

The secret life of a rock 'n' roll dentist

With the average GDP's working life becoming increasingly busy, is it possible to hold down another career on the side? Steve Braund proves it is with the story of Miles Waters, a dentist with an amazing double life.

Dentistry is so often labelled a 'sensible' job, an all-consuming career path to grown-up respectability. Yet, behind the mask and scrubs, how many dentists get to live a double life – pursuing a second career which fulfils their dreams beyond the surgery?

Miles Waters is one of the lucky few. A practising dentist for over 30 years, for twenty of those he has also been moonlighting as a hit songwriter and record producer, rubbing shoulders with the likes of Paul McCartney and David Gilmour.

Starting about as far as you can get from the music industry, Miles was born in Durham in 1949 and coming from a medical family (his father and brother were both doctors), he found his way into dentistry almost by accident. Miles played in various bands at school and at university in Dundee where, managing to leave enough spare time to continue and further his musical ambitions, he also started to write songs.

Following his graduation in 1974, Miles became a full time dentist working in Dundee. He continued to write and perform music, however, and in 1977 he cut back dentistry to part-time and moved south in order to better focus on song writing. The gamble paid off and by 1986, Miles had landed himself a co-writing deal with Chappell Music and contributed 'Heart on the Line' to the US platinum-selling album by eighties stars The Jets. Miles went on to co-produce the top ten debut album by Mica Paris, including co-writing her top ten single, and biggest hit, 'My One Temptation'.

At this point, having worked in Oxfordshire for ten years, Miles gave up practising dentistry for a time in order to concentrate on a full time musical career. He went on to work with Jim Capaldi of Traffic, one of the cornerstone bands of Island Records, on an album featuring a dream team of collaborators including Eric Clapton, Steve Winwood and George Harrison.

Although he now has one eye back on the dentistry day-job, Miles is preparing to take a step further into the limelight. Since 1992, he has been co-writing material with long-term friend Margo Buchanan, a long-serving backing

singer to the stars, including Joni Mitchell, Van Morrison, James Blunt, and KT Tunstall. Miles is central to her new solo album project – co-producer of the album, guitarist in the band and co-writer of nine out of ten original songs. He has also helped self-finance the 5 June release of the album and eagerly awaits its success.

In spite of this, Miles will continue to rely on dentistry to keep him grounded. After all, rock 'n' roll can be a difficult career to get your teeth into!

The album *I Should've Done This Years Ago* is available on Bahookie Records and from www.margobuchanan.com. A free download of 'Years Ago (Acoustic)' is also available from www.myspace.com/margobuchanan.

