

MEDIA KIT
FESTIVAL OF SMALL HALLS AUTUMN TOUR 2020
PORT FAIRY TO THE NATIONAL



Event	Festival of Small Halls
Presenting Line	<i>Woodfordia Inc in partnership with Port Fairy Folk Festival and National Folk Festival presents Festival of Small Halls Autumn Tour 2020 featuring The Paul McKenna Band and Alana Wilkinson.</i>
Tour Partners	Port Fairy Folk Festival and National Folk Festival
Artists	The Paul McKenna Band (SCO) Alana Wilkinson (AUS)
Regional Partners	See Locations
Tour Announce Date	3 December 2019
Tickets on Sale	3 December 2019 www.festivalofsmallhalls.com Prices vary by location
Web	www.festivalofsmallhalls.com Handle: @SmallHallsAus #HallsAutumn
Instagram	https://www.instagram.com/smallhallsaus/
YouTube	http://www.youtube.com/user/festivalofsmallhalls
Facebook	https://www.facebook.com/festivalofsmallhalls

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Attachments/Provisions

- Artist biographies
- About Festival of Small Halls
- Locations, local partners
- Media release #1 + Simple Promo Paragraph
- Logo (1)
- Artist Images (2)

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Artist Biographies

The Paul McKenna Band (SCO)



Short Biography

Called “the best folk band to have come out of Scotland in the last twenty years” by the New York Times, award-winning Glasgow singer Paul McKenna is ranked among Scotland's finest younger songwriters, armed with a powerful yet intensely emotive voice and passionate social conscience. Alongside Conor Markey (banjo/bouzouki/guitars) and Ewan Baird (percussion), Paul McKenna draws on both Scottish and Irish roots in a dynamic full-bodied array of original and traditional material.

Full biography

Scotland's Paul McKenna has long been ranked among our finest younger singers and songwriters, armed with a powerful yet intensely emotive voice and passionate social conscience.

He and his band – comprising Conor Markey (banjo/bouzouki/guitars) and Ewan Baird (percussion) – draw on both Scottish and Irish roots, in a dynamic, full-bodied array of original and traditional material, along with songs by like-minded authors.

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The Paul McKenna Band's newest release Breathe showcases Paul's development as a songwriter and includes two co-writes with acclaimed Canadian songwriter Dave Gunning and another with one of Australia's most respected songwriters, Liz Stringer. Produced by Mike Vass, this new release expands on the band's trademark sound with added instrumentation to enhance and focus on the original material.

"The best folk band to have come out of Scotland in the last twenty years"
- New York Times

"The best band of their generation"
- The Living Tradition

"A band with the potential to dominate the Scottish/Irish traditional scene for the next twenty years"
- Fatea Magazine

<http://www.paulmckennaband.com>



<https://www.facebook.com/thepaulmckennaband/>



<https://twitter.com/paulmckennaband>



<https://www.instagram.com/paulmckennaband/>



https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCKqaNm3_E9FArQyGoPxBrqg

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Alana Wilkinson (AUS)



Short Biography

Described as equal parts vulnerable folk singer and vitriolic poet, Alana Wilkinson has turned heads recently with stellar performances across major festivals such as Blue Mountains, Queenscliff, Woodford and Nannup. Equally at home in the intimate confines of a house concert or in the expansive surrounds of a festival, Wilkinson engages audiences with revealing and hilarious stories and songs that leave you pondering the joys of life with a smile on your dial.

Full Biography

The shining beam of sunlight that is Alana Wilkinson has had a big few months since the release of her debut single *Closer* in late 2018. Now following up *Closer* is the release of her second single, *Partner In Crime*, and if you have not yet fallen in love with Alana Wilkinson, this is the track that'll send you swooning.

Partner In Crime is a poignant and moving tale of adventures with her childhood bestie, Amy, capturing the spirit and carefree nature of growing up in the Melbourne burbs. Accompanied by a beautifully crafted video where Amy and Alana are played by their own respective 'mini me's', *Partner In Crime* is sure to build on the reputation for whimsical, funny and brilliantly executed words, music and visuals that Alana has established.

Described as equal parts vulnerable folk singer and vitriolic poet, Surf Coast based, Alana Wilkinson has turned heads recently with stellar performances across major festivals such as Blue Mountains, Queenscliff, Woodford and Nannup. She's also spread her magic touring with The Porch Sessions and supporting the likes of the

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Pierce Brothers, Bob Evans, Eddi Reader, Sarah McLeod, Shaun Kirk and the Badloves, amongst many others.

Combining delicate melodies with disarmingly insightful vignettes about the human condition, Wilkinson is a smiling assassin. Her songs skewer ex-lovers, would-be suitors, ridiculous social norms and the absurd challenges of suburban life in a merciless, yet strangely affectionate way, leaving audiences feeling like they're sitting in her living room, chatting about life over a steaming cuppa.

Equally at home in the intimate confines of a house concert or in the expansive surrounds of a festival, Wilkinson engages audiences with revealing and hilarious stories and songs that leave you pondering the joys of life with a smile on your dial.

The debut single *Closer* was instantly added to ABC Local Radio nationally, seeping into the soundscape of the summer through car radios across the country. The song even found its way onto the playlist of a chain of national department stores fulfilling an unrealized life-goal for Alana. Hello Kmart.

Drawing on the spirit of Woody Guthrie she seeks to connect in the most direct way possible - taking her large repertoire of songs on the road accompanied by just guitar and ukulele - and the caustic wit, theatrical delivery and questionable dance moves that serve her oh so well.

Alana Wilkinson, in all her sunshiney glory, is one to watch.

"Her gentle guitar work, accompanied by soft and beautiful vocals, leaves the audience smiling, reflective and ready to have fun. Alana manages to deliver a paradox - cut-throat lyrics with an infectious smile on her face. Her genuine honesty and enthusiasm throughout her performance is refreshing, as the crowd laugh and sing along with her..."

- MEL Live.

"This new track radiates a feeling that can only be described as bittersweet. Partner in Crime is an emotionally gripping single disguised by innocent lyrics that take listeners back to when Alana Wilkinson was younger. Her use of raw acoustic major-key guitar strumming brings a sense of warmth to the surface and compliments her songbird-like vocals incredibly well."

- Pilerats

<https://alanawilkinson.com>



<https://www.facebook.com/alanawilkinsonmusic>



https://twitter.com/alanawilkinson_



<https://www.instagram.com/alana.wilkinson/>



<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCHCVzKmEC2p1KIZRzd5OJ8A>

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Tour Location Details

6-9 Mar	Port Fairy	Port Fairy Folk Festival	Tickets available at http://www.portfairyfolkfestival.com/ticket2020/
11-Mar	Pomonal	Pomonal Community Hall	Tickets available at www.festivalofsmallhalls.com
12-Mar	Robe	Mt Benson Hall	Tickets available at www.festivalofsmallhalls.com
13-Mar	Lameroo	Lameroo Memorial Hall	Tickets available at www.festivalofsmallhalls.com or locally at the Lameroo Post Office.
14-Mar	Orroroo	Orroroo Memorial Hall	Tickets available at www.festivalofsmallhalls.com
15-Mar	Beltana	Beltana Assembly Hall	Tickets available at www.festivalofsmallhalls.com
18-Mar	Red Cliffs	Red Cliffs Civic Centre	Tickets available at www.festivalofsmallhalls.com or locally at the Red Cliffs Community Resource Centre.
19-Mar	Wycheproof	Wycheproof Shire Hall	Tickets available at www.festivalofsmallhalls.com or locally at the Wycheproof Community Resource Centre.
20-Mar	Caldwell	Caldwell Hall	Tickets available at www.festivalofsmallhalls.com
21-Mar	Sedgwick	Sedgwick Public Hall	Tickets available at www.festivalofsmallhalls.com
22-Mar	Glenlyon	Glenlyon Hall	Tickets available at www.festivalofsmallhalls.com
25-Mar	Loch	Loch Public Hall	Tickets available at www.festivalofsmallhalls.com
26-Mar	Merton	Merton Memorial Hall	Tickets available at www.festivalofsmallhalls.com
27-Mar	Hallston	Hallston Mechanics Institute Hall	Tickets available at www.festivalofsmallhalls.com
28-Mar	Tarwin Lower	Tarwin Lower Mechanics' Institute	Tickets available at www.festivalofsmallhalls.com
29-Mar	Port Albert	Port Albert Mechanics Institute	Tickets available at www.festivalofsmallhalls.com
1-Apr	Heyfield	Heyfield Memorial Hall	Tickets available at www.festivalofsmallhalls.com or locally at the Heyfield Newsagency.
2-Apr	Stanley	Stanley Soldiers Memorial Hall	Tickets available at www.festivalofsmallhalls.com or locally at the Stanley Post Office.
3-Apr	Dalgety	Dalgety Memorial Hall	Tickets available at www.festivalofsmallhalls.com or locally at Iona Gardens Cafe & Nursery.
4-Apr	Ganmain	Ganmain Hall	Tickets available at www.festivalofsmallhalls.com
5-Apr	Brungle	Brungle Memorial Hall	Tickets available at www.festivalofsmallhalls.com
8-Apr	Barnawartha	Barnawartha Soldiers Memorial Hall	Tickets available at www.festivalofsmallhalls.com
9-13 Apr	Canberra	National Folk Festival	Tickets available at https://www.folkfestival.org.au/buy-tickets/

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General Promo

*Woodfordia Inc in partnership with
Port Fairy Folk Festival and National Folk Festival
presents
Festival of Small Halls Autumn Tour 2020
The Paul McKenna Band (SCO) and Alana Wilkinson (AUS)*

Festival of Small Halls is a series of tours that takes the best folk and contemporary acoustic artists performing at major Australian festivals and sends them on the road to halls in communities all over Australia. Each night on the tour is a beautiful occasion for original music, and a chance to catch up with family and friends over cake and tea during a supper break.

Autumn 2020 sees the team cross from the deep deserts of the South Australian outback to the farmlands of western Victoria, across and through the Garden State and along the coastlines of the east. Winding down in heartlands of the snowy Mountains in NSW, Festival of Small Halls crosses all terrains between Port Fairy and the National, two of Australia's most beloved festivals.

ABOUT THE AUTUMN TOUR 2020

- This is the 18th Festival of Small Halls Tour in Australia
- Two partner festivals – Port Fairy Folk Festival and National Folk Festival
- 21 regional tour stops
- Fun fact - Alana Wilkinson has a 'share a secret' portal on her website, and was featured in the 'Duality Experiment' that paired 25 visual artists with the words of 25 writers to create a collection of works, as part of the Melbourne Writers Festival. She's also toured with Eskimo Joe's Kav Temperly.
- Fun fact - The Paul McKenna Band's newest album features a collaboration with previous Festival of Small Halls touring artist – and one of the only artists to ever be featured on multiple tours, Liz Stringer.

FROM OUR CURRENT PARTNERS

"We are so thrilled that our village program on opening night will feature the Festival of Small Halls, which will be presented in our historic Lecture Hall right in the heart of Port Fairy. The Festival of Small Halls is a wonderful program, that not only celebrates outstanding music but also puts the spotlight on regional towns and the halls of old which are treasured parts of our history, our present and our future."
- Caroline Moore, Program Director Port Fairy Folk Festival

"Woodfordia's Festival of Small Halls is a wonderful initiative putting world class musicians in front of audiences and regional communities who would otherwise not have the opportunity to experience them. The National Folk Festival is delighted to be partnering with Small Halls to book-end the upcoming Autumn tour with Port Fairy Folk Festival. We look forward to welcoming Canada's The Once and Australian artist John Flanagan to Canberra this Easter."

- Pam Merrigan, Festival and Artistic Director, National Folk Festival

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FROM PREVIOUS ARTISTS

"When it comes to music, community and your sense of where you fit in the world, the Festival of Small Halls knows what your heart and soul truly needs more than you do. It was an epic journey filled with boundless music, laughter and memories. If asked to do it again, we would gladly make the 17000 + km trek. Because it's worth it."
Geraldine Hollet, The Once, Festival of Small Halls Autumn Tour 2019

"Small Halls is a brilliant, inspiring tour that brings we musicians and regional communities together in a mutual discovery and celebration of each other. With this awareness Small Halls is helping build respect and sustain a healthy responsibility in the relationship between contemporary musicians work and regional Australian communities. I blinking loved every sweat, soaked, dusty morsel of every show and mile."
Liam Gerner, Festival of Small Halls Summer Tour 2019

"It was a life-changing experience for me, being a part of the Festival of Small Halls Summer Tour. It was amazing sharing my music with communities I wouldn't normally get to visit and to be greeted with such warmth and generosity of spirit. We travelled through so many beautiful, special places that I will never forget, and I am sure my memories of the tour will filter into some of my songs in the future!"
Lucy Wise, Festival of Small Halls Summer Tour 2018

"Festival of Small Halls seems to do everything right. From mission to community to execution, this roving, nightly festival shares and is made by the same dedication and love as its parent festival—the Woodford Folk Festival. I saw and met amazing people and places I wouldn't ever have dreamed of seeing and visiting and felt able to deliver the best version of myself as an artist over a sustained and lengthy tour thanks to the amazing team. We went to extraordinary places for extraordinary community building and celebratory happenings. Thank you."
Old Man Luedecke, Festival of Small Halls Summer Tour 2018

"Festival of Small Halls breeds new life and culture into Australia's regional communities at a time when it is most needed. A fresh take on an old tradition."
Elwood Gray, Festival of Small Halls Spring Tour 2018

"The Festival of Small Halls solidified my love of Australia, giving me the opportunity to visit so many beautiful towns and villages that I would have never gotten to see otherwise."
Dave Gunning, Festival of Small Halls Autumn Tour 2018

"The Festival of Small Halls was an experience of a lifetime. Imagine a traveling touring festival where the focus is celebration of community, family and music, all somehow beautifully wrapped in song and story performed by under-the-radar national and international artists, brought to distant corners of the Continent in order to co-create with local communities an evening to remember. It's mind blowing! My bandmate and I were introduced to regions of Australia that many Australians have never seen before, performing in community halls that most have never heard of, singing for audiences of all ages and all walks of life. I recall asking our fabulous tour manager why the parent organisation (Woodfordia) was so keen on the Small Halls tour idea. Her simple yet powerful response was "because it's important." With that I knew we were indeed part of something life changing, of something life giving, not only for us but for everyone involved in the endeavour. I am so honoured to have been a part."
Cara Luft, The Small Glories, Festival of Small Halls Summer Tour 2018

"The Festival Of Small Halls was easily one of the most rewarding tour experiences I have ever been a part of. I was blown away by the generosity and warmth of spirit of everyone

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involved and I feel that the bonds I have made along the way will be there for years to come.'

Claire Anne Taylor, Festival of Small Halls, Summer and Autumn Tours 2018

Festival of Small Halls - a brilliant remarkable concept. [The Summer Tour 2017 was] remarkable, artful, successful, fun, and an enlightening run. New friends and fans in a whole new hemisphere. Bucket list stuff for any musician much less any American. The width and breath of some Queensland countryside. I made great friends...

Vance Gilbert, Festival of Small Halls, Summer Tour 2017

The Festival of Small Halls is a unique program, centred around the spirit of community and the role of music and culture in bringing these communities together. This ethos is a central part of my own career, and to that of many other musicians I know, and it's a privilege and joy to be a part of such a unique tour that distills these simple, and incredibly important, ideas so well and with so much dedication and heart.

Liz Stringer, Festival of Small Halls, Summer Tour 2017

"I cannot express how amazing our experience was touring the Tasmanian portion of "Festival of Small Halls Australia". Six out of the seven shows were sold out (the other was 90% full) as a touring musician this never usually happens. It is a sign of hard work behind the scenes - proper organization, publicity, rapport with the venues and all around excellent team work. Judging by the amount of albums both acts sold, I think the show was enjoyed. A lot of these communities were hurting for entertainment or a reason to come together. As I've seen in other areas where Small Halls has been, it really connects people by celebrating music. They can also forget about the struggle that sometimes happens in small communities. Being from one myself, I know what it's like not having outside culture grace your community... And when it does, you never forget it. The children in these small Tasmanian towns were bursting when it was time to talk at the end of the show. Several kids and a few teenagers told me that they plan on practicing their instruments more or taking up the fiddle (which is cool for me to hear). A real show with real people certainly tops watching one on television or YouTube. Thanks for giving us the opportunity to grace these towns and give back a gift that was given to us."

Tim Chaisson, The East Pointers, Festival of Small Halls, Summer Tour 2016

'It was one of the best, most inspiring things we've ever done! We are totally in love with the towns and communities we visited, with the extremely kind folk we met along the way, with Kate and Harry, and with the boys! Please know that we are 100% up for doing Small Halls again (and again and again). So grateful for the whole shebang. Will never forget it.'

Siskin River, Australian Artists, Festival of Small Halls, Autumn Tour 2015

'The Rhythm Boys unanimously agree that Festival of Small Halls Australia was one of the best tours we've ever been on... being immersed in the beautiful rural communities of Victoria and NSW made the experience all the more authentic and special. The crowds were extremely enthusiastic and appreciative for bringing music into their small halls.'

Gordie MacKeeman and His Rhythm Boys, Canadian Artists, Festival of Small Halls, Autumn Tour 2015

'My experience with the Festival of Small Halls was nothing short of magical. Coming from the frozen plains of Canada and jumping straight into a hot Australian summer gave me some worry at first, but all that worry quickly slipped away. What I walked into was a well run, well executed traveling show that was imbued with cultural relevance and importance that rivals any show I've taken in as a concert goer or as a performer. The greatest opportunity for me as a writer and performer was the chance to connect with a rural Australian audience. My songs and stories are agriculturally themed and I was given the chance hear stories from Australian farmers and producers and also people from all walks of life. This traveling festival

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seems like a model that could and should be implemented wherever possible. It's my belief that people do love music, and those of us who live in out of the way places don't get enough of an opportunity to take it in. It makes the most sense to me to bring a show to these towns. Rather than broadcast a message that music is only a cultural artifact of the urban landscape, we should all be interested in providing solid footing for the arts in the rural as equally as we do in the city.'

Del Barber, Canadian Artist, Festival of Small Halls Summer Tour 2014

'Small Halls is a concept we all really believe in. We are big believers in live music as a way of keeping communities and towns connected and alive. It was humbling to realise how unusual and novel live music is for people living in small or remote towns. More often than not we felt like we were participating in town social events and we felt privileged to encounter some really awesome, inspiring communities as well as some truly quirky ones! We taught songs to high school kids who have never been taught music before (they thought it was the weirdest thing they had ever heard of but ended up embracing it and having fun!) We were also gratified by how well people embraced weird folk music they had clearly not encountered before.'

The Mae Trio, Australian Artists, Festival of Small Halls, Summer Tour 2014

'Festival of Small Halls is an absolutely brilliant initiative! There are so many winners; from the regional communities who seldom have the chance to engage in live, original music, to the historic, intimate and often unused community halls, to the production crew who make the whole thing happen. The biggest winners, though are the artists. Meeting and sharing our music with the folks who turn out to these shows has been the most profoundly rewarding experience. Their honest appreciation and genuine commitment to supporting the whole concept has filled our hearts with hope!'

Starboard Cannons, Australian Artists, Festival of Small Halls, Spring Tour 2014

'The Small Halls tour was not just another tour! To go into these small, sometimes tiny towns to set up and play shows for the people was truly satisfying. Many of the towns were still in the rebuilding stages from devastating floods, and the Small Halls tour in many cases was the first bit of live entertainment they'd had since then. I felt like my music was helping people. And I'd never really felt that like this before.'

Jordie Lane, Australian Artist, Inaugural Festival of Small Halls Tour, Nov/Dec 2013

"Having grown up in a small town, my appreciation for the Small Halls Australia tour was deep. There is something truly special about a community coming together in the centre of town with food and drink and people of all ages, to share in a night of music. There was an element of surprise in each town as they showed their pride and colours. This is probably the most unique and memorable tour I've done and certainly a great introduction to many parts of Australia I may never have seen."

Rose Cousins, Canadian Artist, Inaugural Festival of Small Halls Tour, Nov/Dec 2013

FROM OUR PATRONS

"I just want to thank Meander Valley Council and particularly Patrick Gambles for the fabulous concert we had on Friday night. Our little community being under siege [from bushfires] for nearly a week and inundated and virtually "taken over" by strangers - I was dispirited, anxious, dog tired and in no mood for this event - it appeared to be just another thing we didn't need right at that moment. What eventuated was that it was EXACTLY what we DID need! The hall looked amazing and we burst with pride. It sounded amazing and we congratulated each other. The crowds were tremendous and we patted each other on the back. The concert was a HUGE success and we felt our spirits lift and our morale soar as we stomped, clapped, yahoo'd and danced with each other. Thank you MVC and Patrick and his team for this moment of light relief in a time of such gloom (literally!). Well done"

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- J Lamont, Chudleigh Hall Committee

"This is truly one of the most lovely projects I have seen developed in regional Aus in forever. What a brilliant thing! Big visions and open hearts. These sorts of things sew community back together."

- P Larkins, Girgarre

"Made the four hour trip from Sydney to Grenfell to see these amazing international and local entertainers. What a great night. Can't wait for next year's. Thank you for making my boy exceedingly happy! Kirby exclaimed that Wednesday night at Grenfell Festival of Small Halls Australia was, "the best night of his entire life!" A big call for an 8 year old. Your cd has been on constant rotation, and it seems we'll be making a trip to Canberra, to see you again before you leave Oz. Thank you so very much."

- B Meur, Grenfell

"We live in an isolated area and are very drought-stricken at present. Our community is being hit hard....times are tough for people on our land, and in a micro-community, the effects are felt by all. However, sitting there last night watching such a beautiful and moving performance, all was lost for a while."

- K Sutton, St George

A great experience at Numinbah Valley School of Arts Community Hall. Was invited and really had no idea what to expect. Great concept and a wonderful way to use these halls. Friendly people and wonderful talents on stage.

- R Maguir, Numinbah Valley

IN THE MEDIA

"Once again the good people from the Woodford Folk Festival have hit the nail right on the head... Where in Australia are there promoters thinking of doing a tour featuring such improbable places as Forest Hill, Eulo, Barcaldine, Wallaville?"

Sam Cutler, Rhythms Magazine

"I always thought about the history of the place, the community meetings, the weddings, the dances, the loves lost and found. It always made me a little sad that those spaces were so often locked up and underused. So it cheered me to hear about the Festival of Small Halls..."

Noel Mengel, Courier Mail

"The event is not just an experience for those who watch it, but also for the musos themselves."

Lauren Grounsell, Caloundra Weekly

...if supporting the growth of Australian music is one aim, so is a celebration of the halls themselves, the oldest of which date to pre-federation.

- Clarissa Sebag-Montefiore, The Guardian Australia