



Music in Malvern, then and now

Transcription of excerpts from interviews with
Mary Simcox, David Roberts, Malcolm Orgee, 'Toad' Seabright,
Roger Morton and Ralph Titley

Mary: I just thought Malvern was a really boring place until I moved away when I was about 20, and then I realised how magical it was.

David: I look at the events at the Winter Gardens and it seems very staid to me. There's nobody promoting the music that they used to have. And that was the good thing about Cherry Red, there was a vast range of music they put on, you know it suited a lot of the tastes. I mean I might have been bored by Camel, but the rest of my sixth form friends thought it was the best gig they ever went to in their lives, you know. And similarly for Caravan, but I thought it was a load of old tosh myself. But, you know it was there if you wanted it, and if you wanted a more folkie experience, go and see Lindisfarne and whatever, you know you could do that. But I look at it now and just think it's not the place it has been, and it's been good that they've put all that money into the Winter Gardens, but they don't seem to have very exciting stuff happening there that I can see.

Malcolm: I know that there is still a healthy music scene in Malvern. I'm still in contact with people through social media, and I realise that. And I know there's always very good musicians around here, very, very good quality. I don't quite know why that is, but it's always been the case,

you know. It's just part of the Malvern culture. Or maybe it's in the Malvern water, I don't know.

Toad: A lot of people round here still, they keep going on about the old days and all that like. Yeah, we--, look they're gone, you know it's good memories, but you know some people are sort of like trapped in the past really like, you know. But yeah, yeah it was, er, you know, tell kids of today, "Yeah, saw AC/DC, yeah". They're like, "Really?" "Yeah, they played here, yeah". And a lot of kids can't believe it like, but yeah, it used to be, well it still is, a good town, but I mean I like living here, but yeah, it's not as lively as it was, I don't think.

Roger: The concerts are all tribute acts and that sort of stuff, it's nothing exciting. In the '60s it was exhilarating [laughs]. Yeah. Yeah, I wouldn't call Malvern exhilarating now. I like being here because it, you know I've got happy memories, but it's not the Malvern that I spent my time in the '60s in, no way.

David : The Winter Gardens doesn't seem to celebrate that history. I've noticed that myself when I go there. And I think that's a great sadness, I think they should celebrate this period. And they should do something about bringing it back as well. As beautiful as a place as it is to live, I wouldn't want to live there now. I might change my mind if somebody used the Winter Gardens to do something a bit more exciting than some very safe middle of the road music, or some covers band, you know. They need to go back to that more edgy stuff, you know. There's a purpose-built space for it that was very successful, there's no reason to believe it wouldn't be successful again.

Ralph:

In many ways I still think Malvern has one of the most vibrant music scenes I've come across. I mean I've lived quite a few places and Malvern is absolutely full of musicians. You know you can't go ten yards without bumping into a poet or a [laughs], or a violin player, or a flutist. It's a constant thing in Malvern, and I'm never quite certain why it is, you know, maybe it has something to do with the heritage of the Winter Gardens that, you know, people feel they've got some connection with it. But it's a very musical place, and the quality and the standard of our musicians and our musicianship, and the songs that we produce here is just, you know, it's world class. And I think it's sad that sometimes we don't recognise that ourselves.

*Transcripts of the full interviews are available from Rock Around the Hills
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