

Podcast 97 – Slim Dusty

Learn English while learning about daily life in Australia,
with Rob McCormack

Podcast Number 97 – Slim Dusty

<http://traffic.libsyn.com/slowenglish/podcast97.mp3>

Hi,

Country music in Australia has a unique Australian flavour. It may not be as popular as pop music, rock music or the other new styles of music, but it still has a strong following. The best known Australian country singer is undoubtedly Slim Dusty. His work is probably the best example of the unique style of Australian country music. In this podcast I would like to tell you a little about Slim and his remarkable career as a singer, songwriter and performer, which lasted more than 60 years.



Slim Dusty next to the Big
Guitar in Tamworth.
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work) [CC BY-SA 4.0
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Wikimedia Commons)

Slim Dusty was working on his 106th album at the time of his death in 2003 at the age of 76. He was the first musical artist anywhere in the world to record 100 albums, followed by Cliff Richard. By 2007, sales of Slim Dusty's albums in Australia had reached 7 million. His most famous song was called 'A Pub with No Beer' which he recorded in 1957. This song was the first by an Australian musical artist to be a hit overseas, as well as in Australia.

Slim was born in New South Wales in 1927, on a cattle farm near Kempsey. His real name was David Gordon Kirkpatrick and from an early age he loved singing and performing. It became clear to his family that he would not become a farmer like his father. In fact, he wrote his first song when he was still only 10 years old. At the age of 11, he decided to create a unique stage name for himself – Slim Dusty. In 1945 he wrote his first hit song – 'When the Rain Tumbles Down in July'. He recorded this song in that same year and, in 1946, at the age of 19, he signed a recording contract. Remarkably, he stayed with that same recording company throughout his recording career.

In 1951 Slim married another country singer and songwriter, Joy McKean. Their enduring marriage also became a long-lasting partnership in music. Joy also wrote many songs for Slim, including 'Lights on the Hill' and 'Indian Pacific'. Together they toured Australia, bringing their special style of Australian country music to all parts of the country, especially to outback towns where other performing artists rarely visited. They had two children together, Anne and

David, both of whom are country music singers and songwriters.

Slim's songs always tell a story. Those stories are always about Australian life, particularly life in rural Australia. Many tell about life in earlier times when life was tough. These types of songs are also known as 'bush ballads'. Two good examples are 'Waltzing Matilda' and 'The Man from Snowy River', both of which are actually Banjo Paterson poems made into songs. He also sang songs about truck-driving in Australia. My favourite Slim Dusty trucking song is 'Lights on the Hill'. Slim's songs are easy to sing along with, and they are about ordinary Australians. Everybody can relate to his music – it makes sense and it tells the story of being Australian. It's no wonder his music is so widely known and enjoyed.

Slim won many, many awards during his long career, including the highest awards from the Australian Record Industry Association (ARIA) and the Australian Performing Right Association (APRA). He's also been inducted into the ARIA Hall of Fame.

Perhaps his greatest moment as a performer came when he was the final act for the closing ceremony of the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games. What better song to sing than one of his best Australian bush ballads – Waltzing Matilda. I can still remember watching it live on television and it was a very moving experience to see 114,000 people in the Sydney Olympic stadium all singing the one song which all Australians know so well, lead by one of our best known and much loved Australian performers, Slim Dusty. At that moment, it felt good to be Australian.

Slim also received Australian Honours including an Officer of the Order of Australia in 1998 and the Centenary Medal in 2001. In 1999 Slim was named Australia's Father of the Year and also the inaugural Senior Australian of the Year.

When Slim finally passed away from cancer on September 19, 2003, it was a sad day. He was honoured with a State funeral, organized and paid for by the government and attended by the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition, along with family and many friends from the music industry. Thousands of people came to the cathedral from all around Australia and stood outside to say thank you and goodbye to an Australian icon. It was broadcast live on television and watched by very many Australians.

While Slim may be gone, his music lives on, forever to be part of our Australian culture.

<http://www.slimdustymusic.com.au/>

If you have a question or a comment to make, please leave it in the comments box at the bottom of this page. Or, you can send me an email at rob@slowenglish.info. I would love to hear from you. Tell me where you live, a little bit about yourself and what you think of my Slow English podcast. I will write back to you, in English of course. If you would like to take a short quiz to see if you have understood this podcast, you will also find it on my website. Goodbye until next time.

Rob

Podcast 97 Quiz - Did you understand the podcast?

You can take the quiz as many times as you like.

Start quiz

Vocabulary

album = a collection of songs

artist = (here) someone who performs for others

Association = a group of people who have a common interest

Australian Honours = special awards or prizes given by the Australian Government (see Podcast 71)

awards = prizes

Banjo Paterson = an Australian Poet (see Podcast 86)

beer = a drink with alcohol

broadcast = when radio and television stations make and send out a program for people

cancer = a type of disease which can be very dangerous

cathedral = a very large church

cattle = animals which are grown for their meat

ceremony = an event which has a formal set of steps, often a tradition.

country music = a type of popular music

create = to make

enduring = long lasting, until the end

final act = the last person to perform in a show

flavour = (here) how something sounds, feature, characteristic

following = (here) when people like something and take an interest in it

hit = (here) when a song is very, very popular

honoured = when you praise or thank someone for the work they

have done

icon = something or someone which is much loved and respected

inaugural = first

inducted = made a member of

Leader of the Opposition = the leader of the political party which comes second in the election

moving experience = when something makes you feel happy or sad or other emotion

ordinary = normal, not special

particularly = when something is special or stands out from other things

passed away = died

performer = someone who provide entertainment for other, e.g. singer, actor

popular = when something is liked by a lot of people

Prime Minister = the leader of the Australian Government

pub = a place where you can meet with friends and buy alcoholic drinks like beer

rarely = not often

record = when music is copied so that it can be heard by others

recording contract = when another person or company agrees to record your music

relate = when one thing is connected to another thing

remarkable = unusual, special

rural = areas away from the city

stadium = a place where sport is played and people can sit down to watch

stage name = when you change your name as a performing artist (e.g. actor, singer)

styles = types

throughout = during

tough = hard, difficult

toured = to go from one place to another, to another and so on.

truck = a large vehicle which carries heavy things

tumbles = to fall down

unique = there is nothing else like it