EXCLUSIVE NEW INTERVIEW

Midge Ure

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Photo: Extreme Voice
Welcome to EV18! It’s taken us a while to complete this one as we’re being kept busy by various record companies wanting to release Ultravox and related material – but at least that’s a GOOD thing! We’ll keep you posted...

Soon it will be the 20th anniversary of Vienna, the year 2000, and issue 20 of Extreme Voice, just two more issues away. So, with an eye towards the dramatic, we have made the difficult decision to wind down the printed issue at that point, letting it go out on a high. But don’t panic! The website will take over – we’ll still keep on producing new articles and interviews and the current content that you get on the site, it will just all be in one place (and free, of course!). Please do subscribe to the news email service if you haven’t already – just head for the News page.

So what if you’re not on the Internet by then? Don’t worry, we’ll still keep on mailing out the news flyers for anyone who wants to send in some stamped addressed envelopes, or International Reply Coupons outside the UK.

So what can you look forward to in the last two issues of Extreme Voice? Well, we have more exclusive interviews lined up, articles on the filming of various Ultravox videos, plus the usual mix of previously unseen photos, news, reviews, and a fab final competition next issue, guaranteed to give your brain a good workout. The prize is set to include the ENTIRE EMI Gold Ultravox and Midge Ure re-release catalogue, plus Exotour (no. 900 of 1000), Subterranean Omnidelic Exotour (no. 005 of 500), Cathedral Oceans and Shifting City, plus a few others. Most will be autographed by as many band members as we can muster, so don’t miss out!

We would like to thank you all for your support over the years. As usual, quite a few subscriptions run out with this issue, in which case your address label will say “subscription expires with EV18”, and a subscription renewal form will be enclosed. We would very much like you to accompany us for the final two issues! Any cheques etc should be made payable to Cerise A. Reed, please. See you in the new millennium!..!

Subscription rates for the FINAL TWO issues (EV19 and EV20) including post and packing are as follows:

UK £7.00 • EUROPE £8.00 • OUTSIDE EUROPE £11.00

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All the very best!
ULTRAVOX
CD re-releases

ULTRAVOX! : The First Three Albums
Island Records have once again showed an interest in the possibility of remastering and repackaging the first three Ultravox albums; Ultravox!, Ha! Ha! Ha! and Systems of Romance. It's hoped that these new versions, which won't be considered now until at least the middle of next year, will not only include extra material, but correct the errors in the original CD's artwork so that we can finally say cheerio to Mr Jairazbhoy. The matter of the two Tiger Lily tracks, Ain't Misbehavin' and Monkey Jive, is also a cause for debate – leaving them off the first album would doubtless please the purists, whilst at the same time annoy the completists! Hopefully, we'll have some more definite news in time for the next issue.

ULTRAVOX! : The Island Years
Viewed in some quarters as a bit of a missed opportunity, The Island Years is essentially the Slow Motion compilation CD with two extra tracks (Hiroshima Mon Amour and The Man Who Dies Everyday) both of which had already appeared on Three Into One. The omission of John's final spoken title, which is quite some achievement when you remember that this is a budget release. Thanks again to EMI Gold to release it for completion's sake. Permission is certainly at this stage, but we're hoping to persuade EMI to gain access to it. As far as we know, this is the very first time an "enhanced CD" has been used for an EMI Gold release, so it's quite an honour. Below are our proposed track listings:

Catalogue Number: Spectrum 554 898 2
1. White China 3'50*
2. One Small Day 4'30*
3. Dancing With Tears in My Eyes 4'39*
4. Lament 4'40*
5. Man of Two Worlds 4'22*
6. Heart of the Country 5'05*
7. When the Time Comes 4'56*
8. A Friend I Call Desire 5'09*
9. Easterly 3'45*
10. Building 3'10*
11. Heart of the Country (instrumental) 4'23*
12. Man of Two Worlds (instrumental) 4'31*
13. White China (extended version) 8'23*
14. One Small Day (extended version) 8'31*
15. Lament (extended version) 8'03*

Catalogue Number: EMI GOLD 521 8342
1. Astradyne 7'07*
2. New Europeans 4'05*
3. Private Lives 4'07*
4. Passing Strangers 3'50*
5. Sleepwalk 3'12*
6. Mr X 6'33*
7. Western Promise 5'18*
8. Vienna 4'54*
9. All Still Stood 4'22*
10. Waiting 3'54*
11. Passionate Reply 4'18*
12. Herr X 5'51*
13. Alles Klar 4'55*

ULTRAVOX! : U-Vox
Unfortunately a release of U-Vox is by no means a certainty at this stage, but we're hoping to persuade EMI Gold to release it for completion's sake. Permission is being sought as we write this – we'll keep you posted. Here is our proposed track listing:

Catalogue Number: TBA
1. Same Old Story 4'40*
2. Sweet Surrender 4'34*
3. Dream On 4'48*
4. The Prize 5'37*
5. All Fall Down 5'08*
6. Time to Kill 4'25*

mean! We have to say a big "thankyou" here to June Graham, a native Gaelic speaker who originally hails from the Isle of Skye, for translating and transcribing the lyrics for us. It couldn't have been an easy job!

For the track listing, we decided to re-unite the eight standard album tracks, removing the extended remixes from the middle and end of the album – these originally appeared at the end of each side of the limited edition cassette, something which carried over onto the CD format. The two studio B-sides and the three remixes appear in chronological order at the end of the CD and after a second gap, in line with the other re-releases in the series.

The feedback we've received so far has been exceptionally positive, with special mention going to the restored track order as well as the enhanced sound quality. Full track listing as follows:

Catalogue Number: Spectrum 554 898 2
1. Dangerous Rhythm 4'16*
2. My Sex 3'04*
3. I Want To Be a Machine 7'23*
4. The Wild, the Beautiful and the Damned 5'54*
5. Life at Rainbow's End (For All the Tax Exiles on Main Street) 3'45*
6. Young Savage 2'59*
7. Slip Away 4'17*
8. Rock Wrok (re-mixing Rockwrok) 3'35*
9. Hiroshima Mon Amour 5'11*
10. Distant Smile 5'25*
11. The Man Who Dies Everyday 4'12*
12. While I'm Still Alive 3'16*
13. Slow Motion 3'27*
14. Quiet Men 4'07*
15. Cross Fade 2'52*
16. Just For a Moment 3'08*

ULTRAVOX! : U-Vox
Whilst you read this we are in the middle of creating the artwork for the forthcoming EMI Gold version of Vienna, due for re-release to coincide with its 20th anniversary (give or take a month or two). We were always led to believe that this would be one album we wouldn't be able to get hold of because it's always been a strong and regular seller, but as it happens sales have dropped off in the last few years, which has meant that EMI Gold has been able to gain access to it.
Midge Ure: Live in Concert

(CD releases)

Disc One
1. Vienna (single edit) 4'39"
2. Passing Strangers 3'55"
3. We Came to Dance (single edit) 4'10"

Disc Two
1. Same Old Story 4'39"
2. Hosanna (In Excelsis Dee) 4'22"
3. Keep Talking (cassette recording during rehearsals) 6'23"
4. When the Time Comes 4'56"
5. Answers to Nothing (single edit) (Midge Ure) 3'40"
6. Waiting 3'52"
7. Alles Klar 4'55"
8. Face to Face (recorded live at St Albans on 16th August, 1980) 5'58"
9. Paths and Angles 4'22"
10. Private Lives 4'06"
11. A Friend I Call Desire 5'09"
12. Passionate Reply 4'18"
13. Building 3'13"
14. I Never Wanted to Begin 3'41"
15. All Stood Still (single edit) 3'40"

Catalogue Number: Disky HR-853802

Various Artists: Lullabies With a Difference

The PACES (cerebral palsy) charity has released a compilation album of tracks by artists such as Midge Ure, Paul Young, Joan Armatrading, Tina Turner, The Cranberries, Brian May and many more. Entitled Lullabies With a Difference, it can be ordered from various record stores and online at the PACES website, http://www.paces.org.uk/html/lullabies.html. Midge has contributed a lovely new track called Baby Little One, which is unique to this release.

The design (by Broadleaf) is excellent, we can’t fault the look of it at all. But as an aside, it’s kind of amusing to see that they really couldn’t decide on how to spell Melissa Etheridge’s surname – it’s spelled both as “Eidhridge” and “Etheridge”, often in the same sentence, and there are other typos (apparently Joan Armatrading and Gus Dudgeon “compiled” the album). Oh and the BMG logo was obviously taken from a fax... but now we’re just nitpicking!!
Midge has recently recorded an orchestral version of Vienna with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra (produced, arranged and conducted by Mike Batt), which is featured as the B-side of the Mike Batt single Bright Eyes, also recorded with the RPO. Vienna also appears on the new Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and Mike Batt album entitled Philharmania – All Time Great Rock Hits Vol.1, however both of these releases are only available in Germany.

1. Bright Eyes [Mike Batt] 3:50*
2. Vienna [Midge Ure] 4:44*

Catalogue Number: Stella Music 563 211-2 (single)

Midge has been busy on the live front lately, appearing at gigs in aid of Kosovo in Swindon and Glasgow (solo, acoustic), and for St Peter's Hospice in Bristol in October 1999 (full band). Added to this was The Danube Festival in Vienna, Austria in June 1998 (full band), the Kingdom Festival in Bellinzona, Switzerland in July (full band), then a week-long run of Not Quite Alone dates with Troy Donockley in November 1998. This started in London (semi-band show) before a ‘highland and islands’ stint around Scotland, something Midge has been meaning to do for many years. It then whisked over to Belfast for the final date, before dropping back down into England for another week in December.

He also completed a full-band, six-day run (with two shows a day) at the Sweet Basil Club in Tokyo, Japan in May 1999, with a warm-up date at the Basingstoke Arvil in April, before embarking on some more Not Quite Alone dates around England with Troy in June and July – we caught up with him in Nantwich on a beautifully sunny day, to do the photo session which accompanies the interview in this issue. In August 1999 he played the West Belfast Outdoor Festival, co-headlining with Status Quo. What a busy chap!

WOMAD Gran Canaria

Following his storming performance at WOMAD Singapore in September 1999, Midge was asked to play WOMAD Gran Canaria on the beach in Las Palmas on November 12th 1999.

Family Addition

Midge and Sheridan had a baby girl on Monday 5th April 1999, who weighed in at 8lbs 10oz. They have named her Florence Lily. Our congratulations to them both!

Wicked Women

Midge once more donned his Musical Director’s hat to MD the Wicked Women event for the Breakthrough Breast Cancer charity. Held at Hyde Park in London on 30th July 1999, it included Ronan Keating, Robbie Williams, Connor Reeves, Mark Morrison, The Honeyz, Martine McCutcheon, (of whom, it has to be said, Midge does a pretty decent impression!) Emma Bunton (Baby Spice), Jane McDonald, Beverley Knight, Dina Carroll, Gabrielle, Republica and Errol Brown. Midge put the house band together (including Dave Williams and Josh Phillips from his own Breathe tour band on bass and keyboards, with pal Mark Brassicki on drums) and played guitar, a reflection of his recurring role with the Prince’s Trust over the years. For his own slot he performed Hymn and Dancing With Tears in My Eyes, the former of which was shown on the TV broadcast later that night. It is hoped that this will become an annual event.

BILLY CURRIE

Still Unearthed

When we last spoke with Billy he was unable to confirm whether or not Unearthed would ever see a commercial release, which would be a real shame! It seems that when a ‘demo’ copy was sent to Q Magazine it wasn’t made clear that it was only to give them a taster of what the two live shows at the Royal Geographical Society would sound like – but they reviewed it as though it would be imminently available to buy, causing much confusion. As usual, we’ll keep you posted if we hear anything more definite on this.

JOHN FOXX

Forthcoming releases

John Foxx & Louis Gordon : The Exotour

A new ‘definitive’ version of the previous (now long deleted) Exotour CDs is going to be released early next year due to popular demand, date TBA. This thirteen track album features reworked versions of The Quiet Men, An Ocean We Can Breathe and The Noise.

1. 20th Century 6:22*
2. Burning Car 8:37*
3. Overpass 5:54
4. This City 4:35
5. Hiroshima Mon Amour 5:00
6. Just For a Moment 4:08
7. The Quiet Men 5:09
8. Dislocation 4:38
9. An Ocean We Can Breathe 6:35
10. Through My Sleeping 5:24
11. The Noise 4:59
12. Shifting City 8:36
13. Endlessly 8:18

Catalogue Number: META 0005CD
Please note that with all of the following, both the track listings and sleeve designs may change between now and when they are finally released. However, it’s unlikely that any of these will see the light of day much before the new year because of the inevitable bun-fight that’s about to take place with the lead up to the new millennium – John’s albums would be overlooked in the rush to flood the market with numerous compilations and Best of s.

John Foxx & Louis Gordon : The Pleasures of Electricity
The long-awaited follow-up to Shifting City. John Foxx and Louis Gordon merge contemporary technology with analogue synthesisers. The theme of these songs is the city.

1. Invisible Women
2. A Funny Thing
3. Quiet City
4. The Falling Room
5. Camera
6. Cities of Light (No 3)
7. Uptown / Downtown
8. Automobile
9. When it Rains
10. Nightlife
11. Travel

John Foxx : Cathedral Oceans 2
The body of work titled Cathedral Oceans has been quietly developing and accumulating since 1983. Cathedral Oceans 2 is a further investigation of the endless layering of distant voices and echoes which quietly developing and accumulating since 1983.

1. Far and Wide
2. Shimmer Symmetry
3. Stillness and Wonder
4. Ad Infinitum
5. Revolving Birdsong
6. Visible and Invisible
7. Golden Green
8. Return to a Place of Remembered Beauty
9. Quiet Splendour
10. Luminous and Gone

Harold Budd & John Foxx : Translucence
Treated piano pieces which follow Harold Budd’s tenet of beauty and simplicity. This collaboration was forged after Harold attended one of John’s early performances of Cathedral Oceans.

1. Subtext
2. Momentary Architecture
3. Implicit
4. Rain Dust
5. Here and Now
6. Adult
7. A Change in the Weather
8. Long Light
9. Almost Overlooked
10. Spoken Roses

Harold Budd & John Foxx : Drift Music
Calm and enveloping themes, unfolding textures of sound characterise the intriguing partnership of Harold Budd and John Foxx. A further exploration in this series of compositions.

1. Suntlit Silhouette
2. The Other Room
3. Some Way Through All the Cities
4. Reassembling

John Foxx : Metatronic
A compilation of some of John’s best electronic pieces together with tracks and versions not previously released during the years 1978 to 1992. Final track listing TBA.

1. Linger
2. Weather Patterns
3. Resonant Frequency
4. Curtains Blowing
5. Coming Into Focus
6. After All this Time

John Foxx : Urban Motets
Sparse, minimalistic and lyrical solo piano pieces. A reflective approach to improvised music.

1. A Charmed Life
2. Twilight Avenues
3. Finsbury Square
4. Arriving
5. As Best I Could
6. Lost Apartment
7. Unspecified City
8. Watching the Patterns in Passing Crowds
9. I Will Always Meet You
10. A Many Splendoured Thing
11. Summer Lover

John Foxx : Metadelic
The other side of John Foxx’s career. This album highlights John’s long interest in making electronic psychedelia as well as his more linear material. Final track listing TBA.

Helden
Spies – at last?
It look as though things could finally be under way for Helden’s long-lost Spies album (Warren Cann and Hans Zimmer). Everything now seems to be in place for a possible release, having been dogged with administrative problems for the past few years. All eleven musicians involved have been contacted – no easy task, as they have scattered to all corners of the world since 1982 – and are supportive of the release. All that now remains is for a record deal to be finalised – hopefully there will be more news soon.

Thanks to....
Midgie and Sheridan; Chris and Lynne, Warren and Alison, John Foxx, Danny Mitchell, Colin King, Berenice and Dave, Angie Clifford, and Kate Cons (née Hanson). Special thanks to Steve Wool, June Pollard and Kathy Duncan of EMI Gold, and Ashley Hillman & Holly Barringer of Strange Fruit. For contributions to this issue, we’d like to thank Rob Kirby, Peter Hill and Jonas Warstad.
Quietly Confident

When most people talk about their forthcoming releases it usually means that they’re planning on one, or maybe two new albums... but NINE? This unprecedented amount of activity is the result of a backlog of material that John has been quietly working on over the past few years.

Written from the point of view of The Quiet Man, The Pleasures of Electricity is John and Louis’ follow-up to 1997’s Shifting City. Although all of the actual recording is now finished, John and Louis still have to settle on the albums final running order, “I may possibly omit one if the flow of the album benefits, but I won’t know until the final edit”. Of the two tracks we’ve heard so far, we can say that Quiet Cities reminds us of Blurred Girl (off of the Metatmatic album) whilst Invisible Women sounds strikingly like Underpass, or Overpass depending on your point of view, and if that doesn’t whet your appetite...!

The sessions with Harold Budd, on the eagerly-awaited project whose working title is Translucence, has been so productive that it quickly became clear that there would easily be enough material to create a second album, tentatively titled Drift Music. The enormously popular Cathedral Oceans series is also set to be added to in the shape of a second installment, with more to follow in the future.

The difficult subject of which extra tracks to add to the forthcoming remastered versions of Metatmatic, The Garden, The Golden Section and In Mysterious Ways hasn’t been finalised yet, but it’s already apparent that there’s certainly not going to be any shortage of possible candidates. So much so that John has said that there’s to be an album’s worth of rare tracks and previously unreleased material for each of his Virgin-era albums. The first of which, Metatmatica, is set to feature tracks written and recorded at the tail-end of 1979. This means that we could finally get to hear the (otherwise almost impossible to find) alternate versions of both He’s a Liquid and A New Kind of Man, as well as the near-legendary original version of Like a Miracle – a track that wasn’t destined to officially surface until 1983 and then only after it had been totally re-recorded.

Best-of albums have always been very difficult to get right. A case in point is when Virgin Records released Assembly back in 1992. Its enhanced sound quality made it a very welcome addition to any John Foxx fan’s CD collection, but many people felt that it relied too heavily on The Garden, taking six of its eighteen tracks from John’s second solo album, whilst practically ignoring both The Golden Section and In Mysterious Ways. With the freedom that inevitably comes with owning your back-catalogue and having the vehicle with which to release it, John has suggested a more balanced alternative to the format of the traditional compilation album. With two special releases, Metatronic and Metadelic (each album concentrating on a specific strand of John’s music – electronic and psychedelic respectively), John intends to demonstrate how both of these seemingly disparate genres have shaped his writing style.

In the last issue of Extreme Voice we detailed two limited edition CDs that were originally put together to be sold exclusively on the recent Exotour. Demand for them was so strong that John and Louis set about creating what they called a definitive edition, “I think it has all the best versions of the tracks from both of the previous CDs.” which also includes reworked versions of The Quiet Man and An Ocean We Can Breathe, whilst The Noise now benefits from having a longer and more powerful introduction.

One very notable omission from this tantalising selection is the Metatmatic remix album first mentioned in Extreme Voice 16. “Well, the surveyors are in, so it’s possible.” Although at the time of writing no-one has been officially approached, John has said that Tim Simenon, Andy Wetherall, Flood, Gareth Jones and William Orbit have all been mentioned as possible collaborators. “I would also love Daniel Miller to do a track”. Doubtless, John will find it difficult to keep Louis from contributing something to the mix! “The project is still only an idea, but everyone we have mentioned it to has been enthusiastic”. As before, John doesn’t want this to take the form of the conventional remix album, saying “It could be very interesting, but I really don’t want it to be the usual total abstraction, as I feel the tracks should retain identity. If they don’t, they won’t get legs”.

But the big question is how long will we have to wait for all of these albums to be released... “A.S.A.P.” is John’s short answer, with The Exotour, The Pleasures of Electricity and hopefully Translucence coming out early next year. “The rest of the catalogue will be released when remastered. I’d like to do that before 2001”. So it doesn’t look as though John’s going to be quiet for much longer...

Keep up to date with the new releases on Metatmatic, John’s official website at http://www.metatmatic.com and on EV’s site at http://www.ultravox.org.uk. If you have limited web access, join their free email news services – just register your email address via their respective news pages.
A part of the city between the financial zone and the waterfront. Smell of the ocean behind tall glass buildings which give way to brick built warehouses and weed grown streets.

Once this was a busy neighbourhood. Now quiet and neglected after the demise of the docks. Still a couple of grocery stores, pawn shop, shuttered bar, a barber shop.

You can only find this place by drifting. It is impossible to walk directly here. You must first surrender yourself to the tides of the city. Takes years to do it. Slowly the tides will take you here.

One day you will find yourself looking into the window packed with racks of clothing. Overcoats, shirts, jackets, suits. Silvery grey dust on the glass. Proprietors spectacles reflecting dim yellow light as he moves around behind the counter.

You go in. Look down the racks of clothing. Find a grey suit. It always fits.

You take the suit back to your apartment. Put it on. Somehow the light is behind you in the mirror. You are only a silhouette. Feel a sensation of stillness. Something has shifted. Sounds of the city humming outside. Traffic. Voices. Faces.

You do not realise that you are lost, adrift. Been like this for years without knowing. Slowly things moved away. Bit by bit. You barely noticed.


Next day you examine the material of the suits sleeve in clear morning light. It looks grey but if you look very closely in good light you can just see that the treads are all made up of brightly coloured fibres. Red, green, violet, yellow, blue, orange. All in various combinations. Millions of colours. Together they all look grey from a normal viewing distance.

When you wear the suit, you begin to disappear. You can go anywhere and you will barely be noticed. After a slight initial interruption in everyone’s field of awareness, you fade out.

You come to know that the fabric is a map of all movement in the city. Everyone’s crisis crossing journey all through the streets, corridors, rooms, subways. Feel the effects as you move down the avenues. Endlessly shifting and repeating patterns and rhythms. Tides moving through you. You walk the streets woven into the fabric. Feel them somehow. The suit shows you how to move. Translates. Transmits. The tides move through it. You go on a voyage through the streets. It is the lost suit. The great forgotten book of the city. It is woven all through you. You are incorporated into it.

Misty morning. Breakfast in a glass fronted coffee shop. Then you go down 5th Avenue through the atrium up to the rooftops and look out over the great city. You will get lost many times in your life and you will find this suit and wear it until it fades. It will always fit. It will weave itself into you and you will make its fabric more complex. The more complex the weave, the more tiny colours in the grey, the more it makes you disappear.

Days later you will be living somewhere else. In some suburb of another city. The sun will be shining. You will have forgotten the suit. It will be overlooked in the wardrobe somewhere. Thrown away. Given to charity.

Years later you will be living somewhere else. In some suburb of another city. The sun will be shining. You will have forgotten the suit. It will be overlooked in the wardrobe somewhere. Thrown away. Given to charity.

When you tried it on once, you could barely remember it. Marginal episode, rapidly fading. The colour was dull and it did not fit very well. Fabric looked worn. Time for a change now. The ghosts go out and fade in the sunlight. The person who wore the suit is now gone.
W

What sort of question can we pose this issue, we thought, that even newcomers to Ultravox’s music can answer? We pondered for a while, had a cuppa, mulled it over, gave up, came back to it... and then hit us. Why not do away with the questions altogether? So we did. Instead of archival knowledge of the history of the band, this time you’ll need... your own imagination!

To enter this competition, you need to submit a photograph of EITHER:

- the band (or a member of the band), perhaps at a live show or
- yourself or a friend with the band (or a member of the band) or
- something which you feel represents them (or one of them), for example, the Callalishing Stone
- a viola perhaps for Billy, a garden for John, or a Charles Rennie Mackintosh piece for Midge.

Use whatever style or technique you like, but your photograph must sum up an aspect of ULTRAVOX for you, and you must tell us WHY it does in 100 words or less. Submissions must be no larger than A4 (210 x 297 mm, ie the size of this magazine folded out), and can be either in colour or black and white. Each entry will be judged in these categories; imagination, technique, artistic merit, and humour if appropriate.

The closing date is the 1st of March 2000 by post, or a scan of your photo by email – contact details are on page one. The winners will be drawn and notified by the end of March 1999, and the winning entry will be shown in EV19, along with the best of the rest. So, are you up to the challenge? Here’s what you could win...!

Prize #1:
- Exotour poster signed by John Foxx in thick black marker
- Ultravox Christmas card (Quartet and Rage in Eden era) from Midge’s own collection, with a certificate of authenticity.
- A badge set from Warren’s own collection circa 1980-1984

Prize #2:
- Midge Ure All Areas gig pass, Cardiff Music in the Bay Festival 1996
- Midge 1996 tour T-shirt (blue with red hand and MIDGE URE lettering)
- Midge 1996 tour Sweatshirt (design as above) XL size
- Breathe tour programme (the first since 1985’s The Gift), autographed by Midge and all of his new band, whilst on tour in Italy.
- Lament CD signed by Midge Ure

Prize #3:
- Photo of Billy’s Ultravox (Sam Blue era) signed by all the band
- Signed photo of Gary Williams
- Zildjian drumsticks from Tony Holmes, well battered!

Please indicate your preference of prize number when you enter. If you would like us to return your entry please enclose a stamped, addressed envelope (or addressed envelope with an International Reply Coupon outside of the UK). Thank you!

**EV17 comp answers:**

The ‘question’ lyrics came from:
1. Dancing Like a Gun (The Garden)
2. White China (Lament)
3. The Frozen Ones (Hal Hal Hal)
4. Private Lives (Vienna)
5. Fields of Fire (Breathe)
6. Sat’day Night in the City of the Dead (Ultravox!)
7. Accent on Youth (Rage in Eden)
8. Give It All Back (Inevitably)
9. Touch and Go (Metamatic)
10. Hell to Heaven (Answers to Nothing)
11. The Haunting (The Bloodied Sword)
12. Slow Motion (Systems of Romance)
13. On the Borderline (Spies)
14. I Am Alive (Revolution)
15. Through My Sleeping (Shifting City)

**EV17 raffle winners:**

First Prize: Simon Carroll (who chose the Midge Ure prize)
Second Prize: Simon Blackmore (who chose the autographed CDs)
Third Prize: Tim Welsh (who chose the Monument tie and badge set from Warren)

**EV18 winners:**

First Prize: Peter Hill (who chose the John Foxx prize)
Second Prize: Gwilym Chesterfield (who chose the signed Exotour CD)
Third Prize: Simon Blackmore (who chose the john Foxx prize)

**EV18 Competition closing date:**
1st March 2000
Midge Ure

Midge Ure has had a busy year. What with appearances at various charitable shows including Kosovaid and St Peter’s Hospice, WOMAD Singapore, constant touring including a stint in Japan, and donning his Musical Director’s hat once more for the Breakthrough Breast Cancer charity, it’s a wonder he has time to write new material. But an album is on the way, and we recently took the opportunity to quiz him about this, as well as Ultravox, Visage, life, the universe, and everything...
EV: You have recently performed in several Kosovo benefit concerts, and indeed took on the role of Musical Director for the breast cancer awareness gig Wicked Women. Do you think there has been a recent upswing in this kind of fundraising? It seems that the press' much-touted ‘compassion fatigue’ has well and truly worn off.

MU: Possibly... It was quite interesting to see how this one came about actually, because it was the first one that they’ve done for breast cancer, and what they were trying to do is establish an annual concert, which is quite a good idea. A bit like how the Prince’s Trust things are used to be, so that when they announce the new concert next year, they don’t even care who’s on, they buy the ticket, Breakthrough gets the money, and there’s a great show on at the end of the day. It’s just good fun to be asked to do these things. When I said yes it to some three months before the concert, it was going to be a rock concert – but all of a sudden I found myself with a wah-wah pedal and playing all these soul songs, it was funny! I mean it was great though, some of the people up there were fantastic, Beverley Knight was just blindingly good. It’s one of those nice moments that, when you’re in the presence of someone who is brilliant at what they do, it doesn’t matter what type of music it is or what it is they’re doing, they excel at it, and I was standing there, completely agog at how powerful this little girl is! She got up there and just belted this stuff out, and she felt every note, she was dancing round the rehearsal room, y’know, not the stage, it all came from the heart, it was just fantastic. Wonderful to see. Then you get things like Martine McCutcheon who’s never used an in-ear system before, it was hysterical. And she’s lovely, she was really lovely. She sang her big hit, and she sang it well but a few notes were a bit dodgy and I said, “Well, have you ever tried an in-ear monitor?”. She goes, “No, what’s that?” I told her “Ah, I use one, you can use two but you feel kind of removed from what’s going on, just try one and sing it”.

Dave [Claxton, Monitor Engineer] gave her this in-ear thing and she put one in, she spoke into the mike (puts on perfect Tiffany-from-EastEnders voice), “Oh! It goes right in your ‘ead!” (laughs). It IS Tiff! It is! It’s Tiff!!! It was funny. But it was great, it was a good fun thing and it was brilliant weather as well. It also meant the kids got a chance to see me onstage singing a song, which the little ones haven’t had the chance to see yet. I’m singing this song and they’re way at the back sitting on their chairs, going “Daddy! Da-diddy!”, kinda waving, trying to get my attention! (laughs).

EV: Do Kitty and Ruby realise what you do?

MU: Oh I think they know what I do, because of this, the studio set-up here. So they know I make music and I make records and stuff, and Kitty can tell my voice now, she likes Breathe and Fields of Fire. She recognises those. But for Ruby I think it was a big realisation!

EV: How long did it take to learn songs for the Wicked Women show?

MU: It took a long time, because a lot of the soul stuff is feel-based rather than chord-based. We were having these great conversations together, all the band members – I’d ask and say, “Right, That song – where’s the chorus?” and I would say, “Well I dunno, it’s all the same chord, I’ve got no idea where the chorus comes!” (laughs). So we had to sit and write down how many bars it was, he’d write down “32 bars”, and then go, “OK, same chord, but now it’s the chorus!”. It was very alien to us to do that, so it took quite a long time to learn the songs, and we had three full days of rehearsal – which was very tight, but we managed it. But they all did a brilliant job, Josh did fantastically, Dave learned all his stuff, they’re all great. Everyone had their own particular, peculiar little note system so they could count all the bars, y’know (mimes playing with great concentration). There were a couple of panicky moments on stage when I thought it was due to finish and it wasn’t, it just kept going and I thought, “Oh God, I’ve lost count somewhere!”. Good fun though.

EV: With hindsight, do you wish that Live Aid had been the final Ultravox album? Live Aid would have been a great way to go out.

MU: Yeah... I think we went out with a kind of whimper but we chose to do that really, we didn’t do the all-singing, all-dancing farewell tour cash-in that a load of bands do. I had decided that I was leaving before we did our last European tour, the U-Vox tour. We were in Italy, I just remember Billy being incredibly depressed and having a horrible time and not wanting to do any of the shows.

EV: What memories do you have, of Live Aid day?

MU: Waking Warren up to go onstage! (laughs). That was quite a good one. The biggest, most exciting show ever, and he was asleep in the dressing room before we went on! But that was Warren! (laughs). The whole thing was great, it was a great day, a great event. And I think we kind of held our own, I mean, we were probably one of the most technical bands on there so we were more prone for things to go wrong, go down - and luckily they didn’t, it all seemed to work alright. We were very under-rehearsed, we hadn’t played together for a while. We weren’t meant to be on so early, it was all shuffled around at the last minute because somebody in the hierarchy wanted Geldof to perform in front of Charles and Diana, and they were leaving because of security, after an hour. So we were told there was some problem with Adam and the Ants’ equipment and could we slip round and whatever, so we were completely and utterly stuffed!

EV: It must have been a bit of a shock!

MU: Well it was a shock because of the media, it was some journalist that said to me, “How do you feel about getting dumped for Geldof?”, I said “Don’t talk nonsense, that’s rubbish”, you know (laughs), but it was true, absolutely 100% true!

EV: We understand that meeting Freddie Mercury was quite an experience...?

MU: Yes, he wouldn’t let go of my hand... he tried to get me to sit on his knee, it was frightening! (laughs).
But the two guys from Status Quo were there [Rick Parfitt and Francis Rossi], they obviously knew him and they were just pissing themselves laughing, they thought it was hysterical. I was sweating, going, "Oh I've got to go, I think that's my wife standing over there!"... God!

EV: Band Aid recently saw its 15th anniversary, and Live Aid its 14th. Did you celebrate or reminisce in any way?

MU: Was it? No! (laughs).

EV: Are you still involved?

MU: Ohhh yes. Well you’ve got to be, you’re responsible for overseeing of how that money’s spent and distributed, so you’ve got to be on board.

EV: Is there much still coming through?

MU: Well every year the record will generate money, for years to come, because every Christmas compilation album has it, every time you walk by Boots or WH Smiths from about October onwards these days, there it is, it’s playing at you so all of that generates money. If... And every time it’s put on a compilation album it gets sold, it generates money, it’s hard sales. So the money all goes straight into Band Aid and then filters its way through into the long-term aid that’s been going on for the last, was it fifteen years? (laughs).

EV: You must feel quite satisfied that something that you’ve generated has made such a difference?

MU: It’s weird, it’s just so huge that you can’t really associate yourself with it, it’s just too big – that was the other Midge! It’s just too big to take on board. It’s like, when Becca [neighbour’s daughter] from across the road came in last year and she said, “We were doing about you in History today”...  I went, “What?!” (pulls incredulous, horrified face). It’s in the history books, it’s like, good God! It was a fairly historical day I suppose, but – to think that, generations down the line, they’re gonna be reading about you! Sir Bob Geldof and Midge UBE, that famous spelling mistake!

EV: How do you balance the inevitable interest in your past recording exploits with the need to promote whatever your current project might be?

MU: Well I’m not particularly interested in promoting the old stuff, it’s out there for people to find if they want it. It gets very dull talking about the same stuff all the time, the same old songs.

EV: Like now?

MU: No, no, you can understand why (laughs). I’m talking about journalists, not yourselves. You can understand why people do it because they have to have a reference point of where you’re from, what you’re all about. It’s like the press have to kind of tag you with a label: “Ultravox – they’re a kind of Pink Floyd with Roxy Music undertones.” That kind of thing, and then the people can log you in a certain area. Well journalists have to do the same, so they look at the biog, and you can tell, ninety-nine times out of a hundred what question is coming next, just from the flow of the biog. So you go, OK, here’s the Band Aid question coming up now. And they ask, “So, Band Aid...” and you go, “Oh right, OK”...! Because they just highlight the bits in the biog and write them down on a bit of paper, and that’s the sequence the questions come in more often than not. So I’m not particularly interested in promoting old stuff.

EV: But don’t you sometimes find that people stumble across an old album, and follow it through to your recent catalogue?

MU: If it’s a retro thing like that... It’s interesting because in Italy last year there was a whole new audience of young people who had only bought Breathe. And they are now going to find some of the old stuff, they’re buying backwards, they’re buying back into my youth, which is great. The great thing is that in the videos I get younger looking, I get more hair as they dig back.

EV: Did you ever have any major resistance from Chrysalis over the final track order for both the Ultravox, and your first two solo albums?

MU: Chrysalis in America took great exception to, on the Vienna album, opening up with an eight-minute instrumental! They just couldn’t get that at all, but then again they thought we were German, so that didn’t really matter! But they wanted us to re-edit... But Americans always want you to do something, they want an AOR mix, just nonsense. “Ohhh, you can’t play that, the guitars are too heavy, you’ll have to do a remix,” and you go “What?!”... It’s either good or bad, surely?

EV: Did you ever have any major resistance from Chrysalis over the final track order for both the Ultravox, and your first two solo albums?

MU: They were a contrived art school band, put together by this, that and the other, you know... and I believed all that at the same time. It wasn’t until I moved to London and started hanging out with Rusty [Egan] and Steve Strange and all that stuff at a club called Billy’s, which was a forerunner of The Blitz, that I found differently. And hearing Slow Motion and Hiroshima Mon Amour. I went, “Good God, what’s this, this is great!”, you know. So it wasn’t until I heard that, that I realized they were actually a very good band. But the press always hated us, they loved to hate us. And sometimes quite rightly so, we were a right bunch of pompous prats at times, we had absolutely no idea what the hell we were doing. I thought it was art, Billy thought it was pop music... Sometimes I listen to the albums and I think “What utter nonsense” at times, because I just can’t get my head back into the same situation my head was in at that particular time. Rage In Eden I loved, ‘Dancing with bovine grace’... It worked perfectly well but you can see why the press, sitting reading this stuff, just thought we were a complete bunch of prats! It was different, it didn’t fit in with what was going on at the
time. A rock band using banks and banks of synthesizers, and syn-drums and then mixing it with viola. It was scary. It wasn’t until a few years later that a lot of bands adapted – or adopted – what we were doing and went off and became the whole New Romantic thing... Every band had a synthesizer. By which point we’d moved on and started working with The Chieftains!

EV: You know, it’s funny, we heard someone the other day refer to your years with Ultravox as the “mainstream” era of the band. We thought that was so bizarre, because at the time Ultravox were so very different. We think for “mainstream” you should read “most commercially successful”...

MU: Yes... you have to look back, and with hindsight it’s very difficult for people to think of Vienna as not potentially a hit record. It was very much not a hit record! It was a complete joke because it went so against what everyone else was doing at the time. It was this long, slow, morbid ballad, it sped up in the middle with a big violin solo, and people didn’t get it at all. But it worked. When we put it out people were saying “Oh, it’s suicide, it’s suicide, it’s never going to happen”. A bit like Japan’s ‘Ghosts’, it was so radically different from anything else that was around at the time, that it was either going to fail miserably or be hugely successful.

EV: Perhaps it’s a measure of Ultravox’s success then, and of how much influence they exerted on other bands, that something that was so different at the time can now be considered “mainstream”...

MU: We were quite good at that, quite good at sticking our heads in nooses and quite a lot of the time getting away with it. More often than not, abject failure! But failure commercially, not musically – we’ve always had a huge gap between what’s musically successful and what’s commercially successful. And musically successful means that it works, for us. And commercially successful means that the record company has done their job. Or it’s touched the right hearts.

EV: It’s amazing, the atmosphere that you managed to capture with Rage in Eden, out of all of them it’s by far the most intense.

MU: It was a fairly intense record to do, Rage in Eden. For me it was the ‘second album syndrome’, We’d done Vienna, it was my first album with Ultravox, and the second album is notoriously difficult. You spend ages writing the first one and getting it out of the way, and then it achieves a certain amount of stature, status, and yet you instantly start doubting you can write anything better than what you’ve just done, because it’s what an artist does. And then we decided not to write the album first, but to go straight in and do it all in the studio. I had a minuscule handful of ideas of basic thoughts on it... We went to Conny Plank’s, locked ourselves away in the German countryside for three months. It was very intense. And it’s not like you can just run away from it and go and turn the telly on, it was in German! And the radio was in German! We got a bit stir-crazy. But all of that made the album work, it’s still one of my favourite albums. There’s bits on there that I don’t think we would ever have gotten into, and we didn’t remotely try and do ‘Vienna Part Two’, which is what we were being pressurised into doing. We went off and did something that was completely and utterly different. Sometimes it was just, sticking your head in the noose just for the sake of it. Just being bombastic and bloody-minded – “We are Ultravox – all you can expect is change!” That was important to us. Tossers! (laughs).

EV: Where you were staying to write Rage in Eden, which was a very closed and claustrophobic atmosphere, really contributed to the album’s feel.

MU: Oh, we had a few set-tos and stuff! I mean not bad, for a band we were actually reasonably good friends. I remember one evening when Chris and I were just in hystericis in the studio for some reason, just having a laugh. And Billy got reeeally, really intense, and kinda jumped in my face and stuck his finger right at my nose and he’s going “This is important, this is important!” Fuck off, don’t be stupid! For God’s sake, it’s just a bit of music, y’know. And he just got really hung up about certain things. But I think that’s all to do with the tension away from home for three months in the middle of the German countryside and trying to write and record what had to be an interesting record.

EV: You had no feedback at all of course, there was no audience to play to.

MU: Nope. Nobody. People would pop across, I think Chris Morris [CMO Management] popped over, Chris O’Donnell [CMO Management] popped over at some point, but they come over and it’s a social thing, you’re just so pleased to see another face and get some packages! We used to have these ‘first aid’ packages coming from home, with magazines in them and bits of Fawlty Towers videoed for you, stuff like that, you know! So you could watch something. God, I remember we got the ‘German’ episode of Fawlty Towers sent across, and we sat and watched it with Conny, who thought this was just the most hysterical thing he’d seen in his life, he just thought it was absolutely wonderful. But that was it, we had these packages, get me an NME, get me a Face magazine, get me anything, y’know! So yes, intense, but we chose to do it that way, we decided to do it ourselves.

EV: There were certainly lots of ground-breaking ideas, like the radio...

MU: The whole track disappearing through a little megaphonic radio and switching it off? I can’t remember what that track was now... Your Name (Has Slipped My Mind Again)? No?...

EV: No. Ummmmm.....

MU: Oh, you’re fired, you two! (laughs). Whatever it was, it worked.

EV: Rage in Eden?

MU: Or was it I Remember (Death in the Afternoon)? Death in the Afternoon, I seem to remember. I’m not meant to remember these things! I can’t even remember what the singles were now. So The Thin Wall was the single from that album, wasn’t it?

EV: And The Voice. Only the two.

MU: I can see why (laughs). Bit of a dark record, bit of a dark horse.

EV: Did you see the recent comedy film on TV by Martin Clunes, Hunting Venus?
MU: No, I missed it. He asked me to be in it and sent me the script down, and I just said, “Look, y’know, I’ve spent all these years walking away from this New Romantic thing. I was never one, I never wanted to be one, I was in a band at the time that was going in a bit more serious than Duran Duran”, and he understood. I said, “I’m more than happy to play a traffic warden or something, a security guy, do a spoof, but I’m not going to go in there and do that”. He got loads of people to do it, though.

EV: Ultravox still featured quite heavily.

MU: Yeah I know, the Vienna video. And they smashed Joe Dolce’s Shaddap You Face. I saw it all in the script, long before it was even written.

EV: Were there still no release dates?

MU: No. But the second single has been out. But the problem is that, without any real campaign, any real foresight, it’s just kind of sitting there. And you think, that’s an expensive band to sign, they’ve spent a lot of money to get them, and now they’re spending more money every other week to do this remix and that remix – “This guy’s cool, let’s get him to do it”, and “Oh no that’s crap, let’s get this guy to do it”, it seems that that’s the way decisions are made now in A&R. They throw loads of money at it, then probably go back to the first mix and go “That’s the one we really liked. That’s why we signed the band”.

MU: It’s really loses its spontaneity then.

EV: Ohh yes. And the band are getting bored. They’re out playing sleazy clubs and travelling up and down the country, learning how it all works. Which is good, because they need to do that.

EV: You engineered a couple of gigs for them...

MU: Yeah, I engineered a couple of gigs for them. We worked with them on their first album, and that was all because... It’s a long story. But very talented. Very good. Good writers, good players, but like you do when you’re sixteen or seventeen, you sort of like your heroes of that particular moment. In my case, I’ve got demo tapes of me sounding like Queen, David Bowie or Roxy Music, we all start off like that. So I just took them into the studio and started working with them. And it grew from there, we did a track then did another and another, and they just expanded and we developed this sound. Before we were even thinking about talking to record companies, we'd heard it and took it to a friend who works in a publishing company in London, who just flipped and signed them. So I kind of liked my attitude, a good working-class Liverpudlian. Also it’s a very cool label to be on, Deconstruction. But then I got a phone call from the guy who owns London Records, he said, “What do I have to do to get this band?”. I said, “You have to show commitment. These guys are seventeen and eighteen, I can’t bump them into two years’ time when you’ve dropped them and their careers are washed up and they’re only twenty”. So he went, “Both record companies have gone two albums firm”, which means that’s a record deal, a major deal, nothing matters, what happens, which gives them a little bit of a career. This guy said, “I’ll go three albums for them”. Which is just unheard of for a new band, it doesn’t happen any more. But since then, I delivered the album a year ago and it’s still in the remix stage, they’re still remixing this and that and trying this and trying that, and (sighs) it’s just dreadful.

EV: Is there still no release date?

MU: No. But the second single has been out. But the problem is that, without any real campaign, any real foresight, it’s just kind of sitting there. And you think, that’s an expensive band to sign, they’ve spent a lot of money to get them, and now they’re spending more money every other week to do this remix and that remix – “This guy’s cool, let’s get him to do it”, and “Oh no that’s crap, let’s get this guy to do it”, it seems that that’s the way decisions are made now in A&R. They throw loads of money at it, then probably go back to the first mix and go “That’s the one we really liked. That’s why we signed the band”.

EV: You engineered a couple of gigs for them...

MU: A couple, yes. They’re learning how it works, and getting tired... They thought that going on tour to Ireland for five days was really exhausting! So... they need to learn. Five days? That’s a holiday!

EV: How did you originally get involved with Danny Mitchell and Colin King, better known as the Messengers?

MU: Ummm... I can’t actually remember, to tell you the truth! I was in Glasgow, just when Vienna was happening. I was looking for projects, something to work on. And one night, there were two bands playing that I’d been told about... I’ll tell you who it was from, I think it was from Kenny Hyslop, the old drummer in Slk. I said, “Right, who are the hot bands in town?”, and he said “Well there’s Johnny and the Self-Abusers”, who became Simple Minds, “and there’s a band called Modern Man”. And I went to see them both. Modern Man, to me, were just infinitely better because the songs were just brilliant. And that was Danny and Colin – Danny was the guitarist and Colin was the drummer. I hooked up with them, got them a record deal, did the album – very cheaply, it was a very small record deal. I think we made the entire album in two weeks and we

“Rusty and I might have a dabble with something new”
EV: What does Danny contribute to the mix that no-one else can?
MU: I think his character. He comes in and his lyric ideas are very lateral, a bit like mine, if I want to sing a love song I sing about nasty things! The bad side of things instead of the shiny good stuff. And he kind of does the same thing. Danny wrote Wastelands... the imagery in that song is just fantastic. In Glasgow we have these orange streetlamps, ‘those lamps that make you think that night is day’, and all that imagery of lying back in your bed, you just can’t be bothered, everything’s a mess and your life’s all screwed up, he does it so incredibly well! So he’s just a great character, we kind of think alike.

EV: In the interview we’ve just done with him, he mentioned his Mum always said he should be a politician!
MU: Yes, that’s actually a very good statement! We took him out to Belfast last week [for the Belfast Festival], cos he’d never seen the [Breathe] tour band play. He hadn’t seen me play with a band for a long time. It’s such a ball, it’s fantastic. And Gerry Adams was there. Oh God! Thank God I didn’t meet him – I sang All Fall Down and dedicated it to all the losers that are in charge of all our political lives! (laughs).

EV: The Messengers appeared many times supporting Ultravox on tour, you engineered their live set at the first US fan club night, Danny and Colin featured in the Hymn and Dancing With Tears videos, then they played live on the Oxford Roadshow in 1984 in their own right – success seemed assured. What happened?
MU: Again, it’s a bit of a record company ‘pandering-to-artist’s-whim’ kind of thing. My whim at the time was a record label, MusicFest. Like Alex in Blur, he has his own record label right now. “Let’s keep him happy, it doesn’t matter”.

They didn’t want to upset me ‘cos we were selling loads of records for them, Ultravox were one of their main artists. They’re just ‘fantastic Messengers, love it, fantastic’! So they do a nice sleeve but they don’t do anything about it, they don’t promote it like it’s actually going to be something. They say, “Oh, well it’s just two guys and they’re a bit static”. I said, “Well have you heard of the Pet Shop Boys? A bit static yeah, but – hello – these guys have got good songs, there’s something interesting there”. So it was just this kind of long slog that happens.

EV: Danny mentioned the track names of the demos they had put together ready for the album, two of them being If I Was and Call of the Wild, are they the same tracks you released?
MU: Yes. Pretty much so, but with Colin singing. Call of the Wild came with no chorus, it just had ‘Don’t go’, there were no lyrics, just that. So I sat down and wrote the ‘And in my heart I held you just for a while’ bit around it. If I Was was very much a kind of demo thing, I took it and started to work on it. A lot of the stuff came from David Bowie, was it Let’s Dance? All that big crescento stuff, none of that was in there so I wrote those bits to go with it. It’s funny because it was a weird record to do, because it was my first record and I said to Danny, “Look, whatever we work on together, we’ll just share”, you know, as writers. So I think he suggested I do She Cried, he was talking about the Glasgow Indian population, which started off incredibly quietly fifteen or twenty years ago, but now they’ve got these beautiful Glasgowian Indians, these lovely young girls, they’re all really trendy and really groovy. He was telling me a story which sparked off this whole thing about the whole idea of tradition against the modern life, arranged marriage against this young girl who had been born in Glasgow and lived a Glasgow lifestyle. She’s all funky and groovy and wants to do what all her pals are doing. So Danny wrote much of that, but we just said, “You gave me the idea, I’ve written it, so it’s yours”, and we just did that right across the album, we do that all the way through. If I Was was a song on a tape of maybe ten that Danny had, and it stuck out to me, it jumped out, whereas everyone else who had heard the tape had given a non-committal “Hmmm”, even his publishers. ‘Y’know, don’t see it, don’t get it’.

So you take it and you go, ‘Hold on a second, let’s just knead this up a bit, let’s pummel this and twist it and change it, and all of a sudden it’s a number one record.

EV: There have been some rumours of you doing some soundtrack work. Is there any truth in this?
MU: Oh yeah. I’ve done two in the last year. Both for the same director, a friend of mine called Richard Schenkman. He started off working in MTV and then he had the ridiculous job of directing Playboy videos for Playboy television, telling these voluptuous young ladies how to take their clothes off.

EV: Is that how the Playboy Late Night Show theme came up?
MU: Yeah, he asked me to do it. He has now gone independent and he’s writing, producing and directing his own little movies, but they’re actually very good movies, one in particular, Coney Island it’s called. It’s great. Gone to Coney Island, Be Back By 5:00. Oh no. Gone to Coney Island on a Mission From God, Be Back By 5:00. The longest movie title ever, but it was a lovely, well-written, really interesting and funny movie. Rites of passage thing, a bunch of kids all growing up together and one goes astray. It was a great opportunity to do some nice atmospheric music.

EV: Was it the whole score?
MU: Oh yeah, it was about forty, forty-five minutes’ worth of music, which is like an album. It was lovely for me to do it, it was nice, it was good fun. I didn’t have to write lyrics which was great, it’s one of my pet hates.

EV: Do you find that part difficult?
MU: I find it difficult simply because people read them and take them out of context from the song. They read them as poetry or read them as a message of some sort and it’s not necessarily that. Although I do get loads of communication from people who say lyrics have – not as dramatically as saved people’s lives – but have helped them through crispy times. So I can’t dismiss them really.

EV: What does it feel like going back to the soundtrack work, what was the second thing you did this year?
MU: That was October 22 which was kind of a shoot-em-up, Tarantino type thing, where it starts off with the end of the day which is the horrible bit. Then it goes through individual lives involved in that horrible bit, and what happened that day from the moment they woke up… He didn’t write that, he directed it, but it’s very well as good.

EV: Do you regret not being able to devote more time to this particular musical avenue?
MU: It’s one of these things that when it comes knocking at your door, if it’s the right thing you can do it. It just doesn’t happen that way. I don’t have an agent for it or anything, I don’t have anyone out scouting for business, y’know, “Midge is ready to do some Hollywood movies now thank you!”. It kind of pops up and you do it, hopefully someone hears it and likes it. A bit like Catherine Zeta Jones, you plod along and then all of a sudden Steven Spielberg sees you in some made-for-television movie and goes, “That’s the girl, I want her for this part”. The huge curve comes along and it all goes on a different course. You can’t force these things, you just do it when you can.

EV: We still get a lot of enquiries about Come the Day which you wrote for the film Class of 1999. Do you ever know what the film is about beforehand?

EV: Going back to the soundtrack work, what was the second thing you did this year?
MU: That was October 22 which was kind of a shoot-em-up, Tarantino type thing, where it starts off with the end of the day which is the horrible bit. Then it goes through individual lives involved in that horrible bit, and what happened that day from the moment they woke up... He didn’t write that, he directed it, but it’s very well as good.
MU: No, I’ll be given the highlights you see in trailers. There was a dreadful trailer for it (Class of 1999), but at the time I thought, “That’s fine, it’s probably never going to make the cinemas, but who knows if I do this and I do it well maybe the director or the production company will come to me with something good in a year’s time and say OK can you do something for this now?” But if you turn it down in the first place you don’t get the second chance, so you give it your best shot first time round. It was actually not a bad song.

EV: How do you feel about Ultravox being listed as The Times newspaper’s “1000 Makers of Music” from the current millennium – the partwork included all pop styles, classical, jazz, folk, choral and early music – vindicated, perhaps?

MU: Oh God!

EV: Did you not know?

MU: No, no idea. Hey, let’s get the band back together now! That was a joke (much laughter). Well this is fantastic, it’s just great, it’s lovely to be kind of recognised in any respect but something like this, I would never have guessed that at all. I still think it’s quite nice to see Vienna in the ‘top 100 records of all time’. All time stretches back to the 1940’s or something, you know. I’m a bit taken aback by that. That’s fantastic.

You go to Glasgow and everything is pseudo-Rennie Mackintosh or ‘Mackintosh’ as they call it. It’s just that everywhere you go in Glasgow has got a Mackintosh sign, the hairdressers, the butchers, the bakers, everything has got the four squares. All of that gets a little wearing after a while, but when you get back to the core of it and think that this guy was designing this stuff at the end of the last century and it was just completely and utterly out-there. When the Victorians were so into the Victoriana and all the dark heavy stuff, he was doing the white chairs with purple glass and stuff. It’s fantastic, it’s brilliant! He designed the Hill House and everything that filled it – Phillip Stark eat your heart out! It’s just fabulous, wonderful. That stuff just doesn’t diminish and it’s still a major influence.

EV: Last year you appeared at a special Charles Rennie Mackintosh Society meeting, being interviewed and playing The Gift live on acoustic guitar, quite a feat we thought! Did you enjoy the experience?

MU: No, it was petrifying! A room full of would-be architects, not necessarily music lovers, so it was very tough. I was coerced into it, but I did it and came away reasonably unscathed!

EV: You looked like you were having fun anyway.

MU: It was hard work. Trying to play a song which depends a lot on sound effects, on loops and samples and stuff. I was asked to do it again and I said “No!”

EV: Do you still feel as passionately about Rennie Mackintosh’s work as you did then when you actually wrote The Gift?

MU: You go to Glasgow and everything is pseudo-Rennie Mackintosh or ‘Mackintosh’ as they call it. It’s just that everywhere you go in Glasgow has got a Mackintosh sign, the hairdressers, the butchers, the bakers, everything has got the four squares. All of that gets a little wearing after a while, but when you get back to the core of it and think that this guy was designing this stuff at the end of the last century and it was just completely and utterly out-there. When the Victorians were so into the Victoriana and all the dark heavy stuff, he was doing the white chairs with purple glass and stuff. It’s fantastic, it’s brilliant! He designed the Hill House and everything that filled it – Phillip Stark eat your heart out! It’s just fabulous, wonderful. That stuff just doesn’t diminish and it’s still a major influence.

EV: How did you choose the band you currently have, for touring?

MU: It was pure luck really. Berenice (Hardman, Tour Manager) and Dave (Claxton, Monitor Engineer) had a lot to do with it. Josh (Phillips, keyboards) I’d obviously worked with umpteen times. Josh knew Dave [Williamson] the bass player, better known as Ming of Mong, Josh had worked with him in Heatwave. The drummer and another person I’d no idea about, but Berenice knew Troy [Donockley, Uilleann pipes] and she’d been going on to me for about two years about him, but I’d said, “No, he lives up in the middle of nowhere and God how are we going to do it?”. So she told me all about Troy and sent me a tape of his. It was fantastic! Russell [Field, drums] who Berenice also found, he used to play in a band called the Drums. In fact we actually played back to back to back in a festival in Leeds about four years ago, they were still on stage while I was at the edge of the stage the walking gap to go on and do my bit, but I didn’t know Russell then of course. Within an hour of us all meeting each other we were best friends, bosom buddies, and that just doesn’t happen, you just can’t get five random people and put them in a room and all of a sudden you instantly bond… When we were in Italy we were playing in a series of tents [Teatro Tendas], like big tops. And backstage there were these little stalls that would be for individual performers when there is a circus or whatever there, and about a month into the tour we’re all sitting in this one little stall all squished in, because we’re all chatting and having a laugh. We didn’t want to spend our time individually, we were such a bonded unit it was absolutely frightening just how fun it was and how good the whole thing was together.

EV: Any new dates coming up this side of the new Millennium?

MU: No, no tours. Album-wise I’ll be locked in here for a while, I’ve got new material taking?

MU: If Ultravox had carried on I would like to think that this is probably how they would sound now. It’s dark, it’s interesting, it’s melodic, it’s got very interesting modern sounds. I don’t know, I’ve delved back into technology again, I like my technology, I like my synths and my loops and samples and it’s coming out in the music, but take all that away and it’s Breathe. Who knows it’s hopefully interesting songs just dressed a wee bit different. Spielberg Sky is one of the nice ones, the The Refugee Song has really shaped up and that’s turned out really quite nicely.

EV: Having heard you showcase it on a few live dates, presumably the The Refugee Song is motivated by the plight of the people of Kosovo?

MU: We’ll start off with that, but you have to think that there are refugees all the time, everywhere. It’s like us sitting here and not really right now, and all of sudden a soldier walks upstairs and points a gun in your face and says, “This house isn’t yours anymore”, all of that stuff is just frightening, it’s horrible. And the song refers to the whole idea of losing your family for a bit, not knowing whether they are alive or dead? Then you have to come to the realisation that when you do meet your family again, will you speak the same language, will you be able to understand what they’re saying and will they understand what you’re saying? Not just the fact that they might recognise you as their father but if they’re only two or three at the time that they disappear and you meet them when they’re six, they have completely different lives, how they think and dream and speak a different language. So the idea of all that stuff is in there, it’s a very powerful song I think. It’s not the most pleasant of songs but they not always are.

EV: Your albums always seem to finish on a very thought provoking song…

MU: And they also end on a waltz, and The Refugee Song is a waltz as well. I’ve got no idea why!

EV: Is your new album self-produced?

MU: It is so far. I’ve got no plans to change that, I’m quite happy about that way it’s going, how it’s sounding.

EV: How has the digital studio affected the way you write and produce yourself?

MU: It’s nicely different. It’s much more immediate, I can do stuff that I would never have been able to do before, I do it on the computer screen. It’s just fast, radical compared to having to sit down and plan a song in your head and then put it down onto tape, because once it’s on tape it’s committed, whereas with this it’s never committed. You put it in there, and you say “Well I think I’ll just start with the chorus today”, pick up the chorus and move it to the front of the

EV: Have you to think that there are refugees all the time, everywhere?
song, drop it in, and your vocals, your guitars, your drums, your keyboards, all of that stuff all goes to the front of the track. So I can constantly edit, change, revise all of the arrangements, everything.

EV: Is there a danger then that you can...

MU: Never finish it? (laughs)

EV: ...give in to the temptation to over-produce?

MU: That’s always been there since the day I bought my first studio! This desk is five years old, and it’s still seen as high-tech. Roland have now come in and gone, “Let’s blast Yamaha with this new thing!” So the one they’re bringing in for me soon is coming directly from Japan, they haven’t got any in the UK at all. They have a little prototype that they brought here and showed me. So this will be the first Roland digital setup in the UK.

EV: For the new album, do you plan to have any familiar names, adding their input?

MU: Nowhere near yet. I’ll get it up to about 90% and then we can start putting out some real records!

We yakked on for so long, this interview will be concluded in EV19, which we are aiming to have out in April (2000). Subjects include Montserrat, Levi’s adverts, Max Headroom, This Rose Must Die, and Jansen Barbieri & Karn. Don’t miss it!

“**This will be the first Roland digital setup in the UK**”

EV: Any projected release dates for the new album?

MU: Uhh, Benenice spoke to Gaby [Sappington, BMG USA] last night and Gaby would like it as early as possible next year. And my ballpark image of when it would come out is March. Just let all that Millennium ‘Best of. Ever. From anything. Everywhere’ stuff kind of die down, and then we can start putting out some real records!

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**Dead Man's Curve**

A question we're constantly being asked is "Are there any unreleased Ultravox tracks in the vaults?" and to date we've always said that there isn't... but that's not strictly true. We found out about this track when we were researching the answer to EV16's competition question. Back in 1981 when Warren, Chris, Billy and Midge were in Germany writing what was to become Rage in Eden, they also wrote something which was never seen the light of day, a song entitled Dead Man's Curve. As usual, there's more to the history of this than first meets the eye - we'll let the guys explain...

CHRIS: Well, we were at Conny [Plank's] studio and at the studio they used to have this crappy old beige car that everyone used to do their shopping and stuff in.

MIDGE: This horrible little Volkswagen [Passat] thing was Conny's runabout. It was very nice of him to have this, because they realised that people would go mad, and you had to escape – like Chris and I used to do – into Cologne as often as possible and have a wander around the city.

CHRIS: Warren used to be off in it all the time and he'd always drive us to and back from the studio to where we were staying. And you could never get it off of him, it was like his little car (laughs) and he used to drive like an absolute nutter.

MIDGE: Warren did use to drive this thing like a maniac!

WARREN: One very snowy winter morning I was driving the studio car 'on the way to work' from our hotel which was a few kilometres from Conny's. There was just Bill and I and, while I can't speak for Bill, I was a little worse for wear from the evening before. We were heading down this very steep hill when the car went into a skid and I lost 99% of control. We were slipping and swerving all over the road on our way down the hill as I struggled with the remaining 1%. Somehow I managed to keep the car heading in approximately the right direction and we ultimately ended up at the bottom of the hill, still in one piece, stopped just short of the intersection of the main road. I could only think that the times I used to do that sort of thing deliberately, for fun, back in Canada were not for naught (apparently). Quite a morning eye-opener.

EV: So what does Dead Man's Curve sound like?

CHRIS: Well, it's like an old Jan and Dean song, like a surfing record, you know that one... What's that song where the boyfriend dies on the motorbike? The boyfriend goes out angrily on his motorbike and he goes out on it and then he gets killed... It's one of these classic 60's songs, early Beach Boys stuff. I suppose it's old-fashioned rock'n'roll really. I can't remember what song we nicked, but it's like a traditional sort of 12-bar blues type number. I remember doing this bit at the beginning of it and it was like “Oh Warren you look soo sexy in your black leather driving gloves”. A real pisso-take. So we made up this song about Dead Man's Curve, but it was about Warren crashing the car.

EV: So you never thought of releasing Dead Man's Curve as a single?!

MIDGE: Warren would have loved it! Yeah Dead Man's Curve, that was it, we sang a little song for him.

CHRIS: We just did it as a laugh and then we thought “Oh, we know what we’ll do, we’ll send it to Chrysalis and tell them that we've got a new direction. This is where we want to go, this is really where we see Ultravox going” (laughs) this rock and roll thing.

MIDGE: We sent it to the record company as 'a taste of the new album'!

CHRIS: We convinced Chris O'Donnell [CMO Management] to take it in. And he went in there and delivered it as our next single (laughs), and they shat themselves!
In this, the last installment of Rare in Eden, we’re concentrating on what for most people is the rarest of all Ultravox related items – namely Torque Point. If it’s rare tracks and unreleased mixes you’re after then Torque Point isn’t for you. Instead, the reason for its inclusion here is because of the ‘demo’ picture sleeve that houses test pressings of the Vienna album. So the question we put to Warren, Chris and Midge was how all of this came about...

WARREN: My very first recollection of that takes me back to sitting around the kitchen table at Conny’s; the band was talking about possible album titles. I was briefly toying with something I considered sort of trendy-vague and technobally encompassing... and came up with Torque Point. Not brilliant, but these things depend on keeping up a constant stream of ideas and not getting bogged down. I offered it into the pot, as it were, and distinctly remember Bill immediately asking what ‘Torque’ meant. I said something to the effect of, “It refers to a rotational force, twisting force...” It was met with rather blank stares all around. After a few seconds Chris and Midge started taking the piss. Bill started to like it (I think)... my memory of this particular aspect of the story isn’t all it could be) and I became not so sure (I think...).

CHRIS: Billy was very keen on that. He thought it was good on two levels if I remember rightly. One was that it’s about power and turning, so that it was like a new thing and the other thing is he thought people that were into motorbikes would like it... how he thought that I’ve got no idea at all (laughs), but I remember him trying to sell it as an idea to us.

WARREN: Yes, when you’ve had a few and you’re trying to get the creative juices flowing – as opposed to the juces readily available in bottles, of which we were never in short supply – you can come up with some real duds. Like, what were we thinking? Though I have absolutely no memory of any of the other possible titles we were coming up with, it didn’t take long before Torque Point became representative of everything the album title SHOULDN’T be and its very mention was quite a pain to start us howling. It took its place as one of a score of our standing private jokes. Naturally, we mentioned it to numerous people as a possible album title and endeavoured to keep a straight face as we did so. Our sense of humour often backfired on us, this is obviously one of those times. It was NEVER seriously considered as the album title. Just how it ended up on some test pressings is truly beyond me!

MIDGE: I think when we did Vienna we knew it was something special, although we tried to ignore that, hence calling the album Torque Point. What nonsense!

WARREN: Later, I recall Midge saying that, for him, the album simply had to be called Vienna, it was the standout track and the standout choice for the title. Perhaps I was being perversely difficult but it just seemed so OBVIOUS, perhaps there was a tinge lurking about that wasn’t derived from one of the tracks on the record. I wanted to look at all the options. But it was soon, uh, obvious to me that it was obvious for a damn good reason – it was the best title!

CHRIS: I think Midge and myself always wanted Vienna because it was so obvious, so strong and it was the thing that was the most different really.

MIDGE: It reverted cos I think Chris O’Donnell [CMO Management] came down and slapped us in the back of the head and said, “Don’t be so bloody stupid! It’s got to be called Vienna, this track’s a killer”.

WARREN: We’d put ourselves under a lot of pressure making that record. We were so utterly committed to giving it our absolute total best down to the smallest detail and perfection that we were, of course, adamant that the matter of the record was the film Eraserhead. It’s a really horrible noise in itself, but the memory had gone on the computer and we got near to it, but it was never as good as it was on the rehearsal tape. Warren had a little £20 Panasonic... almost like a dictaphone. It’s just got a single mic in it and automatic levels. Just about the straightest cassette thing you could ever get. And we’d gone to Germany and we tried to recreate it from what we could remember from it and we just couldn’t do it. But we had that rehearsal tape, so we had to fly Warren’s tape machine over to Cologne so that we could get the best playback from it (cos we tried doing it from other tape machines and the signal wasn’t brilliant). So we thought that if we used the original machine we’d get the best volume we could get.

WARREN: We transferred the cassette to multi-track tape and cleaned up the recording as best we could technically... that was it.

MIDGE: That’s right. That made it as good as it is, which is pretty nasty actually! But that’s what we were into, we quite liked the idea of doing that stuff, it’s a piece of music, it’s just not recorded in a 24-track studio.

WARREN: After briefly trying to decipher the important elements of the music and write a piece around it, we decided it had charm as a ‘captured moment’ and that it’d be fun if we put the thing out just exactly as it was as – warts and all – as a glimpse into how we worked on our music.

EV: So why did initial pressings list the track as Keep Torque-ing on the label, whereas the sleeve still referred to it as Keep Talking?

WARREN: It wasn’t exactly a misprint, more like a private band joke that got a little out of control, or a complete misunderstanding of a handwritten title on a tape box label, perhaps both... it was never meant to appear on the record.

CHRIS: Yeah, it’s possible we did that just for a laugh, just to make it interesting. I can’t remember.

WARREN: The title came about when one of us was on the telephone talking to Chrysalis in London... they wanted to know what the title was going to be and were being very persistent about it. The trouble was we hadn’t really decided upon one. While we were sitting with them on the line someone, who was very busy at the time, gestured to the person on the phone and said, “Uh... just keep talking... keep talking...” Midge or Chris (can’t remember which) then said suddenly, “...that’s it! Keep Talking!’ That’s the title. ‘... We were happy with the title, it fitted perfectly with the aforementioned ‘talking’ sound on that track. A fine case of serendipity.
The Messengers, aka Colin King (left) and Danny Mitchell (right), were synonymous with Ultravox for many years. They performed not only as support on the Monument and Set Movements tours, but also onstage during the main set; they appeared in the videos for Hymn and Dancing With Tears in My Eyes, and they recorded on Midge’s MusicFest label, being produced by him for good measure. So when we ran into them recently we couldn’t resist chatting about the good ol’ days...
EV: You both were originally in a five-piece band called Modern Man. Tell us about the other members; Jim Cook, Mike Moran and Ali McLeod.

DM: “Big” Jim Cook is now head of the Housing Benefit Police and comes round to kick your door in, should you slip into arrears. P.S. I’m related to Jim in an in-law sort of way, as his sister and I still boff on occasion. Mike was last heard of selling carpets and breeding in the land of Trainspotting. Ali McLeod on the other hand has gigged and recorded non-stop with Glasgow stalwarts The McCluskey Brothers as well as session work for Craig Armstrong, one time Keyboard Man for Midge on his solo tour (The Gift) and Ultravox on the U-Vox tour, who has since gone on to arrange for Madonna, Nelee Hooper and is currently producing the Pet Shop Boys’ new CD, and I’m glad to say he’s still calling on Ali (whose stage name is Pibr och Solo) for the use of his tasty licks.

CK: Jim gave up singing after Modern Man. He now works for the Glasgow City Council, we’re still in touch. Mike Moran – no contact whatsoever, but Ali is still playing in various bands, and we have some contact.

EV: How and when did you all meet?

CK: Jim and I met at school, and Ali through an ad for a guitarist.

DM: I met Jim and Colin through a mutual friend whose sister I had recently divorced, you will notice a sisterly theme developing here, and then in the spirit of the Job Creating Mid-Seventies we all self-recruited ourselves into Modern Man. I was chosen for my Father Figure status (I like to think) and for the possession of a driving license (the stark reality).

EV: Were there any bands or artists that inspired you at that point?

DM: Jim and Colin were both attending therapy to get over their unhealthy Bowie obsessions. Ali loved all things Zappa. Mike was inspired by anyone who could get pissed, stoned, screwed, high and now on looking back was actually ahead of his time. I, as Father Figure (feel free to substitute Codger) harked back to the heady days of the Summer of Love and beyond.

CK: Paper Lace, Middle of the Road etc...

EV: We know of the album Concrete Scheme, were any singles released from it?

CK: As far as I can remember, one single called All the Little Idiots which is still held in high regard by most bands today (laughs).

DM: Not being very good at remembering what happened yesterday, I think the singles were All the Little Idiots, Body Music, Wastelands, and then not from the album Things Could Be Better and War Drums but don’t quote me on that.

EV: How did you originally get involved with Ultravox?

CK: Danny was a groupie, myself a professional stalker.

DM: Through Midge’s involvement with Modern Man, he had done all the production work except for the last single, and after the band split Colin and I started working as a “pop synth duo” (euphemism for a pair of chancers) and Midge asked us to augment Ultravox for their live shows. Live shows actually being live in those days, scary.

EV: Midge covered a Modern Man track, Wastelands, on his album The Gift in 1985. What’s the story behind this?

CK: Ask the groupie!

DM: If you mean why did he cover it, I guess because he liked the song, it was one he’d seen us perform at one of our numerous pub gigs and considering we used to play 2 hours’ worth of 3 minute original songs it must’ve stood out. If you mean what’s the song about, it’s about society’s profligate attitude towards its youth and the proffered results of such (mother was right, I should’ve been a politician).

EV: Anything more you can tell us about Modern Man?

CK: The most vastly underrated band of the time.


EV: At what point did the band part company? Was it on good terms?

CK: We parted on good terms.

DM: By the summer of 1980 I think it was, I just felt disappointed, frustrated and responsible for the lack of progress. I couldn’t really see a way forward so I tendered
my resignation in the official "Band Leaving Ceremony", 
and at this point I would like to say there were no 
sisters involved, and we all lived happily ever after.

EV: So you and Colin decided to go it alone..?

DM: Not quite, I got a job in a recording studio, sold my beautiful Les Paul Black Beauty and bought a 
portastudio and started writing songs in the kitchen for 
no apparent reason, and as my voice only goes from 
here to here but my melodies were going from here to 
there I asked Colin, who is blessed with one of those 
voices, to assist with the recordings and from that 
sprung The Furious Monkeys (how they all laughed so 
we became Messengers). Midge called etc...

EV: Were the Messengers a progression of the 
Modern Man sound, or did you see it as something 
entirely new?

CK: Something entirely new, a Dynamic Electro Duo.

DM: Modern Man were definitely a guitar band with 
synths stuck on, and on a good night extremely rocky 
in a pop stylee. Messengers on the other hand were a 
committed pop synth duo, till that approach failed.

EV: There were three singles, I Turn In (To You), 
Great Institutions and Frontiers. Do you feel they 
got the exposure they deserved?

CK: Too many to mention, apart from the haunting 
baldal Who Muffed the Irving Dummy!

DM: If there had been an album it may have 
contained such gems as Art, Strawboy, Woman in 
the Dunes, Plains of Siberia, The Mound of 
Anguish, Hard, Making Preparation, Call of the 
Wild, Nomad. If I Was, That Quiet Hour, Looking 
for the Perfect World, The Dancing Bear, 
Nighttown, Departure, Serious Colour. Song From 
a Cage all of which, apart from the three singles, never 
got past demo form.

EV: Was a publishing deal ever negotiated or 
finalised for the album?

DM: No, publishing was done retrospectively after If I 
Was, and by that time I had a bit of bargaining power 
with the publishing companies.

EV: On the single I Turn In (To You), the B-side was 
a track called The Semi-Professionals. Right at the 
end, a man walks away whistling the A-side tune. 
Whose idea was this, and who was whistling?

CK: I think you’ll find that man was a boy and that 
boy was me (inspired by a tribute to Roger Whittaker).

DM: This was recorded in down time in the studio I 
was working in. The track was the dedicated 
soundtrack to our nocturnal drives through London 
when we were recording I Turn In (To You), as Messrs. 
Boyles and Dodie, dangerous in a red Fiesta.

EV: Were the car engine noises on The Semi- 
Professionals sampled, or library sounds?

DM: This was pre-samplers, so we lifted the car noise 
from a crappy BBC FX record.

EV: You recorded a Radio One session in August 
1983. It included four songs; Departure, Great 
Institutions, Dancing Bear and Nighttown. Usually 
the format of these is that you have a set period of time 
in which to do it, using the in-house equipment and 
producer. Did you enjoy the experience?

CK: Very much. Apart from the rushed time and 
hideous cyst under my eye!

DM: We were famous for enjoying any experience, and 
as we had borrowed one of Ultravox’s PPG synths and a 
Linn drum machine, everyone had a state-of-the-art time.

EV: As a band you were constantly linked with 
Ultravox, you completed three world tours with them 
(once as Modern Man, twice as Messengers), plus TV 
appearances, and you played live on the Oxford 
Roadshow in 1984 in your own right – success seemed 
assured. What happened?

CK: Fuck all!

DM: I think if Colin had applied himself a bit more to 
the attentions of Peter Powell and other Media Moguls 
(laughs), perhaps by sporting a tad more eyeliner things 
may have taken a different bent, as happened 
for some other Pop Synth Duos (Pet Shop Boys, 
Erasure, and the one with Marc Almond in it).

EV: Would you have done anything differently?

DM: Maybe showing a bit of independence and being 
the Messengers instead of the Passengers might’ve 
been the thing to do, but really we were too busy 
enjoying the experience to bother.

CK: My main regret is that Danny and I never married!

EV: What are your memories of filming Ultravox’s 
Hymn and Dancing With Tears in My Eyes videos?
DM: During the Monument tour we were appearing in Clermont-Ferand Ice Arena in France, the stage set was built on a riser 2 metres off the ground, our position on the stage set was the little Romeo and Juliet balcony up behind Chris, another 2 metres. After the third song in the set Colin and I retired from the balcony and perched on an upturned flightcase to enjoy a well earned fag ‘n’ beer break, this was always done seamlessly during a stage blackout, I was chatting to Colin in the darkness and thought he was being uncommonly unresponsive only to discover when the lights went up that he had walked off the edge of the set, gone A. over T., and was lying, fag in mouth, beer unspilt, in a pose reminiscent of Bowie on the cover of Lodger (I mentioned he was an obsessive fan). The roadies carted him off and he was sent alone, speaking no French, to the local hospital, where he somehow managed to convey to the hospital staff by way of his appearance (white vest, big black baggy pants tucked into boxer boots and the ubiquitous eyeliner) that he was a circus performer who had fallen from the trapeze and broken his hand. Meanwhile back at the iceink the show goes on and I’m left trying to cover Colin’s backing vocals, obviously none of the band had any backing vocals in their monitors because after a full show with me failing manfully to hit the notes in Vienna, Hymn et al., a bemused Midge turned to thank his guests, only to find a 50% attendance in the Messenger department. Due to his attempts to hide the plaster cast on his hand Colin became known as the Little Emperor.

EV: Danny, you’ve had a writing partnership with Midge for many years – can you tell us more about this?

DM: It really just developed from the Modern Man days, having a good time, and I think the main thing when you’re writing is to have a sense of trust.

EV: When you are writing songs with other artists how much influence do they have over your own style of writing?

DM: I don’t think there is one style of writing, the finished article can be achieved by so many different methods, but when I am writing with someone hopefully there will be a constant dialogue that’s influencing the direction of the song.

EV: Are there any artists who you just couldn’t work with, or ones that you would like to work with?

CK: Colin tumbling over the handlebars of a stolen pushbike in Tokyo!

DM: Not enough, but when we do the pieces are immediately picked up, as well as the glasses.

EV: Finally, what are your plans for the future?

CK: One day at a time!

DM: Lord knows, any ideas? Fancy a drink...?
MODERN MAN

All the Little Idiots
b/w Advance
Cat No: MAMS 204
Format: 7" Single
Date: August 1980

Body Music
b/w I Couldn’t Stop
Cat No: MAMS 206
Format: 7" Single
Date: October 1980

Concrete Scheme
Cat No: MAMLP 5001
Format: Album
Date: November 1980

Things Could Be Better
b/w Wastelands
Cat No: MAMS 207
Format: 7" Single
Date: February 1981

War Drums
b/w Tell Us Lies
Cat No: MAMS 211
Format: 7" Single
Date: July 1981

THE MESSENGERS

I Turn In (To You)
b/w The Semi-Professionals (Theme No 1)
Cat No: CHS 2663
Format: 7" Single
Date: 1983

I Turn In (To You) (Extended)
b/w The Semi-Professionals (Theme No 1)
Cat No: CHS 12 2663
Format: 12" Single
Date: 1983

I Turn In (To You)
Cat No: Chrysalis CPK 4
Format: LP
Date: 1983

This untitled Chrysalis promotional album contains standard 7" mixes of I Turn In (To You) as well as Ultravox's Hymn, with Ultravox as the first track on side one and The Messengers as the first track on side two.

Also includes a Messengers interview in the magazine. This short lived LP mag also brought us two rarities from Germany. The German Issue One included John Foxx's Like A Miracle plus an interview inside, whilst the German Issue Six included Ultravox's Heart of the Country with a spoken intro by Warren: "Hello, this is Warren Cann from Ultravox. I’d like to wish all the readers of Debut, erm, best wishes and on behalf of all of the band I’d like to say we’re looking forward to seeing you all very much when we come to Germany in May." The cover incorrectly lists Dancing With Tears in My Eyes as the featured track!

Great Institutions
b/w Here Come the Heroes
Cat No: MUST 1
Format: 7" Single
Date: June 1984

Great Institutions (MF Mix)
b/w Here Come the Heroes / Strawboy (Live)
Cat No: MUSTX 1
Format: 12" Single
Date: June 1984

Frontiers
b/w Plains of Siberia
Cat No: MUST 2
Format: 7" Single
Date: October 1984

Frontiers (Extended)
b/w Plains of Siberia / Andy Warhol
Cat No: MUSTX 2
Format: 12" Single
Date: October 1984
Danny Mitchell

Real name: Daniel Mitchell
Date of birth: 14th May 1951
Present home: A humble shanty in a Glasgow township
Parents' occupations: Never met my father, it was one of those virgin birth scenarios
School begin in tears?: Sadly, yes
Earliest musical memory: Rockin’ the tenements with The Ballad of Davy Crockett
Proudest school moment: Getting caught shoplifting on a school trip to Belgium
First crush: A girl classmate who didn’t do things with things like crisps
First record bought: Take Good Care of My Baby – Bobby Vee
Worst job: Counterhand at the DSS – got sacked for being too informative
Worst band: The Three D Men
Most hated record: Sat on me plums
Lowest point in career: Having my licks slagged by the blind guy in Peters ‘n’ Lee
Favourite fantasy: See above
Favourite transport: Car
Domestic pets: Labrador – sadly deceased
Most nostalgic record for you and why?: The Little Boy that Santa Claus Forgot – I was that boy
Spent last Christmas: Drake and orderliness
Likes: Seafood mama
Dislikes: Tripe
Greatest fear: The tripe’s revenge
Favourite advertisement: Any Special K ad before PC
Best holiday you’ve ever had: Anywhere in the Highlands, eg Arisaig; then Venice.
Best present you’ve ever been given: Clunk Click Every Trip
How good a cook are you?: Average
How do you relax?: Measuring my sausage
Most beautiful thing?: A statue in Paisley Town centre
Favourite music paper: N/A
Where are you going after completing this?: From this computer to another one

Colin King

Real name: Colin King
Date of birth: 9th December 1957
Place of birth: Glasgow
Height: 6’0” (?!)
Own teeth?: Yes
Parents' occupations: Retired
School begin in tears?: And ended
Earliest musical memory: Singing with a chum
Proudest school moment: Leaving
First record bought: My Sweet Lord – G. Harrison
Worst job: Hospital work
Previous bands: White Light, Hot Valves, Speed, Modern Man, Messengers
Worst band: N/A
Most hated record: Knights in White Satin
Lowest point in career: What career?!
Favourite fantasy: It’s a Wonderful Life
Favourite transport: Car
Domestic pets: Labrador – sadly deceased
Most nostalgic record for you and why?: None
Spent last Christmas: Home
Likes: Good films, food, drink etc
Dislikes: Not having any of the above
Greatest fear: Modern Man reform
Favourite advertisement: Clunk Click Every Trip
Best holiday you've ever had: Anywhere in the Highlands, eg Arisaig; then Venice.
Best present you've ever been given: Still waiting
How good a cook are you?: Average
How do you relax?: I don’t
Most beautiful thing?: Faces
Favourite music paper: Bed, then working with Robert Duvall and Michael Keaton on a new film
Where are you going after completing this?: To another one
Want to hear the news as we get it?

Then you have two options! One is to visit the website (http://www.ultravox.org.uk) and submit your email address on the "News" page. If you don’t have email, you can send us Stamped self-Addressed Envelopes (SAEs), or, if outside the United Kingdom, International Reply Coupons (IRCs, available from post offices) with addressed envelopes, and we’ll post the news updates to you as soon as there’s something to report. As you’ve probably noticed, EV’s schedule is a little erratic due to our work commitments, the website and the CD re-releases, so the mailers allow us to keep you up-to-date in the meantime. Many of you already use this free service, but we’d like to get everyone involved so that you don’t miss out on any exciting developments! Send as many SAEs or IRCs as you like, numbering your envelopes (no. 1 of 5, etc) so that you know when they run out. Don’t forget – send them NOW!

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