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National Obituaries

Peter Hood: Drummer with The Atlantics on international hit 'Bombora'

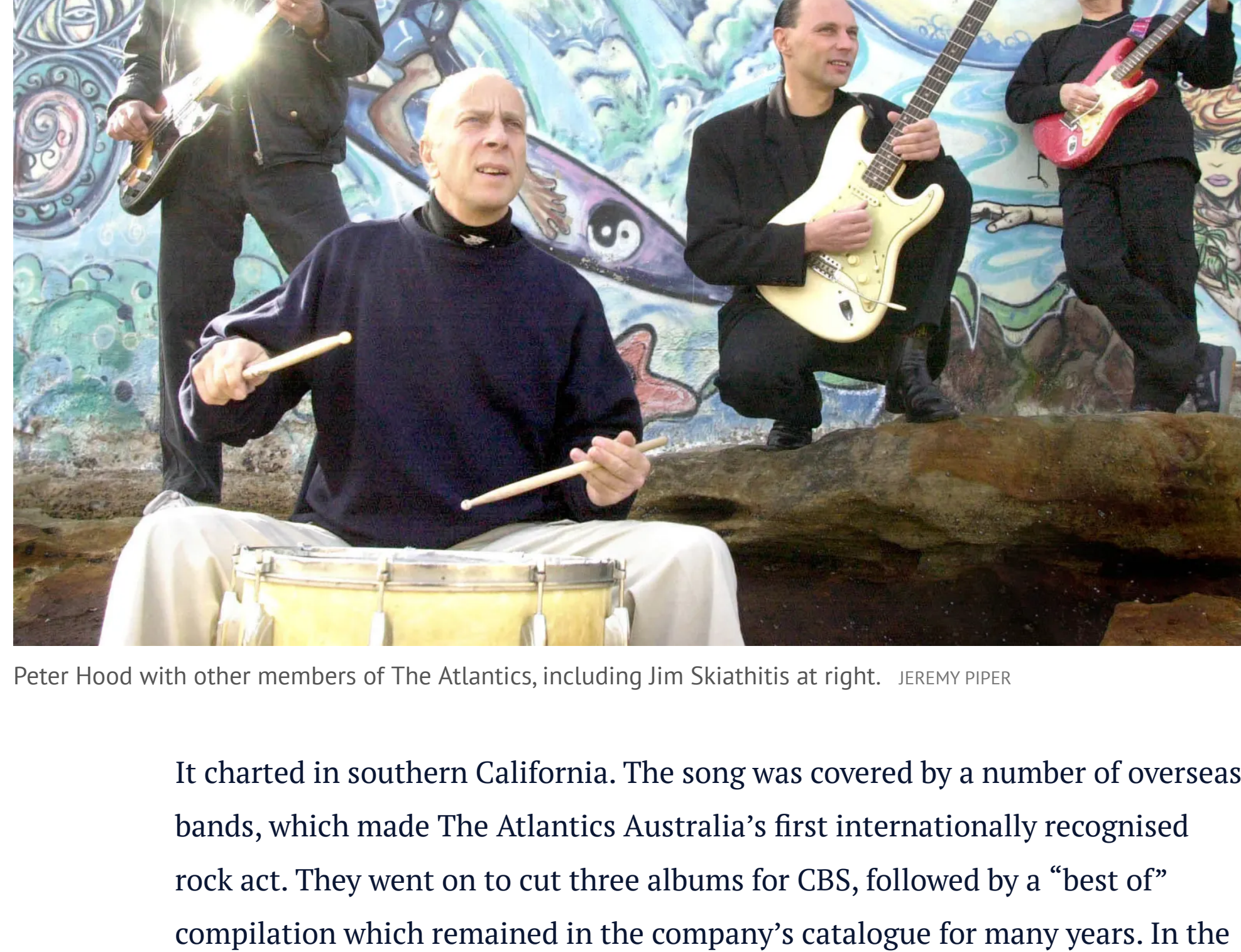
By Glenn A Baker September 24, 2021 - 4:17pm

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PETER HOOD: 1943-2021

In 2013, a surging instrumental rock song was added to the National Film and Sound Archive's Sounds of Australia registry. It was named after an Aboriginal term for large waves breaking over submerged rock shelves and had what has been described as a "monstrous, pounding, driving sound".

By September 1965, Bombora had been released in Japan, Italy, Holland, England, New Zealand and in South America. It was nominated as Record of the Week by US Cashbox magazine and reached No.2 on the Italian charts.

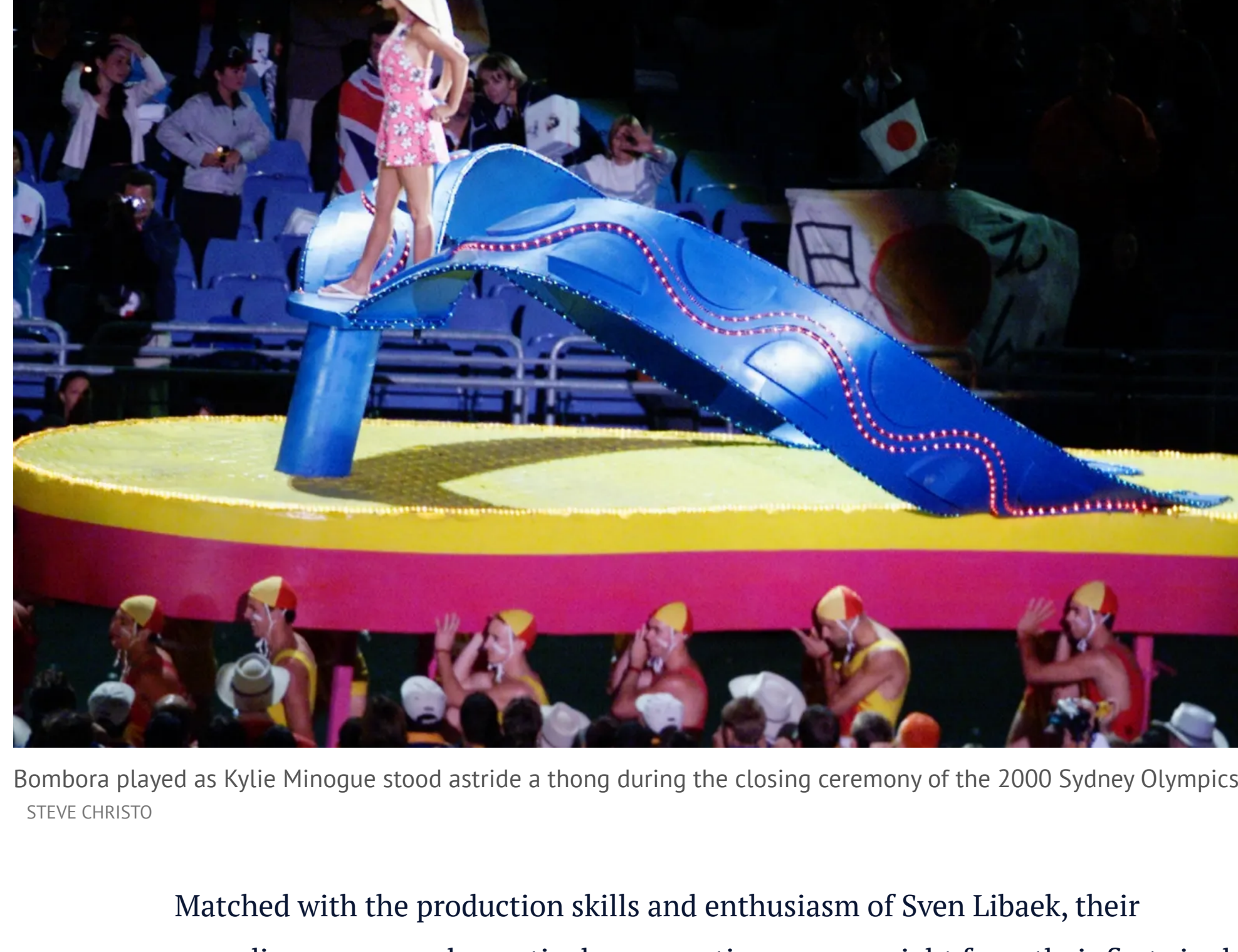


Peter Hood with other members of The Atlantics, including Jim Skiathitis at right. JEREMY PIPER

It charted in southern California. The song was covered by a number of overseas bands, which made The Atlantics Australia's first internationally recognised rock act.

The Atlantics was a seemingly odd name for a surf band that assembled along Australia's Pacific coast, though it makes sense when you understand that it was inspired by a popular brand of petrol.

They weren't prepared to just cover Shadows and Ventures tracks but had their own exciting sound to pursue. There was no shortage of instrumental acts in Sydney in the early '60s, before the British invasion exploded.



Bombora played as Kylie Minogue stood astride a thong during the closing ceremony of the 2000 Sydney Olympics. STEVE CHRISTO

Matched with the production skills and enthusiasm of Sven Libaek, their recordings possessed a particular energetic presence, right from their first single Moon Man. They developed an efficient studio association. In a four-hour session they could turn out an entire album.

The members' European cultural influences (largely Greek with some Yugoslav and Hungarian), with all members having come to Australia as child migrants, gave their music a passionate edge over other local bands of the time.

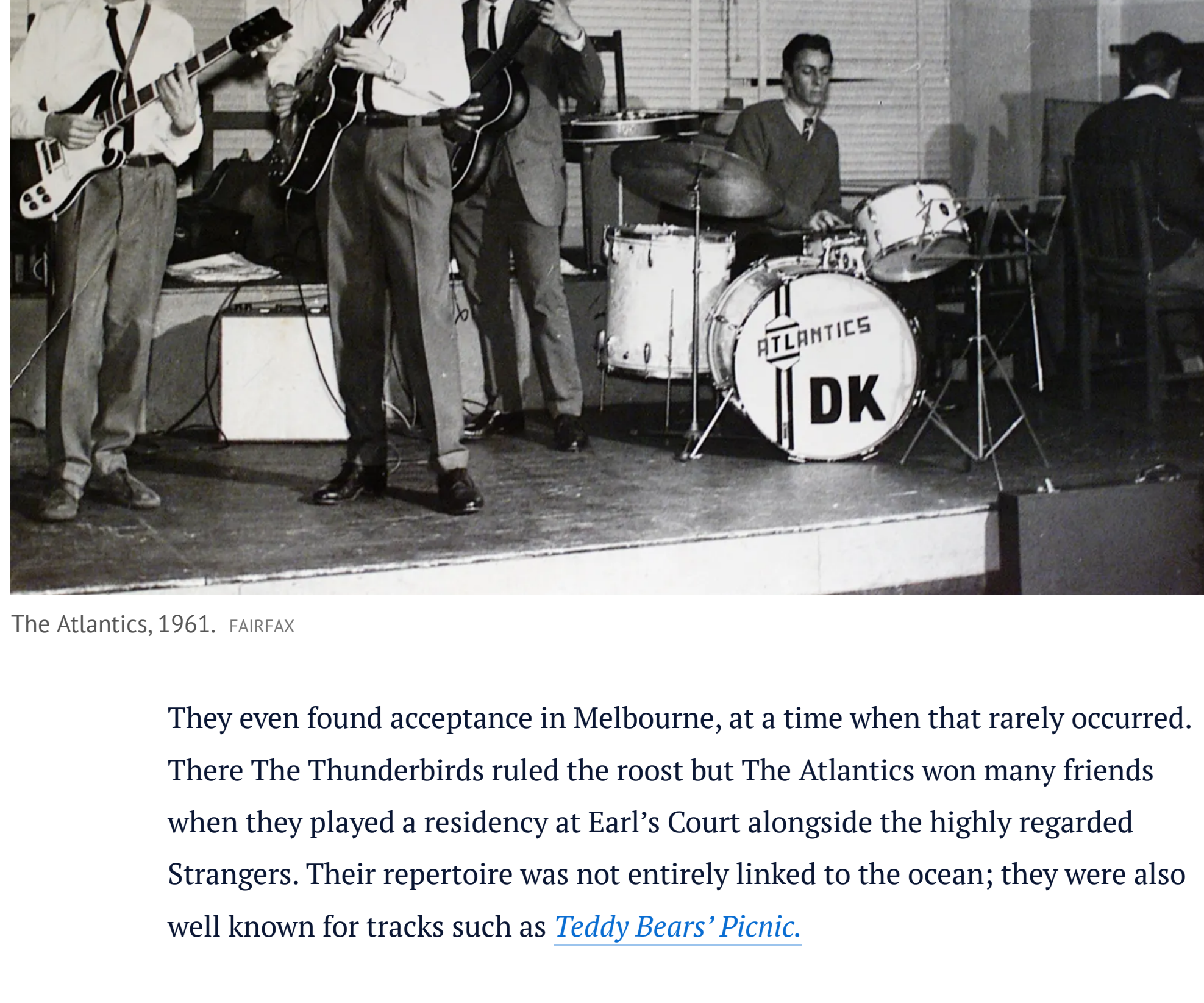
They even found acceptance in Melbourne, at a time when that rarely occurred. There The Thunderbirds ruled the roost but The Atlantics won many friends when they played a residency at Earl's Court alongside the highly regarded Strangers.

Their fourth single, War of the Worlds, was a total break with the surf sound. Released in March 1964 it was a bold and ambitious attempt at a mini sci-fi space opera.

It was way ahead of its time, featuring a battle in space using echo and guitar effects, the like of which would not be heard, according to some chroniclers, until the arrival of Jimi Hendrix.

Penglis switched to keyboards in 1965, they added a vocalist in rock'n'roll hero Johnny Rebb and released a number of tough-sounding singles.

They also transformed Screaming Jay Hawkins' I Put A Spell On You into a live drawcard.

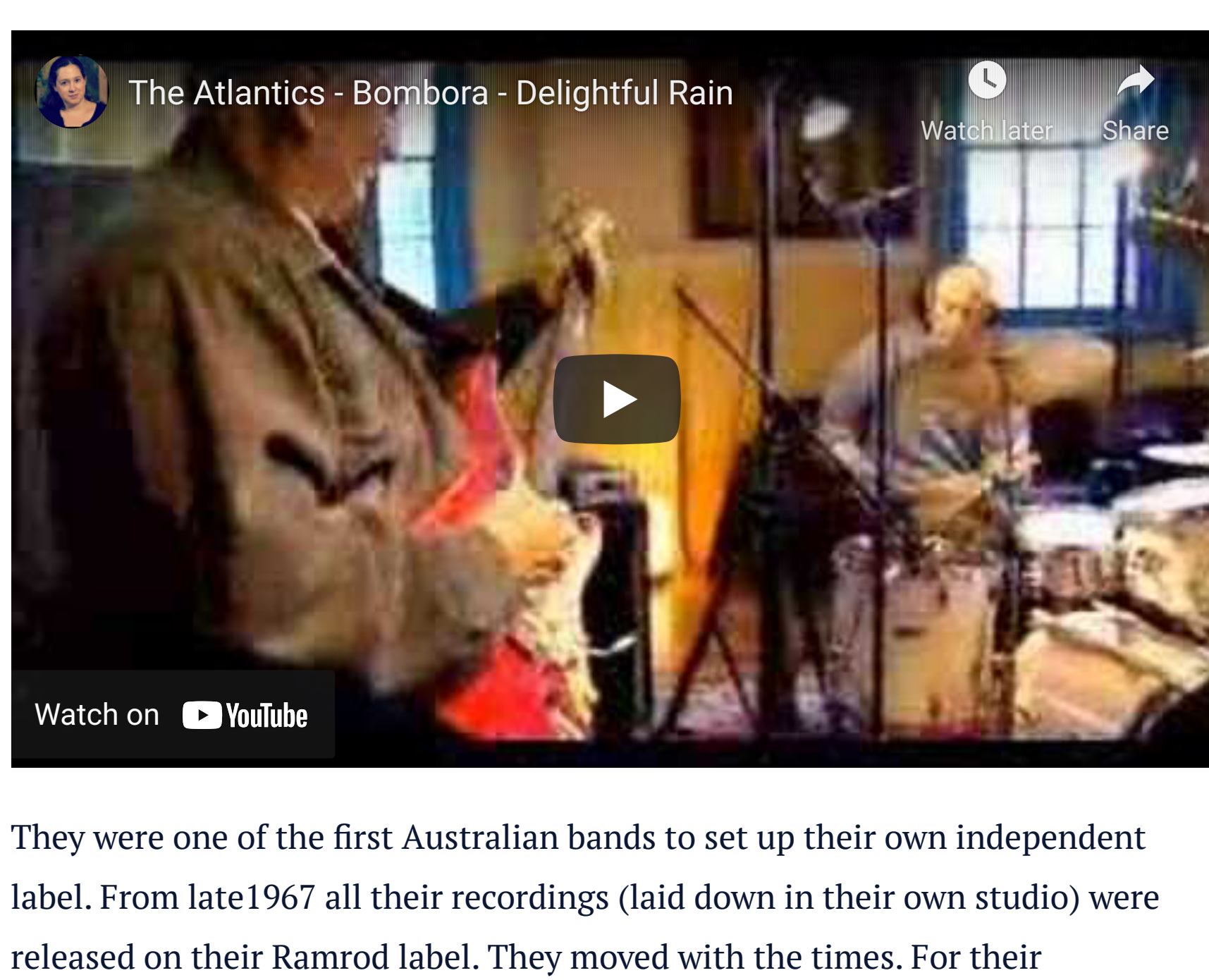


The Atlantics, 1961. JARRIX

Like England's Shadows, The Atlantics were perfectly capable, in all phases, of recording vocal tracks, though radio programmers made it plain that they were an instrumental band to them and to their listeners.

They formally reunited in 2000 for another string of albums with new members Martin Cilia and original bass player Bosco Bosanac, they saw that particular writing on the wall and became the hottest, sharpest instrumental outfit in the country.

Once again with Hood the engine under their hood.

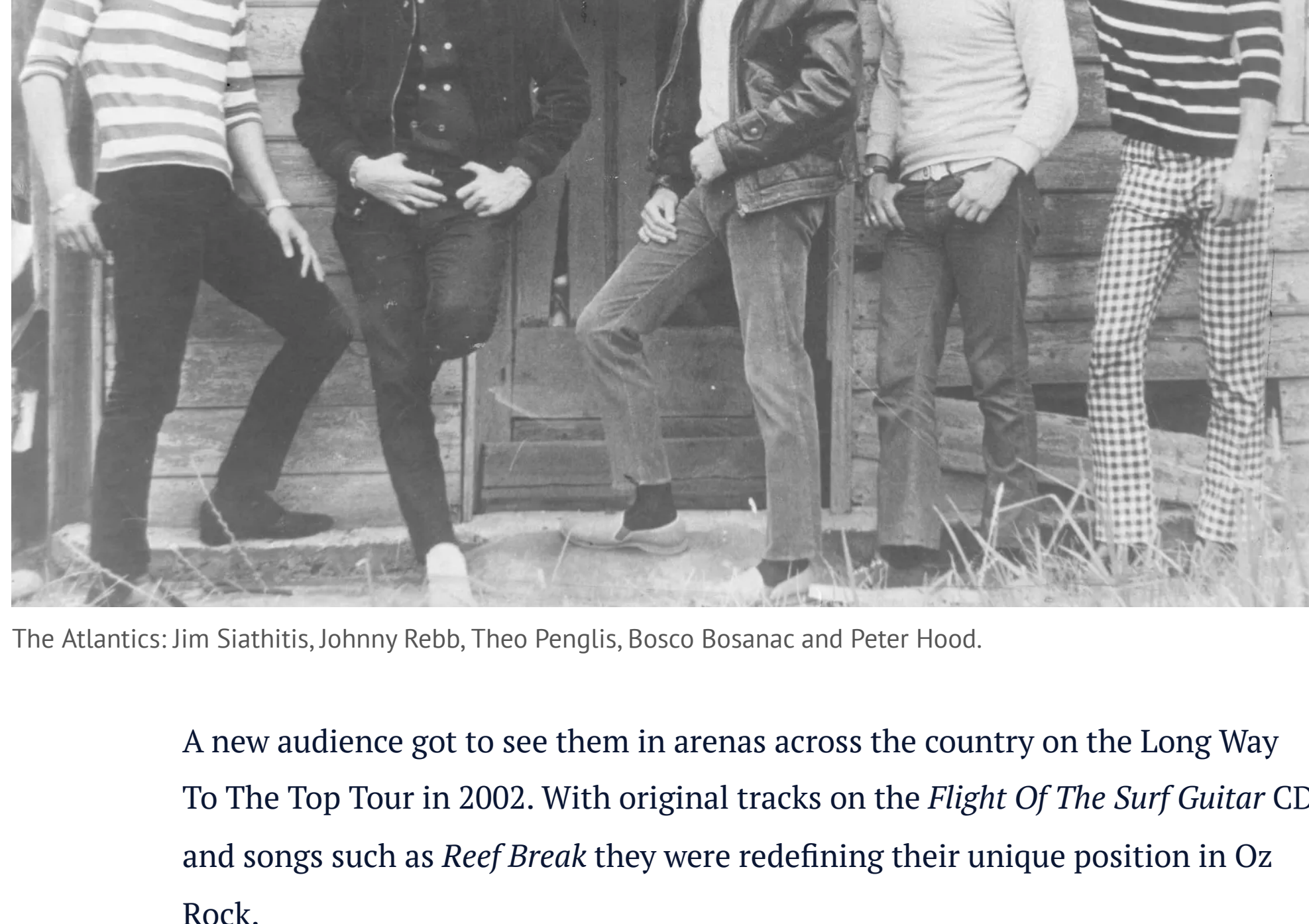


They were one of the first Australian bands to set up their own independent label. From late 1967 all their recordings (laid down in their own studio) were released on their Ramrod label.

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The Atlantics: Jim Siathitis, Johnny Rebb, Theo Penglis, Bosco Bosanac and Peter Hood.

A new audience got to see them in arenas across the country on the Long Way To The Top Tour in 2002. With original tracks on the Flight Of The Surf Guitar CD and songs such as Reef Break they were redefining their unique position in Oz Rock.

In 2006, they participated in the CD/DVD project Delightful Rain. Filmed at Freshwater Life Saving Club, it celebrated Australian surf music and beach culture. In 2013, they were invited to a surf music festival in Livorno, Italy, to which they tacked on shows in Italy, Finland and Greece.

Hood's battle with progressive aphasia confined him to bed and made him gravely ill for the past year. He died on September 22 at Robina on the Gold Coast. Jim Skiathitis was by his side, as was Carol, his wife of more than 50 years.

Peter Hood is survived by his children David, Daniel and Michelle, who is a musician and music teacher, and by four grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

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