

Paul Kelly & The Portraits

Since the birth of rock 'n' roll, photography has played an important role in documenting rock music, as well as capturing the essence of musicians, their songs, and their stage presence.

The exhibition *Paul Kelly & The Portraits* brings together the works of nine photographers who have documented the iconic Australian singer songwriter Paul Kelly over the last four decades. Greg Noakes, Liz Reed, Bleddyn Butcher, Jon Lewis, Stu Spence, Wendy McDougall, Tony Mott, Peter Brew-Bevan and Martin Philbey have backgrounds ranging from fine art and portraiture to commercial and rock photography. Combining candid, live performance and studio shots their works capture the many sides of Paul Kelly's life and career from the 1970s through to 2011.

About the resource

The resource is designed for educators as a companion to the exhibition and associated website *Paul Kelly & The Portraits*.

The resource engages students to:

- consider the work of nine Australian photographers
- interrogate the relationship between rock photography and portraiture
- explore how photographic portraits can convey the story of Paul Kelly's life
- reflect on the social, cultural and historical context of the photographs
- question how the photographers represent Paul Kelly
- consider the technology involved in creating the portraits

The approach promotes active learning through discussion, enquiry and activity and is designed for years 9-12, although the tasks and questions can be adapted by teachers to suit a range of student learning needs.

The *Paul Kelly & The Portraits* website:
portrait.gov.au/paulkelly

Paul Kelly & The Portraits is supported by The Caledonia Foundation and Shark Islands Productions.

Paul Kelly & The Portraits exhibition venues

National Portrait Gallery
19 June 2013 – 1 September 2013
Blue Mountains Regional Gallery
22 November 2013 – 5 January 2014
Tamworth Regional Gallery
18 January 2014 – 15 March 2014
Mornington Peninsula Regional Gallery
23 May – 20 July 2014

Education bulletin

Subscribe to the National Portrait Gallery Education Bulletin for educators at portrait.gov.au/site/subscribe.php

Learning resources

Learning resources can be downloaded at portrait.gov.au/site/education_downloads.php

Tell us what you think

The National Portrait Gallery is committed to providing opportunities for all audiences to access exhibitions and the collection and we welcome any comments or suggestions about this learning resource. Please contact Amanda Andlee Poland, Manager, Learning Programs 02 6102 7062 amanda.poland@npg.gov.au

NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY EXHIBITION

King Edward Terrace Canberra ACT 2600
Education and group visit enquiries
email bookings@npg.gov.au or
telephone (02) 6102 7000

Paul Kelly & The Portraits

National Portrait Gallery Learning resource

Tasks for students

Before the visit to the exhibition

- Visit the *Paul Kelly & The Portraits* page on the Gallery's website: portrait.gov.au/paulkelly. Explore the timelines of Paul Kelly's life, Australian social and musical history, and developments in photography. List 3 links between Paul Kelly's career and events in the other timelines. Explain why you have chosen these links.
- Look at the Paul Kelly timeline on National Portrait Gallery website. Create a photographic timeline of a member of your family or someone you admire. Select around 10 photographs of this person. Think about how the images tell the story of the subject's life. What happens when you choose a different set of 10 photographs of the person? Can you tell a different story?
- Choose a song by Paul Kelly. You can find lyrics to Paul Kelly songs here: paulkelly.com.au/music. Draw a storyboard of 3-5 images that illustrates the narrative Paul Kelly is telling in the song.
- Think about your favourite singer or band. Do you have a favourite photo or video clip of them? Describe the image and why it is your favourite. To what extent do the technical aspects of the image influence your choice?
- Create a coloured digital portrait and convert it to black and white. Experiment with variations of contrast. Which do you prefer and why? Describe any shifts in how you 'read' the digitally manipulated portrait.

In the Gallery

- Imagine you are explaining Paul Kelly's life and music to a friend. If you could only choose one image from the exhibition to help describe him, which would you choose and why?
- Compare and contrast one of the studio shots in the exhibition with one taken at a live performance. Explain which you think is the more successful portrait and why?
- Choose a work in the exhibition and consider the following technical elements of the photograph. Write down notes on each question:

- 1 What is the vantage point of the photographer?
 - 2 What sort of lighting has been used? (e.g. natural vs. controlled, use of contrasts etc.)
 - 3 How is Paul Kelly positioned in the photograph?
 - 4 How has depth of field been used and to what effect?
 - 5 What background details or additional elements have been included? How does this influence the shot?
- Find the earliest photograph by Greg Noakes from the early 70s and the one taken most recently by Philbey in 2011. These photographs were taken about 30 years apart. What do you think have been the biggest changes in rock photography over that time? Is it evident in these two photographs?
 - Consider the statements and quotes from the photographers in the exhibition. What do these tell you about the relationship between the photographer and Paul Kelly as a subject? Do any of the statements change your understanding of the portrait?

After the visit

- Write a song. Paul Kelly has written songs about people he respects and admires such as Donald Bradman and Archie Roach. When Kelly wrote 'Bradman' he sent Donald Bradman a copy of the music video. Choose someone in public life that you admire and write a song about them. Compose a letter to that person telling them about the song and why you wrote it.
- Two photographers in the exhibition have made the following comments on the relationship between Paul Kelly's music and how they approach photographing him:
"Because I have such a connection to music (I play a little), I've always strongly felt that the imagery should somehow be part of the sound...that when someone sees one of my images and listens to the associated artist(s) there should be an unseen, hopefully unconscious, seamlessness between the two. A deep melding." Stu Spence
"I don't know if the music itself influences me greatly when I approach my work but

in cases like Paul definitely his lyrics would play a large role as they are very much a window into his psyche which gives me valued information about him as a person." Peter Brew-Bevan
What mood do you think is conveyed by the images of Paul Kelly discussed above? Choose one of the photographs by Stu Spence or Peter Brew-Bevan and find a Paul Kelly song that you think conveys a similar mood to the image.

- Imagine you are a 'rock photographer'. Find a performance within your area (e.g. school band, local concert, street performer). Take an action photo of the performance. What are the challenges involved in capturing a live performance? As a class, put together an exhibition of 'rock photography' using your individual performance photos. What story do you want the exhibition to tell? Consider how to best place the photographs in order to tell this story. Write a 100-word statement about your work to display alongside each photograph.
- Debate one of the following statements with your class. Support your argument with examples of portraits in the exhibition and extracts from the photographers' interviews on the *Paul Kelly & The Portraits* website (portrait.gov.au/paulkelly)
All rock photographs can be considered portraits.
All photographs of people are considered portraits.
The most compelling portraits are taken by people who know their subject.
You have to have professional standard photographic equipment to take great photographs.
Everyone knows when a portrait is a great one.
Candid photographic portraits reveal more about a person than studio shots or fabricated images.
- Select one photograph from each decade in the exhibition. Find 8-10 photographs created in the same decade of creative people, events, or artworks that expand your understanding of the era. Consider the reasons the photographs were created, exhibited or published.

*Paul
Kelly
& The
Portraits*



Peter Brew-Bevan

(b. 1969 Adelaide. Lives in Sydney)

Paul Kelly 2007

Type C photograph

National Portrait Gallery, Canberra

Gift of Peter Brew Bevan 2012

Photographer's statement

This image of Paul was part of a series I took for a cover story that appeared in *The Melbourne* magazine. Shot in a cavernous studio in St Kilda on the 17th of April 2007, Paul was a man of few words but once the shoot got creative momentum, Paul began to open up more and more. This particular frame was actually taken the moment Paul opened the piano hood and he started to tinkle the keys ... for a split second I lost him in his world, and this was the resulting image.

I would have to say that my approach for any of my sitters is exactly the same. For me, it's all about the individual, whether they be an actor or musician or politician, my approach is to focus on them as a person, as someone who has a story and an essence. Naturally their talent would play a part in the way I photograph them but 99% of the time it isn't the primary focus. On the contrary, I try and find something about them that isn't really associated with their public image in order to extract something unique from them.

Questions

How would you describe Kelly's expression in this portrait?

What does the inclusion of the piano add to the photograph?

*Paul
Kelly
& The
Portraits*

National Portrait Gallery
Learning resource

2.1



Greg Noakes

(b. 1949 Newcastle. Lives in Melbourne)

Paul Kelly c. late 1970s to early 1980s

Inkjet print produced by the

National Portrait Gallery

Courtesy of the artist

Photographer's statement

The early shots of Paul were taken early in my career of rock music. Recently I saw Paul and he signed the photograph with the cigarette and the guitar for me, but he did write on there, 'who is this thin guy?'...To me they were just moments in time, that when you look back at them you can read as much as you like into them. But at that moment it was his space, my space, we took the shots. There was no careful creation of the shots- they just happened. When you look through the viewfinder on the camera you know when you've got a good photograph.

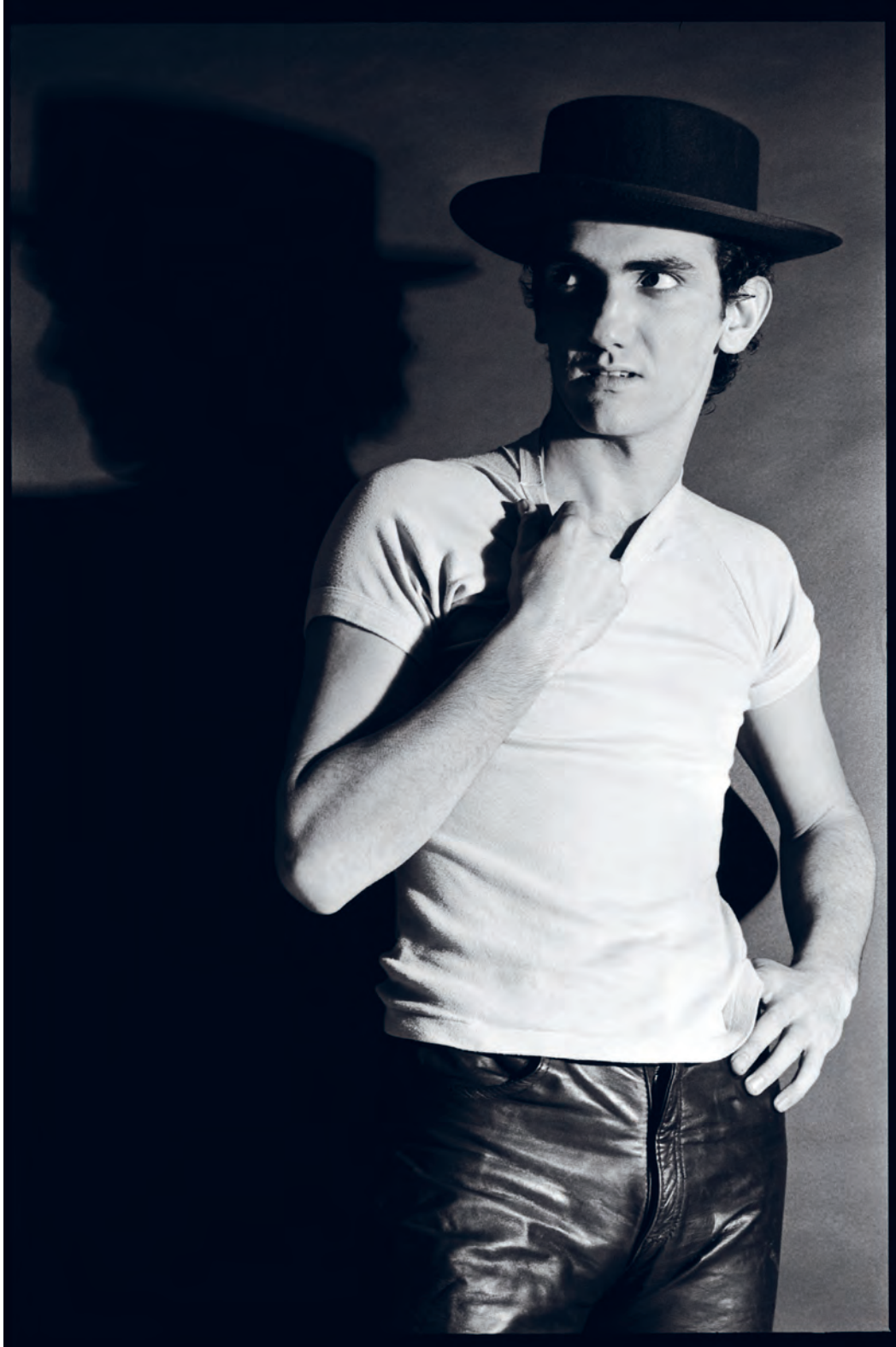
Questions

List 5 words that describe this photograph. How has Paul Kelly been positioned in the photograph? Why do you think the photographer chose this composition?

*Paul
Kelly
& The
Portraits*

National Portrait Gallery
Learning resource

3.1



Greg Noakes

(b. 1949 Newcastle. Lives in Melbourne)

Paul Kelly c. late 1970s to early 1980s

Inkjet print produced by the

National Portrait Gallery

Courtesy of the artist

Photographer's statement

I cannot place dates on any of the Paul Kelly sessions except to say they 'happened' around the end of the '70s and beginning of the '80s. Each time Paul came to the studio, either as a solo artist or with band members, his outer persona had changed slightly though his inner shyness was still apparent, if only eclipsed by my own. With a guitar in his hand and a camera in mine, we were different people.

Paul was great to photograph, very aware of himself... He knew how he wanted to look. I didn't have to do too much 'stand here, do that' etc. It was a matter of watching Paul, seeing how he naturally acted then just moving the lights into the right spot and taking it away from there.

Questions

What strikes you most about this photograph?

Greg Noakes talks about Kelly's inner shyness in front of the camera. How does this photograph capture that inner shyness?

*Paul
Kelly
& The
Portraits*



Liz Reed

(b. 1950 Melbourne. Lives in Melbourne)

Paul Kelly, 30.11.1980 1980
Inkjet print produced by the
National Portrait Gallery
Courtesy of the artist

Photographer's statement

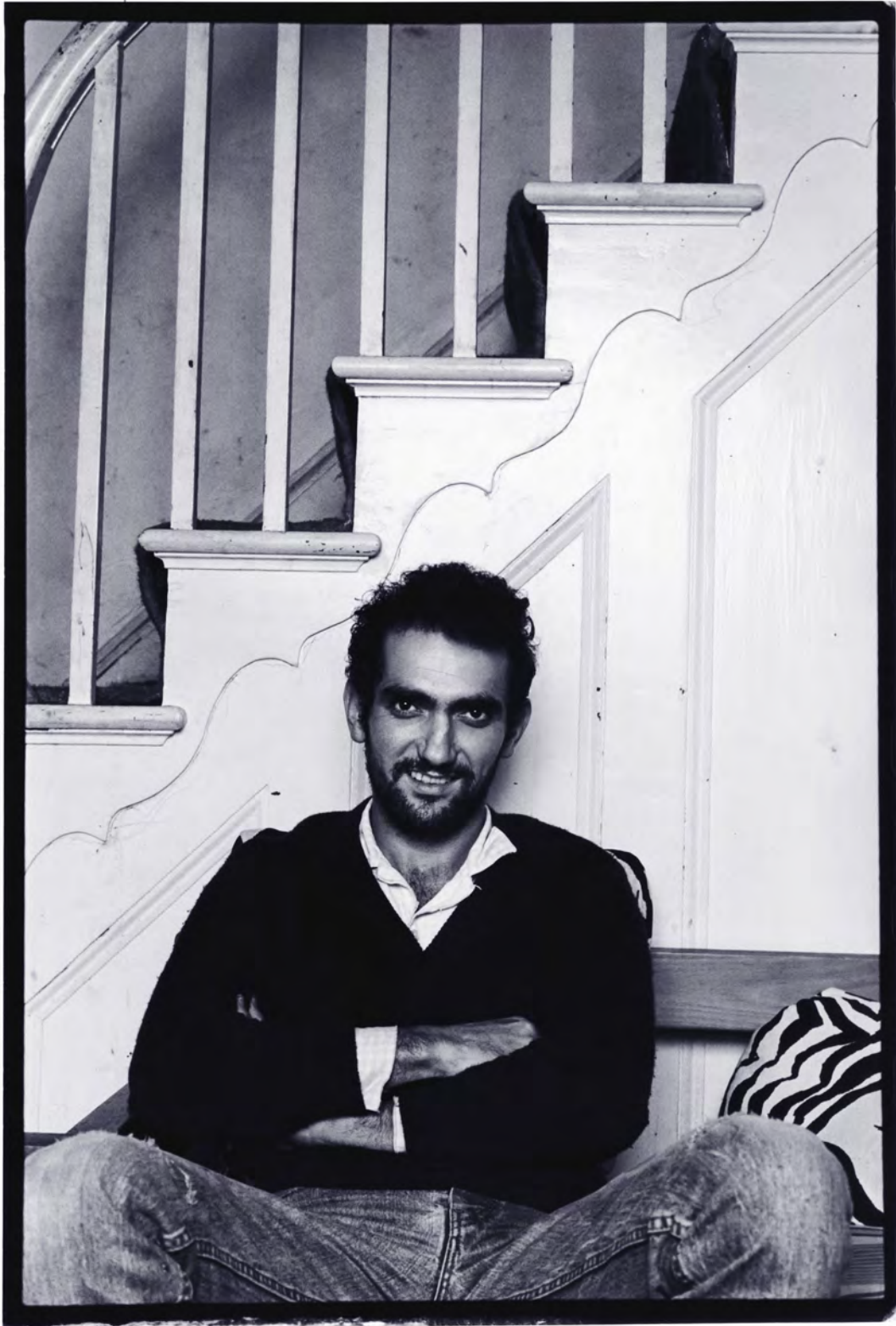
1980 on a warm spring night. To create a poster for the Talk album, a studio shoot was consented to by Paul Kelly. In the day, this shot was not considered poster material, but from my personal view as a photographer, this was one of the best three shots of that evening. I saw the Paul Kelly that I had met on the day he rolled into Melbourne, having relocated himself from Adelaide into the Spare Change household in East Melbourne. Within a week 'The High Rise Bombers' was up and running and from that point on Paul Kelly never missed a beat.

Looking back at that portrait of Paul Kelly, it's my favourite shot from the entire shoot and it always was... What I loved about it was I saw Paul, the man I knew. I'd seen it on stage every now and then, that crinkle of the nose; I'd seen it in funny moments over a cup of coffee, a glass of wine or a certain kind of conversation. To me I think every single one of us has got an idiosyncratic move or gesture that denotes us.

Questions

Liz Reed has stated that 'in the day this shot was not considered poster material.' Why do you think the record company would not have wanted to use this photograph? Which work in the exhibition would you use for a promotional poster and why? Can you tell this photograph was taken with a film camera? If so, in what way?

*Paul
Kelly
& The
Portraits*



Bleddyn Butcher

(b. 1953 London UK. Lives in Sydney)

Paul Kelly 1986

Inkjet print produced by the
National Portrait Gallery
Courtesy of the artist

Photographer's statement

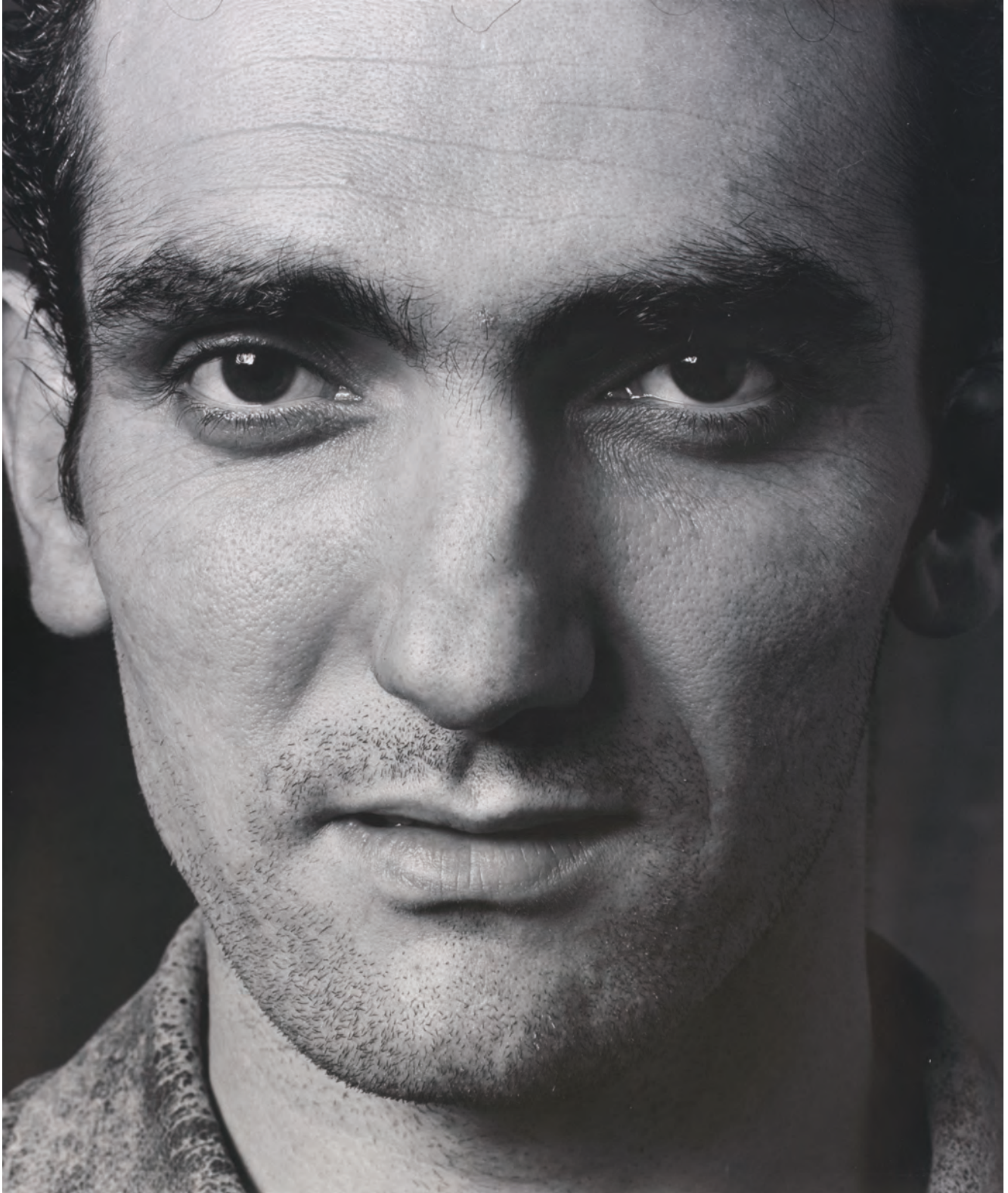
Taken at Paul's house in Darlinghurst the day he and I met. I was en route to London with instructions from the editor of the New Musical Express to photograph any 'emerging Australian artists' I might encounter along the way. Clinton Walker, the writer and journalist, was my Sydneyside guide. He thought a profile of the newly solo post-Post Paul Kelly would be right up the NME's street. He arranged a meeting. We took beer. Beer soon overtook us. Even so, Paul was shy. Just catching his eye was a challenge. When I managed it, I counted myself a success. Clinton's article was never published. Somehow Paul and I became friends.

Questions

What makes this photograph a successful portrait?

Does the photographer's statement influence what you think about the image? If so, in what way?

*Paul
Kelly
& The
Portraits*



Jon Lewis

(b. 1950 USA. Lives in Wombeyan Caves, NSW)

Paul Kelly 1986-88

Silver gelatin print

On loan from the National
Museum of Australia

Photographer's statement

This portrait was taken as part of a photographic project, culminating in an exhibition *Face to Face – 200 Portraits 1986-88*, which aimed to provide a portrait map of Australia during its bicentennial year. The sitters ranged across generations and included ordinary, unknown Australians through to celebrities including the rising star Paul Kelly.

Questions

What does this photograph tell us about Paul Kelly?

What do you feel when you look at this portrait for an extended time?

What are the qualities that contribute to the mood of this portrait?

*Paul
Kelly
& The
Portraits*

National Portrait Gallery
Learning resource

7.1



Stu Spence

(b. 1960 Geelong. Lives in Sydney)

PK Studio late 1987 to early 1988

Inkjet print produced by the

National Portrait Gallery

Courtesy of the artist

Photographer's statement

This photograph was taken around late '87, early '88 on a stormy, tropical late afternoon. The band had been out playing cricket on their day off, and it was clear to me that it had been a P.K. initiative. My musician friends at the time were all night dwelling, club lizards who thought sport was for yobbos, so having Paul Kelly in the studio après a serious session in the nets was quite astonishing to me. People don't realise just how connected to sport Paul actually is. I always had the distinct impression that, whilst many musicians struggle with the camera, Paul always realised it was an integral part of the business, a slightly annoying necessity, like visiting the dentist, I guess. On this day he worked the lens like a man completely in charge of his destiny.

In terms of black and white printing, I remember this was a seminal portrait for me. I had decided that I'd play with pushing the contrast in the printing, looking for those rich blacks and shadows... my portrait printing up till then had more of a softer feel to it, it was the 80s, after all. I do remember making a conscious decision at that moment, to treat this as rock'n'roll, dark and dangerous, so therefore crank up the drama.

Questions

How would you describe the person in this portrait?

What are the technical qualities of the portrait that contribute to your reading of the subject?

*Paul
Kelly
& The
Portraits*

National Portrait Gallery
Learning resource

8.1



Wendy McDougall

(b. 1961 Melbourne. Lives in Sydney)

Paul Kelly 1992

Inkjet print produced by the
National Portrait Gallery
Courtesy of the artist

Photographer's statement

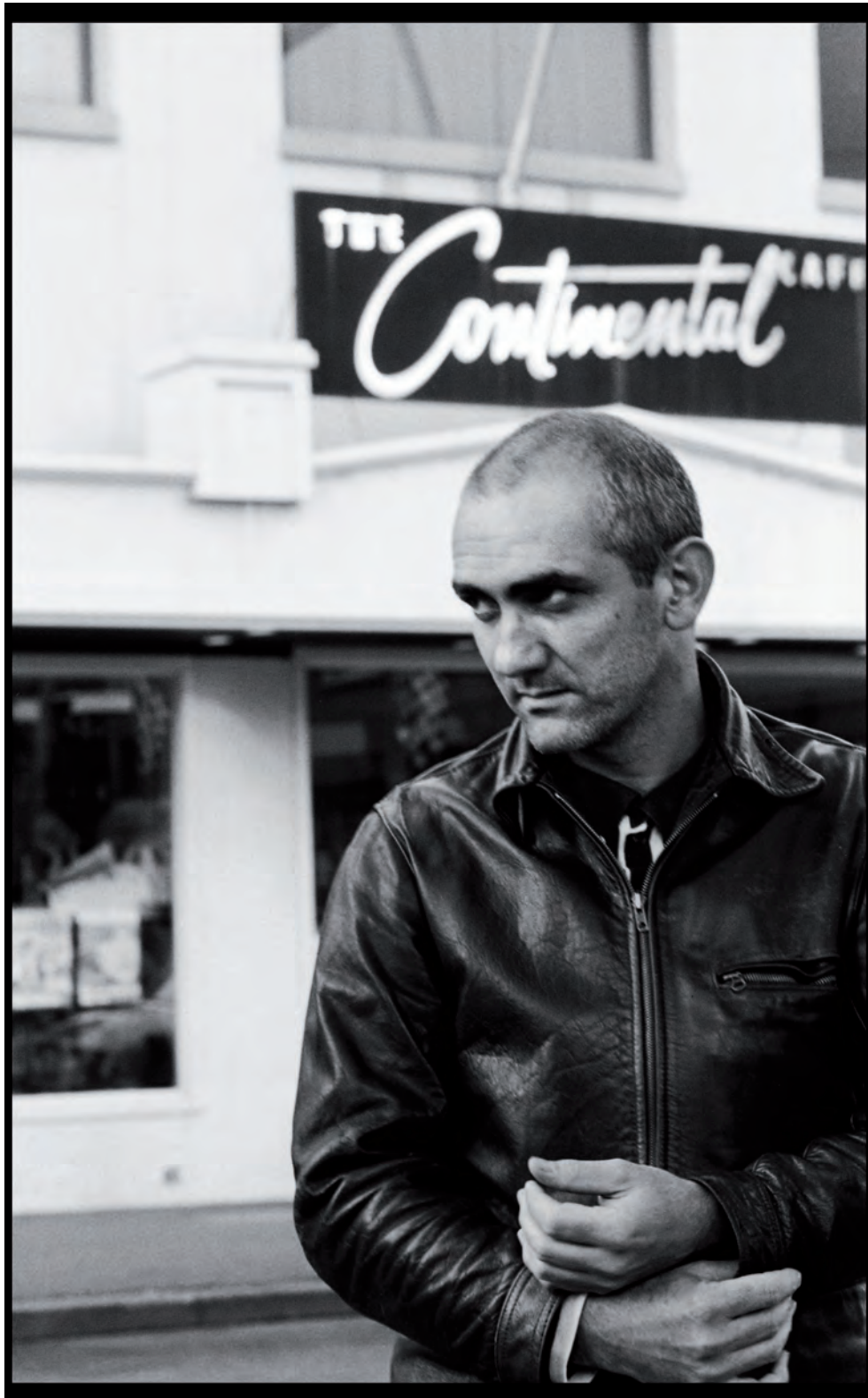
These two photos were taken on the same day in Melbourne about 1992. We were in a mood and a moment rather than a long conversation. It was casual and simple, just me and Paul... I followed Paul's lead in regard to locations as I was from Sydney and we were in Melbourne. The legendary Continental Café was a venue Paul played in often, and the car happened to be parked nearby. We must have asked the owner if we could use it and he obviously said yes!

Even though I have now explored other styles of photography, my roots will always be in music. If I ever get the chance to shoot musicians I would take that job over others.

Questions

Describe the impact of using the car as the setting for this photograph. Compare this photograph with the Continental Café photo taken on the same day by Wendy McDougall. What do they have in common? In what ways do they differ?

*Paul
Kelly
& The
Portraits*



Wendy McDougall

(b. 1961 Melbourne. Lives in Sydney)

Paul Kelly 1992

Inkjet print produced by the
National Portrait Gallery
Courtesy of the artist

Photographer's statement

In the background you see a street scene, but in fact the background is a place; a venue that meant something to him [Paul Kelly]. At the time it was still going but I think it might have closed down not long later. It was really just a regular, shop-sized place where musicians would come in with jazz, blues, rock, whatever, and do a more low key kind of thing.

Questions

Discuss the cropping used in this shot. Why do you think Paul Kelly chose this streetscape for the photograph?

*Paul
Kelly
& The
Portraits*

National Portrait Gallery
Learning resource

10.1



Wendy McDougall

(b. 1961 Melbourne. Lives in Sydney)

Paul Kelly, Melbourne 2010
Inkjet print produced by the
National Portrait Gallery
Courtesy of the artist

Photographer's statement

Ian Darling from Shark Island [director of *Stories of Me*] asked me to come and photograph Paul Kelly in Melbourne during the filming of the documentary. This image, shot in rehearsals for a gig, became the title photo in the film.

I find this exhibition interesting and almost amusing as it is about the observer being observed! For me, Paul Kelly writes great lyrics that are his result of observing life around him, the little things as well as some big issues. He is not a show pony but rather a conduit of sorts. I think that's why he is not at ease when being photographed. He must feel more comfortable doing what essentially we are doing too, observing!

Questions

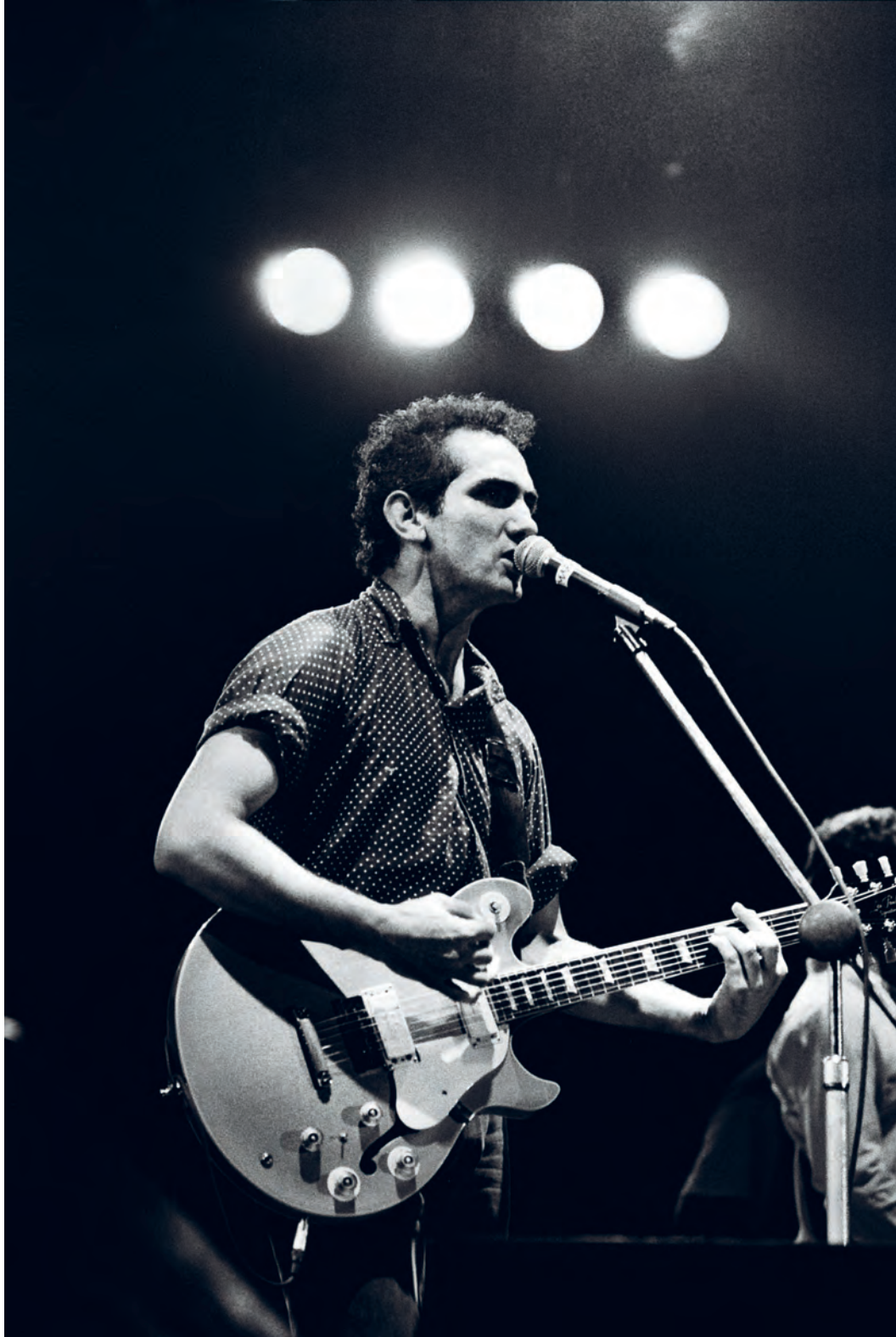
Why do you think this photograph may have been chosen for the signature promotional image for the recent film *Paul Kelly: Stories of Me*?

Describe the lighting that would be required to achieve this silhouette of Kelly.

*Paul
Kelly
& The
Portraits*

National Portrait Gallery
Learning resource

11.1



Tony Mott

(b. 1956 Sheffield UK. Lives in Sydney)

Paul Kelly c. late 1980s
Inkjet print produced by the
National Portrait Gallery
Courtesy of the artist

Photographer's statement

This shot was taken at the Hordern Pavilion in the early days of Paul Kelly's career. It's with Paul's band, The Coloured Girls... He was popular with the inner city crowd. Indie music was really popular with the inner city crowd and it was already obvious that Paul was destined to greater heights with his lyrics and hooks. Not the most animated performer, his voice and guitar was all he needed.

In live photography I have the advantage of the artist in their natural environment but no control of the lighting and circumstances, such as 10 punk rockers on your head. In portrait or session photography it's the opposite, I have total control over lighting but the musician is not always comfortable and half my job is building a rapport and making them comfortable. It's the yin and yang of rock'n'roll photography.

Questions

To what extent is the inclusion of the four lights important in this photograph? Tony Mott describes Paul Kelly as 'not the most animated performer.' Based on the photographs from the exhibition would you agree with this statement?

Paul Kelly & The Portraits

National Portrait Gallery
Learning resource

12.1



Tony Mott

(b. 1956 Sheffield UK. Lives in Sydney)

Paul Kelly 2008

Inkjet print produced by the
National Portrait Gallery
Courtesy of the artist

Photographer's statement

Sydney Festival January 2008 at the State Theatre. This was taken during the Kev Carmody 'Can't buy my soul' concert. From a photographer's point of view, this is an unusual shot because it's of Paul without a guitar. It's not often you witness that and his animated look: not very Paul Kelly.

Paul Kelly has become something of a holy grail... Once I've got what I consider to be a great shot I move on and want to get a great shot of everybody. Paul Kelly is my holy grail in so much as I don't believe I've got what I consider a great shot of him. That's not his fault, I believe photography for Paul may well be a necessary evil, as in it's something he has to do but more important to him would be to write a song or deliver a performance...

Questions

Tony Mott describes this photograph as 'not very Paul Kelly.' Compare the work with two others from the exhibition. Explain what you think Mott means by this statement?

What do you think Mott was trying to achieve with this photograph?

*Paul
Kelly
& The
Portraits*



Martin Philbey

(b. 1962 Melbourne. Lives in Melbourne)

Paul Kelly 2007

Type C photograph

National Portrait Gallery, Canberra

Purchased 2008

Photographer's statement

This image was shot for the *National Photographic Portrait Prize 2007*. It's a picture made outside an iconic Melbourne shop that has traded since 1910. I think this may even have been Paul's idea – and I thought there was something humorous about a bald man waiting outside a hat shop. Although the image is quite serene it was made at peak hour on a Friday night on the corner of the busiest intersection in Melbourne. I had to shoot in between crossing pedestrians and in time with the blinking City Hatters neon sign but Paul was very patient.

At the end of the day the portrait that you make of the artist, that's what it is. It is a record of the connection that you had at that moment in time.

Questions

What information does this photograph communicate to the viewer about Paul Kelly? How does the fact this photograph was taken at night contribute to its meaning?

Paul Kelly & The Portraits

National Portrait Gallery
Learning resource

14.1



Martin Philbey

(b. 1962 Melbourne. Lives in Melbourne)

Paul Kelly 2009

Inkjet print produced by the
National Portrait Gallery
Courtesy of the artist

Photographer's statement

These two live performance images were taken at the same event – one from in front of the stage and one from on the stage showing Paul's view. The event was the Sound Relief concert at the MCG on 14th March 2009. It was a concert to raise money for the victims of the Black Saturday bushfires in Victoria. It was one of those magical moments that rarely come together – Paul Kelly singing about the MCG at the MCG with over 80,000 people singing along with him.

I love to make a great picture and I often have these little what I call 'I love my job moments' where the hairs will stand up on the back of my neck and I get to look around and see a sea of humanity lost in the moment of the magic that some artist has created, and I get to be a part of that. Not only do I get to be a part of that but I get to make a picture from it.

Questions

Philbey describes the concert at which these photos were taken as a 'magical moment.' How does his framing of the shots help capture a sense of that moment?

*Paul
Kelly
& The
Portraits*

National Portrait Gallery
Learning resource

15.1



Martin Philbey

(b. 1962 Melbourne. Lives in Melbourne)

Paul Kelly 2011

Inkjet print produced by the
National Portrait Gallery
Courtesy of the artist

Photographer's statement

This image was also shot for the *National Photographic Portrait Prize* 2011. The idea was to shoot Paul in a field of flowering canola. Yellow flowers as far as the eye could see – but after getting him out of bed and driving half way to Geelong at a ridiculous hour in the morning to catch the sunrise we arrived to discover the flowers all gone.

This wasn't the picture I expected to get but I was pleased to come away with it.

I've always been a bit of a fan of Paul Kelly since I was young and I think Paul will be remembered fondly by history after we're all dead and gone. He'll probably be seen as the Banjo Patterson or the Henry Lawson of our time. He's a great storyteller, and he's great character, and he's a lovely bloke, which is the nicest thing about working with him.

Questions

What do you think Philbey was hoping to achieve in this photograph by taking Kelly to this location at sunrise?

What do you think would be the technical considerations when setting up for this shot?