

First Person

Simple Minds frontman **Jim Kerr** has made a 30-year career out of making damn sure you don't forget about him. Here he proves that his mind is anything but simple.

Working with Charlie (Burchill) is kinda back

and forth. The music usually starts with some seeds from him. Sometimes he'll give me pieces that are only a minute long, but it'll have a melody usually and a kind of atmosphere that will quite often ignite something in me. Then we get it to a different level—bit of tennis back and forth. And then prior to actually recording is when we bring in the rest of the guys and sort of flesh these pieces out and they become fully fledged songs.

Charlie and I like each other, you know.

You see, in relationships you have the ebbs and flows, and there is no perfect. But I think even in our case, whenever there are clashes, they're usually clashes for the right thing. But I think the main thing is that we both have this tremendous passion for Simple Minds that has endured. We've enjoyed almost every minute of it; even when things haven't panned out we've always appreciated the opportunity to do this in the first place. Within the context of Simple Minds, we're very much part and parcel of each other.

Whatever you're saying, it still has to have this allure that's going to bring people in—whether it's a movie or a melody or whatever.

I think at different times with different

albums you maybe have a different strategy in your head. You know, some albums you're thinking "we're gonna have to do something really different here," other albums you're thinking "nah, I want to return to some path we were on before." I think with the last album we felt we needed an album that was somehow classic Simple Minds yet had a contemporary feel to it. Now, on paper that's so easy, you know, it sounds great. But in fact, when you think about it, they're almost a contradiction in terms because "classic" by definition means going back to the past, and contemporary usually means working on something that's of the moment. But somehow, I think the general consensus is that we hit that target.

One of the songs that lead me to the political

sphere was Peter Gabriel's song about Stephen Biko (released in 1980). Now you know, it's a wonderful and informative song, but above it all it had a spellbinding melody. And without the melody then it's just agitprop. It's just propaganda—it won't work. You still have to dress it; whatever you're saying, it still has to

have this allure that's going to bring people in—whether it's a movie or a melody or whatever.

I think the political world has changed in that

the targets are not so easy these days. I mean back then—and the same in the '60s—the world was very much divided. There was left, there was right, there was the Berlin Wall, there was Communism, Capitalism, and—when I grew up—there was Reagan, Thatcher, apartheid, anti-apartheid. Now politics can be the coffee that you drink or buy, or the training shoes that you buy, or where you go to buy a T-shirt you know?

Within the context now of rock 'n' roll,

50 years old is still a bit wet behind the ears if you think about the Rolling Stones, David Bowie and Lou Reed, you know, who are all a good 15 years on me if not more. So yeah, we're the sort of the new old guys! **Interview by Michael Franco**

Simple Minds takes the stage at Fort Canning as part of F1 Rocks on Sep 25 at 7:45pm.

Log on www.f1rocks.com for more details.

