00:00:00
Speaker 1
This is Maya Gottlieb conducting an interview for the Section Stories Project at Westminster Archives on the 27th of February 2023. Hi. What is your name?

Speaker 2
Mo Foster.

Speaker 1
What year were you born?

Speaker 2
Year 1944.

Speaker 1
And where were you born?

Speaker 2
Byfleet in Surrey. But only because my mum was moved there.

Speaker 1
And what did your parents do for a living?

Speaker 2
Well, then, at the time, my father was a commando and my mum was a Salafist.

Speaker 1
And did they change after?

Speaker 2
Oh, yes, a few times, yeah. He became a PE teacher and she worked in a pharmacy, that kind of thing.

Speaker 1
And so let's start out. Can you define what a session is for us musically?

Speaker 2
Excuse me?

Speaker 2
A session was a gathering of several musicians to play a track or two in a studio in a fixed place for generally a three-hour period. And there's many more bits to add on to that. That's the basic.

Speaker 1
So tell us about how you first became interested in music.

Speaker 2
There was one key moment because there was no music in my family. We had no piano, no, we had a radio, but no television. No, it wasn't. Music wasn't around. And when I was nine in class, one day, my primary school, Mrs. Williams came in with a discount recorder, played a little bit, said, Would anybody like to form a little band?

00:02:01
Speaker 2
I was mesmerised. This is a life changing moment, and I went for it. I learned violin as well. At the same time. So that was the start. Then it stopped because I went to a grammar school that had no music department. So for two more years there was no music and it changed.

Speaker 1
So what led you to the instrument that you play now?

Speaker 2
How long have you got? Have you heard of skiffle? Not skiffle. It was a mid-fifties music style that was simple and started by a guy called Lonnie Donegan, and it was involved a couple of acoustic guitars, a washboard for rhythm and a bass was made, often made out of a chest and a piece of string and a broom handle.

Speaker 2
So it was very primitive, but it had a great energy, and that actually didn't appeal to me. But it was the start of something happening. It's pretty rock and roll. And my some friends at school and I got together to play something. I mean, you know, a rock and roll band with recorded isn't happening. And so I learned a bit of guitar and then realized the bottom end was missing.

Speaker 2
And I heard I'd heard the song, especially on what I'd heard the phrase bass guitar, but never seen one. And I thought I'd build one. Had a bit of a knowledge of electronics school and converted an acoustic guitar, took the top two strings of I made a pickup out of two military earphones and a plastic soap dish which around the TV aerial connects into the back of my dad's radio.

Speaker 2
And it worked. I'm so excited. And it was a philosophical moment as well, because the first time in my life I was playing here, but hearing it there, that's and everyone accepts that now. But it was new then and that was the start of bass before it got a bit serious.

Speaker 1
Great. And and then in terms of the business itself, the music business itself, how did you get started in that? How do you start professionally.

Speaker 2
Off to backtrack, to explain things? I couldn't study bass guitar because the music colleges didn't do electric instruments, so only upright acoustic stuff. And I got to university and I was studying physics and looked around for the band. I needed to be in a band that took a bit of camaraderie and fun, and they didn't need bass players, they needed drummers.

Speaker 2
So I very quickly got a kit and learned to play just enough to get through, you know, wasn't nothing great. So for three years I was a drummer and we left. All of my friends hated real life. We didn't like the jobs we were doing. We thought we'd form a jazz rock band with me back on bass guitar, and we rehearsed in a bungalow in Brighton for the summer, learning what to do and how to, you know, what songs to do.

00:05:34
Speaker 2
And somehow we'd heard that Ronnie Scott of the Just Stuff was looking for bands to manage. So we got in contact and I said to him a tape and he agreed. And so for two and a half years he was our manager and we're based at the club in London. That was an eye opener because I'm surrounded by these legendary double bass players and I'm playing this little plank and felt inadequate, but learned from everybody, learned from the lot.

Speaker 2
That was the start. Yeah.

Speaker 1
And then from there, what happened? From there.

Speaker 2
The band finished as bands always do, and I generally tried to play with lots of people. For some reason I didn't know what I was doing but asked around and did gigs at the Marquee Club and little bits of tours with other acts. And I met Michael D'abo who'd been there, so he'd been the singer with Manfred Mad and sorry.

Speaker 2
Oh, I don't know why that, but so slowly I'm filtering my name around without realizing it, and some of the picked up on it. I'm sorry. Initially I'd start again. I'd put an advert in Melody Maker saying Name group what engagement wanted. And he got answered by a manager singer Michael D'abo from the band Manfred's, and he's looking for musicians.

Speaker 2
So at audition we got together and recorded a sort of start, and then the name filters around and I got a phone call from nowhere saying, Would I turn up at the studio Lansdown to record for Barry Ryan, Singer of the day. And there I met four guys that I'd known for the rest of my life. It was the start and the main thing about that day was I felt I'd come home.

Speaker 2
It suddenly felt, This is great, this is what I want to do. And the humour was just brilliant. So that was it. And excuse me, is my voice clear enough? I could feel it being weak. Yeah. Yeah.

Speaker 3
Great. Well, we'll take care of your voice. You're just a.

Speaker 2
You're a surgeon. Yeah. So sorry.

Speaker 1
About sessions. Can you tell us about the first session that you did?

Speaker 2
Oh, that was it. Yeah. I didn't know anything about sessions. I'd never heard of them. Strange being in the industry, but not hearing about because it's a hidden. So I didn't know what to do, what to expect. I bought an amplifier. Boxes you? No one. And I couldn't read music at the time, so really worried in case that was going to happen.

00:08:30
Speaker 2
But it was just a code chart, so it was good. And I met Clem Cattini, who's a drummer, a legend, and Ray Cooper, who you may have seen playing with Elton John, Mike Moran on piano and Ray think on guitar. And I've since worked with all of these guys in many different ways and we saw it playing and it just worked, you know, it was the right time.

Speaker 2
So everybody's happy. One little feature that I hadn't anticipated, but I didn't know whether you had lunch or what you did. So based on history of my parents, I took a flask of coffee and some sandwiches, which is ridiculous because they go to the pub, you know. So they remembered me for a long time for that one guy even remembered the colour of the flask.

Speaker 2
It was a stupid. But that was the start. And then if you're good enough, you get recommended mushrooms. And first of all, if you're not, you just rubbed out the book.

Speaker 1
Can you tell us about some of the different studios in your early years? The atmosphere, the sights, sounds, smells? What was it like?

Speaker 2
There were the big ones which are the which tended to be associated with record companies like EMI, which is Abbey Road and Decca Philips, and they A By driving around, it's like being a cabbie finding where things are. I slowly discovered what they were, what their histories were, who recorded there, and it made sense. Suddenly the record you knew, like Philips stand up gate was where Dusty Springfield did all the hits, and he thought, Oh, that's that room, you know, they all had that.

Speaker 2
They were all big corporate, the big ones. And I found out many years later that none of them knew each other. That's a big surprise. I thought they didn't mingle, but it was all secrets at that time. This is the early seventies. It's coming there.

Speaker 2
It was the start of the more sophisticated. It's private studios are coming in like Trident and Utopia at that. These are smaller places, but they had the best gear that they were the first people to have eight track tape machines ahead of Abbey Road in that kind of thing. And they were great for just smaller sections. And so you often didn't know who was going to turn up.

Speaker 2
And on Sundays I'd do three sessions at three studios with three separate rhythm sections. So you got to know, you know, you got to have the whole scene. It's only small, about 50 or 100 people, but you knew them. And I forgot the question at the studios. Oh.

Speaker 1
Yes, the studios back in those days.

00:11:30
Speaker 2
Exciting. I just wanted to be there. I've always loved recording, so I'd want to be in the control room at the same time and see how they're doing things, which led to me being a producer later. I was fascinated. I was fascinated. That night, for example, at Abbey Road, there's an echo chamber they have at number two, which I'd heard on records and often used to whatever it was, it sounded magical.

Speaker 2
I finally got to see it. You could go through a door at the back of the studio and there's this little room. It's like a tiled bathroom, and it stinks a bit, and there's some concrete sewer pipes that reflect sound, and it's just so unromantic. And this is the the sound of that studio. It's fantastic. The secrets I got to know the engineers and some of the producers, the studios, it was more the people, the people and the equipment.

Speaker 2
I didn't I don't remember smell at all, really.

Speaker 1
And what would you say were some of the challenges in your early years in music sessions?

Speaker 2
Challenges parking, endless parking and free parking and tried not to not have your gear stolen? Did you take it in? That's hard. The music itself, those fear before you. So you never had anything in advance. So on the downbeat, you're looking at something. You're playing something you'd never seen before and also listening on the cans to everybody else.

Speaker 2
They slowly realized what's going on and it it could be terrifying on a film date, which where everybody is reading. We can't hear everyone because it's such a big 700 players maybe, but you may have what are called UNISON, so may be playing the same line as a trombone or tuba somewhere else in the room. So I've got to get it right and hope that they're getting it right at the same time.

Speaker 2
It'll sound good, but you'd never get that. Sometimes the part would be arriving on your music stand just as you finished the last one and then the count again. So you're immediately playing something that's never been seen before and is good. And if it's towards the end of the session, that's going to be in the film. Now that's here because if you make a mistake, they have to rehire everybody.

Speaker 2
Oh, no.

Speaker 1
Yeah. And so you've spoken about the challenges. What drew you to session work?

00:14:23
Speaker 2
It is something that just fitted what I like doing, which is playing. Don't enjoy being live that much. So playing in a room with good people, the great players, that was that was a thrill. I knew stuff just being there. The whole process of what was the actual question against Sir Jeremy. That was it. That was the thrill of being there.

Speaker 2
Secondarily, it was well paid and very first I discovered it was earning ten times more than I was in the band earlier for the same work. So it was exciting. It was just so new as well. And it was it was a bit of a dream.

Speaker 1
Great. And how did you get the session work? Word of mouth fixers. How did that come about?

Speaker 2
Sometimes fixers, but they were old school, so they tended to stick the people to the people they knew. And so I was attracted to the producers and some of the younger ones who were looking for new sections, word of mouth from the players, certainly they'd pass the name along and that was it probably. But in America they had a thing called the The Wrecking Crew from L.A. We had the similar thing.

Speaker 2
It never had a name, but we had similar little sections that we'd often made. It would be the same guys, which is how, for example, Jimmy Page and John Paul Jones started Led Zeppelin because they just kept meeting on the session sort of thing.

Speaker 1
And what kind of music did you work on in your sessions? Did you specialize in the kind of music that was?

Speaker 2
Anything? I suppose initially it was a pop session, so it would be you'd be doing a track for a singer who would be well known at the time and the chance there was to. This connects to an early or a slow. You realize that the chance was to they're leaving it to you to invent the part. So you've got to coach out, you've got to invent the line, you're got to play and put a riff on it or something.

Speaker 2
And you'd get in little huddles and discuss how it should work. It was a challenge there, very much leaving it to you to make it happen. And if it's if a song is a Polish hit, that was a challenge. We tried your best.

Speaker 1
Did you have any music styles that you specialized in that you enjoyed more, or did you kind of just enjoy.

00:17:02
Speaker 2
A good, good rock or rock jazz or whatever? What was around or whatever was good? It was wide ranging. It was just suspect or bad or nothing of any content. Then you try hard. But I didn't enjoy it. My voice is struggling. So I said, All right, okay. You see, it's not hurting. It's just it's just weak.

Speaker 3
We cannot see the input. So if your voice goes softer, we can just.

Speaker 2
Yeah, I'm just sorry.

Speaker 3
Yeah, we'll take care of it. Yeah.

Speaker 2
Thanks. I have a quick look at this. How we did. All right. It's making sense. Yeah.

Speaker 1
And the next question I'm going to ask you and you spoken about sometimes having three different sessions in a day. Yeah. Can you describe a typical day of session work.

Speaker 2
When it's a busy one? Yeah.

Speaker 1
A busy one.

Speaker 2
A busy one. You get up about eight or earlier so yourself out driving into town for the first date, pop the car above the studio load, you get out, get in the room looking out for parking wardens and hope you get safe in the hallway, then repot the car, come back car. You get an awful staircases and stuff.

Speaker 2
It's heavy, lots of instruments and amplifiers and get set up. And ideally you you should be about half an hour before the first full 10:00 or whatever. And it'll be so sure because you know some of the guys so the coffee and chat he does work at the at 1:00 you do the reverse. You take your gear up to the hallway, find your car, come back loaded and drive to a studio that's probably ten miles away and do the same, go over and over again.

Speaker 2
And then this is 7:00 evening, one till ten. But it might go on to midnight if it if it's happening, you know, if that. Please, you keep working and it's great. But when it became relentless, you lost track of who you were. It was a there was a guitar pick of Vic Flick, who is very well known. He played on the Bond theme and he said at the end of one session it came out of his car and started crying.

00:19:39
Speaker 2
He just lost identity, you know, It was very strange. So the pluses and minuses, he had to be had to look after your health. That was hard. And for some of the guys, it was a bit of a drinking culture, but I couldn't do that because you can't you can't play and drink. Tried, but you can't.

Speaker 1
Do you want to talk to us a bit about the culture on the session? So you alluded to drinking and to people feeling like they've lost their identity. What was the culture like?

Speaker 2
Can you expand on that? What do you mean?

Speaker 1
Sure? So I guess we spoke about challenges. Yeah. And then you mentioned these additional ones. Yeah. And you've been around for so long in session work. So how have you seen maybe the culture around being a session musician evolve? Maybe at different times there was more alcohol problems, more issues?

Speaker 2
Yeah, it was the alcohol for people just like drinking, you know, And some of them, it didn't affect their playing at all. It tended to eat, okay, you had lunch and so on, but that was all. That was not a problem. It was the early days of smoking. So when I started, everybody smoked except me. I didn't then and surfaces of the control room.

Speaker 2
A yellow, you know, is not nice at all. The ceiling was yellow. That changed for a second. One of my problems with this, what I've got is brain fog. So I keep losing the words. I want to apologize for that. Can you remind me again what the what that question was.

Speaker 1
About the culture around.

Speaker 2
The culture around it? Yeah, it was respect. You respected the other players because they were so good. It was a treat to play with them. That was not the unless there was one guy who was a bit suspect, his timing was good. Then you it was a struggle. You just wish he'd go away that not so much that now it was a sense of relief when you when you walked into a room and saw a certain drum kit, you thought, this is going to be a good date because you knew who the player was.

Speaker 2
That was when we had a session roadie used to bring the gear to all the rooms, carry him around around London, ready for the next session. It was good that the culture there was the sociability, there was the catching up on the news. Was it what's it called? The watercooler thing in. And slowly over the decades that changed as the studios changed and the work changed to become less, it became less social.

00:22:34
Speaker 2
And that's when the team of guys coming together to play that's that slowly ceased. It would devolve to one player that very often there'd be a producer, an engineer and an artist, and you and you're interpreting what they wanted and doing the job, but missing the feel of the other guys because you need that five way input to inspire you know multi where inspiration.

Speaker 2
So that began to disappear and then even in the big rooms when they used to be a big orchestra playing together, they have what they call stems now, which is just the brass, just strings. And it's good for the film engineers because they can mix very clearly innately, but soulless, so the players can't interact with those. So you get perfection and no soul, which is a great pity.

Speaker 2
That's the film world anyway. It's great.

Speaker 1
And what do you think the skills and qualities were that someone needed to be there?

Speaker 2
What qualities?

Speaker 1
Skills. Skills is that someone needed to be a session musician.

Speaker 2
Ultimately, yeah. To be a good, very good player to play in any style you called upon from music in the last 30 years could be anything. You should be a good reader and I became a better one from the beginning because. Because having been a scientist, I'd never bothered to learn to read music, you know, you've got to be sociable very, very much.

Speaker 2
That and sense of humour is vital. It glued everyone together. Everyone took the piss out of everybody else. And in the early days, everyone had a nickname that reflected some aspect of them, which could be a physical shape or it could be anything that was funny was.

Speaker 1
Or a nickname.

Speaker 2
On a Cliff Richard Tour of Australia had a machine which I tended to record conversations all over the place. My nickname was KGB.

Speaker 1
Great. So what was the creative process like? How was the music created in a session.

00:24:57
Speaker 2
First, a run through it? Well, this is if there's a chord chart, you play what's written, just fill out a line that followed the chords along the way. You start to hear what other people are playing. You think, Oh, I could do this. That's different. And then he hears what you've just done and it goes round. It's a multi way thing and you're hearing he's in the headphones.

Speaker 2
And so after about two or three takes, it's it's really happening. The dream which did happen is take one. When you've got the sound, the sounds already together, the engine is good, the echo is good in the cans and you know what you're going to do and you play if everyone's got it right. First take has a magic you could never capture.

Speaker 2
You try two or three more, but it's never there. And that's why some records are that good. Because of that first take, you have to remind me the question again.

Speaker 1
So sorry music created in the session.

Speaker 2
Those that there were different ways. Like I'd worked with Gerry Rafferty quite a lot and he knew nothing about parts. He didn't care. So you'd arrive in the studio after all the banter and the coffee and stuff. He played the piano and you stand around it, listen to what he's doing and figure out what kids and what the chords.

Speaker 2
You have to work it out for yourself, what the inversions are. That's what the root note. And slowly it evolve apart, which you write down lots of crossings out. You know that this will be better so it can take about an hour or so just to get the part down. And then you start playing and then it evolves even more.

Speaker 2
And we were using that way. He'd sometimes spend 12 hours going over a track. So it's perfect. And I have lost a bit of soul on the way. But it worked, you know, and then there's sort of there's the orchestral one where you read everything. That's it.

Speaker 1
Great. And so you alluded to relationships in the studio and the humour and all that. What was the atmosphere like between the players in a session?

Speaker 2
Friendly I'm not quite sure what you mean, but it is.

Speaker 1
Was it supportive?

00:27:19
Speaker 2
Oh yes. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Not competitive? No, because everyone in the room has reached a level where he is and doesn't approve. Really, so it doesn't matter. But you support everyone. If they're having problems of my you'll make it better for them by playing differently or just talking and discussing a problem. And there was always a joke hiding somewhere as well.

Speaker 2
An insult, which was the word I used. And it lubricated it. It made it work, made it worth being there, you know.

Speaker 1
And can you tell us a bit about the types, the backgrounds of people working in the sessions? So there was Horn and Rhythm section and strings and all that. Were there different types of backgrounds that they came from or personalities that worked so well?

Speaker 2
It wasn't just the sections. Everyone was totally different because they'd all learned a different way that there'd be some had come through dance bands, sort of rock bands, or just in their bedroom, you know, where they started the strings, certainly the strings. And some of the brass would have gone to music college, so they knew a lot about the written note, how to feel it, whatever that was.

Speaker 2
It really. I came through science, you know, totally wrong way. There was no rule is so different and fascinating because as you found out what everybody did beforehand, that was nice that there was a sit there somewhere else. There was a problem with time where time is an orchestral time, it's very different from rhythm section time. When you see a baton go down, we feel one has to be there.

Speaker 2
The orchestra is somewhere on the way up, somewhere ethereal, just where the strings creep in. And if you watch an orchestra on television, I challenge you to find out where one is. But just by watching the conductor, it's a nightmare. We had to sort those kind of problems out. Got there, but it was weird.

Speaker 1
And were there hierarchies in session work? So the producers, engineers, composers, were there hierarchies in the studios between the different groups?

Speaker 2
Well, you had to respect the producer and his and the artists what they wanted. It was your job to make what they wanted come to life. I don't know if that's a hierarchy. It's just respect for what they are between the sections. It was just a laughable sort of because I once described that on a session at Whitfield Street Studios was nice and the rhythm guys were in booths so we couldn't talk to each other.

00:30:24
Speaker 2
So we just got on with the job. All the horn section. They're also layabouts. They want to go to the pub, they're throwing darts and just being silly. While the strings were all very sombre and hating everybody else and reading Hare and Hounds and being deep and wanting to go back to their mansion somewhere and hating the brass, there was that kind of difference which slowly disappeared because it was pointless.

Speaker 2
Then respect came back and then the work stopped.

Speaker 1
And I'm sure you have some. Can you describe some characters that stood out for me early years?

Speaker 2
I got on second. On second. Think. Well, one is Matthew you didn't climb Cattini.

Speaker 3
You ever go this afternoon?

Speaker 2
Oh, fantastic. Clem was a sort of legend, and so it was great to meet him on my first session. And he actually looked after me because he could sense, you know, I was lost and he was a sweetheart, but he was a source of great fun and which is what you need. And he wants when you're setting up, you're talking to the engineer about your headphone levels.

Speaker 2
You can also raise things to change. And because of this problem with strings being late on the beat, he said something very funny but dangerous. It's a danger. Can I have the strings a bit earlier in my hands, please? Meaning that so late, but an impossible question. And several people stood up to see who'd said this. And they were the fixers.

Speaker 2
They were string players. So a dangerous crowd that was people like that, just a stigma that stands out. I'm do apologize.

Speaker 3
I'm I'm.

Speaker 2
I'm.

Speaker 3
Forgetting you told me a story about Herbie.

Speaker 2
What was that?

Speaker 3
You have a story about Herbie. About that You used to turn up and walk around with no shoes on.

00:32:46
Speaker 2
Not me. No, no.

Speaker 1
You can turn flatter if you think of any. Just. It was just a question.

Speaker 2
Yeah, I mean, there'll be a million answers, but.

Speaker 3
I can promise you way rustle anything around right?

Speaker 2
Yeah, Let me think. Right? Yeah, right, right. You're sorry? I'm sorry. I was being casual. Ray Russell. I met him in a Ford Transit going up the M1 to a gig, and we just instantly got on. It was one of those things, just. It's chemistry. He's a bit cosmic and a bit silly, but the humour connected and humour let us down.

Speaker 2
Sometimes the giggling started, especially if you're laughing at the part or someone of the artist is a pompous ass. You know it's going to happen. And on bad days we had to sit back to back. We didn't have eye contact because the show biz guy on a really bad day, everyone in the room went for a walk on Primrose Hill just to stop laughing because the stomach was hurting.

Speaker 2
So that kind of thing, you know? A Yeah, we still still swap ideas together as good. I'm sorry. I'm glad to come back to that. Yes. Yeah. Yeah.

Speaker 1
And what do you feel has been the role and position of women in the session music fields?

Speaker 2
Not enough of them. It was because the rhythm section players had come from bands and pits and brass bands and whatever where there were no women. So just flowed down in time and there were a couple around who were piano players, but they were rare. It was a harpist, but she was more on the classical side. And it was.

Speaker 2
It was I hated it. I just wish there had been more. Now there are. I've been in touch with an American friend of mine. Carole Kay is a bassist. She's on a lot of sessions in the seventies and it's great to hear stories, but we didn't have them here pretty.

Speaker 1
And so we've spoken a bit about studios, but do you have a studio in London that was special to you? Can you describe it or several Doesn't have to be one.

00:35:22
Speaker 2
It's several, yes. Abbey Road, certainly, because it's a special place. It really is. There's this music in the walls and I got to know the engineers and they've got. So you feel like you're part of a community there it is and it's been the canteen and you'll be sitting next to the Beatles or whatever. It's that kind of world and everybody respects the space, you know.

Speaker 2
So yeah, no intrusion and it's got a studio too, has a magic sound there. It just works. So that was a treat to work in. There was a place called Trident where I did a lot of French disco in the seventies. They just they chose that and it just worked. And this is every tune was 120 beats a minute and you had a click machine in your headphones.

Speaker 2
So you had that in your ear all day. And it meant that when we went to the pub, we walked at 120 beats per minute. There's no choice. Some buildings you like because of the sound or the place, some were geographically sited that had to be handy. Some of the engineering staff were very good. It was a whole variety of things.

Speaker 1
It's great that you kind of brought us on to my next question, which was vary from session to session or studio to studio.

Speaker 2
Well, it would depend on the music really. The setting and the engineering could affect it, but the music would dominate everything. So if it's good, then we're going to rise to it and kick it up the hours. And you complain that the engineers a bit always for things that's it really depends on the music.

Speaker 1
Yeah that's great. And so if we move on to the topic of working conditions, how did Pavement work get? Were there rates, Did you get paid for overtime, residuals, all of that?

Speaker 2
Yeah, lots of things because you worked initially from a musician's union rate, which is okay. They also had rates for overdubbing when you played on top of your performance and for doubling when you brought a separate instrument, they used and a while later think Porter came in, which is a fee to compensate your travel here carrying gear. So it's to pay the taxes or whatever and oh sorry you know.

Speaker 1
About how payment was.

Speaker 2
Yeah payment. So you set them, you set the basic rate but some of the players got better. They were called to the A-list. They could charge what they wanted to sometimes double scale or whatever. And it worked. And some were so busy that it was hard to get hold of them. And the general companies wanted these players, so they invented a new session, which was eight till nine in the morning, hideous hour, and it was called the Greedy Hour.

00:38:49
Speaker 2
So some people actually did that, then did three sessions. So they never didn't have a life payment, was you sent an invoice to the record company or whatever. I mentioned doubling it earlier on. And this generate meant if you brought one instrument like a guitar and a mandolin, but when the pedals, the effect pedals started, the guitar players noticed that if they did put their foot on the pedal and on a wah wah, they could charge a doubling fee for it.

Speaker 2
And that was good, except that I couldn't. There were no pedals for bass, and the string players objected as well. So I eventually made my own pedal and it had nothing in the box. Went in and straight out again and a switch. And I could if the producer was a complete idiot, it was. There were quite a few.

Speaker 2
I said, What about this switch? And then play different? And he said, Well, that's great. So that charge for not doing anything, the said of these pedals on a lot of albums all because of idiocy. It's called a DFA. I'll have to let you decide what that means, right.

Speaker 1
How did how are you credited for any music that you did?

Speaker 2
You mean a cover? LP Cover do you mean?

Speaker 1
Yeah. So for any of the sessions that you did, how did you get credited? Yeah.

Speaker 2
In the early days you didn't. It was a bit of a battle to get your name on the on the box. That was it. Just your instrument and name because that was your role. If you're a composer, it's different to you. Get your composing credits, not producer, but you're just one name in the list.

Speaker 1
Great, Easy. And what was the role of the musicians union in your work.

Speaker 2
On dangerous ground here? Sometimes to interfere unnecessarily. Sometimes they did good stuff. They were supportive. In some ways. They said they set bass rates, which was good, but I found them sometimes obstructive that she stopped me working on one occasion, which I didn't like, and it was unnecessary. So it's a mix. It's a no idea what they do now.

Speaker 2
I'm not a member anymore, but I wish them well. But I've no idea.

Speaker 1
And what were and I guess you spoke about the culture a bit, but what were some challenges maybe that you faced with session work? Was it long hours, lots of alcohol around?

00:41:41
Speaker 2
Is that the challenge was the music was getting it right, was singing apart and making the best possible piece of music you could from that chart and not annoying anybody by playing badly keeping time. And you have to have a great sound. You got to make the sound. That's not easy. A lot of players have no idea to do it.

Speaker 2
I remember an engineer talking about this. He used to get lots of drummers coming in who were not fully pro, but they were good. But he could never get a drum sound. He tried all the best mics and he thought it was something wrong with him. And one day one of the list turns up and the sound is there.

Speaker 2
It's perfect. So it wasn't his fault. That was a realization that you got to know how to make it sound as good as possible and be up to date. You have to get if you had a sound, a record that was important to get the instrument that played that sound. So I had to learn to play fretless bass and other things and was enjoyable.

Speaker 2
Learning new techniques always for that, for the record, for for the music.

Speaker 1
And you mentioned reading music and that you weren't a reader. Was that a challenge that you said.

Speaker 2
Oh God, yes. Yes I'll have to have said so.

Speaker 1
Yeah, go ahead.

Speaker 2
I we don't chaps something right in the charts yet, but.

Speaker 3
If you've got Christmas number one, the is.

Speaker 1
So I'll just remind you that that's the lesson about reading music.

Speaker 2
Reading music right. Playing music. It's strange. I thought I'd read music at school for a discount recorder, but didn't translate that to treble clef to my instrument is on bass clef. And because I was doing physics, I didn't need to learn to read music. What the what I need that somehow I'm in a world where some people can read and others can't.

Speaker 2
And those who could read got more work because it was there, you know? And if you wanted to do a pitch orchestra theatre thing, there's no other way. And I used to are struggling to learn to read. I was reading for books I'd found It's very boring when you buy yourself playing an instrument that does not harmonic. It's just one note at a time.

00:44:25
Speaker 2
But I was struggling and vaguely understanding shapes and repeats and things, and I got found out very badly on one session because Abbey Road it was a big orchestra of 50 pieces and I was getting ready to bluff and but my God, did I have to bluff? It was all written out. And the M.D. and the composer was David Rose, a great American guy, had written the stripper, for example, a good composer did the Bonanza theme and nine piece rhythm section.

Speaker 2
So what I started doing was listen to everybody else and make a part fitted with what they're doing. So it was smart but nightmarish and switched, you know, wanted to big. Did it to appear. So the day went on like this with me struggling, but just getting through it till halfway through the second session, he stopped the entire orchestra and said and pointed at me.

Speaker 2
He said, Mr. Bass Player, do please play bars 65 to 85 for me. And the whole room turns to look to see who the offender is. And you want to die that minute. And I played something and he was so kind. He said It was not what I've written, but it'll do so. Oh, and I stepped up my reading after that.

Speaker 2
That was.

Speaker 1
Great. How did you balance your music work with your family life?

Speaker 2
Music took to dance because that's what I did. So what you want, That's it, Really? You fit it. You fitted around it?

Speaker 1
Yeah. Did you find it hard to Was it hard to balance? I guess music work with just doing other things in your life? It's personal life.

Speaker 2
Not really. I didn't have children, so I mean, that would have been a more of a problem. But it. Well, it was your life. So the two are intertwined and very often with the same people.

Speaker 1
And so then how did you fit your session? Work with your other work in music? How did you balance the two?

Speaker 2
Well, one one big thing you had to sort out or cope with was touring. For example, I did an album with Phil Collins, and then a bit later he asked me, would I like to two of them? Yes. Yeah, of course. Tour America and Europe and whatever and with great players. But that means for two or three months you're not you're not taking any calls.

00:47:21
Speaker 2
And what happens then is other players think, Oh, hang on, they move in and take your slots and it takes a bit of time to let people know you're back in town again. So there's that trade-off. But you have a good stimulating to being paid well and losing work in the studio. So there's that trade-off. What was the question?

Speaker 1
How did you balance your session with other music work?

Speaker 2
Well, I suppose I didn't do too much other stuff. Occasionally I had a band promoted around on albums, that kind of thing. Again, that was the same problem. You have to get back in again. And other were just little jazz gigs one, not one one-nighters, you know. So that was the right.

Speaker 1
How would you in terms of maybe job satisfaction, how would you compare the process of creating your own music in your session compared to other work that you did.

Speaker 2
More challenging because you're creating, you're actually composing for them, although uncredited actually is a great pity. So that was that challenge was on those dates. But if you're playing a nightclub with somebody just reading it or following the pub or touring the same year, you remembered it, but you're playing somebody else's songs that's already fixed. You might be playing your own line, you know, but that that's it's fixed now.

Speaker 2
It's so. And I toured with Jeff Beck and that became almost like a jazz gig. So some might go off some way that you weren't expecting, but you've got to be ready for it. And that's nothing to do with sessions at all. A whole different world. Does that answer? What? Yeah.

Speaker 1
If you want to sing more about did you get more satisfaction from one or the other or kind of the same.

Speaker 2
Equal satisfaction, but very different. I'm taking an airplane every day. To go to New Town is exciting for a bit, then it's dull. But driving into Soho every day is, you know, it's a trade of voice and.

Speaker 1
Do you want to tell us about any memorable sessions, your most memorable session, If you can remember.

Speaker 2
Give me a second memorable.

00:49:59
Speaker 3
You've got I think this is you've got quite a lot that you tell the good sessions, the difficult that you really talked a bit about being useful practicing. Yeah, yeah. And I remember you mentioned that. Yeah. And you just, just a few that you think illustrate memorable. Yeah. I mean, maybe start off with a proud one that you think that was, that was just music.

Speaker 3
It was something that was really meaningful to you.

Speaker 2
Again, can we come back to that? Can we do that? Because I'll.

Speaker 1
Yeah.

Speaker 2
Yeah, I'll get it better. Yeah. The fog will have lifted you.

Speaker 1
Of course. Okay, let's talk about changes then. Yeah. Can you tell us about how technical changes that have occurred during your work?

Speaker 2
Oh, God. Colossal. When I started, I think we'd just left the hold the big hole. It was mono tape. Machines were mono and stereo was around. So that meant it recorded direct to tape. You couldn't overdub anything. Or if you did, you had to go from one machine to another at the same time. And that was no, you just accepted that.

Speaker 2
Then the studios got more aware of a treat of treatments and reflections and containment of sound as the machines got better. We had a four track. First was the Beatles had that it Sergeant Pepper on a four track. It's fantastic. That means there are four independent recording tracks, you know, 30 different instruments. And then the first eight tracks appeared about, well, late sixties.

Speaker 2
I think. And then it just got better and better. Those 16 track machines appeared. This meant that you could record separately, you could do the rhythm track, and then the strings came in separately, not together. And you could also repair a part, as it's called, which is the if you've made a mistake, you could tell the engineer where it was.

Speaker 2
You rewind the tape and it's called, he'll punch it in. You know, you play those two bars and it's out again. So it's better. I have a story now which would connect with that, maybe connect from earlier. I had the luxury of recording in Montserrat, one of George Martin studios in the Caribbean. It was just bliss. It was paradise, but it was perfectly fine studio and a team of us, about six players, had gone out to do this album, and I should explain that.

00:52:47
Speaker 2
There's the studio, then the control room on the window in the control room, which overlooked the pool to overlook the Caribbean. So it was fantastic. And one day, for no apparent reason, I kept making the same mistake stupid, just total logic to it at all. And every time it did this mistake, the guys could take 5 minutes and wander around.

Speaker 2
One guy realized, you can go and have a swim. And because I kept doing it, it got known as a swim break. So while I'm repairing this note, they'd have a quick swim in the pool. Then. Then I solved the problem was fine. Then the afternoon session it was okay. Then I made the same mistake again. Couldn't believe it.

Speaker 2
I looked up from our playing and looked at Frank Cottee, who was playing congas, and he went like this. He went, Oh, just nice work. I have a superb right.

Speaker 1
And in what other ways would you say session work has changed? Maybe in terms of the recording conditions, apart from the technical changes.

Speaker 2
I'll sort of continue to work from where that the machine's getting bigger, bigger. Then it became digital many tracks and now it's just what's called ProTools. You record digitally straight into the computer as many tracks as you like, but unless it's a big orchestral date, what happens normally now is it's one person, so it's lost its soul and you're not meeting any people and you go and do the work and come out and what have I done?

Speaker 2
You know, it's one of those things. I'm not sure if that's answering your question.

Speaker 1
Yeah, it was just about how session work is. Yeah, conditions. And do you have any advice? What advice would you offer to young musicians now.

Speaker 2
Be born in the forties or fifties? That's about it really, because the work is gone. There were 93 studios in central London. We used to work at 93, a lot of them small ones, and now there are five big ones and a lot of studios in bedrooms on Macintosh. So the work that we had sadly has gone it never to come back.

Speaker 2
We were very, very privileged to be in those three or four decades. And so I can't give advice now because there's nothing to say. It's sad, isn't it, that Oh.

Speaker 3
You asking why?

Speaker 1
Oh, why has the work on.

00:55:28
Speaker 2
This won't be the initial reason the work started suffering is because the studios are suffering because they couldn't get the budget from the record companies to pay for the to be there. So they began closing. And as they closed the music was evolving and changing and the two things led to less work. And so that was the implosion of the scene.

Speaker 2
It's so sad.

Speaker 1
And the budgets coming down. And why were the budgets going down?

Speaker 2
Oh, I don't I don't know. I actually don't know. Record companies were just moneymaking machines. And if they went wrong in one way, they'd just try and make money in other way. But I won't go into that. But they're surviving some of them at the expense of everybody else.

Speaker 1
Do you want to just say a bit more about how those technical changes led to the general changes in terms of people recording at home, just in terms of how technical changes had an effect on.

Speaker 2
A Well, there was what I said about the numbers dwindling, playing together and the rise of the Macintosh computer and software to go with it, which evolved slowly and finally arrived at ProTools in the big studios and a thing called Logic Pro, which is brilliant. I mean, I use it at home for all kinds of things and you have a virtual studio on the screen with tracks and faders and everything and the sample library, so you can actually produce stuff that's pretty good without instruments, although it doesn't sound quite it hasn't got the brain, the breath, you know, the emotion.

Speaker 2
But it's great for demos and it's I used it to record a live album and mix it at home. Took a long time, but you could do that now, whereas the cost of mixing the album in a studio would have been astronomic. So there are benefits to the process.

Speaker 1
And if we look back, what has your session work meant to you?

Speaker 2
A life?

Speaker 2
I just love doing it. A life, a lifestyle, an income. I wouldn't have a house without it, but mainly the thrill of being in that room with those people just worked. I didn't know I missed it, but I found it. You know, one of those.

Speaker 1
That's great. I was going to say, if you want to do another story, I thought the one that you told us about and the countdown thing.

00:58:38
Speaker 2
Oh, yes, yes. Oh, that's not a session. No, that's out, isn't it? But I wasn't on it. But anyway. Okay. It concerns the TV theme Countdown, which is written by composer Alan Hawkshaw, who had a studio in Radlett in North London. And he wanted there was a section where the arrows going round the very last note. He wanted a timpani to be hit.

Speaker 2
And then there's a penalty push that changes the pitch of the instrument, and invited his friend Brian Bennett, who was the drummer of the Shadows. But did sessions and also lived in Radlett. And he said, Come round. He brought his tent round. But Alan's studio is at the top of the building, up a stairway and he couldn't get it up, so he parked it on the landing and they dropped it a microphone down and the headphones and stuff and that that's I'll sing very badly that the end of the theme is the, the, the, the letter bowing.

Speaker 2
So that's all Brian had in his headphones that led up to that one note. He's standing there ready to play then I to that I it does the pedal which point his wife and his wife's dog wakes up in the bedroom nearby rushes out, panicking and savages Brian's leg. So he on the tape is going, followed by rather that should have been captured.

Speaker 2
That I think is a great story.

Speaker 1
And is there any.

Speaker 3
I've got a couple of notes from Section. You talked about session with Big Jim Sullivan.

Speaker 2
Didn't I?

Speaker 3
Yeah. Oh, okay. Jam session of the Barbican with the also doing the Bernstein piece with the crescendo.

Speaker 2
Oh yeah. Yeah. It's not a session though. It's a concert. Does that matter?

Speaker 3
Let's stay with sessions. Yeah. Okay. So about just.

Speaker 2
Wish I've got my notes.

Speaker 3
Advanced. Is there a kind of a session? Doesn't have to be the one but one. Yeah. I just remember going really well and you kind of let do. You talked about the relationship you might be with Clem and Ray Russell. You did a lot of work. Yeah. Something to you.

01:00:54
Speaker 2
This. There are some sessions that. Sorry. Yeah, there are some sessions where while you're playing, you suddenly think this is fantastic. It doesn't happen very often or didn't. And there's a track called Stay With Me Till Dawn by singer Judy Tzuke, which is fantastic. And after just a few bars, we're also looking around. This is this is special.

Speaker 2
And I was even before the string parts go on. So that's a nice feeling when you realize you were playing on something. I think the guys who played on Elton John's, your song would have felt that because you just know it's that good. It's a good song. Yeah.

Speaker 3
There are any others that's.

Speaker 2
Out there, so I wish I'd brought my book to the trigger. I need a trigger.

Speaker 3
To write about characters. So you were going to ask anyway. You do karaoke drama about characters because he's a.

Speaker 1
So do you want to go back and think about any characters? And maybe that will help you think of some stories. And were there any?

Speaker 2
Karen Yeah, it was a treat to meet Ray Cooper because you've probably seen him with Elton John and he's you can't stop watching him. The fundamental act of playing a tambourine. You make it into an art form and you're playing on a session trying to read the part, and you keep wanting to look up and watch the record that, you know, so nice feeling.

Speaker 2
This is awful. There are a lot of things. I'm just not accessing them. I need a trigger.

Speaker 3
Remember, I'm going to come in because you at home playing the bass. So if there's anything you can remind yourself.

Speaker 2
Okay, that's fine.

Speaker 1
Is there anything you advertise?

Speaker 2
Yeah. So do you.

Speaker 3
To what?

01:02:52
Speaker 1
And can you characterize the different types of work you would do for sessions? So there may have been an advertising like a jingle. You mentioned orchestral for a film.

Speaker 2
Yeah.

Speaker 1
Yeah. Types.

Speaker 2
Anything with music. So it's movies. There was a lot of jingle work, the one-hour sessions and you turn up with great players and you working for Kellogg's, you know, it's very strange. I think I did the first Cadbury's. Oh, no, no. What was it, Flake or whatever. And I did those kind of things. Rock sessions, pops, and you leave a pop session and then go to a jazz date.

Speaker 2
That was a challenge to rethink the feeling, Oh God is terrible.

Speaker 1
So there yeah, you mentioned maybe Jingle Rock, Jazz. Yeah. Were there any other sort of.

Speaker 2
Oh, tip television, of course. Yeah, you do. Sometimes I play a track that gets to be a hit and you'd be invited to do Top of the Pops with them miming to a track. That's weird. It's a weird program. Those are. But that was about 16 people in the audience being herded. I always imagine colleagues dragging them round between acts.

Speaker 2
It's strange, very funny. Oh, TV or TV themes. It's a bit like jingles and there's library music. If you had a library music, we you make or compose even readymade off the shelf theme music. So you give a brief how do you write this or perform this music could be any style and it's promoted around the world. If someone picks it up, you get paid or you don't.

Speaker 2
If they don't, you know, So it's just a little branch of income. And a lot of the session players did that and wrote that and had each other. You can't believe how small it was compared to America. Yeah, very big. I'm still trying to think of these things.

Speaker 3
That, mind it, tell the story of Minder.

01:05:28
Speaker 2
Oh, mind. Okay. Yeah, Yeah. There's a singer called Dennis Waterman and we're making about late seventies. We're making an album for him with one of the teams. The producer was Chris Neil. He did lots of stuff and this track came up called I Should Be So Good For You, just in another song on the album. And we've played it through and it was alright, but nothing exciting about it plotted a bit and I just got a new bass that made a very bright sound.

Speaker 2
When he's what's called slapping. And I said to the guy, Why don't we try this? I unpacked this instrument, I started this thing, and suddenly the track lifted up in the air and became really bouncy and memorable. And two years after that, a film company is making a TV series called Minder, and they picked up this track to be the fit the 40 years ago.

Speaker 2
And it's great. So that's that's my fault. Any other prompts over there that good prompts?

Speaker 3
I've got few. What are we not? Did you have anything you want to ask us? Okay. It's impossible. I mean, we've got so many stories. I don't know.

Speaker 2
Oh, mention a.

Speaker 3
Couple. I mean, do what you want to just go way back to the days or just talk? Tell me about getting work through Gioconda Street and Oxford Street.

Speaker 2
Well, I wasn't part of that.

Speaker 3
You.

Speaker 2
Know, not before me.

Speaker 3
But you, you know, about if you could just tell us who we can ask. We can ask.

Speaker 2
Claire. We'll know. Yes. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Speaker 3
Okay. So just to just to tease out a little bit more about the creative process, what how would you play on a recording session compared to if you were playing live? What was the different way that you approached it?

Speaker 2
By the way? I'll come back. Yes, I've got a Jeff Beck story for you in a minute.

01:07:36
Speaker 3
Yeah? Yeah.

Speaker 2
Okay. Um, I got invited to Abbey Road to play on this album for Jeff Beck with my big hero. He's the best guitar player, and the poor guy died a couple of months ago. Oh, you miss him? Anyway, this track, which had written by the drummer and the cable guy, Simon. Tony. Tony put together a chart. There was like about six-page Sellotape together and we're in the control room of Studio two.

Speaker 2
No one in the room, just me overdubbing. And it spread across three music stands. And while I'm playing it to walk along it, someone suggested a trolley could have pulled and it was hard. It kept changing time signatures from 6 to 7 and four. And we finally got through it and it was okay. And this time, Simon and Tony, they looked glumly on chairs.

Speaker 2
And as I finished the last note, they went under the chairs and pulled out scorecards 3.4. You know, so it was nice. Defuse the situation.

Speaker 3
It's great to repeat what I wrote about the different how you approach this.

Speaker 1
It's so how would you approach the play, the actual playing differently if it was the session, if it was live?

Speaker 2
Well, as a session player, you can dress slowly, but if it's live, you've got to wear something. You know showbiz, You've got to pretend you want to be there. You're entertainment, you're entertainer, you're to look the part at it. And you've got to remember the 2 hours of music. So that's a challenge. What we did leading up to Phil's tour, we were rehearsing at a studio in Shepperton in the film lot, and we did a week with the rhythm players and then the whole the Wind and Fire horn section came out of America and we did a week with them, which was brilliant.

Speaker 2
And then just for technical, for the lights and that stuff, because the Genesis team, we did another week with them. So at the end of three weeks you knew the songs and we did. We toured. It was fine.

Speaker 3
I had a common virtue of someone I was I spoke to. You talked about when you're recording, when you're playing, recording, you phrase stuff when you play a lot more notes as opposed to when you're gigging, when you just it can be loose. And also you can. Is there anything.

Speaker 2
Well, there's sorry, yeah, there's yeah, I'm not sure this is what you meant but when you when you presented the music, you've no idea what to play. You just it's just a letter. G So you listen to what the drummer's doing, you try a few things, you try too much, you experiment with throwing ideas in, and most of it's unnecessary.

01:10:44
Speaker 2
So by take two, you suddenly think, Oh, stop doing that. And you find the part emptied out and the holes a just makes it work and breathe. So is that what you meant?

Speaker 3
Yeah. I mean, it wasn't anything to do with just the different, different skills. I Mean I was talking particularly at the moment. I was talking to a drummer who said in, in when you're drumming on a session, you can be much more intricate because it's being recorded and so people are listening and they're going to hear, Yeah, yeah, cake.

Speaker 3
It's much more you're leaving stuff out and it's much more about the whole if the sound is at the same pace at all.

Speaker 2
Not, not so much no. I think that's very much a drum thing. Yeah.

Speaker 1
Is there anything else that you want to tell us that we haven't covered?

Speaker 2
Well, I was just thinking life when I was working with Geoff, we went to states, we went first to the West Coast and I'd got an amplifier called an SVT with me, which is normally very good, very powerful eight, ten-inch speakers and it's 300 watt top and again on stage I couldn't hear it because he was so loud and he had what were called side fills presented across the stage.

Speaker 2
So if you walked into that, it all got hurt. And so I was panicking. I've got another one of these. I've got to I still couldn't hear myself. And over a weekend in Eugene, Oregon, I've got a guy to build me a wreck quickly, which led to 12 speakers to 15 to cinema homes, things beyond the screen, you know, and a big rack of amplifiers.

Speaker 2
I could finally hear myself, but it came at a cost is that when walked there it my trousers flat. It was like it was a bit of a breeze coming out since say so that was allowed to great.

Speaker 3
I've got another story told me. Don't cry for me. Argentina could you could do that ring a bell?

Speaker 2
Yeah. That's about strings and timing. I gave it to on that. We played on the album Evita for Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice and it was the album before the show. So there wasn't a show. It was like their promotion. And it it was done very well, very expensively, and we came to the song Don't Cry For Me Argentina with Julie Covington singing, and we did this in Henry Wood Hall in South London was the London Philharmonic spread out and they had a conductor and the five piece rhythm.

01:13:35
Speaker 2
Well, lovely players were behind big screens. We all had headphones. So when the hope of hearing each other, they had the conductor with the late time thing and we played on the beat. It so bad that the engineer told me later the android was threatening to throw the tapes in the river. So we had something had to be done.

Speaker 2
We we'd never realized that. But this time, this, that classical timing and they didn't know how to do it any other way. But we in a tea break we did to deal with the section leaders where they agreed they'd come in earlier. We agreed to come in later than we normally do. We met halfway and that's it. That was done.

Speaker 2
Trust me. Argentina, which is the number one hit, it was a disaster. Although on the way there was an extra moment later at Olympic Studios. I was just me, I was overdubbing. They'd ask me to come in and play on top of a few things, and it was convivial. It's got a nice atmosphere in the control room. At the end of the session, Tim Rice said to me, What are you going to charge for this?

Speaker 2
I said, Well, look, it's been so many days, so many overdubs. Let's just call it £1,000,000. And he didn't flinch and he got his chequebook out, started, wrote my name, and then I was going to put it in a frame, you know. But Andrew was horrified, bumbled over and said, Oh, the accountant wouldn't like this. I think it stopped.

Speaker 2
It was that close. Okay.

Speaker 3
Just as an art form, just because that's Westminster are very interested in the studios that are in this power. And you know, I.

Speaker 2
Can't think what they.

Speaker 3
Were soho's in Westminster.

Speaker 2
Oh, is it. Oh okay. Yeah, yeah.

Speaker 3
Specifically about the studio scene in Westminster, you know.

Speaker 2
Right. It got to what though. What kind of thing.

Speaker 3
You know, which studios you remember and going from one to another.

Speaker 2
Yeah. Yeah.

01:15:43
Speaker 3
But just to just because, because they'd gone.

Speaker 2
Yes. Yeah. Yeah. Oh that's a good point because well when I walk around Soho now I get a very different feeling from most people. It's like a ghost town to me, because almost every street there was a studio there and I remember going into one called Scorpio, and in my mind's eye I could see the drum booth, but I'm actually staring at cabbages.

Speaker 2
It was very upsetting. And that applied all over and stands. Caught was Trident. The Sony song is about the Elton John albums are recorded there, the marquee at Vision, all these all spread around. So Soho was just throbbing with music. It was fantastic and it's very sad to see it whittled away slowly. What I thought of there. Sorry, I'm blanking.

Speaker 1
Would you say it was a gradual decline or was?

Speaker 2
Yes, it took a few years. Yeah. Yeah. The. What else is there? I'm sorry. I'm feeling.

Speaker 1
Whitfield Street.

Speaker 2
With Yes, Whitfield Street which changed name a few times. It was CBS for a while, then it became the hit factory. And sad because that building is still there, that space is still there, hasn't knocked down yet. And that was a feature of lots of the studios that like Beijing Street and so that's in Notting Hill. But they were chapels.

Speaker 2
Then they got change of use and they became studios. Another apartments. And that's the kind of line that Sony Studios took. I don't know what the Soho ones were so much, you know, when you're working in it, you don't care where it came from. You just there. But it was there was an intimacy and you'd hop around.

Speaker 2
You go from one to the other, passing other musicians on the way, popping in to Ronnie Scott's for a gig was good.

Speaker 3
It's perfect. It's great. And very last one for me. Just going back to the alien stuff was, was it Photoshop? Did you have to be in the union to be a.

Speaker 2
I think so, yes. Yeah. At the time. Sorry. Yeah. Yeah.

Speaker 3
You were cool.

01:18:23
Speaker 2
Yeah. Yes. Sorry you had to. It was necessary to belong to the union to do legit session work and certainly TV work, that kind of thing. It was unionized and it was okay. The rates they set were bearable. That's about it, really, for them at the time. Yeah.