networking point, and also for distribution of promo materials to delegates.

Sounds Australia will also produce and distribute to all delegates (through their Goody Bag), a dropcard with an MP3 track, bio and website links from all participating artists who want to be involved (no charge).

Sounds Australia is working with the Nashville chapter of the International Music Managers Forum to create a specific networking event for attending managers.

There is also the possibility of repeating the 2011 'Downunder' special edition (the

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week following Americana) of 'Music City Roots', a live concert broadcast from the Loveless Barn every Wednesday.

So, if you decide to attend, here's a summary of what you can expect-

- The opportunity to perform at Sounds Australia's 3 dedicated events
- Opportunity to be involved in songwriting workshop with TenTen Music
- Access to special event rego rate for non-AMA members
- Access to Aristomedia PR (press releases, invites, event documentation etc)
- Use of SA Info Booth for meetings/promo distribution
- Possible involvement in Music City Roots Aussie special
- MP3 track, bio/photo/weblinks on SA Dropcard

Funding

The good news is that with a couple of successful Sounds Australia involvements, the Americana event is on the radar of most state funding bodies.

In addition, it is now well known to the Australia Council and part of their 'International Pathways' & 'Live On Stage' funding programs.

The downside is of course that increased 'popularity' also means more competition for funds.

If you're interested, or have any queries after you've looked at the OzCo site, you can contact Andy Rantzen – A.Rantzen@australiacouncil.gov.au

Finally

I realise that many of you are in the early stages of investigating the event, whilst others have communicated their definite intentions to go this year.

The last thing I want to do is pressure anyone, but I'm only too aware that last year's contingent of 18 artists stretched our three gigs to the limit in terms of trying to give everyone a 'fair go'.

If the number committing exceeds practical levels, I'll do my best to create an additional performance opportunity. However, the budget's limited, and the final call would be with the AMA.

Anyway, you can help by letting me know your intentions as they move through 'possible' to 'probable' to 'definite' - OR - back the other way.

I'd hate to get to a situation where Sounds Australia was 'selecting' people for involvement, but - ultimately, it's about delivering a quality experience to those who commit.

Cheers,
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