

MIDNIGHT OIL

THE POWER AND THE PASSION

MICHAEL LAWRENCE

Midnight Oil are one of the most 'Australian' rock bands this country has produced. Born from the Australian pub rock scene that gave us AC/DC, Cold Chisel and INXS, the Oils were able to break out of that scene without compromising themselves in any way. Indeed, their breakthrough overseas record was the most Australian album they made. But it wasn't just the subject matter that made them fiercely Australian; it was their stubborn independence, and their refusal to play the rock'n'roll game and respect its rules and masters. But more than any of this is the adrenalin rush of an Oils show. Performances so intense that witnesses swore they had seen the greatest Oils gig ever! Such was the belief that something so powerful could surely not take place regularly.

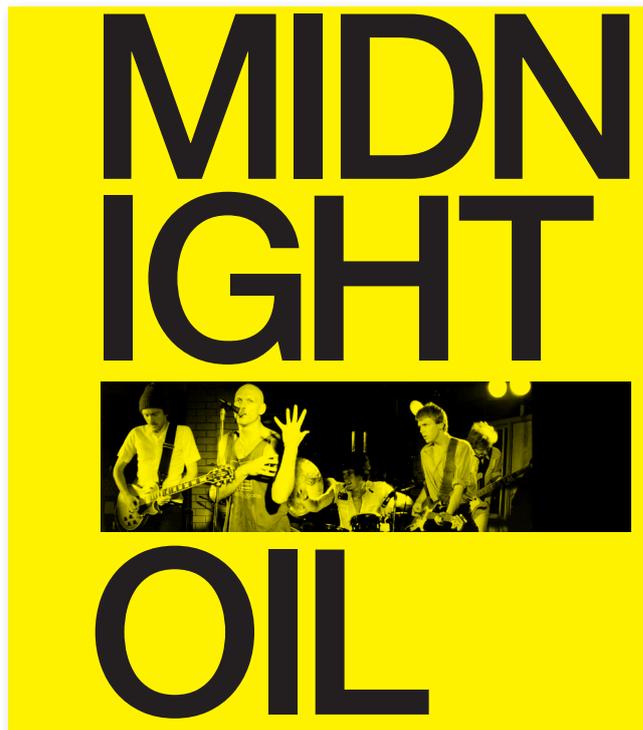
When they took this overseas, audiences could often not understand a word they were saying, but musically they recognised a common language: powerful, unadulterated live performances.

There is no band whose live shows are spoken of with the same awe as the Oils.

The author

Michael Lawrence first saw Midnight Oil in 1980 when they were opening for The Angels. It was the last time they opened for anyone. A musician himself, Michael was blown away with the uniquely complex musical elements of the band and the Australian character of all they did. He saw them many more times and was always amazed at the incredible commitment they brought to every performance and the uncompromising stance they maintained.

Whilst much has been written about Midnight Oil through the years, the majority has been about the political aspect, ignoring the unforgettable power and commitment they put into every performance, the complexity of the music and the musicality of every member of the band. As Michael has found while researching *The Power and the Passion*, Midnight Oil took what he saw in 1980, improved on it and took it to the world without compromising that Australian character.



On their first North American tour, *The Montreal Gazette's* Mark LePage witnessed their show:

"...they hit Montreal like an 18-wheeler on jet fuel. Several hundred jaws remained dropped for the first four songs. Nobody who attended has ever forgotten."

Michael has listened to hundreds of recordings and trawled through decades of interviews, reviews and articles on the band from more than a dozen countries. He has met most of the band members, who have given the project their blessing.

Michael is the author of two books about the iconic Australian band, *Cold Chisel: Showtime* and *Wild Colonial Boys* also published by Melbourne Books. These books became the history that the band themselves refer to and received enthusiastic reviews

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'Midnight Oil's show was every bit a ritual — but one with guts, fire and meaning. Garrett and co. turned the rock'n'roll ritual into something gloriously life-affirming. It's surprising he didn't win that election, for last night's crowd would have followed him into the desert without water.'

— *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, 5 May 1988

'Each recording has brought more power, more depth of expression, and deeper exploration of that curious beast, the Australian Psyche.'

— Andrew McMillan, *Rock Australia Magazine*

'You can forget about bands such as Men At Work, INXS and Air Supply, who churn out transnational pop music. Oil, on the other hand, remains an extremely Australian band, refusing to compromise its sound for an international market ... The 90 minute set of old and new material provided a performance that proved as hard-hitting as their commitment. As it progressed the show became more intense and frenzied, leaving the audience stunned and amazed.'

— *Montreal Gazette*, 29 July 1985

At last, here is a book that does justice to the power and the passion of one of the greatest rock bands the world has seen.

