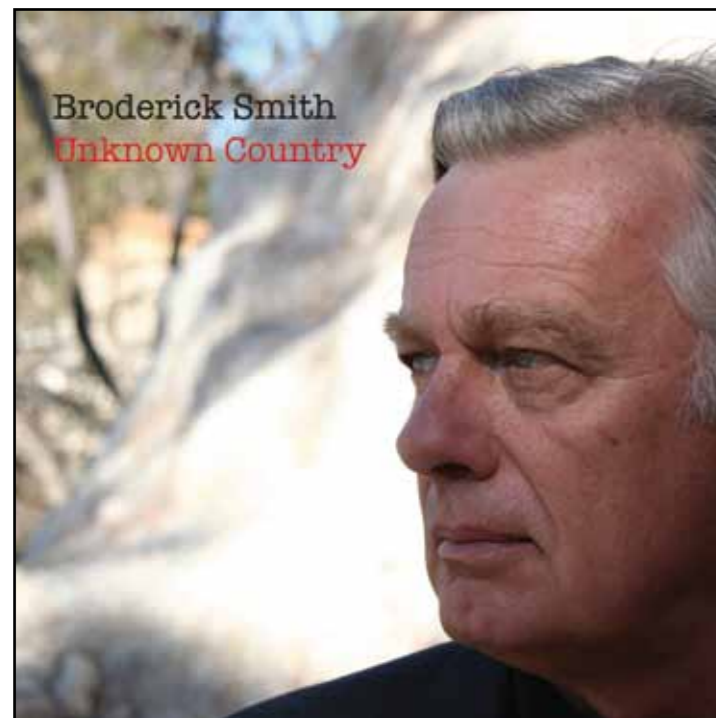


Broderick Smith

Timeline

- 1962 Plays in first bands, aged 14.
- 1966 Joins Adderley Smith Blues Band in Melbourne.
- 1968 Drafted for two years' national service.
- 1970 Joins country/ roots outfit, Sundown.
- 1971 Joins seminal Australian blues band, Carson.
- 1972 First solo singles (by Brian Cadd); also debut Carson LP, Blown.
- 1973 Last Carson album, On The Air; Smith performs in The Who's Tommy. Dingoes formed with Adderley Smith's Kerry Tolhurst.
- 1974 Dingoes' Top 20 debut is instant Australian classic.
- 1977 Band signs deal with Rolling Stones / The Who manager Peter Rudge.
- 1977 Five Times The Sun, recorded after relocation to USA, hits Oz Top 20.
- 1978 Smith returns to Australia, forms Broderick Smith's Hired Hands.
- 1979 Posthumous Dingoes album, Orphans of the Storm. Broderick Smith's Big Combo play first gigs.
- 1980 Sessions include Skyhooks; Andrew Durant Memorial Concert.
- 1981 Broderick Smith's Big Combo album breaks Top 40.
- 1984 Debut solo album, Broderick Smith.
- 1991 Blues Power tour with Matt Taylor, Phil Manning.
- 1992 Suitcase: first solo album with Mushroom Records.
- 1993 Opens for Joe Cocker around Australia.
- 1994 Acts in The Grapes of Wrath for Melbourne Theatre Company. Later roles include Janus, Blue Heelers. Third solo album, My Shiralee, features lap steel player Matt Walker.
- 1995 Songster album for ABC Records.
- 1996 Crayon Angels LP interprets great American, Canadian and Irish songwriters.
- 2002 Too Easy album.
- 2007 Journal – The Best of Broderick Smith.
- 2006 Begins touring with blues trio The Backsliders.
- 2009 Unknown Country: debut album for Liberation Music.



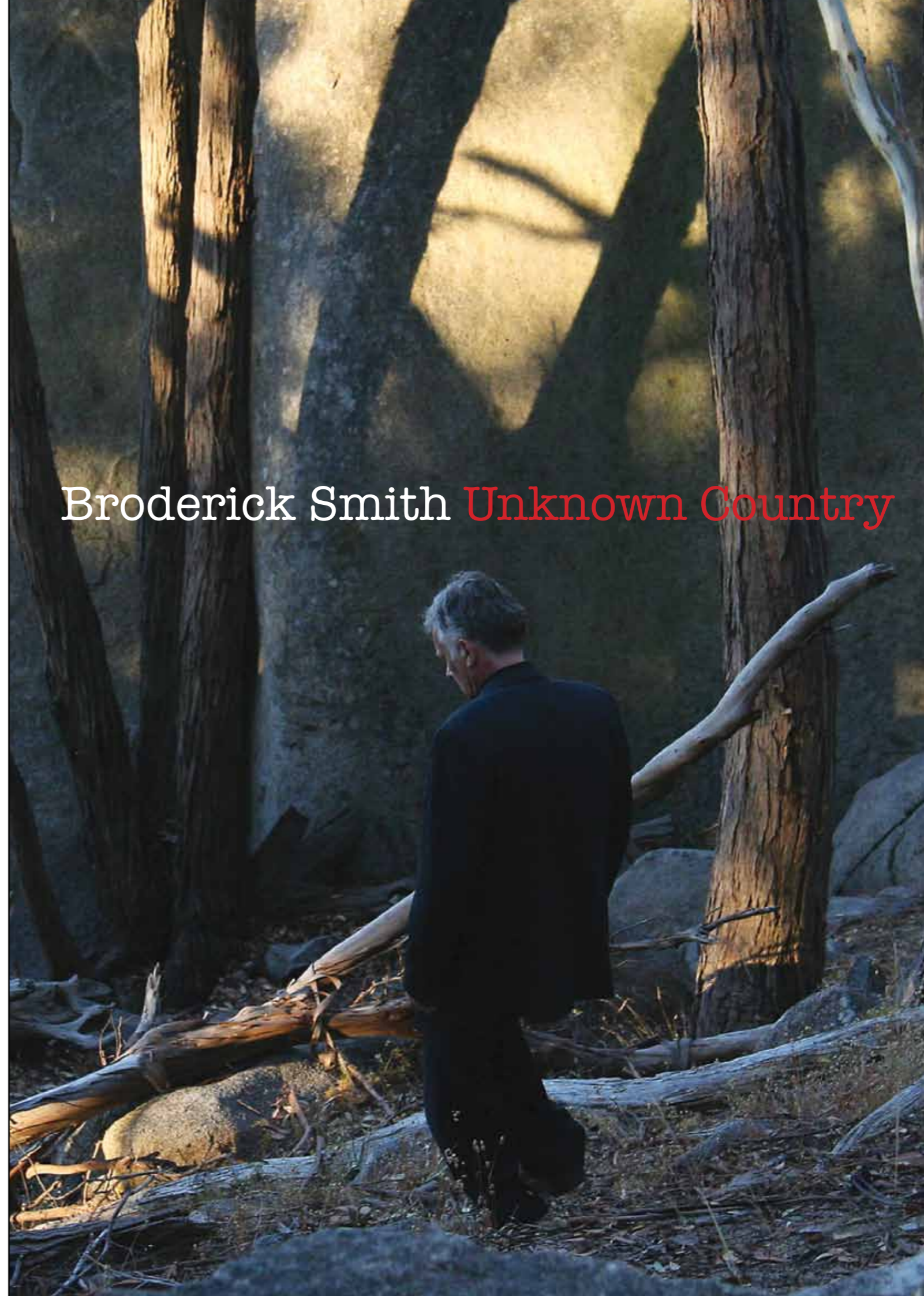
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Broderick Smith **Unknown Country**



Broderick Smith Unknown Country

Unknown Country.

Population: 1.

It's a landscape of familiar features casting strange shadows. There's a visceral echo of early rock'n'roll. The deep, dark twang of the swamp, the high and lonesome air of the mountains. There's the blood of the broadsheet ballad, the weathered bones of back porch blues.

Front and centre is a voice as rich, potent and quintessentially Australian as any this country has yielded.

Broderick Smith has been homing in on this unique territory for nearly 50 years. He staked his first claims with seminal Melbourne blues / roots outfits Carson and The Dingoes. Not that his journey began there by any means. But in a sense, Unknown Country is where it was always heading.

"We did this album pretty fast," he says. "The bulk of it was done in about five days, mostly in one or two takes. Making a good record is really all in the preparation, for me. It's like cooking. You chop and dice and slice and get all the right ingredients ready, you turn the heater on, then you cook the stuff."

Smith's masterful voice is but one key ingredient to his tenth solo album. His longstanding lap steel accomplice and co-writer Matt Walker to his right, guitarist Shannon "The Assassin" Bourne to his left, Unknown Country brings a new combination of passion, depth and texture to Australian roots music.

"I've worked with Matt for 15 years now," Smith says. "He thinks very quickly and outside the circle. He wouldn't even know an Eric Clapton lick. He's him. Shannon is a different kind of player. The pedal king. He plays more lyrical, whereas Matt is deep down, dirty. I knew they'd be a great combination."

Drummer Laurie Ernst is another veteran of Smith's floating combo, The Guild. American keyboard player Garth Hudson (The Band) is an older colleague, going back to The Dingoes' late '70s residency in San Francisco. Bassist Grant Cummerford, Celtic harp player Andrew Rigby and engineer / keyboard player David Manton complete a lean, empathetic line-up.

"I normally sit around and talk with the guys to see if they have any suggestions, so they're all contributing to a record, rather than just turning up to play," Smith says. "We talk about the songs a lot, what they're about. That's the starting point."

The substance of Unknown Country runs as wide and deep as its sound. "I'm one of these guys who likes boxing and ultimate fighting, but I also read Sixth Century Chinese poetry," Smith explains.

Hence the broad sweep of characters that come alive in his lyrics: sympathetic outsiders from boxers and tow truck operators to corporate criminals and the devil himself.

Colonial figures such as Jack Napoleon and Mary The Larrikin spring from Smith's voracious appetite for forgotten history. I'm The Same As You and God May Not

Be With Us are shockingly topical, drawn from the Bali bombings, the Iraqi oilfields and heartbreaking portraits of dead American soldiers on TV.

There are more ghostly portraits, too, like the protagonist of Bad Star, imprisoned either in reality or by his own memories; and the desperate Crazy Mary, whose name was changed but remains tragically familiar all the same.

Then there are the songs that reach for more nebulous and essential qualities, like the dreamer imagining the original spark of New Orleans jazz and blues in Buddy Bolden, and the weary seeker on a dark ride through the remarkable title track, Unknown Country.

"That song was based a little bit on passion plays and stuff," the writer says, "things like Pilgrim's Progress and Everyman, where somebody's searching for some sort of spiritual meaning in their life, going down paths that aren't charted properly. Which is pretty well anybody's life, isn't it?"

Maybe so, but only Broderick Smith's sounds like this.

"The record should give you a cinematic sort of feel," he says. "I wanted to have a vista. I like to think in stereo and quad, and when Matt and David mixed it, they did it in the old '70s way, with a note on the back saying 'Play it Loud,' so you get that sense of spatial depth.

"We weren't thinking about singles. We want to make one of those old records where you start at the beginning and go to the end and then think, 'Hey, where was the dud track?' Well, there are no dud tracks. There is no filler."

And after all these years, there is nobody to compare with Broderick Smith.



Musicians

Broderick Smith vocals, harmonica, banjo, tenor banjo

Matt Walker guitars, lap steel, keys

Shannon Bourne guitars

Laurie Ernst drums, percussion, backing vocals

Garth Hudson keys, accordion

Grant Cummerford bass

David Manton keys

Andrew Rigby Celtic harp

Track Listing

1. Unknown Country
2. The Devil And The Boy
3. Buddy Bolden
4. I'm The Same As You
5. Bad Star
6. Crazy Mary
7. Jack Napoleon From Cape Grim
8. Mary The Larrikin (Joe Byrne's Ballad)
9. God May Not Be With Us
10. The Ring
11. Smashman
12. Walk Into My Soul
13. What Goes Down

About the songs by Broderick Smith:

Unknown Country: Based loosely on the medieval morality play Everyman, and the search for redemption... I think.

The Devil And The Boy: Colonel Tom and Elvis. A dark troubled story. Thank you Link Wray.

Buddy Bolden: Written after reading Coming Through Slaughter then a lot of research. I thought I heard Buddy Bolden, etc, came from an old New Orleans street poem. Jelly Roll Morton used the line for his song Buddy Bolden's Blues but it actually comes from an older street poem that went "I thought I heard Abe Lincoln say he's come to take the slaves away." So I figured it was okay to take 2 lines and change them and then go off into my own fantasy New Orleans street scene.

The Same As You: I wrote this the day of the Bali bombings. My initial reaction was a dad's reaction I guess. What on earth were you doing in a sleazy club? Then instantly this huge sadness came over me.

We tend to forget things when they are no longer "newsworthy" but some things need to be burned into all of us forever.

Bad Star: Written from a very bad hotel room on a rainy day 2 floors up.

Crazy Mary: Memories and names changed and a collage of old sayings and lost youth.

Jack Napoleon: Jack Napoleon was a Tasmanian Aborigine who was brought over in the 1840's to my state, Victoria, which was settled later than Tassie. His job was to tell the Victorian Kooris that white people were ok. He told them the truth, formed a gang and terrorised the colony for a while. Some of the words in this are his. I've used his white name here, not his real name. A real freedom fighter.

Mary The Larrikin: Joe Byrne has interested me for a while. His relationship with Aaron Sherritt was like a Greek tragedy. He also came across to me as the smart one of the Kelly gang. The one who had the best command of reading and writing, a fluency in the Chinese language, and a fondness for opium. Mary the Larrikin was Mary Jordan, a barmaid who liked Ned and the boys. Rock 'n' Roll will never die. If you're in Benalla, Victoria, take the time to pay your respects at Joe's grave in the local cemetery.

God May Not Be With Us: Written during G. Dubya's and John Howard's reigns. Both sides started talking about God or Allah if you like, and I started thinking God has probably got nothing to do with this.

It's kind of like a love story between Australia and the USA but then like some love affairs doubt starts to creep in. Politician heal thyself.

The Ring: The words in this come from the mouths of boxers. As Larry Holmes said, boxing is the sport that other sports aspire to be. Ritualised combat. There is also a strong similarity between boxing and musical improvisation, in particular, jazz.

Smashman: I had an accident one night and spent from midnight to dawn with a tow-truck operator and he told me his story.

Walk Into My Soul: I do self analysis.

What Goes Down: No matter who you are, the truth eventually comes out somewhere. You can lie and cheat and have wonderful things said about you but someone out there knows the truth and at some point it appears. I'm scaring myself