

Across the Great Divide

www.acrossthegreatdivide.website

"You can imagine they would hush any folk club, or bring it to its dancing feet"

Graham Reid, Elsewhere

"evoke a lovely musical imagery"

Gerry Jones, Living Tradition

From soulful Celtic airs, wild jigs and reels, to Americana and Swedish compositions, Across the Great Divide bring a new fusion of artists and instruments not normally gracing the same stage.

This evocative and vibrant sound honours both traditional and contemporary transatlantic music and features resonator, clarsach, guitar and soprano sax creating an inspiring journey on their 'uncommon ground'. Join Tony, Karen and Hanna as they explore musical diversity with a unique expression that reflects their love and respect for the music.



Web content, videos and Social Media

Website - our website provides links to all the relevant information about the band including live Video clip
<https://www.acrossthegreatdivide.website/>

Link to Live Music Excerpts from CD Launch Concert
<https://vimeo.com/315859442>

Link to our Facebook Page
<https://www.facebook.com/acrossthegreatdividemusic>

Link to our Music Video . "Auld Lang Syne"
<https://vimeo.com/307852381>

Spotify Album Link
<https://open.spotify.com/artist/6olebZhwpUMZxceQMe8RU6>

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Biographies

Karen Jones - (NZ) vocals, clarsach, guitar, music education specialist



From New Zealand, traditional folk singer, instrumentalist and music education specialist Karen Jones, spent 14 years in Edinburgh, cutting her teeth in Scottish traditional music, arts and culture. There she began seriously studying the clarsach (Celtic harp) under the guidance of the widely respected Isobel Mieras, ran a very popular weekly folk and traditional session at the Antiquary in Stockbridge, set up a music school and became an active member of the folk community. Here she received much invaluable experience playing among some of the greats of Scottish music. Consequently, traditional Scottish music soon became her inspiration and passion.

Tony Burt - (NZ) resonator, guitar, composer, film maker



Tony's resonator and guitar performances cover a wide range of styles. When he heard the sound of the dobro, Tony was instantly hooked and worked to uncover the mysterious versatility that produces speed, bite and exquisite melody. Always looking towards the challenge of how music can blend together to create new ideas, Tony produced the Snapper Sandwich, a documentary incorporating live performance and narration and has composed music for film and TV documentaries. He has also contributed to many albums and writes tunes inspired by the melodies and rhythms from across the music divides.

Hanna Wiskari Griffiths - (Sweden) vocals, soprano sax , music tutor and ETHNO NZ co-ordinator.

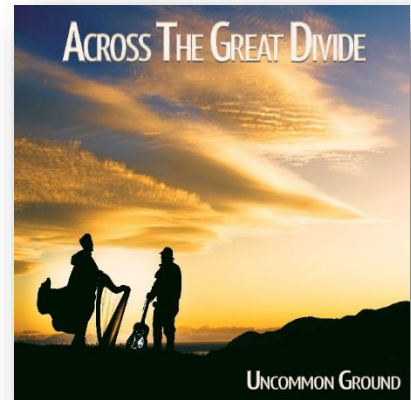


Internationally respected Swedish saxophonist Hanna is a musician and tutor with her roots in the Scandinavian traditional music. Growing up surrounded by music, on the Swedish west coast, she has always had - traditional music in her life, mainly thanks to her father and his playing the Swedish instrument, the nyckelharpa. Since saxophone is not traditional, Hanna has found her own way of using the instrument in this music. For the last 20 years she has been active as a musician in a number of different bands and projects, such the Goodland Trio alongside many others. Now a musician in New Zealand, she teaches and leads 'Ethno', a 10 day music camp where young musicians share their traditional music with each other and is a renowned teacher of international traditional music courses.

CD Available

Their debut album, *Uncommon Ground*, was released October 6, 2018. They are joined on the album by a gifted group of musicians both from New Zealand and across the globe.

Check it out! <https://vimeo.com/289465491>



Long Bio

'Across The Great Divide' are New Zealand duo Karen Jones and Tony Burt. Their musical backgrounds stem from differing paths. Karen's, with her Celtic roots, many years living, learning and playing in Edinburgh developed a love and great respect for traditional folk music of her whakapapa (heritage). Tony's repertoire of Americana folk and music composing stems from the love of the resonator lap steel as an expressive instrument and also from exploring the world through film and music respectively. Having studied from some of the best artisans of the dobro craft, he now incorporates the instrument into his production music and compositions.

Collaboratively, they have enjoyed their journey of bringing such diverse instruments and music styles together while exploring the unique expressions created by them. Whether it be from delicate harp and resonator combination paying tribute to traditional airs or Celtic alternate chordal guitar rhythms bringing a fresh approach to Americana style tunes, the combination reflects their love for the music.

'Across the Great Divide' have always enjoyed merging the music and styles they were respectively familiar with, to come up with something a little different. Karen took up the challenge of applying Celtic guitar to fast rousing bluegrass, Americana tunes and Tony's original compositions. Tony in turn, arranged dobro for Celtic airs and fiddle tunes to accompany Karen's exquisite harp performance and blistering paced guitar fuelled jigs and reels.

Across The Great Divide in Concert

<https://www.acrossthegreatdivide.website/videos>



Joining Across the Great Divide on stage is the very gifted saxophonist and Swedish folk artist Hanna Wiskari Griffiths, bringing the rhythms and traditional style melodies borne from her Scandinavian homeland.

The combination creates a new unique sound, intricately woven, all the while retaining respect for the traditions. A true folk fusion.

In this link, they are caught having a quiet tune among the birds and trees at the Whare Flats Folk festival. <https://vimeo.com/290103281>

Uncommon Ground

*As travellers in music,
may we meet and journey together
with common understanding,
on our uncommon ground.*

Behind the album

Tony and Karen have always enjoyed the challenge of interpreting each other's music, ever since that first session one warm summer night on Mission Bay Beach in Auckland when first they played together. Somehow the enigmatic allure of the Celtic harp and crisp bite and presence of the Dobro seemed to somehow gel. Over time they not only got to understand the background and idiosyncrasies of each other's music styles but took on the many challenges of seriously working musically together. Tony learning jigs, reels and all manner of arrangement on dobro as much as Karen adding distinctive Celtic guitar style rhythms and chordal arrangements to Americana influenced tunes. Tony's background in film and music composition added an original flavour as his tunes became integral to their repertoire.

It is fair to say that if one half has been immersed in honest folk music and the other, in all manner of Americana and filmic music, that this presents a challenge in itself. The reality was finding a creative approach to the album to combine this presence and honesty, with grand and dramatic. Finding common ground was not always easy, and took no small degree of compromise, respect and understanding and, a different sound began to emerge. The answer was unexpectedly, something which encompassed a little of all the above features. So, when combining how the music sounds and how it's put together, **Uncommon Ground** seemed a fitting title for all the manner of diversity landing on one disc.

In the film world there is a saying, 'Music provides the emotional underscore to a movie'. In as much, the tunes and songs on **Uncommon Ground**, could provide an emotional underscore to life and moments.

Making the Album

The album had been roughly 2 years in the making, firstly recording the harp and dobro tracks at **Phil Riley's Life of Riley** studio in Korokoro, Wellington. This was so both instruments could be played live to capture the nuance of the performance on the air for the album.



Back then, guitarist **Jim Perkins** laid some blistering guitar lines on 'Music for a found harmonium' and thus it started.



“We were always looking to blend Celtic and Americana styles and knew there would be a mix of simplicity as well as ensemble pieces” says Tony. So they set about recording and gathering artists across the country, and even remotely from Australia and Scotland. Their amazing guest artists enthusiastically contributed their own unique flavour to the tracks as they built up. **Lindsay Martin**, the masterful and sympathetic Australian fiddle player, laid down a beautiful rendition for 'Ragan Rd'.

Tony packed up the studio into a compact travel case and set up in Auckland for some of the recording sessions. **Jon Sanders**, known for his masterful skills in traditional Irish tunes and creative compositions, came in for a session, bringing his guizouki and bouzouki followed closely by Israeli percussionist **Yair Katz**.



The international connection continued when Swedish saxophonist and folk artist **Hanna Wiskari Griffiths** joined the circle of friends. The interpretation of tunes, the melding and interplay with three disparate instruments feature on many of the tracks. Hanna is also wonderful addition to the live performances as they continued to explore new ground and introduce Swedish folk traditions into the melting pot.

Scottish fiddle player, multi-instrumentalist, producer and composer **Mike Vass** recorded his track from his studio in Scotland. Steeped within the folk traditions, Mike added a raw honesty and beauty to the traditional Scottish highland tune, Arran Boat. Mike Vass is one of the most creative forces on the current Scottish music scene.





Along the way on these nomadic recording sessions, **Shimna Higgins** laid fiddle on First February, a track that she was taught as a student by her teacher, the tunes composer Jono Loni. So back in home town Wellington they were very fortunate to have bass player **James Geluk** from Frank Burkett Band come in and lay some cool low down additions, at times with Tony conducting using a Nashville chart hand signals system he'd invented.

Garrett Evans has been Tony's best friend for many musician years. Garrett laid a bass track for Bounce (The Snapper Sandwich) which the two have played on many a happy occasion. And finally, the wonderfully talented, up and coming singer song writer **Victoria Vigenser** added Bodhran on several tracks and backing vocals on the two songs on the album.



Tony then spent countless hours mixing the tracks and finally it was time for the expert ears to be let loose. **Phil Riley** (*Life of Riley Studio*) is an accomplished recording artist, engineer and producer so it was a great exercise to review tracks with him, get feedback and tweak tracks into shape. In the final stages when mastering specialist **David Antony Clark** joined in giving his feedback from his Auckland Studio, it became the "his masters ears stage" as Tony called it.

Once the mixing was done, it was a case of deciding how to present the recordings. Tony completed weaving the stories in image and it was sent up to Stebbing in Auckland where upon 10 days later it arrived back.....printed and perfect.



The Visual Elements

The making of an album is not just about the CD. The artwork and CD design is integral to the overall package. Tony's cinematic fervour and dramatic vision of silhouetted musical travellers meeting on a wind-swept cliff top under a dramatic sky reaching over the seas to a far off land was realised. Look no further than the incredible photographic artist **Mary Livingston** and an impeccably timed photo shoot to capture the moment to perfection.

"This is where art meets music" says Tony, and adds "It has been such a pleasure to truly incorporate Mary's stunning visual elements".

Album sleeve notes

"Music is a language and therefore a very powerful tool. As two musicians we met, each with our own paths behind us, Tony with his film production and Americana infused compositions, and Karen with her Scottish and Irish heritage. Seldom do these two genres or instruments meet, yet as one, and with great respect for the other's musical pathway, we converse, to honour the traditional, and create the contemporary,

"The musical conversations recorded on this CD, speak of the ancestral depths of the Scottish highlands, (Aran Boat) to the joy of a light summer breeze, (Happy MacHappie), from our response to current affairs, (The Patriot), to the joy of musical friendship (Circle of Friends), of courage and perseverance (Long She Waits) and the joy of family and friends, (Auld Lang Syne) and much more.

"We were very blessed to be joined on 'UNCOMMON GROUND' with an incredible group of musician friends from New Zealand and across the globe, all who have added their own flavour and interpretation to the tracks. Lindsay Martin (Australia), Jim Perkins (Rarotonga, NZ), Mike Vass (Scotland), Jon Sanders (Ireland and NZ), Yair Katz (Israel), New Zealanders - James Geluk, Victoria Vigenser, Shimna Higgins, Garrett Evans and our guest of honour Hanna Wiskari-Griffiths (Sweden). Thank you all for walking with us for that time.

"Like all things which come together, the road has not always been smooth, but as always, it has made us stronger. We offer these musical conversations and hope they create joy, inspiration and kotahitanga (unity)."

With love, Tony & Karen



