



**IN**

**HARMONY**

BY JON WOLFE

## PATSY TOOP AND DAVID BAIRD MAY ONLY HAVE BEEN WORKING TOGETHER AS **THE LONG AND THE SHORT OF IT** FOR SIX YEARS BUT THERE'S A LIFETIME OF FEELING AND JOY IN THEIR MUSIC.

**I** started singing a bit later in life," says David, "but my singing teacher said I should be getting out there and I was singing in a band break at a charity gig and that's where Patsy first saw me."

"I was on the sausage sizzle," Patsy said. "I was absolutely mesmerised by his voice."

"I heard this voice and guitar and I thought the beauty in the voice was extraordinary, but what really struck me was that I thought the tone and the quality in our voices would match and something clicked and I went up asked if he'd like to sing a duet with me."

History will show that Patsy approached David still with her apron on and a sausage impaled on the end of a barbecue fork.

"At that stage I was still quite nervous and trying to get over the fear of performing in front of an audience and this very tall woman came up to me, with a sausage on the end of a fork – it really had me worried!" David said.

"I think he went white and ran away," Patsy said.

But she didn't give up and even though she hadn't sung in public herself, Patsy soon discovered they both shared the same singing coach and he was encouraging them separately to get up and perform in public.

They did get together and soon found they did indeed harmonise well together and eventually they started to work up a country repertoire.

"We started going down to

the Pirates Tavern in Williamstown," David said, "but we probably only had half a dozen songs and we started to build a little bit of an audience."

Both had grown up listening to country music.

"It didn't take much to jump into the country scene because really, it's our passion," Patsy said.

The duo built a following and soon found themselves in the recording studio cutting an album that was just for friends and family.

It was love at first attempt for David.

"I just did not want to leave the studio," he says, "I loved it so much, seeing how it all works and comes together and we were kind of just drawn in."

Since then there has been an EP and three albums officially released and a garnering of fans that have taken to the harmonies and songs of *The Long and the Short of It* in big numbers.

Essentially starting off as a covers duo, they have since started songwriting and recording their own songs, as well as originals by other songwriters.

"It was almost like I was too scared to try writing songs because I'm not the most confident person in the world," David said.

"When I finished writing my first song I was so excited I couldn't sleep for days."

Since then it's been a case of more songwriting and even a couple of songwriting wins at a recent Canberra Country Music Festival.

And the inevitable step of making a video soon followed.

"One of the songs is called *Robyn* and it's a testament to the woman who we stay with when we come to Tamworth," Patsy said. "She's an extraordinary individual and we made a YouTube video to the song."

"It got so popular that YouTube took it down. But it was put up again and it has become a finalist in the Independent Music Video Awards to be announced at the end of November."

In 2013 the duo made the momentous decision to record in Nashville.

"David's ambition was to go to Nashville," Patsy said. "But getting into Nashville is really hard. It's always about knowing someone to get in."

After an extensive search they settled on Emmy Award-winning producer Kenny Royster to helm the project.

"He's a man of very few words," David said, "but if he's got something to say, it's worthwhile and intelligent."

"We did a worldwide search for songs and honestly we had over 2000 submissions and we reviewed every song we received," Patsy said.

"We found some brilliant songs," David said.

"We wrote one ourselves and it barely made the album, but it did become the title track," Patsy said.

The sessions with some of Nashville's top players was a whole new experience for the duo.

"I couldn't believe it," David said. "Kenny had told us he only used the best and when we looked at the bios, we realised that they are some of the best players in Nashville and these guys pretty much nailed it the first time."

"What can you say," Patsy said, with an unmistakable degree of awe in her voice. "What more can you ask for?"

"Of course being in that kind of environment makes you raise your own bar," David said.

"Guess what? We lifted our game," Patsy said.

The resulting album, *You Made Me Stronger*, was released in April and the first single, *Latter Day Cowboy*, immediately made an impact on radio that is reflected in the overall album.

"I think it's our best work," David said. "There's a bit of blues, a bit of honky tonk, gospel and contemporary country."

"And there's some not-so country," Patsy said. "It's kind of like country crossover."

"And the reception it's received is amazing."

A new single, *Beatles Without John*, has just been released to radio and is already garnering airplay nationally.

In 2015, David will give up his day job and the duo will tour extensively and they plan to be on the road a lot.

"We'll be going to a lot more festivals, a lot more shows and venues and getting our stuff out there," Patsy said.

The Long and the Short of It will be in Tamworth for the annual festival and their gigs can be found in the Official Guide.