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# The Southland Times Unwind



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# The bottom line



Roger McLachlan, 2008

Original Little River Band member and Aussie session bass player Roger McLachlan is being inducted into the Southland Musicians Club Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Fame in September. **Chris Chilton** studies the great bassman's chops.

**H**IS photo's been on the wall of the Southland Musicians Club it seems like forever, showing a generation of kids that rock 'n' roll dreams do come true.

There's Roger McLachlan, long hair, rake-thin, holding this beautiful wood bass in his massive hands. The picture was taken some time after he was the original bass player for the Little River Band in the 1970s and some time before he laid down a legendary bassline for John Farnham's international hit *You're the Voice* in the '80s.

McLachlan's been there and done that in the past 30 years but he says he's still tickled pink at being inducted into the Hall of Fame, getting recognition from his peers in Southland, where it all began.

On September 27 he'll be fronting a reunited lineup of his first school band, Roger's Dodgers, not on bass, which he's spent his life playing, but on guitar and vocals.

He's been working on his guitar chops and says, disingenuously, that he's "by no means Eric Clapton — but I'm kinda adequate. I'm really looking forward to doing it — the fact that we're all still alive. Both Bruce (Aitken) and Barry (Withington) have had heart attacks. They don't smoke and they're leading the good life and of course Lyall Barron and I are still the rathbags. We're still smoking and drinking."

**L**ITTLE RIVER BAND was formed in the mid-1970s from the remnants of an Aussie band called Mississippi, featuring a couple of promising singer-songwriters, Beeb Bertles and Graham Goble, and drummer Derek Pellicci. They had a hit single, *Will I*, toured England, broke up and returned to Melbourne.

McLachlan had seen out an Australian *Godspell* tour gig and was hanging around booking agencies with lots of other hungry, out-of-work musicians, when he heard that Mississippi was looking for a new bass player. He signed up fast for an audition.

"It was in the front lounge of the drummer Derek's mum and dad's place in David St, Campbellwell. I can still remember the address."

Young, skinny McLachlan walked in and was blown away by all the expensive equipment the band members had.

"They started this song and said 'just see if you can come up with a bassline for this'. So they launched into *It's a Long Way There* and I'm going, 'this is incredible — incredible harmony. This is the best band I've ever heard in my life'."

"It kind of reminded me of the Doobie Brothers and the Eagles, which I was into."

McLachlan got the gig.

"I remember rehearsing and doing gigs under the name Mississippi. We were driving in me and my girlfriend's Combi van.

"It was a real band thing. There were a couple of guys in the back. I was driving and Glenn (Shorrock) was up the front. We were driving down to Geelong and you past this place called Little River.

"(Glenn) looked up and saw this sign, Little River turnoff, and he just said out of the blue, 'gee, wouldn't it be funny to call the band Little River Band'. Bit of a play on words, to go from Mississippi to the smallest river in the world. Ha-ha. Bit of an in-joke. And it stuck."

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## The hip hop rot

**MATE**  
MARK WILSON



**R**ECENTLY, I enjoyed another instalment in a long-running argument over my taste in music. I am often bemoaned for my aversion to overly loud music, anything created by a computer, DJ on a mixer or any other non-instrumental method and an utter contempt for anything from the hip hop, gangster-rap or Usher-style ego-fuelled R&B genres.

The argument runs something like this. While weaving through erratically controlled motor vehicles piloted by our visiting friends from right-hand-drive countries, my slightly older English female accomplice begins to fiddle like an over-excited teenage boy with the radio switch. Unfortunately for me the dial fiddling ceases in time to catch the start of some west-side rap/hip hop (is there a difference?) artist describing more in spoken words than in song how he would put a cap in a brother's nether region while absconding with his rival's sister, her friend and Snoop Dog for some bedroom pentathlon.

I dive for control to save my ears the torture of listening to such crime-inciting, braincell-devouring rubbish only to be intercepted and informed that, along with techno, drum 'n' base and whatever music Kora plays, this is what everyone listens to these days and I'm a weirdo for liking rock or anything recorded pre-2000 that hasn't been castrated by a techno or rap remix.

Due to continually waging this battle against an ever-more misguided youth, I travel, armed with the relevant information, to prove my point.

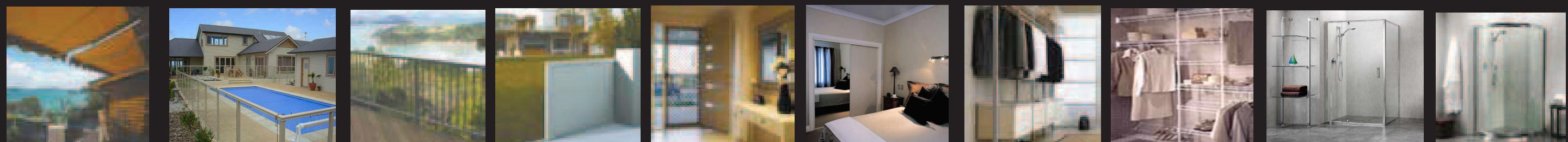
Rock is the largest genre, enjoying more than double the sales of the next genre and many times that of hip hop/rap. Two of my all-time favourites, the *Eagles Greatest Hits* and ACDC *Back in Black*, occupy two of the top four slots in the all-time album sales list. I point out that while diversity is great and everyone has their own preference, I'm in the mainstream majority. I like real music made with instruments, lyrics that are sung, not digitally sped up or raped out in an attitude-filled talk-like amble, and a good segment of the World agrees.

Is there anything more stupid than a scrawny white kid wearing oversized jeans he stole from a front row forward, ripped holes in, drew some gangster art on in black marker, hip hopping down the road listening to 50 Cent pondering who he is going to put a cap in this Saturday?

This music passion is not restricted to youths alone. In any bar, as the night wears on and the music wavers to the dark side, a massive crew of 18 to 31-year-old females are really getting into Busta Rhymes, who is singing about crime.

With all the violence and youth crime problems that exist, do we really need music that glorifies this lifestyle being peddled to our children?

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