

Did you have any music posters on your wall growing up?

Of course. Mostly the kind you'd get free with magazines, though sometimes it might be the artwork that came with albums. It was a golden era, so there'd be pictures of David Bowie, Mott The Hoople, T. Rex, Alice Cooper...

What's the first pop song you remember loving?

Puff The Magic Dragon by Peter, Paul And Mary. Don't judge me.



Do you have a favourite album?

It's probably an age thing, but these days I seem to have a different one each week which I'll play, even via an app, in order and all the way through. Right now it's *Hejira* by Joni Mitchell.

What about your favourite 80s album?

My wife and I first played Kate Bush's *Hounds Of Love* over and over on cassette while in the hills of Nepal in 1985. It amazed us then and still does now. And I'll bet there's a fair number of players and producers in their 30s and 40s who as children would listen to that second side on headphones in bed.

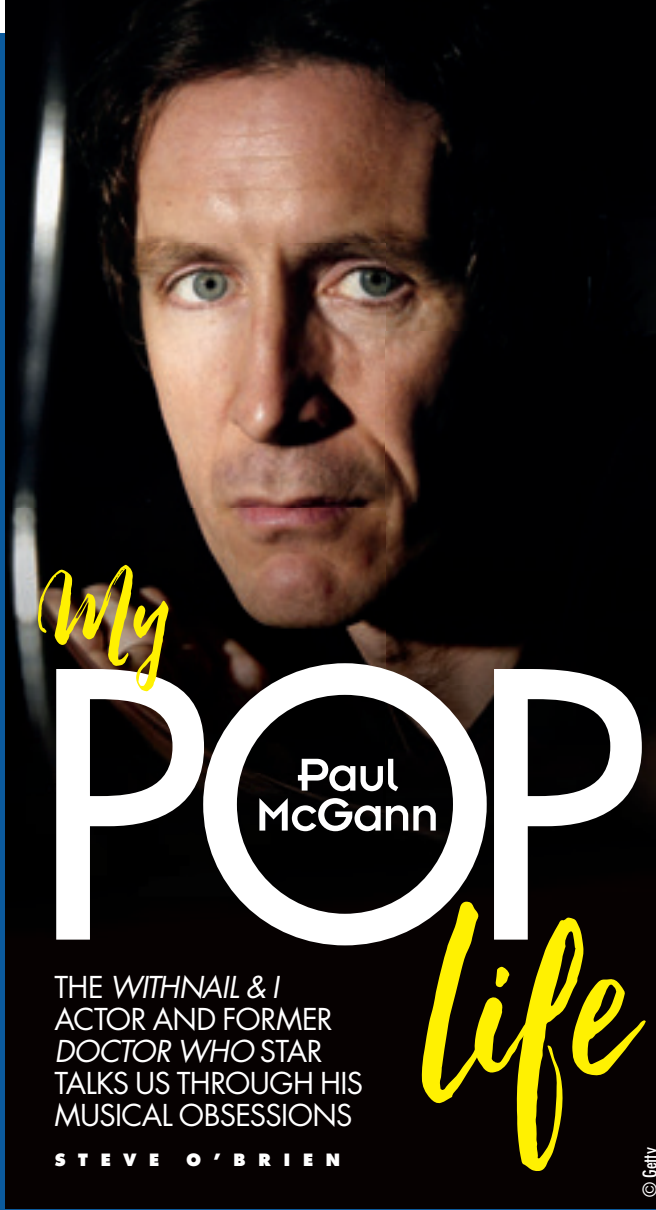
Are there any bands or artists that you're a completist about?

Not really, as it would mean my having to love live, or worse, bootlegged live recordings. With a few exceptions, I just can't.

Have you ever met any of your musical heroes?

Quite a few, and I'm glad to say none has ever disappointed. If I could turn back the clock and change one occasion it would be the night I met George Harrison at a party and he asked me to get up

"I MET GEORGE HARRISON AT A PARTY AND HE ASKED ME TO GET UP AND SING WITH HIM AND HIS MATES AND I BOTTLED OUT. WHAT A FOOL."



THE WITHNAIL & I
ACTOR AND FORMER
DOCTOR WHO STAR
TALKS US THROUGH HIS
MUSICAL OBSESSIONS

STEVE O'BRIEN

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JONI MITCHELL: HEJIRA

first of countless gigs that I'd see in my life but perhaps the most unforgettable. We've been remembering it again while mourning Ritchie's death recently, aged 73.

If there was anyone, alive or dead, you could see play live, who would it be?

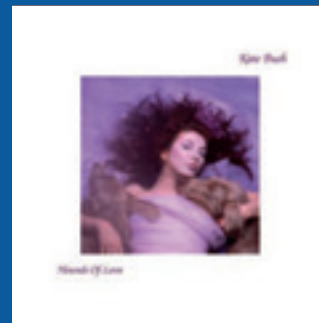
Prince. I still can't believe I never did despite all the

Not only did Paul miss out on the chance to sing with a Beatle, he never got to witness a Prince live show - "I always thought there'd be another [chance], when suddenly there wasn't."

and sing with him and his mates and I bottled out. What a fool.

What's your favourite gig that you've been to?

Sometime in 1966, I was taken as a child by my mum to a packed Empire Theatre in Liverpool to see a revue headlined by Ben E. King which included The Cryin' Shames, a group my then teenage cousin Ritchie Routledge played guitar with. It was the



opportunities I had. I suppose I always thought there'd be another one, when suddenly there wasn't. Also Billie Holiday. That'd be me with my breath having stopped, like the audience in that Frank O'Hara poem about her.

Did you ever buy the music press when you were younger? If so, what was your favourite read?

I can't remember actually buying it but I had an older brother who did, so it would appear in the house and I'd read it. *NME*, *Sounds* and the like. At the time it seemed important, like the music itself. Now even the very idea seems quaint.

As regards listening to music, are you a vinyl hound or a Spotify-head?

It's the best of both worlds. Our basement at home is full of vinyl, most of which our son uses to do shows, along with some turntables he rehearses on. Elsewhere in the house it's bluetooth speakers. I'll sometimes lie for more than an hour in the bath (I know) listening to music. It used to be Spotify until I discovered Tidal. ■



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