

I'm writing this a few weeks after returning home from my 4th tour in Australia, just so you know, I'm sitting at my computer in my kitchen listening to Duke Garwood's album 'Heavy Love' – it was the sound track of this tour for me, awesome album.

I feel at home in Australia, as much as I do here in the UK, and it's been that way since my first visit some years ago with Tallulah Rendall. I'm so grateful to Tal, for so many things. I've got friends, and friends who have become family, and always I meet new friends, and it is a joy for me to be amongst these special people for a day or two, or more.

My concerts themselves have been fairly well documented, but I will just say that each and every concert was a privilege for me to play. Thank you to Roger, to Bill, to all my promoters and everyone who came along. Thank you for being such great audiences, for being so enthusiastic in all aspects, for welcoming me and for taking the time to share your stories and experiences.

I flew this time with Emirates, nice people, and as ever Nevis travelled in the hold of the aircraft, and arrived in one piece, hand delivered to me which was a nice touch. I left a freezing London and stepped out at 10pm in Adelaide to a 36 degree night, BEAUTIFUL! It was my first visit to this fabulous city and I love it! I'm coming back! My motel was basic but fine, and I met some very cool people who were there for the Soundwave festival, we drank beer and spent a lot of time laughing. The concerts at Trinity Church were great, what a superb venue. On the second night I was waxing lyrical about Rex Infractus, and hauling oneself up after times of difficulty, that kind of thing, and some bloke piped up from the back 'D'you mean like Monty Python – 'tis but a flesh wound'?' and literally all of us fell about laughing! It was one of the funniest moments ever, it totally set the bench mark for the rest of the tour! The prospect of Peter Sculthorpe in Tasmania the following week loomed fairly large I have to say, coupled with the solo version of 'This Path...' so I spent much of my awake time practising, it was way too hot to venture out, except to the local veggie cafe who gave me Green Goddess smoothies and kept me healthy! It's actually a luxury for me to be able to do nothing except play, I love it, and it gives travel and touring another dimension for me, albeit a selfish one, but it gives me time to be able to focus and work solidly without distraction, as welcome as those distractions are at home! My time in Adelaide was fantastic, filled with some very inspirational people, and I know we will meet again and share more stories.

I went from Adelaide to Melbourne, ah Melbourne! Lovely to be back, and to be so well looked after. Melbourne was cooler, a welcome relief for a pale English lady, bit more like a UK summer really! I had STUNNING accommodation and awesome company throughout, and I met up with friends I already knew well, and friends I'd only met previously online, so it was a very cool time indeed. I know this city pretty well and it always amuses me the number of buskers there are, with really good set ups, and audiences that rival a decent pub turn out! I visited Wick Studios (home of my hosts) whilst there, and oh my goodness. The last time I saw Wick Studios they were great, good vibe, good people, a roller-shutter-door kind of studio, exactly what I am used to here. But now – woah! The boys have been busy! A total refurbishment, state of the art desks and facilities, basically in one shot Wick have

removed all competition for rehearsal and recording work, there simply is no alternative I would say, if you're in this part of the world. Beyond comprehension in some respects, and I'm so proud of them all. It was a very moving experience being shown round, partly because I know the people behind this immense project, but also the scope of their imaginations, their passion and the realisation of this dream, and all driven by music.

Bill (McCormick) my loyal and utterly fantastic sound man and I travelled on to Sydney next, me on VA, he on Qantas, and lo and behold NEITHER Nevis nor Bill's bag of complicated and secret soundman things (mics I think!) arrived! I hit the roof in a controlled 'where is my cello' way, and was assured it would be on the next flight. Australian airline workers, please note that people (me) from the UK are not used to there being one flight an hour, we can barely rely on one bus an hour here, hence my twitchiness. But thank you for your patience and for also living up to your word! Two hours later both Nevis and Bill's magical bag arrived, and we set off straight to the venue. Super night, super food, super accommodation from a loving and welcoming couple. With a very cool bike in the back garden.

Less than 24 hours later we were off again, this time to my ultimate second home, Tasmania. I've got a family here, and I love them dearly. This is what is so wonderful about travelling, you do meet people sometimes only once, but sometimes you meet them several times, all over the world, and you become attached, well I do anyway. This is it with Roger and Lyn, and their family and grandkids. It's a joy to be a part of this family, and to have such a steady support during a fairly full-on tour. Roger and I work together, he manages things in Australia for me, and works insanely hard doing so, but we manage to balance out business with a glass of wine, and I spend a huge amount of time sitting in his beautiful back garden meditating with the mountains and Mindi the hound for company. It's somewhere I feel very still and peaceful and I find I write quite a bit when I'm here too, both words and music. Actually in some respects my composing begins with words anyway, so I treasure the time I get to just de-focus and look beyond what I actually see. It was great to revisit the ABC radio again, and play a live to air, and repeatedly tell people the wrong day for my big concert in Hobart, but luckily this got corrected by my interviewer. Several times! I had a lot of concerts in Tassie, one especially beautiful location on Bruny Island, the ForestVale design centre, and I also got to perform at Rosny with a super ensemble Note Aurius, and they don't know it yet but I'm factoring them in already to my next trip! Brilliant and generous musicians, and up for a bit of improv, special hats off to Tom who had to play the 'balanced piano', literally, balanced on a trolley propped up by a couple of handily lying around large rocks! I also had the privilege of playing John Akerman's cello, the huon pine and myrtle work of art (have a look at my facebook page for more info) and I was able to perform both the Sculthorpe and 'The Hidden Forest' on this unusual and most beautiful cello. It was so fitting to perform 'Threnody' in Tassie on a cello made in Tassie from local wood by a local luthier, it was a very special concert for me and one I'll always remember. Plus John did a great and speedy rehair on the 'Laurus' bow – legend.

I went a week later to Perth, and had a super time, again my first visit to this city to play, having only passed through it before. The concert at Ellington's Jazz Club was lovely, and will be forever memorable by the many great musicians in the audience, and also the 'about-

to-become cellists' who came along and chatted with me afterwards - I wish you all the greatest joy! We had a moment of rock and roll when a lady fell off her chair and apologised for being too drunk, at which point we collectively thought it would be a good idea to chuck a telly out of the window – indeed the night had begun as they say! It was awesome! I had another very profound experience here. You might not say this as your first guess, but it was to be shown around a ship building warehouse. It's funny the things that happen on a tour, this experience was brought about by Mike Fletcher and his brilliant filmmaking, and as a result of this we were able to visit this particular place, and oh my goodness. I was overawed by the sheer size of the building and the creation therein, and the complexity of the operations, the machinery, the skill of the engineers working there. Something else captured me too, and I think it may be something along the lines of the fact that someone designed this work of art, this yacht that will sail the seas, in beauty and grace, and a person, a human being was able to conceive of this, able to dream of it, and then bring this vision to paper, and ultimately to materials, manmade and natural, to create and manufacture this bespoke vessel of such beauty. I couldn't even begin to imagine how this would come about, personally I still think there's an aspect of magic attached to large container vessels floating (science is not my strong point!). I saw the designs and I saw the work in progress, and I have nothing but utter admiration and respect for all those involved. It's a bit like the Wick project too come to think of it. So it's been a tour of Big Spaces Where Big Things Happen. !

My final concert of this tour was in Yallingup. What a beautiful night, such a huge effort had gone in to the preparations for this concert venue, and it was the most magical way to finish the concerts. I played under the stars with the reeds and rushes blowing gently (and not so gently!) and in the company of dear friends, and simply loads of lovely people all with beautiful candle-lit picnics. Always a privilege to realise there are people in the audiences that have somehow arrived not because they are either forced in to it or know someone involved! I felt so at home here that I vaguely contemplated trying to move Ruban and Eila out here and massively overstaying our welcome... perhaps next time!

It is great to be back home, and it is great to travel. I feel very lucky indeed to have both aspects to my life, and very thankful to Ruban and my family for the support they give in all ways, allowing me to go to work in the knowledge that all is well at home. I think of them all the time, and I call or skype as we all do when we're away from home. My priority is and will always be my daughter and my family. But there's also a part of me that exists separately to this, floating, suspended, when I travel with music. There are practical aspects of course that add to this: changing time zones, lack of sleep, the usual stuff, but it's something else as well, and I've noticed it before on previous tours. I sense I am both within and without time. I notice my dreams are always 'big dreams' when I travel, symbolism and archetypal imagery left right and centre, and I wonder if it is because I become undiluted, musically speaking. Then I think about art, creativity (as I am wont to do!), passion, aspects of what I understand by the Soul. I wonder about the state of mind I am in, what happens when I allow it to open: where does the inspiration spring from, how do I channel it... all manner of things, all appearing in my thoughts in a rush! That – and maybe the adrenalin, lack of sleep and guilt at being a mother away from home. Who knows?

Australia, thank you very much indeed for having me, you are a wonderful country and filled with open-minded and generous people who are up for a bit of random electric cello and a lot of ramblings going with it, and I cannot wait to return to you in 2016 xxx