



## **Simon interviewing Steve Kilpatrick, musician and composer**

Simon: I'm here with Steve Kilpatrick. So you are?

Steve: I'm a composer and music producer and also a guitar player and and bassist. Predominantly at the minute I'm doing mixing and mastering from

Simon: From this lovely

Steve: From the

Simon: facility

Steve: place we're in. Yes.

Simon: Yeah Yeah. So tell me a little bit about your background then. What brought you here, but let's start with where you're sort of from and

Steve: Well I'm from the north of England and discovered recording probably around the age of 15. At the High School I was at brought a lady in who taught the kids about recording and so we made little jingles for the imaginary radio show and I, I think we just ripped off Fern Hill ????? ????? got quite a lot of fun and then did what a lot of kids do from my background, which is you start on a sensible career, so I studied as a civil engineer for 3 years

Simon: That's quite a, from where you are now quite a that's quite a big gap isn't it.

Steve: I wasn't very good civil engineer student. I realised that quite quickly. Um.

Simon: OK

Steve: I'd always secretly wanted to be a musician, but always felt to articulate that would make me a a laughing stock in my sort of, where I was from.

Simon: OK

Steve: Where you're supposed to have a proper job. So after leaving engineering I went all in and went to study a an HND in popular music and recording which led on to a degree at the University of Salford

Simon: Ah

Steve: in what was called band musicianship at the time,

Simon: OK

Steve: And there still weren't many choices that had a recording element

Simon: Yeah

Steve: Cos that had originally begun as a brass band

Simon: Right

Steve: degree

Simon: Wow, brass band degree?

Steve: Yeah, but it had grown into jazz. I liked, I picked it because at the time I was really interested in jazz, really interested in recording and I was just developing an interest in contemporary classical music

Simon: Right

Steve: And we could do all of those things there. So I signed up for that and really really enjoyed my degree and then stay stayed on all the way till you can't do any more. And then still didn't want to leave and ended up a senior lecturer in the university teaching composition.

Simon: Ah. Excellent.

Steve: And also studio production. And then I've always been freelance since about the age of 18. I've always had a freelance career. But around 2018 I decided to not have the safety net of an academic

Simon: Right.

Steve: career

Simon: Right.

Steve: So I, I pulled the plug on that and I'd been thinking about this for a long time, and we were actually a friend of ours was touring Europe with the band that he plays with – which is quite a big, a very very big band. And we sort of we used it as a sort of opportunity to be with our Californian friends as they travelled around

Simon: Right

Steve: Europe for this tour. And we went with them. And ...

Simon: Were you playing?

Steve: I wasn't playing. We were just hanging out and then that that was really when I saw the opportunity and I thought you know if I'm ever going to be freelance there won't be a better completely freelance because I've always been OK with freelance but always had that

Simon: So when you say freelance were you were you as a as a composer freelance

Steve: At the time it was really as a composer

Simon: Yeah

Steve: And although I've always done recording, I studied recording at university, it actually came to the forefront more because I was just running my own projects

Simon: Right

Steve: and increasingly recording, doing all the recording and then I found myself doing the mixing and then I found myself doing the mastering and then other people started asking me to do the mixing, other people started to ask me, and as you know well paid composition work is, you know, sometimes you get it and you have a great year not much work, and sometimes you do a lot of work and and make ...

Simon: Yeah

Steve: So I was quite happy to take on this project

Simon: Tell me about composition then because you've done you you've written an opera, is that right?

Steve: Yes. So the opera was premiered in 2011. It was actually commissioned as part of the 2012 London Olympics so it was the cultural Olympiad in 2011 and this was although I'm not a Yorkshire man this was Yorkshire's flagship project and so I was commissioned to write that. That er I did the music for some commercials and things that really took off

Simon: Oh yes. Anything that our our listeners might

Steve: Er, yeah. Well the most well-known thing and the most lucrative thing I've ever done thus far was I did the trailer music for Resident Evil 6

Simon: Ah

Steve: Game which err Got a lot of traction world wide and I

Simon: Yeah, I bet

Steve: So I did that. That year I entered the I got the opera but I also wrote a few string quartets that year, they got performed in the States and they got multiple sort of performances and I developed a good relationship with an excellent string quartet from New York

Simon: Right

Steve: that played my music

Simon: How, how would you describe, I know how you describe your music, but how would you describe the string quartet for example?

Steve: My favourite piece of mine I think would be considered very contemporary by most people.

Simon: OK

Steve: Um, it's not melodic in any sense, it's very textural. That took me three years to write. So, that that piece of music took me three years.

Simon: And how long is the piece of music?

Steve: It's about 8 minutes.

Simon: That's and that's yes so I I totally get that and I'm sure that a a a lot of people won't realise the amount of work that goes into writing just a few minutes

Steve: Yes

Simon: of a big piece of music either. Um and so the opera was part of the cultural Olympiad you said and that. Where was that performed?

Steve: It was performed in Leeds er but premiered in Bridlington. In Bridlington Spa which is a fantastic Victorian not as spa you know for bathing but like a pier type building

Simon: yeah

Steve: So that was the premier and I think I had four performances

Simon: Wow. And what were the performances? How big was the

Steve: Er, It was fairly small and fairly big at the same time. A lot of these projects have to have a lot of community involvement

Simon: Right



Steve: So the, I basically I had a core of of 7 pros who specialised in contemporary music, ????? three singers, two of whom played two characters each, and one of them was Anikó who is my wife and performs quite a lot of my music. And then a string quartet from the States called Foxare. So they, so those guys did all the really hard contemporary stuff throughout and then I had a pretty large wind band from Yorkshire. They were part of the community and then also a community choir

Simon: Yes

Steve: as well.

Simon: Uhuh

Steve: So it was really arranging the sort of hierarchies of abilities, but also utilising the more, the less professional members in such a way that the music is cohesive

Simon: Yeah

Steve: with what the professionals were doing.

Simon: So in the compositional process did you, were you aware of these tiers that you were kind of working with?

Steve: Yes. I knew that from the outset. Oh, there was a children's choir as well.

Simon: Wow. Children's choir

Steve: Because of the nature of the project I spent a lot of time with the different groups. For example the community choir lost all its men suddenly, so then it was a women's choir. So you know you re-do it - can't do that ???? anymore

Simon: Right Right

Steve: The children's choir was really just children from school.

Simon: Yeah yeah

Steve: And they were very young, six of something like that

Simon: ` Must be fun though. Delightful.

Steve: They were fun, but an element of chaos. And alongside a string quartet. Is exciting to say the least. Their appearance on stage for the premier, cos they were also dressed as little birds. And they, as well as singing they did little bird reactions. Very cute. But they they're all excited and they come rushing past the string quartet with a huge gust of wind as they go - paper everywhere. Fortunately the ultra professional string players





went from memory till somebody could scabble around with their papers together. When they - they are phenomenal players. They probably had it in their head anyway. It made it exciting. And then you have to think about things like OK these kids are not going to be good at knowing where their notes are, so I'll have, I'll have them following another character, a sort of a canon

Simon: Cue yes

Steve: you know. Although. And then this bit will be in unison with one of the professionals or here Violin One is going to be playing the tune so they can sort of

Simon: Yeah, yeah

Steve: stick to that.

Simon: Oh. Fascinating project. And has that been recorded? Have you got a record of it?

Steve: There is a recording of it. It was published, the libretto was published as a book with an accompanying CD

Simon: And is it online? Can it be heard online? or not?

Steve: Uh my, I have an unofficial version online, which is the video that was

Simon: So we could put a link if you

Steve: We can put a link to that.

Simon: for our listeners

Steve: Yes. It's in several parts on YouTube.

Simon: Yeah. That would be good to have. So what's next composition wise? What are you, what are your plans?

Steve: I've always got lots of plans about what I'm going to compose and what I really want to do at the minute, it's kind of my bucket list thing, is do a rock album and do a rock album and just do it almost the old fashioned way of go with a record company, let them press it. It's got to be vinyl I'm not doing it just to CD and it's just cos it's a bucket thing I've always been on the edge of doing that or being in bands where post vinyl work comes out

Simon: Yeah

Steve: on CD. So it's kind of like bucket



Simon: Have you got a band or are you

Steve: it's kind of me. I'm all the band. But what I I what I would like to do with this is is actually um get a band together to to tour as well.

Simon: Yes

Steve: And so that's that's a composition project. And then there's a few things that I've done that I really want to sort of get together new recordings also there's a piece, music theatre piece I wrote called The Night Bride – I'd like to get a nice recording of that and then with my recordings I have the string quartet so I'd like to put out an album it's going to be called The Night Bridge and other dark tales.

Simon: You're doing a fair amount of mixing and mastering for clients.

Steve: Mixing and mastering, a lot of mastering for groups in the UK

Simon: Right

Steve: Largely because I've a relationship with another studio in the UK and I'm their preferred mastering engineer. So they're referring a lot of clients. I'd like to sort of expand that area

Simon: I'm sorry, I didn't really ask you why Brittany? What brought you here?

Steve: Well, we explored a lot of countries first of all before we settled on France. Hungary was one country we looked at. Spain, Portugal another one. We settled on France and then we sort of explored theoretically where and Brittany came out as the number one location partly the kind of building we wanted for the studio

Simon: Yes

Steve: in Brittany. And we came out for two exploratory visits and um on the second one we we made an offer on this house. And to make life more difficult it was also in the confinement year

Simon: Yeah..... Ok well we'll post the links for the studio on the podcast page and so people can get to actually to your favourite mastering project or mixing project and I look forward to hearing the rock album when it comes out and we'll talk to you again sometime down the line, catch up and see what what you've done.

Steve: That would be great

Simon: Find out if you've kept your kept your project timeline going

Steve: Well, we'll see, I may have moved onto another project



Simon: Thanks Steve

Steve: Thank you