

Interview with Darren Hayes



Matt Hopper of WAVE 105 talks to the Australian hot man of pop while we do the pictures

The Too Close for Comfort Tour, you called it that why?

Because it is a theatre tour, and it's very much back to basics for me. In many ways I wanted this to be a little bit uncomfortable for me. I wanted to be very close to the audience. I wanted all the little tools and the trickery to be taken away from me, so that it was just my music, my voice, my audience and it's been great, it's been a real, real sort of learning curve for me.

Savage Garden has sold to date 20 million albums, which if you look at it this way means that 1 in every 300 people in this world have a Savage Garden Album. Have you ever thought about it that way?

No, that's a pretty good maths equation whether that's true or not.

I'm going to run with that – that sounds fantastic! You know it was a bit of a phenomenon really. We weren't the biggest band in the world but we sold records all over the world and it kept us busy, definitely. It was only 2 albums and it was in a period of about 6 years but it was very intense, so it almost feels like another lifetime actually, it feels like that happened to somebody else.

How does that make you feel to be that popular?

You know, honestly, we were so busy at the time I don't think I ever really processed it. I think now when I'm playing these shows, I think I'm more conscious and more aware of how lucky I am. Even when I'm playing theatres, they are all sold out but, you know

it, like 2,500 people will come to a hall, and I'm thrilled at the fact that they have all, you know, paid money to see me and come along to a gig. And I think with Savage Garden it happened so quickly that I didn't really have time to celebrate any of it to be honest. It happened and, you know, and it let me be here today and talk to you, it was an incredible, incredible experience but it just, it was very intense.

Well you and Daniel have gone your separate ways now, why was that? You must have been asked this loads of times but I have to know.

Oh god I've been asked it so many times. The short answer? I think everything has an expiry date. I think that any relationship either is intended to continue forever or you have a purpose when you come

together. I think he and I had a purpose in that, I think that he worked out through the process of being in a pop band that he really didn't want to do that for the rest of his life and good luck to him. I mean, as I keep saying it was very intense and from that experience I learnt what I wanted to do. I love singing, I love writing songs, I love performing. I can't imagine not doing it. He could, you know, and you can't hold that against someone. You just, I'm happy that we you know, that we left on an amazingly high note. It's not like we kind of fizzled out and then scrounged around; me doing a solo record was, you know, it was bold, it was scary. To go from a winning thing something that was working to suddenly start again was kind of scary.

Do you guys still keep in touch, do you talk?

Yes, he came to the show in Bristol which was, a little weird I have to say, because you know we've been through so much together and all of a sudden I'm on stage singing some of our songs, but he's not up there with me. But he lives a very, very different life to the life that I do. He's a bit of a recluse to be honest, he has never been really that comfortable constantly being in the public eye, so it kind of makes sense that we are not in each other's face everyday.

What a way to go though, with the mother of all gigs, the Sydney Olympics?

It was great, the last gig we ever performed at – you mentioned the Sydney closing ceremonies which was incredible but the last one we actually performed at was actually in South Africa, in December I think it was, of 2000. And that was pretty much knowing that, oh this was it, this is the end but you know we left with smiles on our faces and very proud of a kind of musical legacy that we started or began.

Scary though going out on your own for the first time?

A couple of years ago it was. Right now to be honest I feel like I've been doing it for ages – now the performing and the actual artistry of it I'm used to. Being a public person is something that's never really been that easy and it's obviously more difficult being a solo performer because it's, there's so much more focus on you as a person.

What I like about you Darren is that you give your fans a lot of time and attention. I mean there were crowds outside before the gig waiting to see you, I think you give them a special performance before the gig itself don't you, which is unlike most artists these days. Why do you do that?

I mean you've got to look after your people I think, that's how I feel about it. I mean I wouldn't be here today if weren't for Savage Garden. I wouldn't be selling these shows if there weren't fans

who listened to my previous music and came along tonight. And there is new people and old faces as well but you know with our fan club that was something we did on this tour, we offered like a sound check where they come in and they watch us rehearse and sometimes it's just hilarious, sometimes it's shocking, sometimes it's brilliant. But you know it's an inside view, I guess, into that world. You can't make time for every single person, so I always try and do things where I let the people who buy my records know that they are appreciated. I will sign after a show or sometimes before the show if there are people waiting, you know. I spend ages there and just sign CD's or whatever they have got because I know what it like to spend your hard earned cash on something you love – and you do not want to feel like you're shopping at chain stores. We're selling spirit you know, it's a real experience and these people are a real part of that.

I've had loads of calls, loads of emails from people saying "can you ask him this", "can you do that", "can you get a signed photograph", and everyone but everyone says "what a nice guy Darren Hayes is"! Is it hard to stay nice in the cut-throat world of pop music?

I think I've always been nice. I don't think it has always helped me though. Sometimes you can be too nice, sometimes people can criticise

you for that and say that you're too saccharin or you're too this or you're too that. I know one thing is you can't always please everybody and that is one thing I've decided to let go of a lot in my life now. It's that, for me, I give so much of myself when I write a song and if you see the show you'll understand. I give every ounce of myself and my spirit on stage to an audience and the people that are along this ride with me, and that's all about you can pretty much promise people. And anything other than that I think is just a bonus and that's why I try and do because you can't please every critic and you can't please every person in the street. And that's kind of my philosophy lately - is just to kind of be grateful, be yourself and generally that shines through.

Your voice has been compared to an awfully lot of people, Michael Jackson is that one that sticks in your mind. On a completely serious note, would you ever consider plastic surgery?

No, never. I have a weird theory about surgery anyway. I think that it's a bit, you know surgery for pure vanity's sake or to keep, to remain younger to me is kind of a bit of an insult to creation because you know there are babies that never make it past four months old. You know, and they would give anything to be 53 and have smile lines or wrinkles and that's kind of how I feel about age and I think it's a privilege. But you know, in terms of accidents, in terms of being born

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with a disfigurement, hey go right ahead, whatever but if it's just because you want to look younger I don't know.

So you'll grow old gracefully? Yeah I think I am, I'm into it.

You had a few problems with your voice I know on this tour. How is it at the moment?

It's fine on stage, I have to be really careful with, strangely enough, interviews and talking because I'm the only person promoting myself. Anyone who's seen the show will tell you I sing for an hour and a half on stage, you know, sometimes 3/4 nights in a row with one day off and do it again, do it again. And a tour can last anything up to 8 months, so it is very intensive and I always have to you know drink the ginger and lemon tea and drink water. I can't



drink alcohol. I have to get a good night's sleep. It's a bit of a nun's life to be honest when you're touring but I think people are worth it. I know if I paid my hard earned bucks to see someone on stage I'd want see them at their best.

So you won't be paying a visit to the Australian bar round the corner then?

No, that's the sad thing. When I'm touring I don't really get to have fun, but all my fun is on stage which is fine by me.

Is your voice insured, and if so how much for?

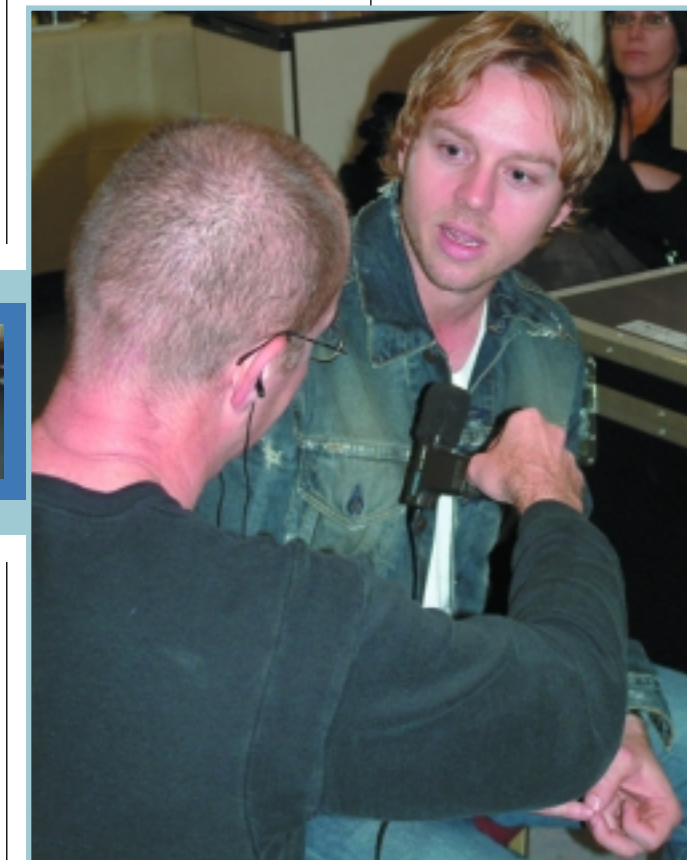
There's no amount on my voice. I mean we're insured if I have to cancel a show due to illness definitely, you know. And up until this year and I've been doing this for, well this is my third world tour, I'd never cancelled a show in my career but I had to cancel a couple of shows in Australia, simply because I caught a viral laryngitis which freaked me out. Thank god we had insurance and we could reschedule some of the shows but in general you know I'm rain, hail or shine.

You're a big Star Wars fan, aren't you. Huge!

Favourite Star Wars film please? The Empire strikes back.

Straight out with that one, no doubt there in your mind at all. Not one of the newer ones or the prequels?

Well I think no. 2 on my list is No. 2 is, what was the second one called? Was it The Phantom Menace? Attack of the Clones – that would be my No. 2, I think that one's pretty cool. Return of the Jedi would be my No. 3. Star Wars would probably be my second



least favourite, and then the least favourite would be The Phantom Menace.

So you don't like the first one? I like it but not as much as all the others.

Are you the kind of guy to be up queuing outside for the first tickets to the latest?

No, I'm a huge fan but both times I've seen the new movies I saw them with George Lucas so I didn't have to queue.

Now that's a name to drop! I know that Truly Madly Deeply was inspired by the film, the Alan Rickman film wasn't it? Yeah, it was, yeah.

Have you ever had an offer to be in movie and if so considered them?

I have, obviously anyone that has, you know, any sort of name at all in a paper ends up getting an agent. So I have an agent in Los Angeles and they offer me scripts and things like that but you know, I mean I'm a performer. I would love to be involved in something if it were really special but I don't want to be Jon Bon Jovi, bless him. I don't want to be the token sort of cute guy or musician in a film. If I did a film it would be a role and it

Do you see much of the places you go to cos you're going everywhere!

I really don't, we talked about this off air. You know I try to get out, like here I made sure I walked around for an hour before the sound check at the gig because I, you know I want to get a sense of the city and the people I'm about to talk to tonight. There is definitely a tone that's specific to every place you go on earth. You have to somehow feel like you're connected to that, otherwise you get out on the stage and it throws you for the first 10 or 15 minutes because you've entered their living room, you know you are a guest. I am a guest here in this city, so I try and check it out. It's not always easy though.

Darren, over there in the corner, have you spotted the Digeree Doo.

Yeah, I've spotted your Digeree Doo and I just have to break your heart right now. I will not embarrass myself by showing you how badly I can't play it. I've tried before.

You know, I though, I figured Australian, big lungs, bound to be able to play the Digeree Doo!

Bless you, but you're not the first journalist that's ever offered me a Digeree Doo. I'll hold it up for the camera, who's taking a picture.

But that's as far, we're not going to hear a note are we? Go on, just a quick one.

No, you'll hear some notes on...

Go on, it's perfectly clean!

I'm not touching it! You'll hear some notes on the stage tonight but maybe not from the d doo.

Well it's been a pleasure to talk to you. Darren Hayes, thanks very much. Good luck with Spin and the new single. Thank you. Thank you, cheers!

