

[00:00:00] **Jarek Zaba:** Okay, this is Jarek Zaba for the AMP Kingston Project from Creative Youth, uh, exploring Art, Music and Pop Fashion Heritage in the Kingston Borough and beyond. I am here in Bacchus Nightclub in Kingston on the 29th of September, 2022 with Nigel Clark. Nigel's, the lead singer of the band, Dodgy, who can trace the early years of their success to this very nightclub Bacchus in Kingston. Nigel, do you mind, uh, stating your name and your date and place of birth for the tape if you...

[00:00:29] **Nigel Clark:** Hey there. I'm Nigel Clark and I was born in Redditch, Worcestershire on the 18th of September, 1966.

[00:00:39] **Jarek Zaba:** Lovely stuff. Um, okay, Nigel, um, yeah, so you, you, you mentioned where you were born there. Do you mind just talking a little bit about your early years, where you were brought up and maybe a little bit about the role of music in your, in your early years?

[00:00:52] **Nigel Clark:** Yeah. Well, I'm the youngest of three children, so I sort of, uh, witnessed my elder siblings go, you know, off the [00:01:00] rails or, or you know, I was the quiet one I suppose, but the one that got away with everything. I've been interested in music from, um, my, my, my next door neighbor when I went a place I was born in Headless Cross, was best friends with John Bonham from Led Zeppelin. So John Bonham was like, um, a local hero to, um, lots of people in Redditch, Worcestershire. Um. Obviously really famous drummer, um, kind of goes, goes round. But anyway, so I was interested in music. I didn't know who Led Zeppelin were, but my brother and sister who were older than me, had all their records. So we were, I was schooled on heavy metal and heavy rock as in the early Black Sabbath and Led Zeppelin. Um. Yeah, it was kind of like a sort of always, not very, not very academic at school. Was very sporty, very sporty as a child, and, uh, got into music in 1977 when the Sex Pistols came out and loved punk, rock music. Um, just thought it was the perfect music for me, at [00:02:00] my time. I was 11. Um, and then... so I've left school, had a job, worked on various jobs. Had worked at Austin Rover in Longbridge, uh, from 1984 to 1988. And in that time. I bought my first house. I was 19 years old, 20 years old, and lived with a girl called Jackie One. Her name wasn't One, but I call her Jackie One. Um, and at 1988, I decided that probably living with a girl and having a mortgage wasn't right for me. And I wanted to pursue a career in music, not being a great musician, but had a lot of belief and thought, yeah, why not? So, uh, up sticks and with Matthew, the drummer, who I'd just met in, locally in Bronze Grove, uh, we decided that we were gonna move to London. So we moved down in 1988, October 88, and I think in about October 89 we found Bacchus Wine [00:03:00] Bar.

[00:03:01] **Jarek Zaba:** Yeah. So, um, yeah, you mentioned sort of, uh, quite a few sort of metal, uh, metally influences, like, like Led, Led Zep. I mean, without, was that sort of early, uh, influence on your, on the music that you would make or, uh, or did you not, did you, did you, were you always aware you weren't gonna quite good on that route?

[00:03:18] **Nigel Clark:** I always thought that Led Zeppelin sort of evoked something within Dodgy, as in like.. We, we all met through adverts in Dodgy. So, I met Matthew through an advert in the paper and we met ma.. Andy through an advert in the paper. So we were all sort of like, and we had a different, different age groups where our different ages. I'm the oldest in the band, so I was kind of the bossiest, I suppose, in some ways. But yeah, we, I was like to punk music. Matthew was into soul and Mod music. Uh, with a drummer. He was in a lot, a lot of that. And then Andy, when we met Andy, he was into Led Zeppelin and Jimi Hendrix, who, and we were, we were excited by, you know, I think we [00:04:00] were more excited by bands that had gone before than bands that were currently doing things. Like in the eighties there wasn't much. It was, uh, it was obviously a stock a and in Wartman period in pop music. And, um, you know, the stuff that we were into was like The The and Talking Heads, Talk Talk. Yeah, and stuff like that. Uh, like sort of new wave, post-punk, you know, music. And then, yeah, I suppose the rock did play a part, but an early part. But I always thought, because Jimmy Page was from Heston and we moved to Heston. When we moved to Heston, Brotherson Road, we found out that Jimmy Page was from there. And so we, and Robert Plant was from Kidderminster, so we had this sort of, uh, we, yeah, Led Zeppelin was kind of a band that we sort of had a, a, a closeness to, because we all wanted signs, you know, but they had all their little signs, each member. So we got our designer, Chris, who was my brother, to design us little motifs for us as in Dodgy. So, yeah, Led, Led Zeppelin was, and they didn't really [00:05:00] fit any groove really. They didn't fit in with any other bands really. So, and I always thought Dodgy, we set ourselves apart. We were always on our own mission and we were just gonna leave. We were never gonna follow a path. We were always gonna be mark... marking our own room and leaving a trail. We always felt that. And here we are, at one of our trails. This is one of the trails for us where we were born really.

[00:05:22] **Jarek Zaba:** I mean, you said, um, you found each other through advert, so how did that... how did, how did that process begin? Was it you decided you wanted to form a band and you put the adverts out? Um, what was the, what was the, what was the genesis of all that?

[00:05:34] **Nigel Clark:** Well, the genesis was, well, I was, so, I, I always feel that I had an alternative life, so I, I can almost date. So I have this other Nigel going, not so much, but back then he was the person. So I left a job, I left a house, a mortgage, and, and I left a life, that was, most people wanted, and I thought I did, but I didn't. And then when I realized that I didn't want it, I felt free [00:06:00] to go and explore what I wanted. So I had this energy that was fearless in a way. And so I wasn't frightened about moving to London with nothing. And because I had dreams and I knew what I didn't want, and I think that, um, so I've probably gone off question there. What was the question again?

[00:06:16] **Jarek Zaba:** Uh, it was about the sort of, uh, the, the, the genesis of the band, essentially. And when you started. Decided to start putting out adverts for, to, to put out a band.

[00:06:24] **Nigel Clark:** So I was working at Rover and I was working on the night shift, and I was buying lots of music equipment and I bought a, I think I bought a 4-track recorder and I was really interested, but I, I hadn't really been in a proper band before. I'd been in a couple of bands like rehearse, I'd never done a gig, and I was about 18, 19, and I saw an advert in the local paper with a guy called, Nigel, who was looking for a band in Bromsgrove and I thought, well, why not? And so they were into similar bands. They were probably into The Cult and stuff like that, and U2, early U2. I like U2 up until The Joshua Tree [00:07:00] album. And yeah, I thought, and I went, yeah, okay, let's go and see them. So I went and saw them and I was firstly, amazed by Matthew, the drummer. He was only 16 then, but he was just like really flamboyant. I'd not really known about Keith Moon, but he had. I'd, I'd known the name and I knew he was in The Who, but I'd not really known about his style or anything like that. And so that took me down that path and yeah. And so me and Matthew, we, we forged a friendship that wasn't just musical, it was also lyrical as well.

[00:07:31] **Nigel Clark:** We had a lot of lyrical ideas that we wanted to write songs about that were, were emotional and it affected us that were real, you know, that weren't just like throwaway. They were like, they were real to us. And then, yeah, and then later on, subsequently, when we moved to London, we needed a guitarist and we put an advert in Loot, which was the free magazine, kind of like where everyone sold like, it was like, like eBay, but paper version of eBay, I suppose. And then on in that, they used to have like, we just put an [00:08:00] advert in saying Jimmy Hendrix or Pete Townshend or Jimmy Page wanted for band West London based, you know, young kids, no time wasters. And we had like 40 or 50 people turn up and we wanted specifically, yeah, we had like a checklist of like, so we tried to not get, we get rid of the time wasters, but sometimes it was quite difficult doing and we had our own. We auditioned

people, but we had, I'd built our own studio in the garage in Hounslow, which helped us immensely, because we had our own rehearsal room so we could invite people over and they could rehearse in our garage. And we lived underneath the flight, flight path for Heathrow. So noise wasn't a problem, really. So yeah, it was like kind of, and that's how we met Andrew, Andrew. So, yeah.

[00:08:40] **Jarek Zaba:** Yeah. Um. Um, yeah. So you mentioned, uh, Hounslow there. When, when was the moment when you decided you needed to move to London? And was that because London was essentially the, the Center for Music and Art?

[00:08:53] **Nigel Clark:** Um, well, when in, in 88, 88 seemed such a long year. Indeed, probably wasn't. Probably [00:09:00] like the length of the years, but I, I, I decided in I'd, I'd left my house and sold my house and split it with my girlfriend in the.. F.. January. I had one of those moments and I just, I remember, January the 1st, New Year, 88, and it just, and I just, I had an epiphany putting the milk bottles out, going, I can't do this anymore. I can't do any of it. I just, and I was only up 20 and I couldn't, and I just, I, I was, and I just wanted to prove to people that I could do it, and I did, but then I didn't want it, and it wasn't what I wanted. I had this epiphany and just went, I'm not gonna be doing this by the end of this year. I'm gonna be somewhere else. I just felt it. And then, um, that year I, I was in the pub with a couple of friends and I said, I really want to go to America for a holiday. I just, just wanted to do it and I had a bit of money cause it sold my house and a couple of guys went, okay, let's do it. So we went to America and in those three weeks we just traveled from New [00:10:00] York to Florida and back on sleeping on beaches. And I just always remember, I just, and I was in New York and I in 1988, which was quite a rough time in New York, and just thinking, God, I really want to live here. I just, I, I felt that city was where I wanted to be. Uh, so I came back from America thinking New York was my first option, but I knew it was kind of a pipe dream cause that had never happened. I did, you know, it would never have happened, but maybe it would. But so, and I was always intrigued by London. I'd come down to London cause I had family in London. My family originally from London on my dad's side. So I always felt a sort of kind of closeness to London and it kind of belonged to me anyway, a little bit. Or I belonged here, not to belong to me. I belonged here. So London wasn't such a big step. And I just spoke to Matthew and he was just finishing his A-Levels. And I said, look, man, I'm, I'm leaving my job. I'm, I've just come back from America. I'm not gonna do this. I'm not gonna do this, you know, this life. I wanna do something different that's not written [00:11:00] down. It's not, expla.. explained, it's my thing, too fancy moving to London. And he was like, well, I was gonna join the Navy but be a merchant navy. And I was like, you know, the offer was there

and he talked to his parents and they thought, cause his brother lived down here. His brother was studying at Saint Martins and so they thought it was a good idea. So we all moved in together in Battersea, but we couldn't afford it. So we lived Battersea for about six months and then we moved out to holiday home Hounslow. Well, we could afford it and we had about five bedrooms, so we rented out the other bedrooms and made a bit of money.

[00:11:31] **Jarek Zaba:** And uh, when did Kingston upon Thames first come on your radar?

[00:11:35] **Nigel Clark:** Well, I suppose, we sort of, we started doing some gigs around, I'm trying to think. It's hard to like place some of the times from the years, but I'm saying, I'm probably gonna say that 89, we started gigging. We moved down in October 88, 8, sometime around 89 we've started kicking in, but not with Andy, with another guitarist. And we weren't called Dodgy, so I'm pretty sure [00:12:00] about 1990, I mean, Julian would probably know. Is it Julian, the guy when it...?

[00:12:04] **Jarek Zaba:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

[00:12:05] **Nigel Clark:** He'd probably know the actual dates of when the Dodgy Club, but I'm gonna say 1990. We started doing gigs in London and the, uh, venues at that time, you'd have to pay to play a gig. So they'd give you, charge you 30 pounds and they'd give you 200 tickets and you'd have to sell them or give them out. And we didn't know anyone. So we were playing gigs in Islington. We were living in Hounslow. We were paying money and we were, it was just... There was no way we were gonna do it. It was gonna kill us. It was, there was no one turning up. Um, we had nothing to offer. We didn't know anyone. So by the, we'd get a headline slot of the St. George Robbery on a Thursday night, but headline slots weren't any good because it, it was after the trains or the tubes went, so you no wanna be there. And we were just sick of it. And, and I came up with the idea of like, let's find, we need to find our own venue. So one Tuesday night .Well, Tuesday night in about, I think September maybe [00:13:00] 1990, or I think I, I can't really quite remember. I think the first one is October, so it might have been October, 1990. And we came, we found this place and we just walking down and went, oh, what's this place? And we came down the stairs and there was tables and chairs and we went, this is perfect. This could be the club. So we spoke to Vincent and he said, yeah, and we had our PA system from the, from the rehearsal room in the garage. We had lights, we used to hire a few lights and stuff like that. And we, we, this became our job. This became my job, really. The other guys worked, and I used to come down, do posters in illegally, obviously putting them on different things, and we

got threatened by people, councils and all sorts. I didn't know, I didn't know you weren't allowed to do that. And, but I was really into making posters. I was really, I was doing it from.. I used to do it in my first band with Matthew when we worked at Rover. I'd go into the MD's office at Rover and he had a photocopy that would do a three photocopies. I'd design them all, like hand design and then print them off in my lunch [00:14:00] break. So, you know, I was quite, so I knew how to do it. I knew how to get people in. I just, and we didn't know anyone. And then the first night we did, I think 60 people came and it was, we'd made some money and it was real. And we played for half an hour and we DJ'd and it was a party. And I think word of mouth spread. And there was some weekends where the students weren't here and it was thin on the ground, but normally you'd get the locals coming in and in the end, it was, you know, it was packed every, every other week we did it. So, you know.

[00:14:30] **Nigel Clark:** What, what, what was it that appealed about this space? Was it the space itself? Was it the fact that it was in Kingston where there are students? Um, was it a combination of facts?

[00:14:40] **Nigel Clark:** Yeah, it was a combination. I think we knew that. There was lots of girls, so it was Tiffin Girls' School. There was like the university, there was the college, there was Twickenham, you know, it was, it was densely populated but with a lot of young people. Unlike Hounslow, Hounslow probably was the same, but it was hot. Hounslow was spread out a bit. There wasn't a scene in Hounslow, in any [00:15:00] any case. It wasn't a scene anywhere really. We just believe that when we came down here, we just thought, this is our cavern. This is our, like The Who had the Marquee. This is our residency. We, we lived that world. We... our like peers were The Who and the Small Faces and The Kinks. We didn't have any modern day peers cause we didn't know anyone. So we could only read history books or, you know, music books, autobiographies, and listen to the records of our heroes and go, well that's what they did and so why not? So we, that's what we did. We found our own little venue. And I still think, I still say to bands now, especially when I used to work in recording studios, you know, get yourself your own gig, find your own residency and start your own thing. Otherwise, it's really difficult. That's how it happens. You put you, you put the emotion and you have to, you, you, you start something and you start pushing. You don't know where it's gonna go, you know? But you start something and it has its own momentum then. I'm not saying that it's [00:16:00] easy, but at least you're going towards something. You're aiming towards something rather than just waiting for something to happen, you are pushing, pushing.



weed around there and stuff, you know, and like, you know. It was just fun and then, record companies. I'd be on the door and I'd go 10 pounds to come in and charge them 10 so we could make a bit of money. And we were very elusive. And we were very, and it goes all the way, all the way up until we got a management deal, [00:19:00] really, where that we lost control I think. And we lost a little bit of control. And, but before that, and I am sorry about that, I wish that we'd have kept more control all the way through cause I'm, I must I look back at it and I think, the enjoy, most enjoyable period of being in that band was this period and the period where we weren't letting record companies. And then we got a publishing offer from two publishing companies, and we told them to come down to our local pub in Hounslow and they had to play video football against each other for the band. Just doing things because I'd, I'd been in business, I'd worked at Rover, I'd seen how business worked and I didn't want this to be a business. I wanted it to be fun and ours, and it was.

[00:19:44] **Jarek Zaba:** Was that, sensible soccer or something like that?

[00:19:45] **Nigel Clark:** It was Italia '90, so there you go. It was Italia '90, so it was, well, 1990, the turn of a decade, we believed that we could do something and in those, you know, we had seven, well, I left in 98, so we had seven or [00:20:00] eight years of like, we were really busy. But I, unfortunately, I think that, you know, letting others take control of the band ultimately, let gave us less of a voice. Ultimately, and I think that's what ,what, you know, beware. That's what I say. Hold onto as much as you can for as long as you can.

[00:20:21] **Jarek Zaba:** Sure. Sure. Um, so you mentioned the radio, though. I know as, as, as time has gone on in, in, uh, the music industry, you know, going way back to the inventions of the phonograph, it's shifted as to what's most important for bands, their records, their live performances, getting on the radio. What was important for, for Dodgy in their, in their early years of success? Was it was the live performances you were doing here or, or that exposure on the radio?

[00:20:46] **Nigel Clark:** Well, I think I, you, it's never enough, really. I mean, when we, we were here, this was great. We wanted then, you know, we wanted to get on support slots for bands and we wanted to tour. We, I mean, the big things for us were like [00:21:00] touring outside Kingston. Gigging outside London, then gigging outside the country, you know, and traveling, going to Europe and doing a gig, and that'd be amazing. And so we had our, our goals were pretty, pretty simple, really. We didn't, e, we didn't make it easy, I think by calling ourselves Dodgy. I think we should in, in retrospect, we probably should have stuck with the name The Dodgy Club and continued as that because, I

mean, now you've got like the Bombay Bicycle Club and you've got a lot of clubs in band's names, but we, I think Dodgy was too ambiguous. People could read into it what they wanted. Well, well, why would I wanna go and see a band called Dodgy? Whereas the Dodgy Club felt more inviting and felt like, well, you know. I don't know. I mean, you retrospect is, it doesn't matter. We, I think, we did it because, and we, we, we almost crippled ourselves by calling us ourselves Dodgy.

[00:21:53] **Nigel Clark:** We made it very difficult for ourselves, but we still overcame it and we still did it, which is like amazing, you know, [00:22:00] it's almost like having a disability in a sense. You know, you, you, you, you, but you want to be like that. You want to be. You know, I, I, I think we wanted to have it hard in some way. I don't know why, I don't know why.

[00:22:12] **Jarek Zaba:** Tell us where, where did that na, uh, name come from? Where did the words, how did the word Dodgy come to be associated with, with, with the club and with the, uh, with the band?

[00:22:21] **Nigel Clark:** It was, um, well, we were looking for a band and, um, a band name and we had one called Coloursonic, which we hated, and we, no one agreed on it and we hated it. And we knew it was like a temporary thing, but we wanted to go out and gig.

[00:22:35] **Nigel Clark:** And then, one we used to go into West, into, you know, London on a Friday night and go to like Leicester Square and have a few beers and stuff like that. And I mean, um, one night we were, we were in Leicester Square and I had some magic mushrooms, dried ones, and we had them on a few slices of pizza on the train, the tube home at midnight. [00:23:00] And we started talking about the band name and then, Chris, Matthew's brother went, oh God, my stomach feels well dodgy. And everyone used the word dodgy back then. It was like, well, that's dodgy. Everything was dodgy. And then, and it was really funny. And so we started, and I went why don't we call a band Dodgy? Stupidly. Wish I'd have shut up. But it set us apart and we just had this whole thing of like going, well what, what about if we did do like merchandise? We started thinking about Dodgy merchandise. Like, you know, it would be great because everything was like, knock, you know, it was one of those things. It was off a daily, everything was knock off. It was like, you know, it was, that's, and that was my sort of, we would just move into London and we would take, we're a bit like, you know, a bit wide. Boy, that's, it was, that's what was around us. And I think we just, it just let it soak up. And then the next morning we woke up and went, have we called the band Dodgy? And we were like, yeah. And I remember Andy Ross, God bless him, he was there. His, his

name, he died this year actually Andy, he was a really nice guy and he used to work for Food, he [00:24:00] owned Food Records and he'd signed Blur and Jesus Jones and Diesel Park West. And he was really interested in Dodgy and I remember him phoning me up on uh, Monday. And he was like going, how you doing? Yay. We're gonna come into the office and have a chat. And I went, Andy, before you say anything, I've got, we've changed their name, cause they came up with Blur, Andy and Dave Bounce. They named Blur, Blur. They were called Seymour before and I think they had the same idea that they wanted to name us. And I said, Andy, before he say anything, we've named a band. He goes, oh, right, okay. What you called yourself? And he went, we went Dodgy. And he goes, are you sticking with that? And we went, yeah, we're sticking with that. And he went, well, I can't do anything with you then. So and so. I was like, damn, I have one link into the music industry. And he doesn't want anything to do with us. So, yeah. But you know, it's one of those things you gotta stick by your guns and know how, how stupid they are.

[00:24:48] **Jarek Zaba:** And, um, so you, among your hits you had Staying Out for the Summer, Good Enough. Um, when did you sort of realize your songs were, were were going to the next level? That they were becoming [00:25:00] mainstream? That, that, that, you know, people, people knew these songs?

[00:25:02] **Nigel Clark:** Yeah. I don't know. I, I, I suppose it was kind of accidental, really. I think, you know, we, I, I, I, and we have always written a lot of songs. So we've always had a lot of material. So like a lot of the second album was easy for us. The first album,

[00:25:20] **Jarek Zaba:** It's a Free, Free Piece Sweet. Yeah.

[00:25:21] **Nigel Clark:** Second album was Homegrown. The first album was a Dodgy Album that didn't do very well, but that had Lovebirds on it and that's got some really good songs on. We did that with Ian Broudie, uh, but it didn't do very well. It just didn't get, we just, I didn't, I don't know, don't know, who knows?

[00:25:34] **Nigel Clark:** Marketing, PR, us, whatever. Didn't really know. I think that's probably one of the cases where we did take our after ball and lose control a little bit cause it goes so fast and sometimes you go, they go, well what do you want for your record sleeve? Who do you want to produce it? And there's about 20 questions.

[00:25:49] **Nigel Clark:** You're like, hold on a second. Now, it'll take us a year to work all that out, you know, cause that's what it was. But you, you, you're

supposed to have an answer straight away. And we didn't. And took us by surprise on the first [00:26:00] album. The second album, Homegrown was going really well. And then, I found some lyrics in the back of a book that I'd written probably just before moving to London, called Staying Out for the Summer. And it was all about me leaving the job at Rover and my girlfriend, and all. And so basically, Staying Out for the Summer was my story of my life up until then. Work in a factory. I don't want to be late, you know, got these debts to pay for, you know, but they're gonna have to wait. And I'm just, and I was just desperate. And the metaphorical summer was, I was in the summer of my life. I was in my, I was 20, 21 and it was like, that was the summertime of my life and I wanted to be doing so, and it was true. And I wanted to do something with it rather than just waste it away. So, and then, when that song came out, I think that perfectly hit a spot with a lot of people. So, you know, and it was the, that was the song and that is my most enjoyable song out of probably all of them, you know, because it is so, [00:27:00] it is the story of the band or me anyway, you know?

[00:27:03] **Jarek Zaba:** And how about Good Enough? When you wrote that, did you know you had a hit on your hands as you were writing it?

[00:27:07] **Nigel Clark:** Um, yeah, I did. I did. I kind of knew that it was different. I wrote it at home, my son was... It was 1995. My wife was pregnant with my son, Marley, and I'd written it on, I'd used it. My, I'd just got a sampler. I'd just got an S900 on, yes, Akai S900, and I didn't even know how to use it, so it came about quite accidental. Uh, me looking for a drum loop. I sampled a drum loop and I couldn't find it on the keyboard. And then, I accidentally did this thing and it went and I went, oh, that's quite good there. So I got my bass out and went - tum, tum, tum, tum, pa - ti - and I was like, I got this groove. The groove was from a Lee Dorsey song by Alan Tucson and The Meters, who were, and I just took this little sample and then, uh, yeah, and Good Enough just came about and I played at the guys, and they were like, wow, it doesn't sound like Dodgy. I'm like, I know. What should we do with it? But the, [00:28:00] everyone we were touring with, really loved it and they were going play that song again and it was like, really good. And it's got a great groove and so, you know, it became, we did it in the studio and it just, and I just knew then, I just knew then. But it was written, it was written entirely for my son, really. And like, you know, the fact that we are in this life and not, we are never good enough. And I was just like saying, you are, you know, you know you are to me, so, that's enough, really. And you know, it was one of those sort of songs. And I think that's kind of the, the, the message of Dodgy comes through that we are, we... I always thought that we were the people's band and we were, we were work, you know, working class enough to want to get out of that, to want to better ourselves. But you can't escape that. You are like, you know, you are like

everybody else. And we weren't any, anyone different, you know, we were just normal, but we just tried really hard.

[00:28:49] **Jarek Zaba:** And during, during this whole period, uh, were you aware or did you consider yourself part of this thing called Britpop? Like was, was Britpop a thing that was [00:29:00] conscious in your head? Um, did you, did you consider yourself part of this Blur, Oasis, Pulp, Sway kind of?

[00:29:07] **Nigel Clark:** Not really. Not really. I mean, we were very much anti - the - whole - flag - wave in. Stuff, The Union Jack stuff at the time, because it did evoke some problems. And, to be honest, I thought, I, I, I've got an interview coming up in, in this afternoon in London, Camden, and they, they was talking about Britpop, and I was thinking that, you know, the, the thing, the start of the nineties, the turn of the nineties was a really weird time. And I can only think that Britpop is, is a word that badly describes eclecticism, which was the nineties, was eclectic. The nineties was about, you know, trans-global underground, left field underworld, and then, you know, Blur and Pulp and all these, and, but you could be into them all, but they might not be the same music or it was just eclectic. But Britpop just seemed, uh, a little bit bo... you [00:30:00] know, a little bit stale, but we did get bummed in with it and it was... I don't know if it benefited us or not. I mean, we, when people talk about it, they don't really mention Dodgy because we didn't adopt the Mod Parka style dress. You know, we didn't. Oasis and Blur did. Oasis were our support band in Manchester.

[00:30:23] **Jarek Zaba:** That's alright.

[00:30:23] **Nigel Clark:** Yeah. So I remember them supporting us and just thinking, no, all right. They sound like the Sex Pistols with a bit of Beatles thrown in. And we played with Blur quite a lot back in the day, but we, you know, it was manufactured and it was manufactured by Alan McGee and Andy Ross and Dave Bell and then, you know, and the whole idea of releasing the single on the same day, it was a brilliant marketing campaign.

[00:30:45] **Nigel Clark:** So let's look at Britpop has been a brilliant PR marketing campaign. All the bands will step away from it and say, we just got bunched in with it, really, everyone did. I mean, they were trying to say Brit Rock a few years ago, you know, but Britpop, we were always [00:31:00] unashamedly a pop, pop band because we thought we were a pop band. You know, a pop with like The Who were a pop band. You know, the chaotic pop.

[00:31:10] **Jarek Zaba:** I think it's a really nice way of putting it actually. Yeah, cause I, I've always thought that, that Oasis - Blur rivalry never made any sense, cause they barely shared any similarities.

[00:31:17] **Nigel Clark:** It didn't.

[00:31:18] **Jarek Zaba:** That's bad.

[00:31:18] **Nigel Clark:** It didn't, but it was like, but I think ev.. what happened in that time was... it was a culmination and everyone played their part in it, from the audiences to the media to, and not in a good way, into the bands. They all played along with it and it was brilliant. It was, you know, you look back on it now and it's like certainly was a golden period compared to what is going on now, where we are sat in a venue, where venues are closing, where you know, the energy bills and it's like, this is 2022, and it's like, oh, sh.. It's 30 years later and it's got worse. You know? It should have got better, surely..

[00:31:53] **Jarek Zaba:** Yeah. Um, now this might be a tale of not trusting what you read on Wikipedia, but, um, your band's Wikipedia [00:32:00] page, I just, a thing, a thing that stood out to me and, and, uh, I, I just thought, um,

[00:32:04] **Nigel Clark:** ...gotta ask that question..

[00:32:05] **Jarek Zaba:** You... well, it's just an intriguing one. It just, it cla.. It says you, you were the second UK actor playing Sarajevo after the lifting of the siege in August, 1996. Is that true?

[00:32:14] **Nigel Clark:** Yeah.

[00:32:14] **Jarek Zaba:** Yeah. How was that experience?

[00:32:17] **Nigel Clark:** Well, I'd finished a book by Ed Vulliamy, uh, which was written.. (he is a observer or an observer journalist), and it was written about the crisis and the, the conflict in Bosnia, former Yugoslavia, which wasn't as simple as everybody thought, because it was a war between Mus..., uh, Bosnian Muslims, Bosnian Croats, and Bosnian Serbs. And there was, and so like normal wars are like normal, simple. It was like, you know, you like to go Bos, England against Germany and America vs. Japan, and that was it. That's how we understood war, and it wasn't like that. Anyway, I finished witness book and Bosnia was part of Europe. It was set up as part of Eu.. It was part of Europe, [00:33:00] it was part of EU. But he had, he had its own flag and it was part of Europe and we let them down. We didn't arm them, we left them in

Sarajevo with, with makeshift stuff and we didn't arm them. And so you had all these atrocities, dropping nitro and stuff like that. We, um, had talked about going to Bosnia because it was part of Europe and we were doing a European tour, and we thought it'd be really brilliant for morale for people, and it would be a great positive for the story. And to go to these places that are written about Muslim enclaves.

[00:33:32] **Nigel Clark:** What is a Muslim enclave? A Muslim enclave in Western world is like where in, in Bosnia is a village and it's got a, it's got a, a church that about the, there you go. But no one used to go. It was, everyone was in the pubs, you know, literally in Mostar where we went, everyone was in the pubs and it was just like a normal playing darts and pool. It was normal, but because of the Islam and they, they try and paint it a different way in the Western media. So anyway, [00:34:00] we decided.. we were spoke, what good enough was in the charts, we were going to do Top of the Pops. We were asked to do networth. We were asked to do all these things where yet we had tickets to go to Sarajevo from.. I can't remember where we were. We were in somewhere, Switzerland, and we were gonna go back, but we went, let's go. But we couldn't get our gear through. We got stopped in Austria, so we had to get a UNHCR convoy to take us to Sarajevo, uh, which was very dangerous, which was an most amazing experience, but it was very dangerous. There was snipers, there was like all the petrol stations had been mined. Uh, we, we, we were, it was, it was a ridiculous thing to do with pontoon bridges, cause the bridges had been blown up. There was, we just traveled for miles and miles, and miles, and miles through the North Yugoslavia, through the Krajina. Um, what, just witnessing and seeing houses that had gotten no, that had been burnt out through war, which is pretty much what's happening in Ukraine right now. So it was a conscious effort on our part to sort of bring the [00:35:00] war closer to people that we could do something about it. And hopefully that did help, you know, the, the task for the US for.. and UN, getting involved and protecting people. So yeah, we went out there for a week and it was bloody crazy and we did gigs out there where, and we went out a few times. We went to Mostar as well, where we did a gig with Mostar people, with kids from Mostar. And everyone in the audience was armed with machine guns in our bags. It was crazy. It was really crazy. And you're drinking afterwards of all these security services and they're going 'well go.. what is in your bag?' And it goes, submachine gun. What? What's submachine gun for? This is the frontline mate. And I'm like, whoa. So it was very, we were, yeah, it was an amazing experience. It was, some people would say it was, it was career suicide by doing it and not doing top of the pop, good enough, cause it could have gone to number one, but... Hey, you know, you only live once.

[00:35:52] **Jarek Zaba:** Absolutely.

[00:35:53] **Nigel Clark:** What story to tell?

[00:35:54] **Jarek Zaba:** Incredible story. Yeah. Yeah. Um, yeah. And, uh, so...

[00:35:59] **Nigel Clark:** from back to [00:36:00] Bosnia, well, I'm back.

[00:36:02] **Jarek Zaba:** Good, good, good, headline for this interview, if it was a written article, um, yeah. In fact, bringing, it back to Bacchus, um, I just wanna, you know, last portion of the interview, bring it up to the present day. Um, first of all, you know, we are here in the space. Uh, what sort of memories were invoked when you first came back in here? And, and, and is it different in any way? I mean, you can't do much in terms of, um, construction work and extensions and that sort of thing, but is there, is it, do you notice much change?

[00:36:29] **Nigel Clark:** Mm-hmm... no, I, one thing I do notice, it's a funny thing. I don't know if you go through this process, I, I came in and went, God, it's really small. It's really small. And like, I mean, literally you could get like 60 people, 70 people in there. We used to get about 130, something like that, and these people would be sat around there and in here. I love these little chair airways, by the way. Um, but I think it's one of those things, it, everything looks bigger. When I went, I go back to Birmingham, we played the... it used to be called, uh, I think it's [00:37:00] called the Institute now in Digbeth. Don't know if you know that one. It used to be called the Digbeth Civic Hall. I jumped off the balcony there in a punk gig in 1993, nearly break my leg. Didn't, but jumped off, which is quite high. But I remember playing there recently and going, oh my God, it's so small. That used to be, when I used to go there, when I was a kid, it was massive to see all these punk bands and then you go and play there, it's like, oh, it's not really that big. Coming back here, the smell. The, um, you know, the sort of basement, no air, but what a great, when you put the music on in ear and people used to come down in the excitement and we used to play at 10 o'clock, there was such a buzz. And we, we, we did our first, we got our first ever, uh, piece in The Face. I didn't, might have told you this, you know, The Face magazine?

[00:37:46] **Nigel Clark:** The Face magazine was like an art magazine. It was.. kind of like a arty fashion magazine like i-D magazine. And The Face came down here and a journalist came down and went, this is amazing. Did a whole article on us, talking [00:38:00] about Mick Jagger over the front of any type Jagg imagining Dodgy. Uh, but we did a photo session by the telephone boxes now, the leaning telephone boxes in Keman, in Kitman, in, uh, in Kingston.

[00:38:11] **Nigel Clark:** And, so that was our first ever photo session. I think, or second? We did the anonyne and we wouldn't show our faces. We took our heroes and we put them in front of our faces, like Bob Marley, Woody Allen, and Groucho Marx, and John Lennon and people. We had these things over our faces. So there was four of us as well, and there was only three in the band. So we just tried to confuse people. I think that was our idea. We wanted to like, you know, and I think we should have kept doing that. I think there's, you know, when you look at bands who do keep the mysty.. it's a bit better. You know, it's more fun, cause you don't get, your personal life doesn't get pulled, pulled into it, you know? It's nice when you can keep the two diff separate really, I think. I don't know, wouldn't you ask me on that laser?

[00:38:52] **Jarek Zaba:** But you said the, earlier in the interview you said, um, your, the advice you give to young musicians and performers is to try and find [00:39:00] their own equivalent kind of space, like Bacchus. Um, but unfortunately in, in London, in Kingston, venues are, are closing. Is it, is it harder now for, for bands to find these sorts of spaces?

[00:39:11] **Nigel Clark:** Yeah. Yeah, I do think it is. I think I mean, I think everybody is looking around in, especially in the entertainment industry, in music, that's what I know about bands and stuff. Everyone's looking around. I mean, a lot of bands help each other out now, which is great.

[00:39:24] **Nigel Clark:** You know, they'll do three bands, four band nights, and so they, you know, obviously they can get their fan bases together. Um, yeah, I mean, being in a band 30 years later, let's look at it. You're gonna have to do things online. Uh, I, I'm even thinking of doing that. I'm moving at the moment, but I'm gonna set up a performance space that's gonna be live performance on at night, where people can, you know, I can broadcast into their homes and have different guests come along and do live jam sessions from my studio.

[00:39:53] **Nigel Clark:** Cause I'm gonna get, bloody wise, a fi ..fiber. So I can do uploads really quickly. [00:40:00] I think that's a future and I'm, and I think people can build stuff and then, once you've built up your following online, then start doing physical gigs again. Cause it will pick up. But you know, people just don't go out anymore.

[00:40:11] **Nigel Clark:** I think the pandemic really changed a lot of people's outlook on life and the home became more than a home, and going out became more, you know, you get prepared to go out. You can't just go out now. I mean, I used to love that, but you can't, you can't, you know, it's just, it's expensive

and like pubs and everything are under threat, because of energy bills. So I'm one of those people that always believes as a way, and I'll find a way. And I think people need to look and go. There is a way, so just try and find it. There is a way, if it wasn't int..., I'm pretty sure it's the internet short term, I'm pretty sure. I mean, that's quite an easy safe bet. But even for musicians, playing live like we did, I did lockdown gigs and I still get people when I go out doing gigs, going, your lockdown gigs were brilliant. They saved me through the.. You know, because people were [00:41:00] locked down and I see that this winter and the energy crisis, people are gonna be locked down. So it's the same. So I'm more prepared, more than prepared to, to go out and do music from my home, uh, where people can enjoy it and they haven't gotta pay parking, petrol, food, drinks, blah, you know, 150 quid a night just to go and see a band. It's ridiculous...

[00:41:23] **Jarek Zaba:** And is the idea of the traditional band slightly going out the window, as well as, DJs and MCs, and electronic influences become more, more important? Or do you think there, there's always a place for, for the guys with guitars kind of, kind of vibe?

[00:41:35] **Nigel Clark:** Uh, yeah.

[00:41:36] **Jarek Zaba:** I mean, guys and girls, of course.

[00:41:37] **Nigel Clark:** I, I mean, personally I'm not so into the music guitar band thing anymore. I'm not. I mean, I have moved on. I mean, if it's good, if they are really good and they've got those of vocals and you know, and they write great songs, then yeah, g.. give it a go. Totally. But I've never been into, I, you know, I weirdly, I got into punk. I'm not into punk. I like all the old punk.

[00:41:57] **Nigel Clark:** I don't like punk now. I like still my [00:42:00] old punk, but I don't, you know, rock bands don't really do it for me. So I do like the technology. I do, do a lot of technology stuff at home. I like drum machines, I like sequences. I like... you know, I like all that. I like, you know, plugging things in and seeing what's gonna happen. I am an experimental and I like it, and where it goes, you know, I would love to do something down here with my electronic music. You know, and visuals and stuff like that. And this is perfect because, you know, it's like you got a bit of DJ and this is the perfect venue to do it, you know, and start building something, but I'm gonna have to do it online now really, and sort of hopefully build something that way. But yeah, you know, if it, it's for me, it's always come down to, and I think one of the philosophies, it's just reminded me our philosophy, cause we used to DJ here. And it didn't matter when it was from as long as it was good. So we used to DJ

on the posters. I wish to love... I'll try and get you a poster. I've got one somewhere that says what bands we used to play, so we used to go Beatles to Beastie Boys, N.W.A to Neil Young. Beach Boys to the Dead [00:43:00] Kennedys. We used to, it was eclectic and it was, and if you looked at our Dodgy poster, two years later, having new social club started with Chemical Brothers and their musical i..ideology was exactly the same as us. You know, it was like, so, but we were the eclectic, we were that band. You know, that started off, a lot off that whole thing because, back in the late eighties, early nineties, it was Camden Palace we used to go to on a Tuesday night, but they would play all the grungy bands and all the new songs by, you know, Alice in Chains. But we weren't into that. It wasn't our music. It was just like, we were into The Clash. We weren't even going then.

[00:43:36] **Nigel Clark:** You know. I think we, we were really interested in the culture of music and our heroes that were real heroes to us, rather than politicians and people.

[00:43:44] **Jarek Zaba:** I'm glad you mentioned, the.. a poster and um, um, I was actually gonna, gonna ask you about, um, cause this, this project is Art, Music, Pop Fashion. Music's the sort of center core of it, but we're looking at how art and fashion interacts with music. So things like [00:44:00] posters and album artwork are really interesting to us. Did, did Dodgy kind of have a.. an aesthetic, uh, a logo, a brand, a kind of, um, and what kind of thought process went into that?

[00:44:10] **Nigel Clark:** Oh, was it? Yeah. No, it was, it was a, it was a, and it wasn't aesthetic. It was, I kind of based the posters on The Who maximum R&B poster that we, that we had in our house, um, which is the one with the guitar. You'll know it. And so basically, you used to say Dodgy Club here. Kindly was like probably a.. Maybe a picture was blank, but then we'd just say the, and DJ and Dodgy play live. It was very simple, but during that time as well, we were looking at like, well, you know, people were wearing flares, you know, it was like baggy and it was like everyone was doing that, and like wearing weird T-shirts and with sleeves, so, excuse me. We had an idea of putting patches on our jeans and stuff like that, which we didn't know.. Had already happened in the sixties, but, you know..

[00:44:57] **Jarek Zaba:** And, when you think about Bacchus [00:45:00] today, I mean, I've, I've mentioned to you that, uh, in 2006, me, and me, and my student friends used to treat this place almost as a second home. We'd be here all the time and it very much served the role among students at that time of being the alternative place, the kind of slightly dirtier, grimmer place where you

had Oceana, you had the works, which played much more sort of chart music. Uh, this is where you came for a bit, something a bit more alternative. Um, and I think that legacy sort of goes back to, back to your days. I mean, what, what, what, what, what do you think when you, when you think about that kind of legacy?

[00:45:34] **Nigel Clark:** It was very much born from the do - it - yourself angle. We're building our own rehearsal room, moving to London, believing dreams, you know, holding onto those things, you know, holding onto our, the things that we hold so dear and, and I still believe in that.

[00:45:49] **Nigel Clark:** Um.. Yeah, it was the alternative. It was cheap. It wasn't being ripped. You weren't being ripped off. We wanted to get people involved. We.. you know, we were [00:46:00] also involved back early on in getting young people to vote and register to vote, and be involved politically with Charter 88, and activate, and working with, you know, people to try and get them involved in politics and in their own politics, in their community. You know, even though it's grungy, it didn't cost us anything. We didn't have any money, but we made the mo... It's like, we've got a song called 'Making the Most Of' what we've got, and it's this, this is what it is. It's this, that, that is our life. It's like, you know, I would still do it now. You know, if I still saw this place down the.. This is perfect. This is perfect. It is perfect. If you're looking, if a band is looking for somewhere to play their band, these songs, and get an audience. This is perfect. And it's still perfect cause it's, it's a step, it's a movement forward rather than sitting in your bedroom.

[00:46:51] **Jarek Zaba:** Do you think this place sort of owes some of its unique character as a nightclub to the fact that it wasn't built as a nightclub? I mean, you've got, the DJs are in the corner there and what I think [00:47:00] used to be a pantry cupboard or something like that.

[00:47:02] **Nigel Clark:** I mean, I don't know..

[00:47:03] **Jarek Zaba:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. Like in that corner there. Yeah.

[00:47:05] **Nigel Clark:** I don't think that ever opened. It was a door back in the down. Think we had, I don't know..

[00:47:09] **Jarek Zaba:** Where were your DJs then?

[00:47:10] **Nigel Clark:** On stage.

[00:47:11] **Jarek Zaba:** I see.

[00:47:11] **Nigel Clark:** So we had them here. So we had them here. Well, we hadn't read a stage. It was no stage, so we had like, we had so many, we had like projectors. We had a big sheet on the back there. I don't think that air conditioning unit was there either. I can't remember. We had a sheet somewhere and we used to put projections onto it. I mean, we just made the most of it really. And it was a shitty PA probably. My shitty PA, but I mean 30 years old. But like, you know..

[00:47:36] **Jarek Zaba:** I mean, did, did, did the size of the place pose some challenges?

[00:47:38] **Nigel Clark:** No.

[00:47:38] **Jarek Zaba:** And so did getting equipment down and all that sort of stuff?

[00:47:41] **Nigel Clark:** Not really.

[00:47:41] **Jarek Zaba:** No?

[00:47:41] **Nigel Clark:** Not really, no. I have.. No, we used to, we used to have a van. We had, I remember we used to give girls some stuff, people, back lifts, back to like, we used to get loads of nurses down from some nursing college. I remember. They were pretty crazy. And we'd get a van and take them back and yeah, that would be funny...[00:48:00]

[00:48:00] **Jarek Zaba:** Good stuff, good stuff. Um, right. We're nearly done. Um, I've just got one question, which we're gonna ask all of our interviewees on this, um, on this project. And it's, it's simply these, these words, Arts, Music and Pop Fashion. When you think of those words, what kind of images does that evoke for you?

[00:48:15] **Nigel Clark:** Art, Music, and Pop Fashion. Wow. Uh, my, my sort of heroes are, uh, Andy Warhol, Vivianne Westwood, uh, Basquiat, um, my, there's, there's another artist. There's, yeah, I, I, I love pop-art. You know, David Hockney. I love the, the art side of it. The fashion side of it with, with Vivianne Westwood. Um, music's, you know, the, everyone talks about music.

[00:48:42] **Nigel Clark:** G voucher from KRASS. She was the designer for KRASS. She was a massive influence on me. I thought her artwork was

amazing. Still is. I think she, she broke the mold. She, she brought something different. So, yeah, visual.. Uh, you know, it's.. I, personally, personally, fashion, I feel a [00:49:00] bit little bit awkward as a person because I'm quite tall and get gangly, and look quite strange. But I am interested in fashion and I really appreciate it. And I was a punk and I loved punk cause punk released me. And, and I think nowadays with, you know, in some ways with, you know, people identifying as whatever they want to is also a punk thing. And I like that. I, I like people expressing themselves in their own unique way.

[00:49:26] **Nigel Clark:** I think we are unique and I think we, we need people to be unique, to push other people on forwards, because otherwise what's life for? We don't wanna just sit at home, you know, life is about expression and life is about getting involved and, you know, I, I was thinking about this. Life poses many troubles and problems daily. When you go into a recording studio, you have the chance to put them right. It's my little quote I thought of last night before I went to sleep.

[00:49:55] **Jarek Zaba:** Lovely, lovely. Is there anything else, uh, you think you haven't covered, um, in [00:50:00] this, in this story that you'd like to mention?

[00:50:01] **Nigel Clark:** No, but I'm really excited about coming back now. I can't wait. It's gonna be so brilliant. I just, I don't know how we are gonna do it and like, you know, but, but yeah, I think it'll be amazing. We might have to do two nights or something like that or just do a mass, I don't know. It'll be so good. I wanna get, I wanna do it. I think it'll be brilliant.

[00:50:18] **Jarek Zaba:** That's the next chapter.

[00:50:19] **Nigel Clark:** I think it's, I think it's a brilliant, I think it's a brilliant legacy, but I also think it's a brilliant story and I think it's a story that could, we could, we could bounce off, you know, like I used as a springboard to go and do what we wanna do next.

[00:50:32] **Nigel Clark:** Absolutely.

[00:50:32] **Jarek Zaba:** Couldn't agree more, which is exactly why we wanted to talk to you.

[00:50:35] **Jarek Zaba:** Nigel. Thank you so much for your time.

[00:50:36] **Nigel Clark:** Thank you very much.

[00:50:36] **Jarek Zaba:** Cheers.

[00:50:37] **Nigel Clark:** It's great.