

**Your new solo album – a mere 25 years after your last – reflects on how we can be a series of different people. How different are you from Gary Kemp circa 1995?**

I was going through a certain amount of pain then [splitting from first wife Sadie Frost] and my place on the planet was a bit different because the '80s had been and gone, and we were being dismissed. Blur were fighting Oasis in the foreground, so I didn't have much room, but I still stand by that record, Little Bruises. The songs on it are some of the best I've ever written. Since then I've found an amazing woman [second wife Lauren Barber], who I've been with for the last 20 years. We've had three boys together and I'm a far happier human being because of that than I was in 1995.



**Star appeal:**  
Jon Bon Jovi

**You talk on the title track, INSOLO, about feeling alone in a city. Have you felt like that in London?**

I think my creative head is very isolated. All of us

have dark moments. If you're a creative person you tend to use those dark moments because you can't write songs in happiness. As a song it's about a couple who are struggling. I'm not in a relationship that's struggling but I have been.

THE ACTOR AND SPANDAU LEGEND, 61, ON HIS 'DARK MOMENTS', BEING A 'POSH SIDEMAN' AND HIS FIRST SOLO ALBUM IN 25 YEARS

INTERVIEW BY PAUL SIMPER

# SIXTY SECONDS

With Gary Kemp



SHUTTERSTOCK

**How is writing for yourself different to writing for Spandau Ballet?**

I don't have to make things up. There's a truth in everything I write now and that's stopped me having writer's block. When I was writing for Spandau I had a lot of writer's block. Partly it was because I was writing for someone else to sing and also because the music felt more important than the words.

**On your Rockonteurs podcast, Gary Numan says he's always been dissatisfied with his singing voice. Have your feelings about your own voice changed over the years?**

Yeah, they have. I was a sideman, a kind of posh sideman because I wrote all the songs. I wasn't the frontman in Spandau and my little foray into being a frontman on Little Bruises was sort of dismissed all those years ago. But working with Nick Mason really encouraged me. I've suddenly been let out the box – and it's taken 60 years!

**I've suddenly been let out of the box – and it's taken 60 years**

**Have you converted your children to prog rock?**

They listen to American rap and a few Beatles songs. When they were young, I gave them all iPods with The Beatles on.

**Who is the first person you play a new song to?**

When I'm writing a song I close the piano room door. I'll play it over and over and if it's sounding good I'll open the door. So my wife is the first person to be introduced to this music. If I go back in the kitchen and nothing is said, I'm probably not on to a winner.

**Do you ever get nervous interviewing music idols?**

Not really. I think Guy Pratt [legendary session bass guitarist and co-host] and I are a good team. I mean, we've had our moments of being nervous, such as before we talked to Jon Bon Jovi, because he's such a big star.

**So who is top of your wish list of Rockonteurs guests?**

Macca. After doing Macca, I'll just retire. I'm a massive Beatles fan.

**Your brother Martin and nephew Roman's DNA Journey unearthed a bunch of strolling German musicians as ancestors. Have you learned any more about them?**

No, nothing. The biggest thing was discovering our nan was in a workhouse and my dad never ever said about that. I don't think the working class discussed their lives very much. It was all about dealing with what was in front of them.

The workhouse thing was quite a shock and then finding where the grave was and that it only had a number on it. Since then, my brother and I have put together a headstone.

**Is there going to be another spoof Kemps TV documentary?**

We've written the follow-up. Rhys Thomas comes and finds how we're getting on post all the fallout from the last documentary. I think we're going to shoot that next January. Listen, to be still working with Martin all these years after my mum said, 'You bloody well better put him in your band', that in itself is very comforting. I'm so thrilled that he's having so much success at the moment. A while ago, I was driving down the Euston Road and a bus came one way with Roman on the side of it and then another bus came the other way with Martin as Captain Hook on it. I was sandwiched between these two Kemps.

**Would you ever consider working with Duran Duran?**

Yeah, I'm up for any musician. I mean, my days of hating Duran Duran seem to be surpassed by members of Spandau Ballet hating me! I've been the guy with one group. I've had one relationship all my life that had a very, very long divorce and so it's quite nice now I'm playing the field.

*INSOLO is released by Columbia on July 16. The Rockonteurs podcast is available on all platforms*

**20% off**  
outdoor plants

(That's 20% off beautiful borders)

Shop in store and a limited selection on diy.com

You can do it

**B&Q**

Offer excludes seeds, turf, bulbs. Offer ends 31 May. Subject to availability. Selected plants available online. See diy.com.