

Drumming up harmony

MUSIC

Jill Fraser

IT'S MEATY, beaty and bouncing around out in the 'burbs.

Cafes and halls in Camberwell, Box Hill, Warrandyte, Eltham, Healesville and Belgrave pulsate with diverse beats.

But unless you're already a loyal patron or have come across one of the colourful flyers, it's likely the developing culture of world music in Melbourne's east and northeast is passing you by.

At Ginkgo Organic Foodstore and Cafe in Warrandyte, Pin Rada says world music has had a slow start in Melbourne because "it doesn't inspire the Australian tradition of beer drinking".

"Publicans tend to go more for jazz and rock," Rada says.

"The foundations of multi-cultural music were spawned by middle-class university students who were politically active, put groups together but didn't have particularly good marketing strategies."

Rada has established a Friday night world music venue at Ginkgo that is so popular, the cafe has had to double its seating capacity, and he is considering adding Sunday evening gigs to the calendar next year.

Ginkgo proprietor Janet Tucker's dream is to create a "mini WOMAD" (World of Music, Arts and Dance).

"We're fortunate because we are in what Tourism Victoria calls the Valley of the Arts. Warrandyte has a strong cultural mix," Tucker says.

Roger King founded the Boite World Music Cafe in North Fitzroy 26 years ago and this year joined forces with Jeff Woolhouse of the Surrey Music Cafe, which Woolhouse began in Surrey Hills five years ago and shifted to Box Hill last year.

King says that despite its low profile, world music is one of the few genres in the music market that is growing.

"Other genres have plateaued or are in decline. But though I believe world music will continue to grow, it won't be forever," King says.

GLOBALISATION and the internet are the greatest potential enemies, King says.

Homogenisation will begin and ultimately take its toll, he says.

Camberwell World Music Nights co-ordinator Mike Enders describes world music as a fusion of many ethnic styles.

"People don't realise that what made American rock music so appealing was that its roots were black American music, which originated in the Mali region in



Popular: djembe player King Marong is part of the world music genre. Picture: DARRYL GREGORY

BEST OF THE BEATS

Ginkgo Organic Cafe, 152 Yarra St, Warrandyte, ph: 9844 3282. World music every Friday. Average price for dinner and show, \$25; show only, \$12. Children free. Bookings essential.

Eltham World Harmonies, first Friday of month at St Margaret's Hall, Pitt St, Eltham. \$12. Children free. Bookings: 9437 2617

The Bodhi Tree, Healesville, Sat and Sun evenings. Bookings: 5962 4407

Camberwell World Music Nights, 405 Cambarwell Rd. Next performances, February 18, then every six weeks. Inquiries and bookings: 0418 567 727

Ruby's Lounge, 1648 Burwood Highway, Belgrave. Bookings: 9754 7445

The Surrey Music Cafe, Box Hill Community Arts Centre, 470 Station St, Box Hill, first Friday of month. Bookings: 9262 8555 or 9417 3550. Visit www.surreymusic.com or www.boite.asn.au for cost and program details

Africa, or that the UK's 1980s band the Police mixed reggae music with contemporary pop, which gave it the interesting beat," Enders says.

Rada believes Melbourne is fast becoming "the hub of world music in Australia".

One of the reasons world music venues are so prolific in the outer

east is because "world music is spread by cafes and community halls, which are usually more accessible in the suburbs", he says.

King, who shifted his performers from his venue in Fitzroy to the Music Cafe in Box Hill because of a complaining neighbour, is looking forward to allowing Kurdish and African percussionists to go for it with no one within cooee.

The non-profit Eltham World Harmonies offers monthly performances in a mud-brick building.

The group's co-ordinator, Beverley Harris, believes the rise of world music in the outer east is because of the many ethnic groups living there.

"There is so much racism and hatred in the world and I really believe that exposing people to other cultures through music and food breaks down barriers."