

BRIEFLY



Special birthday for music project

A music project that provides free courses for people in Leeds is celebrating its 10th birthday with gigs and advice sessions.

Cloth Cat's series of 16 courses are free and include music technology, performance, live sound engineering and the business side of music.

■ **For more information or to book a place, phone 0113 244 2773 or e-mail mike@clothcatleeds.org.uk**



Putin row disco band go on tour

Stephane and 3G, the Georgian band who were disqualified from this year's Eurovision Song Contest, are coming to Yorkshire.

The band refused to change the lyrics to *Don't Wanna Put In* which received complaints from the Russian authorities after it was accused of having anti-Putin sentiments. The band is making an appearance on Wednesday, May 13, at Fuel Nightclub, in Hull.

CHARTS

Singles

- 1 **Tinchy Stryder Ft N-Dubz** Number 1 (4th & Broadway)
- 2 **La Roux** In For The Kill (Polydor)
- 3 **Ironik/Chipmunk/Elton John** Tiny Dancer (Hold Me Closer) (Asylum)
- 4 **Calvin Harris** I'm Not Alone (Columbia)
- 5 **Lady Gaga** Poker Face (Interscope)
- 6 **Ciara Ft Justin Timberlake** Love Sex Magic (RCA)
- 7 **AR Rahman Ft Pussycat Dolls** Jai Ho (You Are My Destiny) (Interscope)
- 8 **Eminem** We Made You (Interscope)
- 9 **Lily Allen** Not Fair (Regal Recordings)
- 10 **Beyoncé** Halo (Columbia)

Albums

- 1 **Bob Dylan** Together Through Life (Columbia)
- 2 **The Enemy** Music For The People (Warner Bros)
- 3 **Lady Gaga** The Fame (Interscope)
- 4 **Beyoncé** I Am Sasha Fierce (Columbia)
- 5 **Lily Allen** It's Not Me It's You (Regal Recordings)
- 6 **Pink** Funhouse (Laface)
- 7 **Prodigy** Invaders Must Die (Takemetothospital)
- 8 **Kings Of Leon** Only By The Night (Hand Me Down)
- 9 **Pussycat Dolls** Doll Domination – The Mini Collection (Interscope)
- 10 **Akon** Freedom (Universal)

How Wonder Stuff got

INTERVIEW

They penned some of the early '90s most upbeat anthems but The Wonder Stuff were far from happy. **Chris Bond** finds out how they put aside their problems to celebrate a major anniversary...

WHAT'S surprising is not that The Wonder Stuff split up, it's that they managed to stay together for so long.

On stage the band, who penned many of the best anthems of the late '80s and early '90s, were an embodiment of a carefree indie existence.

They had long hair. Frontman Miles Hunt wore a tartan suit. Live, they perfected a chaotic kind of charm. Off-stage they were in a perpetual state of unrest.

"To be honest it was always pretty fraught," says Miles, his Black Country accent as distinctive as that suit.

"People think the early days must have been great, but they weren't particularly happy, there was always someone who was fed up. We never agreed on anything."

Nothing if not disarmingly honest about the realities of life in a band, after four successful albums, Miles announced The Wonder Stuff would be going their separate ways. The band split at what was arguably their peak, but it was largely pressure to fit an industry blueprint of success that proved the tipping point.

"I never cared about commercial success," he says, taking a break from the studio where he is currently recording with his acoustic partner Erica Nockalls.

"I cared about the song writing. I cared about how we performed. My attitude was:

'If you want to make money, go join another band'.

"By the end I knew there was going to be pressure to do an arena tour. I didn't want to do it. We'd played the NEC in Birmingham and for me it was the least enjoyable gig we ever did. I was happy to do a tour of 30 or 40 dates, but what I didn't want to do was to play a handful of soulless gigs. I wasn't interested in that kind of musical muscle-flexing."

While other bands would have relished the promise of more fame and even greater fortune, The Wonder Stuff performed their swan song at the 1994 Phoenix Festival in front of 30,000 fans. Miles went onto host a show on MTV, he started another band with ex-Senseless Things bassist Morgan Nicholls and with fellow Stuffie Malc Treece he headed for America where the pair toured acoustically.

He was certainly doing a good job of showing there was life after The Wonder Stuff, but six years after they had gone their separate ways Miles and Malc patched things up with the rest of the band.

"It seemed like a good idea," he says of the reunion with drummer Martin Gilks and fiddle player Martin Bell.

"We were getting on well. Unfortunately that lasted about a month and then the same old piffling arguments reared their head. Nothing had changed.



HAPPY NOW: The reformed Wonder Stuff are back on the road to celebrate 20 years of music.

“I guess we have grown up a bit. We've learnt to smell the roses more often than we used to...”

"Gilksy and Martin left, but it wasn't worth my time to worry about what they were up to. The band had always served one purpose – to allow me and Malc to write songs and that's what we carried on doing."

In April 2006, Martin Gilks was killed in a motorcycle crash. By then Miles had severed ties with his two

former band mates and The Wonder Stuff had already undergone a reinvention of sorts. Two years earlier there had been a new album, *Escape From Rubbish Island*, and with a new drummer, violinist and bassist, Miles was looking forward rather than back.

However, last year he had cause to reminisce. It was 20

Catch the most talented stars of their generation

CLASSICAL PREVIEW

David Denton

This coming October sees the return of Leeds Lieder+, and as a run-up to the event they have arranged a special Gala Celebrity Recital featuring Ann Murray, one of the most renowned mezzo-sopranos of our time.

Born in Dublin, she came to study at Manchester's Royal Northern College of Music, making her early career in

the UK and numbered among the regular team of singers with English National Opera and the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, and was also a familiar figure in our major concert halls.

Thirty years ago she appeared on the second night of the newly formed Opera North in the role of Dido in Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, but her fame was soon was to rob us of her presence, her stage appearances taking her on the international circuit to

Milan's La Scala, the Metropolitan Opera in New York, and, as one of the principals at the Vienna State Opera, her singing of Octavian in Strauss's *Der Rosenkavalier* was one of life's great musical experiences.

In that busy diary she has managed to find room to offer Leeds one of her wide-ranging recitals, the programme ranging from Fauré, through the lieder of Brahms and ending with Cole Porter's evergreens.

She is partnered by Joseph

Middleton, described as the leading accompanist of the new generation, who has collaborated with many of the world's leading singers.

Details of the major event, which is scheduled to run from October 2 to 4, includes a catalogue of younger generation artists, including Christianne Stotijn, James Glichrst, Joan Rodgers, Anna Stephany and the Endellion String Quartet.

■ **Tickets from The Venue, Leeds, May 20, 7.30pm. 0113 222 3434.**



RARE TALENT: Mezzo Ann Murray will perform.