

I'VE SPENT SOME 40 YEARS BEING ASKED

STUPID QUESTIONS ABOUT JOE DOLCE, BUT

# It means NOTHING to me..



MEMORY AID: Talking to Bob Geldof for the new BBC show. Right, Midge in 1985



STEPPING BACK: With Shaun Ryder of the Happy Mondays on new show

**A LOVELY lazy morning in early July and here I am, playing Name That 80s Lyric with pop legend Midge Ure.**

And I have to say he's actually doing pretty well.

I stumped him with a Duran Duran song, but since then he's been on a roll: Karma Chameleon (Culture Club), True (Spandau Ballet), Stand And Deliver (Adam "Dandy Highwayman" Ant). Midge has recognised the lot.

So now for his final mystery lyric: "What's a matter you?" I begin. "Gotta no respect?"

Midge gives a comic sigh. He should have known this one was coming. "No, doesn't ring any bells!" he chuckles. But he's kidding.

That line is from Shaddap You Face, an infamous early-80s novelty hit by a guy called Joe Dolce.

It isn't actually featured in Midge's new TV series, Smashing Hits! The 80s Pop Map Of Britain & Ireland, because (a) it's Australian and (b) it's an abomination.

But it did play a significant role in our pop history, keeping Midge's Ultravox classic Vienna off the top of the UK charts for three long weeks.

### Proud

As Midge, it seems, is still reminded on a regular basis.

"I was in Australia only recently," he tells me, "and somebody told me Joe Dolce was coming round to say hi."

"So I said: 'D'you know what, don't bother. I've spent nearly 40 years being asked stupid questions about Joe Dolce. I do NOT want to spend the rest of my life having people ask me what it was like meeting him!'"

Midge is saying all this, I should stress, with a smile on his face.

Despite all he's achieved in a career that dates back decades - including a pivotal role as co-writer of 1984's groundbreaking Band Aid charity single Do They Know It's Christmas? - he's clearly not a bloke who takes himself ridiculously seriously.

For further confirmation, just remind him of his performance a few years back on ITV's thankfully short-lived show Popstar To Operastar.

"Oh, that was rubbish!" he cries. "And suffice to say the programme disappeared straight afterwards. I'm very proud to have played my part in its downfall!"

Being asked by the BBC to co-host this new series - along with fellow '80s star Kim Appleby of Mel and Kim fame - is something he modestly describes as "very nice of them".

But actually he was a smart choice. Midge makes an engagingly easy-going TV presenter.

Filmed as a nationwide road trip, the show looks at how some of the best '80s pop emerged from key locations, including London, Manchester, Sheffield, Cov-



## Midge Ure Musician THE MIKE WARD INTERVIEW

entry, Glasgow and Dublin, each with its own distinct style. "It's like regional accents," says Midge. "You don't have to travel far to hear a completely different one, and it's the same with music."

"Throw a dart anywhere at a UK map and it'll land on something with a specific type of music associated with it."

So were he and Kim forever stopping off at motorway service stations

tucking into, say, the Little Chef Olympic Breakfast (£7.99)?

"We did do a bit of that," he says.

### Smart

"Every so often we'd pull into the services and there'd be a cluster of '80s pop artists in the food court!"

And his report on Dublin, of course, was the perfect excuse to catch up with his old Band Aid mucker Bob Geldof. Are they still close?

"Bob and I will forever be connected," says Midge.

"We never really call or see each other, but when we do it's fine. We just pick up from where we left off."

"In this case we chatted for about two hours. We could have made a programme from that alone. Bob is witty, smart and abrasive. He's a joy to sit and talk to."

He's also still got all that hair. I politely point out,

Whereas Midge is embracing the fully shaven look these days. "Once it starts going there's not much you can do," he points out. "It's that or a comb-over..."

Coupled with the specs he wears on this show, I suggest he's looking a bit like MasterChef's Gregg Wallace.

Midge seems fine with that comparison. Well," he laughs, "I'd rather look like Gregg Wallace than Rab C. Nesbitt!"

**Smashing Hits! The 80s Pop Map Of Britain & Ireland starts tonight at 10pm on BBC Four.**



ALL STOOD STILL: Midge today and, right, with his band Ultravox in 1985



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