

TOM BROMLEY
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Track Two

Vienna

My own musical journey begins in a way that couldn't be less rock and roll if it tried. I'd love to tell you a story about how I used to gurgle along to 'Life on Mars?' and 'Virginia Plain' in my pram, how my first words were 'dirty fucker' after watching the Pistols with Bill Grundy, and how my parents once caught me attempting to put my nappy pin through my nose in homage to Sid Vicious. That, though, would be a figment of my imagination – or, as Imagination the band might have put it, futuristic funk gladiator garb and all, just an illusion.¹

Instead, let's set the dial on the literary DeLorean back to 1980 and show you what is – as a singer with rolled-up jacket sleeves might croon – true. We're in York. Not cool and happening New York, with CBGBs and Studio 54, but old York, the original one, whose equivalent was the back

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room of the Spotted Cow and the sticky-floor experience of Ziggy's nightclub. Not that I was old enough to know what these sort of places were; I was seven years old and the only thing that I knew about pubs was gleaned from the sarcastic comments my mother made when my father came back from one on a Friday after a 'swift' half of Double Diamond.

It is a Sunday evening, about twenty past six, and (I am ashamed to say, even now) I am already bathed and in my blue-check pyjamas and dressing gown ready for bed. It is pathetically early, I know, but as a parent myself I can now appreciate that, having entertained, refereed and riot-controlled small children all weekend, getting the little buggers off to bed at the earliest possible opportunity is essential for your sanity. I might have made a bit more of a fuss about it but, fortunately for my parents, they had an ally in helping keep me sweet.

Sunday evening in our house always followed the same routine. Mum would bath the children while Dad mopped the kitchen floor. Having sluiced it down, he'd then lay pages of the *Guardian* as soggy stepping stones for us to walk around on – cheery articles about rising unemployment and Russian tanks rolling into Afghanistan. Then he'd retire with the rest of the family to the sitting room, seduced by Gordon Giltrap's Spanglishy theme tune to the *Holiday* programme, where Cliff Michelmores and his team would warm up winter evenings with reports of summer cruises and Mediterranean adventures (not, for all the drooling, that we ever went on such holidays; we always ended up in Swanage instead).

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I didn't join my family round the fire (and we did have a fire in those days – a proper one with a coal shed in the garage and everything). Instead, I remained in exile in the cold of the kitchen. I'd then fix myself a drink. Not *that* sort of drink: the only alcohol in the house was a half-bottle or two of sickly sweet Liebfrau anyway, but of course there was none of that for me – just straight *milch*, in the days before Bob Geldof had made a 'lotta bottle' sort of cool with his hilarious 'You're . . .? Yeah, shattered . . .' adverts.

But, for all my almost aching unhip-ness, there was one glint of cool to add to proceedings. For in this middle-class kitchen, sipping milk in my pyjamas, there was, in the corner, a radio. It was an old Roberts radio, the original sort with a grill on the front and two chunky knobs on the top, one for the volume and one for tuning. My dad had, as with so many gadgets in the house, got his blue masking tape out; in this instance, small triangles of the stuff denoted where certain stations could be found on the dial. However, there wasn't much twiddling to be done as the radio was pretty much permanently set to 88-91, on what these days we'd call FM but back then went under the name VHF.

That frequency, as today, is the home of Radio Two. But that's not what I was listening to. Because, for three hours a week, this VHF stereo setting was handed over to Radio Two's younger, brasher (and, in the case of several DJs, hairier) sibling. Usually Radio One crackled away on medium wave at 1053/1089 KHz (or 275/285m), but for those few Sunday-evening hours it could be heard on the Radio Two FM frequency. Up and down

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the country ('England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales . . . the United Kingdom!' as one jingle helpfully and inaccurately reminded) there were people like me – six to seven million of us, in fact – huddled round our radios, listening excitedly as the 'sensational' tones of Tony Blackburn counted down over the backdrop of 'Rockall' by Mezzoforte. And I'd make a careful note that 'Feels Like I'm in Love' by Kelly Marie was a 'climber', that it had gone up two huge Top 40 places from last week's Number 3 to be this week's brand-new (cue jingle) 'Number 1!'

The singles chart in the UK began back in November 1952, bang in the middle of that sixteen-month period between the death of George VI and the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. It was set up by the *New Musical Express*, who, in a move the about-to-be conceived Peter Mandelson would have been proud of, had just rebranded itself, junking its original title of *Musical Express and Accordion Weekly*. Accordions, after all, are just so 1940s it's not true. In the days of shillings and half-crowns there was nothing quite so decimal as a Top 10. Instead, the original 'Record Hit Parade' comprised a Top 12.²

By the time I was listening, in the early 1980s, the Top 12 had become the Top 40; and instead of ringing round a dozen or so shops on a Monday morning the British Market Research Bureau (BMRB) electronically collated the sales from 250 stores (randomly chosen from 6000 across the country). It's easy to overlook but the charts were, essentially, sales charts. And not just sales charts but sales charts

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of singles – singles that were then primarily a promotional tool used by record companies to shift albums. And not even just a sales chart of a promotional tool, but one created by the *NME* with the express purpose of selling more copies of their magazine. In terms of capitalism it doesn't really get much more unfettered.

Yet at the time the charts never came across as grubby like that. Instead they felt exciting, and fresh, and like something you needed to know about. The *NME*'s original idea had taken a creative activity – making music – and turned it into a competition that, for those golden years, captured the young imagination. A single is a cultural entity in exactly the same way that a novel or a film is, yet bestseller lists or box-office Top 10s have never taken the nation in the same way. The fact that the singles charts were known simply as 'the charts' said everything about their significance. No explanation as to which charts they were was necessary: they were *the* charts.

These days the music charts have gone the same way as all these other bestseller lists. When was the last time that you listened to the Top 40? Do you even know what's Number 1 right now? I have to confess, I usually don't know either.³ Back in 1980, not knowing what was in the charts would have been unimaginable to my seven-year-old self. That early evening ritual was my own form of Sunday service. I'd sit there each week and religiously write the charts down in a notebook I kept for such important information. In the early eighties the Top 40 was hosted by a bit of a revolving door of presenters; but, whether it was Tony Blackburn,

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Tommy Vance or Simon Bates, it seemed the charts required a DJ with a deep voice who could inject proceedings with the requisite mixture of excitement and dignity. Later in the eighties the show was handed over to the likes of Mark Goodier and Bruno Brookes, and that seemed to sum up the era's more frivolous nature.

I didn't really know why the charts were important. I just knew that they were. Before I grew to begin to appreciate music properly I learnt to love the charts, and I was far from unique in that. Most men, and particularly most young boys, have an autistic streak to them that given half a chance will come to the fore. Sitting there in the kitchen, writing out the charts in my notebook, is symptomatic of that. I remember well the late-night conversation at university, years later, when I discovered that several of my friends had done exactly the same thing – one, I jealously noted, had even used different-coloured pens for songs that went up and down (why hadn't I thought of that?). In terms of my being a young boy growing up, then, my behaviour was both a bit odd and perfectly normal at the same time.

What was equally odd (and equally normal) was the way I would imbue these chart placings and positions with a relevance and meaning that, I can happily admit now, didn't really exist. Back then, if a song didn't get to Number 1 it was because it didn't *deserve* to get to Number 1. A straight-in-at-Number-1 entry was such a rarity it was to be relished and admired when it occurred. I would devour chart facts – facts like how David Bowie's 'Loving the Alien', released at the same time as Paul Hardcastle's

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'19', became a non-mover . . . at Number 19! Man, that freaked me out. Or how the Tourists' version of 'I Only Wanna Be with You', which featured in that first eighties Top 10, peaked at Number 4 – *exactly* the same number as Dusty Springfield's original *and* the Bay City Rollers' cover! Whoa. I had to sit down as I took that in. For years I had a party trick of being able to say exactly which position a song in the eighties had reached: *DeBarge? 'Rhythm of the Night'? Number 4, 1985 . . .* (I'm ashamed to say I did that one from memory.) It's been suggested that this might be a sign of an eidetic memory, though I've generally heard it described in rather ruder terms – usually when I've used it to win a bet in the pub.

As well as building my collection of handwritten Top 40 rundowns I saved up and spent most of my pocket money on singles. In 1980 these still cost just under a pound, at a child-friendly price of 99p (an album, by contrast, would set you back £4.69). I was far from alone in my buying habits – during the early eighties the British bought just under eighty million singles a year, making the country the second-highest market of seven inches in the world (first was the United States: in 1981 the US accounted for one third of all records sold). This was a golden era that wasn't to last: from 1985 onwards British singles sales started to slide and by the end of the decade were back to middling mid-seventies levels. A decade later this was down to the low forty-million mark; by 2010 the number of physical singles sold in the UK was just two million.

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The early additions to my record collection were not exactly marked out by their quality. The first record I ever bought – and I must stress I was five at the time – was ‘Pretty Little Angel Eyes’ by Showaddywaddy. No, I’m not really sure why either. I do remember watching them on *Top of the Pops*, mistaking their Teddy Boy suits for pyjamas and thinking that this was somehow subversive (it wasn’t) and hilarious (it also wasn’t). I then bought – and you do have permission to kick me at this point – ‘Hot Shot’ by Cliff Richard, his rubbishy rock-and-roll follow-up to his guilty-pleasure classic ‘We Don’t Talk Anymore’. I’m also the (less than) proud owner of ‘Ain’t No Pleasing You’ by Chas and Dave, ‘My Camera Never Lies’ by Bucks Fizz and ‘This Time (We’ll Get It Right)’ by the England World Cup Squad. None of these singles are even the worst in my collection, a (dis)honour that goes to my ownership of Paul McCartney and the Frog Chorus’ ‘We All Stand Together’. I got that as a birthday present without actually asking for it, so really it’s there only by default.

A ray of light among these early embarrassments is Adam Ant’s ‘Stand and Deliver’. There were other big stars at the start of the eighties who I liked – Madness for their sense of fun and wacky videos, the Welsh Elvis that was Shakin’ Stevens – but Adam Ant was by far the most colourful and charismatic. Ant’s journey to pop stardom had been an unusual one. His first brush with music fame had been via his mother, who in the mid-1960s had been Paul McCartney’s cleaner. Adam – or Stuart Goddard, as he was then – would go with her, gaze in amazement at the

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Pop Art style and Höfner bass leaning against the wall, and take McCartney's sheepdog Martha for a walk (the Martha in the Beatles' 'Martha My Dear'). Goddard's own musical taste began with a love of soul, Tamla Motown, Al Green and Freda Payne's 'Band of Gold' (which he listened to, poor Mrs Goddard, 'over a hundred times' in 1970).

From here, Goddard sang in a succession of seventies bands, my favourite being the B-Sides, so called because they 'only played the B-sides of singles that hadn't been a hit'. In November 1975 Goddard watched a new group playing their first ever gig at St Martin's Art School: the Sex Pistols. It was watching them play that gave Goddard the idea to become Adam Ant, a name whose wordplay I have to confess escaped me for years. It's a name, too, that feels more sixties than seventies to me; a little bit Beatles, perhaps? Certainly, it chimed with what Adam Ant ultimately was – an old-fashioned entertainer but with an eighties twist.

Adam and his band, now christened the Ants, became a cult success, without ever threatening to break through – a fact probably not helped by the decision to turn down a £100,000 record contract from Polydor in the expectation that they'd come back with a bigger one (they instead withdrew the offer). Adam then turned to Malcolm McLaren, the mastermind behind the Sex Pistols, and paid him £1000 to act as a sort of consultant for the band, offering his ideas as to the music they should be playing and the fashion they should be following. What followed was a melting pot of ideas: Adam was reading books on American Indians

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and African tribes, and picking up fashion ideas from them; Malcolm McLaren's partner, Vivienne Westwood, was looking at eighteenth-century fashions, which led to McLaren becoming convinced that the pirate look was the next big thing. There are differing views on who came up with imitating the 'Burundi Beat', a drum-heavy African tribal music: maybe McLaren heard it during his time spent in Paris; maybe Adam had been listening to 'The Jungle Line' on Joni Mitchell's 1975 album *The Hissing of Summer Lawns*, which also used these rhythms. What is beyond dispute was that something distinct had been created, and that McLaren promptly persuaded the rest of the Ants to ditch Adam and use the sound for a new band under his stewardship (this became Bow Wow Wow).

Adam, meanwhile, hired himself a new colony of Ants. It was this distinctive double-drum sound – part African, part glam rock – that was soon thumping its way out of transistor radios everywhere: 'Dog Eat Dog', 'Antmusic' and 'Kings of the Wild Frontier' were Top 5 hits, 'Stand and Deliver' and 'Prince Charming' both Number 1s, all in less than a year. Adam's look was equally as striking: part Apache, part gypsy warrior, he wore Morris Dancer-like knee bells, David Hemmings's jacket from the film *The Charge of the Light Brigade* and painted his trademark white stripe across the face.

Looking back on Adam now, I'm reminded in a strange way of two of the biggest comic turns of the decade. The first of these is Blackadder – the Richard Curtis/Ben Elton character followed Adam Ant, of course, but there's a

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similarly playful sense of romping through history: here's the 'dandy highwayman' in 'Stand and Deliver'; here, in a suit of armour borrowed from the film *Excalibur*, is the Arthurian knight for the (not really very good) 'Ant Rap'. Adam's success also echoes that of comedian Kenny Everett. By which I mean that Adam Ant was a one-off, a standalone star rather than part of a bigger trend. In the same way that Everett's programmes were primetime (just about) family entertainment, so Adam Ant's act was equally all in the best possible taste. There's no doubt that there was a pinch of pantomime to Adam Ant: how could there not be, with songs like 'Prince Charming' and 'Puss in Boots'? When the band was invited to perform at the Royal Variety Performance there was Adam in the line-up next to Lulu, bowing to the Queen in his black tie. There, too, was Adam on *The Cannon and Ball Show*, 'because it had seventeen million viewers'.

All of which was part of the reason that I liked Adam: his act was child-friendly enough to appeal to pre-teen types like me. Yet, at the same time, even he sounded a bit frustrated by the squeaky-clean image: 'I'm sick and tired of being told that because I don't drink and smoke I'm a goody-two-shoes,' he told Paul Morley in an interview for the *NME* – a comment he promptly adapted to write 'Goody Two Shoes', his third Number 1. Adam might have avoided the drugs and the booze, but he more than made up for that in the shagging department: 'sex was available every few feet' was how he described the girls he encountered on tour. Among Ant's many conquests were a young

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Amanda Donohoe, future Cherie Blair guru Carole Caplin, Jamie Lee Curtis, Vanity from Prince's girl group Vanity 6 (who, if Prince had had his way, would have had the stage name of Vagina), and Heather Graham – all of whom, with the exception of Caplin, I would also go on to enjoy relationships with later in the decade. Though admittedly in a slightly more one-sided manner.

One of the incongruities of the charts is how they can throw together random battles between the unlikeliest of artists. In 2005, Coldplay's 'Speed of Sound', failed to become the band's expected first Number 1 when it was beaten by a tuneless, ringtone-ribbeting amphibian called Crazy Frog. A similar chart battle was played out in the spring of 1981. In the credible Coldplay corner of things were Ultravox. Ultravox – or Ultravox! as they were originally called – had been actually been around since the mid-1970s without ever particularly 'troubling the Forty'. By 1980 they'd dropped the exclamation mark and swapped original lead singer John Foxx for Midge Ure. Unlike the rest of the band, Midge knew what chart success was like, having enjoyed hits with his previous bands Slik and the Rich Kids.

Midge ('Mij') is Jim said backwards, by the way. Jim/Midge was given the name in an earlier band, when it was decided that having two Jims in the same outfit was just going to be *too* confusing for all concerned. Midge wasn't just a name but also a metaphor for a man buzzing the eighties from all directions: other accolades included playing guitar for Thin Lizzy on their American tour, having a

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hand in Steve Strange's Visage (the band, not literally palming the poor man's face), and co-writing 'Yellow Pearl', the Phil Lynott song that was the *Top of the Pops* theme tune in the early 1980s (the one with the flying saucer exploding pink records). Ure got £350 every week it was played, a nice little earner. And, of course, there was Band Aid.

On board for Ultravox's fourth album, Midge got the initial inspiration for the title track and hit single from a misheard lyric. Brenda Hempstead, wife of his former manager, told him 'what you need to write is a song like that "Vienna" . . . You know, the Fleetwood Mac song.' If you aren't familiar with the Fleetwood Mac song 'Vienna', you won't be alone. What Brenda actually meant was 'Rhiannon': if you listen to the song, you can sort of hear how she might have thought that. With the greatest respect to Brenda's musical advice, I'm not sure that what Ultravox (or, indeed, the world) needed was for the band to turn themselves into a sort of New Romantic Fleetwood Mac: a slowed-down, synth-heavy version of 'Don't Stop' feels more of a 'Don't Start' to me. But no matter: Brenda's place in musical history was assured. She'd lodged the word 'Vienna' in Midge's head, and the following morning he'd come up with the chorus for the song.

'Vienna', according to the never-wrong Wikipedia, 'takes its inspiration from the 1948 film *The Third Man*. In Midge's autobiography, *If I Was . . .*, he remembers it rather differently. Here he admits that 'we lied about it at the time. In interviews with the *NME* I talked for hours about the Secessionists and Gustav Klimt, all the stuff that was going

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on in turn-of-the-century Vienna. That was all rubbish designed to make us sound interesting.’ In fact Midge wrote the lyrics around the idea of a holiday romance, about being back home in the day job and failing to convince yourself that the foreign fumbblings meant nothing. Not (it should be added) that Midge was exactly writing from experience. As he cheerfully admits now: ‘the whole idea was made up. I’d never been to Vienna, never had a holiday romance.’ I think that’s OK, though, because I’m not sure anyone bought the record thinking they were getting an electronic version of ‘Farewell My Summer Love’.

The photo on the ‘Vienna’ record sleeve is of an iconic grave from Vienna’s Zentralfriedhof Cemetery. The grave, which features a statue of a man kneeling down in front of it with his head in his hand, is a monument to Carl Schweighofer, a famous nineteenth-century Austrian piano-maker. I don’t know if that is a deliberate attempt to pay homage to a longstanding keyboard tradition, but that’s where the song sits: ‘the sound of the eighties is the synthesizer’, declared *Melody Maker* in 1980, and ‘Vienna’, with its whirl of electronic keyboards and sprinkling of piano on top, is the sound of keyboard past, present and what then felt like the future. There aren’t many songs that can start with the drumbeat as the riff to draw the listener. But that’s exactly what happens here, with its heartbeat bass drum and electronic snare going off like an explosion in the distance: from the moment you hear that, you’re drawn in. To add to the mood, there’s even a viola solo halfway through – which was, in order to get the ambience right, recorded in the studio toilet.

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'Vienna' was a song that Ultravox's record company needed their arm twisting to release. Heading towards six minutes in length, the song was seen as too slow and long for the radio. Ultravox won that battle, and then faced a similar one over the video. Contractually, the record company had to make videos for only two singles per album, and Ultravox had used these up in their previous two, unsuccessful releases. But further pressure was applied, and in came Russell Mulcahy to direct. Mulcahy's original idea for the video was perhaps not his best – 'I can see it now . . . Gondolas, bridges, boats' – but once the Australian director was given a brief European-geography lesson he produced one of the first of his many great eighties videos: a moody, *Third Man*-style number that was – and if you look carefully you'll see this – actually filmed in Covent Garden (those hilarious mime artists were presumably edited out). To save money, the filming in Vienna was reduced to a flying visit, and the discovery that if you turn up to the Austrian capital out of season not only is it bloody freezing but half the city's main tourist attractions are mothballed for the winter too. Despite this, the video captured the mood of song. I'm still not really sure what that white horse wandering through the opening shot is about, with the mysterious blonde in the long twenties dress and the fur coat running after it. Likewise the presence of Midge, hiding behind a pillar, with his razor-sharp sideburns and pencil-thin moustache.

'Vienna', then, should really be the story of a great early eighties success. Here was a band, after several albums and numerous singles attempts, finally having the hit song they

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deserved. Here was a group who had gone about it the hard way, eschewing the rules about what a single should be. Here was a four-piece who used two of the touchstones of early-eighties music – keyboards and videos – to devastating effect. ‘Vienna’ would go on to be the fifth-best-selling single of 1981 and win Best Single at the Brits.

And yet, in chart terms, the song found itself in one of those incongruous battles that only the British Top 40 can throw up. For, rather than getting the Number 1 that of all the above seemed duty bound to bestow upon it, in February and March 1981 ‘Vienna’ stayed limpet-like to the Number 2 spot. And the song that kept it from Number 1 was not an even better one, nor a release by one of the big early eighties names such as the Police or Blondie or the Jam, nor a song that, overall, would sell more copies. Instead, Ultravox found their best song up against, and losing to, the modest charms of archetype one-hit wonder Joe Dolce (Joe Dolce Music Theatre, if you are feeling particularly pedantic) and his song, ‘Shaddap You Face’.

Joe Dolce was an American turned Australian who ran a small revue in Melbourne of assorted comic characters: a sort of backroom-of-the-pub version of Harry Enfield. One of those characters was an Italian chap called Giuseppe, whose ‘Shaddap You Face’ song encouraged the audience to shout ‘Hey!’ The song was picked up by a local DJ and became a record and Australian Number 1. Before long, the ditty was spreading across the world like the yoyo craze in the playground. There was even an Elton John-instigated version of the song, sung by Andrew Sachs in full Manuel

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'Que?' mode, to counter which 'Shaddup You Face's release in the UK was speeded up. So you could argue that, if not for Elton, Joe Dolce's song would have been released later and Ultravox would have had their Number 1.

For what have must have felt like three excruciating weeks, Joe Dolce (or Joe 'Bloody' Dolce, as Ultravox drummer Warren Carn was still calling him twenty years later) with his mandolin, pork-pie hat and hilarious hammed-up Italian mannerisms kept 'Vienna' from the top spot. It wasn't as if the British public were deliberately depriving Midge of his accolade, going out to buy the record in the way that Rage Against the Machine stopped *X Factor* winner Joe McElderry getting the 2009 Christmas Number 1. Yet depriving him they were. Quite why is one of those music unfathomables; my guess is that it is a combination of the British liking the plucky underdog combined with a streak of gooey bad taste – the sort of instinct that these days manifests itself in forwarding videos of kittens on YouTube, or keeping John Sergeant in *Strictly Come Dancing*.

These chart battles and their sheer unpredictability is one of the reasons that following them became such a compelling spectator sport. Back then, in the British charts, every record was equal, every sale of a single a vote for that particular artist. It was, in a way, democracy in action, except that sometimes it was the equivalent of the Monster Raving Loony Party who got elected.

Somewhere along the line, between the eighties and today, the Top 40 lost its way: it stopped being 'the' charts, so

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definitively important that it took the definite article, and slid in significance to become just another chart – the sort where the Christmas Number 1 is the only race of passing interest. It wasn't just people like me growing up that were no longer interested: it was also the people who used to be the prime singles markets: teenagers. The end of *Top of the Pops* in 2006 was the day that this particular interest in the music died.

The charts are bit like a currency. For a long while they were very much the gold standard: a sound investment, if you'll pardon the pun, that maintained its value. Getting to Number 1, as Ultravox and Midge Ure knew, was a big deal. A Top 10 hit was significant; even getting into the Top 40 could be a big deal for an up-and-coming band. And the weight of this importance was shown by how few records went straight in at Number 1. When that happened (and, as someone who used to sit down and write out the charts, I know) it was a rare and exciting thing.

In the 1980s it happened just fourteen times. And even that was moderately profligate compared with the previous two decades. In the 1970s just four songs achieved this accolade. In the 1960s the number was just three.⁴ So how many singles went straight in at Number 1 in the 1990s? Twenty? Thirty? The answer is, in fact, 117. By the late 1990s around thirty songs a year were going in at Number 1; in 2000 the number hit forty – or, to put it another way, there were only twelve weeks that year during which a song *didn't* go to Number 1.

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This can be put down to the fact that the record companies simply got too good at marketing their records. They would sell the singles in different formats, with different songs on each, in order to ensure the fans bought them all. They would start releasing the records to the radio stations earlier, so that the songs would be in heavy rotation for several weeks before the single was out. And they would combine all of this with reducing the price of the single for the week of release. This meant a walloping first week's sale . . . And then, more often than not, bummer all afterwards. By then we'd all heard the song to death for well over a month, and also the single was now back to a less enticing full price: the nation knew if they didn't buy the single that first week they'd end up coughing up double. In the process, the record companies at a stroke killed what had been fun about the charts: their spontaneity, their predictability.⁵ As with any currency, once it is devalued its worth starts to sink. If Number 1 records are ten a penny, they're less of a big deal. And once they're less of a big deal, fewer people take an interest and the process becomes less of a shared cultural event.

All of which makes a seven-year-old boy, sat in his pyjamas on a Sunday evening, listening to the radio and writing down that week's Top 40, something of an anachronism (and yes, probably an 'anorakchronism' too). I feel sad for that, and not just the sentimental aspect of looking back on a younger, more innocent version of myself who knew no better than to spunk his pocket money on a Showaddywaddy single. I feel sad, too, that this way 'in' to discovering music,

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and the love of pop it created in me, is now closed to the generation my own children belong to. Cultures change, of course, but even so, I can't help wondering whether yesterday's sense of belonging hasn't been succeeded by a search for longing instead.

About the Author

Tom Bromley was born in Salisbury in 1972 and grew up in York. A writer and editor, he is the author of seven previous books, including the novels *Crazy Little Thing Called Love* and *Half A World Away*, and the non-fiction works *We Could Have Been The Wombles* and *All In The Best Possible Taste*. He lives in Salisbury with his wife, two daughters and his record collection.

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