

LONDON SESSION MUSICIANS PROJECT

INTERVIEWEE	Bob Saker
INSTRUMENT	Vocalist
DATE OF INTERVIEW	17 th March 2023
BORN	Bow 1944
LOCATION	City of Westminster Archive
INTERVIEWER	Neville McDermott
PARENTS OCCUPATION	Father: Labourer and Semi-pro musician Mother: housewife

This interview covers Bob's early life and he describes how his career developed into voicing jingles and other voiceovers. During the interview Bob demonstrates different singing styles and techniques. Bob is an interesting interviewee with a number of amusing tales arising from his career.

Bob started singing in a group from the age of 16. As the group became more popular and bookings increased Bob gave up his day job and played full time with the band. From his work with the group Bob was offered the opportunity to record sessions as a demo singer. Bob describes his work as a demo singer recording popular hits of the day which would then be sold via outlets such as Woolworths.

He explains that although he did not specialise most of his work was in the rock/soul field and it was important to emote songs with feeling. He had an ability to harmonise and also a particular ability to mimic/impersonate popular singers which was an asset when being booked for sessions.

Much of Bob's work was in the field of advertising and he describes the process of creating jingles and the complexity of achieving the words being provided within the time slot required for the jingle and how he would often re-write the words in order that the jingle could be achieved and the message delivered.

An interesting part of the interview occurs when Bob produces his diary and reads out extracts which cover a typical week(s) work and which gives a good insight into the variety of jobs that he undertook. Bob likened session work to other more mainstream work in that he commuted into central London in the morning from East London and would use public transport to visit the various studios.

Bob describes the environment within which he worked and the camaraderie that existed between musicians and how there is no room for musicians with big egos. He describes the difference from 'live' sessions where there is an interaction between the musicians and the more modern way of working where his vocals are recorded separately from the backing track.

Towards the end of the interview Bob discusses the approach of different singers and demonstrates the various styles and in particular how to make the vocals swing. He also demonstrates his versatility to sing in the manner of established singers including Frank Sinatra, Johnny Mathis and others and explains how he achieves the different voicings.

During his vocal demonstrations Bob also illustrates how he can use vocal techniques in an amusing manner to break the ice.