



**What was the album that changed your life?**

There are two – *Parklife* and *Definitely Maybe*. I was given Blur for Christmas 1994 and Oasis on my 12th birthday in 1995. They transformed me from just being interested in the Top 40 to feeling that I had an identity attached to these bands. I found the whole confected rivalry thing quite weird because bands aren't a binary choice. They weren't different things, they were essentially for the same people. If you like Blur, how could you not like Oasis and vice versa?

**What was the first band or artist you were truly passionate about?**

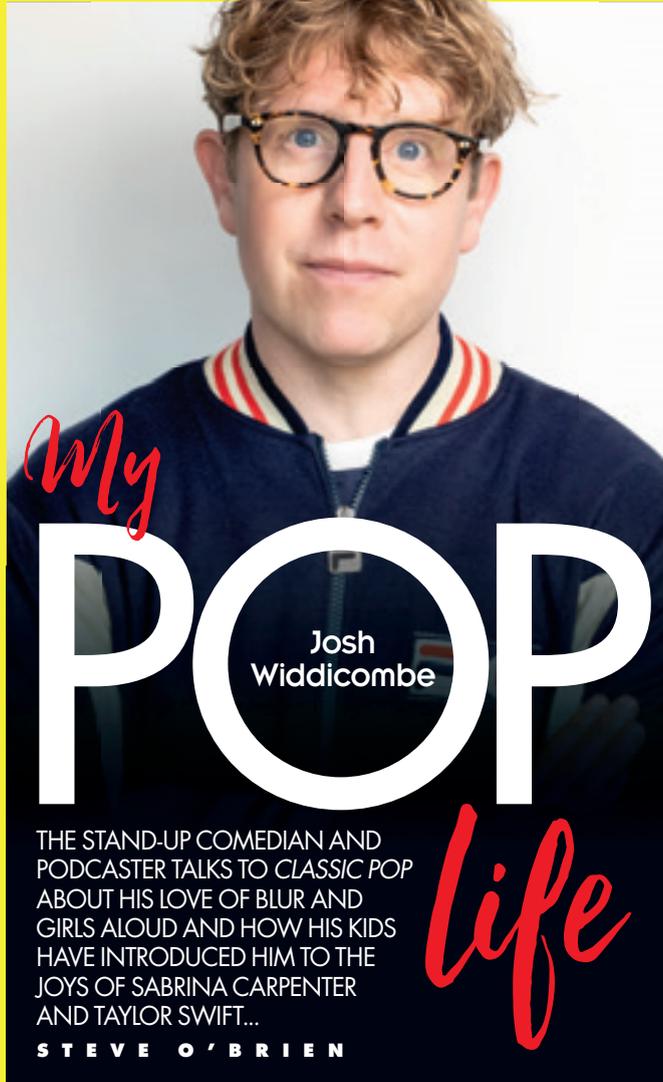
I was obsessive about The Rolling Stones – they were my first ever gig at Wembley in 1990. And I had a brief period where I was into Dire Straits. *Brothers In Arms* would still be an incredibly nostalgic thing to hear.

**Do you have any guilty pleasures, music-wise?**

I cared deeply about whether someone could play their instruments as a teenager, as if it fucking mattered! Back then I'd have spent hours telling you why Gomez are better than the Spice Girls. Well, here's an idea – they're not! I've embraced that pop is great and shouldn't be seen as a lower form of music. Part of that is having kids. I think the best album I've heard in decades is *Short n' Sweet* by Sabrina Carpenter.

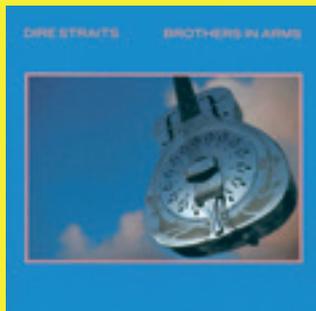
**You chose Blur as your specialist subject on *Celebrity Mastermind*, didn't you. What's your favourite Blur album?**

I did – I got 11 out of 13. I think *Modern Life Is Rubbish* is my favourite, though *Parklife* is probably the best one... but the overplaying of its lead singles means that I could probably go through my life without hearing *Parklife* or *Girls And Boys* again. It's just great to be into a band that much, because it's about more than just the songs, isn't it,



THE STAND-UP COMEDIAN AND PODCASTER TALKS TO CLASSIC POP ABOUT HIS LOVE OF BLUR AND GIRLS ALOUD AND HOW HIS KIDS HAVE INTRODUCED HIM TO THE JOYS OF SABRINA CARPENTER AND TAYLOR SWIFT...

STEVE O'BRIEN



it's about the stories and the people. How they found each other, and if they hadn't, what would have happened?

**Have you met any of your musical heroes?**

I've met all of Blur on a number of occasions. I don't love it initially, because you instantly think, "What have I got to say here?" I met Mick Jagger at a



*Short n' Sweet* by Sabrina Carpenter has impressed Josh recently



cricket match once. He turned up with his security guard, and I asked if I could have a selfie with him, and he was like yeah, fine. I said, "Oh, I watched you at Wembley in 1990," and he was like, "Oh yeah, I remember that one" and I thought, "Ah, I don't think you do!" He gave an excellent spiel.

**What have you been listening to recently?**

I really like that Geese album that came out last September [*Getting Killed*]. I've enjoyed *Man's Best Friend* by Sabrina Carpenter and Charli xcx's single with John Cale [*House*] was incredible. I really like M(h)ao!, which is an angular indie album, but one of the best singles I've heard recently is *Where Is My Husband!* by Raye.

**Have your kids got you into more modern pop?**

Definitely. I liked a lot of 80s and 90s pop – I'd also argue that Girls Aloud are probably the best singles band of the 21st Century. But if it wasn't for my kids I probably wouldn't know who Sabrina Carpenter was, I probably wouldn't know any Taylor Swift songs except *Shake It Off*, and I probably wouldn't know Olivia Rodrigo. We went to see the Eras tour and we've seen Dua Lipa and Sabrina. It's amazing to get to share that experience with your kid. They're like no gigs I used to go to – they're proper shows. You don't get that when you go and watch Yard Act.

**Have you tried to get your kids into Blur or Oasis?**

They wouldn't be interested. I don't think you should impose your tastes on your kids; you should try to understand theirs. ■

● Josh Widdicombe's *Museum Of Pop Culture* podcast is available now, and his *Not My Cup Of Tea* tour continues until September. Visit [joshwiddicombe.com](http://joshwiddicombe.com) for further information.