

Project name: Shifty Records Archive Project

Date of Interview: 01/07/2014

Location of Interview: JHB

Language/s of interview: English

Length of interview: 37m:16s

Name of interviewer: Michael Drewett

Name of interviewee: Matthew van der Want

Name of translator: N/A

Name of transcriber: Victoria Hume

Audio file name/s of interview: SHIFTY_JHB_Van der WantMatthew_20130701.WMA

Interview with Matthew van der Want

Emphasis in *italics*.

Michael Drewett [MD]:

Matthew van der Want [MW]:



MD: OK, so. Um. This is ostensibly about Shifty more than about you.

MV: Yeah.

As it should be! [laughs]

MD: But obviously – er – so – what I'm interested in – I know a little bit about the story, just by and by, but you – you were playing solo and you wanted to get a contract, and I think some people recommended Shifty to you, is that right?

MW: Yah. And at that stage I wasn't really aware of what Shifty Records kind of was; I just knew *all* of the music by chance – it was just the kind of music I was into. So I was a big fan of – um – Koos Kombuis, and – and Jennifer Ferguson, and Gereformeerde Blues Band, and all those bands that Shifty Records was recording. But I didn't – I wasn't *aware* of this *entity* called Shifty Records; I suppose I was only sort of dimly aware that it was a – that it was responsible, basically, for getting – finding this music and putting it out; but – whatever it was about the kind of ethos that informed it really appealed to me, obviously, because, mainly by chance, I just ended up – it was the sort of South African music that I listened to. And I had no idea that – that a lot of these artists were, I

suppose really struggling. And – um – at the time I thought, I kind of thought, well if I – and I'm a 16, 17 year-old kid and I love this music, I'm sure everyone does – so to me, you know, when I went to see Koos Kombuis playing in Grahamstown or whatever, I – it was just like going to watch Bruce Springsteen or something, and you don't think that – that it's not like that, kind of thing. Until you – get exposed to it – kind of face to face. [Timecode – 00:01:57]

MD: So I mean did you actually have the albums, or had you just recorded them from people?

MW: I – yo, shew, I had *all* the albums, I had the LPs of – of all of those, er...

MD: You just didn't connect that it was Shifty particularly...

MW: I suppose, because I also vaguely remember also going – and I remember I used to go and at one point a little office at the top of Yeoville, here, and um - I used to go there and old Hannelie Coetzee was there...

[00:02:26 interrupted by kid... resumes 00:02:55]

MW: So – so I was kind of aware – you know, when I say I wasn't aware of Shifty Records, I wasn't aware of this organisation behind this music, I just knew that this was where I got this music that I liked from.

ARCHIVE FOR JUSTICE

MD: And there was Hannelie, you said you saw Hannelie at...

MW: Yes I saw Hannelie, and she always said to me afterwards whenever she saw me come in there to look – because I often couldn't find the stuff in the shops, or whatever, and I think I phoned or whatever, and I used to end up there buying their badges, and, y'know, Koos Kombuis and James Phillips badges, and that kind of thing. And she always says that she just saw me and said 'you know, this oke is the *fan*, and we've gotta be good to him' [laughs].

MD: So – so then – you um – did you go to Lloyd with a demo, or did he come and watch you at a gig...?

MW: What happened was, I started writing these songs, and I got hold of a guy called – David Marks got hold of me, er he was a 3rd year music at that stage – or still is, I suppose. And he suggested... I'm just trying to remember exactly what happened, but I was playing at – I had this sort of residency gig at Wings Beat bar, and I was recording my songs on little um – tapes, just y'know, onto a ghetto blaster kind of thing. And I'd sent that to Shifty Records I think at some point, and various other people.

And then this chap Dave Marks got hold of me. And after that, I – I'm just trying to remember what happened because there was a little bit of a *tussle* between Lloyd and Dave Marks at one point, but what happened was I phoned up Lloyd and said 'listen you've been recommended to me by somebody, as a possible person who might record a demo.'

[Timecode – 00:04:34]

I think what happened – I think what might have happened was that Dave Marks had said 'you need to get a demo of your stuff, and these are some names of some people,' and one of them was Lloyd; so I spoke to Lloyd, and got – er – he – I phoned him one afternoon and said 'listen you've been recommended to me and I was wondering – you know, I've been playing these gigs...' and he said 'well come over now, and record a set of your songs,' so I did that, and I basically arrived at his little studio, which at that stage was in Bertrams, and the – two houses next to each other there, which I think he ended up selling at a substantial loss, 'cause that area went down the toilet. Um, but – yeah, so I went there that afternoon and recorded all the songs that I had *in* me at that moment; and it was very sort of off-the-cuff kind of thing. And er – yah, then it – well it just – I sort of became – I think my album – my first album was a bit of a sort of side-project for Lloyd, he was very busy with Urban Creep at the time, and he, er... For me it was just pretty amazing for me 'cause all these okes that I'd seen, y'know, I thought were rock stars...



[00:05:39 kid interrupts again, resumes 00:05:53]

MD: And er, yah, so you were saying people you were around –

MW: Yeah, so all these people that I thought were the, y'know, the sort of – rock – so like James Phillips would wander in and out of the studio and say 'howzit,' and [laughs] and ... I mean he came and watched me play the one time, which was pretty amazing. 'Cause I was – so I was completely in awe of that music, and I suppose I still kind of am, especially his – especially James. I think – I think that guy made – some of the best music, or *the* best music, certainly the best songwriting that we've ever had. And I know it's become very fashionable to say that but I honestly have *always* thought that and [laughs], and it's just – it still amazes me that it's not really recognised, that music – *his* music in particular, I mean y'know, that's like – I mean people like Koos Kombuis sort of found a way to make a living, out of what he does; but his music in particular was just – *extraordinary*. And – and it still is, and I still listen to it *often*.

MD: So that...

MW: So to have him wandering into the studio while I was busy going – and I was 19 years old; I was –

MD: Really? As young as that, hey, wow....

MW: Yah. Well no maybe I was 20. 20. I was thereabouts. So I was. Yeah it was very – it was incredibly overwhelming. [Timecode – 00:07:09]
And I thought, 'I've made it now, man'. [laughs]

MD: So talking of that – you were obviously aware of the – I mean over time you became aware of how dire things were for musicians in South Africa – people of the – like James, and people like that. So what were your expectations going into a contract with Shifty? I mean were you expecting to do nothing, or were you hoping that maybe you would – you would get some fame and fortune.

MW: I think at the time, when – basically what had happened then politically, obviously, in 1994 apartheid had officially ended, and there was a – there was a sense I think within Sh – probably from Lloyd – that there was a now an opportunity to do something different, other than the traditionally political – quite politically charged music, so that's why I think he was into signing Urban Creep; and he was interested in me, there was a band called The Removable – no, not The Removable –



MD: The Sunshines...

MW: The Sunshines, yah...

MD: ...Removable Tattoos

MW: Their album, yes around the same time as me. So I think Lloyd was experimenting with trying to make a sort of pop thing; and songs that would get played on the radio. And Urban Creep, and me, and most people he was recording at the time did end up all over the radio, actually.

MD: And er – Sunny Skies, James's album, was also quite a bit more commercial than –

MW: Yes, yes. So I think at that stage, that was the direction that Lloyd was trying to move into. But erm – and I think – I dunno, I mean he'll obviously tell you but I think to me it was a big disappointment to him that it was just more of the same, really, in a way. And I – I always think, especially when it comes to – to the stuff that me and Chris did, I think that Lloyd feels that, because I – certainly after all

of those – after those years – then – '98 onwards, he devoted a hell of a lot of time and energy to our stuff, y'know? He spent – a considerable amount of money and a – a hell of a lot of time recording those two albums that Chris and I did together. And he was very into it; and I think he was very disappointed – as of course were we – that they didn't, y'know – shoot stars out...

[Timecode – 00:09:29]

I mean they got a sort of – y'know – yeah, they got what you can expect them to get – they got your sort of – sort of vaguely cultish following; erm. And I mean for me I'm still glad just to have recorded the stuff, if you know what I mean – to have had an opportunity to put it out there.

MD: Yeah, great things to have done, yeah.

MW: But it came as a surprise to me – how shit a life musicians actually [laughs] lead here.

MD: Yeah. So you – did you – I mean you might have hoped you would do better but you pretty much thought it would be a side – a side show for you?

MW: No, I well – No – I think – certainly for the first – yah, for the first eight, nine years, I threw myself into music, so until I was about 30 it's all I did kind of thing. And – I – yah; it was... I mean the reason I stopped it was because I wasn't enjoying the life of it – I mean, scraping an existence...

MD: 'Sitting on a bar stool spilling your guts'

MW: Yah, exactly.

MD: So, um. What you're saying is you think Lloyd – it sounds like you're saying you think Lloyd put a lot of effort into your albums, er – but do you still think that in a way Shifty as a record company let you down, maybe in terms of marketing – that side of things.

MW: I think, for me – when I look back now, at what a record company is in theory supposed to do, I don't think Shifty really was even a record company – I mean... I – I don't – I think I might be one of the few people that did sign some sort of publishing arrangement with Lloyd, but I think if he's got it I'd be surprised; and we didn't any kind of formal kind of recording contract in place that I am aware of. It was just a kind of a – it was just a kind of – it was done on a – on a wing and a prayer kind of thing. And when I look back that's what it – that's what it feels like.

And there was a period, I mean at that stage, when we had just started, that Gary had started Tic Tic Bang, which was the sort of big hope of a company that could really do something; and for a while they were doing very well.

[Timecode – 00:11:26]

You know, distributing stuff, and getting stuff into the shops and getting stuff into the radio, and they had publicists who were – erm – doing the job that they were supposed to do, kind of thing, and it was looking good. But it just didn't sustain itself, really. And more and more – as I went on more in my music career, more and more it became about me just doing it all for myself, until I ended up just recording myself. Just because I then – er, yeah... it wasn't – I didn't think it was viable for *anyone* to sort of carry on the way it was carrying on. Certainly wasn't viable for me, and I don't think it was viable for Shifty Records.

MD: So it's almost like Shifty reverted to its original goal, which was to – almost be archivists of music, to make sure it doesn't – you know, it gets recorded. As Lloyd said, then he thought he would do something with this, and he started to try and sell the stuff, but it never ever was their forte.

MW: You see that I find, I didn't know that, but I find that very interesting because it definitely, it *definitely* wasn't his forte. And he was aware of it, and he was always wanting someone to do it for him, when I – when I was working with him. Um. But er... I don't – To be very honest, now this sounds incredibly arrogant, but what I was saying about James Phillips's music – and I'm not putting my – the music I made on the same level as that; but it still surprises me that despite having songs on the radio, and despite having good – fairly good opportunities, and nicely recorded stuff, and interesting music, that – that it didn't kind of catch on some more – catch on in a bigger kind of way, sort of thing.

Um. And then it's still happening, with someone like Chris's stuff, who's just – it's like out of this – it's like *otherworldly* his music; I mean I – it's – er - his recent music I mean. And it's still just – just complete doldrums. And I don't really know what it is. I don't know if it's just *luck*, if it's just a thing that well, sometimes, y'know? Or – or whether there's something *particular* about, y'know, having been from here. I know Robin [Auld] always, cause he was also on the scene at that stage – and we used to – I was quite friendly with Robin – but Robin always used to say, you know, 'of all the countries, mom, *why* did I have to be – y'know – born here, kind of thing... And I don't know if there is something about coming from here that just means you're never actually gonna – certainly if you make music that's kind of *about* here, in a weird way, or that's not – that's not – not trying to be from somewhere else, I think that you, you struggle. You might struggle to – to succeed. *No-one* succeeded. I suppose those zef okes, y'know?

MD: I mean I suppose Shifty succeeded on the level of actually finding these people and recording them – maybe not finding them, maybe they were there waiting, but Shifty stepped in and recorded them, they might not have been recorded otherwise. [Timecode – 00:14:40]

MW: I think that's exactly right, and that goes for everyone – and brilliant stuff like Vusi, and Jennifer, and Koos, and Tananas, and...yah, yah.

MD: And Tananas and all those people were discovered by them. But d'you just think that Shifty – as much as Shifty maybe didn't market and so on, it was also that they were in a very difficult context, all along – I mean right from when they started right through to when your album – last album came out with Chris.

MW: Yeah. I think that's – I mean I... I'm gonna get myself a glass of wine...

[00:15:16 break – resumes at 00:16:05]

MD: So – so, perhaps you could say a little bit more then about what you think Shifty's legacy is in a way, and then um we could maybe look at some of it's – sort of failings.

MW: I think it's legacy, as you've said, Shifty ...er – made public, in however [laughs] ultimately futile a way, it made public voices which were just never going to be heard otherwise, I think. And some of them obviously better than others, I mean there was some – there was some dreadful stuff that Shifty did. But – but most of it was – there was just something about it; and – and it's something that appeals to – from what I've seen – a particular kind of – mind. Um. [laughs] And maybe, and that mind is one that's kind of in the minority, I think, worldwide.

But, nevertheless, I think it's – it's – it discovered artists – and some of them went on to do fine, do – do well. But who kind of found a niche for themselves. But that was what – that's what Shifty's legacy's gonna be, that they – they discovered all these – discovered and gave a voice to these artists who otherwise would have just never recorded.

MD: And how important do you think Shifty's – erm – tendency to kind of record with their own artists on each others' albums was? I mean I know on your first album you had a number of...

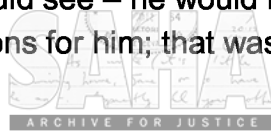
MW: Yah, it was star-studded, yah.

MD: ...Shifty artists playing on there; I mean, d'you think that – that was also an important mark of Shifty's sound, perhaps?

[Timecode – 00:17:49]

MW: I suppose so, I mean looking back now I can hear – I mean I listen to those – like an album like *Niemansland* for example which has got – it had *all* of them – all of those like great, interesting people on at the same time. And there were some *seriously* good musicians.

What I remember now, they did a James Phillips benefit concert at Oppi Koppi a number of years ago, and I remember – I did a few songs of James's as the – as the lead singer of this band. And that band again was all of those – the – the history – the Shifty legacy band kind of thing, and I just remember thinking 'Jees, can you imagine having this as your band, like, all the time?' kind of thing, because they were some *seriously* good musicians. I mean y'know, people like Andy Clelland and – um – and – all of them, Vusi was in there - Vusi was in the band, Chris – Chris Letcher; and, um, Gary on the bass. It was – fantastic. So that was definitely... And Lloyd was – I mean there was a sort of 'I'll do you a favour' kind of vibe about what um – what Lloyd got up to with the musicians he used, so often – I mean I would see – he would record somebody in exchange for coming to do a few sessions for him; that was the sort of culture that was at work.



MD: So I mean that – that is an important point then as well, is around – how the Shifty finances worked; were you paid....?

MW: Jees, you must ask *Lloyd* that, 'cause I wasn't paid – anything.

MD: You never received any money upfront...

MW: I got some - I got some – never money up front. I got some royalties when they were being sold by Tic Tic Bang; and once in a while I get – a payment from Lloyd, but it's not really...

MD: Is that for radio?

MW: No – the radio gets paid directly from SAMRO, so they've always paid. Erm. But actual – what do they call it? – mechanical royalties or whatever on sales...

MD: If somebody...

MW: ...buys your album, you're supposed to get a percentage of – of it. And who knows? It might just be that no albums sold, I dunno, but I – But there were a few – er – royalty payments for a few years that worked [...], that came from Tic Tic Bang. So it's very, it just seems very – I mean Shifty's finances just - I never understood them. [Timecode – 00:20:18]

In some weird way, I dunno – maybe, I dunno – maybe I was at fault, it didn't really matter to me, I never made a thing out of it. I didn't ... I was – In a lot of ways I was just incredibly grateful just to have had someone who *cared* about the music enough to do it, d'you know what I mean?

And who *wanted* it to succeed. I dunno, financially, I dunno what would have happened if it had like *really* succeeded, if you know what I mean, if it had made millions, who knows? There might have been law suits and all of that, probably would have been. But. But um.

It's quite good to talk about this stuff – frankly, if you know what I mean. 'Cause I've never – I never have before. Um. And when I think as the years went on, when the amount of bitterness might have started to grow, about the fact that – well it had just become a sort of running joke that, y'know, we're not going to get a royalty... You never knew – you never got sales reports, you know? You never got...

MD: And – you said you did a publishing contract with Lloyd, does that – was that one where – you didn't sign over your...?

MW: I signed my publishing in my songs, to him, on a – something like a 70/30 basis – 30 to him; and I *think* it lapsed after a couple of years, because it wasn't renewed. I think. But I can't remember. But I remember it was – it was a *big* issue – at the time. Because I think – at the time – Lloyd may have had the – the impression or – he may have thought that some of the music he was recording at that stage, because of, because – it was a sort of a new era; I mean he made that little album, I don't know if you've – *South African Rock*[?] it was called – me, and Urban Creep, and the Sunshines, and...

MD: Oh yah, yah. And Jennifer and um um...

MW: Yes, and he went to South by Southwest, and Jennifer, yah...

MD: And Lesego –

MW: ...and Lesego – ach those things were *great* that he did with – with er, with – um, Warrick. And Warrick's a – Warrick kind of gets ignored a little bit in the

Shifty picture, and he was always there – and on albums he did a lot of work, and he was always...

MD: Was he involved with your albums?

[Timecode – 00:22:16]

MW: He was, especially, yah, particularly – he wasn't involved in my solo album that I did with Lloyd, but he was quite involved in the stuff Chris and I did with him, and he – he played quite a bit of – he played a lot of instruments and he did quite a bit of mixing work and that – he was quite into it. He was a lekker oke –

MD: And he was in Cape Town –

MW: He was in Cape Town. And he was in Jo'burg for a bit, before. But yah, no, he was a lekker oke – interesting guy, funny guy. Um...

MD: But there's no real difference, then, in for instance, what you can see, from doing something with Shifty and doing something on your own. Other than obviously with Shifty you had more resources in terms of recording; but once the album is done, it sounds like it's pretty much the same. I mean, you sort of try and put it out there as much as you can, and not much happens.

MW: Yeah. It's exactly that – that is the – white South African music in a nutshell I think. And I must say, I feel – I take my hat off to anyone who carries on doing it into their 30s and 40s. Like some *are* – not talking specifically Shifty artists, but – I just – I think *anyone* who can do that – I mean someone like that Sito guy from Port Elizabeth [?] who's all over the place and putting his name out there, and seems to be doing OK. I think – I think it's bloody *amazing* frankly – it's courageous is what it is, yeah, doing your – I admire it. 'Cause I couldn't I couldn't do it – I used to get terribly depressed about it. About the fact that I was making this music that I thought was great, and that I threw my whole person into, kind of thing, and it was just this constant, you're not good enough, people don't really like you, you're not selling – and – I dunno. I often think – I mean now we're not talking about Shifty, which is not good – I often think ... it might be a blessing that I never made it big, 'cause I'm not sure if I would have handled it all. Cause I was so riddled with – even as – even as a sort of *nobody* I was so riddled with ego issues and I'm-not-good-enough issues and what have you, so...

MD: Yeah. So I mean, Shifty managed to get um – a really good recording done of the album. It was a good album – it looked good, as well as sounding good; and got radio play, it got good reviews and so on. So – they didn't do anything less than what a major in South Africa would have done probably.

MW: That's a very good point. Because I mean don't – don't ...

[Timecode – 00:24:52]

MD: In fact, probably might be better than a major would have done.

MW: They did a better job than what the majors did, as far as the recording and the quality of the general thing was.

So I suppose that, if you know – because I mean we haven't talked about the majors, because they're – what a *joke*. And they always have been frankly, I just don't – I have no respect for – for them, I don't have any respect for their A&R people and – etc. I think they're clueless; and they watch opportunities pass them by.

I mean I suppose music ultimately comes down to how much money you can throw into it – because you can make anything... but it's what gets chosen to throw money at is – is – I just find *amazing*.

MD: You wrote that article in the Mail & Guardian about Just Jinger and all the rest of it...



MW: Oh yah, that was a good career move...

MD: ...so...

MW: Shit floats [laughs].

MD: ...where you were saying that the wrong bands were being promoted in a sense – what you're saying now; that – that the majors were going for people like Just Jinger, or... those sort of things, and they weren't going for people like yourself, or – James –

MW: And what's pathetic is that Just Jinger was not like a Matchbox 20 that really did achieve success, y'know, they were sort of flash-in-the-pan, but I mean, Art is – he's a very sweet guy actually and I feel bad for having – I was young, and arrogant. But, er – y'know he's struggling, just like Arno Carstens is struggling, and – and whatever. And it's just – it's just – if you're going to throw money at something that's not gonna work, then at least throw it at something that's got value, y'know? – artistic value; that's what I always thought about it.

And that's, that's – and I dunno, if Lloyd had more money at his disposal maybe he would have done the promotion part possibly. But that's – if you wanna talk about what the difference between Shifty and the majors is, the product that Shifty made was *far* superior, and the A&R work, particularly, that they did –

[Timecode – 00:26:41]

choosing who they were going to record – was kind of – unsurpassed.

But [laughs] what they did *after* the recording was probably as bad as, or possibly twice as bad as – as what the majors did, as far as putting it out. And from my point of view, when I was working with Lloyd, he never put himself *up* as somebody who would put my music out – that was going to be Gary's thing, and I think he was quite excited to – to have this Tic Tic Bang distribution arrangement. And after that he tried to do it with Sheer – and – I don't know if that worked; I don't think it worked. But – an effort was made. So I don't think it was for want of trying that Lloyd has, y'know, not able to get his music into the shelves. I still walk occasionally into a – Look & Listen and see somebody like Sankomota, or me, or someone, and I think Jesus, how did *that* get there? And I sometimes catch myself thinking, you know, I wonder if anybody's *actually* making any money out of this. I dunno, I suppose, I hope they are. Somebody is. It's not me, though. [laughs.]

MD: I think it's usually the people at the end of the – somewhere in the middle and the end of the thing who make the most money, the actual retailer will – and if retailers don't sell, then they ship it back to whoever, you know, often it's on consignment or whatever, that kind of thing, so...

MW: Yah,. But I mean these days, I mean...

[kid comes in, break, resumes 00:28:17 resumes 00:28:34]

MW: er... what else do we need to say?

MD: One last thing was – we talked about – we talked a little bit about Shifty artists together on albums, but did you get – I mean you were there later maybe than the halcyon years, the early years, you know all the best people that you were looking up to – but did you feel you were part of a stable, did you feel there was a camaraderie amongst the Shifty artists?

MW: Yeah. Very much so. I mean at that stage it was – it was – in my mind anyway – it was me and Urban Creep that were the kind of – the – the new kids on the block kind of thing. And it was a very – it was nice time, I mean I suppose it was about six months long and you felt like jees, y'know, we're recording this great

album, you've got all these people you thought were *amazing* performing on it, like y'know, Jennifer Ferguson and what have you – and y'know, you sort of feel fre – you're on the radio, and you sort of *feel* fresh and – and that.

[Timecode – 00:29:30]

But y'know, and I mean I – used to gig with Urban Creep and that; erm and they – I did a few sort of shows with Johannes Kerkorrel, when he'd come back here, and those were – sweet. I mean how's what happened to that oke? I mean *jeesus...*

'Cause he was – I thought he was quite an extraordinary man; y'know, I did two or three things with him in Pretoria and then some down in Cape Town, when he'd come back from Amsterdam, and he was trying to make it with a gig here, he was struggling – theatres were sort of half full and – and I was just in awe because I was a fan of his. And erm – [laughs] but he was very funny. And I just couldn't – I was *devastated* when I heard what happened to him, *jesus*.

And, but Lloyd was always quite disparaging of him, I mean he would always be – say it was not nice working with him, and he was pretentious, and he'd have to turn all the lights off and have a candle glowing. But I just found him very sort of entertaining – he was entertaining in that sort of very flamboyant, gay guy kind of a way, which I – I found – quite endearing actually. And he was – he was sweet to me. So I mean, at – at that stage – and James Phillips – I mean – I don't know if you've – I ended up at a few things – it was *horrible* – I mean I ended up at a few things at his house where – I mean I really had been – he'd been a *hero* of mine – and he still is – and his music was just incredible, and I just obviously as you say caught him at the end. And it was er – fucking – hard to deal with as a 22 year-old – to er – to see. I mean at that stage James – he wasn't physically well, and he was drinking a whole lot. And um... yah, he wasn't so – he wasn't so *lekker*. So it was a *weird* scene, actually, when you now you say – when you talk about camaraderie with everyone in there. There was – there was a feeling that you were part of some story, and for *me*, that was always the biggest part of it, was like 'I'm in the same stable as these okes' that I just always thought were *amazing*. And even after I realised that OK, y'know these people are just as – their music careers are not much better if not worse than – than mine, kind of thing. But I – it was always – I felt like I was part of it – and I still feel it, it was like a legacy, and to be part of that is... I'm not sorry I did it kind of thing.

MD: So apart from this project that Lloyd did with Rian Malan, you and Chris had the – the final Shifty album in a way.

That's right. And I must say ... I like – I've sort of met Rian a few times, and like him, and I'm – I'm also kind of in awe of him. But I don't like that album at all. And I know, I know – Lloyd was really excited about it, and I really did *try*, but I didn't dig it at all. I dunno, what did you think of it?

[Timecode – 00:32:35]

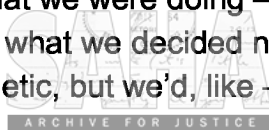
MD: I haven't even listened to it.

MW: Oh haven't you?

MD: I didn't really want to. And – I haven't – haven't had – it's never really come my way, so I didn't have an opportunity to...

MW: You know what it was, and I was so surprised, it very *un-musical*, and – by that I mean melody and *songs* weren't really there; but Lloyd sort of thought that they were, absolutely. And Lloyd was always – if there one thing that he *did* recognise it was melody and song, and – and stuff.

We had, I mean, um, interesting – I won't say fights with Lloyd, but *tensions* about, like production aesthetics and – and that kind of thing; and I think he quite got into our – 'cause what we were doing – I don't know what the hell we were thinking at the time, but what we decided no what we wanted to get is the sort of like almost *punk* aesthetic, but we'd, like –



MD: Acoustic punk you used to called it.

MW: Yes, at some point, yah. That was the sort of idea of – of – of having these sort of – these intricate – intricate little fiddly guitar parts and what have you, but – but that have some sort of weird punkish, anarchic, erm – fuck you, fucked up ness about it kind of thing; and I think we *often* felt that – that Lloyd tended to try to pretty things up, and try to move things in a more pop – pop direction, which for him was very ironic, I'm sure he'd be surprised to hear that. But then I think when he kind of saw – what we were trying to do, he really got into it, I think Lloyd did. And he – he – *now* I listen to sometimes – I mean I don't listen to my music much at all any more – but I – I – sometimes put on um – that first one we did, er Low Riding. I mean some of the production on that is like pretty fucking out there, and I think it's great.

MD: Was that with Lloyd or was that just with Willem?

MW: No that was with Lloyd. No, Willem was – Lloyd [laughs] refused to put his name to that thing – it was also a *shocking* career move, that, er – *EP Tombi* it was called. [laughs] It was just – also when I look back on that I just think, you know,

if you're going to – at that stage it was like me, a hot new songwriter on the block, 22 years old, and Chris Letcher from the band that had been number one all over the place, and we got –

[Timecode – 00:34:34]

and these two are going to make an album together, what's it gonna be, and you put out *that* thing, that's like, y'know, basically a big fat fuck you to all of you [laughs] and it was just a sort of sta – statement that we're gonna do what we want, but Lloyd didn't want anything to do with it, that's why we ended up with Willem. Willem just thought it was funny, I think. And Gary thought – Gary got – Gary got the joke.

MD: Gary kind of put it out, eh? on the Tic Tic Bang thing.

MW: Yah. Yah. He spent, I think – that – that thing has got a – the biggest cover budget that Tic Tic Bang ever did, it was like that weird thing with the pool table and legs, and [laughs] a lemon, and er – It was quite expensive, considering, um...

MD: Probably didn't sell much...

MW: *Ooh*, and the critics didn't like that much, *at all*.

MD: So that wasn't Lloyd, but then we went back to er – *Low Riding* when it, with him – Lloyd, and it was...yah.

MW: OK well just the final word, then – maybe you could just sum up erm – what you think, y'know, about Shifty, what – just a final word on –

MW: I think – I think it's *brilliant* that the stuff is gonna be properly archived and recorded and it's gonna be recognised – as something. I still kind of feel quite constantly *sad* – that *none* of those artists really ever came to anything, I mean Vusi – Vusi was great.

But – er, there was just a complete lack of um – of – success, financial success from *all* of that music, and a lot of it is kind of, *so good*. And y'know, I dunno what makes music – *last* a long time, and I dunno if being in an archive somewhere makes it last. But it kind of – at least it's *there*.

And *I* always had the feeling, having finished – recording an album, I always had this feeling like 'thank *God*, I've put it down; and it is now recorded and it's *there*, and' – whatever, for posterity, or to make *millions* of rand, which it never did,

obviously; but it's kind of done and recorded, and it's, like, it's *static* now, and it's not gonna – it's there no matter what happens. So – so –

[Timecode – 00:36:47]

MD: And that's what Shifty did?

MW: That is exactly what Shifty did. But they're not – y'know, I don't think Shifty's gonna be remembered for – for – for any of its famous artists. Unless I decide to put another album out when er – when I'm 63. [laughs] *You never know.*

MD: OK.

MW: That was quite fun, jees I feel like I've just been in a therapy session [laughs].

[/ends]

