

s f t w

MUSIC EXTRA

TOP 5 GAMES

1. Call Of Duty: Black Ops Cold War
2. FIFA 21
3. Spider-Man: Miles Morales

4. Assassin's Creed Valhalla
 5. Fortnite: The Last Laugh Bundle
- Ukie Games Charts®, compiled by GfK

FOUR decades ago Spandau Ballet emerged and became one of the biggest bands of the Eighties.

Now songs such as True, Gold and To Cut A Long Story Short feature on new collection Spandau Ballet 40 Years - The Greatest Hits.

The band - Martin Kemp (bass), his brother Gary (guitarist and songwriter), Tony Hadley (vocals), John Keeble (drums) and Steve Norman (sax) - had as many squabbles as hits, including a very public High Court case in 1999 over royalties.

After quitting in 2017, Hadley said "I'd rather be happy on my own than be in that band again."

Martin, who went on to star in EastEnders, tells JACQUI SWIFT what their music means today, why Live Aid is a favourite memory and what the chances are of ever seeing the band back together on stage.

WHAT does Spandau Ballet's music mean to people today?

It's an old cliché, but music is the soundtrack to everybody's life. And if you were around in the Eighties, you appreciate the Eighties.

That's the whole idea of bringing out the album - it's 40 years since we started.

We had a career that went on for ten years and so it was an awful lot of music.

On the album, we've put together not just the hits, but some odd bits and pieces as well for people to listen to.

There's also a new track - The Boxer - which is a Simon and Garfunkel track.

Does it feel like 40 years?

When I hear those records it feels like somebody else. I've completely changed as a person to who I was back then. When I play those Spandau records it takes me back. It was the sound of the Eighties and we were one of two bands who represent those times. Us and Duran Duran.

We were rivals like the Rolling Stones and The Beatles, and I loved all that.

A lot of fans were tribalistic and you don't get that with music and bands today.

So when you did start making a bit of money, what was the first flash thing you bought?

Cars. It was the same with every young kid. Spandau didn't actually sell a lot of records in the first three years as then we were only really big in Britain.

You have to wait until you break the rest of Europe or America before you can make proper money. I was still living at home with my mum and dad then.

Your debut single, To Cut A Long Story Short, was your first hit in 1980 - what was that like?

We got to be on Top Of The Pops which was the dream as a kid. It was even a bigger dream than to be number one.

To me and Gary, success meant being able to pay back our parents for the belief they showed in us. Our success belongs to them because of the love and work ethic they gave us both.

And I've passed it on to my kids Harley and Roman, who I'm so proud of, not only because of what they've achieved but because they are really lovely people.

When album True came out in 1983 it changed everything. What was that period like?

Before the album, we were pretty much a cult band playing in clubs. True was a completely different sound for us. We went for it and made the pop-soul album we wanted to. We went to the Bahamas to make it and give it a different feel.

When True went to No1 (both single and album) it was everything we ever wanted. We started playing to more people and developed a bigger sound.

"We'd grown into a proper rock band and that was probably my favourite Spandau period."

What memories do you have of playing Live Aid at Wembley in 1985?

It was probably one of the greatest days of my life.

We knew it was going to be historical while it was happening.

We were playing to two billion people



BEFORE THE BREAK-UP
... Gary, Martin, Tony,
Steve and John



SPANDAU
BALLET
40 Years - The
Greatest Hits
★★★★★

'Us and Duran Duran ...we were like The Beatles v the Stones'

- MARTIN KEMP

around the world on television and 100,000 people in the stadium and it was a beautiful summer's day.

It was a lovely memory and one of the happiest days Spandau ever had.

How did you feel watching your film Soul Boys Of The Western World for the first time when it was released in 2014?

It was really touching. We'd all done our interviews separately and hadn't heard what each other had to say until we were all in the cinema together.

By the end of it, we were all in tears and hugging each other - it was the most emotional hour and a half of my life.

So many kids have said to me how they were jealous about the time and what it meant for youth pop culture, being able to dress up and have their gang. Today pop culture happens behind everybody's telephone, on Twitter and on Instagram.

Your 1989 collection Heart Like A Sky didn't do as well as previous albums. How did you react?

That was a difficult album to accept and the fact that the sell-by date on Spandau Ballet was running out. In the Nineties pop bands were being blown away by DJ culture. It was also an album that Gary didn't really want to make but I pressured him into it to keep the band together. I was scared of what was going to happen if the band disappeared.

But we made it and I'm proud of some of the songs. Gary is a brilliant songwriter.

Back in 1999 Tony, Steve and John launched what would be an unsuccessful court case against Gary for a share of the band's songwriting royalties. How did that affect you?

We are a family that goes through stuff. We have our arguments and re-formed

and then had more arguments. Will we get back together? It's a tough one because we're at an age when I'd question if I'd enjoy a world tour again.

I'm not sure I would want that back in my life. So looking back on the band with this album has been lovely.

You hired a new singer, Ross William Wild, when Tony quit in 2017. Any regrets?

It was an experiment that we all had a lot of fun doing but, for me personally, it wasn't Spandau. But we tried it.

It didn't work and we had to move on. And I don't feel guilty about Ross as he had a great time doing it.

So what would it take to get the five of you back together for another tour?

I have no beef with anyone in the band. I never had. I understand people want to see us together and I have a real guilt with that. If it's to be, it will be. There are five people who have to say "yes" at the same time, not just me.

● Spandau Ballet 40 Years - The Greatest Hits is out today



NEW MUSIC
By Jim Gellatly

CONSTANT FOLLOWER
WHO: Stephen McAll (vocals/guitar/synth/bass), Andrew Pankhurst (guitar), Amy Campbell (synth/vocals), Kessi Stosch (synth/bass/vocals).

WHERE: Stirling.
FOR FANS OF: Low, Bon Iver, Sufjan Stevens.

JIM SAYS: The soaring, melodic, folk-tinged sound of Constant Follower sweeps you away as they create moving and atmospheric music. It's built from personal struggle with frontman Stephen McAll surviving a brutal gang attack as a teenager.

He said: "That's kind of where the name of the band comes from, these tough times that follow you through life... and the good times too."

"The head injury left me in a situation where I wasn't able to play music for a long time. I was doing things that weren't good for me in an attempt to cope with everyday life."

Constant Follower first emerged as a solo project three years ago.

McAll explained: "I played a couple of gigs on my own and realised I wanted to flesh out the songs a bit more. Around that time, I met Andrew at a gig and we pretty much started working together right away."

"Kessi is my partner and is one of the most musically versatile folk I know, so she came in on backing vocals and learned to play bass. I invited Amy to join after hearing her through a friend."

"I knew her vocals would just sit wonderfully in the band. We were also looking for someone to play the synth bits I write live. Amy's incredible on piano, so that worked out too."

With a couple of critically acclaimed singles, things have stepped up a gear for the spring release of the debut Constant Follower album. Influential New York musician, producer and Shimmy Disc label boss Kramer has come on board for recording. McAll said: "Kramer has been so supportive of my process and of the music at large. I can't think of anyone who I'd trust the same with my music... actually, maybe Eno!"

While McAll and Kramer work remotely on the album, the double A-side single I Can't Wake You/Itona has just been released.

McAll added: "If you can hear a common feel in these songs, then the album won't be far off that. I'm not sure if these songs will even make the album."

"We have two albums' worth of songs we think are worthy for the record. Our main aim is to make an 'album' that tells a story, like albums used to. Kramer is the master of that."

MORE: constantfollower.com
● Jim presents a weekly showcase of New Music on Amazing Radio, Sundays from 2-4pm.

amazingradio.com
jimgellatly.com

Watch video of Constant Follower at thescottishsun.co.uk