

Did you have any music posters on your bedroom wall as a kid?

I had the poster that came with the *More Specials* album and one that came with the *Shoplifters Of The World Unite* record, but I also used to have loads of soundtrack posters – John Carpenter’s *Prince Of Darkness* came with a free poster, too.



What’s the first pop song you remember loving?

Matchstalk Men And Matchstalk Cats And Dogs by Brian And Michael. I remember really hoping that Kate Bush wouldn’t get to No.1 with *Wuthering Heights*, because I really wanted *Matchstalk Men And Matchstalk Cats And Dogs* to stay there. Then about a year later, I became obsessed with 2 Tone, that was my first real love in music.

Do you have an all-time favourite album?

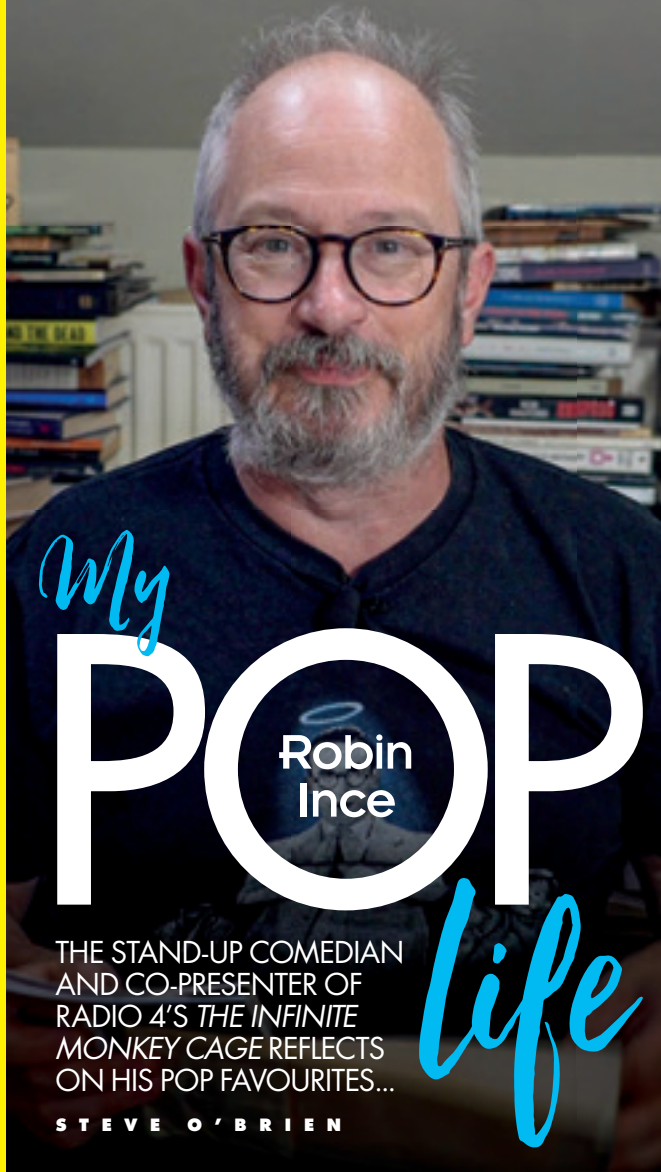
An album I’ve just been relistening to and is a favourite today is *She’s So Unusual*. I’ve always adored Cyndi Lauper. That would have had a lot of plays back in the day, and so did all of The Specials’ albums, especially *More Specials*. Also *The Queen Is Dead*, that’d be quite high up there.

Were you out and proud about your love of Cyndi Lauper at the time?

I think I was, even when I was getting into the inky papers. Tuesday night, you could normally pick up the *NME* in London, and then Wednesday, I’d probably get the *Melody Maker*. On a Friday, if I had any money left, I’d go and get *Sounds* as well. I got into the miserable overcoat bands around that time, but I don’t think I was ever that embarrassed about Cyndi Lauper.

Do you have any pop guilty pleasures?

I was probably guilty of loving Meatloaf’s *Bat Out Of Hell* at one point. I also used to buy



anything that was in any way connected to comedy, so for instance I did have the Meatloaf album that has *Blind Before I Stop* on it, the reason being was that he sang that one when he was on Channel Four’s *Saturday Live* and where he appeared in a sketch with Stephen Fry. I’m a very obsessive person so if somebody’s got a connection, I’ll be like, “Okay, now I’ve got to buy a few



by them.” But I’ve got to say I’ve not listened to *Blind Before I Stop* for a good 35 years.

Are there any artists you’re completist about?

I still buy everything Nick Cave and PJ Harvey release, and Public Service Broadcasting and British Sea Power [now Sea Power] as well. Also The Four Tops, there are few greater sounds than the ‘huhhrrr!’ that comes in at the beginning of *Reach Out I’ll Be There*. And, of course, there’s their connection to *Little Shop Of Horrors*



Duran Duran perform at the Kennedy Space Centre in Cape Canaveral, 2019

[the group’s Levi Stubbs voiced Audrey, the alien plant in the 1986 musical comedy] – there’s always a comedy connection!

Have you ever met any of your musical heroes?

Robert Smith was in no way a disappointing human being. I’ve never really lost that fan thing – I’ve never been afraid to express my love for the stuff that shaped and made me. So when I found out that Robert Smith had read one of my books and enjoyed it, I was like, “That’s Robert Smith! He lives in another world!”

Did you try to cultivate a friendship with him?

I think you’re on a hiding to nothing if you do that. Sometimes you’ll meet someone that you’re a huge fan of and they know less about their work than you do. I remember once with Eric Idle, we were having a discussion about something that was on the *Monty Python And The Holy Grail* album, and he said, “No, it’s not on that, it’s on the *Life Of Brian* album”, and I wasn’t going to argue, cos what have I got to gain?

What’s the best gig you’ve ever been to?

I saw Echo & The Bunnymen a few months ago at the Albert Hall doing *Ocean Rain* with an orchestra – that was great. But an interesting gig was seeing Duran Duran at Cape Canaveral. We were there doing an episode of *The Infinite Monkey Cage* to celebrate 50 years of humans landing on the moon, and that evening, in an environment surrounded by so many pieces of engineering for the Apollo Mission, Duran did an outside gig in a very small field. It was fun seeing Duran Duran do predominantly a set of space songs and watching Simon Le Bon realise that he’d started doing a cover version of The Police’s *Walking On The Moon*, and a note that was far too high. The rest of the band were looking at each other and going, “Simon, I don’t think there’s a way out of that...!” ■

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“Robert Smith was in no way a disappointing human being,” says Ince

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