

Big Mac at the Café

Steve Mac is a man with several strings to his cultured guitar. ROZ BRITNELL meets him after his regular Saturday night slot at the Eletriq Café.



Steve is also resident at Bartellas in Meopham and Wimbledon's All England Tennis Club. But not content with these residencies, Steve also runs a project called the High Tension Wires Performance Group, his "acoustic guitar orchestra".

He tells me "the group is to encourage like-minded local musicians to meet up and practice. We rehearse once a month. I'm always on the look out for acoustic guitarists, who can also play other instruments like the violin, mandolin or whatever to add to the overall sound of the group.

"It's been a painful process but incredibly rewarding for everyone at the end of it".

The group puts on an annual show at the Eletriq café, for many of them a first taste of live performance.

If you think Steve's schedule ends here then you are sadly mistaken. He also offers private tuition and works with five schools in the SE9 area. Working with young people is central to Steve's character. While some of the younger students are desperate to learn the new Justin Bieber song, Steve invents ways of sparking their interest in music from around the world.

He explains: "I think what I'm able to pass onto the kids is to give them opportunities to do something different and appreciate different types of music".

Just like his students, Steve has also been playing from a young age and over a late night coffee I get him to tell me where it began exactly.

"I had an uncle who played guitar really badly. Every time we visited, I played with it. I remember him playing 'Silent Night' and after that the sound of the guitar was so powerful to me I wanted to learn to play".

Now, his average medley can start with Snow Patrol and end in Celine Dion. I asked how he retains a balance between what he wants to play and what he thinks the Eletriq café audience want to

hear, "I have a huge repertoire of songs. I'm very conscious of the fact people don't want to hear the same stuff so I am constantly changing my sets."



ROZ BRITNELL

If you ask Steve to describe his music you're not likely to get a straight answer. "I always like to do songs you wouldn't expect on an acoustic guitar. It gets people's attention. I don't like to pigeon-hole myself," says Steve. So should we expect to hear some Lady Gaga anytime soon? "I think there's a line to be drawn there" laughs Steve.

If you want to get involved with the High Tension Wires Performance group you can contact Steve on 07802415053, stevemacguitar@yahoo.co.uk and visit his website for the latest info www.kentbee.com/1guitarist

Steve plays at the Eletriq Café, Eltham High Street, every Saturday 7.30 – 9.30pm and will appear at Well Hall Pleasaunce on Sunday July 18 from 2-4pm.