



REVIEW

**Lady Gaga**

Brisbane Entertainment Centre  
Wednesday, June 13  
REVIEW **SIMON COLLINS**

# NUTTY BUT NICE



**GOTHIC** The set was a moving medieval castle. PICTURE **KENTARO KAMBE**

“Talent borrows, genius steals,” said Oscar Wilde, the Irish playwright, incorrigible drunkard, convicted homosexual and alleged plagiarist. New York pop star Stefani Germanotti, aka Lady Gaga, has been found guilty of none of these supposed crimes, although she stands accused of the last charge. The plaintiff, Madonna, has made a point of blending her hit, Express Yourself, with Gaga’s suspected facsimile, Born This Way, at the start of her current world tour. If she’s fair dinkum, Madge should launch a class action with Queen, David Bowie, Bruce Springsteen and the late Whitney Houston’s estate as Gaga pilfers something from all of them — and others besides.

But the 26-year-old musical magpie, who burst on to the international scene with her presciently titled 2008 debut The Fame, stirs a healthy dose of pure, unadulterated crazy into her heady homage to those 80s superstars.

Then she adds a dash of fan interaction that very few acts, especially in the pop realm, get close to matching. Gaga calls them her “little monsters” and genuinely feeds off their adulation, talking directly to members of the audience throughout her shows.

All this, and much, much more, was on display on Wednesday night in Brisbane as Lady Gaga unleashed her 14-date Born This Way tour of Australia, which reaches Perth early next month.

The tour not only takes its name from her second album, released last year, it features all 14 songs.

This show is her best, and nuttiest, yet — and it’s got nothing to do with the knock on the noggin she sustained in Auckland. While the crazy antics seemed to pad out the show on previous visits, this time they are part of the songs.

In Brissie, a giant robotic Gaga head floated above the 12,000-strong capacity crowd, the star crawled out of a chicken’s nether regions and she simulated oral sex. That was just the first two songs, performed in front of a moving medieval setting that was reminiscent of Castle Grayskull.

The hits are sprinkled evenly through the set, with Born This

Way, Bad Romance and her first Australian No. 1 Just Dance coming third, sixth and ninth, respectively.

After Bad Romance, a puffing-and-panting Gaga declared that she would “infiltrate your government one little monster at a time”, before exploring the castle to the strains of Judas.

Telephone was a highlight, as Gaga and her androgynous dancers left Grayskull to work the catwalks that extended well out into the pumped-up kids.

Gaga can do crazy, but she can also do poignant. And, damn her hair extensions, there wasn’t a dry eye in the house when she played her motorcycle/piano (don’t ask) for the anti-bullying ballad, Hair.

This and the rock ballad You and I were the highlights as Gaga showed off one thing Madonna never had — supreme pipes.

The home stretch of the gig experienced an unexpected dip during the Latin flavoured songs, Americano and Alejandro.

The show thankfully returned from Spain to One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest territory.

Another Oscar Wilde bon mot is: “One should either be a work of art, or wear a work of art.” Let’s just say that Lady Gaga does both on this tour, where madness is her method and medium. **B**

**Lady Gaga** plays Burswood Dome on July 7 and 8. Tickets from Ticketek outlets.

## Glen Hansard tells Simon Collins he is coping with fame thanks to Bruce Springsteen

It’s something I’ve never done before but I felt compelled to hand the phone to my wife, Myra, so she could chat with Irish folk-rocker Glen Hansard.

At our wedding, she walked down the aisle to Falling Slowly, a song Hansard recorded with Czech musician Marketa Irglova under their guise as the Swell Season.

“No way, f...ing hell, man, that’s amazing,” Hansard exclaims from New York before I pass the phone to Myra.

“I’m blown away,” the Dubliner tells her. “What a great honour for a song to be used in such a big moment in your life.”

Falling Slowly has had quite the life. The song, the heartbreakingly poignant centrepiece of the low-budget romantic movie Once, won the Academy Award for best original song at the 2007 Oscars.

The shock win suddenly thrust Hansard and Irglova, who starred in the Dublin-set film, on to the world stage — an environment neither independent artist was particularly ready for.

“There is a part of your soul that gets cheapened by fame,” the 42-year-old says in a typically philosophical mood as he watches the sunset over the West River.

After quitting school at age 13 to busk on the streets of Dublin, Hansard formed the Frames in 1990, the band earning their place as Irish folk-rock heroes the hard way — relentless and always impassioned gigging.

“All any artist wants is an audience, that’s all they ever f...ing want, and the Oscar definitely gave us that. And it doesn’t give it to you forever.

“The Oscars basically meant that instead of playing the Metro (Theatre) in Sydney, we went down (to Australia) and played the Sydney Opera House,” he says.

But along with all the “unfiltered and uncynical joy” surrounding the success of Once came a deep sense of sadness that Hansard couldn’t quite pin down until Bruce Springsteen sat him down for a chinwag.

“You know what, Glen, the guy that you’ve been for 20 years, has just died,” the Boss told him. “The guy who was kind of struggling, the



**ONCE IN A LIFETIME** Glen Hansard won an Oscar for best original song. PICTURE **WWW.CONORMASTERSON.COM**

# Irish eyes smiling

guy with all the potential, the guy running up against the wall, was just died. Now you’re the guy who has actually done something.

“You’re just mourning the death of your old self. It’s just an adjustment period and you’re gonna be fine.”

Hansard still can’t believe he got his own personal High Fidelity moment with Springsteen. “It was incredible advice,” he says.

Touring with the Swell Season

eventually wound down and nearly two years ago Hansard found himself living in the Big Apple. “Just to chill out and do nothing for a year.”

He got up for a jam with a musical mate, Thomas Bartlett, aka Doveman, at his regular Burgundy Stains Sessions at Lower East Side club, Le Poisson Rouge. What they produced with a bunch of local musicians sounded great, so they booked some studio time and — to Hansard’s enormous surprise — knocked out seven songs in one day.

“I didn’t know I had seven songs in me,” he laughs. “I was delighted with it, really delighted. And I suppose I realised ‘There it is, I’ve just started making my first solo record’.”

Recorded in New York with Bartlett, and musicians that had toured with Bob Dylan, Leonard Cohen, Bon Iver and Springsteen, Rhythm and Repose features 11 mostly lovesick songs.

They see the acoustic troubadour wear his heart and soul, and veer towards being maudlin at times, yet he insists: “I was in really good form making this record.”

Concurrent with making the album, which features Irish painter Colin Davidson’s melancholic portrait of Hansard on the cover, a stage musical adaptation of Once sprung to life in New York. After starting out at a small East Village theatre last December, Once opened on Broadway in March. Helped along by a rave review from esteemed New York Times critic Ben Brantley, last month Once earned an incredible 11

Tony nominations, including best musical.

While he has helped the lead actors learn how to deliver the songs for Once, Hansard says his involvement is minor. He wants to buy a place in New York but is planning to move all his stuff back home to Dublin while he heads out around the world again to tour Rhythm and Repose.

Hansard hopes to play in Perth next March and reckons he’ll bring out his old Frames mates.

“A friendship is 100 hours. We’ve been through it all together,” he says.

“As much as I loved making this record with a bunch of New Yorkers, I feel like in terms of going on stage and being able to turn it on a dime, the Frames guys are the only ones who really get me on that level.”

Our 20-minute chat now heading towards the hour mark, I ask the obvious question — where’s the Oscar?

“My mother has it,” Hansard replies. “My mother keeps it by the bed. She got a little glass case made for it n’ all. The house got broken into and they stole everything — the TV and the video, everything — and amazingly, amazingly, they left the Oscar by the bed.

“She doesn’t live in a mansion or anything. It’s an old council house in a (Dublin) housing estate, so I guess seeing an Oscar on the bedside table, they must’ve thought it was fake.” **B**

**Rhythm and Repose** is out today.



**DISCOVERY** Nicky Bomba, right, and Bustamento pay homage to rhythms of the Caribbean.

## Bomba’s complete experience

**ARA JANSEN**

The constant discovery of different styles of music has brought multi-instrumentalist and singer Nicky Bomba to his latest project. Along with his brother, Michael, and four long-time musical comrades, the crew known as Bustamento set sail in a dugout canoe in search of jungle and island sounds for the album called Intrepid Adventures to the Lost Riddim Islands. “Music takes me to all sorts of places,” Bomba said.

As a musical veteran, he’s living proof, having performed and recorded with various musical projects, including drumming for the John Butler Trio, conducting the Melbourne Ska Orchestra or his bands Bomba and the mid-90s project The Truth.

“As a songwriter it’s great to keep your ears open and be constantly learning. I feel like a constant student and that gives me a sense of wonder in life and in music,” he said. “Music is such a universal language. Just pulling out a ukulele and singing a tune if you can’t converse with someone is a way of connecting.”

Bustamento spent a weekend in a Melbourne studio recording 23 songs. Fourteen made it on to Intrepid Adventures to the Lost Riddim Islands and it’s a barrel of fun jungle, tropical and island sounds filled with a lightness that pays homage to rhythms of the Caribbean.

“Bustamento is another part of my musical journey, an important part. The more I learn about music, the more I learn how it all connects together and how it connects people on a very

simple level. Grabbing people at a really human level is what stands the test of time and for me is what music is really about,” he said.

“People communicating their ideas in a simple and cheeky way is what I love about Jamaican and Caribbean music. It’s like their newspaper. If they can report it, they add a melody and have a song.”

A trip to Jamaica after hearing a mento band in Germany inspired the Bustamento project. Mento is a style of Jamaican folk music influenced by ska and reggae.

“I’ve always been into reggae,” Bomba said. “It moved me on a level that was bordering on spiritual and I still get that when I hear my favourite records. When I heard mento, it was tickling something for which the seeds had already been planted. It stands as a pretty major discovery for me.

“I like hybrids. As a songwriter and musician the more of those influences you have, the higher the quality of the songs. I’m still discovering things about mento.”

The album’s Gilligan’s Island-style packaging also contributes to the whole vibe of what Bomba is trying to do — create a complete experience which transports you to a beach with swaying coconut trees, a gentle breeze and Bustamento playing enthusiastically nearby. **B**

**Intrepid Adventures to the Lost Riddim Islands** is out now. **Nicky Bomba’s Bustamento** play the Fly By Night on June 23.

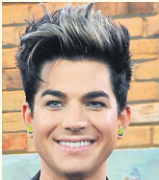
## UNDER REVIEW

**Adam Lambert**

**Trespassing**

19 records/RCA/Sony Music  
REVIEW **ARA JANSEN**

From the opening stomp of the title track, American Idol winner Adam Lambert is making his intentions clear. This is his patch and he’s claimed it. Extravagant, sexy, catchy and deliciously provocative, there’s nothing try-hard about the glam-rock and dance-floor pop of Trespassing. Mind you, Lambert has some heavy hitters co-writing with him, including Nile Rodgers, Sam Sparro, Pharrell Williams and Bruno Mars. While songs like Never Close Our Eyes are a little more melancholy, the beat never falters and there’s a lot of plain fun to be had. Kickin’ In is the kind of song George Michael or Wham would have died for, and whether it’s the 70s slink of Shady, disco beats, some 90s Jackson throwback or future pop, Lambert’s voice moves effortlessly and with an inherent joy, like he’s singing at a rooftop party on a perfect night. On his second album, Lambert cements his mighty vocal style rather than trying to sound too much like his heroes and overdoing that falsetto. On these tracks, there’s just the right amount of showing off and restraint. Time to party.



**LOUDON WAINWRIGHT III**

**Older Than My Old Man Now**

Proper  
REVIEW **RAY PURVIS**

Wainwright has been writing songs about old age and mortality for years. But with the recent death of his former wife, Kate McGarrigle, as well as the realisation that now, at age 65, he’s older than his father Loudon Wainwright Jr was when he died, it’s time for him to take an inventory of his life. Appropriately, he’s made it a family affair with son Rufus singing on The Day That We Die, daughters Martha, Lucy and Lexie, ex-wife Suzzy Roche and current wife Ritamarie Kelly all lending a hand. There’s also a whole lot of guests, including guitarist John Scofield, Ramblin’ Jack Elliott and Chris Smith. The album is a remarkably candid take on ageing, death and the shortcomings of being a father. Songs like My Meds, where he lists his drug intake, 10 laments the loss of his sex appeal, and In C about the break-up of his family, are all lyrically profound and right on target. Two of the most biting tracks are his duet with Dame Edna Everage, I Remember Sex (“That thing we used to do/where you’d lay down/and usually I’d lie on top of you”), and Ghost Blues where he hovers over the mourners at his own funeral counting who turned up (“Some stayed away — hey, what was that all about?”).

**ALAN JACKSON**

**Thirty Miles West**

Sony Music  
REVIEW **TERRY REILLY**

Alan Jackson’s award-winning music is always infectious. The traditionalist values of the distant past in voice and instrumentation, including weeping fiddles and bar-room piano, combined with a snappy rock pulse, ensures artistic and commercial longevity. With his George Jones-styled cadence and earthy inflections, Jackson is swimming in soul. There’s uptempo soul in You Go Your Way with the lyrical twist of “you go your way . . . and I’ll go crazy”, and in the punchy beat of Gonna Come Back as a Country Song, including his own tongue-in-cheek take on reincarnation. The soulful heartbreak of So You Don’t Love Me Anymore is placed squarely in the tear-in-the-beer category and because it’s Alan Jackson, it’s forgivable. Deeper soul and stronger personal grief colour the tone and pace of When I Saw You Leaving (For Nisey), a touching dedication to his wife of 30 years, Denise, who has successfully undergone cancer treatment.



**10th Anniversary supanova**  
pop culture expo  
Join over 100,000 fans, geeks, nerds and aficionados in attending Supanova this year!  
Claremont Showgrounds, June 23-24  
www.supanova.com.au  
Estimated attendance this year throughout our six city schedule (Melbourne, Gold Coast, Sydney, Perth, Brisbane and Adelaide). \*All guests confirmed health and other commitments pending. †Must be accompanied by a paying adult.

**PERTH BLUES CLUB'S 9TH ANNUAL MEMORIAL SHOWCASE A Rhythm and Blues Variety Revue**  
Friday June 29th 2012  
ASTOR THEATRE  
Friday June 29th 2012 7.30pm - 11.00pm  
Proudly Supporting Legacy War  
and will directly support Veterans and Children of Deceased and Repatriated Servicemen and Women