

ALISON HAMS

building the foundations

Alison Hams has been a quiet achiever in the Australian country music industry for the last few years, carefully building her career to a stage where doors are now opening in rapid succession.

The Whyalla (South Australia) based singer/songwriter has experienced considerable success in her home state over a period, but in the last couple of years that success has expanded significantly.

"A trip to Nashville in June 2000 really opened my eyes," remembers Alison. "It wasn't what I expected in some respects, but it certainly made me realise that wherever you are, it often is a slog to be successful, and you really have to work hard at it."

"I guess what it did was put things into perspective - not to say that I didn't work hard before, but I have realised just what a 'people' industry country music is. The love of the music only makes up a part of it."

And working hard is exactly what Alison has been doing, even before the Nashville trip.

In 1998 the ambition to succeed in country music saw her attend and graduate from the College of Australian Country Music in Tamworth - an experience that certainly expanded her perception of country music as more than just the music.

"If I could go back and do it again I wouldn't hesitate," enthuses Alison. "I learned so much in the two weeks, but it was more than just the learning. The friendships and the contacts we made during that time were just wonderful. And individual elements like the songwriting were invaluable."

"As the college progressed, I realised that what I had been doing had been on the right track, but it really gave me the incentive to do it ten times harder," says Alison.

In 1999 Alison was a finalist in the prestigious Toyota Star Maker quest, hot on the heels of the release of her debut EP recorded under the guidance of **BILL & NASH CHAMBERS**.

She was a finalist in the Young Australian of the Year in the South Australian Division

in Adelaide that saw her singing the National Anthem and following up with a five song set as well.

"Being in the right place at the right time - we ended up in the Hilton for two nights," recalls Alison. "But to put it all in perspective, the following night we did a local bowling club show and 'swagged' it on the floor after the gig."

In country music it's called 'paying your dues'!

It was after Star Maker that Alison saw the potential of a solo career. "For years I basically had been the bass player and harmony singer in bands," she says. "But the combination of Star Maker and the Country Music College swung the pendulum for me, and I realised that this was what I really wanted as a way of life."

It was the kick-start of a period that has seen the "ten times harder" philosophy come into play for Alison. Three albums have ensued in quick succession, including her debut effort *Hear From Me*, a limited release Christmas album *Spirit Season*, and the current release *Something In The Water*.

"When I look back on the past three years, it's been a major growth period," says Alison. "I've been particularly excited about the recognition for my songwriting, because it's such a personal part of that development."

It's a development that has seen numerous accolades come her way including a SAMI (South Australian Music Industry Award), and a finalist berth this year in the New Songwriter category of the Tamworth Songwriters Association (TSA) Awards with the title track of her latest album *Something In The Water*.

"Actually Tamworth this year was a real benchmark for me," reflects Alison. "On top of the TSA nomination,

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I was finalist at the TIARA's. It's the recognition factor that comes with successes like those that puts your name in front of so many people, and that's where it really counts."

Certainly Alison is making every step count in her career path, and this highly talented and very focussed young lady is rapidly ascending the rungs of a very competitive ladder.

In a relatively short career, there have been many highlights. "At this stage, it's a toss-up between appearing as support for **LEE KERNAGHAN** at Wuddina during his Pass The Hat Tour, or the Young Australian of the Year Awards," says Alison.

"But now I'm really focussed on the future and getting my own music out there," she emphasises. "The new album is getting a lot of attention, and my new website at www.alisonhams.com is also attracting a lot of additional interest."

"It's a building process, and now I feel that I've laid some very solid foundations, we're entering a very positive and exciting stage."

With extensive touring planned, plenty of festival appearances, and a re-release of her *Spirit Season* album prior to Christmas, it is a hectic time ahead for the talented South Australian.

The rather appropriate name of Alison Hams' second album *Hear From Me* sums it up perfectly, because over the next twelve months, you can bet on it. ■