

# TURN UP THE VOLUME

Sarah-Jane Morris, John Coghlan, Teddy Thompson

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**Announcer** (00:00:00):

From the The Stables in Milton Keynes, home to world-class music and entertainment, and the Milton Keynes International Festival. And a whole lot more besides this is Turn Up the Volume with your host Nick Coffe. Hello

**Nick Coffe** (00:00:15):

And welcome to this April edition spring edition of Turn Up, the Volume from the Stables in Milton Keynes. The sun is Out Storm. Dave has come and gone, and it's time to think about seeing some great gigs at The Stables Coming up later in this episode, we'll hear from Teddy Thompson, son of rock and folk legends, Linda and Richard Thompson. He's been living in America for nearly a quarter of a century, and his music is infused with a transatlantic spirit. His new album is out shortly and he's bringing it to The Stables in June. John Coghlan is the original drummer of Status Quo, now very nearly 80 years old. He still tells a great story and he's coming to The Stables twice in 2026. We'll hear from him shortly. But first, Sarah Jane Morris, perhaps best known as a singer in the Communards. But over the last 40 years or so, she's built up a loyal following of fans who love her mix of jazz, rock and r and b and her unmistakable voice. She's coming to The Stables on the 5th of September to showcase her two albums, The Sisterhood and Sisterhood Two, two albums she's created with Tony Remy as tributes to some of the greatest female performers of all time, Nina Simone, Joan Baez, Tracy Chapman, and many, many more. The stories behind each track are quite remarkable and she's here to tell them now. Sarah Jane, welcome to Turn Up the Volume.

**Sarah-Jane Morris** (00:01:27):

Thank you very much. Very good to be here.

**Nick Coffe** (00:01:29):

I have a problem, which I need to confess to you a little bit of behind the scenes when I prepare these interviews. I basically do loads and loads of research, go back to old interviews, find what people have said, and it's generally a pretty good strategy. Allows me to have some very good questions and hopefully some very good interviews. And then I was reading you and listening to some of your old interviews and in one of them I think you said that interviews are often useless because artists repeat themselves. And I was thinking, oh, okay, my plan has really fallen and foul here because I'm about to read a whole lot of interviews with you talking about stuff. And you're going to say, I've said that before. Are we stuck before we've even started?

**Sarah-Jane Morris** (00:02:10):

No, we're not. But I like being in the moment and responding to that which was presented to me. But I'm interestingly enough because I've done a lot of research because of the project that I'm promoting at the moment. And it's interesting, some of the artists that I've done my research about are so private that any interview they've done has just been a repeat that is absolutely. So you really can't find out about them. They have cleverly designed it so that you know nothing about them.

**Nick Coffey** (00:02:43):

It's so interesting so that because there are moments, and I have these moments in my work where I do sit down to write about someone and I can find nothing. And that is sometimes even around some very, very well known artists. And often in those moments, all I've got is the music. And because I love music, it's a good place to start. And then that opens up the conversation and then we get talking. And in a way, I sense that that's what you've had to do with a lot of these artists for The Sisterhood and Sisterhood Two, is really just go to the music,

**Sarah-Jane Morris** (00:03:14):

Saturate myself in the music and the lyrics and try and find out about them through that.

**Nick Coffey** (00:03:19):

And is that why you've got this quite strict criteria that you insist that as artists who write their own songs, perform something meaningful and connect in some way to your journey as well?

**Sarah-Jane Morris** (00:03:30):

Well, yeah. They're all my lodestars, so they're not everybody's list. But when I originally started the project with sisterhood, it was in the second lockdown and it is because I don't have a television. So my husband and I, we read to each other and that's just part of our relationship. And so I said in the second lockdown that I wanted to find out about the women that I felt had paved the way for me. And so I made a list of about 50, and by the time we'd started to buy autobiographies and biographies and the albums, if we didn't have them and saturate ourselves in their lives and their music, I realised it could be an album because their journeys were so fascinating. And I fell in love with their journeys, not just their music. And so I had to turn that list of 50 into 10 and I then had to see it as the passing of the torch from a generation to a generation.

**Sarah-Jane Morris** (00:04:28):

So it started with Bessie Smith who was the founding sister, and then it finished with Kate Bush who was one year older than me. And so in my head, she was passing the torch to me, that's how I perceived that first album. But by immersing myself in their stories and wanting to do this in such a respectful way because I mean they had either touched my lights or I had worked with them or I was just aware of how important they were in shaping popular music. So I couldn't, when we released this, I wrote this with Tony Remy, by the way, my right hand man. And when we'd finished and launched it two years ago at the Alexandra Palace Theatre and everything was going well, we

realised 10 was not enough and we just carried on writing. And so we've written about another 11, so that makes 21, but 21 out of 50. So yes, for me, they had to be fantastic singers, but they also had to be songwriters, which is why a lot of people you would imagine should be there aren't because they didn't necessarily write their own material. And also they needed to understand that their platform that they had as a result of being a successful singer songwriter was to use that platform for the better Good. So that's why I've chosen these particular singers.

**Nick Coffe** (00:05:56):

I do wonder what is behind so many of these artists being so private, whether it was a conscious choice, whether they don't like sharing their story, whether they feel that it is their music and their art that tells the story and therefore they don't need to tell the story elsewhere or whether it's a combination of all of the above.

**Sarah-Jane Morris** (00:06:15):

Well, some of these singers have been very, very approachable, a being able to write to them, but also all of the information is out there. But I'd say there were three that were incredibly private. One is Kate Bush, one is Tracy Chapman, and the other is Joan Armatrading Very hard to find out very much about any of those three.

**Nick Coffe** (00:06:41):

Do you know what's ironic when you say that is that I interviewed Joan Armatrading more than once, and she was wonderful, but you are right now I'm remembering she was one of those that I realised there's very, very little about and is very private and was one of those interviews that I had to be very, very respectful of that privacy. But actually, and I'm going back probably 10 years when I last interviewed her, I remember as being an incredibly open and warm and engaging person as well who actually wanted to tell the stories.

**Sarah-Jane Morris** (00:07:13):

Yes. Well, what was fascinating about Joan was out of that list, she is the only singer songwriter that has never covered anybody else's material. She's only ever performed her own, which is quite extraordinary. So I met her in 1992. We were both part of a very big International Women's Day concert in Rome. It was for ride tv and it was being presented by Vanessa Redgrave and the list of female singer songwriters were Rickie Lee Jones, Chaka Khan, Montserrat Caballé, Astrud Gilberto, Cassandra Wilson, and of course Joan. And we were asked just not long before the performance if Joan, myself and Cassandra Wilson would sing a Beatles song. And it was up to me apparently to go and ask her. And she seemed to be very, I thought because she said no, she seemed very shy at this particular occasion. And once I then read that, that she had only ever sung her own material, I thought, no, that's why she said no. It was a Beatles song. Exactly. But she has influenced me enormously. I mean, we all remember first hearing Love and Affection, but what great songs she's written. And because I found out so little about her, everything is, everything I found about her is in that song. There was nothing left out.

**Nick Coffey** (00:09:43):

And this is what you hear when you listen to both albums. I need to be clear, this is not karaoke, this is not Sarah Jane does ham-fisted versions. And actually in some ways I would say that you kind of lean into different parts. I'm thinking for example, Amy Winehouse. So we all know what Amy sounds like, that kind of retro poppy, bluesy sound, but you've lent much more into a jazz sound.

**Sarah-Jane Morris** (00:10:10):

So she was known for a Phil Spector sound. That's obviously what the record label and she tuned into very early on, and it was a very clever move because our age group absolutely knew that sound. So it was very familiar. She just happened to be incredibly original with what she did, and she wrote her truth in song. So she was fascinating, but also to think that she lived only til she was 27 years old, but she was steeped in jazz, right from a very early age. She was a huge fan of the likes of Sarah Vaughan and her father obviously being a big band singer introduced you to all of those. And she did a wonderful duet with Tony Bennett. And so Tony and I thought, no, we're not going to go for the Phil Spector sound that everybody is expecting us to do. We're going to write her a jazz ballad. And I'm very pleased with those two lines, which I repeat in each verse, which is, you never stood on solid ground, but the edge is where the magic is found. We can only imagine as is the same with Janis Joplin, who also died age 27. They were both part of that club, that 27 club. We can only imagine what great works they would still be giving us

**Nick Coffey** (00:12:51):

Who are these songs for? By that I mean, are you writing them for yourself as your tribute, your pen if you'd like, to these important women whose stories PEPs haven't been told as well as they could have been or should have been? Are you writing these songs for them, especially those that are no longer here?

**Sarah-Jane Morris** (00:13:10):

I'm writing for both of those reasons and also I'm writing them. One of the things I want to happen from this is, I mean, you look at the charts at the moment, we have so many wonderful young female singer songwriters in the charts. You've got Raye, Olivia Dean, Lola Young, and they are there because of these women. They paved the way, they broke the ground. And we know so much about all the men. Men are always in the history books and we know these women for the music that they've done, but not maybe for the path they trod. And some of them were incredibly brave. I mean, what was fascinating was with Bessie Smith. She was the biggest selling music artist in the twenties, not men. It was her. She was a bigger selling blues artist and it was the sales of her records to a black public that put Columbia records on the map. Nearly all of these singers I've written about, if you look back, they've either been signed to Columbia Records or an offshoot of it. So she paved the way for everyone to follow, which is why at the end of her song I said, thank you Bessie Smith for showing the way.

**Sarah-Jane Morris** (00:14:29):

Also because of segregation and such, she couldn't eat in a restaurant, she couldn't stay in a hotel. So the only way she could travel with her band being the most popular singer at the time was to buy a train. She bought a Pullman train and she and her whole troop would travel around America. But this was the time of the Ku Klux Klan when it was big and there were bullet holes all over her train where they were firing at her as they drove through their particular regions, their counties, and right towards the, she didn't live till an old age, but she started out in absolute poverty and her ex-husband took all of her money. There was nothing left for her headstone. And 33 years later when Janis Joplin was doing what I'm doing now, which is talking about those that influenced her, she was on television talking about how it was Big Mama Thornton and Bessie Smith that had influenced her.

**Sarah-Jane Morris (00:15:30):**

Bessie Smith's maid, who was now a much older woman, heard this, contacted the record company who contacted Janice to say, I know where Bessie is buried and there is no headstone. And Janis Joplin paid for the headstone, but died later that year. I've had so many wonderful feedbacks. But the most amazing thing that happened was for the first album, the first single was about Rickie Lee Jones and her album Pirates was the backdrop to my twenties, and she was also on this International Women's Day concert. So I had met her and we told, I mean, her autobiography was just a gift to me, so I was able to dive into that. But also I already knew a lot about her and she was hitching her way around America, age 12 with a guitar on her back. Her grandfather was a one-legged tap dancer in vaudeville called Peg Leg Jones.

**Sarah-Jane Morris (00:16:25):**

She went out for an entire year with Tom Waits before either of them had Broken Big, he discovered she was a heroin addict and she'd been hooked on heroin by Dr. John. He ran a mile. Tom Waits is influenced by Rickie Lee Jones. Rickie Lee Jones was very definitely influenced by Tom Waits and all of these things are in her song. She was very influenced by Van Morrison and which is why I called her song Jazz Side of the Road. Anyway, it goes out as the first single. And then she writes to me and thanks me for telling her Truth in song, and she said that it was like driving through a car wash with the roof down and everything got all wet. That was how many tears she cried. So that was fantastic. And then two weeks ago, just before we were launching the album, we were in rehearsal studios and because I am the manager, I'm the agent, I'm the artist, I finance it, I write it and I co-produced it with Tony.

**Sarah-Jane Morris (00:17:20):**

So everything comes through my mobile phone. Ping went, I looked to see what happened if somebody had bought the cd. So I looked to see who it was, somebody called Janice in America had bought the cd. I thought, oh my gosh, I wonder if that is Janice, he and that we've written the actually best song for. And so I emailed straight away saying, are you Janis Ian that wrote Society's Child about 17? And she said, yes, one of my fans alerted me to this project we've written and I think it's a wonderful thing that you're doing and I want to have it in my collection. So I said, well, it's going to take

ages for it to get to America, but I'd love you to hear it now so you understand what respect we've paid you. Your song finishes the album and it's called The Dignity of Love. And an hour later she emailed back to say that not only was the research just amazing, but it was reminiscent of her songs and her songwriting, and she said, the Dignity of Love. I could not have written my story better.

**Sarah-Jane Morris (00:19:36):**

Peggy Seeger, who I first met at, I met her at a print worker's benefit at the Hackney Empire years and years and years ago. So I was hugely in awe. I went to Greenham Common for a weekend. She lived there. She wrote the Greenham Common Song. She wrote an early feminist song called I'm Gonna Be an Engineer. So last year I managed to convince her to come and stay with me. And I did so much research. I booked a theatre. I found all sorts of film footage and I interviewed her. So it was an evening with Peggy Seeger, but she stayed here with us and I asked her permission if I could write her a song for The Sisterhood for her 90th birthday. And she gave the permission. And so I wrote a love letter to her for Diva and it was sent to her and she rang me up for an entire hour thanking me for this respect. I wrote her a feminist anthem called Half of Us Longing to Be Free

**Nick Coffey (00:20:36):**

Hearing. You talk so passionately about their stories, and they all have stories and they have stories where they've come from very difficult backgrounds. And my job as an interviewer is joining up the dots. And sometimes those dots are so big and the line is so thick that I don't have to do very much joining up. And I think in your case, those dots are big. The lines are quite thick because your own backstory, your own childhood did involve a lot of moving, a lot of change, a lot of trauma within your family. These are people who you can really identify with, not just on a musical level, but on a really visceral level as well.

**Sarah-Jane Morris (00:21:13):**

Absolutely. I think mean there were many complicated stories. Like for instance, Etta James, her mother was 12 when she gave birth to her. That's very, very young. And I mean, Aretha Franklin was 12 when she was first a mother. So many of these women that I wrote about either went into prison or had someone within their family in prison. My father went to prison when I was 17. I lived in many, many homes, and this is my 37th home that I'm living in now. We never owned anywhere. There was never any money. And with many of these singers, there was a lot of hardship. But yeah, I mean, I suppose it wasn't just their music, it was actually finding out about the story and how it linked with mine that made me understand and possibly able to write it better because I really did understand those journeys.

**Sarah-Jane Morris (00:22:15):**

I'd experienced some of it myself. I mean, there was as a wonderful story, I must tell you about Etta James, and I've put it into her song and her song is called, also known as Etta James. And the reason we called it also known as Etta James, was because she

was christened Jamesetta Hawkins, but they couldn't find the right name for her. So actually what they did was just turned her name back to front Etta James rather than James Setter. Anyway, she did live a very dangerous life, and along the way she got hooked on heroin and she knew everyone. She influenced people like Elvis Presley. The Stones would come and check her out. Everybody came to check her out because if anybody knew how to sing the blues, it was Etta. But she was rung up one day by a friend of hers, a musician who was in prison.

**Sarah-Jane Morris (00:23:09):**

He was in Chino Prison, and he rang her to say that he had this song going around around his head. He knew it was for her, he'd written a few lyrics, but he couldn't go. He could go no further. So she went along to Chino Prison and the prison ward allowed him on the Honky tonk piano in the day room, allowed him to play to her that which was going around his head. So she took that song away and it became I'd rather Go Blind. So in her song, I talk about how she broke half of that song Free From Prison, and it's a song about the power of Love to Blind. I try and reference all of these milestones in people's lives within a couple of lines within a verse, which is why it's always good for me to do some of the introductions so that people can listen out for that.

**Sarah-Jane Morris (00:24:06):**

He wouldn't know that. I mean, in Bonnie Rai's song, a Mother of Hearts, she Isn't a Mother, but the reason I call her mother of hearts is she wrote this phenomenal song which won a Grammy in 2023, and it's called Just Like That. And if you haven't heard it, I urge you to listen to it because you will weep. It's a song about organ donation, and in this particular case, it's a heart donation. And that has gone into her song as is at an entire verse about the fact that she understood that most women that are in American prisons are there either because they've been pimped or trafficked or got into drugs in order to fit into a very male system. And she knew that they needed help rehabilitating. So she set up a charity to help with that. So I try to reference all of these very important things that people have done in a very human way.

**Nick Coffey (00:25:09):**

And I guess the summary of all of this is we often ask the question, when you think about these greats, these other worldly greats, we often ask you, where did it come from? Where do they find it from? And it strikes me that these 21 songs in some ways begin to answer that question in a four minute bite-sized way that a sort of biopic film couldn't even begin to.

**Sarah-Jane Morris (00:25:32):**

Yes. Yeah, I mean, the fact that we've heard from three of those singers to thank us for getting their story and to doing it with respect and musically getting it right, suggests that Tony and I have possibly taken the right path. The one that was probably the most moving for us to be part of was when Tony and I went to South Africa and we recorded the song we'd written about Miriam Makeba. Now, I first got into singing very accidentally when my dad went to prison. I left halfway through my A Levels, I had a

breakdown. We lost our home. It was a really tough time, and it took me a while to kind of get any confidence to go and enrol at a local college to continue my education. And it just so happened that I went to the local college, which had got the first theatre and education course in the country, and I didn't have the confidence to go in and sign on.

**Sarah-Jane Morris (00:26:37):**

I went round to the back with panic breathing and I didn't think I could go in and there was a guy leaning up against the wall smoking a cigarette about the age of my father who asked me what I was doing. And he was quite nice and kind, and I must have in between my panic breathing, told him a little bit, and he was so kind. I probably told him my life story. And he basically said, just behind me here is the drama department. I am an authority on Brechtian theatre. That's what we teach here. You've been alienated. You are carrying your father's guilt. All of this stuff has been landed on your shoulders, and you need to be on this course and you need to find a way of writing your story out of you. And he was exactly the person I needed to meet.

**Sarah-Jane Morris (00:27:24):**

I kind of fell into singing to get my equity card. And the guy, there was a guy who was the third year, he was just leaving and he could play the piano and he needed to get his card. So he started to teach me a few songs. They happened to be Billie Holiday songs. I didn't know that Billie Holiday was, and I just heard him singing them. I didn't hear her singing them. So I learned these songs without being influenced by Billie Holiday. Now, had I heard Billie Holiday sing them, I would've sounded like Billie Holiday. I'd just, that's all I'd have known is to copy. And so I'm very glad it happened that way. But I joined a band called The Republic, and I joined it because a fellow actor, John Matshikiza, he was a black South African actor with the RSC, and he'd been asked to write the lyrics for this brand new band called The Republic, which was an African Caribbean Latin band, quite political.

**Sarah-Jane Morris (00:28:15):**

And he asked me if I would join with him. He knew he was about to go back and do a season with the RSC. I never thought I could sing in a band because I'd never studied music in any of the schools I went to, which was 13. I never studied music. It was never something I always chose art, art or ceramics. That was my main form of expression. So what I wasn't aware of at the time was he and his family were in exile in England because his father was very politically active and his father wrote King Kong the Musical, which is what brought Hugh Masekela and Miriam Makeba to England in the first place. And then after the Republic, which was like I said, a very political band, our first single was anti the Malvinas War. Then there was a song about the royal family.

**Sarah-Jane Morris (00:29:03):**

They did a documentary about us with Granada. We were the cover of NME. We were the band that was supposed to make it, but we were too political in the time of Thatcher. And so that band split up and it became both. One part of it went to a band called 3 Mustaphas 3 and Another to The Happy End, which is a 25 piece political big band.

Now, in the happy end, Jerry Dammers loved what we did. By the way, one of my very first gigs was supporting The Specials in Coventry. This is going back a long, long, long way. Anyway, Jerry Dammers loved the Happy End, and he used to come along to our gigs. And as a result, I joined Artists Against Apartheid, which he set up with Dali Tambo in the early eighties. And I used to go along every Friday to South Africa house with a megaphone and sing Sele Africa.

**Sarah-Jane Morris (00:29:56):**

I started to go out with Dali Tambo, who was the son of Oliver Tambo, who was the head of the ANC while Nelson Mandela was in prison. And Mervin Africa was someone else that lived in Brixton, which is where I lived in hard Tolet housing project. And because one of my ex-boyfriends had bought me a piano as a birthday present, I had in this pretty rundown flat, I had a piano. So he taught me that I should be a safe house for black South African musicians arriving because I could not only put them up, but I could let them practise. So that became very much part of my education and my journey. So when we wrote the song about Miriam Makeba, I realised I had to go to South Africa to record some of it because I'd used the Soweto Gospel Choir in a song that I did on my Bloody Rain album, but I'd sent them the files so I never met them.

**Sarah-Jane Morris (00:30:51):**

And then I met them with Antonio Uni when we went to the Edinburgh Festival and we talked and got on, and I thought, no, I've never been to South Africa. I refused to go during apartheid. Nobody's asked me since. I've got to go now. So I set up a GoFundMe where people could order the CD way ahead of it, being ready. And with that money, I bought the flights for Tony, myself and my brother Rod, who's a filmmaker to go out there. So we've recorded the track, but we needed the voices. I didn't know how on earth I paid for the flights, but they had doubled by the time the money came into my account. So there's no money for accommodation. So I tracked down Dali Tambo having not seen him since 1987, and I trapped him down. And I had a party line with him and his wife asking if he knew anyone that could put up Tony, myself, and my brother, even on the floor or sofa beds if we did a private consulate for someone. And he had a quick word with his wife, and then they both said, no, you are our guests. And so we landed in Tambo Airport named after his father, and we stayed in the heart of the ANC. And we recorded that song on the day that Miriam McCabe would've turned 90 had she lived. And the Soweto Gospel Choir could not believe that we hadn't recorded it in South Africa. They believed that these were all South African musicians.

**Nick Coffey (00:32:18):**

It is an incredible story. We are out of time. I haven't even talked to you about the Pope. I've not talked about the Communards, I've not talked about Prince, all of which to say the stories around sisterhood and sisterhood two are so important and so vital that I think it's been absolutely beautiful to focus on them. The show is coming to The Stables on the 5th of September, Sarah J. Morris, the Acoustic Sisterhood. It's a stage two event. It's fully seated. Tickets are 27 pound 50 from the Stables Box office, which you can find@stables.org all by calling oh 1 9 0 8 2 8 0 800, an evening of song stories. And

I'm sure a considerable amount of emotion as well. And of course, sister Two is out now and available on all the streaming platforms and direct from yourself.

**Sarah-Jane Morris** (00:33:05):

And do you know what I've just heard today? So the first single is the one about Amy Winehouse, and it's in the Italian charts,

**Nick Coffey** (00:33:13):

Sarah-Jane Morris, it's been an absolute pleasure to talk to you and to hear these wonderful stories and bring some of these incredible personalities to life and their music to life as well. I'm sure the gig at The Stables will be wonderful. I really appreciate your time today.

**Sarah-Jane Morris** (00:33:26):

Thank you very much for making the time for me.

**Nick Coffey** (00:34:24):

Time to speak to John Coghlan, pushing 80 years old, but still going strong. Original drummer from Status Quo coming to The Stables twice in 2026. And as with all drummers, I'm sure John has got a lot of stories to tell. Delighted to say he joins me now from his home. John, good to have you on. Turn up the volume.

**John Coghlan** (00:34:41):

Thank you.

**Nick Coffey** (00:34:41):

Do you know what John, some of my absolutely favourite musicians over the years have been drummers and I grew up with some very interesting drummers. My dad managed indie bands and some of the drummers were, they were quite a character. Is it fair to say that you drummers are a breed apart?

**John Coghlan** (00:35:02):

Well, I think we probably are. I don't know. Well, I must say all the drummers I've admired, I've met all of them and there's quite a lot of them. It's been great. I played from the heart, I love playing drums and even at my age and why not? I've always said, if it's something I don't enjoy anymore, I'll stop doing it. But I still love playing. So that's it.

**Nick Coffey** (00:35:25):

I think we underestimate the technicality of playing the drums. What I mean by that, I was reading an autobiography, the Bruce Springsteen autobiography, and he talked about how they auditioned Max Weinberg as the new drummer in the mid 1970s. And he was saying that the key for him is to have a drummer who plays under the music, not over the music. So the drummer is the powerhouse, the drummer is the one that really drives the sound. But you don't want to only see the drummer, which I'm guessing is quite a difficult balancing act.

**John Coghlan (00:36:01):**

I think really I learned in the sixties and by listening to records and watching drummers and things when I could, of course, really, I don't don't really like a drummer being too busy in a song. I don't like the idea, the guitar guitarist doing guitar solo and a drummer doing a bloody drum solo as well. It's a complete bloody mess, Ben. Nice. That's why The Beatles is successful. Ringo, Charlie Watts, the Rolling Stones, John Bonham led Zep and all those drummers, I mean you, Mick Avory, the Kinks and oh, there's lows, there's Lowe's mate play the song. Really? That's what it's about. Play the song.

**Nick Coffey (00:36:40):**

And I think that's what Springsteen was saying, play the song, not be the star. And as I say, I suspect that's a difficult balance to have. So what happened? How did you pick up your first drumsticks? Because you left school at 15 and you were kind of a mechanic's apprentice. So what was that process?

**John Coghlan (00:36:59):**

Well, his dad said, son, I'll get you a job, be a mechanic and you'll be a fully fledged mechanic in so many years. And I realised, you get your hands dirty. And so that put me off. But really, I suppose it all started when mum and Dad used to take me to Crystal Palace Hotel in South London, not far from where we lived. They go ballroom dancing and they'd take me of course, and I'd sit there watching a drum I think, and I'd like to do that. And of course dad had loads of albums like Joe Loss and the dance bands and all that. I listened to that and I thought, oh, this is good. I like this. This is really good fun. So dad bought me a little Beverly drum kit, a couple of cymbals and hi-hat and all that. And I just taught myself really. And I met Lloyd Ryan much later, but that's another story. Took me a few things, but really just listening to drummers keeping me in time.

**Nick Coffey (00:37:51):**

And your dad was your roadie, wasn't he?

**John Coghlan (00:37:53):**

I suppose he would've been, yeah. They also all started with me being in the ATC, the Air Training Corps, thinking I was going to join the Royal Air Force on a uniform. When all that, like you do, you're a cadet, we put little groups together in the squadron and we were playing shadows and instrumentals, Wally Rogers and Johnny Bush, and that was about it. And zoo guys kept coming in. What it was, we were in the drill hall in their Air cadets on a Sunday and across the road they, not across the road rather across a parade with a territorial army. And I think two guys had a band in there, whether it was Francis Rossi and Alan Lancaster, and asked me, am I doing anything? I said, no, not really. And asked me to join their band. That was in 1962, I think. We were all at school. I was at school and didn't like, not a waste of time, but I was happy when I left, really. And Francis and Alan, we grew up together and we rehearsed a lot and they wrote songs. And the rest is history, really.

**Nick Coffey (00:38:55):**

It is history and it's a history that you're bringing to The Stables. You went through names, didn't you? There was the scorpions, there was the spectres. And certainly there was a shift in your early styling because at the outset it was very much fridy shirts and more of a pop styling. And then it shifted, didn't it, into more of a denim long hair, more of a sort of stripped down blues and boogie identity.

**John Coghlan (00:39:20):**

Yeah, thank God it did really, because I don't think, I suppose all the tall tins getting all that dressed up stuff in soho, we used to go to this clothes shop, I can't remember what it's called now, freeish shirts and silly baggage trailer and all that stuff to do Trouble the box and all that. And really, I suppose that's a starting somewhere. I think Francis had this idea of let's go and see some blues bands and things like that. And we did. And there was a band supporting us somewhere once, and the drummer was doing this lovely shuffle on France. I said, can you do that? And I said, yeah, okay. So I picked up the shuffle and we grew our hair long jeans and oh man, it was so much better than all that other stuff we were doing. And it's great. And you think, well really, if you get asked to join a band in those days, go and do it. You never know what might happen. And I remember in London there was soho somewhere. Big band leaders used to go up there on a Saturday, I think it was, and look for a sax player or a trumpet, et cetera, or a drummer, a bass player. And they picked my people up in form a bang. And that's how it was in those days.

**Nick Coffey (00:40:30):**

And for you guys, you changed your circuit, didn't you? Because you then started to play universities, you played colleges that would've left you, I dunno, feeling a little bit more authentic in what you were doing, but then you ended up in Butlin's for six weeks.

**John Coghlan (00:40:45):**

Oh yeah. That was interesting. It was. We won a competition or an audition to go and play in in Somerset. And it was so funny, we were all away from our parents for six or seven weeks where it was in those days also, you couldn't stay on the camp. You weren't in those days, they never allowed you to stay on the base, get a B. And it was hilarious as well. I remember met a drummer called Lloyd Ryan who was playing a big orchestra in the theatre, and we'd walk back to our BS and we saw all these lights in the sky. Oh look, there's UFOs. They're probably just satellites running in their own business, but good days. And you really, I suppose you got to start somewhere, but when we grew the Barnet longer and we play in blues, I suppose think of it as blues I suppose.

**John Coghlan (00:41:38):**

And I remember we were in this, oh, it was a university or college somewhere, and Bob Young was our tour manager at the time, and he said, I'll speak to the stage man. I said, look, we don't want to be announced. We just walk on and be cool. Really? Oh, all. No, he says Iron. I always announced the bands. So we said, all let him do it. And he walks on as a really big crowd from the audience and we're standing beside the stone. They

could smell this smell. Of course the hall was stunk of cannabis. And he was so funny. He said, ladies and gentlemen, this band you've been waiting for is here. Ladies and gentlemen, they're here. He forgot who we were. Oh well anyway, we carried on Brian. It was good fun. But he was so well and truly out of his head. He forgot what we called.

**Nick Coffey** (00:42:27):

And then of course what happens is you get a record deal, you start recording and all the drummers, okay, maybe not all, most of the drummers I know much prefer live performance to recording. Were you the same?

**John Coghlan** (00:42:41):

Oh yeah, yeah. The thing recordings. See, we made 14 albums when I was at the band. So a lot of songs that you may spend days or ages doing one song. And I remember thinking going back home or going to a hotel where it was, I've got to hear another song. This song's doing my head in. But I just always to this day prefer to play with a band and it's an audience and I enjoy that much more.

**Nick Coffey** (00:43:10):

And of course when you're playing, you're touring, you are meeting Jerry Lee Lewis, you're meeting the Kinks, you're meeting Gene Pitney, you played alongside Slade, I think you played alongside Lindisfarne, you played alongside Caravan. That whole period where you are interacting with, playing with. And when I say playing with, I mean it in the context of music and probably all the other forms of playing with that must have been an incredible period.

**John Coghlan** (00:43:35):

Yeah, it was good. You look up to a lot of these bands and things, and I remember in the seventies it was, we did an Australian tour. It was a package tour. It was Status Quo, Slade, Lindisfarne and Caravan. And when we flew through, I think it was Sydney now and then we had to go do interviews and go to Hotel Wind, knackered of course by then. But then we flew internally around Australia. I think it's possibly Anne set her life. And then someone said, by the way, guys, there's four detectives on the plane. We said, yeah, why you saying no? Their hair should keep you given on you. Really? What we going to do? Jump out of the plane there, there four bands and there four lots of row crews, there's lots of hair and jeans and t-shirts. So we stood out times and they stood. All they did is sat in the back. And I do remember we had a great time touring and playing to great audiences in Australia. And when we got back, I think it's to Sydney, to fly back to uk, these guys are still sitting there. I said, hello guys. Alright, how are you doing mate? I said, did you arrest anybody? No mate, just get off the bloody plane.

**Nick Coffey** (00:44:44):

They were just looking for some free tickets, weren't they? You're

**John Coghlan** (00:44:47):

Probably right. Never thought of that. Yeah.

**Nick Coffey** (00:44:49):

When you think about that period, and America as well, you were touring heavily, but I wonder whether there's a case with saying that you didn't quite do America right because you never fully broke in America. There were parts of America that knew you well, parts of America that knew you less well. And do you ever view that as a bit of a missed opportunity?

**John Coghlan** (00:45:08):

Well, I think a possibility would've been maybe moving out to America. I think the fleet, we might do that. Some bands did the same thing. I think being honest with you, we were spoiled because we knew we were big in Europe. And so that's why we went back. I think, yeah, it would've been great to break America. I mean, you're right. I think we were known in Texas and another state, no one's even heard of us. It was quite weird. We played at the whiskey of Gogo a few times. We did that. You do that for a week each time. It's really good place to play. But it was a shame we never broke America. I think, like I said, we were spoiled in UK and Europe.

**Nick Coffey** (00:45:48):

Were you among the most touring of bands? Cause I was looking back at some of the information and it feels like you were touring relentlessly, that the touring was almost continuous and you were very, very, very little time at home. I wonder whether perhaps looking back and I know there was fun, there was drugs, there was drink, there was the whole lifestyle. But whether you look back and think maybe you should have taken more breaks.

**John Coghlan** (00:46:13):

I think so. Yeah, definitely. I think we should have had two or three months off, maybe settle down and just take it easy and recoup and then get back to playing again. But I think we were working all the time. You get to a point where you really enjoy it, then you think, oh dear, is there anything else we can do? And I think I'd had enough after 20 years. It's also with the two reunion tour, it's probably 22 years or something like that. But good fun while it lasted. And I do miss Alan Lancaster and Rick Parfitt.

**Nick Coffey** (00:46:47):

I can imagine you mentioned there leaving. My guess is that being in the quo was rubbish for relationships, rubbish for marriages. It's going to take its toll, isn't it? Exhaustion, there's going to be the band tension internal issues that does lead to that moment in 1981, doesn't it?

**John Coghlan** (00:47:09):

I think it does. Yeah, I think so. See, I'm happy to go down to local pub with a friend, a couple of mates and have a couple of pints. I was never really into that horrible word. Drugs. I don't like the idea. I don't think you need it. I remember Bob Young saying, look guys, you don't really need it. And he was right and I didn't do it. And I remember them saying, oh, have a little try. I think I had smoking some cannabis and couldn't stop laughing. But the other one, the cocaine, no, sorry, I'm not interested in drugs. I'm happy done a local pub with a pint. So

**Nick Coffey** (00:47:44):

Tell me this argument that you had with a drum machine. Let's set the record straight on this once and for all because my understanding is that you had a concern because the band wanted to use a drum machine and you felt that a drum machine couldn't replace a proper riff or a proper shuffle. Did you have a fight with that drum machine or did you just have a mild altercation?

**John Coghlan** (00:48:08):

No, I couldn't hear properly without headset eye on and things like that. And it built up and we were tired. We were a knackered wish should have had time off, but just one of those things escalated. I know if it typically light drum machines, I'm sure most drummers are the same. And you hear modern stuff now that's out and you can say it's a drummer. It doesn't have the feel, the groove and why

**Nick Coffey** (00:48:34):

You were exhausted, weren't you? Because you took a year or two out to literally recuperate. Yeah,

**John Coghlan** (00:48:40):

I remember me and Jillie Holiday quite a bit, went around different places and soaked up the sun and then I thought, oh, I need to play again. I think that's where a diesel band came out with Chuck and Mickey Moody and people like that now. It was good fun. It was quite a buzz rhythm. The reunion tour started. That was great. The only thing was rehearsing in Shepperton Studios was all right, I suppose. But because it's soundproofed so well for making films and things, my drums sounded dead. It was like playing a cold ball box. I'd put up with that for two weeks, then Premier sent the drum kit down for me to use on the tour. So I used their drums for two tour rather. And it was great and I had a great time. And I must say Lance Miles is in my drum tech. All the drum techs I've had in the years bars before all been okay, but Lance, every night, every time I set the kit up, it would be absolutely spot on by the inch. The kit was just right. It was great. It's like it'd never been taken apart and patching cases, it was lovely. And Lance was great and we enjoyed the tour and I think it was the most sober tour we've ever done. No one was drinking, no one was doing anything else, but it may go up for it after the show.

**Nick Coffey** (00:50:00):

I'm guessing once you come out of a band like that, it must show you who your true friends are because when you're in a band, there's probably a lot of people who are there hangers on, they're there maybe for the wrong reasons. And then when you come out and you take that time out and you reassess and you move on, is there that moment as a member of a great band where you just really look around you and think who's still standing?

**John Coghlan** (00:50:23):

Yeah, yeah. I think it happens. You get on with some people and some people you with four, even with Andy Bown, it was great and we're all good friends and one day

something happens and it's not the same anymore. I can't explain it, but just one of those things and life goes on

**Nick Coffey** (00:50:40):

In terms of the reunion, which was what about 12, 13 years ago, frantic for reunion, it was Alan G. Parker who I think triggered those discussions. Must have been, I'm going to say fun but weird.

**John Coghlan** (00:50:57):

I suppose I could have asked Francis, why'd you want to do it? I didn't bother asking it, but he had just gone on with it and we did it. But I think for Alan Lancaster and me, it was new for us because we travelled and slept on those tour buses, which was great. They're fabulous. And say goodnight to the audience and walk off stage. No crew were there with these big sort of dressing gowns and with their names on straight on the bus. Bus would go and in the fridge there'd be and food left for that. The caterers did put it in the microwave and open the fridge. Oh dear, look, there's beer in there. There's wine and nine, seven, 7 cents in Europe. We stopped the diesel along the way I suppose, and Rip Path that used to get off this bus and come on, come on our, because there was Rick and Francis on their bus with air crew and there was a Lanker to me, Jillie, my wife and Al Lanker, Alan Tribe and Bob Young on our bus. And Rick used to come out the bus with a ukulele or a little acoustic and guitar and play. We'd sit open a fridge and drink some wine and sing songs. It was brilliant. And I said to Rick, where's Francis? He coming on the bus and he says, oh, that miserable bus now he's gone sleep. So we never saw Francis on that bus once.

**Nick Coffey** (00:52:09):

And of course you can't have known at the time. Timing is always so serendipitous. But that reunion happened obviously before Rick Puff's death and there must be a part of you that is glad that you got it in when you got it in.

**John Coghlan** (00:52:24):

Oh yeah. That's been mentioned loads of times and me and Julia spoke about that lots of times. And really it was great because you can imagine if it be a bit late and someone gets the phone call or no, what song just died, you'd be sing And no, it was great and it was so much fun. And to see the LA and play again, I must say all the Quo fans I've ever met in my life, we love you. They're fabulous and they've been so kind. And I remember someone telling me they were men in the balconies of Somewhere in Tears because it took them back to memories. The songs took them back to those days, whatever that was going on in those days. And so I still get to people contacting me and Jillie for my books, Spud, which is all my stories when I was with a band. But that's done well and they buy drumsticks and drum heads and pictures and it's great. And we go down to my local pub and someone wants to buy a book and he wants to come by. So we meet in the pub, hand it over, bite other a drink and have a lovely time. So met some lovely people. One come down from Livestock the other day to drive through our pub.

We could have posted it to him, but he said, no, I want to drive really, but way ho. But Quo fans are great

**Nick Coffe** (00:53:44):

And often for that reunion they were flying in quite literally from the other side of the world. When they'd come from Australia, they'd come from all over.

**John Coghlan** (00:53:51):

Yeah, I heard a story where family flew from Australia to catch the three or four shows Hammersmith. So you take into account buying the tickets, airfare, hotels. So they saw the three, was it three shows or four? I think it was three. And then flew back to Australia. Then we heard, but believe this flew back again to catch the last show in Dublin, and that's a true Quo fan

**Nick Coffe** (00:54:16):

That is dedication. Talking of the stories in your book, Spud, I'm guessing that a fair few of them come out in your evening with John Coghlan. So you are coming to The Stables twice Friday the 28th of August, which I'm already sensing is going to be a balmy late summer kind of vibe. Friday the 28th of August, an evening with John Coghlan and also Saturday the 6th of June. You are guesting with Quo Connection, two very different shows.

**John Coghlan** (00:54:42):

Yeah, that'd be great. I'm looking forward to both. And first we did an audience with some time ago, I'm in shock I think it was. And it was great. I really enjoyed it. And it was a guy called Dave, I've got his second name, Dave Sweetmore. And that was great. He was well organised, he was the host and that he really set at a screen, never showing pictures and videos and things. And I really enjoyed talking to the audience. It was really good fun. And also I still like playing with Quo Connection, so I'm looking forward to it. So

**Nick Coffe** (00:55:11):

The tickets for Quo Connection on the 6th of June with John Guesting are 24 pounds tickets for the evening on the 28th of August an evening with John Coghlan. Those tickets are 27 pound 50. All of those tickets are of course available@stables.org or you can call the box office on oh 1 9 0 8 2 8 0 800. That's oh 1 9 0 8 2 8 0 802 bites of the John Coghlan cherry at The Stables this year. A venue you've played before, isn't it?

**John Coghlan** (00:55:44):

Yeah, I played there many times. Yes, it love it.

**Nick Coffe** (00:55:47):

Well, we are looking forward to welcoming you there in June, August. John, I really appreciate your time and I'm going to say patience because something that perhaps listeners don't hear or even need to know about is my word. If we had a technical nightmare getting this interview up and running, I think we've tried every single platform

on the internet and probably changed internet providers about four times, but we have got there and I really appreciate your patience and Jilly's help in setting up. It's been really lovely to chat to you.

**John Coghlan** (00:56:14):

It's been a pleasure, mate. Thank you, Nick. It's been good fun. I enjoyed it. Thank you.

**Nick Coffey** (00:56:17):

Let's finish with Teddy Thompson, son of Richard and Linda Thompson. Teddy has built up an incredible back catalogue of music, which takes its inspiration from folk rock and much in between. His new album, Never Be the Same, comes out in May and he's come to The Stables on the 17th of June. He joins me now from his home across the Atlantic in New Jersey. Teddy, nice to have you on the podcast. Thank

**Teddy Thompson** (00:56:38):

You.

**Nick Coffey** (00:56:39):

Let's start with a departure, a new album. It's due out in a couple of months time, in the middle of May, very close to my birthday. There's an intriguing story that I read about the title of the album. Never be the Same. Am I right in saying that this is a phrase that came up a couple of times in songs and you hadn't even tweaked it and then you thought this might be a good album title?

**Teddy Thompson** (00:57:03):

Yeah, that's exactly right. I suppose it points to a real lack of self-awareness, but there is a moment when you make a record, or at least for me, where you try and figure out what the title is. Sometimes early on, many times there's one song that's really the obvious candidate and you're like, that is obviously the leader for the whole project, but other times not. And this was one of those not times. And so it came to the end of the record and I think I do tend to just kind of be swimming in the thing and not think too much about the big picture. So I don't really plan these things out. So yeah, I really was sort of end of the recording process and really listening to the songs and reading the lyrics as well, and trying to figure out what is I'm trying to say here and what the record is about. And I discovered that phrase is not just that phrase, that exact phrase is repeated in two different songs unconsciously, but it's also, there is a lot of that in the record. I suppose it might be a middle age thing. When you start realising that you are never going to be the same, you are never going to be young again. And you also start to realise that you can't stay the same because there's no other option but to change. And so that's what I came up with.

**Nick Coffey** (00:58:33):

And that speaks of what strikes me as a quite lovely tension in this new album because on the one hand you do speak about heartbreak and loss and longing, but then also the message that you are bringing out there and the message in the title is Change and

Grow and Don't Stay Stuck. So the record kind of sounds emotionally bruised but also not defeated.

**Teddy Thompson (00:58:55):**

Oh, good. That would've been a good title. Emotionally bruised, but not defeated. Not defeated. I wish I'd had you to help me. Yeah. Well, that's a pretty good description of life, especially in the middle section of it where I am, where it's like, yeah, you do feel quite bruised, but you have no choice but to continue. It is a sort of strange place to be. It's just we all get there eventually. And for me, it's certainly felt that way. You feel a bit like this isn't as great as I thought it was going to be. It's not as fun as it was because I'm not a kid anymore. But what choice but to continue and you can't really continue in exactly the same ways as you have when you were younger. So you have to change a bit. You have to grow a bit, which has got to hate that you hate change. They hate

**Nick Coffey (00:59:57):**

Growing. I hate change. My neurodiverse brain is actually, again, that's a bit of a paradox because my neurodiverse brain does hate change, but I do actually think I'm someone who is always growing, so maybe that is the same tension.

**Teddy Thompson (01:00:10):**

Yeah, I mean it's universal. There's no question about it. It's some version of this is with all of us.

**Nick Coffey (01:00:15):**

I guess. You mentioned sort of midlife, and it does feel a little bit like this is mid career clarity phase. This is not you announcing this record as a rebirth, but this is more of a refinement than a reinvention. Does that feel true?

**Teddy Thompson (01:00:33):**

Yeah, I mean, the other thing about making a record, any kind of project really, when this is what you do every few years as a musician, as an artist, is that there's always, there's a promotion, a sales aspect to it. So you're trying to disseminate your products and get out there. And of course, what people really want is some kind of story. That's just always the way. Every time you make a record, the people who help you sell it and put it out are like, well, okay, what's the story behind the record? And people do love a good story. There's nothing wrong with that, but not all of us can be. It can't always be that I was hooked on crystal meth and I had to go to rehab and I was living in a gutter, and then I got it all back together and wrote this album, or it can't be, I just stripped it all away and went down to Muscle Shoals and recorded where the Stones did.

**Teddy Thompson (01:01:35):**

And it just can't always be that overtly extreme and dynamic. I mean, so the truth of it is that most of us are just, as someone once said, inspiration is for amateurs. The rest of us just get up and go to work every morning referring to artists, because the truth is, most of the time it's just we do it like it's a job and we love it, and we try to just make a really good song. That's all I'm trying to do is record a really good song, do something

that I think is beautiful, and that's about it. And there isn't always some incredible grand story behind it because I'm just a normal human like everybody else. It's not complete insanity every day where, or upheaval every album. It's just life.

**Nick Coffey** (01:02:25):

Although it's not quite that easy. And you say everyone loves a good story, and I do agree with that, but also I think you feel that more than anything, everyone loves truth and they love authenticity, and that's something that you do. You always weave truth and authenticity into your music, and I think that's something that's quite hard to do. You make it sound a combination of easy and your day job, but actually that people can hear when a singer means it, even if he's not talking about that Hollywood breakdown in a gutter. It's still really important to know you mean it?

**Teddy Thompson** (01:03:01):

Yeah. I mean, yes, I want that. I hope people want it. I think that people, many of us are deprived of authenticity more and more. Every step we take to automate our arts means that there's less and less authenticity. I mean, the advent of people, of course AI is a big topic right now, but in the music business, we've been living with AI for about 25 years. It's called Auto-Tune, and it has been Creative Death. It's not good. It's inauthentic. It couldn't be more inauthentic. It's the human voice being manipulated into a robotic perfection. And that is true all the way down the line in the making of music and all arts. Now, it is possible to fake all of it, and to a certain extent, it has always been possible. There's always been from the early late fifties or something like somebody, some pop star who was on a TV show and somebody else was actually singing it.

**Teddy Thompson** (01:04:09):

That's been going on. But now it's really truly easy to be completely fake and just as a consumer, I rail against that. I want something that's real. I want to hear somebody actually singing. And it's quite hard to do. I mean, it's quite rare to find when somebody turns me on to a new band or a new artist or I hear a new song go by, I don't really even listen to the record. What I do is go and search for a live clip of this person singing the song to find out if they can sing, if they are singing, if they're authentic. It's as simple as that. I know there's a lot of other variables. If you are Rosalía or something and you're doing stadium tours, that girl can sing. But maybe she's using some backing tracks too. Probably. They all do. But yeah, I mean, the point is, I'm looking to see is this real, I guess is what it is. Is this real? Is this a real thing or is this just something somebody cooked up in a lab?

**Nick Coffey** (01:05:09):

I remember many years ago I was on BBC radio and I was doing the late night show, the sort of 10 to 1:00 AM and I said, I want to do a show with just live cuts of great tracks. Imagine were like, no, no. I said, trust me, listeners will love it. No. And in the end, I went against them as I did probably on more than one occasion, and I did three hours of Live Tracks. Listeners absolutely loved it. And I do think there's something wonderful in live recordings, and I do think that people love live recordings more perhaps than we realise.

**Teddy Thompson (01:05:43):**

Yeah, that's interesting. I hope so. I mean, I certainly do. And I would include in that umbrella sum of live recordings, kind of anything that was made before 1980 ish with the advent of a lot of synth stuff because essentially, and a lot of, well, actually mid seventies, a lot of multi-track recording, meaning that a lot of the records that I love were recorded live. There was no other options. And you know that, so it's real. If you hear an Aretha Franklin record, they all did that in the room at the same time. And it's, wow, it's the great, it's the pinnacle of musicianship to me. And so I do tend to fall back to those eras, I think essentially because yeah, it's, unquestionably real authentic.

**Nick Coffey (01:06:33):**

And that range is I think what really is the signature of your music because you cite Chuck Berry, Hank Williams, Everly Brothers, Ray, Charles, Stevie Wonder, you cite opera, you cite fifties rock and roll. This is Linda and Richard's son. Part of it is actually irrelevant because of the sheer breadth of your music and how that ties into both your background and the music that you create every couple of years.

**Teddy Thompson (01:07:02):**

Yeah, I mean, I think, well, a couple of things I, I think I have my parents to thank actually really mostly my mom who was the one I was growing up with and living with just for exposing me to all that music. I mean, I'm not trying to be clever. I know about as much about opera as the next person, the next person. Yeah, I am no expert, but did I love being taken? Was I wowed by it? Oh my God, yes. Just the expanding of the horizons is all it is. And being exposed to different types of music and being delivered a Catholic taste in music, which I'm so grateful for because it's just being able to hear and experience different things is obviously very good for any kind of artist. Very good for anyone really. Yeah. And so I'm grateful for them, and I have, I certainly am influenced by them too, but not as much as, frankly, American Pop music was more my bag, but they were the ones that played American pop music in the house. Where do you think I heard the Everly Brothers from? It was 1984 in London. Nobody was, I wasn't hearing it on top of the pop, so I was hearing it in the car with my mom. So thanks b,

**Nick Coffey (01:08:23):**

I am grateful to the person who took me to my first opera probably 25, 28 years ago, and simply said to me, just listen, it's a pop song. And those words have stayed me. And I also, I am not an opera expert, but I love going to the opera. I go there with that same phrase in my head, listen for the hook. It may be a hundred years old and it may be being sung differently, and it may involve lots of exaggerated movements. And as long as you know that it is involving heartbreak or death or murder, you are fine. Listen for the hook. And that's what transcends all musical genres.

**Teddy Thompson (01:08:58):**

Yeah, very good. I mean, that was almost exactly my opera experience. My first, or my mom took me to Turandot, which is possibly the hookiest opera of all time. I mean, there's a refrain that goes through that, which could be from any pop song. And it

repeats all the way through in all different parts of the music. And it was so accessible, and it was so exciting when it came back in different forms. And at 12 years old, you recognise it and it gives you chills and it's just so big and exciting. And yeah, just oil gas, man,

**Nick Coffey** (01:09:35):

This leaves me an ethical choice because either I can ask you to sing an extract from tour or I can play a track off the album. Do you know what? Because I didn't warn you of it. I do feel I should at least play a track off the album and not get you tossing opera. What should we play at this point?

**Teddy Thompson** (01:09:48):

Let's hear the single that's out currently, which is, so this is heartache,

**Nick Coffey** (01:14:12):

So this is hard. Take Teddy Thompson from Never Be the Same, which is out in around a month from now. Teddy, there's something that really strikes me, and that is that I've now met, you had the chance to speak to you. You, you've got a lovely way, you've got a lovely sense of humour. You're quite self-deprecating. Your songs can be quite melancholy, I think it is fair to say, but you are not in any way Poe face. And that kind of dry humour around songs is I think quite an interesting way of balancing the mood.

**Teddy Thompson** (01:14:46):

Yes, I'm okay. Yeah, I dunno. I mean, it can get you into, well, it doesn't get me into trouble, but it is a bit of, I've always felt a bit of a disconnect between the way that I sound and the way that I am actually, and maybe I think it's really just being English, but really singing American, if you will. I feel like that's just what happened. It wasn't really that intentional. That's the music that I loved. And so when I opened my voice to sing, I was imitating Americans and it stuck that way. And then of course, once you hear the stones and things like that, you think, oh, it's okay. I'm allowed to do that. Good, fine. But there is obviously the humour thing and the disposition. I'm obviously very English and I do have the sarcasm and the irony, and you can't really put that across that well, or I haven't been able to put that across that successfully in music. I've kind of tried a bit here and there, and I don't think it's really worked that well. People don't really catch on, or maybe it's just because I'm not singing it with the right voice.

**Nick Coffey** (01:16:00):

You've maintained your British accent. You've been over in Brooklyn for I think over 25 years. I was expecting you to have a little bit of a transatlantic twang, and I don't want to get too political, but I'm going to ask you a societal question that is that I'm guessing part of the reason you went to America was because of the freedom, the creative freedom, the cultural freedom that it would afford you. And I do wonder whether recent years have led you to question that at all.

**Teddy Thompson** (01:16:28):

Yeah, A big part of the Draw of America for so long has been what drew me, which is, yes, really the ability to reinvent is what I was so attracted to apart from the cultural music and culture and the history and all that stuff that I loved. It was the ability to move to this new place and just say, this is who I am. And people used to do it by just literally changing their name and saying, no, I'm John Smith now, and I run an oil company. And I did it by just saying, no, I'm Teddy and I'm a musician because I felt that it would just give me this. I could just say it, and that's who I am. People don't question you, whereas when it's England and that's where you're from, and I felt like it was a bit harder for me to create that identity.

**Teddy Thompson (01:17:25):**

And as Bob Dylan said the other day when I was watching some, literally yesterday, he was like, man, life is not about finding yourself, it's about creating yourself. Yeah, that's very true. So I wanted to create myself and just be able to say that I'm an artist, I'm a singer. And that was something that was, and America did feel very open and hopeful and a place where you could do that and where things were also very affordable and just big. And here's a big car and here's a big apartment, it's cheap. Here's a \$2 sandwich, and here's a day job where you can cover your rent. And it was all very exciting. And then now not so much. America has really lost a lot of what made it great, and I guess the hope is that it's redeemable, but I dunno,

**Nick Coffey (01:18:24):**

Would you come back?

**Teddy Thompson (01:18:26):**

I would come back, except since I've been gone, England has become unaffordable. No, I think I would. But it was a bit of a sticker shock when I was considering moving back after the pandemic. And then I went to look at some flats in London and was rocked on my heels.

**Nick Coffey (01:18:47):**

Abort, mission abort

**Teddy Thompson (01:18:49):**

Ab. Yeah. Can't afford it. I'm Englishman who can't afford to live in England.

**Nick Coffey (01:18:54):**

You are coming back to the uk leave for your tour Wednesday the 17th of June. You'll be swinging by The Stables at eight o'clock. Tickets are 27 pounds. 50, yeah, 27 pound, 50 some left. If you want to get them, go to [stables.org](https://www.stables.org). The box office number is oh 1 9 0 8 2 8 0 800. So [stables.org](https://www.stables.org) and oh 1 9 0 8 2 8 0 800 17th of June. That's a Wednesday. [stables.org](https://www.stables.org) for tickets. Teddy, what can we expect?

**Teddy Thompson (01:19:25):**

Don't expect too much. Don't go in expecting. Just go in hoping. How can we hope? And feeling grateful. This expectation only leads to disappointment. So I would say you can

hope for some good singing and some good playing. And gosh, what is it? I mean, I guess I will strive to be truthful and authentic. That's why I have to offer, I mean, that's the upside of the way the music business has gone now. There's so much we can't compete with the kids and the fakery and all the tricks, but they can't compete with us that can actually play and sing. So we just double down on that. We try to be real.

**Nick Coffey** (01:20:10):

Teddy, it's been a lovely chat to you. We look forward to having you over in this neck of the woods.

**Teddy Thompson** (01:20:15):

Thanks.

**Nick Coffey** (01:20:16):

Thanks to Teddy John and Sarah Jane for an episode Rich in Stories, song, craft and Soul. These are just three, or in fact, four of the great gigs coming to The Stables this year. Find out more@stables.org. Feel free to join our mailing list to be updated with all the latest news. Enjoy what's left of your Easter holiday and we'll speak to you again in.