

MAT HECTOR TRANSCRIPTION

Tom: Can we start right at the beginning?

Mat: Sure.

Tom: Where are you from originally? Where did you grow up and your musical background?

Mat: I'm based in Kent just outside London physically. Musically I started quite late. I started around seventeen.

Tom: That is quite late.

Mat: Yeah. When I first started, most people just jammed with friends at school. I was studying A levels, not particularly happy with the path I was following in terms of my life. I was playing drums a little bit at that point, nothing too fantastic, but managed to get myself on a local gig that I used to go and watch regularly who would play most of the pubs in Kent. I was about sixteen then. I did that gig and worked out quite quickly that hanging out with musicians and meeting those kind of people fitted my personality a lot better than an academic route. So all of a sudden things started making a bit more sense as a sixteen year old. I felt a lot happier in my own skin as a musician. I felt a lot happier around musicians then I did in the school environment. It was quite obvious to me that the path for me should be in music, so I ditched my A levels and started with this band who were working every week in most of the pubs around Kent. That was how I started properly with a band that were gigging regularly. It was a three-piece with a bass player and a guitarist who were both really great players. I was very young at the time so I was the youngster amongst the other two and got to learn a lot from them very quickly. If there's one way of learning about music and how to become a better musician, it's by doing a gig. I used to teach for a bit and I'd tell my pupils that one gig was worth ten to twenty drum lessons because you really learn your trade when you're in front of an audience playing with a band, making mistakes and getting things wrong. That's when you really learn the trade. You can practice in a room forever but until you get out there and start doing it for real, if that's what you want to do, some guys are happy playing in their bedrooms with their friends which is completely cool, but if you want to make a serious living out of it you have to get out there and play in front of people with as many bands as you possibly can. That's the path I started at that point in my life and I worked out quite quickly that being on stage and all the good things that came with that; the excitement, the buzz of playing with great musicians, a night going well, playing my instrument, was definitely the path for me. So that's how I started properly.

Tom: So you were immediately drawn to that as soon as you got into it, you were like 'this is definitely it, this is the only way for me'?

Mat: Absolutely. I was considering a path in academia maybe, just a very different world. As soon as I started playing music and hanging out with other musicians everything made sense. I felt happy, I felt content. I had a lot of energy as a youngster and I still have a lot of energy now, and that let me focus my energy on a goal, which at the point was just to become a really good professional drummer. As soon as I decided that's what I wanted to do I essentially, gigs aside, locked myself in my drum room six hours a day, treated it like an apprenticeship that I gave myself. Studied everything. I went to a guy called Bob Armstrong, who unfortunately has died recently, but he's one of the best teachers in the country. A lot of the biggest guys in the UK will have gone to him at some point. I studied with him for a bit. I also worked in a drum shop so I was around drums a lot, in Dartford. That was all around that young, formative period. So not only was I around drums all the time, also gigs would come through that shop, it's a place called 'Drumland' in Dartford, which I would pick up. I would pick up depts and stuff like that.

Tom: Really?

Mat: Absolutely. Getting gigs is all about networking, in this business. You don't go to the job centre and they give you a gig. You go and play with someone, you do a good job, they call you back and then you play with someone different who's recommended you and it spreads like that. So your network spreads with people that know you're reliable, you'll do a good job, you're a good musician, you're a good player, you're a good guy and that's how your professional tentacles start to spread out and that's how you get better gigs, you meet better musicians. All those things also came from being in a drum shop around other drummers. I also worked in a rehearsal studio in Bermondsey at bit later on; maybe I was twenty, again in a place where musicians were going every day. So I'd be around music all the time, I'd go home, I'd practice my drums, I'd go to the studio, I'd meet other musicians. I remember at one point, because I was working in the rehearsal studio I was with so many bands I would do three rehearsals in a day, each with different bands working for other gigs. Building up that network of a lot of people that know you, that's how you start to build a business. We're all self-employed musicians just like a carpenter is self-employed. There's lot of building sites around the country and this self-employed carpenter, if he does a good job will get employed on the next building site. It's no different, the way I've treated it. For me, I endeavor to do a good job all the time and I do a good job on one gig, people on that gig will recommend me for another gig and then your network just spreads out.

Tom: And that's the way that its gone for you?

Mat: Yeah, absolutely.

Tom: Do you think you can trace it all the way back to that first band and that first job?

Mat: Pretty much, yeah. There's a path from where I am now touring with Iggy all the way back to that drum shop. All the people I know in music have spread out

from that first band, that job in the drum shop and work I did from there. You can follow this path through all of them. It's almost like a spreading family tree. You can see 'I met that person but I met him through that' and 'I met that guy through this and that and that' and eventually it will boil back down to those first few gigs and those first jobs in the drum shop and in the studio.

Tom: Like you said, you went out and you did a good job. It sounds like incredible work ethic if you're rehearsing three bands a day and you're working in a drum shop and you're also practicing in a day. It sounds like from the age of sixteen until when you became too busy to do that that you were really committed to it. Did you feel like you had some sort of tunnel vision, laser focus? Did you ignore certain other things that maybe your friends were doing?

Mat: Yep. Absolutely. I'm the kind of obsessive personality to a certain degree. I'm also very focused. I think my talent ratio compared to my work ethic and my application ratio, in as much as applying yourself to do something, I've got enough talent added with a lot of work ethic and a lot of 'I'm just going to keep doing this until I'm successful at it'. Those attitudes, they're a bigger percentage of my personality than the talent I have as a musician.

Tom: That's interesting you say that. Do you think that when you put those two things against each other, have you seen people in the industry who agree with you and that attitude is more important than talent and talent only gets you so far and that if you don't work you're not going to get any further?

Mat: Absolutely. I would guarantee that most working musicians that work from the top down to the mid level will say the same thing. You can find the most incredible drummer, a world-beating drummer who blows your mind, but if that guy is a nightmare, if that guy is never on time, is unreliable, is a pain, he doesn't get on with people, that talent becomes immaterial. Unless you're playing with Dave Weckl or you're with Weather Report where it is completely just about the uber talented, which sometimes that is the only important thing. Most work as a drummer is going to be about playing the groove, having good time keeping, making it feel good, getting on with people, it's more about the basics than it is about super-duper chops, unless you're doing drum clinics. Most gigs you'll find, in the main, is about being a good time keeper, about the sound you make, about being a good musician, and those things sit a little bit outside of just complete raw talent. Also, some people can get behind a drum kit and be incredible, but if you've got enough talent and application you can quite possibly reach the same level they have with less talent but more application. When you're on tour specifically, sometimes it's in tour busses, sometimes it's in hotels, but if you're on a tour bus for six weeks around the States and you've got someone who's an incredibly talented musician but he's a nightmare to be with, he won't get called. It's not different to any other social circumstance. If you're spending a lot of time with people, people want to be happy, have a good time, enjoy the work they're doing, go on stage, have a good night, come off and enjoy the experience. If people are fighting and bickering, being late and being a pain, for an artist it's distracting and for a tour manager who runs the whole thing it's a nightmare. Whereas if you get someone that does a great job, who still hits the mark that's

necessary, but everyone loves, everyone gets on with, he causes nobody any stress, that dude's going to get the work every time.

Tom: Let's break it down into those two things you just talked about. The first thing you were talking about: aside from the talent it's the work ethic, but then you talked personality. I talk to loads of people and they say this as well, someone even said that they thought it was fifty-fifty. Would you agree that your playing and your personality, the social side, is it that important?

Mat: Definitely. Personality paired with work ethic, diligence and professionalism. It's a broad selection of attributes that basically mean you're easy to work with.

Tom: So that's like you're pot of traits that you need?

Mat: Yeah, I'd say so, talent plus being a good professional and being easy to work with. In that sphere of being easy to work with, it's getting on with people, being professional in as much as you're not late, you don't miss lobby calls, you don't lose your passport and you're not a pain in the arse to the tour manager. There's the equipment side of things: that your gear's good. If you're on tour with a big artist that's all taken care of for you, but that's not always the case. The scale of working for Madonna down to a pub, what you take and supply personally changes. But if you're in a situation where you supply your own gear, your gear needs to sound good and be professional. You need to look professional. If I'm playing with a metal band I don't want to look like I'm going to a dinner dance any more than the reverse way round. You need to be aware of how you should be looking.

Tom: But you don't get told those things specifically, that's down to you as an artist in your own right, as a person in your own right, that's down to you, nobody tells you?

Mat: No. Sometimes you're lucky and people give you pointers. This is all coming under the umbrella of professionalism. If you're looking for a career in music as a drummer, for instance, you need to be aware of these things. The best and most successful players I've met have always been really cool guys as well, and that say a lot. Really cool guys that are friendly, who get on with people. I'm laboring the point with this but you'll find this will run true through most professionals you speak to that get called time and time and time again. Who are you going to call? The guy who does a really great job that everyone gets on with or the guy that's super talented but makes everyone's life hell? Again, it's no different to working in any life situation but if you're not aware of that, if you just focus on your chops and nothing else... there's a place for all of this stuff. There's a place for nailing the chops when they're necessary, nailing the time keeping, nailing your professionalism, they're all part of this picture that makes you a good professional. But it's understanding that if you know which particular things that make the difference then you go in armed to a situation. I keep saying the same things. The world's greatest drummers that have been the busiest, they're not necessarily the most incredible technical drummers but they have got a good

feel, they've got a good sound and they're easy to work with. Those things go a massively long way.

Tom: So you went from the professionalism and the personality into the chops business. I'm sure it's the same for other instruments as well, but talking about drums specifically because that's what you do, when you're talking about chops how do you see it? Do you see it as you have a spectrum of things you can do and you're just pulling out the right thing for the right moment or you're doing what you're told? How does it work for you?

Mat: Chops is a funny thing. When I first started playing I spent a lot of time with technique. I think what you need to be aware of is being stylistically aware, is probably how I'd define it. Understanding the music you're playing, the style you're suppose to be playing in and playing what's appropriate and what serves that music best and what serves the artist best as well most importantly. If you're not aware of the kind of thing you should be playing and how you should be playing then you need to find out. Before I started playing with Iggy I did a lot of research into the past drummers that he'd used and the music he'd played - his catalogue is massive. I listened to the good guys and the bad guys that have played with him. The band 'The Stooges' that he played with, the drummer was really good but he wasn't a technical drummer so I've had to develop my sloppy side a little bit. What I've done with Iggy is I've learned to be less choppy orientated, it's more about the sound of the drum kit, it's more about the intent; a bit of aggression and drive, and I play nothing that I would suggest is a chop on the whole gig at all. When I think chops I think of more muso music. Most of the gigs I do don't really fall into that department anymore. What's way more important to what I do at the moment is good feel, good time keeping, understanding how the song works, how best to support the artist, understanding what I need to bring to the song that's going to make it work rather than 'how can I do something that sounds cool and flashy and gets me noticed?' because I'm there to serve the music rather than an ego that I might or might not have.

Tom: It's an interesting thing to talk about, the whole chops thing, because at the moment social media is blowing up and everyone with a drum kit can post a video of them thrashing around for thirty seconds. I think it's quite interesting and it's good to hear you say that because there's a lot of guys who probably think they need to get chops together and that's all they see on social media. I guess just watching somebody play a groove, unless you're really into it, not necessarily the most interesting thing in the world, it's kind of understandable. But you're saying that's the more important side of when you're being a professional? When you were saying that it's more about the intent and the vibe, especially when you're playing with Iggy, everyone on stage is incredibly high energy. Was that something you had to cultivate and realised that you had to bring or did you get booked because you had a bit of that already?

Mat: I initially come from more of a funk, groove background so I've had to develop that and if I look from the first gig with Iggy to how I play now it's completely different. My technique was always really good when I was younger

and as a result, when I used to play I barely moved at all. I moved elegantly, my wrists were nice and relaxed and it looked quite easy. I'm not saying it was but if I watched myself ten years ago everything was very fluid, smooth, relaxed and that's what I was working for. But if you put that kind of vibe on top of an Iggy Pop gig, where he's screaming and stage diving and I'm sitting there with perfect Moeller technique, it's a complete waste of time. So I've had to learn how to hit the snare drum really hard now and quite often my backbeat starts up by my head somewhere. I've had to learn to almost look worse and that's a weird thing to say.

Tom: Are you saying look worse from a technical drummer point of view, but now you're think more from a audience perspective?

Mat: Absolutely. You know, I'm part of Iggy Pop's band I'm not part of Weather Report or a fusion outfit. What's important is that it's a visceral experience. People watch that gig and they see and feel the energy. If you play with heart and soul and stop worrying about technique, sometimes I just batter he crap out of the kit and there's little technique involved but I'm just throwing everything I had at it, and my technique is good enough for it to still work on a technical level but the sound you get is a lot fiercer. Pretty much all the gigs we've done with Iggy for the last three or four years I've been playing with him have all been big and they're all on festival stages and I don't play a lot of nuances anymore, I've had to lose ghost notes. My snare drum, pretty much I just batter throughout the whole gig. The dynamics have gone, to a certain degree because on a big festival stage with an Iggy Pop rock gig that snare drum is probably the most important part of the drum kit and it has to be thumped throughout the whole gig. It's almost like I'm self-compressing myself, I've had to learn to do that, I can't miss a beat.

Tom: So you're missing all the ghost notes. Even with it being whacked really hard, in a big live environment like everything you've been playing with, do you feel like there's just not point? Because when you play ghost notes I'm sure sometimes you might feel like that helps your groove because you're filling in a few spaces?

Mat: Absolutely.

Tom: Do you miss having that or have you learned to completely get rid of it now?

Mat: I do miss it because that was a big part of my playing. I used to play a lot of ghost notes.

Tom: Like you were saying with the funk side of things, it's a big part of it, it's quite integral?

Mat: Absolutely, you've completely nailed it on the head, and it's a fallback timekeeper as well. It fills in the sub-divisions, it can make things flow more easily and that's where I came from. The guitarist with Iggy, who's also the MD

and is a good friend of mine, he's been a guiding light for me musically. He was with Iggy in the eighties, he worked for Bowie for a long time, he was Bowie's MD on Live Aid, he's a real serious dude and he's helped me a lot to get to that real sweet spot of where the gig needs to be. One of the things was he noticed me ghost noting and 'that just needs to go, you don't need that.'

Tom: So you were told. Was this in rehearsals?

Mat: Yeah. When he first approached me about the Iggy Pop gig he knew my background was funk, so there are other drummers out there who probably would have fitted the mold at that point better than me.

Tom: So why do you think you got asked specifically for this?

Mat: Apart from the fact that Kevin was a good friend of mine, I remember he emailed the manager, because they asked him to put the band together, the bass player was perfect, he was a natural choice for the gig, the keyboard player had played with Iggy with Kevin in the eighties as well, and he said 'I've got Mat who's a drummer' and something along the lines of 'this guy works harder than anyone I've ever met, he'll work his nuts off, he'll nail everything, he'll be an asset,' something along those lines basically saying 'I've never met anyone who will work as hard as him.'

Tom: So that is your reputation of years of work ethic. It seems to be that it paid off?

Mat: Yeah. That's what's stood me in good stead is that slightly obsessive nature that I'll do everything I possibly can to be the best I can for whatever I'm doing. We talked about past drummer's that have played with Iggy, a guy called **Hunt Sales** particularly, and how they played and the things that's I'd have to change and adjust to make myself fill this particular rock-punk drum gap. That was a specific discussion about me adapting myself to fit the gig. That's been an interesting journey for me. Before, I played with Kevin with a guy called Thomas Dolby who was an eighties icon, very specific, some funky elements to his music, some electronica as well. Iggy is just big drums hit hard with passion and no fanciness just aggression and intent. So I've had to learn that to a certain degree. I went from a twenty-inch bass drum to a twenty-four inch bass drum, clear emperors to coated ambassadors on a fourteen and sixteen inch rack tom, everything got big. All my cymbals when massive, I had a twenty-four inch ride, everything got really big all of a sudden. You'd sit behind the drum kit and you wouldn't hit it and it would be humming already, it's just a monster! All these things I had to change.

Tom: So you were told specifically you needed to or were you like this is what's happened before, this obviously works?

Mat: Yeah, I did my homework.

Tom: Do you think that's the way going from smaller environments to a bigger

environment, with drums specifically, do you think that most people go bigger to get a bigger sound or is it just for this gig?

Mat: It depends on the sound you want. If you think about one of his iconic tunes 'Lust for Life', the bass drum on that recording was a twenty-six inch bass drum put in pretty much undampened and if you listen to the original it's almost a note, and if you think about Bonham's drum sound, that big coated ambassador quite high tuned drums, that was the arena I was moving in to. Ludwig helped and sorted me out with a bigger kit with the bigger sizes and those drums, before you even start nailing the actual feel and what you're playing, just hitting those drums, they sound like the record straight away. So if you start an iconic track like 'Lust for Life', it's different now but when we first started, those drums sounded exactly like that kit so you sit down, you play that groove, the crowd goes mental because if they're at an Iggy Pop gig they know what that track is as soon as the drums start. Those drums, they sounded like that straight away so already I was getting myself into the headspace of it. If you've got a different drum kit and it sounds different, it makes you play differently. So big sizes with no dampening, coated ambassadors everywhere, massive cymbals, ghost notes almost get lost on a kit that size anyway because everything's ringing continuously, it's just like a cacophony of noise.

Tom: So there's no point because it won't come through?

Mat: Yeah. You end up simplifying things a little bit and driving that kit down the middle of the band as this kind of presence, the whole thing's massive. I've gone slightly smaller now, I'm twenty-two, thirteen and sixteen, still bigger for some people, but I've got a seventies Ludwig, I use the modern kit on a lot of gigs and the vintage one on Iggy, and that kit just sounds like a lot of 'The Stooges' records so before you do anything else you play a groove on it and it sounds like it's from that era.

Tom: That's the preparation you were talking about beforehand, making sure you get everything right and that's on you isn't it? You could have turned up with something else but you probably wouldn't have lasted longer than a gig or so if it didn't sound right.

Mat: If you demonstrate that you're prepared to put yourself out above and beyond, people notice that. If they notice that you've taken the time to listen to the back catalogue, listen to the drum sounds, understand who's played what with him and at least start to work out what's necessary, the front of house guy notices you've got the right drums, everyone starts to realise and get an appreciation that you're there to be serious and to do a great job. We all make mistakes and get things wrong, but if you're doing your best all the time that gives you space and cuts you slack when people know you're working really hard at something, as a pose to the guy that doesn't give a crap then keeps making mistakes and they'll be gone. Because why would you keep hold of someone like that?

Tom: Have you seen other people come in and have a bad attitude and then been given the boot?

Mat: Yeah. It's very easy when you're on the road and doing big gigs to lose sight of your professionalism because it's a lot of fun. When you're on the road everything gets taken care of for you. The tour manager tells you what time to get up, what bus you're getting on, the airline and hotels are all sorted out for you. You basically get told: this is what time's your flight, this is what time you're getting picked up to go to the gig and as long as you're on time, which isn't as complicated as you'd think, if you're on time for those key moments, the rest you're driven everywhere, you're fed, you're led to the stage, you're gear's set up for you, you go on, you play for an hour, you come off, you relax, you have some fun, you go back to the hotel, you go to sleep and then you're driven to the airport. So everything is pretty much taken care of for you. All you essentially need to do is be on time, work diligently on the gig, know the songs, perform well on stage and that's kind of it. It's not complicated but a lot of people get it wrong. What we're talking about as a musician at that point, you've done the work, you've done the practice, you've done the preparation, and you just need to be on time. If they say be in the lobby at ten o'clock be in the lobby at nine forty-five every time. Always be fifteen minutes early. It's not a complicated thing to be professional but some people lose track of that, take things for granted that their irreplaceable and no one apart from Iggy Pop, in Iggy Pop's bad, is irreplaceable. If they started being a nightmare they could go and there'd be somebody else that would love to do that gig and do a great job and would do a great job and not be a pain in the arse.

Tom: How long did you have from getting the call to being in rehearsals? How long did you have to get all of that together?

Mat: It was probably about three months, which is quite a long time. It was going to be originally a couple of gigs supporting the 'Foo Fighters' and he wanted his band put together to do that. And basically the band sounded good, Iggy enjoyed it and we got further work afterwards and it just rolled on after that. I've been quite lucky. So I had a good three-month period from getting it. What I do remember, talking about getting the gig, I'd just come back from a gig and I was at the airport when Kevin rang me. He told me 'they've asked me to put a band together for Iggy, they've actually got a drummer already in mind that they're quite happy to use but there's a little gap in the door if you want to have a go at getting this gig. What I did was, literally on the way home in the cab I rang a videographer, two days later he came down to my studio, I'd shaved a Mohawk in my hair at that point for this video, I had an old Gretsch drum kit with big sizes, I dragged that out, ripped the sleeves off my t-shirt and I got him to video me for about half an hour and we cut together a little drum video. The drummer that was going to do it had a little drum video as well so I had about a three day gap to try and put something together which I could give Kevin and the management to say 'here you go, here's me, I can do this job, give us a chance'. So that was literally on the way back from the airport I was organising that and a day later I was shooting a video. That was done the same day we edited it the same day and it got sent out the same day. I'm an okay drummer but I take

opportunities. They don't always come up that often but when they do, grab them with both hands and wring the shit out of them. Go for it. Give it everything. A lot of people miss these things but I think one of the better things I've been good at is that if an opportunity comes past me, even if it's just a little one, I'll grab it and throw everything at it and that's stood me in good stead.

Tom: That is really going above and beyond. If you'd waited until the next day before you rang your videographer that could have been a day too late and you wouldn't have had the gig!

Mat: Yeah and, you know, big gigs don't come up that often because usually people are already doing it and putting a whole new band together doesn't come together that often and working for someone like Iggy Pop, particularly at this point in his career, he's in the twilight of it now, he's still going strong and I think he'll be going on for years and years still, but these gigs are very special. So to get that gig, it's been a fantastic experience so far. But that's mainly down to just hard work if I'm honest, hard work and application as much as talent. I'm thinking about doing some drum clinics next year and rather than going out and doing lots of chops, what I'm hoping to do is go out there and talk about attitude and approach and what's really important to be a busy professional musician. Rather than going out and saying 'this is how you can go round the kit at three hundred BPM.' Let's talk about what's really important and what's going to get you work, what's going to set you apart from the other guys, how you're professionally better, what's important about drum sounds, what's important about groove, understanding what gigs need to be in front of the beat and what gigs need to be behind the beat and all these things that musicians care about. Other drummers might not as much when we're sitting down in the room and talking about drums but if you talk to guitarists and bass players and MD's and singers, they're the people that will employ you nine times out of ten, not other drummers. So I'm more interested in them thinking I'm a great drummer than another drummer. Although that's a lovely thing, the guitarist, the singer, the MD, the management people, they will employ me on a gig. They do understand chops but it's not important to them. They want to know that it sounds great, it fills great and the artist is happy, and that's got very little to do with technique and chops and it's got everything to do with feel and being a good guy.

Tom: I definitely think you should do that clinic tour because that sounds incredible. From my own point of view, just having come out of education, it's not like all this isn't there, obviously you talk about it with your friends and you experience it, but like you say, there isn't a class where you go in and they're like 'we're not playing today, we're just going to talk about the stuff that's not in music but that's really integral. It's something that you learn through experience, is the way that I've done it. Doing it and then realising 'I wasn't amazing on that gig but people were happy with it and it turned out to be a good gig.

I know you do a couple of different gigs at the moment; do you feel like you play differently on other things, like if you're doing the Thomas Dolby gig?

Mat: Yeah so I've got Iggy on a run at the moment. I do a film project that's a live

gig called Gutterdammerung. That's quite a diverse, it's covers but you're basically supplying the soundtrack to a black and white film with a live band. Iggy's in the film, Joshua Homme, Slash, Grace Jones, Tom Araya, Lemmy, just loads of rock icons.

Tom: It looks incredible from the videos.

Mat: It's really fun, it's a great thing to go and see. The band play behind the screen, they project the film on the screen so you watch the film but at certain points the screen becomes see-through and you can see the band and we perform like a normal band and then the film carries on. It's really a mad thing but next year I think it will take off particularly. That particular gig we do everything from Slayer, Zeppelin, Screamin' Jay Hawkins and at some point I'm playing brushes as well.

Tom: So it's a real mix of things?

Mat: A real mix. Quite often I'll be playing Slayer and then we go straight to 'I Put a Spell on You' with brushes. Playing Slayer is like being a mathematician, somebody explained to me. When I first started to get my head around it I remember my wife was in the room and I was listening to it and all she could hear was me going 'what? What? No, you're having a laugh!' Because it will change on a dime for what would be no apparent reason. But as I started to understand Slayer more I started to love it. That stuff is very rigid, you almost need to illuminate the feel, it's all about mechanically being perfectly crisp, aggressive and on the beat, never behind it. So you'll switch from that to Zeppelin where you're playing this lazy rock Bonham style where he's definitely behind the beat and it's kind of got a swing to it. As a young musician I was just happy to be able to play them, but now you start to realise, as you get older, what's important is that it feels right. If you're playing a Zeppelin tune you want that slow, behind the beat, Bonham groove that he did so well, that is essentially a kind of funk feel but played in a rock environment. So being able to understand that that's what you need to bring to that song but then you flip to Slayer and everything needs to be crisply on the beat, and then you go to Screamin' Jay Hawkins, 'I Put a Spell on You' with brushes and you're swinging and appreciating what you're playing musically, and that's what it is; it's about being musical at that point. Appreciating that those elements of what you're doing will make it sound better. That's what will make the other musicians look round and go 'yeah, that sounds wicked'.

Tom: Did you have to do a lot of work beforehand, working it all out and putting it all together in those orders?

Mat: Absolutely. They originally came to us with just the film and a rough pasting of the soundtrack over the top of it so we had to work it out. Quite often we'll play a verse and a chorus and stop quickly and we'll be stopping on a cue of like a gunshot. So the music is integral to the film, as you'd expect if you were to watch a normal film, but it's being played with a live band.

Tom: Do you have an MD to help with that?

Mat: Yeah, well Kevin, the MD for Iggy, is also the MD for this, but because I'm kind of a technical guy, I use Logic and Pro Tools a lot, I programmed the film that had the film in and all our click tracks. Obviously the clicks are different; at certain points you have to be rigidly stopping on an exact point where either a vocal thing happens, as in someone speaks, or a gunshot. The very first scene of the film we play up to this big moment where this guy fires a gun and we have to stop on a dime literally just before this gun goes off. So the band is firing away, stops, 'Pheow'. So it has to be so, so tight, so we're on a click track so it's very rigid and there are certain parts where the band can just play and they pause the film and then start it when we're ready. But the majority of the film's to click track and is very specific and arranged. So I did all that side of it, myself and Kevin worked together arranging the lengths of stuff, timing things, then I'd program the clicks and program how it all fitted with the film. That's another element of what I do; I'm good with technology. I use lots of technology with the Gutterdammerung, I use a lot of Roland stuff with Iggy and with Thomas Dolby I use loads of electronics, so I developed that side of what I do as well. I understand all the electronic side of things, so that's another asset. Again, not necessarily about talent, I just thought 'I'm going to learn this stuff so if it's ever needed on the gig I'm all over it'.

Tom: From a drumming point of view, do you feel like all the hybrid stuff is more integral these days for live environments? On the Iggy gig you've got not the biggest kit in the world; you've got two toms and three, four cymbals. Do you feel like that's essential to get the sound of the record, like you were talking about with the drums before, or is it more bringing something else to the live environment?

Mat: In terms of the drums, the drums are seventies so they sound right. Cymbals I use quite a lot of Sabian Artisans that sound a little bit vintage anyway, which I really like and the electronics I use, generally, are triggering very organic sounding loops. So it's mainly things like claps or tambourines or a piano. So the hybrid thing, that I'm into big time with Roland, when I use it with Iggy it's very discreet, it's very organic sounding and you wouldn't necessarily know that stuff was being fired off from the front of the stage because everything sounds like a live band. The claps sound like its people playing it live, its not electronic sounding. It's just one extra layer rather than a whole backing track. There's some claps here, some tambourines there that make a massive difference to what we do. Without those things there would definitely be something missing. We play a song called 'No Fun' where there's a repetitive handclap groove throughout the whole song and that's hugely important. The tambourine on 'Lust For Life' on the backbeat makes a huge difference when that comes in. Like many records in the studio, a tambourine on the backbeat at a certain point can lift the whole song. It's amazing what a tambourine can do.

Tom: Underappreciated instrument I think!

Mat: Absolutely, forget more cowbell it should be more tambourine! So these little things, that's what I use most of my Roland stuff for with Iggy.

Tom: So it is to get the sound of the record? That's the main point behind it, because that's what people come to hear and you're just trying to emulate that?

Mat: Yeah and emulate it in a way that seems very natural. If you were standing in front of my drum kit you probably wouldn't see any electronics. I've got these BT triggers on my snare drum that sit on the outside of the rims and I start pretty much everything from there so it's not like I'm turning round and hitting an SPD-SX, which is hidden in my rack. I'm hitting stuff that's on my snare drum that's very subtle. It's not like you're watching a pop band and they've got fifty backing vocals, a string section, a horn section, and there's five people on stage. It's the four of us with Iggy and some extra little touches. But it does bring a lot to it and the Roland stuff does it really well, I'm really happy with how we get that stuff firing off. In fact we did a video recently with Roland, which they're going to be firing out soon, where they start talking about the hybrid stuff a bit more, where we talk about the Iggy stuff and how I use it so that should be out soon as well.

Tom: So if we go a bit left field, I wanted to talk to you about, I found you through social media and I know that on your Instagram account there's a few videos of you working out at the gym and you obviously take that part of your life fairly seriously. So how do you balance all the busy touring life and rehearsals and being committed and going over the top, with all the other things like your family and going to the gym? How do you put all that together and still manage to keep the career side on it as well?

Mat: For me, I like trying to stay fit and trying to stay healthy and with Iggy it's a physical gig so I want to feel strong on stage. When you do a two-hour set with Iggy, you know about it because he's very energetic and demanding. If he turns around at you, you don't want to be looking like you're sleeping. You want to give him back what he gives you, which is one hundred and fifty percent of energy. So the gym side of things, I put it on my Instagram because that feeds into what I do as a drummer at the moment. I like to try and stay reasonably fit and that's not always easy when you're on the road for a whole number of reasons. You can't control what you eat necessarily or it's tougher, you're eating at late times, you're traveling at weird times and you're stuck in airports a lot. I run quite a lot, and most places you can always find somewhere to go running in the cities around the world and that's quite a nice way to see the cities as well. It just feeds into what I do and I quite enjoy that. I've enjoyed getting fitter over the last three or four years and stronger.

Tom: So you feel like it comes naturally to what you're doing at the moment in your career?

Mat: Yeah. Most times you get enough time to go and do something for an hour so I'll train a reasonable amount most weeks anyway, sometimes that's easier

said than done, but generally I'll get in the gym three or four times a week and run a couple of times as well. As you get a bit older those things are harder to hold on to. The other side of this is talking about professionalism and image that does feed into what I'm trying to project as a professional. I sound good, I play well, I'm professional and when you go on stage, let's not make bones about it, you want to look good as well. Some gigs that really matters and some gigs it doesn't matter at all but if I walk on stage with Iggy Pop I want to feel that I should be there, not just musically, but that I look the part as well. Having that confidence to go on stage and have a bit of an ego about you in as much as you're there to perform and 'look at me', that kind of stuff helps my confidence. Some of the coolest bands like Queens of the Stone Age, they all walk on stage and they look cool, and that definitely, on certain gigs, is important. You'll find it particularly on pop gigs where they really worry about it but if you're doing a rock and roll gig I want to look like I mean business. So me keeping fit feeds into what I try and project when I'm playing live.

Tom: The work ethic is something that keeps coming back in my mind because if you say you only have an hour off I'm sure most people, if they're touring and playing two hour sets with Iggy, they probably want to have a nap! Do you ever get into a stage where mentally, 'I just need a break', but you have something you do mentally to kick yourself up the arse and get back on with it and do what you've got to do to be professional?

Mat: I'm quite lucky and unlucky in as much as I've always been a driven individual, I always want to be working or striving towards something and I enjoy that part of life. I like trying to get somewhere, I like the thrill of working hard and achieving something then moving on to the next thing so I've never struggled with motivation. The gym thing is part of that; I got semi-obsessed with going to the gym just like I did about music originally but those things are still there. As long you still keep the focus on the fact that I'm going up on stage and playing with Iggy Pop; it's one of the best gigs in the world, and I need to be good at it and I need to be fit and strong and healthy, play well, look after myself and do a good job. If you can't get motivated in that situation then there's something wrong. It's not like you're working down a pit for ten hours, you're playing on stage for two hours. A lot of the time you could be tired because you're traveling a lot but lets not make any bones about it, I'm not killing myself all day long. You find that, especially young guys, you'll be fine, just get your head in the right place and be prepared to work. Be prepared to be the person that works that bit harder then the next guy and does a better job than the next guy and you will work. Be a good guy, do a good job, do your homework, don't be a dick - you'll get work.

Tom: So you've done a lot of work in the live touring environment. Do you feel like there is an accepted path into getting those sorts of gigs?

Mat: I know a lot of people go to the Colleges these days which is fantastic and you get a great education there and you can learn a lot of stuff and you network as well, but I still feel the best way to get work is essentially through networking. It's by meeting other people, getting out there and playing with as many people

as you possibly can, meeting as many people as you can and doing a great job with as many people as you can. That's how I've got work. I'm not aware of there being another way, even if you meet people and talent spots coming to College, once you're in a pop gig or get plucked out of College for a pop gig, you'll still meet people on that gig that do other gigs. It's still essentially, as far as I can see, all about meeting people and doing a good job and then them recommending you. With brass players the College thing is a much bigger deal, a lot of people are drawn from College and get a lot of work that way. But a contemporary rock or pop musician, I think you're going to find that work through meeting people. That's why you can't be afraid of going to the jam nights and meeting as many musicians as you can. Even ten, fifteen years ago I'd still look at ads and find new bands that are out there looking for a drummer and I'd go and meet people and play and not necessarily always do them, but you just need to widen your field and make as many opportunities for someone to come back to you with a big gig as possible. The more people you know, the more chances are one of them is going to come with a big gig to you.

Tom: Was there one stand out moment in your career that you felt like you hit the next level or was it just an organic process of growing from down the bottom to up the top?

Mat: I think there's probably one moment. I used to run a couple of different bands when I was younger that did lots of function work and we were doing a wedding gig, when I was a lot younger, in Tuscany for the guy who ran TED from TED Talks, and Thomas Dolby was the musical director for TED from the beginning and Thomas was at that wedding and wanted to get up with the band. He got up and played and we got on and about a week later he rang me and asked me to play on his latest album and eventually I ended up doing that at Real World Studios, which is Peter Gabriel's studio in box, and that was probably the start of me progressing up. I played with Thomas for quite a few years, I played on a couple of his albums, did a few tours and Kevin Armstrong, who is Iggy's MD, was on that gig and we toured the States together. Kevin became a really close friend of mine and then I've got work that's sprung off of Kevin as well. So Thomas Dolby gave me my first step up. He's not necessarily a household name now like he used to be, but he's a big deal in the States and working with him started to get me noticed and I started to work with other, more well known musicians and that put me up a notch and availed me to other great musicians which then started pretty much all the other stuff that's come since. But I was on that gig because I set up function bands to go and do some weddings so, again, that comes back to the whole work ethic thing. I thought while I was doing all the pop stuff and trying to become a better musician I need to be working every week and the best way to work every week as a working musician, when you first start, is in functions. So I decided I wanted to control it all myself so I set up a business and we were a very busy function band while I was doing all the other stuff. So come rain or shine I would have two or three gigs a week regardless of anything else, which would bring me in money and in between that I weaved all my original music with original bands, so while I was doing that other stuff was going on at the same time but I was working all the time. So that endeavor and that hard work led me to meet this other musician by chance.

Tom: It sounds like putting in the work and then cultivating your social relationships as well, once you get to that stage?

Mat: Yeah, that's the path I had to tread. If you can be a stunning musician and have all the work ethic and the professionalism as well then you're nailed, and there are guys like that as well. If you're fantastically talented but you're also a really cool guy that everyone likes and easy to work with then you're laughing. But if you're not that talented guy, there are plenty of talented guys without the work ethic, there's enough of those guys to make it easier for the guys with enough talent but a really good work ethic.

Tom: So if there was somebody who was slightly younger who was trying to get their first break, if there was one thing you could tell them to change what would you advise them to do right now in 2017?

Mat: Go out and play with as many people as you can. That's the best bit of advice I could ever give because every time you play with someone new or someone better or someone older or someone who looks at it a different way you'll learn from them. That's a free lesson from a whole load of people, and one of those people will come back to you with another gig and one of those people will come back to you with a bigger gig and it will all swell from that initial you getting yourself out there. Don't sit in your bedroom, the rehearsal room is great but go and play with absolutely as many people as you can and just work your nuts off and you'll be successful.