

Every second Tuesday with the EW band

I ARRIVE at the closed offices of Environment Waikato on a Tuesday night and wonder how I am going to get to the tearoom where E2T are practicing.

I start texting when a worker exiting the building kindly escorts me around the back where Ally is waiting outside. Never having interviewed a group before, I have no idea how this will go and am more nervous than usual. Just trying to sort out who is who seems to overload my brain. I needn't have worried as the seven members of Every Second Tuesday are friendly and enthusiastic when talking about their band, Every Second Tuesday.

This lineup has evolved from earlier incarnations of the band and is a group of colleagues at Environment Waikato. One member, Karl Hjelmstrom, was recruited from Hamilton City Council. As the name suggests, E2T practiced every second Tuesday but these days, they try to practice every week. After chatting to the band members for a while, bassist Kaye arrives with a large dog to enthusiastic greetings.

Junine Stewart is group manager, corporate services, and boss of several members of the band by day. By night she sings and plays the bass when regular bassist Kaye wants to sing. Junine joined the band in 2008 and was previously involved with music and theatre. Shane Cairns works as a systems administrator in IT and has played the drums for the band since 2007. Kaye Whittle started out as a backing vocalist for E2T in 2004. She was a web editor at EW and now runs her own communications business. In her spare time she collects footwear and there is much talk of some purple shoes she wore to a gig.

Karl Hjelmstrom is a wastewater engineer and team leader at Hamilton City Council treatment plants. He joined in 2008 and plays guitar for the band. Ally Armstrong, aka "Camp Mother," is a communications assistant and has been with the band since the beginning. She sings, organizes practice schedules and books gigs for the band. Bill Vant is a water scientist and keyboard player. He has also been involved with the band since its earliest days as has Cara Graham. Cara is a computer trainer, sings and is also involved in other musical projects and bands.

E2T don't do a gig unless all the members can make it. Members "get out of their sickbed" to sing. Junine turned down an overseas trip for a gig and another member was late for a wedding. Once, they played two four-hour gigs in one day. Cara says they were buzzing by the end of it. This lot is dedicated!

It is also clear that they love making music together and even though they are now semi-professional, the main thing is for members of the band and the audience to have fun. They say the energy levels drop if they are not enjoying themselves. Environment Waikato bosses have been very supportive of the band.

A few co-workers were "band groupies" for a while, going to all their gigs, though they seem to be over it now. Kaye's husband and friends are staunch followers. Band members avow that family members are their harshest and most honest critics as well. "Ten years ago they covered their ears when we played." When they say they have improved you better believe it.

The ages of the band members range from young Shane at 32 to Cara at 62, with the others clustered in the middle. There have been many amusing, mainly ageist responses from the public including the following: "I want to be in a band when I'm old like you are"; "I like the style of the young bass player", (competition judge in his mid 70's referring to Kaye) and, "If you could see that woman walking along the street, would you think she could sing like that?" (Referring to Cara).

When I ask if they are different people (from their day persona), Ally quickly agrees and says, "I don't feel comfortable talking in front of a group but, as an entertainer, I have a different persona...you feed off the energy and enthusiasm (of the audience). It is better with a live audience." The singers all take turns taking the lead role.

New songs are nominated by members; everyone listens then they vote on whether or not to include it. Usually the songs are chosen to suit their voices. They say the band is "family" and, like any family,

Hamilton East

Local Lives

by Jane Landman



honest communication is essential to keeping the band functional. "We are all responsible for keeping the band on the tracks. We can't get too annoyed with each other. There is too much at stake. We don't live in each other's pockets but we are in the same quiz team. We socialize and play afterwards."

The band has won several awards including runner up for the inaugural New Zealand Corporate Battle of the Bands in 2009 as well as "Best Stage Band." Bill also won "Best Keyboardist" at the same event.

Some groups in the contest were semi-professional outfits performing to a high level, so this was no mean feat. Last year they also won the Waikato Councils' Battle of the Bands. Winning these events was the catalyst for E2T's confidence to continue to get better. E2T does a lot of free community work as well, including entertaining the troops at EW "in return for letting us practice in the tearoom". They have also entertained the social club at HCC as well. After hearing them play, band members say people keep giving them bottles of wine and other gifts after these types of events. At paid gigs, sometimes they get paid more than they charged.

They have performed at several Steele Park Heritage Festivals, Earth Hour celebrations and Relay for Life in March, 2010, amongst others. They also do birthdays, weddings, garden parties and corporate events. Bookings are mainly from word of mouth, although they do have a website <http://e2t.weebly.com>

The band plays a large range of music from blues standards, covers from the eighties and nineties through to the present day - rock, pop, blues, R and B, and metal. The repertoire for E2T is quite impressive covering everything from "Chain of Fools" by Aretha Franklin, "You give love a bad name," by Bon Jovi through to B52's "Love shack" and The Clash's "Should I stay or should I go". They tend to go with songs that are energetic and good to dance to. Songs can be tailored to suit the requirements of a particular gig. The personal tastes of the individual band members are just as eclectic - ranging from classical through to blues and heavy metal.

The band members would like to record some of their music. They are looking for sponsors to help with this ambition. At present, all the money earned from professional gigs is put into a band bank account. The money is used to replace instruments and similar. The members fund their own way to events. E2T reckon they have got the balance right between professional and community gigs. They are in it for the long haul or until making music together stops being fun or "...until I run out of breath".

After an hour of talking, I sense some restlessness amongst some of the musos. I pack up my pen and linger a while to listen to the practice. The enjoyment is evident and the music is not too shabby. Somehow, I get the feeling that they will be around for some time yet.

Upcoming events include the Hamilton East Heritage Day at Steele Park on Sunday, December 5 and the Whangamata Club on New Year's Eve from 8pm. Email ally.armstrong@ew.govt.nz for more information or visit their website.

Co-ordinator's Corner —

WELCOME. Waimarie: Hamilton East Community House serves the South East area of Kirikiriroa. Community Houses are located in local neighbourhoods and exist to support and serve the local community. We run a variety of programmes and services and we are always open to new ideas and suggestions.

Summer is just around the corner with hot sun, Christmas and holidays. Sometimes tradition and family responsibilities can feel overwhelming so this year I am running away from Christmas altogether to Tasmania for fun and frivolity. We have decided to forgo presents to each other and just decide what we want to do on the day. I am looking forward to this immensely and can't wait to see how the day unfolds with no expectations or plans. Christmas should be a joyous occasion but too often we put too much pressure on ourselves to live up to some arbitrary notion of a perfect Christmas. No one will starve if you don't make home made shortbread and Christmas tarts or put yourself in debt for the next year buying expensive gifts. Unless you are a Christmas fan, do the preparations that you enjoy and spread the workload around. Tell your guests

to bring a plate and let the people who didn't prepare the food do the dishes.

HOLIDAY PROGRAMME

The New year programme begins on Monday, 10 January 2011 to Friday 28 January. We cater from 5 to 12 years of age and parents who qualify can apply for the WIN subsidy. In most cases, the subsidy covers the full cost of the programme. There is a weekly trip on Fridays with lots of activities planned. Ring Waimarie for details about the programme or check on our website. You can also download enrolment forms from here; www.waimarie.org. Please enroll by the 17 December to avoid disappointment as we had a waiting list for the last programme.

Thought for the week

"There are no nations! There is only humanity. And if we don't come to know that soon, there will be no nations, because there will be no humanity." Isaac Asimov

Remember you are always welcome to pop in for a cuppa and a bit of a chinwag.

J. Landman
Co-ordinator

Funders & Supporters

A BIG thank you to our funders and supporters for 2009/2010:

FUNDERS

COGS (operating costs)
Community Response Fund (MSD) (Operations)
Donny Trust (Sporting & Cultural Fund)
D V Bryant (Wages)
Envirofund (HCC) (Irrigation/ Garden Shed)
Hamilton City Council (Operations/Rent)
Hamilton City Council Holiday Programme Fund
Hamilton City Council - Community Well-being (Wages)
Lotteries (wages)
Norah Howell Trust (Wages)
OSCAR (Holiday Programme)
Police (Sports equipment for youth)
The Lion Foundation (Office Equipment)
The Southern Trust (Budgeting/

Gardening/Printing)
The Tindall Foundation (Wages, advertising)
Trust Waikato (Global costs)
WEL Energy Trust (Heat Pumps)

SUPPORTERS

BP (Petrol vouchers)
Clyde Law (Legal advice)
Entertainment Book
Hamilton Budget Advisory Service (Support)
New Zealand Post (Pre-paid envelopes)
Pukete Neighbourhood House (Advocacy Support)
Sunshine Bakery (Bread, pies)
The New Zealand Printing Company (Artwork design)

Also a big THANK YOU to all those neighbours and volunteers who have given their time and energy to Waimarie.

BOOK FAIR AND GARDEN PARTY

Saturday, 12 March 2011.
Fundraising event for Waimarie.
Put this date in your diaries now! Live music, kids activities, devonshire teas and more!

Clear out your book shelves over the holidays and drop off any unwanted good quality books to the community house between 9am-4pm workdays.

Thanks for your support of this event - it is much appreciated.

