

## **TTM IDIOT INTERVIEW FOR OCTOBER 2013**

Ladies and gentlemen. Here we present our second reprise of IDIOT in which we feature one of our younger members whose interest in music from what we have heard so far seems to place him in an older bracket. But, we have yet to hear more from him and no doubt he will surprise us with a unique modern tune before long.

Grab your coffee or favourite beverage and read all about:

### **NEILMAC**

Q.1 What is your real name or the name you would like to be called?

**Neil MacDougall**

Q.2 What is your age group? 20 - 30. 30 - 40. 40 - 50. 50 - 60. Over 60.

**Right now I'm in the 30 - 40 group....by the time this gets posted I might be in the 40-50 group lol I turn 40 in October...**

Q.3 Can you list your top 3 music genres?

**Not much of a one for genres to be honest, I like pretty well everything, good music is good music regardless of whatever pigeon hole you try to put it in.**

**If pushed I'd say Rock, Country and Rock'n'roll**

Q.4 Of the three, which do you associate with mostly?

**Probably Rock...I'm a noisy person :P Just ask my wife ;)**

Q.5 What is your talent? Don't be modest.

**I like to think of myself as a singer....any degree of talent is determined by the listener lol I've been singing since I was very wee, in fact there is a tape kicking around of me singing when I was 3 or 4 lol I was a member of the local gaelic choir for a number of years till my voice broke, competed locally and nationally as a member of the choir and as a solo singer( got a third place at the nationals which I'm very proud of :) Started playing guitar at about 9 or 10, my mum bought a "Hummingbird" second hand - beautiful guitar, but it was too big for me, so she sold it and got me a small "student" acoustic - I wish I still had that first guitar though.....I'm a passable guitarist,**

**mandolin and bassist, nothing special or flashy...and I can just about fake it on piano and harmonica...**

Q6. So if pushed you could find the original tape recording and post it up on TTM boards could you?

**It's possible lol I'm not sure if I have it in my possession, I'd have to look lol**

**I do know I have a copy of a tape someone made of me and another guy playing together on a "Ceilidh Cruise" when I was 18 or 19. It was on a Cal Mac ferry that was specially hired for the occasion. They took the ferry out of port and cruised around local waters for a couple of hours. Lots of different bands and performers dotted all over the ship in various lounges etc, everyone playing traditional Scottish music and songs. Very cool 😊**

Q.7. Of the talents you have not listed, which would you like to do most?

**I'd love to be able to play piano properly...drums too, but they're not very practical...maybe one day I'll get one of those electronic kits you can plug headphones into...maybe lol**

Q.8. From the list of members you know, which interests you most and why?

**Good question.....I'm not sure I can narrow that down to one or two lol  
There are so many interesting, talented people here.....**

Q.9. Have you ever collaborated with another member or members on a recording.

**I've done a couple – The first song I wrote lyrics and sung was a collab with Toadman, called "What If?", about a year ago, which basically got me started writing my own stuff. Duetted with Scprock on a cover song, collabed with your good self on a couple, contributed a tiny part to The North Country thing... I think that's about it....**

**I'm not someone who pushes himself forward for that kind of stuff, more of a "If you ask me I'll do it" kind of guy lol**

Q10. Would you be prepared to help others with songwriting techniques of your own. How do you begin to get the inspiration for a song and how does it work?

**Absolutely, although I don't know what help I'd be lol**

**I should be clear here and state that I've never come up with something that wasn't "challenge" related lol no time or inspiration, unfortunately. That aside, where the inspiration comes from really doesn't matter – whether it's a life event or a news story or an emotion or a set of challenge criteria, the end result is exactly the same – a new song, right?**

**So when I have that in place, I generally sit down with a guitar and set the metronome or get a drum beat going and just mess around. It usually comes together pretty fast, a riff or a phrase or something will spark an idea – I mess around with the tempo or the guitar "sound" till something clicks. Once that's done it's really just a case of expanding on that to find the song itself – to me it almost writes itself from that point on... I just keep messing around and trying things out till I build a structure that works for the song as a whole. When I have that figured out, it's time to start recording. Generally I'll either have the drum track figured out and programmed or I'll stick with a basic beat and embellish it later as I go along. I tend to record the guitars first, get the bones of the song down on "tape", then the bass. Usually as I'm recording the guitars and bass a melody will "suggest" itself..I'll find myself humming a melody line as I'm trying to play lol Once I have everything "recorded" as a bare bones track, I'll sit and listen to what I have over and over and write lyrics as I go....I find that way it scans better than writing lyrics first and trying to fit them to the music after. For me a lot of it is purely subconscious. I don't really analyze HOW I do it...I just do it lol It just seems to happen, but that's the basic gist of how it works for me. I don't sit there and think to myself "this is how it should be done properly, according to the books I've read and courses I've taken". I don't usually have anything specific in mind (unless there are technical limitations set in the challenge criteria), what comes out is what comes out ☺ I don't think there's any such thing as a bad song, just songs that don't work – and if it doesn't work – you'll probably feel it in your gut, you know? The thing is, what works for me might not work for someone else...you have to find your own way of doing things that works for you. There's no magic formula that will**

**take the average man in the street and turn him into a songwriter. It's either in you or it isn't. The trick is if it's in you, what's the best way to bring it out of you? This just happens to be mine ...lol**

**Wow...can I get off my soap box now ?? lol**

**Once I start I sometimes forget to stop lol**

Q.11. Which of your colabs did you enjoy most?

**All of them! I don't really have a favourite...."What If?" was special because it was the first time I'd ever tried writing a lyric and melody....and I really liked Lowdown Bandroom Blues – I just like that song**

Q.12. Have you a favourite mix from our bandroom? (Could be one of your own.)

**Actually I do most of my listening in the forums....never seem to have time to hang around the Bandroom, it's tough enough keeping up with the forum and challenges lol If pushed for a favourite I'd have to say most of Jahva's stuff seems to be right up my alley musically, but really everyone at TTM does some really great music. I should check out the back catalogue more... especially with the new Challenge Archive – that was a stroke of genius (I should point out that at work , general contractors we work for have started using a host of different FTP sites and I hate them all lmao) This archive is clean and clear and easy to navigate ...well done that man!!**

Q13. Since you say you do most listening in the forums, would you prefer if music was archived somehow like ODC archives that could be easily accessed via the forums.? Remembering the band room may have to go.

**To be honest, the Bandroom is pretty much redundant (for me at least – see above). I like the easy access archive idea..but I'm not sure how it would work with the forums. In the case of the ODC, it's pretty easy – from a putting everything in one place point of view (That's not to say the actual doing of it was easy :P but from the outside looking in, ODC archive is a pretty good umbrella...) Essentially, to my mind, the Bandroom would move lock, stock and barrel to be part of the forum – I guess each individual would have their own subset archive in the "archive" – it would then be their own responsibility to fill it with their stuff??**

**I don't know what the technical ins and outs would be, but the same problem remains – you still have to generate traffic from outside the "group" or it has no real purpose lol. I do like the setup at gmhCafe that they use for the challenges, with the player being "right there", as it were... I think it would be pretty cool to be able to browse the forum while listening to a TTM player widget (that can be turned off of course lol) with a mix of the "locals" on it (like TTM has on the actual homepage which nobody visits because we all have the forum page in our "favourites":P )**

Q.14. What is your ambition both musically and personally?

**Musically I'd love to have a real album on the shelves...that would be cool...of course that doesn't happen nowadays lol Other than that, probably to have someone say "You should listen to this guy...he's got some great songs" about me....lol Personally, just to be happy and healthy**

Q15. Would you like a section of TTM set up where you could build a CD of your own or a compilation with others at the cost of losing the bandroom?

**Yes...that sounds like a great idea! A "best of TTM" compilation would be very cool...Maybe a yearly thing that was "for sale" (like a mini iTunes thing), although I'm old school...I like the whole Album/Cassette/CD experience lol although the production cost would probably be prohibitive lol You never know, it might even contribute to the costs Joom is incurring just keeping the place open... I'd buy one....not sure of the legal technicalities of doing something like that...but it sounds like a good idea to me ☺ I think Reverbnation does something like that, certainly they have a "store" section which I've never really looked at...**

**The Bandroom is a great idea in itself, but if you can't generate traffic from it, it's pretty much dead in the water unfortunately...and I'm guiltier than most of not using it and checking out what everybody is doing. Of course, in a lot of ways it's almost redundant for me anyway since the "active" users mostly post versions in the forums anyway...**

Q 16. Do you belong to any other indie websites and will you name them?

**I'm a member at GMHCafe, and KAE forums(although I haven't been there since the day I registered, I got shunted over here and never left again lol)...does Reverbnation count as indie?? I doubt it....that's it – I have enough trouble keeping up around here without adding any more lol**

Q.17. Where do you see TTM in 5 years time? What role can you play in it's development?

**Hopefully bigger and busier....it would be nice to see more people taking an active role. There's a wealth of info and experience to learn from here, everyone is extremely helpful and willing to share their knowledge....it's the ideal place to hang out for people who want to do some home recording or improve on what they're doing already. I'm not sure what role I could play, other than being around and posting, generally taking part in the forums. It's participation that makes this place run and keeps it interesting**

Q.14 Who is your next choice for the IDIOT?

**Ummmmm....who haven't you done yet??? Lol  
Oh! You haven't done Jahva.....do Jahva!!**

Thanks Neil for an enlightening interview. You may want to rephrase that last line but I will ask Jahva if he will agree to an interview.