

Born in Rugby, England in 1956, young Robert came to Australia in 1970 as a 13-year old clarinet-tooting schoolboy. A year later he switched to guitar and the rest, as they say, is history...

## What, When and Howe

After playing around the fringes of folk music in Sydney, **BOB HOWE** began his professional Country Music career after being 'discovered' in 1975 by Desree-Ilona Crawford and the late Bill Kelly. While still a teenager, Bob played studio sessions for **Reg Lindsay** and **Diana Trask**, and later went on to tour with them both, and he played on over 40 episodes of the Logie-winning TV show, *Reg Lindsay's Country Homestead*. In 1977 he spent a year playing his guitar all over England and then returned to Australia to tour with many artists including spells as Musical Director for both Lucky Starr and Laurel Lee. He also began producing records in 1979 with Terry Gordon's *The Last Of The Marrickville Cowboys* LP for Opal Records.

After playing the part of lead guitarist James Burton in **ELVIS - The Stage Musical** at the Capitol Theatre, Sydney and Her Majesty's Theatre, Brisbane in 1981, Bob moved to Melbourne. He subsequently toured Australia with **Johnny Chester and Hotspur** (playing on the Golden Guitar-winning recording *Rough Around The Edges*) and with **Donna Fisk**. In 1982 Bob was voted *Most Popular Guitarist*, *Most Popular Musician*, and *Most Popular Newcomer* at the **Southern Hemisphere Country Music Awards 1982** (F.E.I.P. Victoria), and later won the *Best Country Song* award in the 1984 3CCC-FM song-writing contest.

1984 found Bob playing his way across the USA, followed by tours of the UK, Australia and the Far East as Musical Director for legendary Australian singing star, **Frank Ifield**. He took a break from touring in 1986-87 to perform a critically acclaimed portrayal of Paul McCartney in **Lennon - The Musical of the Legend** at the Enmore Theatre, Sydney; and the QPAC Lyric Theatre, Brisbane. After another season in the U.K and another Australian tour with Frank Ifield, Bob relocated to the U.S. for a time, first in Mobile, Alabama and later Nashville, Tennessee, touring with Gospel/Country singer **Jerry Arhelger**.

Through the Nineties, Bob continued to be highly in-demand as a multi-instrumental musician. As a musical director he conducted for international singers such as **Guy Mitchell**, and **Judy Stone** and toured Australia and New Zealand as guitarist with **Val Doonican**. As a session musician he has played on Gold Guitar-winning recordings by **Allan Caswell** and blown harmonica on **Don Spencer's** platinum-selling children's albums. Bob's television appearances include *At Home with John Mangos*, and *It's Country Today!* for which he was the band's Musical Director. The list of artists he has played for reads like a 'who's who' of Country Music, and also includes Slim Dusty, Anne Kirkpatrick, Pat Drummond, Keith Glass, Graeme Connors, Judy Stone, Jade Hurley, Sarah Jory, Dale Watson and Kitty Wells, to name just a few!

**Into the new millennium:** As **Frankie Goes To Holloway** (FG2H), Bob and Michael Vidale released a linedance version of *On The Inside* in the U.K. and Australia. Amongst his other varied activities, 'cyberBob' is also a Country Music Webmaster, known for his 'Capital News' column *Cowboys In Cyberspace* and his photojournalism in various music magazines. In 2004 he was recognised internationally, winning **The Charlie Lamb Award for Excellence in Country Music Journalism (Lifetime Achievement Category)**, presented during the International Country Music Conference at Belmont University in Nashville. During the conference, Bob was also a featured guest speaker, and his presentation on Australian country music was enthusiastically received by the audience of International academics.

Bob continues to be much sought after as a musician and producer (*world-wide releases include Frank Ifield, Wayne Horsburgh, Donna Boyd, Emma Hannah, Nicki Gillis*) and was the Musical Director for the **Hats Off To The Outback** concert band (Tamworth, June 2002) and the **Telstra Road To Tamworth** band (2004 and 2005).

Bob produces the popular monthly Sydney live show **Canterbury Country**, co-hosted by Bob and Nicki Gillis, which has been running since 2000. The concerts give big-city exposure to a myriad of Country artists and have become the biggest regular country music show in Sydney.

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Every Saturday night for seven years (2003-2010), Bob (a.k.a. **Big Bob from Bondi**) chatted with John Nutting on ABC Local Radio to deliver the Saturday Night Country Gig Guide, relayed across 60 stations nationally, via the Web and Radio Australia. Bob also co-hosted on numerous occasions from the Sydney, Tamworth and Mildura studios, reported in from the USA in 2004 and 2008, and performed live music in the studio.

2006 saw the release of Bob's first solo instrumental album entitled **GO WEST** which received great acclaim and won the *Marketing Excellence Award* in the *Australian Country Recording Awards*. In the arena of live performance, Bob was honoured as **Variety Vocal/Instrumental Performer of the Year** at the prestigious 30th *Australian Entertainment 'MO' Awards*.

2007 began with a special industry award at the *Australian Country Music People's Choice Awards* where Bob was named **Musician of the Year!** The inscription on the award reads "...in recognition of your musical skills and how you have brought them to bear over the years for the betterment of Australian country music and the artists you work with." Later in the year he was nominated again for a 'MO' Award and also was thrilled to be nominated for the **Rex Barry Award (Industry Achiever award)**, the top honour at the 2007 CMAA **Australian Country Music Achiever Awards**. The Awards recognise industry members who have "made major contributions to the development and promotion of Australian country music". At the end of the year he followed up the success of *GO WEST* with another CD, **CLASSIC TWANG**. In 2008, a radio single from the album, *I Listen To My Heart*, received world-wide airplay - from **Austria** to **New Zealand** !

In June 2009, **NICKI GILLIS + BOB HOWE** released the CD album **COLLABORATION**, which garnered excellent reviews and the radio singles *Chasing Cars* and *It Doesn't Matter Anymore*, reached #3 and #10 on the U.K. Country airplay chart and even higher on the European Country Music Association report. In June 2009 and again in July 2010, Bob toured the U.K. as Musical Director for the Nicki Gillis Band. April 2010 saw the release of a brand new recording of *I Remember You* by Nicki Gillis with Frank Ifield. This version of the song was produced and recorded by Bob Howe at his Kenilworth Studios in Sydney, Australia.

Bob was again honoured as **Variety Vocal/Instrumental Performer of the Year** at the 34th *Australian Entertainment 'MO' Awards* presented in May 2010 and his band Hillbilly Heaven have been multiple nominees in the *Slim Dusty Country Group* category of the Australian Entertainment 'MO' Awards, plus the *Country Group/Band* category of the *Australian Club Entertainment (A.C.E.) Awards*. The honour was duplicated when Bob was named **Vocal/Instrumental Performer of the Year** at the 35th *Australian Entertainment 'MO' Awards* presented in May 2011.

In June 2011, Bob hosted the *Tomkins Guitar Showcase* in Nashville, Tennessee for the second time, a task he has been responsible for on numerous occasions in Tamworth and Sydney. The following month he released his third (mostly) instrumental album, **COLOUR MY WORLD**, and in 2012 a digital-only single release *Celtic Bushman*, a lively instrumental featuring electric guitar, tin whistle and mandolin, inspired by the Irish and Scottish influence on Australian music and culture.

In January 2014, Bob was inducted into the **Australian Country Music Hands of Fame** and his handprint is now immortalised at the Hands of Fame Park in Tamworth, NSW.

His latest solo releases are the CDs **THE SILVER COLLECTION** and **ACT NATURALLY**, plus the digital single *Highwayman* (by **Fisk, Fisk & Howe** that reached #4 on the Australian Country Tracks chart) and he co-wrote and produced the single for **Nicki Gillis**, *In The Daylight*, which spent three weeks at #1 on the U.K. Hotdisc chart.

Whether appearing live on stages around the nation or across the ocean blue, life is just getting bigger and better for **BOB HOWE**.

#### Links:

[www.bobhowe.com](http://www.bobhowe.com)

[www.cowboysincyberspace.com](http://www.cowboysincyberspace.com)

[www.shownet.com.au/canterburycountry.html](http://www.shownet.com.au/canterburycountry.html)

