

AT AROUND 9.20PM MONDAY 27 MARCH, 2006, **PETE WELLS**, THE MUCH-LOVED AND MUCH-TATTOOED SLIDE GUITARIST AND COFOUNDER OF ROSE TATTOO, FINALLY LOST HIS LONG BATTLE WITH PROSTATE CANCER, BUT NOT BEFORE HE RECORDED ONE LAST ALBUM, AS **MICHAEL SMITH** REPORTS.



LAST ORDERS PLEASE

As ill as he was in those last three or four years before he passed away, Pete Wells seemed even more determined to record as much as his body allowed him. There were the two albums with his partner, songwriter and keyboards player Lucy Desoto and drummer/producer Rob Grosser as The Handsome Devils, another with his "Melbourne" band Blues Hangover or contributions to compilations by fellow guitarists Chris Turner, Steve Flack and Roddy Ray'da – and, now finally released, his final solo album, *Bodgie Dada*. Now some of those friends will perform together to help launch Wells' new album.

"He just wanted to keep playing and writing," Grosser explains. "Pete's thing was that whenever he was playing, he just didn't feel the pain – even live."

"One of the last gigs we did with him," Desoto adds, "we drove to the Narooma Festival. It would have killed anybody else – the man had the constitution of an ox – he was so sick but we had the date booked and he was just determined to get there. So we got on stage, played the set, absolutely fucking set the place on fire – he was amazing – and then we packed up the gear and drove back to Sydney!"

Wells decided to call the album *Bodgie Dada* because, as Desoto explains, "he was a bodgie at heart, and he loved the whole Dada philosophy." Bodgie refers to a '50s Australian version of the teen rebel, and Dada of course the anti-establishment art movement of the early 20th century – both terms quite appropriate really.

"Peter's main concern was always to be contemporary but not fashion-oriented. So he wanted the music to be relevant but to transcend fashion, and he had a way of managing to do that stylistically and aesthetically that kind of put him ahead of his time a lot of the time, throughout his career. With this last one, what he wanted to do was investigate the technological changes that are taking place in recording studios everywhere with loops and things like that. So he decided to go to Gene Krupa and looped a drum pattern from *Golden Wedding*. He propped himself up in the archway at Damien Gerard's, so ill and chockablock full of morphine, and just played the bass for about seven minutes over the loop, then looked at me and said, 'Follow that smartarse!'"

So *Krupa Loop* became the first track recorded, and, with his former frontman from Buffalo, Dave Tice, singing, *Brothers In Arms* became the last Wells recorded for *Bodgie Dada*. "In the end, there was a very important and emotional bond there that had to be acknowledged."

WHO Angry Anderson, Chris Turner, Rob Grosser & Tim Gaze, Dave Tice & Mark Evans, Lucy Desoto

WHAT *Bodgie Dada* (Only Blues)

WHEN & WHERE Thursday 24 April, The Bridge Hotel, Rozelle