

Sing, Wing, sing!

www.wingtunes.com

Wing was born in Hong Kong but now lives in sunny New Zealand where she has spent the last decade learning to sing. She had been using her talents to entertain residents at local rest homes and hospitals, also managing to squeeze in recording sessions for 10 solo albums, when a groundswell of support spearheaded by underground online chatter led to her version of Abba's 'Dancing Queen' being featured on an episode of South Park. These days Wing is dabbling in soundtrack work and has tapped into the lucrative University Tavern circuit but thankfully still finds time to perform for the elderly and infirm. And if you happen to be heading to San Francisco in August you might be lucky enough to catch Wing performing at Cafe Du Nord, wherever that may be. You really need to visit this site and listen to some of the free samples of Wing's work to appreciate just how far passion, luck and a global fascination with confidence will get you in the 21st Century. I swear that the beat behind her rendition of AC/DC's 'Highway to Hell' is not the thumping bass of the crappy Casio keyboard but the muffled sound of Bon Scott turning in his grave. Wing's albums are also for sale on the site with every album sold being accompanied by a photograph of Wing herself! If you like Wing, you might also want to check out the website of one-time Clive James regular Margarita Pracatan at www.margaritapracatan.com.

Giving music the Gnod.

www.music-map.com

Merek Gibney (www.sensationbox.com) is a German code geek with some interesting ideas relating to Artificial Intelligence and the hive mind. One of his many projects, Gnod, seeks to build and expand a collective knowledge-base using user input and AI filter. Divided into 4 categories (Film, Music, Books and Flork) Gnod uses user input related to the categories (Flork being a 'people' category – a kind of lo-fi version of social networking) to build a knowledge base from which it suggests alternatives to input entered by other users. For example, entering your favourite band into the search field in the Gnod music category (directly accessible through www.music-map.com) will bring up a 'Music Map' showing other artists or groups that you might like to listen to. The closer the artists are on the map to your submitted artist, the more likely you are to like their music. It's kind of like the home-coded, user-driven alternative to Pandora. I entered 'Louis Prima' as my chosen artist and the Sex Pistols came up as being closer than Frank Sinatra (who was level pegging with the Ramones), but not as close as Dean Martin. While these artists seem as different as chalk and cheese, I have to confess to owning albums by all of them. Weird. To contribute your own music data to the Gnod project head to www.gnoosic.com and follow the prompts.

Toy notes

www.squidoo.com/soundtoys

David Holmes is a former sound engineer whose popular personal/professional blog (<http://soundblog.spaces.live.com/>) is aptly subtitled 'A Virtual Playground for Audio and Music Enthusiasts'. His interests and pursuits are wide and varied but among them are collecting, previewing and reviewing sound toys – not necessarily sound toys like a talking Shrek doll (though if the sounds were cool enough it might make the cut) but sound 'toys' that appeal to audiophiles. Many of these pieces of audio gold are archived, catalogued and housed at Dave's alternate blog www.squidoo.com/soundtoys where you will find links to music and sound related games, composition aids, engineering tools, literature, software, video, instruments... the list is endless. Basically if you consider yourself interested in music and sound beyond the level of 'casual fan' then you're bound to find something of interest at Dave's site.

Written by Gibson Nolte