

Transcription of Interviews

Isaac(LetterBoxKid) – 29/12/22

Peter: Would you be able to state your name and what it is that you do?

Isaac: My name is Isaac O'Sullivan and I am a musician and an artist

Peter: What is creativity to you?

Isaac: I think creativity to me is trying to make sense of something that is difficult to put into words. And doing so by problem solving in an artistic way – music, art – and expressing yourself.

Peter: would you look at music as a way to problem solve?

Isaac: Making music is like finding the best way to jump hurdles in the best way possible.

Peter: Is the easier route the best route?

Isaac: it depends. For me, If something is really good and simple then it's better than something that's really good and complicated. I think it's more difficult to make something that's really good and simple than it is to make something that's really good and complicated.

Peter: Would you say that it's like something that's hiding right in front of your face. Is it so simple that you don't even think of it?

Isaac: You hear the simplest songs and they're the most popular. Anyone can do it, but they don't. The more complicated stuff you can get as nerdy as you like with production and chords and all that and it still might not be good.

Peter: How do you channel your creativity? Is it a waiting game or do you go out and find it?

Isaac: It depends. There's different ways. A lot of the time I wait, to be honest. I can trigger it by doing certain activities – going for walks. Being alone, I feel like the more time I'm alone, the more time I write stuff. When it comes to me naturally is probably when it's best. But, by doing things like going to a museum, reading a book, watching a movie – things like that often trigger it.

Peter: Would you say that being creative is a lonely lifestyle?

Isaac: Yeah it definitely can be. It's good to have people around you that you can be creative with, but for me, I'm definitely better at making music by myself. And the more I'm busy socialising and those sort of things, the less I'll write music. Recently I've found new ways to create. So I have a few avenues I can go down which I can do anytime without really needing that creative spur.

Peter: Would exercise ever come in to the equation?

Isaac: Yeah. I exercise a good bit. Runs and things like that. It just gets me out of my head more so than gets me creative. I'll often go for a run, shower, listen to some tunes and then make music. That would often be a ritual.

Peter: Would you say that exercise helps you see things in third-person? You remove yourself from yourself.

Isaac: Yeah, it gets me out of my head. Resets whatever. Gets rid of whatever negative s*** im thinking about. Focuses me aswell a bit.

Peter: Is there anything else that helps/hinders the process?

Isaac: Just having time and freedom and not being stressed. Having a timeline to finish something is a good thing because it means you'll do it. You wont procrastinate, but at the same time if you're stressed about getting something finished or you're worried about it sounding a certain way, I think you just need to be a bit free with it. Maybe before a few years back I use to worry – you'd hear people say 'what if they lose their ability to write or create'. But I don't worry about that anymore. If I don't write something for a few months, it doesn't bother me. I just have to try not to worry and let it come to me. I feel like stress and doing things that you don't want to do – having a job that you hate – and things like that probably hinder the process.

Peter: My mother was saying that if you want to get something done then give it to a busy person. But at the same time, if he's too busy he's never going to get it done. You've got to find that balance. If somethings stressing you out its not good for you.

Isaac: We had a thing in college and you had to make a beat a week. Which was great, because its something which I would never usually do. But then at the same time a couple of them might be terrible, but still you get something out of it.

Peter: Would you say the terrible ones make way for the good ones?

7 minutes in. 😊

Isaac: Yeah, potentially. And even the bad stuff, there's something there even if theyre weird and a bit terrible. You can use the for other things you know.

Peter: Can you recall your earliest memory of the creative process?

Isaac: I think so. I definitely wrote songs and things when I was 13/14. But they were terrible. I wouldn't count that as creative process. But when I was 15, maybe, I got into the 'flow' for the first time as you might call it. And I remember that quite well. I was in my kitchen and was playing guitar but I wrote my first song that was actually me not thinking about it too much, not thinking at all nearly, just writing and seeing what it means afterwards and not really knowing at the time. That was the first time.

Peter: The flow would be 'hard enough that it's a challenge, but not hard enough that it's a stressful thing'?

Isaac: Yeah. For me, that's why I like to leave things come to me. Its like Im in that flow im not thinking nearly at all. Im just writing and one word is triggering the next word and its like that for however long it goes on for. And, yeah I might not even know what it means for a year, and then I might read it and go 'oh that's what it meant'. But at the time im not really thinking about it.

Peter: Would you reckon its your future self laying the seeds for your present self? Youre almost writing to yourself from the future?

Isaac: I kind of like to think that when Im writing like that Im a medium for something else. Im just channelling something that might be there somehow ad its just coming out and that you don't really need to understand what it means. A lot of the time Ill figure it out further on down the line.

Peter: Was having a chat with a co-worker one time. Ideas and things come through us rather than from us. We are mediums for art etc.....

Isaac: Yeah that's why I don't understand people that have egos and things around music or art or anything like that. I mean, I made it so I guess it wouldn't be there if I didn't do it, but it doesn't feel like its me like 'ah look what I did'. Theres none of that.

Peter: I think that's a good way to be. It's a nice bassline to be rested on. What would you say your creativity is rooted in? Can you trace it back to your early memories?

Isaac: I don't really know. My dad played guitar and there was a lot of music in the house and things like that. But I never thought that I was necessarily creative growing up. I still think that the whole time. Probably just started playing guitar and then started getting a bit older into my teenage years and thinking about things a bit more introspectively, being by myself a bit more and then I guess it just came. I guess I kept trying and eventually it just worked out.

Peter: There's that good quote: If at first you don't succeed, try try again. And I think it a good ethos for the creative process.

Isaac: And now its just got to a point where I feel like trying is the worst thing I can do because its not natural. With writing and things like that. But I was trying and trying and then it worked and now I don't want to push things and don't want things to be unnatural.

Peter: Like a flower, let it bloom. When did you know, or realize, that you were the creative type? Was there a particular point?

Isaac: Because my older brother is super creative and he seems like that creative type and a lot of my friends that I met you can tell immediately that they're that way, I don't necessarily think that Im like that. Well, maybe, I don't know. I cant speak for other people. I do see myself as creative now, but I look at other people and say 'that's a real super creative person' and Im creative and I know there's something there. Apparently the more creative you are the more your brain bounces around from one thought to another which I notice myself doing once Ive realized that Im having completely random thoughts, But some of my friends will be bouncing around from thought to thought barely making sense. Im creative and I know how to make music, but im not that 'out there'.

Peter: I think you could probably put a tag of ADHD on that kind of thing. Im not sure if you can self-inflict ADHD upon yourself though.

Isaac: Well, I'm sure there's ways and means.

Peter: Why have you chosen the creative road?

Isaac: It was the only thing that I wanted to do. It made sense to me when I was in school. I didn't want to do business or any.... It's a bit serious. Even though music can get quite serious and you can treat it quite seriously, at the end of the day its just music. It's the closest to magical you can be in the real world. You can capture a feeling or a thought or an idea that you cant really put in to words but you can create a little bit of magic and it's a beautiful thing. Its one of the best things.

Peter: A three minute pop song can be three minutes of magic.

Isaac: In Rainbows, the Radiohead album, that really captures multiple emotions in a couple that you cant really put in to words and you cant really describe, but everyone can relate to it and that's why certain music is really good, Because it's a feeling or emotion that you cant really describe or pinpoint yourself but everyone can relate to it.

Peter: there are no words to really describe it, it goes beyond words, beyond description.

Isaac: Yeah it's a thing everyone has felt and its in a song.

Peter: What do you hope to discover from the process of creativity? Are you looking for yourself, are you looking for other people, the meaning of life?

Isaac: Id do it no matter what. Its gotten to a stage now just to go back to the other question. Id be doing it anyway. Its gotten to a stage now where I cant stop doing it. I might aswell try to get paid for it, kind of thing. You know what I mean? If im going to be doing it all the time and spending loads of time doing it then I might aswell. What was that question again?

Peter: What do you hope to discover from the process of creativity?

16 mins and 44 secs 😊

Isaac: Oh yeah. It's a nice thing to do. It's a good thing to do. I can sense through my music what kind of place I'm in. If the music sounds complete or zen or a bit insincere or these different things I take from that and know how I'm really feeling.

Peter: Would you say your creations are mirrors to your soul? They can tell you about yourself?

Isaac: It can tell you about yourself and where you're at. I might think I'm in a great place in my head or in my life and I might make a song and to most people might sound that way but I know that there is something 'off' with it and its not as honest as maybe it could be and I can self reflect on that I guess. Sometimes its just hard to understand what you're feeling. That what makes a good artist. They can understand how they're feeling and hoe other people are feeling and make art from it.

Peter: On the flipside of the creative process what do you get from consuming creative content?

Isaac: It depends. I really like all creative content pretty much. Ill listen to a lot of music, read a lot of movies, read a lot of books. I feel like I get more out of books and things and feel better about myself reading them. Mostly it is just enjoyment. Most of the time it's not for the creative process, but I like to think that when I'm reading books or watching movies that it feeds in to the creative process in some way. Even if Im just doing it for enjoyment. Like Im reading this book and whatever im taking in from it will come out at some stage in some creative way, even if im not deliberately doing it. Again the medium thing where I take in, consume and might put out.

Peter: Kind of like a vitamin.....

Isaac: I just read a book by Stephen King, 11.22.63. It's a time travel kind of thing. The last few days Ive been messing around, not really writing anything just playing chords and singing stuff, It has all been time related and I didn't mean to do it but there you go.

Peter: I think that's pretty much it...

Scott – 29/12/23

Peter:

Scott: My name is Scott O'Sullivan. And what I do, I guess mainly, is painting right now. Over the past four years or so. But a more extended answer of that would be: photography, drawing, writing, generally recording things constantly. The end result of most things does end up being a painting most of the time.

Peter: Would you have a favourite of those that you named?

Scott: I could say my favourite being, my best work, would be big paintings that could take the most amount of effort, time spent, a few months. Whereas what might be the most enjoyable and necessary for me to do would be drawing; little line-drawings, from a notebook.

Peter: What does creativity mean to you? What does it do for you?

Scott: I don't know. First of all, Its something I sort of have to do, almost, and always have done. It wouldn't take long before I just start being miserable if I wasn't at least journaling, writing, whatever.

Peter: It's a necessity in a way? Its a must have?

Scott: It depends. Its good and bad. It is a blessing and a curse kind of thing. People are all like 'I wish I was more creative'. I don't know. If things aren't going particularly well, then it'd be a lot easier if you weren't. Does that make any sense?

Peter: I think that everything that's worthwhile is a gift and a curse in a way. People on the outside cant really see the curse of it.

Scott: For me, mainly its like a way of living in a way where you can kind of document your own stages of your own life. And hopefully other people relate.

Peter: How do you channel your creativity? Do you wait or make it happen?

Scott: Sort of both. I try to live in a way where Im sort of setup so that Im in a position so when something does come about it is possible to get the most out of it. I guess as long as I go whatever Im doing whatever it is, If im recording in whatever form through writing or photography or drawing eventually something will naturally come out of that. So I sort of have to live in a way where Im actively working on something small. So its like a constant way of living, sort of. And if I was to stop that, nothing would happen. But also I couldn't go too long without doing that either because Id be miserable.

Peter: I can relate to the 'being ready at all times' thing with the writing and reviews. If I get pulled away from that for too long I get a bit agitated. But if Im doing it for too long I get bored of it. But im always ready – phone at hand – ready to get my thoughts down.

Scott: That's why there doesn't have to be any one particular way of working. Like I said, when Im going travelling, Im not going to be painting, working on canvas or whatever. Im just going to be doing a lot of reading and writing and photography or whatever else. By the time im in a studio again Ill have material to work with.

Peter: Do you have any rituals that help/hinder the process? Any thing that adds to it or takes away from it?

Scott: Well, say if I'm trying to do work toward a series of paintings for a show, and I actually have a project I'm working on, for me, I do have to be pretty routine. I just have to have a solid enough routine that I can't let myself get too far away from. I'll have things that kind of recenter myself into a mental space where I am able to paint and get things done. But over the past two years one of them has been running. Weirdly enough. I run fairly regularly. Also it's difficult for me to say, but what I've been working on is all developing and getting better as I go. Even though there are things that I might go back to which are nice and easy...

Peter: Can you recall your earliest memory with the process?

Scott: I don't know if I have one particular memory, specific memory, but I remember drawing and painting from a really early age. And I remember, now that I think of it, where me and my friend in school were six or something, and I was trying to draw but I was aware of the fact that I was six and that I wasn't great at drawing, yet. I was drawing like a six year old and I was like 'this is ridiculous'. My friend was trying to get me to draw the Simpsons whole family – and I drew it from memory as best I could. And all their faces were all distorted and we were both laughing at how weird it looked. It was just one drawing that I did that I remember – I could have been six or seven.

Peter: What would you say your creativity is rooted in?

Scott: I might be wrong, but I want to say that wanting to sort of constantly record and remember everything. I think.

Peter: Like an Alzheimer's installation?

Scott: Yeah something like that, yeah. Yeah.....

Peter: When did you know or realise that you were the creative type?

Scott: Probably knew for sure sometime in primary school, maybe towards the end of primary school. I guess I noticed that it wasn't super common to do what I was doing.

Peter: why have you chosen the creative road?

Scott: Well, I guess because I wouldn't know what else I would do. I couldn't do anything else. I think if I started running earlier I could have been like a professional marathon runner. But, I'm getting too old now.

Peter: Mid-twenties is too old?

Scott: I guess Kipchoge is 38. He wouldn't have time for anything else kind of thing.

Peter: Where do you go running?

Scott: When I was living in Dublin, luckily enough I lived near Brickfield Park which is about exactly a kilometre lap. It's about a kilometre run to that park then I'd do however many laps. I miss that park because the park was hilarious. Each corner of that park has a different thing going on. One has dog walkers, the other has kids, another one has soccer and there's one just for drug dealers. And when you run around it, four different worlds, four times, every four minutes. Right now I'm running around where I live – road-running.

Peter: I go up the quarry road. Towards Blackwater Blinds....

Scott: It'd be cool to drive somewhere, just to run. I've been mainly concentrating on distance and time. I don't really care where I'm running so much. As long as it's not too distracting.

Peter: Do you use music when youre running?

Scott: Most of the time, no. I do very, very rarely. I listened to Beyonces new album for the first time and I was trying to do a running goal that I was trying for at least a year, and I did it listening to that album and you know that part of the album where they all clap?

Peter: I havnt actually heard the album but I can hear it in my head.

Scott: When I finished the run that happened and I was like 'great'. It was exactly the length of the thing(album) aswell.

17 mins and 30 secs 😊

Peter: What do you hope to discover from the process?

Scott: I cant say really.

Peter: Self exploration? Why this occurs, why that occurs?

Scott: Id love to have an artist statement that's literally nothing. But you cant really do that, that's the thing. Nah, I don't know...

Peter: I have one question about consumption.

19 mins and 30 😊

Scott: Well, I actually do really like visual art. A lot of the time Im just seeing stuff on the internet but it is great to see stuff in person also.

Peter: If youre watching TV, what are you looking for? Or even listening to a song?

Scott: I could almost answer it. Its actually hard to sort of explain exactly what Im thinking or feeling if Im watching a good documentary or movie. Another thing that I do, now that I think of it, I kind of relate them all to each other, all the time, somehow. I sort of watch them all in the same way. If its very good then, Im kind of explaining how I rate something now.

Peter: Is the story important? Are the visuals important?

Scott: I think like a good painting that's something similar to what I might do, theres a popular theme a lot of the time with young painters, a lot of the time people are painting people they know personally and real life friends and family. If I think of one painting in particular, theres a story behind it, but Im not really thinking about it. I don't think that I really care about the story so much. First thing, the most important immediate thing, literally how it looks. The composition and whatever the lines are going on and how the paint's used and literally how it looks is a big one, to start with. A lot of the time a good painting wont come to that point. A painting wont come to be unless it has everything involved with what its about. But you can go back and really spend a long time with visual art. If it's a particular artist that could be their whole..... I don't know. I remember thinking that, when I was really getting into music and stuff when I was a teenager, not wanting to know how any of the sounds that make up the music actually was made. I didn't want to know how, I didnt want to play an instrument. I didn't want to know how any of it worked because I wanted to keep it this sort of alien/magical thing that exists that isn't even made by humans, but it turns out theyre just playing guitars and stuff..... you know.

Peter: The secrets of the trade are fairly straight forward... Where are you creative in your everyday life?

Scott: Goddamn. Everyday life. If that counts, I guess it would be continually documenting things as I go. I do keep a nearly daily journal, but I don't now if you'd call that creative.

Peter: Interview with Scott O'Sullivan has now come to a close. I feel like Twin Peaks character....PEACE.

Mum Interview – 18/1/23

Peter:

Mum: I worked as a nurse for 44 years.

Peter: As all of the things as you mentioned, in what ways in your everyday life would you get creative?

Mum: Well, I was thinking about this and I feel that I'm not very creative. But I do admire and enjoy other people's creativity. Especially architecture, music, books, the cinema, paintings. And I draw inspiration from that in my everyday life. In my home, I try to make the home a nice place to be and at special times of the year I think I'm fairly good at making the table nice at Christmas, putting family photographs up and around, having nice lighting. In the garden, planting bulbs for the spring – thinking ahead. I really do appreciate creativity in my surroundings and in the people and places I love to be.

Peter: You said that you were a nurse for 44 years, where in nursing would you have to be creative?

Mum: I think when you come across somebody who could be stressed or fearful or in pain, you're required to have some adaptability to change your approach to each situation; to try and see where you can ease any tension – or fearfulness or stress. So, you have to be creative in reading the situation, trying to get to know a person quite quickly because you may not have a lot of time to think things through if something needs to be sorted and you have to do it here and now. You have to be adaptable, as I say, and creative in a way that helps that person relax, and be able to get them through that situation however stressful it might be. So, you know, you have to think on your feet.

Peter: How would you get creative with a procedure when it comes to a surgery or prepping someone for surgery or dealing out a prescription?

3mins and 45 😊

Mum: Well, you have to approach each situation and assess it and see whether you can help by, first of all, being calm and patient. Having good communication skills – being able to explain, to support. And sometimes, that can be helped with a bit of humour, a bit of common ground. If you've got a young lad of 16 you might talk about football. Or, if you've got a young woman you might talk about children or babies – something that might be important in their lives. So, you ask common questions and try and get to know where they're coming from. And then feed into that to have a calm, patient conversation that may well allow them to relax a little bit and help them through the situation – giving explanation the whole time. Also bringing family into it – anyone that might be with them – having a conversation with them and allowing that person in that predicament, in that situation, who is perhaps having to go through something that they don't particularly want to go through, you know, something else to think about and time to just breathe a bit and having time to process what's going on, but at the same time, coaxing them on and giving them the support they need to get through whatever it is, and when they come out the other side, they'll think back and think 'you know, that

wasn't too bad'. I'm glad that there was somebody with me who was able to help me through and make it that little bit easier.

Peter: Would you say that making someone feel at home is a creative task in itself?

6 mins 😊

Mum: I think easing somebody's fears and stress and perhaps allowing them to feel more relaxed and if that means they're a little more at home, then yes, it is a creative process. Because they may be going through a procedure that you may have seen people go through a hundred times before, to them it's the first time. So, you're helping them go through their own personal experience. It's different for every single individual and, as I say, you've got to be able to adapt to each person's needs and to seek them out. And that might be through a small ten-minute conversation you had while waiting for the anaesthetist to come or for the porter to come and that little conversation might have, and by holding their hand, you may well be the person that I the buffer and the person that allows them to take their mind off what's going on and what may go on in the next short while. So, yes, I suppose it is a sort of creativity because you never do the same thing twice, because it's never the same person twice – in an emergency situation.

Peter: On the flipside of being creative, we also consume creative content. What do you get from creative content?

7:45 mins 😊

Mum: What I'm looking for when I see a movie or listen to music – I like to be uplifted, or if I feel like I want to cry I want to be able to express my own personal emotions and go with it. I like story-telling, I like humour, I like documentaries that inform me and educate me and perhaps make me re-assess my own points of view and think again about my own opinions and make me think.

Peter: you were saying that you want to cry or feel some sort of emotion, would you consider art to be a conduit for emotion?

Mum: Definitely.

Peter: Like a medium for....

Mum: Yes. Absolutely. You can look at a painting and quite often it's not just perhaps the two people in the portrait that you look at constantly, it might be something that they're holding or something that's on the table beside them that tells a story that gives you a background into why they're there and who they are. And then, that makes you start thinking about their lives and perhaps where they came from or where they went to. It might make you want to go home and make you want to look up about their lives if they're real people and see where they went on and how their lives pursued. And yes, that can make you emotional. A piece of music, absolutely. Not just emotional, as in a sad way, but as in an elated way. A release of energy. An enjoyment. A pleasure. So, even going out for a walk and going through a forest and listening to the trees – the wind through the trees – or the sun light coming through the branches or a squirrel running up the trunk of a tree and kind of think 'gosh', you know, that I'm surrounded by nature and that's creativity in itself.

10 mins and 30 secs 😊

Peter: Is there anything else that you would like to add?

Mum: When you're dealing with somebody, who may have a condition like dementia, and you can't talk to them about the match that was on this morning or the film that they saw yesterday because

they are sometimes disconnected with the world that you're personally living in, so, in a creative way what is generally done, over time with the help of family and friends, make what's known as a life book, and in that book there will be photographs or Christmas cards or birthday cards or maybe something that they may have crocheted or something to do with family or pets and over time you create a book, so when that person is confused, disorientated, fearful and you may want to only simply give them a shower but they feel you're attacking them, apart from having a quiet friendly, patient, kind approach you may take time before that shower to sit down and go through their book and reminisce with them about the photographs – the people in them – maybe their favourite dogs collar or a birthday card that brings back memories so they can orientate themselves. It might not be in this moment in time, it may be orientating them to 20 years ago. But, you're building trust, you're lowering their stress rate and eventually you can say 'do you know what, why not come in with me and I'll help you have a shower', and they'll say 'yes'. So that's a creative way to help somebody be calm and trust you and know that in some way, you understand them – where they've come from and what's important to them. And in that way, you're able to help and make life less disturbing and less traumatic and allow them to have the simplest things which may cause them enormous distress a little calmer and when it comes to the next time you say 'come on shall we go and have a shower', they'll know you – your voice, your touch, your energy – and will be less likely to be afraid. And so, in that way you're making life a little easier for them.

Peter: Done?

Mum: Done.

Peter: When it comes to creativity, what is it to you?

Will: Well, I suppose, not to sound obvious or condescending, creativity is just the willingness or drive to create in any type of field I suppose.

Peter: What would you say your creativity is rooted in? Where do you use creativity in your life?

Will: Well, I suppose creativity comes everywhere really. My job at the moment is involved in music, something that's very technical and very much in a creative field whether it be playing or writing really. And even in my spare time when it comes to script writing or editing. Sorry, I'm after freezing there.

Peter: That's alright. They're not easy tip of the tongue questions! When it comes to script writing, is there anything that you do that gets you in the zone? Anything that helps channelling, or rituals of any sort?

Will: Well, when I sit down and write it really depends what kind of mindset I'm in. If I sit down for ages sometimes something will come to me and then I'm like 'ok yeah I'll put that down' and try and come up with ideas. Or sometime I'll just be doing, I don't know, I'll just be shopping and then I get the idea for something and then I'm like 'I need to write this down' and whenever I work on it later nine times out of ten I can never remember what it was because I never got the chance to write it down. But, the rare chance that I do, I take a look and then try and think to myself 'ok it'll be cool if we did that' or 'hang on, if I tackle it like this'. The big rule that I have when writing: I subscribe to the Matt Stone and Trey Parker method. And so, what they do, they're the creators of South Park, is they try to avoid 'and's...' and what I mean by that is they try to avoid stories where such and such happens 'and then' this happens. Instead, they try to replace 'And's' with 'But's' and 'Therefore's' just to make it interesting. Let's say, for example, Jimmy goes to the shop and he meets his best friend and then they go off and get a drink. It's a bit boring that way. If you throw in 'but's' and 'therefore's': Jimmy goes to the shop but he meets his friend there, therefore they go to the pub, but they can't get in because the bouncer is an arsehole; you know something like that. You're creating more conflict and therefore it's more interesting to listen to. That's the thing that I try to stick to whenever I try to write something.

3 mins and 26 secs 😊

Peter: It's almost like, instead of a game of domino story-telling where one thing leads to another, it's almost left up to a spirit of some sort. In a way, if that makes sense?

Will: I see what you're saying. Instead of stuff just happening there's cause and effect.

Peter: Yeah. I've not actually heard of that. I do know Matt Stone and Trey Parker.

Will: It's the way that they do it. Because the show is very cheaply made they're able to get an episode out in a week. They're always on top of everything. For example, at the time of recording they released an episode recently around the whole situation with Harry and Megan saying they want nothing to do with the Royal family; they want privacy. But they're also advertising themselves the whole time and showing themselves around the country. So, of course they're like 'ok that's happening, we'll give our take and take the piss out of them as well'.

Peter: I suppose reality is a never-ending cesspit of potential material to pull from.

Will: All fiction is rooted in reality in some form.

Peter: Do you subscribe to the fact that truth is stranger than fiction?

Will: yeah definitely. I remember when I was younger and growing up thinking that stuff that you see on TV, that's not actually true. Reality shows are scripted and sitcoms look like nothing will ever make sense. And then as I'm getting older and I see more news stories popping up – like ridiculous things – I just realised that everything is bad as each other. A good example I always go to is a show called 'The Thick Of It' that was on BBC One. It was a political comedy that just took the piss out of politicians. Most of what the show was, they do something stupid and then try to figure out a way to save their careers. That show couldn't last today because... sure Boris Johnson locked himself in a fridge to avoid questions one time and then two years later he was the prime-minister of the UK. So clearly, they don't need to worry about that kind of stuff anymore so.

Peter: Reality writes itself. Can you recall any early memories that you have either of script-writing or creativity in general?

Will: Like my first spark of it?

Peter: Yeah like the first time you went 'oh there's something here'

Will: I suppose, it was when my mum signed me up for a creative writing course, no it was a comic book class, and basically what that was for about six to twelve weeks, if I remember, you come up with your own comic book idea; they go through all the story and writing beats with you and then they do the artwork as well. Of course, I didn't really focus on much that, I was just like 'aw I get to have my own comic book and draw really crude stuff'. Not crude, just very amateur-ish stuff without any plot or anything. It was just a excuse for me to sit down and draw, if that makes sense. Then coming up with character names and then I was getting older I did that more in my spare time and then it was around secondary school I was thinking 'I could take this a bit more seriously' and when I joined college, then University, I started doing it more and then that eventually lead to doing it a lot more because then when I came to the UK and met my friend Gabriel, who runs a company, and then he was looking for scripts and I sent an idea that I had when Baby Driver came out about two years ago. And then we started discussing it and it developed more into a short film that was released fairly recently, funnily enough. To sum that up, it kind of started around primary school and naturally developed unconsciously ever since really.

8 mins and 10 secs 😊

Peter: Where do you take your major influence from when you are writing? Does it help you figure out things that are going on in your own persona life? Are there things that you pull from your stories?

Will: From my experience, anytime when I've sat down to write I've come to realise it that its very much a snapshot of how I was thinking of at the time. For example, last year when I was doing your course – you do audio drama?

Peter: Yep, we've got our results – that before Christmas. Yep.

Will: So, I wrote the script for the radio drama for that course and I listened back to it the other day and it very much encapsulates my mindset and who I was at that time because – I'm not sure if you know what it is but it's a sci-fi based audio drama about this bounty hunter and is very isolated alone and she's trying to find someone who went missing to get closure on that. And then, when I was listening back, it very much encapsulates what I was feeling at the time since its focusing on one characters isolation. Because, when I look back, when I moved to the UK first it was very isolating, so, I suppose, I kind of encapsulated myself into that character unconsciously. I was listening to a lot of audio at the time, I was watching a bit of horror as well - I had a small bit of an interest in horror – so

I just thought it made sense to put into an audio (drama) because I thought 'when you cant see it and youre imagining it, it's always a lot scarier' so I just thought it made sense. So, I guess, it just encapsulated my mind at the time and what I was interested in at the time.

Peter: When Im writing about albums and stuff I do find that I do look back and go 'that does kind of sum up who I was at that stage. I have a similar thing to you, where it reveals to me what I was actually like.

Will: It's the same when you look through old tests or stories you'd written when you were twelve. You see terrible grammar and the page is a bit ripped up and youre looking at it and 'yeah I guess that's what it was like back at the time'.

Peter: Do you look back on your older stuff removed from it or can you see still actually see from the perspective of the child or kid that you were at that time?

11 mins and 20 secs 😊

Will: Like do I see my point of view?

Peter: Yeah.

Will: Oh yeah definitely. There's a specific scene (of Will's audio drama) where she's walking through the city of Devon, and she's reminiscing on this person that she's trying to find back when she was younger. So, I suppose, at that time, I was doing a load of reminiscing about myself – looking back and hopefully getting back to what I wanted in the past was to improve my future. That was more or less the point of the story was letting go of the past and not letting it eat you up inside and try to move forward, really. I was subconsciously trying to tell myself 'don't worry about what happens, try and just focus on the now'.

Peter: So like small reminders to yourself inside of your pieces.

small chat about college and project – a bit of a tangent to interview

Peter: As I was saying, when I do my bits and pieces of writing, if I go back to say 2020, and it was a whole Covid thing, a lot of my points of views on albums would be from a very isolated mindset. But, I think I relate to what youre saying there. A lot of the people that Ive interviewed doing this whole creativity thing, says that creativity is a thing that they use to remind themselves subconsciously to remind themselves to keep their cool, basically, to keep them in check. Which is a pretty cool thing.

13 mins and 45 secs 😊

Peter: You have creativity, which is the creation of something or a process of figuring something out. Is there any ways that you look towards to get inspiration in order to create? What do you input in order to output?

Will: It literally can be anything. I can sit down and watch an episode of Doctor Who and thnk to myself 'oh, I want to do a documentary on Doctor Who' or just do nothing and then I'll decide I want to write a 100 page treatment for Charlie and the Chocolate Factory al of a sudden. It can literally come from anything. But I suppose the weirdest one was, I'm still trying to figure out the first draft, out of nowhere I got this idea to work on a story about these lads in Newcastle on a night out but they havnt met each other in 10 years and one lads trying to organise it and the rest of them are trying to avoid him really. And what I meant to do was have it as a bit of a homage to the 'Worlds End' - One of my favourite films, but I havnt watched it in like 5 years – and then I showed it to my

friend, Gabriel, to get some feedback and he just said it's basically the 'Worlds End' again. Like beat for beat. And I think that I havnt seen that film in over 5 years, if that makes any sense.

Peter: Yeah. I was going to say it kind of sounds like the Worlds End premise.

Will: the only difference was, I didn't throw in any aliens in there. But that just kind of spurred from something, even though I didn't think it was, because I hadnt watched the Worlds End properly, but because it's still in the back of my head without me realising it still comes out in different ways. So, I could remember something that happened 10 years ago and I can think 'oh that's a bit funny' or 'that's a bit tragic' and I could turn that into something.

16 mins and 10 secs 😊

Peter: I think there's been many TV shows that Ive watched where Ive begun to make something and realised 'oh yeah, its just that'. Its literally just then skeleton of that thing, but I guess theres only so many stories that you can tell. Someone said to me that there's only 6 stories; you have the redemption story, the love story, the this and the that. There's only so many and they all circulate around the same thing. So, eventually you are going to stumble across a story that you've seen before in full, and tried to re-create it without actually consciously knowing so.

Will: It's even worse for music as well. I used to mess around with Ableton back during Covid. And I remember – I don't know how to play any instrument other than drums – coming up with this really cool song and I remember thinking 'oh yeah this is cool, Ill add an effect here and over here' and I was really proud of it. And then I sat down and I was listening to music afterwards and it was a song off of 'In Rainbows' from Radiohead, I think it was 'Weird Fishes', and I was like 'hang on this is exactly the same thing that I just spent the last I don't know how many hours to come up with'. It's a bit discouraging, but that's kind of my point. I love that song. That was in the back of my head and it's blatantly obvious when you put the two together, but then when youre actually creating it it's just not obvious to you that it's right in front of you.

17 mins and 54 secs 😊

Peter: I wouldn't mind that too much if I was creating Radiohead to be honest with you. If I was creating Radiohead level music I wouldn't mind it too much. You were saying that your earliest memory if this creative thing was going to creative writing classes, am I right in saying that – that's what you were saying?

Will: yeah. It started off, from what I remember, in some sort of comic book creation class and then, eventually, my mum signed me up for regular creative writing classes and then it was drama and film so a bunch of different areas of it. I try to get as much experience as I can in each different field. I was an actor for a bit as a teenager, dabbling in directing and writing at the moment – the job that I work at is a lot of live event stuff and sound and lightning. I don't have a clue how to do half of that, but Im learning as I go. It's just so I can get a sense from every field. Say if I just think to myself 'oh, I want to be a writer' and dedicate myself just to my writing and then I find I get bored of it or Im just not enjoying it as much I wouldn't have anything to fall back on. But because Ill have experience doing this and that, its more experience not only to keep myself from getting bored, really, its also a way to appear more attractive to people saying 'I can write, I can direct, I ca stand on my head for 10 minutes or whatever, I can hold my breathe for however long you know'.

Peter: You can basically turn up to an interview and say Im a Swiss knife, pretty much.

Will: Yeah exactly. I try not to limit myself especially in the creative field. Even when I was un Uni. I did two classes dedicated to audio and two dedicated to visual just because I don't want to limit myself really.

Peter: I think that's the best way to be. Go down as many lanes as possible and take from them what you can and then come back and mish-mash them into one stew. When it comes to script writing or anything that you do, what do you hope to discover from it?

Will: Is this idea doable? How can I work on it? And, if so, how do I get the best out of it? Because the way that I go about my process is, I need someone else's input because if I sit down and I do all the work by myself and Ill try to look it over I'm just not going to change too much and try to keep it the exact same. I kind of subscribe to the Josh Homme method – I want to start off with a bassist but I kind of need other people to help me with it. If you know James Rowe, he'll agree with me on this, or maybe he wont. When I was writing that audio drama I had him(James) with me as well so I would consider him a writer – even though I was coming up with the ideas and writing them down. Just because I needed another person to bounce off of to say 'maybe if you did such and such' then he could either agree with me and we'll get it done faster or we can stop and say 'I think that's a bit stupid'. And Im not going to not listen, Ill try it and see if it works and if it does Ill keep it in. Usually, its really good input that I have. Collaboration, I would say, is a really big thing for me. I dont trust myself enough to create a product that Im happy with – I need another person, not to do it for me, but to regulate me and make sure they get the best out of me as well and I also try to get the best out of them through contribution.

22 mins and 30 secs 😊

Peter: So, almost like having a creative assistant of some sort? Someone to... like an editor, someone to go over what's being said in more of an active way or more of a down the line kind of thing?

Will: I suppose as well, yeah. But not even as an editor, I want them to feel as if they're contributing because I feel as if everyones ideas are valid. To bounce back to Matt Stone and Trey Parker, because theyre a really good example, they do get a lot of flack because it looks like Trey comes up with a lot of the ideas and he does the songs and writes the scripts, and Matts just useless or whatever. But Trey Parker says that Matt is the cornerstone of it. Because hes the guy to stop him when hes going too far or suggesting what could be better- he basically keeps Trey grounded. I feel like I need that or I can be that to someone else.

Peter: Theyre like the lead to your balloon?

Will: I suppose? Ive never heard of it like that before.

Peter: I was just trying to come up with an analogy. Me neither. Its just the idea of youre the balloon and someone else is the lead to stop you from getting out of hand, I guess? I dont know.

Will: Yeah that exactly.

Peter: You said that youre doing light and sound at this moment in time. Are you using what you learned from the WCFE to do that?

Will: Yeah, in the sound department. Its an apprenticeship, so Im learning on the job as well. Im kind of re-learning everything because its been ages since WCFE. They saw my CV and they were like 'Sound engineering, that would be perfect. We'll have you on.' I come in and I know what everything does, I just forget how to do it.

Peter: I still remember doing the practical test with Damien where you have to set up the speakers where this one goes with this one and that winds up to that one. Then when you go to the mix desk and nothings working you say 'what do I do?'. Its just wires everywhere – tripping over yourself.

Will: I never did that exam. I completely missed out on it. Ill tell you what, the third day I was ever in there – it's a college, to put in into perspective. The engineer that Im apprenticing for, he basically showed me how the mixing desk worked and then what everything plugs in to. Mind you it's been like two years at ths point since I worked on it. So, Im like 'ok, that makes sense'. He showed e it once and was like 'ok'. And then he goes into the classroom and says 'Adam, you can send your class in there'. He says 'Right Im going to fix some stuff, can you show everyone else how to do it'. And I literally learned in 5 seconds and was like 'hang on just two seconds' and theres 5 16/17 year olds watching me fumble my way trying to explain the mixing desk. Then, expecting them to do it and looking at me when it doesn't work because I was only show how to do it once.

Peter: Do you reckon your teacher did that on purpose? To throw you in the deep end?

Will: I don't know, to be honest with you.

Peter: Was he getting creative in a way to force you to align with your students? I think he was doing something on purpose there quite possibly.

Will: Yeah definitely..... what it was, Im not sure though.

Peter: Did it work? Do you know how to use the most confusing of technologies on the planet – a mixing desk? Because I still don't know how to work my way around them.

Will: Ive been there since November, and am only getting the hang of it. And then he's throwing in bits of reverb units and power amps and Im like 'fine, ok.'

Peter: Its almost like using a calculator with calculators attached to it. Im not too sure what this button does but now it sounds funny and its giving me weird emojis, I guess. Last question. Theres only 5 minutes left in the actual meeting.

Will: I think you can make another meeting if you want to drag this out a bit more?

Peter: I think Ill stick to the time of the thing that we've got. Ive only got one more question. You might have already answered it. On the flipside of creativity, what do you look for when you look at another persons piece of work? What are you looking for inside of it?

Will: in terms of a professional thing? Or something that my friend created?

Peter: Either or.

Will: I suppose, it depends on what om watching or listening to. Because theres one side of me where Im very analytical and am like 'ok, is this the best they could do with this? Could they get as much out of this as they can within this one project?' and Im taking it really seriously. And then Im watching another thing and im like 'ok, I can turn my brain off' and not take it too seriously. Indiana Jones 3 'The Last Crusade', one of my favourite films, one one side you could look at it saying 'yeah they took the concept they were given and branched it out and managed to get as much as they could in terms of music, performances and just overall script' but then also on the flipside I can just turn my brain off and enjoy it for what it is – which is just a cheesy action flick with Harrison Ford in it. And I suppose when Im looking at work done by my friends, what I try and look for is more or less the same thing. Because they have less resources as Steven Spielberg and George Lucas. Given the resources and the time you have, were you able to get as much out of this as you can? And if im

looking at a script and giving feedback, I'm kind of like 'it's the bets that you can do? And if not, how do I help you to reach that'.

Peter: On one hand there's an active, almost participatory, element to it. Then there's another where it's more like 'I can let loose and not have to think too much about it'.

Will: Exactly. Because there's no point in analysing every single bit of media you're ever going to consume. It's exhausting. That's why I wouldn't want to be a critic- no offense to critics.

Peter: tell me about it.

Will: Listening to music or watching films in a certain timespan and then giving your thoughts on it just sounds really exhausting. I look at Anthony Fantano (The Needle Drop) and he does how many reviews in a year? You wouldn't be able to listen to it – music in your spare time - and enjoy it because that's your job and you're doing it the whole time. I just wouldn't be able for it.

Peter: I can relate to that. I go through peaks and valleys of interest in music. Two weeks ago, I got this almost Godsend-like interest in music again – everything was fresh, everything was new, everything sounded pretty nice - and then a couple of days ago that vanished and everything sounds the same. Everything is covered in this muddy thing that I can't hear through. It goes in peaks and troughs. I know when it gets really bad, it gets really good. There's always this polar opposite thing going on. I can relate to the whole 'not wanting to have to be switched on all the time while listening to or watching something'.

Will: I was like that in secondary school when I was getting in to a load of stuff. Like loads of alt-rock – Paramore, Arctic Monkeys, - and then my friends showed me anything they were like 'how does the drummer sound, how does the bass player do, are the lyrics any good, is it pop or is it rock' and all that and I'm just like 'I don't give a shit man, as long as I enjoy it'.

Peter: I do find it hard to turn it off though. Once it's turned on, and you've done it for a few of them, it's hard to not to do it. I think it's just muscle memory. When I hear a piece of music my mind goes into analytical mode immediately. It's either for me or it's not. I need to figure what it is or I can dismiss it. There's no inbetween. Like a binary reaction. It's a weird thing – being able to come up with opinions on stuff but not really know why you need to. There's no actual need for it. There's no need for an opinion on art – it just is what it is. I'm kind of scratching out my own lane, I guess. There must be a reason for it somewhere down the line. That was basically my list of questions. I'm going to transcribe what was said here and pick out pieces and fit it into a half-hour project.

Will: Is it a documentary, a thinkpiece or a podcast?

Peter: It's a documentary. My initial idea was to figure out why we're creative, but I realised that I was just going to get different answers for everything so I..... **Zoom meeting ends**

Camel Island – selected bits.

ONE

Camel Island: I think I just enjoy doing it and the thing that drives us to do it (is to become rich) it's to be able to not have to do anything else. It's to be able to have the comfort to create more – if you know what I mean? This is what I want to do to have better tools to do it in the future. Which is just like one big loop but it's just fun. Its fun to make music, even if its not going to be an end product. To mess around like the other day when we were just fiddling with delays and created this massive wave of sound we'd never use it but it was fun.

Peter: That's the thing. You may never use that thing but, in a way, its feeding something that's coming on down the line. If you think of it as a gutter of sorts you have to clean the gutters every now and then to let the clean water come through.

Camel Island: ive heard that tap analogy – letting the dirty wate run to get the clean water. From just writing and writing that's how you get them good ideas. Its not about waiting for it to hit you. cos we have wrote some bad stuff.

TWO

Camel Island: Ive always been a fan of art – my dads quite an arty person – so I'll always draw and if I have the means Ill do a painting here and there. Nothing, like, serious. Its all just for fun it's nothing I would be able to sell.

Peter: I think all the best things are started by the concept of 'fun'. If youre doing it to be serious about it youre not going to get much out of it.

Camel Island: Ive approached things in that way before and you just end up more frustrated. You don't get where you want to be. Whereas if you start actually enjoying just doing it, that's when the gold comes. I mean, not necessarily saying that our songs are gold, but, that's when your better stuff comes.

David Almond interview – 19/4/23

Peter: How has your imagination changed as you've gotten older?

David: I don't know. I think, really, it's the same. I think we begin life as imaginative beings, creative beings, right as soon as we're born we are creating. We're sort of making yells, we shout, we squall, and eventually we learn how to control those and turn them into speech or song – it's the same with making marks, then eventually we make pictures or letters. We run around and we learn how to move and we turn that into dance. So, creativity is just part of the human condition. One of the reasons as to why I refer back to my own childhood experiences of the imagination is because I think that it is very similar now, to how it was then. Except now I mostly use it in a much more focused way. I do it to write stories, to kind of shape language. But I still feel that the kind of writing that I do, and the way I write – my creative process – is something that, in many ways, is still very child-like.

Peter: If I relate it to my own life, when I was a kid, I used to think 'oh, I want to be a cowboy or a wrestler'. As I've grown up I've realised that maybe it's not possible so that my imagination has changed to more rooted in reality – obviously I still have those fantasies – but I was just thinking maybe as you've gotten older, maybe your priorities have changed imagination-wise maybe? So that's why I've asked that.

David: I mean, my priorities have changed, because when I was a kid I used to want to play for Newcastle, but also at the same time I wanted to be a writer. So, I guess you learn what you can do and when I was a kid I knew that I wanted to be a footballer – it was a fantasy, I knew that I would never make it. I knew I wanted to write and I just kept on doing that as I got older, and I knew that it would be a long journey, and I'm still on that journey now, all these years later. I'm still on that same journey that I was on when I was a kid.

Peter: How do you channel your creativity? Do you explore it or let it come to you?

David: It's just how I am. I don't see my creativity as being something separate from me, or something that I have to go to. Obviously there are times when I'm writing – say in the middle of writing a novel – and I kind of go to a place where it is released. It's like a meeting, it's like an encounter.....with yourself, with your own creativity. Creativity isn't something separate – it's part of you, part of me. One of the things I'm stumbling on is the word 'creativity'. It's a very difficult word in lots of ways – because it makes people imagine it must be something really weird and something really special. It's not, you know. It's something innate in all of us. So, when I'm writing well it feels like something comes through me, but I get out of the way. It's a meeting with something, and then a meeting that I disappear from and this thing comes through.

Peter: So, you're a medium for something else and the something else is yourself?

David: Yeah. And it's not totally abandoning yourself, because a lot of it is very conscious shaping of language – you have paragraphs and pages and books – and it's working in that boundary between that sense of control, but also being in a kind of condition where you're also kind of out of control too.

Peter: So, in between conscious and subconscious?

David: Yeah.

5 mins and 34 secs 😊

Peter: Do you have any rituals that help/hinder the process?

David: I use notebooks a lot. So, my notebooks are my ritual – my blank pages. I use lots of different kinds of pens and pencils and highlighters and crayons. Again, it makes it seem very child-like. So, yeah, they're my rituals, I guess.

Peter: Colour coded creativity, in a way?

David: It's not really coded, it's just a kind of splurge really. I make a mess. I'm looking at my desk now and it's covered with all kinds of pens and pencils and notebooks and Sellotape and sharpies.

Peter: And would you say that because creativity has shaped your mind to be messy in that way, so your environment can become a small bit messy?

David: I think creativity is messy. I think one of the mistakes people make about creativity is, say they'll look at a book, and a book looks so perfect. Therefore, somehow the beginnings of the book must look like the end of the book. But it doesn't. The beginnings of a book are like a child's squabbling's, a child's scribbling, a child's calling out. Creativity is messy, it's imperfect. That's one of the beautiful things about it. It's not perfect.

Peter: I can relate to that, because I do music journalism – album reviews and things like that. And I've got a paragraph setup, and they're all over the place – none of it makes any sense. One is next to four, four is next to seven, but then as the process goes along, I tie them together and then it makes sense. So, you kind of stitch it later on, I guess. So, yeah, I can understand that.

7 mins and 40 secs 😊

Peter: I was reading the bio on the front of Skellig and it mentioned that you had multiple different jobs – postman, brush salesman, blue-collared work – how has that shaped your perspective on creativity as you've gone through life?

David: I've done loads of jobs – you know, when I was a student or when I was growing up I did loads of jobs like working on building sites, working in shipyards; they were kind of temporary jobs. I was a postman for a while. For me, they've been really important in helping me to see the kind of breadth of the real world and also given me a privilege of having experience towards those kinds of things. They do feed into my work. I think it's important if you're going to write, is to have a life. You can't just be a writer. You can't just think about books and literature. You have to also have an active life.

Peter: And in that active life, you're consuming things on a daily basis. What do you consume in order to influence what you create.

David: What do you mean 'consume, I don't know what you mean?

Peter: As in TV shows, other people's books, articles in a newspaper. Where are you looking for inspiration to create?

David: I read a lot, I watch a lot of TV, I stroll around a lot. I just look at the world and you never quite know what it is that's going to somehow fire you. But, you find yourself reading something and suddenly you know it's going to have a big impression on you; or watching something or wondering through the world and seeing something in somebody's garden that you know is going to have a big effect on you.

Peter: Do you know when it happens, or is it later on down the line?

David: Sometimes you know straight away, something immediately happens and it fires and you know it's going to have an affect on you. But, then a lot of stuff is long-term and something will strike you three years after and think 'oh shit, that's what I'm picking up on'. Often, you know when you're writing something you're not quite sure where it comes from, but then 'oh yeah, that's from that thing I did twenty years ago – that's where that comes from'. And I think being an artist of any kind is being in a state of alertness – allowing yourself to be influenced by the things around you; not just by

the books that you read or the TV you watch, but also by the things in the normal world. That alertness is... you've got to look at things and listen to things; allow yourself to be influenced and not tell yourself what you're going to be influenced by. I think the big mistake that people say - say if they want to write - and they want to be a particular kind of writer, then they'll only read a particular kind of writing; I think that's a big mistake. You've got to give yourself the chance to figure out all kinds of stuff and find out what you're really interested in. You don't know what you're really interested in until you begin to explore.

11 mins and 2 secs 😊

Peter: I can subscribe to that thought process. You can kind of pigeon-hole yourself into one thing, if you look at a certain thing - and only look at that. It's hard to pull everything out of one thing, but you can pull one thing out of everything. What's the hardest part of the process for you? Is there anything you find is menial, but absolutely necessary?

Davis: It's all menial. It's wonderful and magical and weird and dream-like, but it's also menial. You sit down at a desk and you get the words out. Sometimes it can be a real slog - and sometimes it's really difficult - and sometimes it's weirdly easy. The sort of meniality of it is really important. Just actually doing it and committing to doing it - it's work, as well as being the most amazing kind of play. You know, so many people come to me and they say 'well, I think I've got a great idea for a book, David. What do you think I should do?'. And I say, 'how about try to write it?' And often people never have thought that - 'oh yeah, I've got to sit down and actually do it'. So, you have to accept that a lot of it is menial.

Peter: I suppose beginning is the bedrock for everything really. Have you ever bumped in to writers block, and how did you deal with it?

12 mins and 32 secs 😊

David: No, I don't believe in writers block. I think it's a luxury; also I can't afford to have writers block, you know, I'm a full-time writer - it's how I make my living. I think writers block is like when you're a kid and you don't want to go to school; and your mother says 'get out of bed and get to school' - it's similar to that. Writers block is a luxury. Again, it goes back to it being menial. Sometimes you have to accept that you have to sit on the bloody chair and do it.

Peter: for me, I wouldn't say that I suffer from writers block. But, I do have dips in, I suppose what you would call my creativity. But, it's because I haven't been keeping up to date with everything else that I do - exercise, eating, sleeping. All of the back processes.

Peter: you've got a bit of an understanding of philosophy. Are there any links between philosophy and creativity? Would you consider creativity to be a loose and free-form philosophy of sorts?

David: Philosophy, I suppose what does philosophy mean? How you contemplate the world. How you respond to the world. Yes, there are profound links between my writing and philosophy. I find out what I think by writing about the world. And then things that I think about the world will effect my writing. Again, I don't see a separation between the two things - philosophy and writing. It's not as if you think 'oh, I've got this idea - this is how I think about the world, therefore I'm going to write this book in this particular way'. You find out how and what you think about the thing that you write. So, in all of my work, I've discovered what I really think and what I believe. I don't really understand what I believe but I begin to explore what I believe. It's a constant process of exploration and discovery about yourself. You can't begin by saying 'this is how I think, therefore this book is going to be like

that'. It's not like that. If you write properly, you kind of open yourself to the book, to the story, to the language and its through that process that you find out what your – you might call it – philosophy is.

Peter: There's a guy that I follow called Jordan Peterson. He's a psychological analyser of sorts and he says that 'if you're not sure what you think, write' because it clears up your thoughts up and you actually figure out what you're really thinking.

David: Thinking on its own can be really hard, but also thinking on its own can get in the way of discovery – because thinking is a very solitary, inward thing. Whereas, if you write, you think and write at the same time, things come out that you didn't know were going to come out. Like I say, it's a constant process of discovery and surprise, you think 'oh shit do I really believe that, oh yeah I do. Well, I didn't know that'.

Peter: How close would you say the creative process and the divine experience are together. Are there links between the two?

David: I mean, I don't like the word 'divine experience'. But, I know where that comes from. And, it sometimes does feel as if you're in contact with something beyond yourself or being on the edge of something that isn't you. So, yeah, it's very close. But, I kind of avoid the word 'divine'. The sense of imminence – being on the edge of something deeply mysterious. That's true and really important to me. I think the more I go on, the more I believe that language, art is a way of drawing on those 'other places', those other forces, But, also a way of getting close to them as well – without quite understanding what it is that you're doing.

Peter: Does writing books for young adults give you more of a creative license in comparison to writing for an older audience?

David: I don't know. I mean, I never expected to write for young people. It was only when I began to write Skellig and I realized that it was a book for young people. I thought 'my God, this is a book for young people', I never expected to do it. But, as soon as I did, it felt a great sense of liberation and I think in many ways it has released me to write in many forms that I wouldn't have written in if I just thought of myself as an author for adults. I'm able to experiment and collaborate with all kinds of artists and musicians; to work on the stage; to work with music; to work in short forms and long forms. So, it is, for me, it's been a liberation. And I love that sense of freedom that I have.

Peter: When you're writing a book, does each character in a story represent a side of your personality?

18 mins and 22 secs 😊

David: I haven't a clue. I don't know. Perhaps they do. Yes – often I see characters and think 'oh yeah, that's a bit of me' or a character that I'm totally unlike I might think 'oh yeah that's a bit of me too'. I think it's bound to. The books come from you – from me. As you're writing you can't think too much about that, you have to let the characters develop as they need to. And then when they appear, when they begin to grow, you realise that sometimes they are quite like me.

Peter: Do you understand your characters very well? Do you relate to them? Do you get to know them?

David: Yeah. I think you get to know them really well. You know, you get to know them so closely that you know what their dreams are, you know what their memories are. But, yeah, some characters they are imaginary beings with some kind of ties to the real world. So, I do get very close to them.

Peter: Has there been a character across all of your books that you've enjoyed being around the most?

David: The character from Skellig called 'Mina'. When Mina came into Skellig I didn't know Mina was going to be in Skellig. I hadn't met anybody like Mina before and she jumped into the book – fully-formed. Without Mina, Skellig would have been a frail thing. And then, subsequently I wrote a book all about Mina titled 'My Name is Mina' – I wrote that ten years after Skellig – which is like Mina's notebooks. Again, thinking about characters being like me, I realise that Mina – although she's an adolescent girl – is very like me in many ways. And then, just recently, I published another book about Mina called 'Paper Boat, Paper Bird' which came out earlier this year, which again has Mina in it. So, Mina just won't go away.

Peter: She's here to stay.

David: She's here to stay and she'll be coming back.

Peter: What do you hope to discover from the process of creativity?

David: Good stories. Interesting language. Beauty. I hope to discover and experience beauty. And in the process of doing that, you're going to experience a lot of pain and ugliness as well. But, it's a striving towards a kind of.... to discover something beautiful. And also, to write in such a way that the people who read you, read me, are in some way.... Liberated. Or in some way changed by what they read.

Peter: How do you know when a piece of work is finished? Is it a feeling, a thought, when you're fed up?

David: I just finished a book recently – about three weeks ago – and it's a feeling where you get to a point and you're fiddling around and trying to get to the end and you think 'I'm getting there, I'm getting there' and then there's a moment of 'OHH I've done it' and you kind of step back from the work - and there it is; done. It's a kind of sensation.

Peter: Do you have a defined workflow or process and if so, does it vary from project to project?

David: When I'm writing a novel, I get very orderly. So, I try to write a thousand words a day. And I kind of draw myself a calendar to try and make sure that I keep to some kind of schedule. And often I don't manage to hit that schedule, but having this structure helps me. So, I'm very structured when I'm writing a novel. But in the midst of all that structure, a lot of it will be very messy and kind of playful. Other things – shorter pieces sometimes come very suddenly and I'll write them down very suddenly. And then hone them over months – even its say a book of 500 words say. I might get it out really quickly, but then spend months going back to it and getting it right, getting it right.

Peter: I've got one more question. Why have you chosen the creative road?

David: Oh I didn't. It chose me. I couldn't have done anything else. I know if I hadn't chosen it – if I hadn't done this – I would have been a very frustrated, kind of mysteriously afflicted, person. I wouldn't have known what the hell was wrong with me. But, no, it chose me. This is what I was going to be. But, also it was a choice. I knew it would be difficult and knew it would take a long time. But, to go back to it being menial and did lots of other things to look after myself during that time. I think another thing that's really important – if you're going to aspire to be any kind of artist you have to look after yourself. Because, it's very difficult to make a living as any kind of artist. So, I did all kinds of jobs – I was a teacher for a long time. But, throughout all of it, at the heart of it all, was my desire and my work to become a writer.

Peter: Beautiful. Ive interviewed a couple other people and they mentioned that if they didn't have some sort of creative output that they would be miserable. I think that's a common through line between most of the people that Ive talked to.

David: Yeah. Good.

Signing off x 😊