



WIDE OPEN ODE

THE TRIFFIDS
Beck's Music Box
Friday-Sunday, February 20-23, 2009

Over three nights last weekend at Beck's Music Box, as a music lover you wouldn't have wanted to be anywhere else in the live music world.

Well, certainly not if you'd ever been touched by the music of David McComb. Unlike so many bands that ham-fistedly group together after long bouts apart, replacing personnel in an au-go-go fashion that pays neither the previous members or the audience any respect whatsoever, the surviving friends in The Triffids regrouped and paid tribute to McComb both tastefully and beautifully.

First performed at the Sydney Festival in 2008, *A Secret In The Shape Of A Song* was not a mere gig, but a eulogy - it soared the depths of sadness but most the heights of happiness - that would have to rank as one of the highlights of this decade's Perth Festival contemporary music programming.

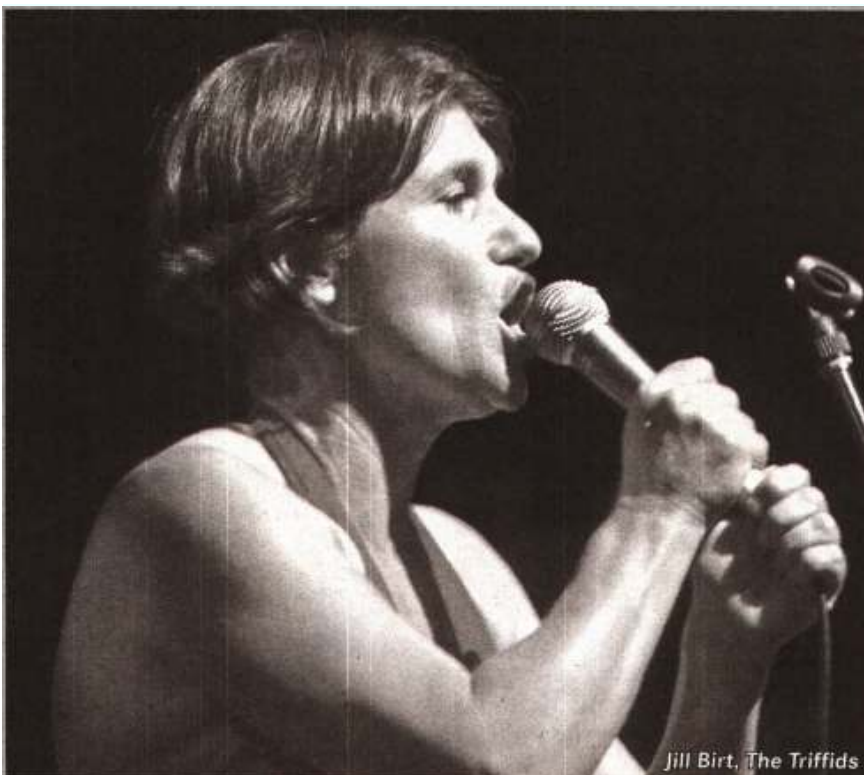
From the moment Jill Birt, Alsy MacDonald, Robert McComb, Martyn P. Casey and Graham Lee sauntered onto the stage each night you could tell they wore the weight of true tribute on their shoulders. If it was emotional for the audience one can only imagine how it felt for them. MC Handsome Steve Miller (the band's one-time tour

manager) provided direction that was both oblique and poignant, while the latter was fully in place when brother John McComb spoke of David's formative years and the effect they clearly had on his creativity - he also read some pre-adolescent poems that hinted at the man-to-be's ability to twist and tantalise with literary turns.

Highlights were many - it was all a highlight - but for this writer Jill Birt's fragile vocals on *Tarnup Bridge*, Mick Harvey's turn on *Kelly's Blues* and *Setting You Free* (night #3); all of the Snarski brothers songs, the Kill Devil presence on *Hometown Farewell Kiss* and Youth Group's Toby Martin's *Trick Of The Light* were nothing short of wonderful. The Church's Steve Kilbey brought a confrontational edge to the occasion that seemed a little jarring, but his renditions of *Wide Open Road* and *Wrong Turn* on the first two nights were indeed stirring. Unfortunately on the third night his voice was completely shot and the same heights were not reached.

Overall though it was awe-inspiring. A celebration of a creative life lived well, lifetimes contained in songs and songs that have a lifetime left inside. God bless David McComb, The Triffids and all who have been near them.

BOB GORDON



Jill Birt, The Triffids