

Luscious, pouting Steve Martland: "Ninety per cent of pop

BATONDOWN

Forget Nigel Kennedy, forget Radio 3, STEVE **MARTLAND** is busy putting the political boot into classical music and getting his kit off whenever there's a camera around. STEVEN WELLS meets the tattooed love god of 'classical punk'. Lighting conductor: **PENNIE SMITH**

"Perhaps someone should drill a large hole and bury Steve Martland and his so-called music to save posterity the Letter in Classic CD magazine.

m, quick, think of some

reasons why the ultrafunky NME reader has just

gotta, like, really dig Steven Martland.

How about - he's gotta hot bod! Sexy Steve set sexbits a throbbin' when he stripped off for the Neville Brody-designed muscles'n'tats cover of his 'Glad Days EP' on Factory records. He's just finished a tour with The Durutti Column and the utterly ace ex-Communard Sarah Jane Morris. And he's worked with Fall dancer Michael 'Bums Out For

Department, and Circus Archaos. This geezer is the only serious modern composer ever to have been interviewed by The Daily Star. He wears Air-Wair boots and the classic Springsteen-Jimmy Dean Levi/white T-shirt combo. He pumps iron, he smokes teninch-long cigars and he has the cutest little flat top you ever did see. He complains that he is far too busy for a regular girlfriend. Good enough for you, pop-

And he's a rebel. Oooh yeah! He is HATED by the sweatypalmed, greasy-haired tweedy jacketed tossers who pose and pontificate about 'proper' music He is Johnny Rotten with an A-level in swotty music (sort of) and he gets up all the right noses

"If they hate you," he smiles, vainly trying to get his incredibly stupid Bertold Brecht cigar lit for the 18th time, "then you must be doing something right puff

But first - a short history lesson, About 300 years ago a bunch of Germans in powdered wigs invented an incredibly complicated and occasionally fun new sort of pop music which involved millions of other people in powdered wigs sticking unelectrified little guitars under their chins whilst large women in norned helmets screamed about dragons

After World War II another bunch of Germans whose names began with 'S' (ie Stockhausen. and Schoenberg) decided that this classical stuff was somehow responsible for the holocaust. So they invented music that went bonk . . . bonk bash . . . biff smash smash. Sort of Test Department without any sense of rhythm. All the sweaty-palmed, greasyhaired tweed jacketed public school types who pose and pontificate about 'proper' music thought it was brill. Everybody else thought it was a load of wank.

Meanwhile some American composers, like Phillip Glass, invented a 'modern' (as in not pop) music that was quite fun. And then along comes Steve Martland, dragging his knuckles in the blood of murdered critics, screaming through the clenched fangs in his ape-like snout— WORRABOUT THE POLITICS? GIVE IT SOME BOLLOCKS! Steven is actually a very nice

boy. He only appears like a deranged, masturbating orang-utan next to the seedy swotty geeks who are his peers. He hates his own genre for all the reasons you do. It says nothing, it means nothing, it has "no social function". Oh yeah? And his stuff does, does it? Ha! Well . . . yes, actually.

Last week I went to see Don Letts' Punk Rock Movie at the National Film Theatre. On the way, a mere 300 yards from the NFT, I passed a party of homeless kids huddled around a small fire listening to pop blasting out of a tinny transistor. As I left cardboard city a police van drove down the ramp to bust things up. It made watching the movie a very uncomfortable experience. When gothome I played, for the first time, the track 'Festival Of Britain' from the 'Glad Day EP'. The words, by Stevan Keane, go

something like this . . . "Underneath the concert halls/ The teenagers and deadbeats/ Are laying down their cardboard/ On carpets made of concrete/ They rub their hands/They stamp their feet/Too tired to sleep/Too poor to eat...Deep inside the concert hall/The bankers and the landlords meet/Their credit cards buy curtain calls/The market dances to their beat/They rub their hands/They stamp their feet/ street . . . Farewell to the Welfare State/That's what made this country great/Festival of Britain/ There's nothing left to celebrate.

And who in hell is writing pop music that says as much? Kurt Weill meets the Pet Shop Boys anybody? A video was planned. The camera was going to pan up from Waterloo's cardboard city to the middle class art-ghetto of the South Bank directly above. It never got made.

'We just came away in tears, all of us, we just couldn't film it . . . couldn't doit.

Serious' modern music has a lot of catching up to do, I mean, the critics are still wanking on about how repetition is "banal" It's as if the African revolution in Western music (them crazy drums) had never happened. It's as if Jimmy Hendrix' 'Star Spangled Banner' (the live version on the 'Woodstock album) didn't just about piss all over every single piece of serious' modern music written since 1945. They want to keep 'Western culture' a negro-free apolitical quarantine zone. And their days are numbered

Martland hates the snobs and the ghettoisers with a fury. And they hate him right back. Whilst employed as a music copyist at the old English snob-hole Glyndebourne, he was refused permission to see a performance of the opera he'd worked on because he didn't have the right clothes. But although he is slickly packaged by Factory, Martland has no ambitions to be a pop star.

"Ninety per cent of pop is pure trash. It doesn't question the world, it sedates the senses. Also the idea of going into a studio and going — oh well, let's just lay down the bass line here and stick that track here — that just does not excite me intellectually.'

Martland is also wary of being continually lumped together with the spuriously titled (I've just made it up) 'classical punk' movement-The Great Kat's Beethoven-thrash abortions, the London Chamber Orchestra's amplified classics concerts and

well, let's talk about Nige "Who?" Nigel Kennedy

"Well he's a performer and I'm a composer, I'm not interested in performers, we have nothing in

You've both got flat tops. "He hasn't, actually." He furrows his brow. He's suffering from the Ozzie Syndrome. If he says that Niglet is anything other than a great bloke then all his critics will point the finger and scream - See! He bites

the heads off small furry animals! "I think it's great what he's doing, breaking down barriers but he's playing music that's 300 years old. I never conduct anytning except my own music That's the first difference. Besides, I've got an IQ. Hur Hur



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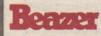
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