

Ash Grunwald - Live From The Factory (2008)

Written by bluesever

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- 01 – *Don't Worry* [00:04:11]
- 02 – *Think Tank* [00:06:03]
- 03 – *Give Signs* [00:04:07]
- 04 – *Take The Drop* [00:03:54]
- 05 – *Skywriter* [00:04:45]
- 06 – *Money* [00:07:48]
- 07 – *Serious* [00:03:34]
- 08 – *Heart Attack And Vine* [00:03:36]
- 09 – *Going Down Slow* [00:05:03]
- 10 – *1976 Coaster Van* [00:04:30]
- 11 – *Give Something Away* [00:03:15]

Ash Grunwald - guitar, vocals, Chris Wilson - harp, vocals.

Ash Grunwald is part of Australia's blues and roots scene, a one-man band who belts out his songs on guitar and stompbox at festivals around the country. Like a lot of blues and roots musicians, he's something of a young hippie, and many of his songs deal with subjects like escaping from the big city and spending time with nature. He even has a song thanking a pod of dolphins for saving him from a shark while he was out surfing.

Grunwald's grandfather played bass and at the age of ten they first started jamming together while he was learning to play the guitar. That began his obsession with the blues, expanded into an expertise by listening to the blues shows on Melbourne's community radio stations as a teenager. By his early 20s, Grunwald had been in and out of several bands including the Blue Grunwalds and the Groove Catalysts, as well as playing in a couple of duos. He found that he preferred playing solo, however, booking small shows along the coastline wherever there was a good beach he could surf at, even if it meant playing unnoticed for hours in the dark corner of a restaurant.

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Still independent and without a manager, he recorded a collection of his songs and several blues covers live (including songs by Howlin' Wolf and Robert Johnson), *Introducing Ash Grunwald*, and released it himself in 2001. Shortly after that he discovered Tom Waits, and in particular his work from the '80s and after, which involved experimental percussion with everything from pots and pans to a dumpster. In 2004, Grunwald recorded a second album, *I Don't Believe*, again live and solo, this time using spanners and hammers for percussion and adding several covers of Waits' songs. It was also the first time he used samples and live loops on an album. Songs from those first two albums were then combined together in a new release called *Live at the Corner*, for which he won an Australian Blues Award for Album of the Year.

The popularity of blues and roots had exploded in Australia with independent, dreadlocked musicians like the John Butler Trio suddenly capable of topping the charts, and Grunwald was caught up in the boom. The JJJ radio station was responsible for spearheading the trend, and in 2005, Grunwald's youthful fascination with radio came full-circle when he became host of JJJ's *Roots N All* show, a position he held for 18 months. He also worked on *Give Signs*, his first album to consist only of original songs on which he continued to experiment with unusual percussion, like the sound of a cricket ball bouncing on the floor and his own boots stomping down the steps.

Every year, Mushroom Publishing holds a songwriting workshop in which two songwriters from different genres work together to create a song in a day; in 2008 Grunwald participated in this workshop and was teamed up with Count Bounce, the beatsmith from hip-hop group TZU. The two had a passing acquaintance from sharing the bill at festivals, but working together they discovered they had more in common than it first seemed. The two continued working together on Grunwald's 2008 album, *Fish Out of Water*, which was the first of his albums not to be recorded purely live or on his own. --- Jody Macgregor, Rovi

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