

# EMPIRE OF THE ARIAS

Okay, so last year we didn't see the Empire Of The Sun sweep coming... But that hasn't stopped **BRYGET CHRISFIELD**, **ANDREW MAST** and **SHANE O'DONOHUE** having another attempt at predicting the winners of the annual **ARIA AWARDS**. Cover and feature photos by **KANE HIBBERD**.

Dan Sultan



**BEST DANCE RELEASE:** Nominees – *Magic Fountain* ART VS SCIENCE; *Sometimes* MIAMI HORROR; *The Crystal Axis* MIDNIGHT JUGGERNAUTS; *Immersion* PENDULUM; *We No Speak Americano* YOLANDA BE COOL & D-CUP.

**Form Guide:** It's an even field with all newcomers to the category – although back in '97 another band called Pendulum won here. Could this be an omen? **What we think:** The past four years have seen this dominated by those with the most crossover appeal (The Presets, Sneaky Sound System, TV Rock), so will judges take into account Yolanda's massive global sales or Art Vs Science's local sales? **What we want:** Show us ya Juggs!

**BEST URBAN ALBUM:** Nominees – *Running On Air* BLISS N ESO; *Round The World* LOWRIDER; *Good Gracious* M-PHAZES; *Soul-Fi* SPACE INVADAS; *Spitshine* URTHBOY.

**Form Guide:** This is BnE's fourth Urban nomination (winning in 2008 but losing to cat dominators Hilltop Hoods other years) and Urthboy was here in 2008 as part of The Herd. **What we think:** With the Hoodies busy trick-or-treatin', Bliss N Eso will spook 'em with a second Urban win. **What we want:** Just like in 1978, Space Invadas should destroy all-comers.

**BEST COMEDY RELEASE:** Nominees – *The Blow Parade* ANDREW HANSEN, CHRIS TAYLOR & CRAIG SCHUFTAN; *Arj Barker Forever* ARJ BARKER; *Heath Franklin's Chopper: Make Deadshits History* HEATH FRANKLIN; *Jimeoin On Ice Live* JIMEOIN; *Songs From The 86 Tram* THE BEDROOM PHILOSOPHER.

**Form Guide:** With the salad days of The 12th Man or Martin & Molloy (three wins each) long gone, there has not been a dominant presence in the Comedy cat for the past decade. However, this is Jimeoin's fifth nomination and he has yet to score a win. **What we think:** Despite living up to its name, *The Blow Parade* involves two brands judges are bound to be attracted to, Triple J and Chaser. So unless there has been a sentimental swing to Jimeoin, this will *Blow*. **What we want:** Jimeoin – music awards are a natural home for those on ice.

**BEST ADULT CONTEMPORARY ALBUM:** Nominees – *Eat My Shadow* ANGIE HART; *Intriguer* CROWDED HOUSE; *The Rhythm And Blues* JIMMY BARNES; *Car Tape 2* LISA MILLER; *Johnny Ray's Downtown* PERRY KEYES.

**Form Guide:** Crowded House won here back in 1989 while Barnsey was nominated in 2008. But it is Lisa Miller who has been here most often – this is her fourth nomination (the first *Car Tape* losing to Paul Kelly back in 2002). **What we think:** If the campaign for Perry Keyes to win is as strong as the recent one to get him to number one, the best the Sydney cabbie can expect is a \$5 tip driving the winner home. And though young bucks have been winning here in recent years (Josh Pyke, The Panics, Bob Evans), it will be time to honour a heritage act again (last time was The Go-Betweens in 2005). Crowded House to win. **What we want:** C'arrn, give it to Miller. The resulting sales bump may mean she can afford an mp3 player in her car.

**BEST ADULT ALTERNATIVE ALBUM:** Nominees – *Down The Way* ANGUS & JULIA STONE; *Basement Birds* BASEMENT BIRDS; *Modern Day Addiction* CLARE BOWDITCH; *Cinema* THE CAT EMPIRE; *I Believe You Liar* WASHINGTON; *Go Forth, Find Mammoth* WHITLEY.

**Form Guide:** A new category, spinning off from Adult Contemporary – perhaps in the hope of moving the new adults on the block to battle it out here and allow the oldies back on the AC winners' block (the faces who bring mum and dad ratings to the broadcast). But is it a clean field? The Stones, the Birds, Bowditch and the Empire have amassed more than 60 ARIA noms and a dozen wins between them over the years (most of those to Birds' Kevin Mitchell though). **What we think:** Young blood to blindsides the pros. Washington to win. **What we want:** Would be a nice way for A&J to cap off a solid year making themselves household names.

**BEST POP RELEASE:** Nominees – *Head Of The Hawk* BLUEJUICE; *Half Mast* EMPIRE OF THE SUN; *Like It Like That* GUY SEBASTIAN; *Aphrodite* KYLIE MINOGUE; *We Are Born* SIA.

**Form Guide:** This is Minogue's ninth Pop nomination – she has won here four times (most recently in 2002). Empire won this last year. **What we think:** If Guy Sebastian did to the ARIA panel what he said those *X-Factor* contestants did to him, he could be the favourite. However, the Pop award has tended to go to newbies in recent years (Missy Higgins, Veronicas, Blasko, Gabrielle Cilmi and, as mentioned, Empire). Despite winning a Best Music DVD award last year, Sia might be fresh enough for ARIA's pop judges. **What we want:** We will clap for Sia.

**BEST ROCK ALBUM:** Nominees – *Birds Of Tokyo* BIRDS OF TOKYO; *Bliss Release* CLOUD CONTROL; *Rush To Relax* EDDY CURRENT SUPPRESSION RING; *Golden Rule* POWDERFINGER; *Innerspeaker* TAME IMPALA.

**Form Guide:** Powderfinger have won three of the four times they have been nominated here. In 2008, Eddy Current lost out to The Living End. The rest of the field are fresh rock fillies. **What we think:** Powderfinger haven't quite retired yet so we don't see them handing their arena rock mantle over to Birds Of Tokyo just now. **What we want:** Seeing as there is no Psych Rock category, how about Tame Impala getting this?

**BEST INDEPENDENT RELEASE:** Nominees – *Magic Fountain* ART VS SCIENCE; *Get Out While You Can* DAN SULTAN; *Rush To Relax* EDDY CURRENT SUPPRESSION RING; *April Uprising* JOHN BUTLER TRIO; *We Are Born* SIA.

**Form Guide:** JB3 own the Indie cat with five nominations and three wins since 2001. The rest are first-timers. **What we think:** Every few years this category pulls out a wild card (Savage Garden in '97, S2S in '00). Could Art Vs Science be this year's joker in the pack? Last time JB3 lost here was in '06 to Hilltop Hoods. **What we want:** Dan Sultan – the only one here who has never been nominated in any ARIA category previously.

**BREAKTHROUGH ARTIST:** Nominees – *Restless* AMY MEREDITH; *Bliss Release* CLOUD CONTROL; *Hope Is For Hoppers* PHILADELPHIA GRAND JURY; *Innerspeaker* TAME IMPALA; *I Believe You Liar* WASHINGTON.

**Form Guide:** For 20 years this was divided into separate Breakthrough Single and Album awards with a dozen artists taking out both (not always in the same year, go figure). So finally it's rolled into one. **What we think:** With this category long dominated by female artists (or female-led bands), this will go to Washington. Unless judges think Amy Meredith is a chick. **What we want:** Be nice to see Cloud Control win – could result in the night's politest acceptance speech.

**BEST GROUP:** Nominees – *Down The Way* ANGUS & JULIA STONE; *Birds Of Tokyo* BIRDS OF TOKYO; *Golden Rule* POWDERFINGER; *Innerspeaker* TAME IMPALA; *Love Lost* THE TEMPER TRAP.

**Form Guide:** If Powderfinger win it will tie them with INXS for the most Best Group wins. INXS won three of these awards between '87 and '92. The Powdies are tied on two wins apiece with Silverchair, The Cruel Sea and Crowded House. **What we think:** Bands with women win every ten years here – Killing Heidi in 2000 and The Black Sorrows in 1990. Could be A&J stumbled in at the right time. But it will be a photo finish with Powderfinger favourites to land this 'gold watch' as a retirement farewell. **What we want:** Julia is woman, hear her roar.

**BEST MALE ARTIST:** Nominees – *Dan Kelly's Dream* DAN KELLY; *Get Out While You Can* DAN SULTAN; *Like It Like That* GUY SEBASTIAN; *April Uprising* JOHN BUTLER; *Fast Friends* PAUL DEMPSEY.

**Form Guide:** Only Butler and Dempsey have priors here. Butler's amassed five noms and a win (in '04) while Dempsey scored a nom last year (losing to Daniel Merriweather). Of course, Kelly is related to two-time winner Paul Kelly. History shows that repeat winners are liked here – John Farnham, Diesel and Alex Lloyd have three each while Kelly, Nick Cave and Jimmy Barnes have two apiece. **What we think:** Despite Sebastian being the first *Idol* graduate to be nominated here, will his recent fluffs on *X-Factor* blow it for him? Will the Dans split the indie judge vote? Will Dempsey smile? Butler to make it a second Best Male win. **What we want:** Two Dans enter, only one Dan leaves.

**BEST FEMALE ARTIST:** Nominees – *Modern Day Addiction* CLARE BOWDITCH; *Aphrodite* KYLIE MINOGUE; *Oh! Hark!* LISA MITCHELL; *We Are Born* SIA; *I Believe You Liar* WASHINGTON.

**Form Guide:** An interesting spread here. This is Minogue's 12th Best Female nomination with only one win (in '01). Bowditch odds fare well in comparison with two noms and one win. Mitchell was nominated last year but lost to Blasko. **What we think:** As with Best Male, repeat winners are favoured here (Wendy Matthews and Kasey Chambers have three each while Higgins, Natalie Imbruglia, Kate Ceberano and Jenny Morris have two each). However, recent years have been won by a string of new faces (Blasko, Bowditch and Cilmi). Washington will be the latest new face. **What we want:** It would be nice to see Bowditch or Minogue join the multiple winners' set... Jeez, Imbruglia's in there, what's a person have to do?

Megan Washington

