

James Partridge

57:40

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people, primary school, singing, sing, put, classical music, songs, bangers, work, music, feel, guess, musicians, teaching, social media, life, place, piano, great, shows

SPEAKERS

James Partridge, Hattie Butterworth, Rebecca Toal

James Partridge 00:01

I am the Lord of the dance said he

James Partridge 00:03

It sounds so good.

Hattie Butterworth 00:05

They're singing so well!

James Partridge 00:06

Yeah!

Hattie Butterworth 00:07

It's really emotional.

Rebecca Toal 00:09

It is! It really brings you right back, doesn't it?

Hattie Butterworth 00:15

Hello and welcome to Things Musicians Don't Talk About with your hosts Hattie Butterworth..

Rebecca Toal 00:20

And me, Rebecca Toal.

Hattie Butterworth 00:22

Within our vibrant musical world, it can often feel that the struggles and humanity of musicians is lost and restricted.

Rebecca Toal 00:30

Having both suffered in silence with mental, physical and emotional issues, we are now looking for a way to voice musicians' stories and discuss them further and to connect with the many others who suffer like we have.

Hattie Butterworth 00:41

No topic will be out of bounds as we're committed to raising awareness for all varieties of struggle.

Rebecca Toal 00:46

So join me, Hattie, and guests as we attempt to bring an end to stigma by uncovering the things musicians don't talk about.

Rebecca Toal 01:16

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Rebecca Toal 02:00

Welcome back to TMDTA - Things Musicians Don't Talk About. It's me Becca. And it's actually New Year's Eve at the time of recording. I'm sitting in the study with my new fir tree candle and it's raining very heavily outside, it's very dark, I feel very cosy, I feel very reflective....looking back over the past year. Just done a little post on our Instagram about what we've been up to over the past year and in my personal life, I've been reflecting a lot with my partner as well and kind of looking forward to our goals for next year and stuff which I don't tend to subscribe to. I'm not a big New Year's resolution person, but for some reason this year it kind of spoke to me a bit more. So I'm feeling very mellow. I'm also going out to a New Year's Eve party tonight so I'm trying to keep my energy reserved because I know it's gonna be a long night. But by the time you listen to this, it will be 2024 so Happy New Year! We have the incredibly uplifting James Partridge with us today, as you'll hear. I don't need to really introduce him much more than to say that he's that guy that you see all over social media doing those amazing primary school hymn/banger videos that make everybody just go crazy. It's a great chat. I'm sure you'll have a great time listening to it. And I just wanted to say thank you so much for being here, thank you for listening. If you fancy supporting us via our Patreon where we host our monthly support ... peer support sessions, head over to patreon.com/tmdta. You can also ... we have a like a fundraiser page and also a "Buy me a Kofi" page. All sorts of ways you can support us or if that doesn't speak to you, please do share our podcast with a friend, a loved one, an enemy, your nemesis ... anybody. It really helps us to get our podcast out there if you share it with people you know. I would say like and subscribe but I feel very imposterish saying that I won't say it. Anyway on with the podcast.

Hattie Butterworth 04:23

So we're here today with the amazing James Partridge who I'm sure you will have seen "TikToking" around ...

Rebecca Toal 04:30

Is that a verb now?

Hattie Butterworth 04:33

TikToking around...

Rebecca Toal 04:35

the Christmas tree

Hattie Butterworth 04:35

... bringing back all the flippin mems. But thank you so much for joining us. How are you doing? How's life?

James Partridge 04:43

Very well. I had a show last night which was great fun. Had a lot of people packed into a cocktail bar in Smithfield.

Rebecca Toal 04:51

Where you'd usually sing hymns of course.

James Partridge 04:53

Yes, exactly. This is the hilarious thing about it because I'm trying to find venues to put on the show and ... as I'm basically teaching all day and getting home and sending emails and saying, "Would you be up for hosting a night with primary school sing alongs?" And a lot of the venues are just like, "urr...delete. What, what is this?"

Hattie Butterworth 05:14

It's kind of the thing though I guess, if you're not there or you like, don't get it, it sounds ...

James Partridge 05:20

Yeah...

Hattie Butterworth 05:21

...sort of sad.

Rebecca Toal 05:24

Hattie!

Hattie Butterworth 05:24

Just to be brutally honest.

James Partridge 05:25

Yeah.

Hattie Butterworth 05:26

But then like the emotion that you get from people...

James Partridge 05:30

That's the thing, because I've actually had a number of people come on their own to the show, because they haven't ...

Hattie Butterworth 05:35

Awwww!

James Partridge 05:35

...been able to convince anyone else to come. And I absolutely love that, because the one thing I kind of want for the show to do is to like build up like a community of people that are just like, you know, up for singing along and getting into like a nostalgic kind of positive atmosphere.

Hattie Butterworth 05:53

Yeah.

James Partridge 05:53

And the nice thing is actually, I've seen people come along on their own and make friends. And, you know, where else can you do that?

Rebecca Toal 06:02

Primary school!

James Partridge 06:03

Yeah, so the first time I actually kind of thought of this idea, I did like a bit of a variety show. And I did include some of the bangers. And it was in a, like, a venue that's normally like a drag club.

Rebecca Toal 06:16

Yessss.

James Partridge 06:16

So I'm playing in all sorts of different venues, so I was up in Preston and played in an ex-library, which had been turned into an arts centre.

Hattie Butterworth 06:24

Sweeeet.

Rebecca Toal 06:24

Everyone going "shh!"

James Partridge 06:25

Yeah, exactly, "Shh! Fingers on lips please." And I played in ... yeah, Brighton Komedia, which is normally a comedy club and ...

Hattie Butterworth 06:34

I guess the fact that it's so unique means that you can kind of pitch to anywhere.

James Partridge 06:38

Yeah, yeah.

Hattie Butterworth 06:39

Like it's quite kind of open.

Rebecca Toal 06:41

As long as they don't delete the email.

James Partridge 06:43

Yeah exactly.

Hattie Butterworth 06:44

But I'm, yeah, really...I think it'd be great if you could just kind of take us back to like, the genesis of your TikTok, I guess.

James Partridge 06:52

Yeah.

Hattie Butterworth 06:52

Or what were you, who were you before this all blew up for you? What was going on? And why did it all start?

James Partridge 06:58

Yeah. So I left uni in 2012 and then moved to London without a job, which was extremely scary.

Rebecca Toal 07:09

Yep.

James Partridge 07:09

And then did whatever I could to just live in London - I just thought to myself, "even if it means like, you know, standing on a street corner with a McDonald's sign, I don't mind what I do, as long as I'm in London, because it's the place to be." So I did, like some temping jobs then I worked for PRS for music for a couple of years, which was nothing to do with music. It was very, very admin based and slightly soul-destroying unfortunately. But I spent my lunch times going to the Yamaha piano shop on Wardour Street, and literally just like ... I'd go out and literally spend the entire hour just like putting headphones on, play the piano. And then I'd come back to the work and then yeah, get through the rest of the day. And then after a while, I was like, "this is not really working." I'd actually done a little bit of work for the

Royal Philharmonic Society, which I absolutely loved. And so I just, I helped them out with their award ceremony after I left PRS. And then I actually - this is feels like a very long winded way of working towards...

Rebecca Toal 08:05

No.

Hattie Butterworth 08:05

No it's great!

James Partridge 08:07

...how it came about. But then I had an audition for Gareth Malone's Voices. I don't if you ever...

Rebecca Toal 08:12

Yes.

James Partridge 08:14

Which was amazing and for me, that was a real game changer because I'd sung in choirs all my life. And I ... well, when I was at school, choir singing was not a cool thing whatsoever. And so I tried to start like a barbershop group at school, and it was not cool. And then I did ... I went on, like the National Youth Choir and Eton choral courses and all that stuff and I thought "I've finally found my tribe." And this was a lot of fun during the Gareth Malone choir, because it was a choir of like 18 to 25 year olds, something like that, and we all thrown into this crazy thing, we did these amazing gigs. And then after that finished, I thought "I can't go back to doing what I was doing." So I went freelance, and I've been teaching since then, in lots of different schools. And ...

Hattie Butterworth 08:59

This is singing teaching?

James Partridge 09:00

Singing teaching, yeah...

Hattie Butterworth 09:01

Okay.

James Partridge 09:01

... and piano. Mostly singing and then got to lockdown and - which was great for all musicians and everyone - and took the teaching online and I made loads of backing tracks for my pupils because teaching singing on Zoom is a hilarious thing ...

James Partridge 09:17

... because you're ... first of all, I tried to like play in time with them and I was trying to preempt them by playing like one second ahead of them, you know...

Rebecca Toal 09:17

It doesn't work...

Rebecca Toal 09:17

Yeah.

James Partridge 09:19

... to catch up with the lag. But it didn't really work. So I just made a load of backing tracks, put them on YouTube. And then someone said to me at the beginning of 2021 "Oh, have you heard of this TikTok?" And I was like "yes, it's the app for like people dancing."

Rebecca Toal 09:40

Teenagers, yeah.

James Partridge 09:41

Teenagers, yeah! And I think at the time it pretty much was and then I started putting up some singing tips. Some literally like ... or music theory tips as well...

Rebecca Toal 09:49

Yeah.

James Partridge 09:49

... like you know "how to..." - just try to be really ambitious - "how to read music in 60 seconds". So like teaching the staff and how to read the treble and bass clef and all that kind of stuff. And then I did a few comedy skits, but literally, it was like the, I don't know, like the 10th video I put up was... actually it was Easter Sunday. And I was like, "oh, we need some Easter content."

Rebecca Toal 10:11

Yesss.

James Partridge 10:12

So I put up a video, which was "my top five Easter hymns for Easter Sunday." And that did quite well, when I put that up. And then I thought the next day I was like, "oh, what else would be quite good?" And then I remembered this book that we all sang from, which I have here. And it's got a blue cover with little kids singing on the front called Come and Praise and ...

Rebecca Toal 10:36

Ours were red.

James Partridge 10:37

Yeah, well, actually, the red one was the updates.

Rebecca Toal 10:41

Ahhhh what can I say? I'm an updated gal.

James Partridge 10:44

And, yeah, so I so I had the piano anthology, which was red.

Rebecca Toal 10:48

Yes!

James Partridge 10:49

And that had Come and Praise one and two. And it had all the songs and I opened up the contents page and I was like "Oh, my god, Morning has Broken, Water of Life, All Things Bright and Beautiful, Autumn Days," and the list keeps going on and on. All these bangers. And so I thought, "oh, let's make a top 10 of my favourite primary school assembly songs," put it online and it kind of went a bit wild. And that's the genesis.

Hattie Butterworth 11:09

Oh my gosh!

James Partridge 11:10

That's a very long answer to your question.

Hattie Butterworth 11:11

No, but then yeah, where do you go from there I guess? This blew up and so were you like "people clearly like this. I'll make separate videos of them or ...?"

James Partridge 11:22

Yeah, so I think the initial thing was like I did, so I did a top 10, then I did like 20 and then 30 and 40. So I did like...

Hattie Butterworth 11:30

Oh!

James Partridge 11:30

...So I did quite a few lists. And then I kind of wanted to branch out pretty quickly. So then I just stopped doing that idea. And then did some other things like kids theme tune like top 10. And then and then I was getting more into ... I did like some acapella close harmony things like sea shanties, and Beach Boys style harmonies and things like that. And then I did a few like "here are five pieces of classical music you might not have heard before" and things like that. But none of them got like ... they all got like nice reactions, but none of them had like the massive kind of response.

Hattie Butterworth 12:03

Pull of the primary school nostalgia because it's such a kind of weird reaction you get when you hear it again, I guess.

Rebecca Toal 12:12

Yeah. what is it about...What do people resonate so thoroughly with? Because it is a very like visceral nostalgia.

James Partridge 12:20

Yeah, I get all sorts of comments on the videos. So I just have like, "nostalgia unlocked."

Rebecca Toal 12:28

Yeah.

Hattie Butterworth 12:28

It's so true.

James Partridge 12:29

"I haven't ... I don't know what I had for dinner last night but I remember the words to these songs I haven't sung in 20 years."

Rebecca Toal 12:34

Yeah.

James Partridge 12:35

I did actually have ... one of my favourite comments recently was "these songs slap harder than Will Smith at the Oscars."

Rebecca Toal 12:43

Ohhh!

Hattie Butterworth 12:43

I love it.

James Partridge 12:44

Which is...

Hattie Butterworth 12:44

It's so true.

James Partridge 12:45

That's hilarious. But yeah, no, I think it's ... hearing something that you haven't heard in a long time, no matter what it is, it just puts you in a time and place, right? Whether it's like, songs you sung, or piece of classical music, or you know, a pop banger from the 90s, whatever it is, it'll put you in a certain time and place. And I think a lot of people have very kind of - whether it's rose tinted glasses or whatever - they have very positive memories of primary school, and you kind of feel safe and a lot of these songs are just very happy and positive and upbeat and there's nothing cyni-... I think one of the things is... that one of the great things is there's nothing cynical about it. And I think a lot of things now in adult life are very cynical, and there's like a hidden agenda to things and this is just like pure, wholesome joy, singing

these songs. So I think that's part of the reason why it resonates a lot with people. And then obviously, a lot of those memories come with, like funny things that happened at school and ...

Rebecca Toal 13:48

Yeah.

James Partridge 13:48

...and all these other things. So yeah.

Rebecca Toal 13:51

I guess a lot of the like, hymns are intrinsically linked to religion and Christ-... Are you religious?

James Partridge 14:00

Well, yeah, it's an interesting ... it's an interesting thing really, because I was brought up going to church. So I went, you know, I kind of grew up ... I literally learned to read in my local church choir, like, they were like, if you could ... so I think I was five when I joined it. And then just like did the Sunday school and all that kind of stuff, but it was more of kind of like something to do really.

Rebecca Toal 14:23

Yeah yeah yeah.

James Partridge 14:25

And then so and then I've sung in a lot of churches in London as part of like, you know, their choir or like depping around and things like that. And I would say that I'm not like I'm actively religious...And but, you know, that was my upbringing. And I didn't go to like church school or anything like that. It was just like a kind of normal state primary school. And, but so yeah, it is interesting. And the thing is, I've actually not really had much pushback against the religious stuff.

Hattie Butterworth 14:56

I was wondering that, yeah.

James Partridge 14:57

And one thing I really want to make sure is that it is a safe space for anyone that comes to like a show or sings along or just watches a video and I'm not pushing the religious side of it at all. But if you do have a faith and you want to take that from it, then I think that's brilliant and that's great. And I've had, you know, vicars come to the show, and things like that, and they've loved it. And that's the thing, because so ... basically, the way the show works is I kind of ... so actually, just to set this up, I am doing a show of the primary school assembly bangers at the moment and touring around the country. And basically, it is a sing along show so I've got a QR code that people will scan and it pulls up a PDF that put together all the lyrics.

Rebecca Toal 15:48

Oh my gosh.

James Partridge 15:49

And...

Rebecca Toal 15:50

The best karaoke.

James Partridge 15:51

Yeah, exactly. Exactly. So you know, you've got sing alongs all sorts of stuff but there's not been anything of this. And then I intersperse it with kind of stories from school and I kind of structure it as part of the school year so we go through like...

Hattie Butterworth 16:06

Harvest festival!

James Partridge 16:06

... the summer term. We've got the harvest festival bangers, yes. We've got the harvest festival.

Rebecca Toal 16:10

Oh my gosh.

James Partridge 16:11

And then it gets to like the summer holidays and I talk about going on like cub camp and scout camp ...

Hattie Butterworth 16:16

Cute!

James Partridge 16:16

...and singing all like the campfire songs and then we get into like yeah, TV shows you watched in the summer and Disney movies that we watched and all this kind of stuff. So...

Hattie Butterworth 16:25

How long is the show?

James Partridge 16:28

So it's a two ... it's two hours with a 20 minute interval.

Hattie Butterworth 16:31

Oh wow!

Rebecca Toal 16:32

A lot of bangers!

James Partridge 16:33

Yes, yes, a lot of ... And the funny thing is we get to the end and there's still a lot I haven't done.

Hattie Butterworth 16:37

Yeah, yeah.

James Partridge 16:38

So I've just, in the last couple of shows I've done, I've started saying, "well, it's got to the encore..." And I normally finish on a Beatles song. And I ... What so-..., I got to the encore in one of the shows and someone shouted out a request. So in the last couple of shows I said, "does anyone have any requests?" And everyone just keeps shouting all these songs.

Rebecca Toal 16:57

Yeah.

James Partridge 16:57

And I try and pick out a few that I can hear.

Hattie Butterworth 17:00

That you've that you actually know.

James Partridge 17:01

Yeah, exactly. Exactly.

Hattie Butterworth 17:03

That's so stressful. I love it though!

James Partridge 17:05

Yeah.

Hattie Butterworth 17:06

But obviously a big part of, I think why you've resonated with people and the fact that you can do this show comes as well for, like a natural way of speaking and performing and like, does being on stage, do you enjoy being on stage? You know, do you like speaking and presenting? Is that something that you feel you enjoy and like has bought something to your life or do you find it quite nerve wracking?

James Partridge 17:30

Well, a bit of both, actually. It is very nerve wracking and when I did the first couple of shows, I was physically shaking. And ... because it's such a new thing and it was something that I've literally put together completely myself. It's not something that I've ... it's not like I'm performing a theatre piece that has been written by someone else.

Hattie Butterworth 17:52

Or that you've seen anyone else do.

James Partridge 17:54

So I couldn't eat before it. I was shaking and I just thought "how... I don't know how... how this is gonna go." And then I do like a little, like a welcome song. And I was kind of ... I listened back and you could hear my voice kind of quavering through it. Then it got to the first sing along which is Who put the Colours in the Rainbow, and as soon as I started playing it, everyone joined in and all of a sudden, the nerves just kind of went. And it just felt really, really nice and natural. And yeah, and you know, I still... I've been getting nervous before each show because every one's different. I don't know who's gonna be there.

Hattie Butterworth 18:31

Yeah.

James Partridge 18:31

I don't know how it's gonna go. Quite often finding a new venue so whether the sound might be okay, but so far, so good pretty much.

Hattie Butterworth 18:40

Okay. And you've found that people do sing?

James Partridge 18:42

Yeah!

Hattie Butterworth 18:42

And enjoying the singing. Because I guess that would, that's what would freak me out is that no one would sing and I just be there like...

James Partridge 18:47

Yeah, well, that's the thing. So basically, I kind of wrote it so like, slightly foolproof way so that if people don't sing, it's not the end of the world.

Hattie Butterworth 18:59

Okay.

James Partridge 19:00

So I can just basically sing all of them and then when it gets to the end of the song, there's a bit of chat, a bit of talking, you know, some funny stories and I try to like interlink each section and keep it flowing. So there's not really much time to have like dead ... like dead air in space. So if nobody sang along, which would be totally fine and people can do what they want to do - they don't have to sing if they don't want to - then it would still be fine.

Hattie Butterworth 19:27

That's still brave.

Rebecca Toal 19:29

I guess when you think about like primary school, like it seems like such a joyous thing and it kind of feels almost paradoxical that there's like this aspect of nerves and like all this kind of stuff. And it's like, no, even though it's still like a joyous thing, it can still be a scary experience. And I think like people often think that about musicians performing it's like, "ah, but it you know, it's something that you love, like why would you be nervous?" But it's interesting that you know, even with like, primary school hymns, it's still ... it's still, it's still your career.

James Partridge 20:06

Yeah.

Hattie Butterworth 20:06

Yeah.

Rebecca Toal 20:06

I wonder like how ... because it feels like a lot of your content has been kind of audience-led, like, you've been creating stuff based on what, you know, what the feedback that you've received, sometimes more than ... I don't know... it hasn't, yeah.

Hattie Butterworth 20:27

What you want to play kind of thing.

Rebecca Toal 20:28

Has it felt like you've had to go with what your audience wants or have, you felt like you've been able to do what you want?

James Partridge 20:35

Well, I mean, it is a funny thing because I definitely would not have thought you know, that I would be doing this. But, but it's, it's something that I have, you know, I absolutely love doing it and it brings me a lot of like personal joy, and puts me in like a happy place doing all of these songs and putting the show together. And I think one thing as well as that I put, like ... the show's basically like a love letter to ... basically to communal singing, and also to the fact that we were so lucky to have music teachers at school that actually taught us not only these songs, but other songs and all different styles and got us all singing together and just the fact that we all did sing together, which I think is so important and just such an amazing thing ... like not every like culture has, not every country has like group communal singing. And something ... it's also something that we don't really do necessarily as adults, unless you sing in like a community choir, or you sing in a symphony chorus or whatever. Because the ... it kind of feels like there's a big gap between people that just sing for fun and then like professional singers. And I think that growing ... well, kind of like studying in like a classical music degree and being in the community of professional singers, it feels like everyone I know, has done singing in some form, and still does do it, whether they sing in the church choir or singing, you know, as part of like, I dunno... the BBC singers or whatever. Actually, probably not the best example.

Hattie Butterworth 22:10

For now.

James Partridge 22:11

But the fact is that, you know, across the UK anyway, like most people grew up singing. And unless you sing, as I said, yeah in a community choir or like at a football match or whatever you don't ... like people don't really sing much anymore.

Hattie Butterworth 22:26

Or happy birthday.

James Partridge 22:28

Or happy birthday.

Rebecca Toal 22:29

That is communal!

James Partridge 22:30

Yeah, that is communal.

Hattie Butterworth 22:31

It's so true.

James Partridge 22:33

Yeah, yeah, I don't think that I would have originally thought of this had it not been for the reaction in [...]

Rebecca Toal 22:39

Yeah.

James Partridge 22:40

And yes.

Hattie Butterworth 22:41

So talking about like, I guess your day job as well and the teaching, do you think ... I mean, how do you feel about teaching? Is it something that you enjoy doing? Because we both have quite a complex relationship with teaching. Do you... you know, is TikTok and these shows something you would ultimately want to replace that? Or do you kind of always want to have an element of that side of your work?

James Partridge 23:06

Yeah, well, I think it'd be, it would be good to keep both going if possible. It has been quite tricky recently. So at the moment, I teach in four schools ...

James Partridge 23:16

So I kind of cycle around and go in and do singing lessons, one on one. So I actually don't do the assembly singing in the schools that I go to, because that's like, that's, you know, that's the Head of

Music's job. But, yeah, so I've been, yeah, I've been teaching for about eight years now? Something like that. Eight, nine years. And yeah, I think as you say, like a bit of a ... I don't know ... complex...

Rebecca Toal 23:16

Wow.

Rebecca Toal 23:43

Yeah, it depends on the school, depends on the students, like depends on the time of year ...

James Partridge 23:47

Depends on the parents as well.

Rebecca Toal 23:48

Yeah, exactly.

Hattie Butterworth 23:49

Very much.

James Partridge 23:49

Yeah.

James Partridge 23:50

I mean, most of my pupils, most of my parents have been lovely. And ... but then there's like so many different issues that come with it, like should people do exams? Should people ... should, I mean, even at young ages, should they be put in for exams, and some parents are very keen for them to be pushed through as many exams as quickly as possible. And, and also the content of what is on the syllabus, and how basically, singing is structured in lessons I don't always agree with. And actually a lot of the songs on the syllabus, I don't think are suitable to be sung, especially by the ages of the kids I teach.

Rebecca Toal 23:50

Yeah.

Rebecca Toal 24:31

As in they're too advanced for the voice development?

James Partridge 24:33

Yes, some of them are too advanced and the subject matter is not that suitable.

Rebecca Toal 24:37

Oh I see.

James Partridge 24:37

Some of them are actually like wildly inappropriate.

Rebecca Toal 24:41

Nice.

James Partridge 24:42

You know, sea shanties about like ...

Hattie Butterworth 24:44

Oh dear.

James Partridge 24:44

... going to Amsterdam and all that kind of stuff.

Rebecca Toal 24:47

Yeah! What was your relationship with your own singing education? Did you enjoy it?

James Partridge 24:55

Yeah, well, I had ... I didn't actually have any singing lessons until I was about 17 ... Yeah, 16 / 17. So I ... singing wasn't really encouraged on a one to one level when I was growing up. You know, after primary school, when we sang all these classic tunes, I went to an all boys grammar and obviously, it was the most uncool thing you could possibly do. And so while everyone else was outside playing football and rugby, I was in the music practice room, playing the piano and then obviously...

Rebecca Toal 25:29

Who put the colours in the rainbow?

James Partridge 25:31

The funny thing is it wouldn't have been any of those songs because I ... like, I think from the age of like, I don't know, 12 to probably two years ago, I didn't even ... I hadn't even thought about most of these songs. I teach a few of them. But, yeah, no, my relationship to singing when I was younger was quite like a fraught one.

Rebecca Toal 25:52

Yeah.

James Partridge 25:54

...Because I very much felt like it was, yeah, not the cool thing to do whatsoever. And, and it's only, as I said, when I did these, like national courses and met other people that also loves this as well, that's when I was like, "oh, okay, this is like a legitimate thing to like, and it's, it's okay." Yeah, so I think there are probably about like, 1000 boys in the school. It was a big, like, yeah, big state grammar school down in Dorset and we didn't do any singing in assemblies. There was a bit of singing in music, but not really much after year eight. And then, yeah, we I tried to start a barbershop group and then like four people out of like 1000 boys were actually vaguely interested and even then...

Hattie Butterworth 26:38

Only need four.

James Partridge 26:38

... it just like petered off. Yeah exactly, you only need 4 to be fair. And one of them was my brother so...

Hattie Butterworth 26:45

Awww that's so sweet.

James Partridge 26:46

Yeah, yeah.

Hattie Butterworth 26:46

I did the same thing with my sister. I forced her into the chamber choir.

Rebecca Toal 26:50

Ahhh.

Hattie Butterworth 26:50

Like, I used to go and find her. She would be snogging her boyfriend. I'd be like "You should be in chamber choir!"

James Partridge 26:56

There are more important things to do right now.

Hattie Butterworth 26:58

Literally!

Rebecca Toal 27:00

I guess that, yeah like, I was the same that I had such like a difficult relationship with playing the trumpet. Like it wasn't cool until I ... Yeah, had like a communal, National Youth Orchestra or like...

Hattie Butterworth 27:13

Or music school.

Rebecca Toal 27:14

Music school.

Hattie Butterworth 27:14

Yeah.

Rebecca Toal 27:15

And I guess that is a testament to the power of communal music.

James Partridge 27:20

Yeah.

Rebecca Toal 27:21

Um

Hattie Butterworth 27:21

So before that, sorry.

Rebecca Toal 27:22

No, no, I was just gonna say it's clearly very important.

James Partridge 27:24

Yeah, for sure.

Hattie Butterworth 27:25

Before the singing lessons and stuff, I guess was piano the main focus for you?

James Partridge 27:32

Yeah. Yeah. So I had piano lessons from about the age of five I think and my piano teacher loved, like Burt Bacharach and people like that. And so she taught me a lot of those kind of 60s and 70s tunes, as well as doing the grades. So I did like every single piano grade, up to grade eight. And then ... but I didn't ... I actually funnily enough, I haven't told any of my pupils this, but I actually didn't do any of the singing grades growing up.

Rebecca Toal 27:59

Wow.

James Partridge 27:59

I didn't do a single one. And so when I started having singing lessons, when I was about 17, my teacher was like an ex-Heldentenor from like, he used to sing at Bayreuth and things like that. And he was about 70, 75, like late 70s. But his voice was absolutely insane.

Rebecca Toal 28:15

Yeah.

James Partridge 28:16

And it was, it was a very rogue way of teaching actually because it was like ... some of the things were just very ... like he used to get me to like slap his belly and stuff while he was singing and like, stand on him while he was like lying on the floor.

Rebecca Toal 28:32

One of my trumpet teachers did that as well.

James Partridge 28:33

Yeah, and, you know, if I did that now in school...

Hattie Butterworth 28:38

Oooo.

Rebecca Toal 28:38

Immediate dismissal.

James Partridge 28:40

Safeguarding alarm bells would be like going off everywhere. But I mean, it's very inspiring in a lot of ways, but totally nuts. Yeah. So.

Rebecca Toal 28:49

I guess that, yeah. It makes sense why you have a kind of broader perspective on pupils taking exams and stuff.

James Partridge 28:55

Yeah.

Rebecca Toal 28:56

It's interesting, like, yeah, I have a friend that's playing ... I think he's on trial in Gothenburg and plays French horn... he only ever took grade five.

James Partridge 29:06

Yeah.

Hattie Butterworth 29:07

I love that.

Rebecca Toal 29:07

It's just yeah ... I mean, grades are just such like a funny construct that pupils I mean, and especially their parents are obsessed with.

Hattie Butterworth 29:15

It's the parents.

Rebecca Toal 29:16

Yeah.

Hattie Butterworth 29:17

They just want to show off.

Rebecca Toal 29:18

But then the children absorb that.

Hattie Butterworth 29:20

Yeah.

Rebecca Toal 29:20

And then the children then become obsessed. And it's like...

James Partridge 29:23

It's so hard. At school they put up the grades.

Rebecca Toal 29:25

Yeah.

James Partridge 29:27

You know ... I don't know ... did either of you go to Cambridge?

Rebecca Toal 29:29

No.

James Partridge 29:30

So they ... at Cambridge, they had a ... like the main building is Senate House, and they put all the grades outside at the end of the term and it tells you like what you got. And so like, everyone's going up to these sheets, and they're like, "Oh, this is ... you know, this person got this and this person got this," and this is what happens at school.

Hattie Butterworth 29:49

You're joking.

James Partridge 29:49

They put up the grades and they say ... they put the marks as well.

Hattie Butterworth 29:53

What, like on a sheet of paper?

James Partridge 29:54

Yeah. And so people are going you know, the girls are going up to ... I mostly teach at girls schools. Actually no I just started at a boys school. But anyway, the school I've been teaching at the longest is a girls' primary school and they all go up to the sheet and say "Oh I got a distinction." "Oh, I got a merit. Why didn't I get a distinction?" I think it's ... that's so tough ...

Rebecca Toal 30:15

Come on.

James Partridge 30:15

... and then they're going home to their parents and thinking "oh you should have good distinction, not a merit." And I think "you did so well to get a merit."

Rebecca Toal 30:22

Yeah.

Hattie Butterworth 30:22

But like it is really hard to get a merit. I'm impressed.

Rebecca Toal 30:25

It's hard to do the grades themselves.

James Partridge 30:27

Yeah, it's ...

Hattie Butterworth 30:28

Oh my god.

James Partridge 30:29

It's hard to get in a room, especially at that age with someone you've never met, a complete stranger.

Rebecca Toal 30:33

Yeah.

James Partridge 30:34

And perform in front of a complete stranger. Sometimes they're nice. Sometimes they're not. Sometimes they can be quite scary.

Rebecca Toal 30:41

Yeah.

James Partridge 30:42

Especially when they went back to school post-COVID. All the examiners wore masks and gloves and all sorts of stuff.

Rebecca Toal 30:48

And so far away in a big empty room.

James Partridge 30:50

Yeah, exactly. I remember when I used to do my piano grades, I was absolutely terrified.

Rebecca Toal 30:55

Yeah.

James Partridge 30:56

You know, like genuinely like, palpitations.

Rebecca Toal 30:59

Yeah.

James Partridge 30:59

To be fair, the place I did my exams was quite a creepy ... It was someone's house. And the waiting room was just like the living room basically. And they had, like, in my mind, it was all in black and white. They had like a TV in the corner, which was like, basically static, they had one of those like Japanese water features with like...

Rebecca Toal 31:18

Oh my god.

James Partridge 31:19

A bit of water dropping.

Hattie Butterworth 31:20

Creepy.

James Partridge 31:21

Yeah, and it's really creepy. And then you can hear the the exam next door happening. And everyone in the room is just like staring into the abyss.

Rebecca Toal 31:29

It sounds like Craxton Studios.

Hattie Butterworth 31:31

I was literally thinking of that.

Rebecca Toal 31:33

Where you can like hear the audition going on next door, and everyone's sitting there like in the waiting room like...

Hattie Butterworth 31:37

You warm up in his attic room.

Rebecca Toal 31:38

Yeah, waiting for their...

Hattie Butterworth 31:40

Oh I can't.

Rebecca Toal 31:41

Execution.

James Partridge 31:41

And I just think, like, "if that's your entry into music making..."

Rebecca Toal 31:45

Yeah.

James Partridge 31:45

"It's just, it's not really encouraging is it?"

Hattie Butterworth 31:47

No.

James Partridge 31:47

For like, a positive experience.

Rebecca Toal 31:49

No.

James Partridge 31:51

So yes, that's that ... I do have mixed feelings about exams, very mixed. And I get that it's great to have a goal to work towards. And some of the things you pick up in like an exam context are great, like, just the ability to be able to perform and to memorise a piece, all of that stuff's great. But even like the other things, some of the aural tests and the sight reading are just not really that helpful, I don't think.

Rebecca Toal 32:15

Yeah.

James Partridge 32:15

And I think there are better ways to be - if you are doing an exam to, to work on your general musicianship.

Hattie Butterworth 32:24

I guess like a massive, maybe going back to the beginning, like a big part of why a lot people resonate to you is it's a big escapism...

James Partridge 32:33

Yeah.

Hattie Butterworth 32:34

A lot of these songs ...

James Partridge 32:35

Yeah.

Hattie Butterworth 32:35

..and kind of like what you were saying, like, obviously our world and even the music world, like, forget it, like it's quite depressing, if you think too long and hard about about all of that. But why do you think it's important that you exist online? And kind of how have you seen the impact on people's like mental health and wellbeing and just being a place to kind of escape and, and have vacuity? What's the impact of that do you think?

James Partridge 33:04

Yeah, I think social media is like, it's such a huge, huge ... ah it's like a behemoth of an issue. And it's like a double-sided thing as well because on the one hand, it can be a place of escapism, and it can be a place of refuge. And if you're someone that is socially anxious, or, you know you find it very hard to meet people, make friends, then it can be amazing place to find your tribe, find your community online, whatever it is. And that's why something that you might think is extremely niche and not necessarily what I do, but lots of other people have their niches and get huge followings from it because it's something that people wouldn't necessarily kind of come across in, let's say, the real world. And so, a lot of people do like TikTok lives or Instagram lives and people just sit all night watching these live streams where you might cosplay as something or whatever.

James Partridge 33:07

Have you ever done an all-night primary school?

James Partridge 33:57

Not an all night one!

Rebecca Toal 33:59

I can imagine your neighbours would be like, "shut up! We don't care who the colours in the rainbow!"

James Partridge 34:04

Yeah. Well, I think it almost got to that point during during lockdown, because I got engaged actually, the week before lockdown. And she's American and she had never heard any of these songs before.

Rebecca Toal 34:18

What an education.

James Partridge 34:19

By the end of week two, she was like, "Why do you keep singing songs about vegetables?" And so it was slightly torturous for her. But I was doing - when this started picking up - then I was doing a lot of these livestreams and I didn't do an all nightone. But anyway, yeah, social media is ... it can... yeah, it's got definitely like a lot of positives to it. But I've been finding more and more like really, really like severe negatives to social media in lots of ways. I think that it's interesting actually being on social media and also teaching at primary schools...

James Partridge 34:59

..Because some people have, they have no connection with social media at that age, which is great. I think it is extremely hard to kind of stop people under the age of 13 from being on social media. But I think they really, really should, if possible, but I mean, it's so hard to stop them from being on it. But those that aren't on it, they don't really even think about it. But those there are, it just consumes them.

Rebecca Toal 34:59

Yeah.

Rebecca Toal 35:25

You can tell which ones are and which ones aren't.

James Partridge 35:27

Yeah, exactly. And I hear children as young as like five, like singing songs that I know are like, TikTok viral.

Rebecca Toal 35:34

Yeah.

James Partridge 35:34

And I think you've been just like, watching TikTok all night. And a lot of my pupils come in and say "Oh, can I sing this song?" They want to sing a song that is viral, and they'll know, like 10 seconds of the song. And they want to sing that bit of the song, which is viral on Tiktok. And, you know, you're not technically allowed to be on TikTok if you're under 13. But I have ... because I teach privately at people's houses after school as well and I go back, and I see some of these kids on their phone, you know, literally, as soon as they get home: "Mum,, where's your phone? I want to look at TikTok," or whatever. And they will literally sit for like two hours just scrolling through it. And that's at the age of eight, you know, and think what that is doing. And actually, you know, some of the videos that come up ... you can't really police it that well. And especially a lot of the livestreams, because the way that TikTok work is every, like five videos you scroll through, it'll come up with, like someone doing a live stream. And I've actually kind of stopped doing lives because I really don't like the culture around it. And there are a lot of really, really inappropriate lives, like completely inappropriate, you know, people, you know, undressing ... all sorts of stuff.

Rebecca Toal 36:45

Wow.

James Partridge 36:46

And a lot of the comments are just horrendous as well. So it's not just the lives. It's a lot of like, the videos that come up are also just wildly inappropriate for children to look at. And I guess, you know, if you are the company, you could argue "well, they're not supposed to be on it anyway, because it's ..."

Rebecca Toal 37:02

Yeah.

James Partridge 37:03

...you gotta say "I am over the age of 13." But you can't...

Rebecca Toal 37:06

Anyone can do that.

James Partridge 37:07

Exactly.

Rebecca Toal 37:08

And in terms of like, because obviously a lot of your career focuses on being on social media, has it had like, negative impact on you?

James Partridge 37:17

Yes, I think so. Yeah. I've tried to come to terms with it a bit more. But I think it is hard, because when you create things online, and you know, I'm sure you guys know this, like if you put something online and it doesn't quite have the reaction you think it might have had or it doesn't, you know ... because social media is such a tangible thing. It's like you got 20 likes on this post, as opposed to the last time you've got 50 likes, you think, "Oh no, what have I done wrong?" You think it's all about yourself, where, you know, most of the time, it's not at all. It's just about whatever the algorithm picks up, or whatever is like slightly more controversial that people might comment on. So yeah, I've stopped looking at like, sort of, I've ... I try, like, I try and like keep an eye on top of comments and stuff, but I've stopped kind of like going through every single comment and, and trying to reply to everyone, because it's really draining and, and it just puts you in a really negative mindset if you're constantly kind of comparing yourself, not even to your own posts but to other people's posts and think, "oh, you know, this person got like 2 million views on literally just like laughing at another video." And so, you think, "what have I done wrong? I did..." You know, I made a video about Chopin. And I was like, "this is really cool. I find this really interesting."

Rebecca Toal 38:39

Yeah.

James Partridge 38:39

And it got like, basically no reaction.

Hattie Butterworth 38:42

Yeah.

James Partridge 38:43

But a few people like few weeks later - and I felt kind of bad because I spent a while like, you know, going around, and like filming this and putting it together - and then a few weeks later, a couple of

people completely separately said, "Oh, I loved that video you did on Chopin. And it's completely different to what you normally do."

Hattie Butterworth 38:58

Aww.

James Partridge 38:59

So I guess different people like different things.

Rebecca Toal 39:02

Yeah.

Hattie Butterworth 39:02

I guess you have to stay true to what your interests are, as well. You know, much as I'm sure you enjoy the primary school stuff, there are other things in your musical life to fulfil.

James Partridge 39:12

Yeah exactly.

Hattie Butterworth 39:13

You can't just do that all the time, so I think no matter what the likes are ... we find this as well I think like ... sometimes you just need to creatively do ... make something for yourself, you know, to ... that's just more in line with... I don't know what I'm saying.

Rebecca Toal 39:31

Yeah, for sure. I mean, otherwise it can become so like, you're just hopping from one thing to the next and you're basing all your ...

Hattie Butterworth 39:37

Engagements.

Rebecca Toal 39:38

... internal happiness on like external factors, whereas actually, that can just stop at any moment. Like, you know, what if somebody else came along on Tiktok doing basically what you did, but I don't know, people prefer them for whatever reason. It's like everything is so fragile and actually as long as you're kind of finding kind of authenticity or whatever in your own work and enjoying it, then it doesn't really matter what the likes are. But... and it's hard if that's what your business is based a lot of the time.

Hattie Butterworth 40:10

Do ... have any of your students kind of found you on TikTok?

James Partridge 40:14

To be honest, not that many.

Hattie Butterworth 40:16

Okay.

James Partridge 40:16

A couple of them have and, and again with those pupils, they've been like, "how many followers do you have today? Like this week? Have you got loads more followers?" Because that's all they're interested in...

James Partridge 40:24

Ah, yeah.

James Partridge 40:24

How many followers you've got.

Hattie Butterworth 40:27

Because it is pretty cool that you ... how many you have got, I guess.

Hattie Butterworth 40:29

But even the fact that you're saying that Hattie...

Hattie Butterworth 40:31

Sorry!

Rebecca Toal 40:31

.... it's like, why is like...

James Partridge 40:33

Yeah.

Rebecca Toal 40:34

It's so funny that that's becomes like...

James Partridge 40:36

And that's actually something that I've changed my mindset on, how I approach social media, because at first, I think when things start picking everything, "oh, you know, this is amazing, I'm getting all of these followers on a certain platform. And I need to just keep doing more and more to get more followers." And then you think, "actually, that's such an ... that is, you're fighting a losing battle, then because it'll never be enough." Because, you know, even if you've got like, a million followers on the platform, you'd be like "yeah, I've got a million but why don't I have 2 million?" And I mean, I think the main thing is just finding the right content that is true to what you ... like your vision, like your mindset, and finding a way to bring some positivity to the world online. And I think that's what's great about what you do on this podcast, because you're literally talking about things that musicians don't necessarily normally talk about. And I've not, you know, I've heard other podcasts talking about, you know, if you're

in business or whatever you talk about, you know, "I found it really hard to set up my million pound business" or whatever. I feel really depressed.

Rebecca Toal 41:44

Yeah, cool.

James Partridge 41:44

But, you know, musicians, it's, I think, like, the whole great thing about this kind of primary school thing that's picked up is just building that community. And I think that musicians need to have each other's backs for sure. So being able to talk about all of this stuff is amazing in what you do on this podcast.

Rebecca Toal 42:05

Thank you.

Hattie Butterworth 42:06

I guess you're not one of many in this sort of viral music...

Rebecca Toal 42:10

Well, that's what I was gonna say like, music or like, especially classical music TikTok and ... or all social media, it feels very ... like classical music as a whole is very behind everything else, so actually, a lot of classical music, social media is still like, very positive or very, like, kind of...

Hattie Butterworth 42:29

Happy clappy.

Rebecca Toal 42:29

Happy clappy or just like, not very real.

James Partridge 42:33

Yeah, I actually do a little bit of work for Decca classics, as like, a social media person, not in terms of like posting for them, but I essentially like scour social media for what's happening in the classical music world. And, you know, I'll make a pack every month of like who's doing what and just the kind of keep on top of what everybody's doing...

Rebecca Toal 42:59

100 days of practice.

James Partridge 43:00

...in classical music, whether it's something more fun, or whether it's like an existing artist or whatever. But yeah, classical music is in an interesting place, and there's some people doing amazing things, like really, really amazing things on social media. And I think the more that people who don't have an interest in classical music can engage with it, the better. So if social media is the way to do it, then that's great, and whether it's through like, funny videos, you know, it's like, I've seen quite a few of the things like, you know, "people in 1720 when Bach dropped this banger," and they're like, just ...

Rebecca Toal 43:36

Yeah.

James Partridge 43:36

...raving to Toccata and Fugue or whatever. Or it could be more like, slightly more educational or it could just be like a play along video ...

Rebecca Toal 43:45

Yeah.

James Partridge 43:46

...with like, I think it's like the London Philharmonic Orchestra.

Rebecca Toal 43:48

Oh yeah!

James Partridge 43:49

They do a lot of... Is it them or is LSO?

Rebecca Toal 43:52

No it's LPO, where they do like...

James Partridge 43:54

They have the score that goes along underneath it. Yeah, that's great. I love that.

James Partridge 43:57

Those are great, I love... yeah.

Rebecca Toal 43:59

But it is that thing of like ... I don't know, I feel some people are very against like, what they call the 'dumbing down of classical music' and it's like, "no, it's just bringing it into the relevance of modern day society." And like, you can't have something that's supposedly relevant and isn't on one of the biggest, you know, social media is so engrained in our lives now and we can't extract ourselves from it, so we've got to go with it.

James Partridge 44:28

It's actually been really interesting talking to classical musicians about it because some people have a mindset of, "oh, I wish I could. I wish I could do social media, but I can't. I can't do it."

Hattie Butterworth 44:37

Yeah.

James Partridge 44:38

"I'm too far removed."

Hattie Butterworth 44:39

I've heard a lot of people say that.

James Partridge 44:40

Because some people's accounts on Instagram especially go really like mega viral ... like not necessarily viral, but like they get lots of followers just by literally recording themselves practising the clarinet or something, or the cello or whatever. And they'll just have like a post maybe like three or four posts a week of them just practising and those posts will just get a lot of traction. But then you get some like the big, like people that are doing really big things in classical music that don't want to touch social media and say, "Oh, no, it's not for me. I wouldn't want to do that."

Hattie Butterworth 45:10

Don't get me started on their websites.

James Partridge 45:11

Yeah!

Hattie Butterworth 45:12

Some of these stratospheric musicians like...

James Partridge 45:14

And I kind of, like, yeah, I kind of feel like ... I don't know, are you not doing it because you don't want to, or because you think it's like, too, I don't know, dumbed down as you say, maybe?

Rebecca Toal 45:26

But like, we need

James Partridge 45:27

I saw a hilarious video of Karl Jenkins...

James Partridge 45:27

Or like...

Rebecca Toal 45:27

...to have those people on there that are doing something different, that aren't just going with the trends or whatever. Like, imagine having somebody completely ... - like, if you're famous enough, in the real world, you will get that many, like, you'll get followers on ... and then if you just put your own stamp on what you think social media should be, that's gonna change things for the better.

Rebecca Toal 45:32

You mean Meghan Markle.

James Partridge 45:35

Slash Meghan Markle, yeah saying that "I am not known Meghan Markle. I am Karl Jenkins."

James Partridge 45:52

Imagine having to release that statement.

James Partridge 46:00

Yeah, that's hilarious. But you know, he did it really well. And, I think more and more people are getting on it. And even, you know, someone like Andrew Lloyd Webber, who he doesn't need to do it, and like, whatever your views on him are, but he does like duet videos. And things like that.

Hattie Butterworth 46:17

Yeah, yeah.

James Partridge 46:18

And that's, that's quite fun. I think I think more people could do it.

Hattie Butterworth 46:20

No, it's true.

James Partridge 46:21

But I think, you know, I totally 100% respect anyone's decision as to whether or not they do social media or not.

James Partridge 46:28

And, and, for a lot of people, it just, like, it isn't the right thing. And it would bring like, an extra level of anxiety to something that is already so you know, it's so precarious in terms of work and if you're putting yourself out there, and a lot of people don't like filming themselves, which is, it is a very, very tough thing to do to set up a camera and film yourself and put it out there for the world to see. And I think actually before Tiktok I felt extremely self conscious about putting up anything online in that way of filming yourself doing it. And then when Tiktok came along, because it was so informal, I was like "it doesn't really matter because it's basically just kids dancing anyway, so..."

Rebecca Toal 46:28

Yeah.

Rebecca Toal 47:07

Yeah.

James Partridge 47:07

... that's why I was, in a way it kind of ... for me, it helped a lot of my kind of self-doubt and like perfectionism and stuff like that, because it didn't matter as much.

Hattie Butterworth 47:20

It still slightly feels like that.

James Partridge 47:21

Yeah.

Hattie Butterworth 47:22

I still feel like I want to put some videos on Tik Tok, but I wouldn't put on Instagram.

James Partridge 47:26

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Hattie Butterworth 47:27

I don't know what that's about. Do you have that or not really?

Rebecca Toal 47:30

Do you think it's because our Instagram feels like there's a lot of people we know following us whereas...?

Hattie Butterworth 47:36

All my family are on it, but then none of them are on TikTok.

Rebecca Toal 47:38

Yeah. Yeah.

Hattie Butterworth 47:40

It just feels more like important, like in terms of what we say on there rather than TikTok where it can be a bit more like far away and even slightly more controversial.

Rebecca Toal 47:50

Oooooh!

Hattie Butterworth 47:51

Ooh!

Hattie Butterworth 47:55

So what we normally do at the end is a kind of like, win of the week. So we just say something small from our week that's been like...

James Partridge 48:02

Okay.

Hattie Butterworth 48:03

...a positive, I guess or like, something we're proud of?

Rebecca Toal 48:06

I'll go first.

Hattie Butterworth 48:08

Okay go on.

Rebecca Toal 48:09

I've never gone first I don't think. I finished my CBT ... 10 weeks of CBT therapy on Tuesday, which yeah, it's been like, amazing.

Hattie Butterworth 48:21

Yeah!

Rebecca Toal 48:21

It's been completely like, I was very sceptical of CBT before I started, and, yeah, it's been amazing. And like, as much as I didn't resonate with some of the exercises that we did, I did do all the homework, and I kind of threw myself into it.

Hattie Butterworth 48:38

Yeah.

James Partridge 48:38

That's awesome.

Rebecca Toal 48:39

Like, I finished on Tuesday and that was good. And like, felt like really nicely rounded off and I felt that I could be really honest with my therapist about like what had worked and what hadn't worked, which is usually unlike, like, with my last like, awful therapist, I didn't give any feedback because I was too scared that she...

Hattie Butterworth 48:54

There was no like mutual trust there.

Rebecca Toal 48:55

No, but I was very honest with this one, which was bueno.

Hattie Butterworth 48:59

Yes legend.

Rebecca Toal 49:00

Yes.

James Partridge 49:00

So what did the course kind of entail?

Rebecca Toal 49:03

Um it's ... we started off ... Well, I think I'd refer myself because I was feeling like overwhelmed with a lot of things. So we did like working on what are my symptoms, and then what are my like, negative automatic thoughts that kind of come up. I worked especially on like, audition rejection, and that kind of stuff.

James Partridge 49:23

Right, yeah.

Rebecca Toal 49:23

...Which was tricky, because ... yeah, the same as so many therapists, like they don't really understand freelance musician life. So she was like, "so can you do like another audition?" And I was like...

Hattie Butterworth 49:35

"I've done 25!"

Rebecca Toal 49:36

Yeah, or like, you know, she kept calling them interviews not auditions...

James Partridge 49:41

Right.

Rebecca Toal 49:41

And like these kinds of things that like don't really matter, but like ... So yeah, I did a bit of that. And I've just done, actually, a whole half an hour video on our Patreon about what went down in CBT.

James Partridge 49:52

Oh cool!

Rebecca Toal 49:52

...but yeah, it was great.

James Partridge 49:54

Everyone subscribe to Patreon.

Hattie Butterworth 49:56

Do you have Patreon?

James Partridge 49:57

No, I don't, no.

James Partridge 49:58

Oh, okay!

James Partridge 49:59

Yeah.

Hattie Butterworth 49:59

So you can, in all honesty, just tell them to go to ours.

James Partridge 50:03

Yeah.

Rebecca Toal 50:04

We're not rivals.

Hattie Butterworth 50:05

We will get you to shout out your TikTok and everything. Not that you need to but... Do you have your win of the week down and ready?

James Partridge 50:11

Well ... I've got a ... yeah, okay, I'm gonna say something from last night, because ...

Rebecca Toal 50:15

Yeah!

James Partridge 50:15

So last night I did this show, and I already mentioned one thing which I loved, which was the fact that people came on their own to see it. And there's just something about that, it actually made me feel quite emotional...

James Partridge 50:27

... because it's so tough doing anything on your own. And some people, you know, find it very, very hard to even get out the door on their own. And the fact that they've made the effort to, you know, buy a ticket, come on their own and travel to this unknown location with a load of people they don't know, singing along, it's quite a scary thing.

Rebecca Toal 50:27

Yeah!

Hattie Butterworth 50:50

It's massive.

James Partridge 50:50

So that was for me, like, yeah, definitely just an amazing, like, beautiful moment. But there's ... I met a couple last night, which ... they taught music in China...

Rebecca Toal 51:04

Wow!

James Partridge 51:04

... in like a really rural province of China. And they said that during lockdown, or whenever it was, they would get a school bus with the kids every day to the school and they all wanted music to play on the school bus, and every single day, they said, every single day, they'd play my videos on the Bluetooth speaker, because it made them feel happy. And it reminded them of home because they couldn't go home. So...

Rebecca Toal 51:31

That has made me so emotional.

James Partridge 51:34

And this in some like really random rural province of China that they were like blasting out the songs on a bluetooth speaker.

Hattie Butterworth 51:39

That must make you feel so like...

James Partridge 51:41

And they came along to the show last night and it was ... Yeah, so that was an amazing story.

Hattie Butterworth 51:46

Yeah.

Rebecca Toal 51:47

Have you had any proposals at a...

James Partridge 51:50

Not yet.

Rebecca Toal 51:50

I was gonna say that would be like the funniest place to be like, "I'm gonna propose my girlfriend tonight!" like...

James Partridge 51:55

Yeah, um...

Rebecca Toal 51:59

I thought you were gonna say like, "a couple came to my show and they got engaged."

James Partridge 52:02

It would be a good place to propose because, you know, at the last year, there was a vicar.

Rebecca Toal 52:08

Immediate marriage!

James Partridge 52:10

I'm there on the piano, I can play the hymns, you know. And then everyone else can join in with "I do."
Urgh "we will support you," and all that stuff.

Rebecca Toal 52:17

Forget friends and family, just have randomers witnessing.

Hattie Butterworth 52:20

Do you do weddings?

James Partridge 52:21

Well, I also sing with a function band.

Hattie Butterworth 52:24

Oh okay.

James Partridge 52:24

I've been doing that for about 10 years now. And so I've sung at lots of weddings, mostly as part of the band in the evening.

Hattie Butterworth 52:31

Ah wow!

James Partridge 52:33

So and you know, in the past sign the choirs for weddings and things like that, but not had a wedding, yes.

Rebecca Toal 52:39

A joint venture.

James Partridge 52:41

Yeah, that'd be fun. Yeah. Well, actually the funny thing is a lot of people, when they do get married, they sing these songs because they are ... if they didn't go to church, or whatever, they'll think "okay, what songs are suitable?" So I have been to weddings where they've ... well I've played like, One More Step Along the World I Go or Shine Jesus Shine. Everyone just loves it. Everyone joins into the sing the songs. So, yeah, no I think actually ... I wouldn't be surprised if it does happen actually.

Rebecca Toal 53:09

One day.

James Partridge 53:09

That'd be fun.

Rebecca Toal 53:10

One day! Hattie?

Hattie Butterworth 53:12

So I was like, "Oh, I shouldn't say this, because it's too personal or whatever." I don't care.

Rebecca Toal 53:18

We'll just cut it out.

James Partridge 53:19

This is a personal podcast right?

Rebecca Toal 53:21

Yeah, literally!

Hattie Butterworth 53:21

So, two days ago, I made a year self-harm free.

James Partridge 53:27

Yes.

Rebecca Toal 53:28

Woo!

Hattie Butterworth 53:28

Which was like, massive. And I actually, like, glazed straight past it. I didn't even realise. I only realised yesterday. So yeah, like, I think that kind of shows that with things like addiction, the first few months, you never... like, I could never imagine myself making it to a year. But then like, recently, it's just become such a thing in the background, which is like, amazing. It feels amazing now that it doesn't have this, like, sort of struggle every day of getting through, you know what I mean?

Rebecca Toal 54:00

You're not checking the app every day to be like...

Hattie Butterworth 54:02

Yeah!

Rebecca Toal 54:02

"One more day."

Hattie Butterworth 54:03

Yeah, exactly. So now like it just felt massive and quite ... it sort of says a lot that I ...

Rebecca Toal 54:08

You didn't notice it.

Hattie Butterworth 54:09

Yeah.

James Partridge 54:10

That's great.

Hattie Butterworth 54:11

So like that is the win of the year really, I think.

Rebecca Toal 54:13

Yeah.

James Partridge 54:13

That's amazing.

Hattie Butterworth 54:14

Yeah.

Rebecca Toal 54:14

Year and a day.

Hattie Butterworth 54:15

Year and a day!

James Partridge 54:16

Very good. Fantastic.

Hattie Butterworth 54:17

So ... but this has been so nice.

Rebecca Toal 54:20

Yeah, thank you so much, James.

Hattie Butterworth 54:21

Thank you.

Hattie Butterworth 54:22

For coming all this way. You've gotta shout out your ...

Rebecca Toal 54:22

It's been so lovely.

Rebecca Toal 54:26

Oh yes.

Hattie Butterworth 54:27

So tell us your Instagram, Tik Tok and then tell us the shows you've got coming up, slash anything else you've got coming up.

James Partridge 54:35

Yeah, I don't know when this will go out in terms of like, show dates and stuff.

Hattie Butterworth 54:39

Just give it all and we'll...

James Partridge 54:40

Yeah, so ... yeah, the TikTok and Instagram pages are @jamesbpartridge and the show is called Primary School Assembly Bangers Live. But it's not just a primary school songs. We do some musical theatre, we've got Disney, we've got like TV theme tunes from our childhoods. We've got all sorts of stuff. So...

Hattie Butterworth 55:01

It's all there.

James Partridge 55:02

It's all there. It's just like a total like escapism-nostalgia-fest. And yeah, that's, that's the live show. And I've got... So today, on the day of recording, I'm gonna go up to Leicester, then tomorrow, I'm in Cardiff. And then I'm doing a load of other shows in June and July as well.

Rebecca Toal 55:20

It may be an obvious announcement, but it is no longer 2023. So these next dates that James announces are completely irrelevant, but we thought it'd be nice to keep them in because it's really lovely to hear what he's up to. But please do check out what he's doing in 2024. Hattie and I are really rubbish at getting these episodes out in a timely fashion. Look, we're mentally ill. What can I say?

James Partridge 55:44

I'm doing some cool venue... I'm going to Southwold pier...

Rebecca Toal 55:49

Wow!

James Partridge 55:49

I'm singing at the end of the pier.

Rebecca Toal 55:51

Don't fall off!

James Partridge 55:52

...Doing Sheffield and York and a few other places.

Hattie Butterworth 55:54

Oh nice!

Rebecca Toal 55:56

A lot of travelling.

James Partridge 55:56

Yes. Yeah.

Hattie Butterworth 55:57

What does the future look like after the shows anything fun or just kind of...?

James Partridge 56:02

I ... so yeah, I've got a lot of wedding gigs with this function band I sing with. And also, I'm going to do a Christmas show. Spoiler. Yes, I'm putting together a Christmas show and this will be like ...

Hattie Butterworth 56:14

That will be great.

James Partridge 56:15

...the Christmas assembly bangers with like Christmas number ones. And ...

Rebecca Toal 56:18

Little Donkeyyyy.

James Partridge 56:19

...like, exactly, and then we'll all have like Christmas crackers and mince pies and mulled wine and it's just going to be a wholesome like...

Rebecca Toal 56:25

We will be there.

James Partridge 56:26

So yes, I'll let you know when it is.

Hattie Butterworth 56:28

Thank you!

James Partridge 56:30

That will be a lot of fun I think. Yeah.

Rebecca Toal 56:31

Amazing.

Hattie Butterworth 56:32

Thanks so much for joining us.

Rebecca Toal 56:33

Yeah, thank you so much.

James Partridge 56:36

Great.

James Partridge 57:05

All Things Bright and Beautiful