

One, two, three, four...

Of course you don't hear that on the recorded track, as is often the case the count is edited out during the mixing stage. But that was me, counting in 'Sail Away', the first track on Woolly Wolstenholme's solo album 'Maestoso'. The responsibility for the count usually falls to the drummer and it was a responsibility that I truly relished on that first day of recording in Stockport's Strawberry Studios. And so began an adventure that was to last, on and off, until Woolly's tragic death thirty or so years later.

So, its been forty years since we recorded the first Maestoso album, where did that go, eh? Being asked to think back about that exciting period of my life with a set of questions posed by Stephen*, brought back many memories. In actual fact, the adventure began some time earlier and in order to answer some of the questions for this reflection, I must first go back a little further than forty years to contextualise the situation from my own point of view.

Isn't Life Strange? (to quote The Moody Blues aka The Rich Mans Barclay James Harvest)...



KT at 16

In 1971 at the tender age of 16, I had moved from a tiny village (Howe) in North Yorkshire to Manchester. Leaving friends and family behind, like many others before me and since, I had come to the big city to seek fame and fortune. I was already a fan of Barclay James Harvest having seen them perform with full orchestra at the Weeley Festival that same year (I had particularly loved Mocking Bird and bought the album 'Once Again' as soon as I got home). I can remember as if 'twere yesterday, going into Crowthers (one of the coolest clothes shops in Manchester at the time, which was owned by John Crowther, Barclays then manager) on South King Street and thinking 'I wonder if I'll see any members of BJH in here' (I never did!)

To quote somebody else, 'Life is what happens to you while you're busy making other plans'...

I had been living in Manchester for a couple of years or so, trying to make my way and break into the music scene. I had been playing with a couple of local bands but not much seemed to be happening fame or fortune wise and my father (Ralph Turner, a pro sax player/band leader in the 50's and 60's and from the 70's until not long before his death in 2007, a popular clubland comedian known as Pancho Villa) had asked me if I would like to accompany him on a trip to relocate his catamaran (which had taken him seven years to build) from Thorne near Doncaster to Malta. This seemed like an exciting prospect and so, after a little deliberation, I agreed. After successfully sailing down the east coast of England, we were (some might say foolishly) attempting to cross the English Channel on a particularly stormy day. Disaster ensued when the catamaran, being buffeted by heavy seas began to let in water. By this time we were half way across the channel so there was no turning back and we ploughed on relentlessly. I found myself in the bowels of the boat waist deep in water desperately bailing out. When I realised the water inside the boat was at the same level as it was on the outside I was finally forced to admit defeat. After sending up several flares and a frantic mayday call we were rescued from certain death in a watery grave by a French fishing trawler that came to our aid. Understandably this escapade cut the trip somewhat shorter than I had anticipated.

Fate, it seemed, had other plans for me.

Wet and bedraggled, I returned to Manchester and as chance would have it, I made the acquaintance of Tony Cresswell (the original Mandalaband drummer) during a recording session with Dave Rohl in the first recording studio I had ever been in: Indigo Studios. Tony coincidentally, it turned out, lived round the corner from me in Heaton Moor. This encounter ultimately resulted in my being re-

cruited into the ranks of Mandalaband after Tony, John Stimpson, Vic Emerson and Ashley Mulford parted company with Dave Rohl and Dave Durant (the original vocalist), to form Sad Cafe with Paul Young. (NB Somewhere in there I collaborated with Vic Emerson playing drums on what was intended to be an album of his solo compositions. I wonder what became of those recordings?)

What was to become Mandalaband's second album, 'The Eye of Wendor', had originally started out quite differently to how it ended up. Initially Dave Durant was still very much involved and had some lovely songs which were intended for the album. He used to come round to my flat and we would routine the songs together on a couple of acoustic guitars. However, Dave Durant ultimately became disillusioned with the project and decided to bow out which left Dave Rohl having to formulate a different plan...



KT and Dave Rohl in Strawberry, in search of the lost chord

So, there I was, working with Dave Rohl on the 'Eye of Wendor' album, learning as I went along about the process of writing, recording, mixing and ultimately producing a finished album. I was initially recruited as the drummer but ended up being able to contribute much more significantly than I had originally anticipated, playing not only drums on most of the tracks but also multiple percussion (tambourine, congas, timpani etc.), tuned percussion (Marimba, Vibes, Glockenspiel, Tubular Bells), sound-effects (prepared piano, water gongs, bells, glasses and various screams, creaks and stomps), guitar and performing backing vocals on many of the tracks too. I look on this experience as my apprenticeship period with gratitude to Dave Rohl who, by the end had started referring to me as his right hand man (even though I'm left handed). As a consequence of my involvement I found myself meeting and playing with lots of illustrious musicians who featured on the album including Woolly and all the rest of Barclay James Harvest.

Woolly contributed a great deal to the Mandalaband album too, so consequently we ended up spending quite a lot of time together in Strawberry (the album was recorded over a two year period), including 'down time' shooting the breeze, playing pool and sampling the odd glass of red.

On a side note, here is an interesting fact straight from the horses mouth: The insult/term 'Wally' (as in 'You Wally!') originated at the Weeley Festival in 1971 as a result of a stage manager calling 'Could Woolly please come to the stage area' over the P.A, just prior to BJH's set. The audience misheard and began chanting for 'Wally'. This eventually turned into the crowd singing random songs such as 'Wally Put the Kettle On' and 'Wally'll be Coming Round the Mountain When He Comes' etc. which kept us amused and entertained until BJH took to the stage. Subsequently, in the ensuing weeks, months and years, this became a kind of Pythonesque 'in joke' at gigs all over the country. While waiting for a band to come on, people in the crowd would randomly shout out 'Wally' in a daft voice, so much so that eventually, after it having been quite amusing initially, over time it became an irritating and inane thing to do, hence 'You Wally' became an insult. (There are other accounts of its origins including the tale of how it originated at the 1970 Isle of Wight festival featuring Jimi Hendrix, but I was there too and can categorically say it didn't!) - As Jonathan Woss might have put it, 'Weeley's Wally was weally Woolly!'

After 'The Eye of Wendor', Woolly, Dave Rohl, Steve Broomhead and myself had continued to work on other projects as a tight knit (or should that be loose knit) unit. This included music soundtracks for some TV programmes with the animation company Cosgrove Hall, who went on to make such programmes as Count Duckula and Dangermouse. The first soundtrack we recorded was for a feature length cartoon called The Talking Parcel with music written by Woolly and Dave, so the basic line-up for Maestoso had been formed and forged over that period of time. When Woolly decided to leave BJH and begin his solo career by recording an album of his own compositions, we

were already 'in situ' so to speak, and so, for me, it was very much a case of being in the right place at the right time.

Woolly and I shared a passion for music, more specifically a love of progressive rock and classical music, though while Woolly was a big fan of Vanilla Fudge and Love, I was more into Genesis and Yes. And whereas he favoured Mahler, I loved Bach. However, we both agreed that King Crimson were great! And we both shared a dark sense of humour and appreciation of the bizarre, which amongst other things was demonstrated through the exchange of unusual and often banal gifts such as kitsch 1950's dinner place mats and knitted tea cosies (What *do* you buy for the man who has everything?). However, Woolly's sense of humour was tested while we were touring Europe with the Canadian band Saga when, on stage in front of a 10,000 strong audience, I decided to poke a little fun at the pomp and circumstance of the occasion and elected to slowly and pointedly un-peel and eat a banana during a performance of 'The Iron Maiden', one of Woolly's most sombre and heartfelt songs. Ripples of laughter ran around the auditorium. Though the audience and I found it highly amusing, I'm not sure that Woolly did! Indignantly he said to me after the gig, "Tomorrow, while you're singing 'Tonight Could Be the Night', I'm going to eat a peach!". We both shared a love of food. While we were on tour we would dine out at the finest restaurants, though we generally made do with sandwiches from the local deli during the recording of 'Maestoso'.



KT and WW backstage in search of the lost set list

Speaking of sandwiches, having been given my name as a prospective drummer, Morrissey came round to my house when he was putting the Smiths together. I had played him some tracks from 'Maestoso' and 'Black Box', and we had chatted amiably about music in general for a couple of hours or so. When I, not unreasonably I thought, offered to make him a bacon sandwich, he upped and left, muttering something about meat and murder. Needless to say, I didn't get the gig!

I am still very proud of the album 'Maestoso' and my contributions to it. Most of the songs had been demoed by Woolly in advance so we had a pretty clear idea about what was required for the arrangements from the get go. The recording sessions lasted only a few weeks but were thoroughly enjoyable and exciting. The 'vibe' in the studio was great and special mention should be given to four unsung members of the team, Woolly's ever present and supportive wife Jill, photographer Roger Heeley Barnes for his genial bonhomie, the lovely Trevor Worman in charge of logistics and to assistant engineer and all round good guy Chris Nagle who went on to work with, amongst others, Martin Hannett.



KT finally finding the lost chord!

We worked at a fairly brisk pace initially getting a basic 'bed' or two down per day, and then subsequently building up the tracks with overdubs. Creating musical pieces in the studio in this way has always been a passion of mine and even though the basic songs were written and Woolly already had a clear vision of what he wanted there was still a modicum of room for individual artistic expression and experimentation with the overdubs.

Though I have been a songwriter since taking up guitar at the age of 14, I also enjoy co-writing and contributing 'parts' to songs. My favourite tracks on the album are 'A prospect of Whitby' and 'Lives on the Line', though I am particularly fond and proud of a certain quite inventive, cross rhythmic and 'in your face' (if I say so myself) hi-hat/bass drum fill in 'Maestoso - A Hymn In The Roof Of The World', that I had to fight tooth and nail to keep in - Woolly hated it!

I don't really know, and maybe Woolly didn't know initially, if there were any specific plans for the Maestoso album to be promoted by a tour or gigs but he was in generally high spirits while recording and very much looking to the future. There were however, a few barbed comments about the situation he had left behind, specifically the musical direction BJH were headed in and I remember him bemoaning the lack of songwriting opportunities that had been open to him. Woolly and I did do a tour of UK radio stations to promote the album on its initial release but I seem to remember Woolly was less than impressed by Polydor's lacklustre effort when it came round to their promotional campaign - I think it amounted to a half page ad in some music publication or other. Something about a conflict of interest...



Catterwauling in my back garden

Dave Rohl and I got together to reform Mandalaband a few years ago now and recorded a couple of great albums - B.C. and A.D., both heavily featuring Woolly.

These days I own one of the coolest clothes shops in Manchester (so my customers tell me), Zeffa in Afflecks Palace. Recent shoppers have included Lady Gaga, Benedict Cumberbatch, Arthur Brown, The Scissor Sisters, Pete Doherty and, oh yes dear reader, members of BJH - Craig and Kev often come in to restock their wardrobes!



KT with Prog legend Arthur Brown in Zeffa

I still play occasionally, usually with friends just for the fun of it. Sometimes I can be found in the studio with my daughter Mica Millar who, after working with the likes of Red Sky Noise and Goldie and touring with Peter Hook, is currently working on her first solo album with Prince and Etta James engineer/producer David Z (Incidentally, Mica's first venture into the world of recorded music was when she featured on Maestoso's 'Grim' album singing the 'Its lucky you don't have a cat' line in 'Scenes from a London Flat', which was part of Woolly's



My daughter Mica Millar with Peter Hook (and full orchestra) at The Royal Albert Hall

ill fated musical opus - 'Musical? The Musical'). Now that I am approaching retirement age I hope to find the time to finally record my own long awaited solo album of Tyrol Yodeling. Additionally,

Steve Broomhead and I have recently discussed getting together to maybe collaborate on some new material and revisit some old Maestoso songs. I suggested that we might go out as an acoustic duo under the moniker 'Ex-Barclay James Harvest's Woolly Wolstenholme's Maestoso, Through the Ears, Nose and Throat of Steve Broomhead, Featuring Kim Turner (Without Woolly) Unplugged and Unhinged', but I'm not sure it would fit on the posters. Anyway, you never know, watch this space.....

Coda

The fact that anyone should be interested in what I recall about the production of an album of music that was recorded so long ago is quite gratifying. However, I am quite aware that the main reason that people might be interested is because of Woolly. Additionally, I have always tended to subscribe to the old rock and roll adage 'what goes on tour stays on tour', and similarly it follows, 'what goes on in studio stays in studio' because really, it is ultimately just about the music. Additionally, taking a trip down memory lane can, by turns, be a variously interesting, unsettling, amusing and sometimes a quite uncomfortable journey. But, as we of a certain age know, memory can also be a notoriously unreliable source of accurate facts, so perhaps a pinch of salt might be in order.

All the best

Kim

*Stephens Questions:

1. Was it through Mandalaband that you first met Woolly? What do you think you had in common?
2. How did Woolly go about recruiting you for the album?
3. How did you add to Woolly's demos? Did you try out anything else for the album? Were you also a songwriter at this time?
4. There is a ruefulness to the album undoubtedly brought about by Woolly's feelings about leaving Barclay James Harvest which greatly adds to its beauty. How do you feel about those songs now? Which ones are you most proud of?
5. Did Woolly feel optimistic about a new beginning? Did you get any feedback from Polydor?