

40 Into 24 is the song that most typifies that but in *Blame It On The Baby Boomers* he also claims that the 'bloke in black' lives too much in the past and needs to realise that the world, even in his youth, was actually no better nor worse than it currently is.

This interplay carries throughout - not only the songs but also the interactive in which they debate the issues behind the songs.

CNEWS: What are some examples of how those issues are debated?

PAT: The albums are full of them. *10,000 Miles Away* is a stinging attack by the Dark Knight on the military mentality that designates the thousands of children who have been killed in Iraq as collateral damage and is a pretty full on assault on the military.

The White Knight responds with *A River Too Wild*, a song in praise of those in uniform who often lay their lives on the line in civil emergencies to safeguard the lives of innocent people and the terrible psychological price they often have to pay for that service.

In *Exiles On The Glory Road*, The Dark Knight gives the Christian Churches both barrels over the exclusivist mentality that has swung them back towards a neo-conservative, even fundamentalist, form of Christianity in recent years. It's been a big issue in Catholic and Anglican Dioceses in recent times driven by the emergence of divisive attitudes to women, gays and divorced Christians.

The White Knight responds to all of that with a tale of Christian celebration and community in *The Circle Of The Bells*.

In the live show The Black Knight's closing argument on the 'Australian Character' is summed up in the somewhat jaded viewpoint of *The Quality Of Light*, while The White Knight leaves us with the highly idealistic closing anthem, *The Spirit Of The Southern Shore*.



CNEWS: The big question in context of the game - who prevails? Which one of your erstwhile protagonists achieves the Checkmate?

PAT: Well, neither one, I'm glad to say... because the game, like Australia itself, is a work in progress. I'll be happy, however, if they make people sit up and think a bit before they blindly accept what's going on around them ... because there are still some hard questions that need still our attention.

It really is riveting stuff from Pat, and the reaction to the albums has already been quite overwhelming.

"On a recent tour I made a point of talking with as many radio and media people as possible," said Pat, "and I was quite astounded by the reaction even to the initial release to radio of the single *Who Are Those Refugees?*"

"I honestly thought that many would view the whole concept as a bit too difficult, or confrontationist, or whatever.

"But so far it's been an amazing exercise - radio presenters expressing genuine interest in

the songs and wanting to talk about issues raised in the commentaries."

Pat has also taken his live shows to another visual level - recently at a folk festival he set up two microphones, shaved off half his beard, and literally played the roles of the Black and White Knights.

The trivia question is what happened to the other half beard after the show?

"I shaved it off when I got home," laughs Pat, "but the concept was so effective that I will be repeating it in the future. It takes me about a week to get the facial growth to the point where the effect is apparent."

That's commitment, or more to the point, that's Pat Drummond.

The full Chess Set Interactive which is also included on the discs can be viewed at www.patdrummond.net and the albums are available across Australia through Shoestring Records. (02) 4788 1157

MIKE SMITH