

Ellen Lee Osterfield

# The Singing Artist

Edited by Trevor Lang

This multi-talented Australian lady has nurtured her love for art and music by travelling all over our magnificent country while promoting her creative work.



Ellen Lee Osterfield has been painting pictures of Australia for more than 32 years ... sometimes with a paintbrush, and sometimes with a guitar.

Her intense love of the Australian landscape, and her affection for the country's colourful characters and its fascinating flora and fauna, have led to her winning numerous awards for singing, song writing and painting.

Ellen inherited much of her musical and artistic talent from her father, Bill. She started entertaining as a very young child – singing her own version of the classic 'Springtime in the Rockies' for visitors.

When Ellen and her sisters were youngsters, their mother played guitar and music echoed through the household on a daily basis. On Saturday nights the family would go to the old-time dances in the hall at Marong near Bendigo in Victoria. Grandfather Fred Osterfield would run the dances, while grandmother Henrietta organised the lavish suppers. With Bill singing, it really was a family affair. When the children got tired they would find their blanket and curl up behind the band to go to sleep. Inevitably, they grew up loving music.

Ellen's artistic talent was first recognised at primary school. She came home with a cartoon drawing, and her mother thought that she must have traced it. When Ellen drew another cartoon freehand, her mum was surprised and delighted to





observe the beginning of her journey into the world of art.

With constant encouragement from her parents, Ellen Lee Osterfield went on to paint and sing her way around Australia.

She landed a recording contract with Selection Records in 1979, thanks to her ‘uniquely Australian’ style. It was a style that helped her to win three major awards at the Parkes/Forbes Country Music Festival, and it took her all the way to finalist status at Tamworth’s Golden Guitars.

In 1985, Ellen married. She set off around Australia again with husband Wayne. The couple embarked on the trip as hostess and driver for a coach and four-wheel-drive touring company.

Swapping the stage and footlights for singing around a campfire under the southern stars was the perfect formula for breathing new life into Ellen’s song writing and painting pursuits. Sales of her artworks began to grow while she was based at Alice Springs.

Some time later, Ellen and Wayne became resident entertainers on a riverboat restaurant on the Murray River, at the Port of Echuca. Numerous paintings of the mighty Murray resulted from this phase in Ellen’s blossoming artistic career.

Ellen and her family now call Bendigo home. She has a studio and art gallery, and continues to create works in pastels, gouache, acrylics, oils and pencil.

This multi-talented lady has won numerous awards for her art throughout Victoria, and she recently self-published a book of her cartoon sketches and humorous anecdotes. She continues to be inspired by her rural surroundings, and she has a particular love for springtime in Bendigo when blossoming wattles and fruit trees line the streets.

Life on the road, however, is never too far from Ellen Lee Osterfield’s thoughts. ■