

Someone's got to do it...

The Session Guitarist Matt Backer, in his thirties is a session guitarist or a 'guitar for hire'. He's from New Orleans and now lives in London with his wife and two children.

Aren't you always the new boy, never the musician who enjoys the shared experience, intimacy, in-jokes, and lets face it, fame and money, of members of a successful band? *Possibly, but I'm used to it. I used to be a supply teacher. I like the challenge of novelty. And, certainly in London, there's a club feel among musicians so you get the in-jokes plus the shared feeling of being embattled, being in a dying profession that's being replaced by computers. I don't mind not being a famous guitarist in a famous band- I'd rather be a rich guitarist behind the scenes. I know a lot of celebrities and it's not a lot of fun. I get a lot of the perks and none of the problems. I can wander round Dublin while Robbie Williams has to stay imprisoned in his hotel.*

Were you working with him?

I often work with ABC who you might remember from the Eighties. We did a stadium tour opening for Robbie Williams. There were 40,000 people going mad, singing along to the songs.

What of the lack of creativity that surely must bother you?

I get hired for now for what I can bring. People know I can contribute a certain thing to a project. I might not write the songs, but I do for my solo work -I've recently recorded my eagerly un-awaited solo album 'Is That All?'.

Who else do you play for?

The in-house band for The Brian Conley Show and a television series with Harry Hill. And I'm- literally- going to Hell, in Norway with Sarah Jane Morris.

Why not the-relatively-secure life of one band?

The original plan was to have a band and a girl in every port, but I met a girl and now I've got a band in every port!. No. It was something I always wanted to do as a kid, play in a band. I had one at school but we all went off in various directions. I went to Berkley College in Boston. When I was at Warwick University I played in bands and all over The Midlands. I've got eclectic tastes and musical abilities so it's probably better I'm not stuck in one band. A colleague was once talking to George Harrison who told him he was lucky to play with lots of different people in different styles. My colleague was gobsmacked- Harrison implied he felt stifled and wanted to branch out!

You've worked with a lot of comedians. Has that been fun?

Yes. On Harry Hill's new show we all had to wear bald wigs and glasses and dress up like Harry.

That wasn't compromising your artistic integrity, indeed dignity?

No we saw the funny side and that's why they hired us. And at the end-of- series party I ended up dancing with Christine Hamilton. The great thing is meeting so many different people and your preconceptions go out the window. Neil Hamilton is very dry, sharp, articulate and well-read.

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