

“The Midnight Special”

A visual art community engagement project for The Last Hurrah of the Wangaratta Festival of Jazz and Blues 2023.

There are many jazz and blues songs composed and recorded about trains. They range from jazz composer Duke Ellington to blues singers like Muddy Waters and Leadbelly.

“The Midnight Special” a classic blues train song, was adapted and arranged by Leadbelly (aka Huddie Ledbetter) during one of his stints in a US jail. The train would apparently roar past the jail around midnight and shine its light on the walls of the prison and into the cells. Leadbelly, like many of the prisoners, probably wished he was on that train. He recorded the song in 1934 after his release from prison. Many artists have since recorded it.

Metaphorical Concept

..At the end of the final Wangaratta Jazz and Blues festival all the musicians who have ever played at the Festival over the past three plus decades will gather at midnight at Wangaratta Rail Station with a “one way ticket” to “move on down the line”.

How to participate.

1. Download and print the train window template and print it A3 size. The train window in question is from the old Vline H class carriages that were recently replaced by the modern Vlocity trains on the North East Melbourne to Albury line. (These old carriages had curtains that could be pulled across, but for our purposes the curtains are red as one might find in a theatre. The H class carriages also had a blind that could be pulled down as well.)

2. You are now ready to draw.

In your train carriage window you are going to create a jazz or blues musician (or two or three...) You choose the drawing medium. Pencil, texta, collage, etc. It could be a musician that has performed previously at the festival or it could be someone you would have liked to have come to the festival. Your performers could be singing, dancing or playing any instrument you can think of that may have been used over the years. There are so many..guitar, double bass, electric guitar, piano, harmonica, drums, recorder, diddly bow, saxophone, trumpet, trombone, violin, didgerdoo, tambourine and clarinet are just some.

Handy Hints

If you have seen trains go by with passengers you will note that we can't see all of a person onboard. This means less to draw!

Need inspiration? Call in prior to the festival to view Marc Bongers magnificent photo exhibition currently in the WPACC foyer and you will see some great examples of musicians in action that would be perfect for a train window.

#The old H carriages have pull down blinds. Make yours down of partly down and what would you see? A shadow silhouette of a musician on the blind!

Fancy yourself as a musician? Create a self portrait as a Jazz or Blues artist.

While it's sad to farewell the festival, this is a celebration. Make your drawing bright and loud. Your music should come out of the window.

Deadline.

All artwork needs to be completed by the end of October and dropped at the Rural City of Wangaratta council offices by the 1st of November. The artworks will then be displayed in selected windows in Wangaratta CBD in time for "The Last Hurrah." **GET ON BOARD NOW!!!!**

Please ensure each artist has their first name, age and school, if a school student. This will assist with prompt returning of work to schools. Other artists can make arrangements for return of work. Perhaps add a contact number on the back.

Any queries contact David Godkin 0439040868 or festival chair Dave Fuller via the festival website.