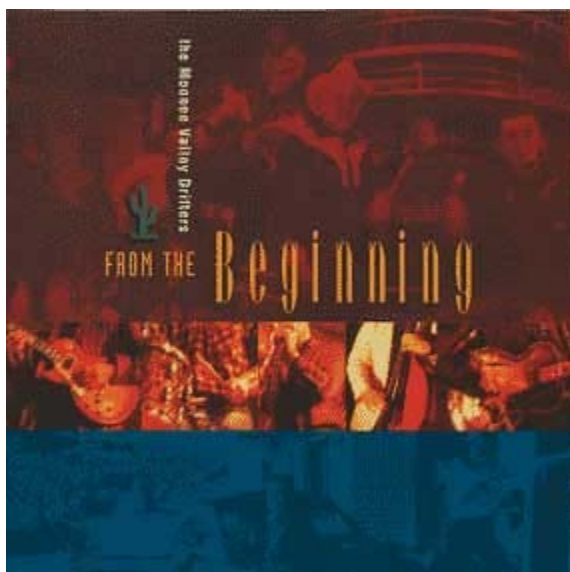


Reviews and articles on *From The Beginning*

| [Home](#) | [Albums](#) | [History](#) |



Click on the album cover for info

[from Rick Bayne writing in *The Warrnambool Standard*]

THE Moonee Valley Drifters meander back into Warrnambool tonight hot on the heels of their new album *From The Beginning*.

The CD brings together some of the band's most popular tracks recorded during the past 16 years (and including a few previously unheard songs and some outtakes) and show a crispness which could match the album which regenerated interest in this genre: *Oh Brother, Where Out Thou?*

The final mixing and remastering of the CD took place at Peter Bird's Yelp Studios in Warrnambool. The CD also features "Here I Go Again", written during the Port Fairy Folk Festival back in 1988 at the Killarney Hotel.

While largely following a traditional route to its country music, the veteran Melbourne-based band excels when incorporating subtle outside influences. The Cajun-flavored "Allans a La Fayette", the rockabilly riffs of "Juke Joint Johnny" and the gospel over-tones of "I Saw The Light" show The Drifters at their rollicking best.

Of course, the band's music and this CD will be best appreciated by dedicated followers of country and western and the steel guitars, fiddle and double-bass work should hit the spot.

The Moonee Valley Drifters will play at the Hotel Warrnambool tonight and the Caledonian at Port Fairy tomorrow night.

[from Bob Anthony from *Country Update*, 20/7/02]

Follow the course of the 'Drifters'

From The Beginning

The Moonee Valley Drifters

Independent

I first "discovered" The Moonee Valley Drifters at my first ever Gympie Muster back in 1995 and I have never wavered from their infectious brand of music.

This album is really a musical chart of what they have been able to produce over the years since they have been together.

The secret to their appeal is that their music is a blend of Cajun, swing and honky tonk, played in a manner which Hank Williams, Lefty Frizzell or Buck Owens would be proud of. It's jaunty, toe tappin' and gets in your blood.

While it may have more appeal for those whose musical tastes come from country's more traditional rhythms, there's no denying anyone when the Moonee Valley Drifters crank up the swing or Cajun tempos.

Tom Forsell has a voice second to none when it comes to this type of music — he was born to it.

On this album of 17 tracks, there are recordings of the early times (warts and all) to the slicker versions of songs which they currently perform. There's nothing boring with the Drifters, there's plenty of energy in every track.

This album would be equally at home at any party, particularly if the guests are ready to get up and dance. For lovers of western swing, there are great tracks such as "Well, Here I Go Again", "Juke Joint Johnny", the great Tom Forsell original "The Honky Tonk's Still Standing", the Lefty Frizzell classic, "If You've Got The Time, I've Got The Money" and the Gene Audrey classic "Back In The Saddle Again". There are catchy instrumentals which get in your blood such as "3 Will Get You 6" and "Remington Ride" while the honky tonk fans will appreciate "I Want To Live And Love", the upbeat version of the George Jones classic "Why Baby Why", the honky tonk/swing rhythm of "Cash On The Barrell Head", the classic "I Saw The Light" and "6 Pack To Go".

Add some Cajun numbers like "Allons a Lafayette" and "Sugar Bee" and there's something on this album for everyone who just loves good rhythms to their music.

You don't have to be a lover of traditional country music to love the Moonee Valley Drifters, just let the music grab hold and don't try to fight it!

- *From The Beginning* by The Moonee Valley Drifters is released independently and can be obtained by contacting the band on 03 9666 4282 or fax 03 9666 4300.

[from Jackey Coyle from *Rhythms*]

FROM THE BEGINNING

The Moonee Valley Drifters

Independent

Now here's a record with history. The recordings date back five to fifteen years, made in studios that ranged from Graham Thomas's Preston Records to live *Coodabeen Champions* at the old ABC Melbourne studios, and more between.

Some selections here have been released on previous albums and many live Drifters staples, like "Sugar Bee" not released before.

For me, listening to this music here invokes instant time-travel back to 1986. This is the band that opened my eyes and turned me round to look at what was happening here, as opposed to the USA. It was also music that made the night flash by.

Tom Forsell has the ability to sing a hopelessly cornball line like "Whoopi-di-yi-yay, I'm on my way" (Gene Autry's "Back In The Saddle") and make it sound utterly reasonable, the coolest, most natural thing to say. His voice is warm, with that almost-yodel catch, and he'd send a song out if he knew you. "Howdy folks", he would say, his immaculate white cowboy hat shining in the dark pub glow.

The late Peter Linden was a heartbreakingly fine pedal steel player. Mesmerising in his soulful technique, he'd "take a break" when Forsell called his name. (His death five years ago seems still to shock people.) Linden stars on eight tracks; half not released before. Look out for "I Saw The Light" and the duet with guitarist Rob Grenville on their instrumental "3 Will Get You 6", then "Cash On the Barrel Head" with the band's co-founder Warren Rough doin' some Travis pickin'.

Jerry Hale appears on fiddle, then there are all the line-ups of the band through the years, with big playing all the way through.

Forsell, a leader in the Bob Wills tradition, can be heard intro-ing and calling breaks ("Go ahead Leroy!" to Linden on Lefty's "If You've Got the Time, I've Got the Money"). Paul Pyle ably holds down the bass line nearly all the way through. James Black, whose **liner notes** are a joy to read, adds piano. "There's no greater pleasure", he says, "than to sit in with the whole band rocking it up on "Six Pack To Go" watching a roomful of whirling dancers go wild."

Material ranges from three originals to the Hanks to George Jones to Joseph Falcon's "Allons Lafayette", showcasing a fine vocal by lap steel player Ric Dempster.

When I would go to the bands' gigs the first thing I'd want to know was, "Has Ric done "Remington Ride" yet?" Written by Herb Remington, Bob Wills Texas Playboy and steel guitar manufacturer, it's a steel guitar adventure with hammer-ons and pull-offs all over the place. Dempster races the three-minute marathon and wins it, climaxing the album on a sweeping glissando. Get it.

[from Larry Schwartz from *The Sunday Age* 23/12/01]

Who: The Moonee Valley Drifters

What: From The Beginning

Label: Independent

Rating: *** 1/2

Review: Larry Schwartz

To forge a link between his adopted home and his native land, Detroit-born Tom Forsell came up with a clever moniker for an antipodean band in the mid-1980s. He found in it a way to honor the sounds he'd loved since childhood — country, bluegrass, western swing, cajun, blues. Since then, the Drifters has provided a focal point for a host of musicians that has included bassist Paul Pyle, pianist James Black, Peter Linden on pedal steel (who died in a plane crash in 1996), and fiddler Jerry Hale, who went on to Uncle Bill.

Drawing on three albums and radio broadcasts, this 17-track album includes originals penned by Forsell ("Well Here I Go Again", "The Honky Tank's Still Standing" and "Rain On My Window") as well as favourites from Hank Williams ("I Saw The Light" and "I'll Be Your Baby"); a Charlie and Ira Louvin song ("Cash On The Barrel Head") and Gene Autry's "Back In The Saddle Again". With renewed appetite in recent years for so-called roots music, *Beginning* is a welcome reminder of the talents of a band that has played on regardless of prevailing taste.

[press release for launch of the CD, *From The Beginning*]

MOONEE VALLEY DRIFTERS

When you talk about this band we're talking hard-hitting, steel-stringed, hardcore country & roots music. No one, but no one, does it better than THE MOONEE VALLEY DRIFTERS mixing these styles together with their own stamp of originals. They will be launching their 4th CD which is a history of the band from its early days in 1986.

The band contains graduates of the Dancehall Racketeers, the Crakajacks, alumni of the Rhythm Rustlers, Slim Dusty Band and the Black Sorrows. Each member having worked the honky tonk showrooms of Melbourne, Sydney, Tamworth, and gigs in Texas mixed in with years of studio time. The guys have been on the bill with FLACO JIMINEZ, SONNY CURTIS, AND HERBIE HANCOCK. Put the lot together and you have an unmatched combination of technical skill, road tested experience, sweat soaked passion, and above all, lots of swingin' bop.

The band originally formed when Tom Forsell returned from one of his regular trips back home to the States in 1986 and they have been going ever since. Tom spent 1997-98 playing in Texas with his American band and reformed the Drifters upon his return October 1999. They have re-established themselves as fine purveyors of vintage country and other assorted Roots Music, and take a fiendish delight in delivering their high charged package of western swing, hardcore country (not the Kenny Rogers or Garth Brooks type), cajun, zydeco, blues, and rockabilly with an increasing number of originals.

The band just get on stage and swing, covering a wide range of styles and getting people on to the dance floor to sweat and cook and sometimes to sit and contemplate their existence with a little ballad or two.

The band's 4th C.D. the compilation "Moonee Valley Drifters, *From The Beginning* will be launched on Sunday November 4th at the Cornish Arms. This will solidify their reputation after the excellent reviews of their previous recordings.

The record launch will feature various members of the band over the years including Tom Forsell on guitar, vocals, and accordion, Rick Dempster on vocals, harmonica and steel guitar, Paul Pyle on double bass and some harmonies, James Black on piano and guitar, Rob Grenville guitar and vocals, Brendan Shearson guitar and vocals, John Brockton drums and vocals, and Warren Rough on guitar with other guests sitting in through the night.

The band are in good form so do yourself a favour and see them.

So don't miss this once in a lifetime gig with the Drifters 4th CD LAUNCH

NOVEMBER 4TH

CORNISH ARMS BRUNSWICK

6:00-9:00

| [Home](#) | [Albums](#) | [History](#) |