

The Sydney MusicFest 2007 – *share the music*

<http://www.musicfest.org.au/>

Written by Damian Castaldi

Open Stage at the Alliance Française de Sydney. An entire day filled with musical performances and in the spirit of the festival all live and free!

I recently spent two years living in the south of France with my wife, Solange Kershaw and one of the musical highlights of our life there was taking part in the (very French) tradition of the "Fête de la Musique", a unique international event that takes place on 21 June each year to celebrate the summer/winter solstice. It was initiated in France 26 years ago and its name and concept has spread throughout the world since that first year in 1981.

On one occasion, in June 2003 we we're staying with family in the beautiful pink city of Toulouse and spent the night wandering the medieval inner sanctons listening to everything from really bad Parisian punk rock to absolutely superb solo electronic buskers and full Latin percussion ensembles. On the other occasion a year later we we're camping on a farm in the region of the Ariège and on the top of that mountain could hear small bursts of music springing up from all of the surrounding towns. It was a beautiful clear summers night and we were camping high up on a mountaintop with a clear view to the Pyrenees Mountains, bordering southern Spain and Salvador Dali country. All we could hear that night were mad little pockets of music coming from beneath, I'll never forget it and have never experienced anything like it, until now!

This truly is a festival unlike any other. Its catch phrase is "*make your own music, have your own stage*" and it's one great big "anything goes" day and night of musical performance. It's not about selling music or putting stars on stage. It's about a community of musicians and people who just love hearing and sharing in the experience of music wherever that might be, on the streets, outside a gallery, in a venue. I went in to the **Alliance Française** on Thursday to catch a bit of the musical action and here are some of the pics from the day.

I also talked briefly with Valérie Nicolas (pictured at the table eating lunch), the general manager of the Alliance Française de Sydney about the festival this year and she was very excited with the interest and

media it is now generating. At present, Fête de la Musique brings together more than 120 countries and 330 cities in an exciting live music celebration. Participating cities include London, New York, Berlin, Rome, Bamako, Tel-Aviv, Havana, Tokyo and Cairo. The second Australian edition of the Fête took place on **Thursday June 21st** and **Saturday June 23rd** (to allow for a wider participation) and if you didn't catch it this year put it in your diary for next, take the day off on the 21st of June and wander the streets of Sydney for a unique musical experience.

Valérie forwarded me the following information on this year's festival:

MUSICFEST PARTICIPANTS 2007

Institutions

ADCEP (International Coordination in Paris),
Australian Embassy in France
French Embassy in Australia,
Alliance Française de Sydney.
Bondi Pavilion Community Cultural Centre - Bondi Beach

Venues

Australian National Maritime Museum – Darling Harbour
Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA) – The Rocks
Sydney University Museums - The Macleay Museum
Sydney University Museums - The Nicholson Museum
Sydney University Museums - University Art Gallery
Historic Houses Trust of NSW
Bankstown City Council - Bankstown
Willoughby City Council - Chatswood
St Vincent's Hospital - Darlinghurst
Prince of Wales Hospital Foundation - Randwick
Sutherland Shire Council - Sutherland
Goethe Institut - Woollahra
Alliance Française de Sydney - Sydney
La Brasserie - Darlinghurst
La Gerbe d'Or - Paddington
Croquembouche Pâtisserie - Banksmeadow
Industrie, South of France - Sydney
Jeff de Bruges - Sydney
Lycée Condorcet The French School of Sydney - Maroubra
Sydney Boys High Music Department - Surry Hills
Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Australia - Sydney
St John's Anglican Church - Darlinghurst
The Sydney Society of new church - Roseville

Centennial Parklands - Sydney
Parramatta Park Trust - Paramatta
Sydney Harbour Federation Trust - Cockatoo Island
Sydney Ferries Corporation - Sydney
Seymour Theatre Centre - Chippendale
Wallspace Gallery - Surry Hills
Slide - Sydney