



Luscious, pouting Steve Martland: "Ninety per cent of pop is pure trash."

# BATON DOWN THE THATCHERS

● 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 trouble." Letter in *Classic CD* magazine.

U 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-Communist Sarah Jane Morris. And he's worked with Fall dancer Michael 'Bums Out For

The Lads' Clark, Test 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 ten-inch-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-pickers?

And he's a rebel. Oooh yeah! He is HATED by the sweaty-palmed, 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 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 horned 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, greasy-haired 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 orangutan 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 I got home 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/

Who cares who's living on the 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 do it . . ."

'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 common."

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 Niget 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 anything except my own music. That's the first difference. Besides, I've got an IQ. Hur Hur Hur!"



Classical gasbag

## Leaders, Dreamers, Planners, Number Crunchers, Smooth Talkers . . .

**Tarmac** CONSTRUCTION

**HIGGS AND HILL**

**TRY Monk**

**DOUGLAS**

**Bovis** Bovis Construction Limited

**LAING**

**WIMPEY**

**Beazer** GKN Kwikform Ltd

WILLET TROLLOPE & COLLS CEMENTATION



**WILTSHIER**

Have you got what it takes to be a professional in the construction industry? Brains for sure.

But also drive, leadership, team spirit, creativity? If the answer is yes, you'll want to put it high on your careers shopping list.

It's a career with a secure future with lots of action, variety and teamwork — with an opportunity to change the world for the better.

The major firms in Britain's biggest industry are actively seeking graduates now and are offering highly competitive starting salaries to tomorrow's managers, quantity surveyors, accountants, computing and marketing specialists.

Cut out the coupon and we'll send you details of a wide range of exciting careers, with the qualifications you need, the training on offer and precise guidance on which firms in your area you should apply to. It could open the door to the most important job interview of your life.

**AMEY**

**Balfour Beatty**

**Alfred McAlpine**

**Fairclough**

**Mowlem**

**TAYLOR WOODROW**

**Lovell Construction**

**Sir Robert McAlpine**

**COSTAIN**

**MILLER CONSTRUCTION**

**Norwest Holst**

**nuttall**

**CONSTRUCTION CAREERS SERVICE**

THE PROFESSIONAL CHALLENGE

## ... Apply Here

I am interested in a career in the construction industry, please send me more information.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Tel No. \_\_\_\_\_

6th Form  Undergraduate  Graduate  (please tick) Place of study \_\_\_\_\_

Course interested in/studying/completed \_\_\_\_\_

Please return to: Construction Careers Service, Bircham Newton, Nr King's Lynn, Norfolk PE31 6RH.

BBR 710