

[00:00:00] **Jarek:** Don't need to clap, so yeah, off we go. Um, right, this is Jarek Zaba for the AMP Kingston project from Creative Youth, exploring art, music and pop fashion heritage in the Kingston borough and beyond. It is Tuesday, October 25th, 2023, and I'm with Stephen Budd. Today, Stephen is a well renowned music executive, but one who can trace his early love of live music to Kingston, and Kingston Polytechnic in particular.

[00:00:26] **Jarek:** Stephen, do you mind stating your name for the tape, as well as your date and place of birth?

[00:00:29] **Stephen Budd:** I'm Stephen Budd. I was born on Christmas Day, 1958, in Hampton Court. There you go. Down the river. Just down the river.

[00:00:39] **Jarek:** That's exactly where I'd like to start was in your, in your early years and upbringing so you were, uh, were you raised in, in Kingston, Surbiton?

[00:00:47] **Stephen Budd:** I was raised in Hinchley Wood and then I lived in Surbiton, Thames Ditton, so in this area. Kingston was very much my capital of my youth. So [00:01:00] where I would come and hang out when I was a kid,

[00:01:02] **Jarek:** uh, yeah, I can recognise that. Um, I, I'm from a village called Cookley but it's near the town of Kidderminster is the capital of Cookley.

[00:01:07] **Stephen Budd:** Right?

[00:01:07] **Jarek:** Yeah, yeah, yeah, I understand that. Um, yeah, I mean, what are your, um, memories of how much you enjoyed the town growing up? Did you like being in Kingston?

[00:01:17] **Stephen Budd:** Well, it was the place that represented excitement to me as a kid. You know, it's where I would come and buy records, you know. There was a flourishing record scene in Kingston when I was 12, 13.

[00:01:31] **Stephen Budd:** I just came out of the station here and remembered there was an amazing old second hand record shop on the station there. Uh, literally, which is now a, I don't know, it's a kiosk or something, and, uh, used to go in there and buy records for 50p and I remember buying an album there by a band called Dr. Strangely Strange, which I think I paid one pound for, and I think it's worth about three or four hundred quid now, so, it's somewhere in my loft.

[00:01:57] **Jarek:** Yeah. Doctor Strangely Strange. Who [00:02:00] played?

[00:02:00] **Stephen Budd:** Ah, well, there you go. If you don't know, you don't know, but I'm pretty sure they would have played at Kingston Poly back in the day.

[00:02:06] **Jarek:** Right. Okay. Okay. Yeah, I mean, um. Yeah, that brings me on nicely into sort of how your early music taste developed. Was music big in your household growing up, parents?

[00:02:16] **Stephen Budd:** Um, not really. I mean my dad had

[00:02:19] **Thomas Gibbons:** Sorry, could you start it with something like, music wasn't that big in my household, or just, just, just so, just so they won't have to get out of the question.

[00:02:27] **Stephen Budd:** Editing, yeah, sure, yeah. Um, music wasn't very big in my childhood when I grew up. I mean, my dad had one of the very first cassette players and I remember we had about half a dozen cassettes.

[00:02:39] **Stephen Budd:** Um, Frank Sinatra, Herb Albert and the Tijuana Brass, The Beatles. Um, but, you know, I started collecting records when I was 10 or 11. I mean, the very first record I bought was Ball of Confusion by The Temptations. An amazing, amazing track. Still sounds as good today as it did back then. [00:03:00] And the first album I bought in Kingston was, um, Led Zeppelin IV, I think.

[00:03:08] **Stephen Budd:** I think that was the first album I bought. The day it came out, I remember queuing up to get it. But before that it was all singles.

[00:03:17] **Jarek:** It feels like for a 10 year old you had quite mature tastes if you were listening to The Temptations.

[00:03:24] **Stephen Budd:** I think, you know, there was, you know, you listened to Radio 1, you listened to John Peel on the radio, you listened to Radio Luxembourg, you know, and then local pirate radio stations that existed slightly later.

[00:03:40] **Stephen Budd:** Radio Jaguar, and there were pirate stations dotted around the area in Surrey.

[00:03:49] **Jarek:** We still have Radio Jackie in Tolworth.

[00:03:50] **Stephen Budd:** Radio Jackie, of course, which was a pirate station back then. Yeah.

[00:03:54] **Jarek:** Yeah, in fact it has a statue of a pirate outside the studio these days.

[00:03:58] **Stephen Budd:** Right.

[00:03:59] **Jarek:** Just to [00:04:00] really remind you.

[00:04:03] **Jarek:** Yeah, in terms of those, uh, those routes into those records, so, so was, was the radio the main, the main route, or?

[00:04:11] **Stephen Budd:** Radio was absolutely the main route, and you had Top of the Pops, you know, I mean, and early doors, um, there was a couple of TV shows, um, obviously the Old Grey Whistle Test, but before the Old Grey Whistle Test there was a show called Disco 2, and I remember that, you know, staying up late to watch Disco 2, because I think it came on around about 11 o'clock, um.

[00:04:34] **Stephen Budd:** But, you know, and then you'd see occasionally artists playing on different kind of vari- bad variety shows. But there was such limited choice, you know. Um, but also there was the time to listen then, you know. It's, it's like we weren't being bombarded attention wise constantly. So, you know, if you got an album, if you went out and bought a record, it was a big deal.

[00:04:57] **Stephen Budd:** You, you went home and you listened to it. 30, [00:05:00] 40, 50 times, you know, you've got to know it in intimate detail and because you needed to save up your pocket money to go and buy that or your, the money that you used to earn, you know, working in the fruit and veg shop on a Saturday, you know, those, those records held great value.

[00:05:17] **Jarek:** It's really interesting what you're saying about, um, how, how much you'd listen to an album and you'd listen to it, well, wear it out essentially 40, 50 times. Um, we had a discussion, we had a, we recorded a podcast here on Monday, which was all about how music relates to art. Um, and we're talking about album artwork.

[00:05:32] **Jarek:** Another thing, presumably, that you would have done would also have been taking in all the album artwork, the sleeve notes, all of that sort of thing.

[00:05:38] **Stephen Budd:** Oh, absolutely. Catalogue numbers. You know, like, obsessing about record labels. You know, like, I remember being in Cubs and having arguments with friends about which was the best record label when I was 12.

[00:05:52] **Stephen Budd:** You know, and it's like, I was Motown, Motown and my mate was Trojan, you know, and then I started to get into [00:06:00] Trojan of course, which, you know, was early reggae. Um, and yeah, we, we were quite musically literate early on and, you know, I look back and listen to, look at some of the records that I bought when I was 12, 13, 14, you know.

[00:06:18] **Stephen Budd:** People like the Mahavishnu Orchestra and the sort of jazzier end of Santana and people like that and you go like, wow, yeah, that was quite a sophisticated music taste at that age, you know.

[00:06:30] **Jarek:** And how about live music? What's your first memory of live music?

[00:06:33] **Stephen Budd:** Well, the very first band I ever saw was UFO, um, who went on to become an, an extraordinarily big, not particularly to my taste, um, uh, sort of metal act in the, in the 70s and 80s.

[00:06:51] **Stephen Budd:** And, you know, I think they're even still around today, but there was one of their first shows that was at Kingston Swimming Baths, which [00:07:00] was Called

[00:07:01] **Jarek:** Coronation Hall.

[00:07:02] **Stephen Budd:** Coronation Hall, that's right. But it was the swimming bath where they laid, um, planks and um, parquet flooring over the swimming pool in every winter and turned it into a dance hall, and they put on UFO.

[00:07:17] **Stephen Budd:** And I said to my mum, Hey, listen, there's a band playing in Kingston, and I was 11. And she said, well. And I was bugging her to go and she said, Alright, well I'll drop you off outside and I'll come and pick you up after the show. And I went and saw UFO. And that was the first show that I ever saw. But the, uh, the second show that I, I went to was, was at Kingston Poly.

[00:07:41] **Stephen Budd:** And, um, And I can tell you all about that if you like.

[00:07:45] **Jarek:** Yes. Maybe, uh, yeah, first before we get into the, the, the Poly, maybe just, yeah. How, how, what were your memories of that uh, UFO gig?

[00:07:54] **Stephen Budd:** Dim and distant, I mean, we're talking 1971 or [00:08:00] early 1972, I think 1971 actually. Um. Um, I can hardly remember anything about it at all.

[00:08:11] **Stephen Budd:** I mean, just, I was just like, wow, I'm at a gig and it's a band and it's real live musicians. And it was like, okay, this is fabulous.

[00:08:20] **Jarek:** And did you, did you go to many other gigs at the Coronation Hall?

[00:08:23] **Stephen Budd:** No, there weren't many. I don't think they put on that many. Um, so, you know, the gigs that I went to started going to, I mean, were the gigs at the Poly.

[00:08:33] **Stephen Budd:** And then, when I got a little bit older, some of the pubs in Kingston, the Toby Jug in Tolworth, um, there was a place near here called the Kaleidoscope, um, which I seem to remember was just the other side of the railway station, um, which was a kind of like late night, drug rehabilitation hangout kind of place, but they used to put bands on at like midnight, [00:09:00] and I remember going to see things there.

[00:09:03] **Jarek:** Um, I, I, yeah, I spoke to Peter Tagg who was in one of the founding members of Cardiacs.

[00:09:09] **Stephen Budd:** Yes.

[00:09:09] **Jarek:** Um, and he said they played their first gig at Kaleidoscope.

[00:09:12] **Stephen Budd:** I think I was at that gig, yeah, because I ended up signing them a record label I started. And, um, but, yeah, and then there were other pubs dotted around Kingston.

[00:09:25] **Stephen Budd:** Um, which was a late, later on, but, you know, when I was, yeah, 12, I think was the first time I went to Kingston Poly. Yeah. I shouldn't have been there at all.

[00:09:35] **Jarek:** Yeah, so why don't you tell the story of, of, of the Spirit gig and, uh, yeah, just start at the start. Um, when, when did you come across this band and when did you decide you, you, you wanted to go and see them?

[00:09:44] **Stephen Budd:** Well, um, I was at home one night and, Watching the TV and I was staying up late to watch Disco 2, which I used to watch. And, uh, which was a prototype version of the old Grey Whistle Test. [00:10:00] And on Disco 2 that week, whichever week it was, featured Spirit. And Spirit were this American band, three piece, fronted by a guy called Randy California, great name.

[00:10:14] **Stephen Budd:** Who was an incredible guitar player, and they were signed to CBS, I think, and they'd had an album out called The Twelve Dreams of Dr. Sardonicus. Who wouldn't want to go and see a band who had an album out called that? Which was actually a brilliant album. They were kind of a West Coast band, but funny enough, um, he, Randy California, had early doors met Jimi Hendrix in the late 60s and him and Hendrix would become very good friends and Hendrix showed him a lot about playing the guitar and he formed this band Spirit and they had a couple of inverted commas hit singles.

[00:10:54] **Stephen Budd:** Um, so they were coming over to the UK to tour. Uh, I don't know if it was their [00:11:00] first tour. I don't think so. I imagine it was their second or third. Because they were quite well known in sort of underground hippie circles. Anyway, so they played the, uh this, this programme, Disco 2, I saw it, and they said, And Spirit are on tour.

[00:11:15] **Stephen Budd:** Tomorrow they're playing in Ipswich. On Wednesday they're playing in Kingston, at Kingston Poly. And I was like, OK. And I thought, I'm going to go to that, by hook or by crook. And, I

[00:11:27] **Jarek:** Remind us how old you were when

[00:11:29] **Stephen Budd:** I was 12. I didn't tell my folks, and I snuck out. Out the back window and got the bus into Kingston, got to Kingston Poly, probably an hour before the doors opened and waited and waited and then the doors opened and they let me in.

[00:11:48] **Stephen Budd:** And I sort of was like, I didn't really know what to do. You certainly didn't know what gig etiquette was when you were 12 years old. Anyway, I walked into the refectory. And I'm in the refectory and there's people all drinking [00:12:00] beer and, you know, sitting around. Everybody in Afghan coats, you know. And I was kind of a little bit overawed and I'm sort of

leaning up against the wall and this guy comes up to me and he's got this kind of fro and he, in an American accent, he goes Hey kid, what are you doing here?

[00:12:21] **Stephen Budd:** And I was like, well, I just saw them last night on Disco 2 and I've come to see - come to check them out, you know. What do you say? And he bought me a Coke, I remember that. And then I walked into the main hall. I said, thank you very much. Walked into the main hall and everybody's sitting down on the floor, because that's what you did in those days at gigs.

[00:12:42] **Stephen Budd:** People sat on the floor. And I walked up to the front of the stage, and as I walked up to the front of the stage I saw a couple of the prefects from school. And I suddenly think, ooh, am I going to get into trouble for being here, you know? So, I walked up to the front of the [00:13:00] stage, and the band then eventually came on.

[00:13:02] **Stephen Budd:** And I stood up, and, wait a minute, it's the guy who had bought me the Coke. Was the guitarist, Randy California. And he put his guitar- he walked on the stage, saw me standing there, put his guitar on the, on the end of my nose, the end of his guitar on the end of my nose, and he looked at me and went, Hey kid, this song's for you.

[00:13:23] **Stephen Budd:** Right? I mean, it's as corny as you could possibly get. And they started the set with this song called Mr. Skin, which is a song about pornography. And, which was one of their two big hits actually. And it's, listen, if there's one thing you should take out of this interview is go and listen to that song.

[00:13:41] **Stephen Budd:** It's as awesome today as it was 40 something years ago. 50 years ago? Anyway, 50 years ago. So it was an extraordinary moment for me and of course I'm like, this is transformational. Um, and I kind of stood there and went, [00:14:00] wow, this is all I want to do with my life is be around music like this, you know, you know, and I kind of that sowed the seed within me, uh, in a very intense and visceral way that, you know, I wanted to be involved in music, you know, and at that point I kind of like, it set a course for my life.

[00:14:20] **Jarek:** Yeah. Yeah. Was it, um, Uh, the live, uh, the live element that you were interested in getting into as at, at that point? Or did you I would just, just those music overall.

[00:14:32] **Stephen Budd:** Yeah. I wouldn't say that I knew what I wanted to do, but I just wanted to be involved and very soon I started playing the guitar and bought myself an electric guitar from Woolworths.

[00:14:43] **Stephen Budd:** All my parents bought me an electric guitar from Woolworths, a 15 quid joby, and then it turned out that a friend of mine. Well, he wasn't a friend yet, but four or five doors down the road was this kid who I would see in his upstairs window [00:15:00] playing an electric guitar. So, we eventually, um, connected and, you know, started playing a bit together.

[00:15:09] **Stephen Budd:** And I would then, I formed a band. I'm just thinking, we, yeah, we formed a band and I think I was probably 14 or 15 at this point. And we'd go and play little gigs in Kingston. And, I certainly remember we played in one of the colleges in Kingston. I don't think it was the Poly, but I think it was another one.

[00:15:31] **Stephen Budd:** Um, early doors, we managed to get a gig. But I, you know, for some reason it was down to me to be the person who would organise these things. Organise the gig, organise the transport. We needed to find an amp. Or borrow some amps. And behind my house lived this guy called John Hiseman, who was the drummer in a band called Coliseum, who were a really important, kind of like, [00:16:00] rock, jazz rock band of the early 70s.

[00:16:03] **Stephen Budd:** Very, very well known at the time. Gigging everywhere. And of course he had a garage full of amps. And he used to lend us the equipment that we could rehearse with in my garage, which was down the bottom of my garden, soundproofed with egg boxes. Anyway, so I was in a kind of like, proto kind of band and would play, you know, around the area.

[00:16:27] **Jarek:** What kind of music is this proto band playing?

[00:16:30] **Stephen Budd:** Gosh! Um, bit of everything, but I remember we would have a very long version of Whose That Lady by the Isley Brothers. Mainly because it was two chords and there was long, long moments where you could solo, you know, uh, that kind of thing.

[00:16:47] **Stephen Budd:** This is all pre punk, of course.

[00:16:49] **Jarek:** Right. Yeah. And we'll, we'll, we'll sort of, we'll, we'll talk about how your sort of tastes and, and, and style evolved over time. Um, but just going back to that. Spirit gig, [00:17:00] I'm just interested in, you mentioned gig etiquette, and you mentioned the fact that everyone sat on the

floor and that sort of thing, I'm kind of interested in that because the way gigs look and feel have changed over time, right, so, I mean I remember watching old footage of the Monterey Pop Festival, you know, the proto Woodstock, you know, in California and being amazed that everyone, people were watching Jimi Hendrix or whatever, but they all sat on plastic chairs instead of just listening, you know, and being like, what's going on? So, uh, yeah, I'm just interested how, how, how you, how you think the gig has evolved in terms of, you know, how people consume it and enjoy it at the time.

[00:17:34] **Stephen Budd:** I mean, there was that, I don't know when sitting on the floor stopped, I'm trying to think about that, but it was definitely around about punk time. Um, and you know, a much more visceral kind of engagement between the audience and the artists on the stage would be there. You know, but I mean, you have to remember the kind of bands that were playing at Kingston Poly.

[00:17:58] **Stephen Budd:** There was a lot of prog [00:18:00] rock in those times, tonnes of prog rock bands, you know, um, and you know, which You know, the way to appreciate prog rock is you need to be sitting there and listening intently, right? And, you know, beard stroking, and you're not necessarily going to be dancing, you know? Um, there was a lot of that, so, and of course, you know, the hippies, you know, which there was a big, big, big contingent of hippies in Kingston, who were still post hippie, but living that kind of life.

[00:18:34] **Stephen Budd:** You have to remember, at that time, Kingston was filled with squats. Everywhere was squatted, you know, up Kingston Hill, across in Richmond, everywhere in the area was hundreds and hundreds of squats. There was lots of big old Victorian houses that had been empty for years. And hippies would take these places over and, and, and live there, you know.

[00:18:58] **Stephen Budd:** Um, so there was this big, [00:19:00] big contingent that had been, you know, since the end of the 60s into the early 70s. Um, living for free, uh, in these massive old abandoned houses.

[00:19:12] **Jarek:** That's, that's actually an element of Kingston history I hadn't heard before. I didn't, yeah, this, this, this squatting thing. Do you have any idea of the factors behind that?

[00:19:20] **Jarek:** Like, why were all these houses sitting empty?

[00:19:23] **Stephen Budd:** Um, the big houses were empty because they were just unaffordable for people to maintain and run, you know. Um, the squatting scene in the early 70s was massive. Not just in Kingston, but Camden, Maida Vale. You know, some of the roads that are now the most sought after, most highly prized in terms of property value were empty, you know, and squatted, you know, there were squats on Piccadilly, you know, I mean number 100 Piccadilly was a very famous squat.

[00:19:54] **Stephen Budd:** Um, so it was a big, just a big part of the culture and, you know, There was [00:20:00] a lot of unemployment, you know, and people didn't have the money to, to rent. Um, and a lot of people coming into London didn't have anywhere to live. So there was a lot of, you know, there was this, all these empty places, so they were squatted.

[00:20:14] **Jarek:** And you're far from the only person to have mentioned Afghan coats when I, uh, when I do interviews about music in the 60s and 70s. They must, they must have been a hot, hot fashion item at the, at the time.

[00:20:23] **Stephen Budd:** Especially in Kingston, because right, it's a Kingston thing. Well, it wasn't just Kingston, but there was like, there were places in Kingston, there was a, I'm trying to remember the name of the shop, but there was a very famous kind of Indian trading store, um, that used to sell Afghan coats that they brought over from Afghanistan, right, in bulk.

[00:20:45] **Stephen Budd:** You know, um, and they used to smell, especially if it rained. You know, the worst thing possible was a damp Afghan coat. Really, really bad. But yeah, Afghan coats were the thing. That's braided- you know, with embroidery on the back and, and all [00:21:00] the rest of it.

[00:21:00] **Jarek:** That's precisely how one guy I spoke to described the smell of the Toby Jug was wet Afghan coat.

[00:21:06] **Stephen Budd:** Perfect, perfect.

[00:21:10] **Jarek:** Yeah, so, yeah, we'll move, let's talk about some of the other venues you've set, but just sticking with the Poly that, that, that gig, that Spirit gig, was that in the main hall on Penrhyn Road?

[00:21:18] **Stephen Budd:** Yes it was.

[00:21:19] **Jarek:** Yeah, yeah. Did you see many gigs in the other venues, or was it mainly main hall that you saw gigs?

[00:21:24] **Stephen Budd:** It was mainly the main hall, from memory. I probably did go to other venues, I'm sure I did. Uh, but it was mainly the main hall where they had the bands that, you know, we're advertising in Melody Maker and NME, right, if the gigs were all advertised there and you used to see a little, Kingston Poly would have a little banner: Coming up over the next few weeks We've got X Y Z and it was on the, it was on the circuit, you know Kingston Poly was very much part of the university touring circuit it was one of the the gigs that you played and and You know all the major [00:22:00] bands would play, you know at places like Kingston Poly

[00:22:04] **Jarek:** So are there any other memorable ones that stand out for you?

[00:22:07] **Stephen Budd:** Caravan I think were a big one that I remember, um, fantastic prog rock band from Canterbury who were, um, very well known, uh, very elegiac, if that's the right word. Um, and, uh, pastoral, but beautiful, beautiful music. Um, definitely beard stroking music, but they could get you up and dancing too. A band that did get you up and dancing was Horslips, who were an Irish band, who had a little bit of, they were like a prog rock band again, but they had a little bit of that kind of, you know, Irish jiggery stuff going on.

[00:22:47] **Stephen Budd:** Um, those were I'm pretty sure that The Nice played at Kingston Poly as well. [00:23:00] Um, of course the Nice were just before Emerson, Lake and Palmer. Right, so they were Keith Emerson's band. Um, but there would have been others whose names have faded into the mists of time.

[00:23:15] **Jarek:** And, uh, I'm just wondering as you go through adolescence, as you approach adulthood, um, Did you go on to study somewhere?

[00:23:23] **Jarek:** And were you tempted to study at Kingston?

[00:23:26] **Stephen Budd:** I would have been tempted to study. No, I went, um, I, I, uh, I didn't go on to study at university or poly. I was pretty much immersed in music at a very early age, uh, aged 15. Um, I was DJing at a pub just down the road here called the Jolly Brewers, and the Jolly Brewers was the hippie pub.

[00:23:52] **Stephen Budd:** There were two radical hippie pubs in Kingston, right next door to each other, like within 100 yards. There was the Jolly Brewers and the Three [00:24:00] Fishes. They've both since been knocked down and

turned into car parks. But the Jolly Brewers was my pub, and I used to DJ in there two or three nights a week.

[00:24:09] **Stephen Budd:** And I was 14 at that point. And, um, but, you know, they could get me fairly cheap. Um, and I enjoyed it a lot, and it was just the best thing for me to be able to DJ there. It was loud. They had a really loud PA system. But what was fascinating about that pub, historically, is it's the pub where the hippies who organised the free festivals, the big free festivals that were happening at the time, and I'm talking specifically about the Windsor Free Festival, they hung out at that pub, right?

[00:24:43] **Stephen Budd:** So, the Windsor Free Festival was a completely anarchic free festival that had three editions, um, 71, 72, 73. No, [00:25:00] 72, 73, 74, I think. Uh, I might be off by a year here. And the last one, they were all in Windsor Great Park and they were completely illegal. But they were big. 15, 20, 000 people there. Rackety stages set up just using, um, you know, scaffolding and planks and PA systems borrowed off Hawkwind.

[00:25:24] **Stephen Budd:** And, uh, and the last one ended up in violence when the police evicted the entire place to- 200 policemen just walked on and started tearing everything down and threw everybody off. So the next year They organised, the government, which was a Labour government at the time, was very keen to not have the festival take place in Windsor.

[00:25:46] **Stephen Budd:** So they sent an emissary to the pub, right, to the Jolly Brewers, to seek out these hippies who organised this festival. And we eventually ended up sitting round this table. Why I was there was only [00:26:00] because I was the DJ. Sat round this table with Lord Melchett. who was a culture minister, who offered the hippies £100,000 in cash and a festival site in Swindon, which was an old Second World War RAF base.

[00:26:19] **Stephen Budd:** Do it there, don't do it in Windsor. You can do what the hell you like there, we'll leave you alone, here's some money, go and do it there. And of course £100,000 was an extraordinary amount of money. And we couldn't believe it. It was like, you've got to be kidding, right? So we had a festival that we then ended up setting up that lasted three weeks, 50,000 people, three stages, hundreds of bands, front page news of the newspapers on the TV and everything.

[00:26:53] **Stephen Budd:** And I was aged 15 and a half, given the role of stage managing one of the stages [00:27:00] there, which was just completely nuts.

And, uh, off the back of that was my then, sort of, further entry into working in music because things developed from there.

[00:27:11] **Jarek:** I'd sort of like to hone in on some of these venues a little bit, so, so, so, so, paint me a picture, if you will, of the Jolly Brewer.

[00:27:17] **Jarek:** I'm walking into it, what am I seeing, what am I smelling, what am I hearing?

[00:27:20] **Stephen Budd:** Oh boy, okay, so Watney's Red Barrel, 20p a pint, right? Scuzzy, sticky floors. Carpet that's had so much beer pulled on it that it's growing mushrooms. Um, Gruff ex copper landlord, right. Big, bruiser guy, right. Six foot six tall, right.

[00:27:47] **Stephen Budd:** And his very sweet red haired Irish wife who always had the, you know, um, buttons on down to her waist. I mean, it was kind of absolutely cliché, you know, 70s [00:28:00] pub stuff, really. And a few hippies, sort of, in the corner, trying to score some acid, right? And, um, you know, it was, it was a very small pub. I mean, it probably, you could probably fit 40 or 50 people in there, max.

[00:28:16] **Stephen Budd:** Um, but it was loud, loud, loud. Blanked out, the windows were blanked out with boards, I think to try and keep the sound down. Uh, and the PA was cranked up to, you could hardly hear yourself, you know. And, um, and it was, uh You know, it was great. It was absolutely brilliant. And of course it was like the centre of seediness in Kingston as far as the authorities were concerned.

[00:28:41] **Stephen Budd:** And it was the sister pub to, although they weren't business related, to the Three Fishes, which was the slightly posher version. Again, all hippies, but they had a bigger and better sound system. And DJs who really knew their stuff and were importing records from [00:29:00] the States that you just couldn't buy in record shops over here.

[00:29:02] **Jarek:** Are these venues doing bands as well?

[00:29:04] **Thomas Gibbons:** Can I just get the beginning of that just with the name of the pub in it.

[00:29:07] **Jarek:** Yeah.

[00:29:08] **Stephen Budd:** Yeah, so the pub, the pubs were, the pub that I used to hang out in was called the Jolly Brewers. And it was located in the car park behind Kingston Station.

[00:29:19] **Thomas Gibbons:** Perfect, thank you. I'm going to pop that on the beginning.

[00:29:21] **Stephen Budd:** Yeah,

[00:29:21] **Jarek:** yeah.

[00:29:22] **Thomas Gibbons:** You talking about the mushroom floor.

[00:29:23] **Jarek:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. Um

[00:29:26] **Stephen Budd:** In fact, you probably licked the floor as well. You didn't need to score the acid, you could just lick the floor.

[00:29:35] **Jarek:** Oh yeah, that's what I was going to ask. Were these two specific pubs, were they doing live bands or was it just DJs?

[00:29:42] **Stephen Budd:** No, it was just DJs. They didn't have the space to have a stage. I do believe that there I seem to remember a couple of gigs in the car park outside. Where somebody had set up a generator and just, [00:30:00] you know, done a Saturday afternoon jam session. Of course, there was lots of local musicians in the area, you know.

[00:30:06] **Stephen Budd:** And, uh, lots of people, um, who would rehearse in squats around the place.

[00:30:12] **Jarek:** Yeah, yeah, um, yeah, in terms of Kingston musically overall, um, well first of all, um, we've spoken a little bit about the Poly, spoken a little bit about the Coronation Hall, um, in terms of live music bands, were there any other venues that stand out in your, in your memory?

[00:30:28] **Stephen Budd:** Well, I mentioned the Kaleidoscope, um,

[00:30:33] **Jarek:** Well, talk about the Kaleidoscope, what do you remember about the Kaleidoscope?

[00:30:39] **Stephen Budd:** Fuck. Mists of time, you know. Part the mists of time. I mean, the Kaleidoscope was down some stairs. And it was, uh, it was, it was pretty sort of dingy, I think. Um, [00:31:00] I can't remember that much about it because, I mean, I used to go and see bands there and it would be pretty full because it was the only place that was open past pub closing time.

[00:31:09] **Stephen Budd:** So people would go, you, you, the pub would close and everybody would go, right, we're off to the Kaleidoscope, you know? And you'd go down to the Kaleidoscope and, and sort of hang out there. And, uh, you know, that was the, that was the kind of scene. And then bands would just turn up and play and often you didn't know who the hell you were watching.

[00:31:28] **Jarek:** But remind me again what the Kaleidoscope was, because it wasn't a pub, right?

[00:31:31] **Stephen Budd:** It wasn't a pub, it was a, it was a youth club, and I think it was predicated on drug rehabilitation. That had something to do with it, or maybe they shared the premises at the same time. I think we'd need to look, look this up.

[00:31:44] **Jarek:** Sure. Um, and you mentioned just now that there were a lot of local bands, so was Kingston sort of Would you describe it as a kind of happening place music wise at the time where there was lots of activity in terms of bands and venues and that sort of thing?

[00:31:59] **Stephen Budd:** Well there [00:32:00] was certainly like, I remember going to different parties in squats and seeing lots of jamming bands and sort of proto punk things you know you have to remember that all of these, certainly all the punk stuff came out of people who lived in squats, you know, the 101ers turning into the Clash being a classic example, you know they lived in a squat up on on Elgin Avenue and you know, I saw them play -we had them play at the festival the 101ers with Joe Strummer. You know played at the the Watchfield Free Festival which is what the festival was called that we we ended up running and of course, you know Hawkwind Were one of the bands that played there and they, Hawkwind were obviously a very famous, substantial band at the time.

[00:32:47] **Stephen Budd:** But they had come out of that whole kind of like, squat thing, playing in squats, playing at free festivals and all of that kind of stuff. And of course, uh, Lemmy, who was the bass player of [00:33:00] Hawkwind, one of the last gigs they played was at that festival before he got thrown out of the band. And went on to form Motörhead.

[00:33:09] **Stephen Budd:** Right, and of course I was invited to become the roadie for Motörhead off the back of having been the stage manager of this, uh, of this little festival. Not a little festival, quite a big festival, Watchfield.

[00:33:24] **Jarek:** Yeah, um I'm just thinking, could we, do we need a sentence with just the name Watchfield in it?

[00:33:31] **Jarek:** Because we've got, we've got that great festival story, but I don't know if you actually said I didn't. So maybe just, maybe, could we just literally just get the festival, just get the festivals called Watchfield?

[00:33:39] **Stephen Budd:** Sure. So the festival was called Watchfield and it was located in the Vale of the White Horse near Swindon.

[00:33:46] **Stephen Budd:** In front of that incredible horse that's on the hill, carved out, you know, in chalk. So you could see that, and that was the logo of the festival. So we were down in a Second World War airfield that had been a fighter squadron [00:34:00] airfield and there were the big aircraft hangars and the conning tower and in fact I slept in the basement of the conning tower that was where you know the staff slept and uh and we had this unbelievable festival there for three weeks.

[00:34:15] **Jarek:** I still can't get over this idea of Lord Melchon coming into this, this, this, yeah this hippie pub.

[00:34:20] **Stephen Budd:** Yeah. I, I love the fact,

[00:34:22] **Jarek:** essentially with a brown envelope.

[00:34:23] **Stephen Budd:** Yeah. I, I love the fact that he was called Lord Melchett because that makes you think of, you know, Blackadder, doesn't it?

[00:34:28] **Jarek:** Yeah. . Yeah. Yeah. No, it's an amazing story.

[00:34:32] **Jarek:** Um, yeah, and just picking up on, on, uh, local bands, um,

[00:34:37] **Stephen Budd:** oh, God, don't ask me the names of the, I mean, one of the local bands was The Cardiacs.

[00:34:41] **Jarek:** Yes. Well, that, that's,

[00:34:41] **Stephen Budd:** that was later on.

[00:34:42] **Jarek:** That's where I was just going. So, um. Yes, Cardiacs, um, originally Cardiac Arrest, I believe, um, and later Cardiacs, um, so yeah, we've interviewed people who are involved with the Cardiacs, um, They're a band that I maybe vaguely knew before this project, but I've only just come to appreciate that they were actually quite [00:35:00] influential on lots of people, I think.

[00:35:01] **Stephen Budd:** Yeah, really, really, you know, interesting post punk band, um, who, led by Tim Smith, uh, who sadly died a couple of years ago, um, after a long, long disability and illness. Um, an incredible band. And, um, they were- I was turned I had started a little record label. I don't know if you want me to start talking about that, but

[00:35:27] **Jarek:** No, yeah, go ahead.

[00:35:27] **Stephen Budd:** Okay, so Out of my bedroom Okay, rewind.

[00:35:33] **Jarek:** Is this, is this, is this after the festival?

[00:35:35] **Stephen Budd:** Yeah.

[00:35:36] **Jarek:** Yeah, so we can just connect it to the festival.

[00:35:37] **Stephen Budd:** Okay, so here's, here's how we get the connection, right? So the connection is, out of the festival, I ended up, um, roadieing for Motörhead, right? And roadied at their first ever gig, which was at the Roundhouse supporting the Pink Fairies and at their second ever gig the next night their first headline which was at the winning post in Twickenham [00:36:00] in front of 300 Hells Angels.

[00:36:02] **Stephen Budd:** That's another whole story, but I uh, that was my entree into the world of roadieing for people. Um, and together with the guy who I'd played guitar with, who lived a few doors down the street from me, he had a PA he'd bought- he'd created and built his own PA and we would go out and roadie around the place and, and he would hire that PA out and bring me along to, to help set it all up.

[00:36:28] **Stephen Budd:** So I immersed myself in the world of roadieing, especially with kind of punk bands. And after doing that for two or three years at places like the Vortex in London and, uh, and various other sort of locations for bands like X-Ray Spex and, you know, Generation X and all these kind of

people. Um, I saved up a little bit of money and, um, wanted and I was quite keen to start putting out some records.

[00:36:57] **Stephen Budd:** And I thought that I would set up a little [00:37:00] record label and sign local bands from Kingston area. So, I found a band. And, um, a band called The band, the first single I put out was by a band called Second Layer. Um, who was based on a guitarist who was in a band called The Outsiders who came from Wimbledon.

[00:37:26] **Stephen Budd:** And he'd set up this spin off band called Second Layer. And anyway, we ended up, I ended up putting out this single and learning the whole process. In reverse, going into a recording studio, recording the band, having to go and find somewhere to get the lacquers made and the master disc cut, find a factory who was going to press it, find someone who was going to press up the labels, find somebody who was going to press up the sleeves, and then end up with a seven inch single.

[00:37:57] **Stephen Budd:** You know, first band, second layer. [00:38:00] Funny enough, that very first record that I put out Right, this local band, the guys lived in Kingston, Wimbledon, um, with me on rhythm guitar as well. Just throwing myself in there in the middle of it. Um, ended up being sampled by the Chemical Brothers recently and it's the first single of their current album which has just come out.

[00:38:19] **Stephen Budd:** Um, which is kind of quite sweet, 40 years later. Um, but the second single was by a band called The Sound. Um, who went on to become quite a, um, cult band who I ended up managing. And they turned me on to the Cardiacs, and they, Adrian from The Sound was friendly with Tim Smith, and said, come down and see this band play at the Kaleidoscope.

[00:38:42] **Stephen Budd:** So I went and saw them play at the Kaleidoscope, thought they were amazing, and offered to record a single with them. And ended up putting that single out, which was the very first Cardiacs single. Yes, so that was the birth of Torch Records, is what it was called. [00:39:00] And, uh, I released, you know, a half a dozen singles and ended up managing the bands that were on that particular label.

[00:39:08] **Stephen Budd:** Because nobody else was managing. Didn't manage the Cardiacs, but managed the other bands.

[00:39:13] **Jarek:** Right. I've asked a few people how to describe The Cardiacs sound and it's proved quite difficult for a lot of people, I think, uh, not, not, not, not an easy band to, uh, categorise.

[00:39:23] **Stephen Budd:** No, they, they were quite sort of, it was punk meets jazz, you know, they certainly knew how to, uh, do some highly complex chord arrangements.

[00:39:35] **Stephen Budd:** They were very quirky. Um, quirky is a name, is a, is a term that I'm sure comes up when describing them. Um, but they were, they were, Interesting, very interesting musically, very interesting lyrical, lyrically, um, they should have been on Virgin Records, ultimately, because they would have sat next to, very well next to bands like, you know, Henry Cow and Faust and all these [00:40:00] kind of things.

[00:40:00] **Stephen Budd:** They were like a post punk version of those earlier kind of experimental. But they had singles, you know, they had singles that could be played on the radio. And, um, I don't know, you know, one could say they were distant cousins of XTC, even.

[00:40:16] **Jarek:** Yeah, and as their career evolved, I mean, the impression I get, they never had huge chart success of any kind that I could tell.

[00:40:23] **Stephen Budd:** I don't think they even had small chart success.

[00:40:26] **Jarek:** I think there was, on Wikipedia it says there's a number 78 in there or something. I think probably. But they seem to have a huge cult following.

[00:40:34] **Stephen Budd:** Yeah, they were definitely a cult band. And they existed for really quite a long time. They had a 15 year or more, 20 year perhaps, career.

[00:40:45] **Stephen Budd:** And they made many albums.

[00:40:48] **Jarek:** I think they existed all the way up to Tim's illness, I think.

[00:40:50] **Stephen Budd:** Yeah, absolutely.

[00:40:53] **Jarek:** And I believe Radiohead, Damon Albarn, they've cited Cardiacs as sort of influences on them and that sort of thing.

[00:40:59] **Stephen Budd:** Yeah, [00:41:00] yeah. I think they were kind of early influences on a lot of people. They were, you know, they were pushing the envelope.

[00:41:05] **Stephen Budd:** You know, they were definitely not polite, you know.

[00:41:09] **Jarek:** And The Sound, they were from Kingston as well?

[00:41:10] **Stephen Budd:** The Sound, the drummer lived in Kingston. Yeah, he did. Dudley, uh, lived in Kingston. And Adrian Borland lived in Raynes Park. And, um They became a very influential band to the extent that they're very influential now, you know.

[00:41:27] **Stephen Budd:** The first EP I put out on my little label became a bit of a kind of cult classic and I recorded an album which I was going to put out on my label but then we signed them to Warners and I became their manager. So, they were around the period of sort of Echo and the Bunnymen and Teardrop Explodes and, you know, Joy Division and U2.

[00:41:51] **Stephen Budd:** They became a bit of an influence on U2, actually. Um, and, uh, I remember being, discussing it with, um, Adam [00:42:00] Clayton from U2. The sound were an influence on them. And, uh, didn't really become that successful in the UK, although they were Melody Maker Band of the Year in 1980, I think, or in that kind of period, and then, uh, but became quite successful in Holland, Germany, Scandinavia, where they were viewed, you know, very favorably, and in fact, to this day, although the main guy, Adrian Borland, died in 99, Uh, the band are revered, and there are conventions, and, um, a movie has been made about them, and books are released, and I'm going to a convention in April of next year in Amsterdam.

[00:42:45] **Stephen Budd:** You know, they were that kind of influential over there.

[00:42:49] **Jarek:** Yeah, I was, um I was just sort of Googling around and prepped for this interview and I came across an interview with a member of The Sound and I wonder if it's this Adrian that you mentioned because he talks about the fact that [00:43:00] in Wimbledon there was no scene at the time, he had to go to Kingston, which is interesting, yeah.

[00:43:04] **Jarek:** So I wonder, I mean that prompted me to make a note of a question to compare Kingston to surrounding areas, I mean, did Kingston attract people from the surrounding areas to its music venues?

[00:43:17] **Stephen Budd:** I think Kingston attracted people to its music venues from the surrounding areas, absolutely. Kingston was a, a, Kingston felt groovy.

[00:43:31] **Stephen Budd:** You know, it felt that there was something happening in Kingston, you know. Um, I think because it was a little bit on edge, I think because of all the squats and things like that, and there was a lot of young people, because of the Poly. Later, which later became the University, but because of Kingston Poly, you know, there was a lot of students in the area.

[00:43:52] **Stephen Budd:** Um, the pubs were interesting. Um, you know, yeah, definitely that there was, it felt like there [00:44:00] was a bit of a scene in Kingston. And certainly it was. It's definitely, as I said, the capital of the scene for the surrounding area. For the borough, essentially. For the borough, and this sort of northern part of Surrey, really.

[00:44:13] **Jarek:** Yeah. Yeah, um, in terms of your own journey, when did your residency in Kingston or the Kingston area come to an end, when did you move elsewhere, and how did that tie in with your career?

[00:44:26] **Stephen Budd:** So, I left this area, I would say, in about 1979 and went to live in Ladbroke Grove. And, um, I was working in music already, started my little record label, as we discussed, and was managing artists and stuff like that.

[00:44:44] **Stephen Budd:** So, you know, that's when, you know, my, uh, direct um, living in the area came to an end. Um, but, you know, obviously I was still in contact with people who lived down, down here. Uh, it's funny because now it seems so [00:45:00] close, you know. It's like, you know, it's just, you know, just up the road. But in, but in those days it felt like you were emigrating to London.

[00:45:07] **Stephen Budd:** You know, it felt like we were separate from London here. You know, which is ironic really. But it definitely felt like that at that time.

[00:45:14] **Jarek:** Yeah, and actually on London, I mean, presumably the relationship with London was that you'd go into town for the bigger, the bigger gigs and the bigger concerts, that sort of thing.

[00:45:21] **Stephen Budd:** Yeah, yeah, I mean, yeah, travelling up, you know, was a big deal, you know, going up to Hammersmith Odeon, you know, and going seeing all, you know, like, I don't know, the Allman Brothers or Santana or like the Big Axe would go and play up there. Um, you know, yeah, or the Hammersmith Palais, you know.

[00:45:40] **Jarek:** Um, I reckon we've probably got about 20 to 30 minutes left, if that's fine with you.

[00:45:45] **Jarek:** Um, I think the, the remaining questions, I mean, we'll, yeah, we'll talk a little bit more about the, the sort of latter part of your career. Um, and then, yeah, the sort of broader, broader chat about Yeah, well let's talk about the student circuit first of all. So, [00:46:00] um, I asked Julian the same question yesterday and I'd be interested to get your take on it.

[00:46:04] **Jarek:** Um, the student circuit we know was a prominent feature of live music in the country from I think 1960s to around the late 80s, early 90s. Um, why was it such a prominent feature of live music and why is it no more?

[00:46:22] **Stephen Budd:** Really good question. I mean, the student scene was prominent because, you know, the student unions wanted to entertain their students, you know, and they would book bands and, and it became, you know, almost a kind of entry point for the music industry for whoever was the You know, the student union coordinator, uh, ENTS officer would invariably end up getting a job in the music industry.

[00:46:54] **Stephen Budd:** And I think that from the early sixties onwards. I mean, if you look at like, you know, the [00:47:00] people who were starting independent record labels like Chrysalis Records, Virgin Records, um, various other. Uh, record companies, starting agencies, starting management businesses, live agents, etc. They were all the ENTS officers at the student unions in polytechnics and universities dotted around the country.

[00:47:22] **Stephen Budd:** That's where they got their kind of breaks, by booking bands. So, you know, they would be contacting agencies and saying we've got 200 quid to spend on a band who can you supply and they would say we've got you Deep Purple or Free or Caravan or Hawkwind we can do it you can book them you know so that was the kind of right of passage and every university pretty much would have an ENTS officer who was booking people onto the circuit and there was a very very lively circuit so the tours that would happen in those days that were coordinated by agents would be [00:48:00]

coordinated by, you know, they would be reaching out to ENTS officers and booking them.

[00:48:05] **Stephen Budd:** Tonight you're playing in Kingston, tomorrow you're playing at Ipswich, Wednesday you're playing Birmingham, Friday you're playing Liverpool, you know. So it was, universities were a step up from the pubs. So there was the pub scene. And then if you graduated from the pub scene, you would play universities.

[00:48:24] **Stephen Budd:** And, you know, and what was after that? Well, then if you were really successful, you might get booked to have Hammersmith Apollo.

[00:48:32] **Jarek:** Yeah, and when I've asked other people this question, some people cite the fact that there wasn't that medium level, uh, there wasn't a lot of that medium level, uh, venues, um, elsewhere.

[00:48:43] **Jarek:** So unis actually served a function because of the size of the

[00:48:46] **Stephen Budd:** Absolutely. They were playing catering to the sort of 500 to 1, 000 capacity. And there really weren't those kind of venues. It was pubs or big venues. There was nothing in the middle. And absolutely, universities completely catered to that market.

[00:48:59] **Jarek:** [00:49:00] So, you know, this, this, this may answer the next question, but, um And yeah, sort of framing it in the full sentence, um, why, why then did it, um, did it die a death? Is it down to the fact that these medium sized venues started springing up? Um, was that a factor behind, yeah, the sort of, the death of the student circuit, as it were?

[00:49:24] **Stephen Budd:** I think the death of the student circuit, which would be a great title for somebody's thesis, right, would probably be down to the opening of medium sized venues, you know, um, starting with places like the Rainbow, the Astoria. Uh, dotted around London, uh, ending up with, you know, Shepherd's Bush Empire, uh, the Music Machine in Camden, which of course is now KOKO um, became Camden Palace in the interim period.

[00:49:58] **Stephen Budd:** So it was the Music Machine, [00:50:00] then Camden Palace, now KOKO. So that kind of, the Forum, Kentish Town being another one, you know, that kind of 1, 000 to 1, 500 capacity venue, uh, hadn't really existed. And when they started opening those up catering specifically to

music. So, you know, the student union, student union gigs were fairly ramshackle.

[00:50:23] **Stephen Budd:** You'd have to bring in your own PA systems. Um, You know, the level of, sort of, professionalism around it all was, uh, very, very varied. So I think that there, that when dedicated music venues opened, the market tended to steer towards that, I think. And also I think punk had something to do with it. I think punk, punks were, didn't like universities.

[00:50:57] **Stephen Budd:** Didn't like polys. It was [00:51:00] almost like, no, you're middle class kids and we're working class kids and we don't want to play, you know, those kind of venues, you know. So I think that, that had an impact on it, but I tell you what, it's, it's, somebody's thesis is out there beckoning.

[00:51:16] **Jarek:** Hopefully we, hopefully we can inspire someone to write that dissertation.

[00:51:20] **Jarek:** Just you mentioning the pub scene has reminded me that I didn't ask you properly about the Toby Jug. You said you did go there a couple of times. What was the -because we know the Toby Jug for its- what we most know it for is a sort of four year period between 68 and 72 where it hosted Bowie, Yes, Led Zeppelin, Jethro Tull, yada yada.

[00:51:45] **Jarek:** Um, what was the sort of status when you were going there? Was it, was it, was it hosting a lot of live music?

[00:51:49] **Stephen Budd:** Well, I, I went there, it had a, it had a kind of renaissance in sort of mid sev- post punk. [00:52:00] Uh, it was putting on bands again and, you know, I saw Ultravox. Uh. And, gosh, the Kursaal Flyers and various other bands there who were on the punk, Red Beans and Rice, bands who were on the kind of, that kind of pub rock circuit, you know, uh, later on.

[00:52:21] **Stephen Budd:** Um, and it was, you know, smallish, um, I don't know, 250 capacity, something like that, venue, um, interesting, interesting place.

[00:52:35] **Jarek:** Did it smell of wet Afghan coats?

[00:52:38] **Stephen Budd:** Not at that point. It smelled of bad, um, bad leather jackets and beer stained jeans.

[00:52:49] **Thomas Gibbons:** Could we just have the Toby Jug at the beginning?

[00:52:52] **Jarek:** Yeah, yeah, so you'll just say, um, my memories of the

[00:52:57] **Stephen Budd:** So, my memories of the [00:53:00] particular pub was the Toby Jug.

[00:53:03] **Jarek:** Yep, yep, that works. Yep, lovely, thank you. Um, right, and then in terms of, you know, your career and how you've reached the point you are today, so, um, I think the last we heard you'd, you'd, um, yeah, you'd worked at this festival, you'd then, um, signed up Motörhead and, and, and these sort of things. Um, yeah, how did your career evolve to the point, uh, where you were working with the likes of Damon Albarn and...?

[00:53:29] **Stephen Budd:** Right, so my career evolved in, um, in the following way.

[00:53:36] **Stephen Budd:** So, after having set up this little record label, um, and, you know, made an incredible amount of trial and error mistakes, but remarkably managing to find three or four acts who are quite meaningful who turned into kind of longer term meaningful acts that I ended up managing. Um, I signed one of the artists, I signed one of the artists [00:54:00] to Warner Brothers, that was The Sound.

[00:54:01] **Stephen Budd:** I had another band called The Big Sound Authority, also with the word sound in it, obsessed, um, that I signed to MCA Records and, um, I actually managed to have a hit with that band, doing Top of the Pops and all the rest of it. They were a band from Shepherds Bush and they were kind of a mod revival band.

[00:54:21] **Stephen Budd:** And, uh, as a consequence of that, we, we, I was asked to make an album with the band. There was no A&R man at the record company. He'd been sacked, so I was left doing it myself as the manager was given a budget, asked to make an album to capitalise on the fact that we'd had a top, top single with the band and done Top of the Pops and toured all over the place with the style council and pl- people like that. And, um. I needed to hire a record producer to make this album, and I didn't know anything about record producers, so I was thinking Who's my favourite artist? Well, one of them was David Bowie, and who [00:55:00] produced David Bowie? Tony Visconti. He's a record producer. Okay, so let's find out where Tony Visconti is and see if he's interested in producing my band.

[00:55:09] **Stephen Budd:** That's as basic as it got. So I found out that he was located in Dean Street in Soho, and I went up to his recording studio, dropped off a tape, and the next day I got a call from Tony Visconti saying Hey, I really like your band. Let's meet and talk. And we went and met. And before I knew it, he was producing the album for MCA of this band.

[00:55:32] **Stephen Budd:** And, um, he, um, we hit it off during that particular period. And then he asked me if I would be interested in coming in to run his studio and to manage him. And so I ended up doing something completely that I hadn't expected to, which was running a recording studio in Dean Street in Soho and managing Tony Visconti and whilst I was running this recording studio Tony was spending vast quantities of [00:56:00] money on buying new equipment, endlessly.

[00:56:02] **Stephen Budd:** And of course the overheads were going up and up and up and up like this. So I realised, to keep the studio viable, I had to get other producers to work in there, so that we could keep the studio running 24 7. Just so that we could pay for all of this extraordinary amount of equipment we were buying, and the rent and everything.

[00:56:18] **Stephen Budd:** So I took on some producers to manage, which was a bit of an unusual thing, because people didn't realise that producers had managers, because there weren't really any producers having managers at that time. But my raison d'etre and thinking around it was, the producer needs to be in the studio working.

[00:56:37] **Stephen Budd:** He needs somebody else out there to go and sell his services to record labels, to artists. Find him the next gig, so he goes from one gig, to the next one, to the next one. Recording one album, straight into recording another album. I started marketing and selling producers to record companies. And that was a birth of a company that I created that became very [00:57:00] successful, especially, well, the early successes were in the 80s, but then throughout the 90s into the 2000s.

[00:57:07] **Stephen Budd:** And I carried on managing artists at the time. So I was managing bands like Gang of Four, Magic Numbers, and Tanita Tikaram, and, you know, a whole bunch of people. And, um doing all of that, eventually I got involved in a group of live music- uh, a business which owned some live music venues in London, um, starting with a small venue called the Barfly.

[00:57:36] **Stephen Budd:** And I became a director of that company having merged my business with theirs. And we started opening up Barfly clubs around

the, around the country. And that became quite a successful business. And off the back of that, I got involved in the festival business and started up some festivals in India. And in Korea, which going to this day, I have the biggest rock [00:58:00] festival in India called the NH7 Weekender.

[00:58:02] **Stephen Budd:** And in my spare time, I worked on helping create something called Africa Express with Damon Albarn, which is a musical collaborations project between Western artists and African artists that we started in 2006 as a reaction really to Live 8, which was all about Africa and dropping the debt that the African countries owed, but didn't feature any African artists.

[00:58:27] **Stephen Budd:** And we thought that was pretty gross. So we wanted to help figure a mechanism to bring African music, which we were all fans of, into the mainstream. And a few of us got together and talked about how we would do that. And we came up with the idea of African artists collaborating with Western artists, so that the Western artists audiences would be introduced to those African artists via the artists, the Western artists, that were featuring.

[00:58:55] **Stephen Budd:** And we started taking artists out to the Congo, Ethiopia. [00:59:00] Um, Nigeria, South Africa, Mali. And making albums, making collaborations, making films. And then coming back and putting on those artists that we discovered onto major stages in the UK and creating our own Africa Express shows. Which, one of the early ones that we did was in 2012 where we took a train as part of the Olympics, they funded it, around the UK with Paul McCartney, John Paul Jones from Led Zeppelin.

[00:59:28] **Stephen Budd:** The guys from New Order, the Libertines, the Yeah Yeah Yeahs, and a whole bunch of others. But with Baaba Maal, Amadou & Mariam, Fatoumata Diawara, Rokia Traoré, and a whole bunch of African artists. And we would rehearse on the train, we'd put some rehearsal carriages on the train, and stop each night, and where we set up Big circus tents and did gigs around the country and ended up doing a massive show behind King's Cross station.

[00:59:57] **Stephen Budd:** Um, Which was kind of pretty life [01:00:00] changing but Africa Express is a wonderful project. Yeah, not for profit

[01:00:04] **Jarek:** Sounds sounds brilliant. I mean that's that there that that train sounds like an amazing thing to be on I have to say

[01:00:09] **Stephen Budd:** Um, yeah, it was quite something go on YouTube. You can see some of it.

[01:00:12] **Jarek:** Yeah. Yeah.

[01:00:13] **Jarek:** Um Yeah, after we've done the interview I'll tell you a little bit about, we did a project to celebrate Bowie, uh, 60 years since, uh, wait, 50 years? 50 years? 60 years? Since Bowie launched Ziggy Stardust in the Toby Jug. 50 years, that's the one. Um, and, uh, yeah, we did trains from Waterloo to Tolworth which had performances on them.

[01:00:36] **Stephen Budd:** Really? One of my great regrets is I remember people saying, oh, Bowie's playing at the Ebbisham Hall in Epsom. Let's go, because I was at Ewell Castle, alright, that was my school. Let's go to see Bowie, and we tried to get tickets, 50p.

[01:00:51] **Jarek:** Yeah,

[01:00:51] **Stephen Budd:** and it was that that was the and we couldn't get the fucking tickets So missed out seeing Bowie do Ziggy Stardust [01:01:00] at the Ebbersham Hall in in Epsom

[01:01:02] **Jarek:** Oh, there you go In our exhibition which we just had in Kingston Museum featured a pull out quote from a diary entry of a guy who who wrote went to Toby Jug tonight David Bowie was playing in main hall, didn't bother.

[01:01:15] **Jarek:** And that was, that was where he launched Ziggy Stardust.

[01:01:18] **Stephen Budd:** Well, of course, there's a recording of Bowie playing at Kingston Poly.

[01:01:21] **Jarek:** There is, there is. Yes, we, we, we had a bootleg copy of that in the exhibition. Weirdly a German one.

[01:01:26] **Stephen Budd:** Right.

[01:01:26] **Jarek:** Um, but yeah, yeah. Yeah, that's amazing.

[01:01:30] **Stephen Budd:** And the irony is, of course, it's that Tony Visconti ended up You know, doing whatever he did at Kingston Poly

[01:01:36] **Jarek:** yeah, well I was just going to say, yeah, yeah, it's really weird. I'm always slightly, um, yeah, taken aback by the sort of serendipity of

stuff. And yes, Tony Visconti has his studio at Kingston. So, um, yes, I don't know a huge amount about that studio. I need to sort of look into it a little bit more.

[01:01:55] **Stephen Budd:** Yeah, I'd like to too.

[01:01:56] **Jarek:** Um, but I just know that it's, that it's there. Um, [01:02:00] so yeah, further evolving the Bowie Kingston link. Um, yeah, and in terms of, yeah, all that incredible journey that you've had, um, in music, um, Did you maintain any connections from Kingston over this time? I mean, I know you know Julian who we interviewed yesterday, but I think you told me on the phone that that happened to be someone you met later on.

[01:02:23] **Stephen Budd:** Yeah, that was random. Julian ended up, Julian Hickman ended up becoming the kind of road manager for Africa Express, you know, so that's kind of like nice connection. Of course, it was Julian who mentioned me to you, I guess.

[01:02:35] **Jarek:** Yeah.

[01:02:36] **Stephen Budd:** Um, but, uh, yeah, I mean. It's funny who sort of pops out of the woodwork every, every once in a while, you know, you One of my dearer friends, at the time, was a photographer called Justin Thomas, who became THE rock photographer, like THE rock [01:03:00] photographer of the 70s and 80s.

[01:03:02] **Stephen Budd:** Let's make that 80s and 90s. And he, um, and the 70s. And we, one of the bands that we went and saw was, at Kingston Poly, was Dr. Feelgood. Right? And he was an obsessive Dr. Feelgood fan. And I remember bursting into the dressing room after Dr. Feelgood played. And they were unbelievably good, Dr. Feelgood. Wilko Johnson, Dr. Feelgood, right? And bursting into the dressing room. And um, just like, you know, usher- , this gushing with like, joy about the gig that we had just seen. Um, but me and Justin, who I, he now lives in Spain and he became a very famous photographer. Ended up, you know, photo- one of the great live photographers for, for Melody Maker, NME, Sounds the, the, all of the main newspapers.

[01:03:58] **Stephen Budd:** He's photographed [01:04:00] everybody. Um, he, uh. We've been back in contact recently after 40 years, and he was a habitué of the, um, of the Jolly Brewers

[01:04:12] **Stephen Budd:** right,

[01:04:13] **Jarek:** right. Yeah, fascinating. Um, and yeah, in terms of that, that

[01:04:17] **Stephen Budd:** I've just thought of somewhere else that you used to have gigs, right? Which was Surbiton Assembly Hall.

[01:04:22] **Jarek:** Yes, Surbiton Assembly Rooms is one that comes up all the time, and lots of people have very fond memories. Yeah, what do you remember about Surbiton Assembly Rooms?

[01:04:29] **Stephen Budd:** I remember going to see various bands at Surbiton Assembly Rooms.

[01:04:33] **Jarek:** I think I just cross talked you there,

[01:04:34] **Stephen Budd:** just start that again, yeah.

[01:04:36] **Stephen Budd:** One of the other venues in the area that I remember going to see bands was Surbiton Assembly Rooms.

[01:04:42] **Stephen Budd:** And various bands played there. A lot of bands. Um, I remember seeing Jonathan Kelly, who was a fantastic Irish singer songwriter who was on RCA Records. Uh, who was, you know, kind of in that John Martyn vein. John Martyn [01:05:00] I'm pretty sure I saw Kokomo, who were a kind of, uh, up tempo sort of funk soul band at Surbiton Assembly Rooms, but that might have been Kingston Poly, not sure.

[01:05:16] **Jarek:** Yeah, the Surbiton Assembly Rooms ties into the whole folk scene, because I think in the 60s it was a big folk venue, and there's all these rumours that Paul Simon played there, Bob Dylan played there, but like these are, these are unverified as far as I can tell. Um, but it's interesting, but then I think through the 70s and 80s it evolves into a different sort of venue.

[01:05:36] **Jarek:** Um, and I know there's, there's, there's one massive riot that happens there at some point. Uh, which, um, I was trying to establish if that's the reason why they stopped having gigs there or not.

[01:05:46] **Stephen Budd:** I'd love to find out about that. I, two other things that I remember. I mean, I went to school across the road from there.

[01:05:53] **Stephen Budd:** I was at Arundel House School, right? Um, and I also remember, [01:06:00] aged about 12, going to see Ted Heath, the Prime Minister, speak in Surbiton Assembly Rooms about whether the UK should join

the European Union. Right. And, and he was very pro the UK joining the European Union. So I remember that. I remember going along to that talk and I was, I guess, again, 12 or 13 at that point.

[01:06:24] **Jarek:** Wow. Well, if we ever do a Brexit heritage project, then that would be a good starting point. That's fascinating.

[01:06:34] **Stephen Budd:** Another thing I remember there is going to a Communist Party rally, right, and playing a gig in my band. At Surbiton Assembly Rooms, for the British Communist Party.

[01:06:48] **Jarek:** Were they a good audience?

[01:06:51] **Stephen Budd:** They were very beardy.

[01:06:54] **Jarek:** Plenty of beards.

[01:06:54] **Stephen Budd:** Yeah, plenty of beards.

[01:06:56] **Jarek:** Yeah, that's, that's, that's a, yeah, yeah. What a, what a
[01:07:00] bizarre set of memories you have.

[01:07:01] **Stephen Budd:** This is like, just stuff, honestly, I haven't thought of since then.

[01:07:06] **Jarek:** Well this brings us nicely to the sort of final area I wanted to close on, which is about the loss of venues and Surbiton Assembly Rooms today is part of Surbiton High School, and it's not a live music venue.

[01:07:20] **Jarek:** The Toby Jug is a pile of rubble at the minute. Um, um, we, well local community groups that I am involved in have done our best to, um, recognise the history of the Toby Jug. We had a big mural painted with Bowie's face and, um, a sort of artwork about all the gigs that have happened. Unfortunately, TfL have now, uh, blocked that up and they are covering that whole underpass.

[01:07:46] **Jarek:** So, um, it was a real, real sad moment. Sorry, that's just me going on a rant. But yes, the Toby Jug, uh, since last, so many pubs have been mentioned to me [01:08:00] that no longer exist. So, I wonder if you could just reflect a little bit about the loss of music venues, um, Not just in Kingston, but across the country. Um, and specifically, obviously this, we're a youth arts charity, we're interested in this from the point of view of young people.

[01:08:19] **Jarek:** Um, what do you think, yeah, just generally what do you think about that loss of music venues, factors behind it, and what impact do you think it has on young people and the future of creativity in music?

[01:08:31] **Stephen Budd:** Live music venues currently are closing at a rate of two a week, right? Um, there's been a staggering drop and largely due to, um, factors obviously like rents, um, energy costs being a huge factor.

[01:08:50] **Stephen Budd:** Um, but also, um, painful things like redevelopment, you know? And, um, changing the nature of, uh, of, [01:09:00] you know, um, sound protection, uh, and developers and local residents complaining. And of course, you know, my view is that existing music venues should always be protected. You know, they're part of the culture, they're part of what makes a, um, uh, a community a community.

[01:09:20] **Stephen Budd:** You know, people need to have places where they can go and see live music. Live music is utterly crucial to the infrastructure of the music industry. You know, the trajectory for young artists getting to play in small venues and learning their trade in that way in front of an audience before they go on to either form.

[01:09:44] **Stephen Budd:** Better bands or go through the process of climbing up the ladder of one venue to another until they get to the level of stadium acts. This is kind of crucial to the future of the music industry, you know, unless we [01:10:00] want stuff that is only studio based. So, you know, the Music Venue Trust does a great job of drawing attention to the value of live music venues in this country.

[01:10:11] **Stephen Budd:** An extremely important organisation. I helped last year, uh, fund, uh, put together some, um, gigs to raise funds for the Music Venues Trust, where we had large artists playing in the small little venue that they first started, you know, in order to raise money for those particular venues and for the wider Music Venue Trust, um, campaign.

[01:10:36] **Stephen Budd:** And, you know, if we continue to lose venues at this rate we're losing a cultural asset, not just for the locality, but for the whole country. And for what we can go on to sell and market around the globe for the UK. Massive revenue earner for us. Excuse me. [01:11:00] Well, I choke with emotion.

[01:11:02] **Jarek:** Quite.

[01:11:06] **Stephen Budd:** So live- Breathe. So live music is an incredible resource for the country, about what it means to be from here, and what it means to be British, you know. And, you know, not just white British, but from any, you know, ethnicity. There are many venues that feature incredible music from across the globe. This needs to be encouraged.

[01:11:39] **Stephen Budd:** It's all part of our cultural heritage. It's all part of our cultural education. And to see these venues closing is gutting. And, you know, the government really should be stepping in and supporting what is in effect the birthplace of [01:12:00] a major revenue earner for this country.

[01:12:04] **Jarek:** Yeah, revenue is an interesting way to use that, because I think in my mind, you start to try and process, you know, the factors behind it and, and I was thinking, well maybe for young performers these days, live is less important because they just want to go on streaming platforms or whatever.

[01:12:20] **Jarek:** But actually, they don't make you any money, possibly.

[01:12:22] **Stephen Budd:** No. What makes you money, what keeps you alive as a musician is being able to play live. You know, and having a live audience. It's also the best bit. It's the, it's the funnest bit. You know, about, you know, you want, you get an immediate reflection of who you are as a musician, as an entertainer.

[01:12:40] **Jarek:** By the way, I don't think we ever asked what became of your bands.

[01:12:46] **Stephen Budd:** I'm glad you didn't.

[01:12:49] **Jarek:** Did you give us a name for them?

[01:12:51] **Stephen Budd:** Oh God, I can't even remember the name of some of the bands, you know. Let's not even talk about that.

[01:12:58] **Jarek:** Well, just a very final question. [01:13:00] When you reflect, each generation takes something from the previous one in terms of music and pop culture more generally.

[01:13:10] **Jarek:** When you look back at your generation, what do you think the legacy is that has been passed on musically?

[01:13:19] **Stephen Budd:** Well, I mean, I'm going to have to preface this. Um,

[01:13:31] **Stephen Budd:** let's think about that.

[01:13:37] **Stephen Budd:** Okay, I think that the legacy that's been passed on from my generation and is in the process of being passed on is that the birthplace of, you know, what became sort of stadium filling artists was really that period in the early 70s, you know, through to the 80s where artists [01:14:00] saw that there was an audience that could, mass audiences could be created and those, if you think about all of those artists that were birthed out of places like Kingston Poly who gave them their kind of step up on the ladder and look where they eventually ended up becoming stadium filling acts around the globe who are still performing and today, 50 years on, right?

[01:14:28] **Stephen Budd:** And it's that sort of template of growth that places like Kingston Poly, Kingston University, were so integral to that without that, those kind of people, those kind of artists, wouldn't have learnt their craft on a larger stage. As a stepping stone to becoming what they became. And I think that's the kind of legacy that, you know, um, that particular generation [01:15:00] has, you know, delivered to today.

[01:15:04] **Jarek:** Brilliant, brilliant, what a lovely, what a lovely way to end, um. Thom, Thom, nothing else from you then?

[01:15:09] **Thomas Gibbons:** No.

[01:15:09] **Jarek:** No, lovely.