



Simon Scardaneli – musician

Rob: And I'm with Simon Scardaneli, a multi-talented musician who lives in the heart of Brittany, right here. I'm lucky to have heard your latest recording which is called 'Make Us Happy.' I'm interested to know what your favourite kind of music is. Where are you going with your own music?

Simon: I don't have a favourite type of music. I have got increasingly bored with popular music in the sense that I hear re-treads of everything now so, you know, there's all sorts of stuff out there that just sounds like something that was done 10, or 20, or 30 years ago. So I just follow my own path which can take me all over the place. So the last album is quite an eclectic mix of musicians. It's kind of got a ramshackle, folksy, almost Balkanly feel in some areas. Somebody said it's got a slight country twang on one or two others.

Rob: They're certainly very catchy songs because I've been; they've been going through my head.

Simon: OK. Good, well, yeah. I, I really like to write songs that, um, well that I can sing, that I like to sing and so in terms of the sort of lyrical content the lyrics are really important. So all the songs are stories; there's no 'moon June' stuff for me. In fact I shoot people who say 'moon' and 'June' and, you know, 'the love light in your eyes' is, sorry, mate, but if you're still writing 'love light in your eyes' go and retire because it's been done 35 years ago, probably.

Rob: So what are your subjects of interest, then, what do you like to sing about?

Simon: I like to sing about anything that is interesting to me and, for example, on that album the song 'Whirlwind' (I think it's probably track 1 on the album, I believe it is). 'Whirlwind' - it's a tale of migrants, I suppose. It's about a perilous journey across several continents to, to reach safety. But it's not explicit. It doesn't talk about migrants. It just talks about people on a journey and I'm part of the story inasmuch as I put myself in the, in the tale and I'm being led by somebody who's wiser and cleverer than me and finds a way to safety. So that's, you know, that's one subject. Another one of the songs is about a dagger. The life story of a dagger that's obviously performed some fairly heinous tasks. Then I've got a song called 'Annual General Meeting' which is about Capitalism and how all-consuming and destructive and horrible it is and... So, you know, there is politics in some of my songs and sometimes it is not overt, but there is a little bit of politics in some of it. But I write about anything. The new, the new album that I'm working on that I've just launched a kick-starter for; I've got a song about an Edwardian lady who drowns herself when she becomes pregnant getting - her boyfriend is just going off to war; he gets killed so they never marry. But anyway before, before he goes off to war the inevitable happens and she's shamed and throws herself into the sea. So, I've got one song about that, which is cheerful! I write about myself, of course. I wrote a song about patience, or not having any. So the song called 'Patience' starts with "Patience is a virtue that I've never had time to learn. I've been much too busy making up for lost time."

Rob: You don't do cover versions, do you?



Simon: No, I don't, and I usually tell my French audiences, who are very, very receptive to my music, that (not that they ever ask for covers) but I usually say I don't sing other people's songs because they don't sing mine. So why would I? So, yeah.

Rob: You've recently moved here to Brittany.

Simon: Yeah.

Rob: You're installed in a lovely setting, surrounded by fields and everything. It's a country life.

Simon: Yeah.

Rob: Why have you chosen Brittany?

Simon: I just love it. I've had a long association with France right going back to the 70's. I've hitch-hiked around Europe in the early 70's. I used to live in a camping-van (although it was actually an old Ford Transit delivery van with a double bed bolted to the floor and a pair of Wharfedale speakers under the airplane seats). But I used to live in that in '75/'76 and drive from Amsterdam, where I'd spend the winter, playing in clubs, and then once the weather picked up I'd sort of travel around Europe busking. Germany and Switzerland were the best for money but France was always good fun. I'd do the south coast and do Nice and St Tropez and all the rest of it and be this long-haired, scruffy guy amongst all the yachts and rich people and I guess in about 2000 I bought a small derelict house up in Normandy with an acre of land in the middle of farmland which was really just a holiday home and used to visit that regularly and then about 3 years ago I, I came to Brittany and I hadn't really explored it before and I just absolutely loved it so....

Rob: What do you think of the music scene?

Simon: Love it! It's brilliant! There's so much of it. I mean, everything from the traditional Breton music to the jazz and blues and just, there's so much music going on. It's great.

Rob: You've travelled all over Europe, you said.

Simon: Yeah.

Rob: You've also been in the States. I can hear that in your music.

Simon: Really? That's interesting.

Rob: OK, so, you've picked up influences in the States.

Simon: Yeah.

Rob: Are you picking up influences in Brittany?



Simon: Ah! I'm sure I am. I think, as a writer, you pick up influences wherever you are, wherever you go, whatever you listened to, or at least you should if you're, if you're listening to anything. So I'm sure I am and I do go to as many musical events as I can and I do see quite a lot of different types of music.

Rob: You've built a studio here. Is that for your own purposes or do you intend to invite other musicians to join you?

Simon: It's, it's one of those things. I have to have a studio to work in. I've worked in studios all my life and so I - yeah, I built the studio for me but in order to pay for it I hope to attract a few clients here and there. I've already done one small project with a French band - an album - they haven't quite finished it yet with about two more days to go. But, yes, it's open for business so people can get in touch with me and it's a fantastic place and, you know, I have lovely equipment. I've been doing this a long time and, yeah, it's good. It's always the dream. It was my dream back in those days - the 70's I suppose - to have a (country in the studio), man you know, away from it all. So here I finally have my studio in the middle of nowhere. I can make as much noise as I like. I could have a drum rap in the the garden if I wanted to at 3 in the morning. It wouldn't matter. And I probably will, this summer actually.

Rob: It's great. Thanks very much for your time.

Simon: You're welcome. Thanks.