

#5 TOP IA STORY OF 2023: In a week of farewells, some good news comes in

By *David Kowalski*

29 December 2023



(Left to right) Sinéad O'Connor, Rodriguez and Robbie Robertson
(Screenshots via YouTube)

Music columnist Dave Kowalski has really brought the funk to Independent Australia during 2023, such as with this [very catchy August piece](#).

With the tragic loss of some big names in the music industry lately, the announcement of a big festival lineup has come at a welcome time. Here's the latest from IA's music man, [David Kowalski](#).

IN THE NEWS this week, the [Rolling Sets](#) festival is returning to the NSW Central Coast for 2023. The area isn't that far north of Sydney, however in

recent years the region struggled to get any sort of big live events off the ground.

This year's lineup includes [Ocean Alley](#), [Jungle Giants](#) and [Spacey Jane](#), and also a host of cool local bands. This year's lineup doesn't have as many big names as last year when [Hilltop Hoods](#), [DMAs](#) and [Alex Lahey](#) played, but is still amazing enough to rattle the teeth of the local pelican population.

Interestingly, one of the acts on the lineup is the very cool local band called [The Terrys](#). Named after the landlord of the house where some of the band members live, they trade in the kind of relaxed summer vibes that will go down nicely with an amber beverage by the water on a hot December afternoon. Their 2022 album, [True Colour](#), is worth a listen but their current (at the time of writing) non-LP single 'Hopscotch' is the perfect introduction for the uninitiated.

Sinéad's view on the emperor's sartorial choices

It was heartening to see the huge groundswell of support in Ireland last week as [Sinéad O'Connor was laid to rest](#). The funeral procession saw thousands upon thousands of people lining the streets to see her to her final resting place. She was loved the world over — not for her controversies but for her unique voice of expression.

'*The Emperor's New Clothes*' was a 1990 single that has always resonated with me deeply. Against a bouncy alt-rock backdrop, she lays bare a sense

of uncertainty and doubt with the kind of power that she turned into an art form.

I wonder if [Sixto Rodriguez](#) really knew how much he was loved as a musician. The initial release of his two albums [Cold Fact](#) and [Coming From Reality](#) were underwhelming from a sales perspective, but were brilliant albums. They sold well on first release and consistently well afterwards in Australia and South Africa.

The 2012 documentary about him, [Searching for Sugar Man](#), was fascinating and revealing, however, it left out entire chunks of his story that surrounded his frequent visits to this country. His shyness and awkwardness meant that he found it hard to capitalise on any success his recordings may have had. However, what he left us was a small but beautiful collection of material that deserves a wider audience.

The enigmatic Yev Kassem

Newcastle artist [Yev Kassem](#) is enigmatic, to say the least. Is his real name [Noah](#)? Or is it actually Yev? It's this anonymity that he seems to relish, so I'll go with it. A self-produced musician, he goes wherever the muse takes him and while his musical textures are unusual, they are always interesting. 'Headlock' comes from his debut album, [Joy Is a House Made Out of Tears](#), from 2020. This one crossed my path this week and it just had to be shared.

[Robbie Robertson](#) was the leader of the Canadian/American group known as [The Band](#). The band first was the backing group for early rock n' roller [Ronnie Hawkins](#), then they were picked up by [Bob Dylan](#) as his band for the infamous [UK and U.S. tours](#) of the mid-1960s, where he played electric guitar to the horror of the folk purists.

The Band, in their own right, made some stellar records, not least [Music From Big Pink](#), their [self-titled album](#) (aka *The Brown Album*) and [Stage Fright](#). Their [Martin Scorsese](#)-directed concert film,

[The Last Waltz](#), remains one of the greatest concert films ever made.

It has long been a contentious issue as to which members of the Band contributed to which songs, as almost every song on their albums only carried Roberson's name in the writing credits. In his passing, however, this is not a debate to open up here. His role in some of the 20th Century's most enduring songs is indisputable. The funky 'Up On Cripple Creek', with [Garth Hudson](#)'s incredible Fender Rhodes keyboard playing, is a song for the ages. This unforgettable performance from the self-titled 1969 album still sounds remarkable, all these years later.

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[David Kowalski](#) is a writer, musician, educator, sound engineer and podcaster. His podcasts 'The Sound and the Fury Podcast' and 'Audio Cumulus' can be heard exclusively [here](#). You can follow David on Twitter [@sound_fury_pod](#).