

Jeff Smith

Head of Music, BBC Radio 2 and 6 Music

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Welcome to Media Masters, a series of one to one interviews with people at the top of the media game. Today, I'm here in the studios of BBC 6 Music and joined by Jeff Smith, the man who has chosen the tracks that we've been listening to on the radio for years. Now head of music for BBC Radio 2 and BBC Radio 6 Music, Jeff spent most of his career in music. Previously he was head of music for Radio 1 in the late 90s, and has since worked at Capital FM and Napster. In his current role, he is tasked with shaping music policy for two of the BBC's most popular radio stations, as the technology of how we listen to music is transforming.

Jeff, thank you for joining me.

Pleasure.

Jeff, Radio 2 has a phenomenal 15 million listeners. How do you ensure that the music selection appeals to such a vast audience?

It's a challenge, obviously, to keep that appeal across the board with those listeners, but it appears to be working. As you say, we're attracting 15.4 million listeners every week, and I think it's because I try to keep a balance of the best of the best new music, with classic tracks from a whole range of eras, way back to the 60s and 70s. So I think it's that challenge of just making that mix work and making it work in terms of daytime, and not only just keeping a kind of core audience happy, but appealing to a new audience who would find that exciting and fun to listen to.

How do you do your job, then? What's a typical week?

A typical week for me is very much the relationship with the music industry, so I'm both inward and outward facing for the BBC in terms of music. So managing the music that comes into the radio station, and then managing how that music appears on the station. With each station it's a very different process from Radio 2 and how 6 Music works, so we could get to that in detail later. But my specific week is Monday, Tuesday tends to be a very busy part of the week, because at that point we're just gathering in all the information for new releases, and as tracks come into the radio stations, and actually working out what we're going to be doing. Tuesday, Monday tends to be meeting with record industry people, pluggers etc. and talking about the

new music that's coming, with Wednesday being the key point for Radio 2 when we have our music playlist meeting, and Tuesday when we have our 6 Music playlist meeting. And that's the point when, at Radio 2, I chair the meeting, 12 people round the table, that's one hour, one and a half hours, of debate and discussion, very enjoyable too, about music – because it's a great job to be able to just talk about music all the time. And that gets me to about Wednesday. Thursday, Friday, I get the chance to maybe look at our broader wider projects, so that's the point when I'm doing things like recently we've had Biggest Weekend, and we have Hyde Park every year at Radio 2. We have 6 Music Live at 6 Music. A lot of those extra events that you need to apply a bit of blue-sky thinking and a bit of thought. Thursdays and Fridays seem to move towards that.

Do you not feel an incredible sense of responsibility, deciding these playlists? Because you've got to balance lots of competing interests. There are people that, by virtue of choosing what goes on the playlist, you're having to choose what *doesn't* go on it.

Yes. I'm very aware that, after years of doing this – because I used to do it at Radio 1 and Capital as well – the power and the responsibility of it is huge. But it's also very enjoyable, because you're shaping the tastes of the nation, and that's really a pleasure. Because if you come from a background like I do, where I was totally brought up with music and listening to radio stations like this, the fact that I could be leading the music decisions on those stations is fantastic. So I think the enjoyment outweighs the being scared of the responsibility. And also, I've been doing it for 25-30 years this way, so I'm pretty confident in my own capabilities. So it doesn't really scare me to address any, for instance, questions you might have about it, or the wider world – and God knows, people do have questions about what we do in the BBC and Radio 2 and 6 Music! But I think I'm really confident in what we do and what we deliver, and it's a great responsibility to have.

So you've been doing this for 25 years. Obviously, the depth of your experience grows the more you've been doing it, but does that also mean that you're getting older, you know, you don't know what your blind spots are? How do you keep your eyes and ears open for new music? Because you can't listen to absolutely everything.

No. That's a really good point. I certainly found that when I was at Radio 1. I left Radio 1 in 2000 when I was 40 – deliberately, because I didn't think that I could still handle that when I got to 40 years old. I became controller of Capital FM, which was a slightly older station. So, at 57, I'm feeling that where we are with our radio stations, I'm quite well positioned to manage that. But I agree, there are an awful lot of areas which maybe I don't cover, and so it's really important to have people within the teams who do have that awareness. So I'm very lucky to be supported by people within my team, so a great team at 6 Music of Lauren Brennan and Lauren Churchman, and a great team, Gary Bones, Michael Banbrook and Sarah Bowden at Radio 2. So between us all we've got that. And then, of course, within the playlist infrastructure, as we talk every week about music, there's input coming into that. And add into that, not just within playlists, but externally, our suppliers, in terms of the

programmes that we make about blues, about dance music – they bring in that expertise. Most recently we've added a rock show on Radio 2.

It's a great show.

Thank you. So Liz, who produces that, has an amazing background from stations like Planet Rock, and is able to input into what's happening and where it's all going in the world of rock music. So it's having really good people in the team supporting you.

How do these committees work? As you mentioned, often you'll get 12 of you around a table, and the imagery that came to mind was of a local council meeting with you chairing it! But actually it's not that, because you've got passionate, knowledgeable people. I love country music, for example. My wife didn't like country music for years, but because I play it so much, she now listens to it herself as well. Do you have violent, passionate disagreements about, "No, we are going to have some James Blunt on this week!" How does it work?

Yes, I love that. I love when we have a passionate, thump on the table stuff. It doesn't have that much to be honest because, boringly, quite a lot we tend to agree on things. But I think that a bit of passion in a meeting is good, and I would like to think of them more as meetings and discussions rather than committees. Ostensibly it is, because I chair it, and it's a selection of producers, but I think I'd like to think of it more as a discussion and a chat about stuff. But yes, I think the idea that people can come in and say, "We really believe in this record," that's what I want them to do. When I first came into 6 Music, when I took over there, I think they'd got into a kind of routine, if you will, of basically just going through a list of records and playing through them all, and listening to them on rote, you know? I said, "Forget that – just talk about the music you're excited about, and leave the other stuff. If it's not exciting to you, and you're not passionate about it, what's the point in raising it?" And that's a way of filtering, so we're not talking forever about loads of records which we don't really want to play or are never going to play. So I think it's really important that the passion comes into the room, and we leave everything else pretty much at the door – including data and all that sort of stuff. It really is just about the passionate response of human beings to music.

But data must play a part of it, because otherwise how do know whether what you're doing is going down well?

Absolutely. And I've been a big fan of data, I was the first BBC Music head to bring in research to the BBC in 1997 at Radio 1. So I am very much a believer in that from those days. I think a lot of it goes back to what we were saying about understanding the audiences at different ages. When you are a 50-year-old running a station that is maybe aimed at younger audience, it's really important to have that research and information. I think from our point of view at Radio 2 and 6, we're very much not playing in that same market really. Clearly, there are radio stations competing with us, but it's a bigger, wider, global world now that music exists in. And I think it's important that adding this unique approach to it, which is human curation, whether it be something that I and the music team put on the playlist, or whether it's what

Shaun Keaveny at 6 Music or Lauren Laverne at 6 or Ken Bruce at Radio 2 or Steve Wright are particularly passionate about. That's another thing, and we really inject more of that into the mix of things. So the idea that data is going to affect that, I don't think so – but on the other hand, as I say, I don't dislike the idea of data, and certainly over the years I've embraced it. And what I will do is I will look at anything that labels or artists want to tell me about the data that they are allowed to share with me, and I will have that in the back of my head. So come to a meeting, I will have that awareness, but I'm not going to really inflict all that data on all those numbers on the music meeting. I'll leave me to have it at the back of my head, and then if I feel it's worth sharing and it's a question of say, "Do we add this record, or do we add this record?" They're both equally as good, they're both basically maybe new UK artists that we want to support. Which one do we choose? "Let's look at like how it's working or how we think it might work with the audience on what we know." But I'll be honest with you, that very rarely happens in a playlist meeting at Radio 2 or at 6 Music; it really is more often about the gut, the feel, the support for the artist, how relevant that artist is to the radio station, and really, ultimately, the quality of the song.

You mentioned there about choosing between two songs, and I was thinking in a sense, are you like a bouncer at a nightclub that's full, where it's like one in, one out? Is it a fixed playlist where there's 60 songs and if you're 61st you're out, or is it slightly more amorphous?

Somewhere in between, in a way. I think if you're looking at the 25 songs we play every week in the playlist on Radio 2, there will be about five or so spaces every week that crop up, and so five to add. And we keep a fairly straightforward process on that, that a record will last, say, three or four weeks as a career on the playlist. Now, in comparison with, say, commercial radio that would be like four or five times the time they stay on their playlist, so we really move through the tracks faster than commercial radio. That would make no sense to them, and I get it, because I worked at Capital, and that would make no sense to me if I was there. You want to stick with the big songs, because you've tested them, and you are going to play them 75 times a week.

They work.

Because they work, and they're your listeners favourite songs, because you've asked them, and they're telling you that. And so you'll play them again and again and again. I think sometimes that can be tiring for the audience, and fair enough, and that creates fatigue, which doesn't mean that they deliver amazing hours of listening, like 6 does nine, nearly 10 hours a week, and Radio 2 does 11, nearly 12 hours a week of listening, because we don't have that. So our music throughput and usage and turnover is far faster than any other radio stations. And I think that's a really good thing, because I can still play our listeners' favourite songs, but I don't need to put them on the playlist. I can play them in recurrent, or I can play them in gold categories, or we can hand-build; put them into our shows. It's not an issue. What is important is that I'm finding new music and new artists, new songs, for our audience, and for the BBC to bring them through. And I think Radio 1 do the same. So I think our stations are just geared to finding new music and running it through our systems

– and as a result, we’re breaking a lot of music for commercial radio and the broader music industry, which is I think is a great service that the BBC offers.

We’ll come on in a moment to just how you actually go about the process of finding new music, because that’s very interesting, but how do you define the core sound of what Radio 2 sounds like, and 6 Music? Because you can kind of tell when you’re listening that it is Radio 2. It sounds to me that it’s something that, at first blush, could be easy to do – but actually it must be incredibly difficult when you think about it.

Yes. I think the core of all these things, with all the radio stations I’ve been responsible for, has been a music policy. When I was at Radio 1, my job was titled head of music policy, not just head of music, as it is now.

Head of music sounds better, actually.

I know, head of music policy sounds very governmental, doesn’t it?

It does. “No One Direction! That’s the policy.”

Exactly! But with the policy side of things, that is to say what is the tone of the radio station, amongst other things we have to talk about as well, so what are the key genres, what are the core artists. So the tone of the radio station is really important, so the tone of Radio 2 has been, since I came in, timeless and melodic music from a range of eras. The tone of 6 Music has been timeless, but alternative-spirited music – and I defined it as ‘alternative spirited’ rather just be ‘alternative’ because I didn’t see it as XFM, as it was at the time, or Radio X, as it is now. It’s not an alternative station, it’s alternative spirited.

There seems to be a more active love of music itself on 6 Music.

Exactly.

On Radio 2, people enjoy the music but in a slightly more passive way, potentially.

Well, that’s true. I think we have to agree within the music team that clearly where Radio 2 comes from is very much an entertainment-led station with personality, and music is a key part of it of course, but it isn’t the only part of it. It isn’t like music-driven, which is where 6 Music is; it’s completely driven by the music. Great personalities, but driven by the music.

Hence the fact that it literally has music in the title.

Exactly!

And how do you go about doing that? Because when you created 6 Music, you've got a blank sheet of paper there. Do you create something and then hope people like it, and then refine it, or is it something where you let people actually define what they think it should be? How did 6 Music come to be?

It's an interesting question, because I am very much a part of the history and the now of 6 Music, because I think it was back in 1993, I was sitting down with Mark Radcliffe.

Great broadcaster.

He's a fantastic broadcaster, and I've known him for years now.

I used to love Mark and Lard on Radio 1 – they were such legends.

But when I was chatting to Mark in 1993, he was looking after the Evening Session, which I was producing, Mark Goodier was off, and we were doing the show from the north west. I remember having a pint with him after the show, and we were chatting about stuff, and one of the things we started to talk about, I think he was just about to do his Out on Blue Six show, which was starting on Radio 1, and obviously I was a producer on Radio 1, and we started talking about this idea of a smart radio station for music that didn't want to be too smart and elitist, but something which actually talked a bit more about music, and pop music, and got excited about it and got into it. It wasn't quite Radio 3 for pop music, but it was that thing for music fans, and we were both, and we both are, music fans – so we talked about that then. And I often remind him about that when I see him now, because he's obviously on 6 Music, is that we came up with that idea of this smart music radio station.

You two came up with the idea of 6 Music?

Well, listen, we came up with an idea. I wouldn't say that. Because fast-forward to 1999, when I was in my final days at Radio 1 as head of music there, it came up on the BBC they wanted to start this, it was Network X and Network Y. I think Network Y went on to become Radio 4 Extra, and Network X was to become a 6 Music. But it was Matthew Bannister's idea that, "Oh, well, what do we do as a definition different from Radio 1?" And we thought, "Well, an album rock station, of course!" And we could play all those records we weren't playing any more on Radio 1, like The Eagles, and so actually it was a little bit like what Radio 2 went to. But at the time, Radio 2 was quite definably different. It was a lot more easy listening, for instance, than it is now. So there was a space where Network X can actually kind of go in. So we started to talk about it, and then actually I left, and the thing developed with a guy called John Sugar, who was there to be 6 Music as we sort of know it now, although at the time I think was Phill Jupitus at breakfast, and a number of other great broadcasters across the network. But they were very much doing an eclectic station where they just kind of did their own thing. I thought it was really important that when I came in to try and define what we were doing, rather than just saying, "It's eclectic," which is great, and it is, but it kind of doesn't say what it is. But the alternative spirit, and I sort of defined it as when the White Album came out in 1968, that's when pop became alternative, I think. And I'll say that. You could argue with it, but there are lots of things around that time that happened, including big festivals, your

Woodstocks and all that sort of that thing, that actually did change things. So take it through that, take it through the alternative, through Lou Reed, Velvet Underground, the alternative black conscious music with people like Marvin Gaye and Stevie Wonder, where they went to in the 70s, right through to dance music in the 80s, punk and the rave generation, all that sort of stuff, that's an alternative which informed the mainstream. So we kind have like defined it that way. So I guess 6 Music started off as this idea that it was a smart music station, and has developed into the idea that is alternative spirited across a range of genres. And even now, we're still developing that concept, particularly for a station like 6, is that how does that sit in with a younger audience, as younger people become a little bit disenchanted with traditional radio? Actually, we see that as a real opportunity for 6 because we think that smart kids who want to listen to the radio and know more about music might want to sample 6 Music, so will broaden our selection of music there now.

One of the big things that I think, in terms of music, that radio still offers is that sense of curation. I know Spotify do that as well, but you've got the personality of the broadcaster and the music curated around a certain theme or whatever it might be. I was actually on Spotify a couple of weeks ago and I was thinking of listening to 6 Music, and one of the playlists was 6 Music's current playlist. And that actually struck me for the first time ever that I had the choice of listening to the actual 6 Music in real life, or just the playlist on Spotify. And then I had to think, "Well, do I want a human being speaking between the records and also a bit of the weather and a bit of chat?" I actually chose the real person. But that's fascinating that in a sense you're competing against almost the essence of the playlist itself now.

Yes. Well, therein is the real challenge, isn't it, for radio at the moment, and the music industry probably as well, but specifically with radio. And one of the reasons why BBC Sounds is coming into the fore – I don't know if you have had the chance to play with BBC Sounds yet, but it's exactly there to do that – so now you can look at a playlist of music from a radio station like 6 Music or Radio 2 or whatever, but you can also listen to a podcast from one of our broadcasters, or you can listen to a live radio show. And you can create your own radio station if you want to have it, because I think we have to be realistic in that, particularly with not necessarily my generation, I think it's the younger generations, they are not so wedded to the idea of a network radio station. Once upon a time, Radio 1 and Radio 2 were the only places you could get a lot of music from, and find out where the new music was. We know, and we're wise enough to realise that's not necessarily the case. So for a new generation, not for everybody, but I think that people will find things in BBC Sounds where they can do exactly what you say; that you can choose to do either, but at least you're still doing it within a BBC framework. So the BBC still is a part of a younger generation. So this idea that we're inventing this next generation of radio, I think is really truthful for what we're trying to do with BBC Sounds.

Where do you think radio's going in in the long term? When I was a teenager, I used to avidly listen to the chart show on Radio 1 on a Sunday night. Mark Goodier, Bruno Brookes, and I would be there with my finger hovering over the pause button, so as soon as he shut up I'd release it and it would tape it. Now, I have nieces of the age that I used to be that wouldn't even consider listening

to the chart show – they get their music from YouTube. They might listen to a BBC-curated list on Spotify or YouTube, but they're not necessarily tuning in to certain radio stations. Is radio going to constantly have to reinvent itself? Is there a long-term decline? Where's it going?

Yes. I think we speak often of this decline, but actually it's still 90% of people listening to the radio in the UK, and obviously stations like Radio 2 hit one in three of those listeners as well. It's still a massive thing for people, listening to radio, like people still buy CDs, shockingly. Ha! How could they?! But clearly, it would be crazy to say that wasn't changing, because of course it is. And you're right with your niece, I have it with my daughter and my son – they don't listen to the radio. And so the real challenge is to bring them into a kind of context and a platform where they can feel comfortable, and feel that it's modern and it's accessible, and that's why the BBC Sounds thing I think is going to be a real key part of that. But I do think that there is also, in my head, this idea that I think you get to a certain point in your life, and it might be in your mid 20s or something like that, where maybe you're well into your first job, or getting into your first job. Settling down, maybe even first apartment, flat, house whatever you're doing, and getting settled in your life a little bit, I think you move into a kind of like, we would call them 'day parts' in radio, or moods, you would call them, something like that. You get into a mood in your life whereby I think radio fits in. It starts to fit in. You might have a car, so...

I'm a huge radio listener, but I'm an old giffer, I'm 43 now.

Yes, but I'm saying, that maybe even now, when people get to that age and they get to that part of their life, that it's a point when they... because we're seeing that over 25s isn't so much of a problem as this 10-24s – and even with that, I know that stations like Radio 1 are still hitting 30% of that audience, which is still pretty good. So I think that maybe we overstate that, and I think maybe people will still find radio, but back in the day when we were young, like with your cassette machine and the top 40, we had to do that, because there was no other way to get it, was there? And now, there are so many other ways that young people can consume it. So I think it's important that radio can help work in that context. Stations like 6 are really interesting examples, because being digital only, and all their life are digital stations, 6 has had to exist within a digital world. And we made a real big play years ago by saying that 6 Music sits along things like blogs like Quietus, and people like that. Also alongside Napster or Deezer or Spotify or whatever, where you sit in a kind of digital world. So a lot of our consumers at 6 are already very digitally savvy, and so we find a lot of that audience is coming and going in and out of Spotify and iTunes and into 6 Music, and back and forth, like you've just said. You were looking at Spotify, you'll play the 6 Music playlist, but you'll still listen to 6 Music. And I think and hope that's an audience we can build upon.

And how have people changed the way they listen to the stations? What are the touch points? For example, I use the iPlayer radio app on my phone. In the old days, I would have an actual wireless in the kitchen, and I would turn it on, and I'd listen to what I was given. Now, I don't have to get up at nine o'clock on a Sunday morning to listen to Steve Wright's Sunday Morning Love Songs, which I'm a huge fan of and I've listened to it for nearly 10 years, because I can

time shift it. I can get up at 11 and then play it. What are the touch points? How are people listening? I think the only time I really just put the radio on and get what I'm given is when I'm in the car.

Yes, it's growing, certainly the amount of digital usage. Clearly stations like 6, as I've said before, are DAB entirely, so they are entirely 100% digital, but the amount of people listening on PCs and clearly smartphones, like we've just said – I do the same, I listen to iPlayer radio through my smartphone rather than the traditional radio – yes, it's a bit annoying because you're not always getting the 4G you want if you're not in a Wi-Fi area or something like that, but I kind of think that's only going to grow. But I think that's also another good way to define yourself for the future, to say radio is radio, it's not podcasts, it's not audio on demand. It's a part of all that, but it is still radio – and radio can still exist within this digital world and thrive, because of smartphones, voice activated speakers, all those things, that actually are really probably going to assist us with the job rather than get in the way. However, the downside is that within those worlds of smartphones and voice-activated speakers, it's very populated. There's an awful lot of competition now, and we just have to be aware of that, hence great that we've got these amazing radio stations, but also great we've got something like BBC Sounds to work alongside with.

You've mentioned BBC Sounds a few times. Can you go into to a bit more detail about it?

Yes. It's our ambition to create a platform whereby people can consume BBC content across a whole broad range of genres, not just music, whenever and wherever they want to do. And as we construct a future whereby we know that under-45 listening is really important to us, and we've touched upon that, we think finding that audience through BBC Sounds will be the way, because of that integration of playlists and podcasts on demand audio, and the idea that you can create your own radio station if you want to. But I think because of the brands existing like Radio 2 and Radio 1 and 6 Music, it can only really help our basic cause to say the BBC is here and now, but it's also here and now for the future and for future listeners. And that challenge you said about people we know, young people we know, not listening to radio, we need to try and give them something that will bring them into a BBC experience.

Do you have to resist the influence of a record company executives and aspiring musicians that want to be on the playlist? Because in a sense you're a bit like a politician where a public affairs lobbyist wants something from the minister. Well, Rob Stringer at Sony might want you to play a more Manic Street Preachers. How does that work? Does Rob take you for dinner and say, "Could you play a bit more of the Manics?" How does it work? Because presumably you have to resist that. I don't see any brown envelopes around here.

Yes. I've had phone calls, I've had conversations, I've had lunches with various managing directors, chairmen, whatever, and I know them all over the years, but because I've known them all over the years they know that I will only respond to what I think is great music. And so will all these radio stations. So I'm not saying that I'm unpluggable, but... yes, I am saying I'm unpluggable! Because you have to be.

You're unpluggable in the proper sense of the word, insofar as you're open and amenable to suggestions.

That's the thing, and I think it's really important to be like that. You've got to have the dialogue, you've got to have the two-way conversation, but both sides have got to be prepared to say no and walk away from that. And I know it's challenging sometimes when there's a priority from a record label, and a lot of money is being spent on that artist, they really believe in it, but they've got an album which really isn't coming together, and it's track after track which we're struggling to get on the playlist, they have to understand – and I will be honest with them about that. I've always thought that's the best way, and I think if you speak to anybody about me, I'm sure they would say that, that I've always been pretty straight and honest with them about it.

Do you ever get it wrong? Loads of people who have had long careers in any sector can look back at mistakes, but do you ever watch Britain's Got Talent and think, "One Direction? They'll never amount to anything."

Yes. All the time. I get it wrong all the time. And I think it's really important to admit that, because the problem you can make sometimes in this role is saying, particularly with playlists, say for instance we missed a record, so we didn't put it on our playlist and we're not playing it. Now, on a station like Radio 2, one record isn't going to make a massive difference – but I am more than happy to sometimes go back on a record that I think we've missed and add it later, even though other radio stations might be playing it – because if I think that's really important for our audience to hear that record, and I think it's a record that maybe I didn't get, and sometimes one of the things I love about the playlist meetings that we have is that those producers in there often convince me about a record that I didn't get at first, but I'll come out of that room thinking, "That's brilliant." I'll give you an example. One of our producers on the Radio 2 team is Gary Bones, and very inspirationally came across The Greatest Showman original soundtrack. I'm not a musicals fan. I didn't totally get that. He played me This is Me and a number of tracks and I thought, "Oh, there's something there," but I didn't totally get it. But he was convinced about it and committed to it. We tried it out as album of the week. We then went with This is Me, the Keala Settle track, through his passion for it – and he proved it totally right. You look at that album, it's probably the biggest selling album of the year, I think, probably. And there's an example of something that I didn't necessarily get at the start, but it's important that I'm able to, as the rest of the station is, to embrace something that I got wrong.

What do you listen to?

So difficult.

Should I just put Revolver on?

Oh, yes! Definitely The Beatles. I've got no problem with listening to a whole Beatles album.

I still listen to albums, but apparently that's not the done thing any more.

No, apparently not! I think if you've been brought up with an album, say for instance one of my favourites of all time, and I've been involved and done stuff with ELO here which has been a great privilege for me, but doing *Out of the Blue*, and that sort of thing, front to back, I'll play the whole blooming thing. *Concerto for a Rainy Day*, just fantastic. So, yes, I'll still do that. I'll often do it for nostalgic reasons, and maybe this is just been a bit of an old bloke now, I don't know. But just for me, to get a bit of peace and just listen to something which means something to me, which brings back memories, which is very much what our audiences do as well, I mean, it's great, new music, and we talk about new music, and it's really important we do new music at the BBC, but it's so important also for Radio to connect to people's memories, and what drove them, not necessarily when they're young, but at key moments in their lives. So, yes, something like that. But also, I spend a bit of time, and the great thing about, I do think, digital streaming services – and I was working for one of them myself, Napster, a few years ago – is that you can indulge yourself even more now, can't you, so you can dig deeper. And I enjoy doing that. It's great what we do here, and we have a job to do, but I think what those services can do as a utility is allow you to dig really deep into your music and remember stuff you don't listen to any more. I've got loads of records at home, and I've got a whole room of CDs and albums, but I'll often sit in front of my computer and I'll play something from Spotify or Apple Music, and I could just turn around and get it out of the shelf and put it in the CD player or something, or on the record player, but it's just easier, isn't it, just to play the stream sometimes. And it's an instant memory, and it's instant attraction. So that's what I do. I will often indulge myself, and also, because I go back with it, I do geek on radio as well, still around the world, just to see what everyone's doing. Not just the UK, but in America, and all that, to find if there's anything really happening in music radio at the moment – there's not, but I'm looking around to find something which is doing something really exciting.

Your eyes are open and your ears are pricked.

Absolutely!

You're a radio man to your fingertips, really. Did you always want to be in radio? Walk us through your career.

Well...

"He was born at an early age..."

Well, where do I begin? Back to the 60s, I remember listening to Radio 1 on the first day – I'm 57, so I was like six or seven years old, and it was a Saturday morning, it was Tony Blackburn – who now works at the radio station and who I'm privileged to have conversations with in the corridor, or he comes into my office – it's Tony Blackburn! Listening to Tony Blackburn in 1967 as a very small child.

Do you still get star struck?

I do!

When I do Jeremy Vine actually, I come out and it's either Ken Bruce coming out of the studio or going in, or Steve Wright, and I'm like, "You're Steve Wright! I love you! I've listened to you for 25 years!" I don't say that though, because I don't want to look like an idiot.

The thing about Tony, and I was chatting to Gambo a few years ago – Paul Gambaccini. Talking about taping, I used to tape the American top 40 on Radio 1 every Saturday afternoon he was there, and I did actually cut him out! But of course, I listened to the whole show when I was recording it, and I loved what he had to say and tell me about the music that was coming out of America, which we had no understanding of in this country, and I discovered loads of artists – people like Poco and people like that, who didn't get played much in the UK, Asia and stuff like that, or other UK bands who started out with an American hit, and discovered all this music, and particularly black music. I always remember a track called What It Is by Garnet Mimms & Trucking' Company, which I love, because it got played out there – and then Robbie Vincent did his show on Saturday afternoons and I listened to that. So that whole business of being able to meet the people I was brought up with as a kid is fantastic. But I go back to that. Where I come from, I come from Fleetwood in Lancashire, so we're just off the coast, so the Irish Sea is there. So when I was a kid, my mum used to point out where Radio Caroline, which she used to listen to, came from – and it was actually out in the sea, and I could actually see the ship from where we were. And that fascinated me. There's a radio ship with a mast on it which could broadcast to people?! So that's how it really began for me. And then I was lucky enough to get a few breaks – hospital radio, like everybody does – but I didn't really get a break. I worked in a record shop mainly, a lot of my life, from being 14, 15 years old, because I thought that was the way in. Obviously it's music, it's linked to radio, the guy I first worked with used to run his own mobile disco so I got involved in doing mobile discos, I DJ'd, I wanted to be a DJ, I applied to be a DJ on Piccadilly Radio in Manchester, and Colin Walters, who was a programme controller there, turned me down, but was very gentlemanly in having me in the office to explain why, which is brilliant for a 17-year-old. And then it wasn't really until I went to college, got a degree, did communications studies degree and got a break. I did some tech opping at Piccadilly in Manchester, and then got a job as a studio manager at the BBC in the 80s, which was a great opportunity, because I literally spent maybe two years being a studio manager – which is all the technical stuff, which is brilliant – and then I got a break to be a producer. So I ended up producing some great shows on the BBC World Service, and then left and went up to the north east to work for the Metro group, TFM radio, I was programme manager there.

TFM! I used to listen to TFM. You could only just get it in York, where I'm from.

Yes, because it was Stockton-On-Tees, wasn't it?

Yes, that's right. TFM was the cool station.

Absolutely!

It was better then Minster FM, as I recall.

TFM was a great little station, I did that for a couple of years to about 1990, and then I was approached to come back to Radio 1 on a three-month contract. They offered me a phone and a desk, and said, "Do you want to do a few projects with us?" The early days of independent production in a way. But I'd got to know quite a few of the guys, and I came back with the intention of doing an AC/DC documentary, I think, which I never made actually, I'll have to do it in the end, because they actually persuaded me to produce this new show that we're creating called the Evening Session. It was the first time I met Mark Goodier. And me and Mark sat in a café, Café Avela's, around the corner, and we came up with a format for the show, and we just broke all the rules really.

I know Mark very well, his office at Wisebuddah is only a couple of streets away from here!

We were supposed to be doing this magazine programme for young people in the evening, that sort of thing. And we just created a great music show, which was somewhere in between daytime and John Peel. And we found loads of great bands like Suede and Blur and Radiohead. We put them in session, and it just seemed to work, and we were at the right time, and it was like 1990 to 1992.

I used to listen to it.

And then I found Steve and Jo, and a number of other presenters. We trialled them, because Mark was going to daytime, and I put Steve and Jo together as an entity, and they went off, and the Evening Session sailed on happily, and I went into daytime Radio 1 as editor. Then I left, worked with Mark, went to work with him at Wisebuddah. He'd set it up, I went in to partner with him on... obviously they were doing all the Maconie shows, Collins and Maconie, and we brought in Trevor Nelson to do a series for Radio 1.

They also do all those insanely catchy jingles, don't they?

They do, yes. They do great jingles. But I stayed with Mark for a while and then was asked to come back to Radio 1 as the first head of music policy, as we discussed before. Did that to 2000, Capital FM approached to be controller of Capital FM in 2000.

That's a big step up at that point, because you're then CEO.

Well, the thing is, I think I'd always thought to myself, "Oh, blimey." I'd seen Andy, and I'd seen Matthew, and I'd seen various controllers, Johnny Beerling, and I thought, "I can do that!" And BBC radio was always more difficult for me to get the break into the higher echelons of it; I was very much associated with just being a music guy. Fine. So I thought, "I'll go to Capital to prove I can do it as controller." I stayed there for a couple of years. At Capital, we got bigger numbers than they have now, but it was a different kind of time. But one of the interesting things about Capital, and what they were going through at the time, was a renaissance itself. It

was looking to develop on from Chris Tarrant at breakfast and Steve Penk in the mornings, and a range of presenters who'd been there for quite a while. It was an opportunity to look where that was going. So we broke people like Margherita Taylor, there was Cat and Edith we did in the afternoon, and a whole range of new presenters, which I think was the idea was to try and rejuvenate, and of course now, Capital is pretty much rejuvenated, I would say, as a successful commercial radio station and network.

Did you enjoy the extra responsibilities of being CEO? Because we've had quite a few journalists say, "I really enjoyed journalism, was made editor, and then you end up having to deal with HR and legal issues and everything." It's things that yes, they can do, but their heart's not in it. That burden of leadership, did you enjoy it? Because in a sense it's taking you away from the actual music. You will have employed a Jeff that would have done Jeff's job.

I think that was absolutely right. I think that was my voyage of discovery. My voyage of discovery was actually learning that maybe a controller wasn't what I wanted to do. And since then, I haven't really had that ambition. I know what I'm good at, I know what I can do; I went off from Capital to Napster, and that was getting back into the music but in a new start-up environment. But again, I've always have been associated with massive brands, whether it be Capital FM, Radio 1 or Radio 2, and actually Napster was a massive brand, but it actually wasn't very big really, because it was a start-up, really. Roxio had bought the name in America and they want to set up in the UK, so it was like three, four, five of us in the UK, it was a lovely small little start-up team, we could all fit in a little room like this, and we just got on brilliantly. And we were the first digital, proper full-on digital, music service. I think there had been Coca-Cola music before that. But Napster was set up before iTunes, and it was a great pleasure for me to actually be working with the industry again and bringing them into this new world, and actually discovering for myself the whole things about quality assurance, quality control, QA, QC, wire frames, all that sort of stuff – a whole new world. And Napster To Go, which was the first interpretation of something we called "the celestial jukebox". The idea that you could pluck any track out of the sky and just listen to it on your phone. We were doing that in 2004-5, and we had R&D doing that in America, in the States, and it was all kind of moving along. Clearly, the push wasn't fast enough, and of course, in the interim, smartphones had started to arrive, and then that whole idea with Wi-Fi and Spotify appear, and people like that, and it changed. But that was a really exciting time, the early days of the digital music industry.

Did they learn more from you than you learnt from them in a sense? Because I was thinking, did they regard themselves as a tech company that did music, or were they a music company? Because if you talk to Über, for example, they would say they're a tech company that just happens to deliver transportation solutions. They wouldn't actually regard themselves culturally as a transportation culture like a taxi company. They would say, "We're a tech company." How did it work in terms of the culture? Because you were bringing that musical sensibility, the very platform that they needed to build their business on.

It was interesting when they were looking to fill the role that I did. They addressed it in that very American style as they were looking for a “rock star programmer”. And I think that’s the essence of it – they lacked somebody in there who could give them that.

They’re almost asking the wrong question.

Exactly. But it’s good that they realised that they were asking the wrong question, because I think at the end of it, yes, they needed somebody to integrate them into the music industry, and to be aware of, and particularly in the UK... I mean, we started doing gigs in pubs around the corner from our offices, and we recorded them and turned them around as little sessions. I remember one of the directors from America came over and saw that and he was over the moon about this; he just thought it was brilliant, very British pub, English band...

Quaint.

Quaint! And we did great sessions, actually. We worked with the guys at Wisebuddah to deliver our sessions. We did Amy Winehouse and Mika in session, that sort of thing. So there were a lot of radio-style things we were doing for the first time in digital music, which had not been done before. We even created radio programmes, which you could probably call podcasts now, which was I got Steve Lamacq to present this show called Don’t Shoot Me, I’m Only the MP3 Player, and the idea was that it was a round table basically, like he does now on 6, and we’d sit around and talk about some of the music which was on our service, and he’d chat with a few other people, and you’d create it as a playlist, so basically there would be a track, a link with him, a track, a link with him and guest, a track, and then you could roll it out as a playlist – and I know Spotify have subsequently gone on to do that. But yes, it was an exciting time, because you could see the synthesis of existing radio and this new digital music service. I think to a certain extent services like Spotify, and clearly Apple Music is doing it with Beats 1, there’s still an element of that within it, but I do suspect that they may be slightly moving away from that a little bit, that trying to *be* radio; they’re realising that it’s maybe a non-starter for them. But clearly they’re finding other ways to get into that area now. But yes, I think you’re right. All these companies, still now really, are tech companies first and music companies second.

So in a sense you’ve got much more value to add to them really, because you can learn, like you say, wire frames and the technicalities of the app within two hours. But they can’t replace your 30-odd years experience of music.

Yes, I think that’s the thing, and I think that’s why we’ve seen quite a lot of people move into those services from within the BBC, because obviously people who do have musical experience – and often they have in the last 20 years or so been brought up through radio, that’s why they’ve moved in that direction – again, though, I see a sense where that’s changing a little bit as well, is that a lot of those services, like Spotify, are bringing in more marketing people, and more data programming people and all that side of things, and I think some of them, particularly maybe Spotify now, are becoming a little bit more algorithmic based. And you can understand that, because obviously the cost of bringing in lots of skilled people is

expensive, and again it's another unique positioning point for radio, and particularly the BBC, that we still do invest in our people who know about music and our creatives.

So tell us, how did you come to move on from Napster, and then, in a sense, come full circle, back here to the BBC?

Napster, I was there until 2007, and I'd been keeping in contact with Lesley Douglas here, who was controller at the time, and we'd often talked about whether I would come to Radio 2 at some point, and I have to admit we talked about the past, and for me, all my years had been designed to get me to Radio 1 – when I was a kid, that's where I thought I would be. Even when I was at Radio 1, I never thought I'd be at Radio 2. I didn't think it was the sort of station for me.

Well, it didn't used to be cool. Whereas now it is, actually.

It is now!

It's a good station!

I think we've made it more like that. And Lesley, and Jim, back in those days Jim Moore and Lisa Douglas were the key architects of that move to that kind of newer generation, just rediscovering an audience, which you have to do every now and again with a radio station, it's really important to do. We're doing that again now a little bit. But I think it's really important that that time happened, because it was 2007, Napster, again, like we talked about with tech companies, was making changes again, and I thought there probably wasn't room for me any more, but luckily enough this job came up. Colin Martin left, who'd been here for about 15 years or something like that, he'd departed, or was departing, and so I was talked to about coming to be head of music, which I loved the idea, and I particularly loved the idea of bringing some of my digital experience from Napster to it – and I think that went down pretty well when we had the conversations about stuff – but also to get a bit more involved in 6 Music than had been done previously. So I had a very good conversation, and I came in, and that was 10 years ago.

We talked earlier about what a typical week was. What's top of your to do list in the medium to long term? What kind of changes do you want to make over the next few years, as you're commuting in on your foldable bicycle – I imagine, having watched W1A, that's what's all you BBC lot do. As you're wistfully thinking, "What's Radio 2 going to be like in a few years?" Where are you going to take it?

Well, as I said to you before, both with Radio 2 and 6 Music, the challenges are with younger audiences.

What, in terms of attracting and retaining them?

Absolutely. It's under-45s, where we're spending an awful lot of time in thinking about how we might appeal to them, not just with our stations here but also across

the BBC, and particularly in terms of BBC radio, for rejuvenating, and making sure that our younger audiences come through. And obviously, we've touched on BBC Sounds, but the way Radio 2 and 6 can do that is clearly within the music policy, and that's something obviously I can have a major factor on. So a lot of time is thought about can we develop new and unique properties and opportunities that might attract that younger audience. Visualisation is an area which is always interesting to me, and it's a guy called Joe Harlan working here who's developing all those concepts, and brilliantly, as he has done with things like Live Lounge, but we've created Piano Room at Radio 2, which exists within Ken Bruce's show, which is visualised, and content will appear within the BBC, but also maybe a track into YouTube or whatever, and similarly here at 6 Music we have the Live Room, which is just round the corner from the studio we're speaking at the moment, and within that we'll have a range of artists from the Pixies at one end to brand new artists like Beach House or somebody even newer at the other end. It's really important that we have those new ways of reaching out to audiences which are sometimes a little bit beyond just audio and sounds, but actually are visualisation, and something that people can see. Because we know how younger audiences consume content. So it's really important alongside how our presenters relate to the audience. It's really important the music relates to the audience, and we reinvent it. And I go back to something I said earlier about Radio 2 playing the best of the best new music. It means that within our playlists, in our weekly playlists, we play a number of tracks which you might also hear on Radio 1, you might also hear on commercial radio stations. You won't hear them for as long as on commercial radio.

But you'll still hear them.

But you'll still hear them. And I have no worry about doing that, I think it's a really responsible thing for us to do. We must support great new music wherever it comes from, and sometimes there will be some duplication – but actually, that's all for the good of music and the music industry, I think, as we're developing up artists, because I know that, every year, a station, for instance, like Radio 2, plays 10,000 different songs in daytime, whereas the average commercial radio station might get to 1,000. So we play 10 times the number of different songs against any of our other competitor radio stations. So even if every one of those 25 songs on our playlist were the same as was being played on commercial radio stations, the rest of it is so distinctive, not just the music, but the speech in between... I'm not going to do that, by the way, but we could, because I think we can be that distinctive without that.

Radio 2 and 6 Music is run by the BBC, it's a public service broadcaster funded by the licence fee, and I know we've spoken a few times about the absence of commercial pressure in terms of having to play certain songs for a certain length of time. But is there more of a pressure because you're a public service broadcaster in terms of how you respond to calls for more diversity on Radio 2? More female artists, black, minority, ethnic artists. Do you feel that you have a duty to be more inclusive in a way that if you were a commercial station it's just, "Well, we just play the records that people listen to."

Well, number one, I think it's all about the quality of the songs that we play. That's got to be the clear starting point for anything in particular, whether you're a public

service broadcaster, whatever. I think it's really important that we have that as the driving force about it. But absolutely, I think it's really important. In a modern world – and we've talked about younger audiences, that sort of thing – the modern world, and modern audiences, are very aware of diversity, and diversity is a really important thing for us to represent as the BBC, whether it be on our stations at Radio 2 and 6 Music, or on telly, or whatever. I think what we're hearing from the director general is very much that, and absolutely I believe that. I think that's absolutely right; diversity is just what makes this country tick now. So if our music that we play and our presenters don't represent that, then that's not right, so we must get to that. It's just a gradual process to get there. In terms of what we do in music and our playlists, we track it; we track certainly the amount of female to male artists. We don't particularly look in terms of BAME or anything like that, but I know that when we do support artists, like Radio 2 has recently with an artist like Nikhil, and we've got Deva Mahal on our playlist at the moment.

You championed Gregory Porter many years back, great artist.

Very successfully. Shaun Escoffery, Andreyana Triana, you know... I mention these artists, but ultimately, what makes them great is the songs that they create. It's just great music, you know? And music comes from a great diversity of artists, which is brilliant, and we should continue to celebrate that. And I think we'll find in the UK that we'll find more artists from all sorts of backgrounds. I was really chuffed when – it was a bit of a surprise, I think, to a lot of people that we put Stormzy on the A-list on Radio 2, but it was such a gospel-inflected and lovely track that he wrote, and I know he was chuffed, because his mum was chuffed about it, and I know he tweeted about it and everything like that – but I was really pleased that we could do that, and I want to be able to do more of that, and I don't want to feel that we're shackled by some kind of box-tick to do this. I think we just do it because we feel the music's right. Sometimes they might get played on Radio 1. Sometimes they might get played on Heart. But neither of those stations will sound like Radio 2 do, and neither of those stations will bring 15.4 million listeners to the party as well. So I think it's really important that we carry on doing that.

Last couple of questions, then. What are the frustrations with the job? I mean, you are a hardcore music guy, radio man to your fingertips. I imagine that you just want to do the music. But having watched three seasons of W1A, do you get called into loads of endless BBC management meetings that you don't really need to be in? What are the things that you'd like to move on from?

I think one of the frustrations for me generally about me is just that – that being kind of this music guy. Because I think that also I've got a lot of ideas in other places. And I find, you know, the BBC can be quite restrictive, and popping you in a little kind of stereotype, so you just do the music there on Radio 2 or 6 Music, or Radio 1, that sort of thing. And I'm really pleased that increasingly, over the last few years, people like me, and Chris at Radio 1, that sort of thing, are being used more broadly across it. But unfortunately that does mean occasional meetings! But I think there are very few boring meetings really. The great thing about here is most meetings I'm involved in anyway are quite creative – so I don't find that such a big thing. Personally for me, I kind of think that where it goes is more of that visual side of things. There's

something really exciting about... and also I want to tell more stories about music, and I think you can tell great stories about music on radio – and I love radio, obviously – but I think more and more, as I consume things myself, like Netflix etc., I realise there are some great stories to be told of music in television. And I think that's a real opportunity for people like me to break out into and work with and develop ideas. I don't know if you saw it, the Dre and Jimmy Iovine documentary, The Defiant Ones, which I thought was a real benchmark in how to tell a great story about music. It had story arcs and everything like that. I would love to do things like that, I think that would be a great development for me. I think I can do things like that, because I have that history of music within me, and also the awareness of the broader world around it. I think there are some great stories to be told, so hopefully I can break out slightly from my stereotype as this music and radio guy and kind of go into a broader world.

I would say it's not a stereotype, it's you've got a clearly defined proposition in the marketplace!

Thank you very much!

A nice question in a sense is, what's the thing that you've done, when you look back over the last few decades, of which you're most proud?

A couple of things really, I think. I'm really proud of creating Live Lounge on Radio 1, because I was head of music at Radio 1 in those days, and we literally had a studio set up like we have here at Wogan House, or as they do now across the road. But what we had is we had this whole new set up at Yalding House, which was studios all around this central area, and the central area basically just had a computer in it. I said, "Wouldn't it be great if we could put music on there?" Because we had to go to Maida Vale to do everything. And so we thought, "Yes, but we need a name for it." And I spent hours looking. I went on to the early days of something like Google, I think it must have been.

Ask Jeeves, it might have been.

Yes!

Or Alta Vista.

Alta Vista, yes! I think the station was WSTR, somewhere over in America, and they had a thing called Star Lounge, and I thought, "That's a good name, but obviously we can't call it Star because we're not a star station, WSTR." So I thought, "Live Lounge – we'll call it that." And so it was a slot within, I think initially in Simon Mayo's show, then ultimately got taken on board and made famous by Jo Whiley.

So you were the person who ultimately sealed the fate of the BBC's Maida Vale Studios, iconic Maida Vale Studios!

Probably or probably not! In fact, I did a lot of support of Maida Vale, alongside all the artists I put into Maida Vale. But that idea to create a facility whereby we could

create our own content, which was right in front of the presenter, right in front of the DJ, and that interaction, and it was Joe Harland who actually brought in the idea of actually doing the cover into that, which actually rose the whole game up. But I came up with the original concept. I'm really proud of that, in establishing that. And similarly, with another thing you could call me up on really, in a way, was getting rid of the Radio 1 Roadshow! I was pretty much an architect of getting of the Radio 1 Roadshow. I'd done loads of great ones which I was really proud of, but it got to the point in 1999 when we were doing them...

It was of its time. I used to love the Radio 1 Roadshow.

Yes. And we were just losing everybody, so that younger generation we were talking about was coming along saying, "What are you doing?" We still had Smiley Miley, and we still were giving away t-shirts, and it just wasn't of the time, do you know what I mean?

I know, but when it was of its time it was amazing. I'm very good friends with Peter Bowes actually, who used to read the news and go on the roadshow. I was having dinner with him a few months ago, and he was getting his phone out, showing me some of the old pictures of the Radio 1 Roadshow. It was just a blast! It was great to listen to, never mind...

I know!

But you were the guy who closed it down.

Yes. Obviously, I wasn't controller so I didn't have the final decision, Andy Parfitt did ultimately, but it was me who recommended it to him. Because my idea was, why don't we get rid of all those roadshows and just create some bespoke two or three festivals per year whereby... my original idea was we bussed people into all those different parts of the UK, because obviously a lot of people in Great Yarmouth and that sort of thing couldn't necessarily get to Norwich or wherever we were doing the shows from. But it didn't work out that way, it worked out to about five or six in the end of it, but we experimented in 1999 with a thing called Radio 1 Live in Heaton Park in Manchester. We got Robbie Williams to do the number one record live after Mark did the Top 40, so we did it straight off the back of that. And so, it was a real proud moment when I described the idea to Andy, I'd worked with a couple of promoters, and we came up with the concept of having these marquees and things like that, and this giant infrastructure, Europe's biggest undercover festival, as it was at the time, and we created it first as Radio 1 Live, and then the year after it became One Big Sunday. And that was a great thing to be able to do, because we were reinventing it. This is what really excites me, and particularly what we can do at the BBC is reinvent ourselves every now and again, and that's very much something that we did back then.

What advice would you give to someone listening to this who's maybe just left university who aspires to be the next Jeff Smith?

Ha! I think it'd be great if somebody was actually doing that. I'm not too sure people do any more. I think that's part of our problem.

Are you the last of the Jeff Smiths? Obviously, you're the actual Jeff Smith as well!

Are there any more?! But if there were, I would say to them, "Brilliant." Because I think we need more people who are passionate about music in all its ways. I was thinking now, if I was me now, coming out of university, would I do this? I think so, but I think there are all sorts of other things you can do now, and I think obviously digital music services are there. I think music supervisor roles are brilliant roles. I think I would have done something like that had I been 21, 22 now. A&R, I think is more interesting than ever before in a way, in the way that people work it. I think there are all sorts of areas you could get involved in, which I would have probably not seen myself back in those days, because radio just stood in front of me and just sort of said, "You've got to come here," do you know what I mean? Because for me, that's what drove me. But I think I would also say to them, if somebody was trying to get into doing what I do, it's just belief as well. Just keeping that dream alive. You know, if you really want to do it, I honestly believe you can – I would say that, because I've done it – and there are a lot of little areas where you'll go off into a little cul-de-sac and it won't work out, and you've got to have a bit of luck on the way, definitely. However skilled you think you are, or how good you are at what you do, there's always got to be a break here and there. But you've just got to hang in there. And if you've got that dream, and that's what you really want to do, then you should just go for it – and I'm more than happy to... I chat to a lot of people who are young people who do want to do this sort of role, I'm more than happy to encourage them, and that's what I try and encourage my music team to be, to do what I've done, or do this sort of role for the future – because I think finding heads of music in radio, I think it's tougher than ever before. I think there aren't so many people coming through, because people don't necessarily see it as a future role when they are young maybe. And that's possibly part of the fact that radio isn't quite as it used to be when we were kids, when it was just everywhere, and radio was the only way in – it was very exciting, wasn't it, you know?

Jeff, this podcast isn't the BBC so we're not bound by rules of BBC impartiality, enforced impartiality, so I wanted to say, I think you're a legend. We discussed you coming on months ago and I've been looking forward to it. You've certainly not disappointed. Thank you ever so much for your time.

Thanks very much, Paul.