



# Hitting All the Right Notes FOR CHARITY

INTERVIEW BY **DARIO POLI** COMPOSER, ARTIST, AUTHOR AND ILLUSTRATOR

**You come from a traditional Welsh background famous for its choirs and singers; how much has this influenced you?**

Being from the Rhondda Valley music was a very important and pivotal part of my growing up. I learned to read music (being part of the school brass band) and started singing with the school choir. Choral music is a passion for so many in the Rhondda and throughout Wales and of course the Treorchy Male Voice Choir is world-famous! A

Welsh choir seems to pull the heartstrings of so many. Just look at the success of *Only Men Aloud* and very recently *Only Boys Aloud* on ITV's *Britain's Got Talent*. I have also been lucky enough to be invited as a guest soloist with Welsh choirs touring Spain; so has it influenced me... incredibly and undoubtedly!

**At what age did you first realise that you wanted to sing and express yourself through music?**

I grew up in a working men's club run by my

**S**ince I have been coming to Spain, it never fails to surprise me how many really talented individuals I come across on the Costa Del Sol and one of these fascinating people, is Stephen Lloyd-Morgan, a charming though at times rather shy and unassuming Welsh tenor from the Rhondda Valley, South Wales, who I first saw and heard perform at the glamorous Butterfly Ball, supporting The Rhys Daniels Trust Charity, held at the exclusive Hotel Puente Romano Marbella. His voice and its quality, simply took my breath away.

I was raised by my father, an Italian operatic tenor, and was indoctrinated almost daily by listening to the recordings of the finest voices of the time, so along with the musical input from his friend the great cellist Maestro Gasparini, I naturally developed a critical view of voices.

Stephen Lloyd-Morgan's voice hit me like a bolt from the sky, as having a superb richness, timbre and tonal quality that instantly attracted me to his singing.

So it is with considerable pleasure that I was invited to interview this superb vocal talent, just prior to the recording of his recently released new album, **In My Father's Footsteps**.

Popular International tenor **Stephen Lloyd-Morgan** releases albums to aid Spanish and Welsh cancer charities

parents. From a very early age, when it was closed, I would sing to an empty room imagining a concert hall, microphone in hand; the world seemed to be my stage so to speak, with no inhibitions whatsoever! A great deal has changed since then, but I do at least get to entertain larger audiences some 35 years later!

**You have performed for free for many charities including UNESCO-recognised charity The Children for Peace Onlus Rome and The Rhys**

**Daniels Trust, as well as for the victims of the Haiti Earthquake tragedy. What is it that drives you to perform at these charitable events? Is this also a legacy of your Welsh upbringing?**

I was raised in a very giving environment. When someone needed help, people rallied around. This still stands true for me today! As a performer, it really is nothing for me to get up and sing at an event or do anything else I can possibly do to aid a worthwhile cause.

**You have recently re-released your previous album *To Where You Are* to raise funds for The Cudeca Cancer Hospice in Spain...**

The treatment and care of those suffering from cancer is something that is very important to me. It is a cruel disease that rips the heart out of families, mine included. There is no discrimination; it can hit anyone and at any age. Anything that can be done by any of us to raise money to improve the odds, whether in terms of treatment or palliative care is similarly vitally important. Cudeca is an amazing charity with which I have had a long association in terms of fund raising. Also I have had friends who have greatly benefited from their care.

**Tell me something about your new album *In My Father's Footsteps*. I know that you were strongly attached to your father who recently passed away.**

There are many similarities; in particular, both of us very shy, but then when I sing it's like being a totally different person! He was also a singer and bass guitarist in his teens and was part of a 1960s band called The Zendars, who supported The Who, among others. The album is a celebration of the influence that my Dad had on me and on my sister, but in particular, some of the songs he loved and with which I grew up.

**I understand you will have an eclectic mixture of songs on this new album; many are different from your usual genre of Musical Theatre and Classical; why is this?**

I wanted to present a collection of cover songs by different artists, some that were playing on the record player or the eight-track in the car while I was growing up, combined with those I now have a passion for and people associate me with.

**Can you name some of the songs and why have you chosen them?**

My Dad had a very eclectic taste in music and I grew up listening to songs by the likes of The Everly Brothers (*Let It Be Me*), Elton John (*Daniel*), Bread (*Everything I Own*) and Don McLean (*Vincent*); some of which will feature on the album. There will be a fantastic acoustic version of the song *No Day But Today* from the musical *Rent*, a song which sums up my outlook on life. There will also be other songs I have not yet had the chance to record, including *Sometimes I Dream* (*E Lucevan le Stelle*), *A Boy From Nowhere*, *Volare*, *Torna A Surriento*, *Canto Della Terra* and of course *Granada*. I'd also like to include a Welsh language song again as I did on my last album, which was *Dyrchafir Fi – You Raise Me Up*. I am also contemplating Snow Patrol's *Chasing Cars*. The final cut is yet to be decided. I

would like to see it as a really eclectic mix that my Dad would appreciate, that suits my voice, and that those buying and donating to the charities will really enjoy!

**Why are you recording the album in the UK? Do you have a release date in mind?**

I am recording the album back in South Wales. I was born in Porth, in the Rhondda, where The Pop Factory studios are located. The studios

Subsequent to my interview with Steve, I received the following messages of support from both the Cudeca & Tenovus charities:

"I am absolutely delighted that Stephen has chosen to support Tenovus. Music has become very important to us over the last couple of years, since we funded research to look at the benefits of singing for cancer patients and their families. The results were phenomenal and as a result, we



Stephen's father's band, The Zendars



Stephen Lloyd-Morgan's new album



themselves, now mainly used for TV productions, were once the Davies' soft drinks factory and depot, hence the name! My Dad worked there as a delivery driver, and many a happy hour as a kid I spent out with him delivering Corona pop! So I think it is a very fitting tribute to do it there; it brings it all full-circle in a way. The album will be recorded mid-May with the release on 1st July. It will be available as a download only, and absolutely 100 per cent of sales income will be split between the charities.

**Why again is this solely to raise funds for The Cudeca Hospice and the Welsh cancer charity Tenovus?**

I luckily have my health. Cudeca and Tenovus both provide a vital service to cancer sufferers on the Costa del Sol and in Wales. Tenovus gave my family an amazing amount of support while my Dad was in hospital; and this is my way of trying to give back what I can. Although funny enough in a way, I am also a charity shop 'junkie' just like my Dad; you would often find him in the local Tenovus shop; ironically, also supporting them before he became ill himself!

**Finally Steve, tell me something about any personal dreams or ambitions you would like to achieve in the next few years?**

To be happy, healthy and spend more time with my family, friends and loved ones. And of course, just to be able to continue to enjoy my passion for singing.

recently launched our brand new *Sing with Us* programme which will see 15 choirs set up across Wales over the next three years, helping anyone who has been affected by cancer to come together in a fun, positive and energetic way. The money Stephen raises will help us to support more cancer patients and their families in Wales" – Claudia McVie, Chief Executive of Tenovus

"I would personally like to thank Steve for selecting our charity to benefit from his album. The titles of some of the songs he will include just whet my appetite as they are many of my favourites. Thank you for such kind words about Cudeca and to Steve for also sharing his warm memories of his father and life in the Valleys. I am sure the album will have great success and will be a tremendous help to both charities and their patients suffering from cancer. Best wishes, Joan" – Joan Hunt OBE, President and Founder of Cudeca Cancer Care Hospice.

"I send my heartfelt support to dear friend, Stephen Lloyd-Morgan, a fabulous tenor from the Rhondda Valley! I applaud his passionate goal to help raise much needed funds for these truly amazing Charities through the sale of his new album; dedicated to his Dad, who I know he lost to cancer just 18 months ago!" – Russell Grant, Actor

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