

Lonnie was born to parent's who lived on a sheep property called 'Bleak House' a few miles from a small railway siding called Rowena in North West NSW between Moree and Walgett. In 1908, his grandfather named the property 'Bleak House' after the Charles Dickens classic of the same name.

Whilst he spent many of his pre teenage years as a boarder in Sydney's Trinity Grammar school, it was at this time, when, as a very young boy he made his first wireless crystal set to listen to the wider world of music which of course, led him to hear the songs which would eventually become his life. Stars like Johnnie Ray, Nat King Cole, Guy Mitchell and of course Elvis were the mainstays of this young guys life as he worked on the sheep property. Music was his escape and that's what he did.

In Sydney in May 1956 he entered a talent contest singing Elvis' first hit, 'Heartbreak Hotel' and as far as we know it was the first time an Elvis song was sung on Australian radio. A few months later he won the title Australia's Elvis Presley when the MGM movie company found that not too many people in Australia knew who Elvis was, so they wanted to promote his name.

By this time Lonnie had his own rockabilly combo which we also understand was the first pro rockabilly band in Australia. Following this successful adventure into music, he had a car accident which took him by parental control back to the country, as his conservative parents thought this new R & R was "evil".

A few months after his return to Sydney, Australia's first TV show, ABC TV's 'Six O'Clock Rock' had started and other than its compere Johnny O'Keefe, Lonnie became it's most frequent flyer. His popularity had him at one stage, edge out O'Keefe as Australia's most popular TV star. He was also voted the second most popular star of TCN9's Bandstand.

In 1966 after many top selling records, main event live shows and helping to promote new starts like Normie Rowe and John Rowles, he felt he had done all he could do here in Australia so decided to leave for Europe where he was not known. This came about after feeling he had no identity other than "Lonnie Lee" the star and so through many avenues, embarked on a self realisation search to find out who he really was as a person.. In UK and Europe he enjoyed not being recognised in the street and sang in cabaret and US bases and in 1971 went to the USA where he made solid friendships with peers from Motown recording musicians such as Mickey Stevenson who wrote, 'Dancing in the streets' and Wayne Jackson from the famous Memphis Horns. During his many years there he co-wrote with Roy Orbison and in fact for a time, was his personal assistant in the mid 70's !

In 1967 at the age of 27, after a long and varied journey, Lonnie found his spiritual path....a path followed by the likes of Martin Shaw (British TV star), Mutt Lange, Shania Twain our own Judith Durham and many other celebrities and non celebrities around the world.. Since then it has been the core of Lonnie Lee and is the reason his private life has been just that - private!! He maintains a strong sense of integrity, honesty, following through and doing exactly as he says be it with friends, family or business! Lonnie is a man who does stand alone and is today considered ironically, 'the last man standing from his era', as he is still doing it all today and still receiving rave reviews.

There are many sides to Lonnie's personal story which this brief outline could not touch, however I will mention some interesting areas below.

Lonnie is passionate about the environment just like his cousin Peter Andrews. Peter has been featured more times on ABC's Australian Story than anyone else and they are the most watched episodes in the history of the program. Lonnie helped Peter set up his Natural Sequence Farming project and created and still runs it's very popular websites.

His own belief in the environment and the consequences of human intervention sees Lonnie as a 44 year vegetarian, non drinker and non smoker. This clean life must have something to do with his incredible energy levels and really youthful appearance but by no means is it dull.

In 1980 in Nashville Tennessee he created and ran a big Expo which he called, 'Living in the 80's. It was the first of its kind in USA which focused purely on alternative means of energy and living which were then being touted as the future.

In 1976 he had the first record promotion company in USA to become computerised. This was with 'main frame' computers well before Microsoft or any desktop computers came along. When they did, he taught himself programming which has since led him through the evolution of the personal computer right up to today when he still builds and programs his own computers and networks.

His interest and knowledge of the early Australian music industry is well known. His website, 'The Roots of Aussie Rock' has many thousands of members and he has written two books in his series 'The Facts. The first is the story of the ABC TV show 'Six O'Clock Rock' and then came 'Johnny O'Keefe - The Facts'. Due to their factual nature, both of these have become 'bibles' to radio and collectors.

Ask Aussie stars of today such as Angry Anderson, Ross Wilson, Normie Rowe, Russell Morris, Jim Keays and many others what role Lonnie Lee played in their lives before they entered show business and they will tell you he was a definite influence on them and his records were amongst the first they ever bought. Phil Manning and Matt Taylor of the Aussie Blues Supergroup, 'Chain' actually wrote and released a song recently titled, 'Saturday night at the Trocadero watching Lonnie Lee'.

He still writes and records and some of his new songs are fixed on radio playlists across Australia. Starlite Records are also releasing songs from his archives and already there are already 4 volumes of his Definitive Original Collection from 1959 on best seller lists.

His life is still exciting doing what he loves doing, and it is full of ongoing projects, song writing, record producing, live appearances and of course following his spiritual path.

A recent project was the Roots of Aussie Rock Wall Calendar which featured over 500 images of the stars of record, radio, TV and sports of the late 50's and early 60s'. It got rave reviews as it was the first of its kind and a very unique collector's item. It can be seen here <http://www.starliterecords.com.au/calendar/>

He is currently writing his own biography and as he has a library full of his peers stories. Because of the respect he holds for the industry, he is also writing the definitive 'true' story of the start of the Australian Rock'n'Roll music industry.

His current show is 'Solid Gold' features most of his own Gold Hits of yesteryear as well as tributes to the biggest stars of country and the Top 40 charts of the late 50's and early 60's. He also offers a tribute to Johnnie Ray the biggest pop star prior to Elvis in a big band swing show called CRY! (<http://www.thecryshow.com>) and he previews some of the songs the young Elvis sang for Sun Records in The Hillbilly Cat Show. (<http://thehillbillicatshow.com>) . His newest show is, The Roots of Aussie Rock Show (<http://www.therootsofaussierockshow.com>). He tells a brief story of the history and sings the hit songs of his friends and peers of that time, 1957 to 1962. His permanent band, The Leemen provide the musical and vocal backings.

No matter what the format you must not miss this exciting and unique performer. He is a true legend of Australian popular music. In fact many refer to him as 'The father of Australian Rockabilly' or 'The last man standing from his era'..

More information or interviews can be arranged by contacting.

Suzanne at Starlite Records PO Box 3374 Liverpool NSW 2170 02 9826 0220 admin@starlite.com.au

Visit <http://www.lonnielee.com> - Last updated August 2014