Posted by Joanne Kee
Thursday, 11 October 2012 10:23

"Each year since 2005, in the month leading up to the jazz festival in Wangaratta, Miriam Zolin interviews the finalists in the National Jazz Awards. The awards are decided at Wangaratta in a series of heats culminating in a finals performance on the Sunday of the festival. **Wangaratta Jazz Festival** in 2012 runs from Friday 2 to Monday 5 November.

This year's ten finalists are: Cyrille Aimée, France (currently based in New York) | Kristin Berardi, Sydney | Briana Cowlishaw, Sydney | Luara Karlson-Carp, Brisbane | Kate Kelsey-Sugg, Melbourne | Joshua Kyle, Melbourne | Chantal Mitvalsky, Melbourne | Judith Perl, Melbourne | Liz Tobias, Adelaide (currently based in Boston) | Katie Wighton, Sydney.

When did you start playing jazz and why? For example, was there a 'moment' when it came to you as a calling or vocation?

I grew up in Django Reinhardt's town which is a small village in the outskirts of Paris called Samois. Every year a festival in his name is held there and gypsies from all across Europe come in their caravans to honor him during the summer, including his direct family. I started hanging out with the gypsies when I was about thirteen and became obsessed with their way of living and their culture and was adopted by them. One gypsy taught me the guitar and in exchange I taught him how to read, then one day he asked me to learn a song on an old Django record called Sweet Sue. I sang it around the camp fire in front of the whole family with all the guitars, and that was my 'moment'. The gypsies called me 'Sweet Sue' after that!"

Full interview visit Extempore

Cyrille is also performing at the Wangaratta Jazz Festival

and in the inaugural Sydney International Women's Festival