

EMBARGOED UNTIL 12 NOON THURS 8th AUGUST 2019



Nile Rodgers delivers keynote speech as songwriters Get Lucky.

Ivor Novello Award-winning musician and producer **Nile Rodgers** surprised a room full of songwriters, music industry workers, and academics on 8th August, emerging as the unannounced keynote speaker for the **Songwriting Studies Research Network** event held at **The Ivors Academy** in London, UK.

Billed as a conference around the activities of an academic research network, delegates had expected a day full of panel discussions, debates, and papers, but alongside the advertised schedule they also witnessed an intimate, hour-long discussion between Rodgers and music manager **Merck Mercuriadis**. In a rapid-fire exchange the pair covered a variety of topics, including the future of music publishing and the secrets of songwriting success, before answering questions from the crowd.

Research project leader, **Dr Simon Barber** from the Birmingham Centre for Media and Cultural Research at Birmingham City University, said: "Getting these kinds of rarefied insights from people who have ascended the upper echelons of the music industries is priceless. We can't thank Nile and Merck enough for spending time answering our questions and sharing their expertise with the network."

The event – the second in a series of national forums organised by the network – also saw the launch of the **Songwriting Studies Journal**, a new publication edited by Barber that will develop and share work from researchers and practitioners related to the culture and practice of songwriting. Delegates went away with details of the first issue and an invitation to contribute.

Following the event at The Ivors Academy, Rodgers and Mercuriadis then joined Dr Barber and his colleague Brian O'Connor for a live recording of their renowned podcast **Sodajerker On Songwriting** at the Queen Elizabeth Hall as part of the **Meltdown Festival**, capping off a day when the role of the songwriter was the focus for all.

//ENDS – Contacts and Notes for Editors follow overleaf

Contact: Dr Craig Hamilton – Songwriting Studies Project Coordinator –
craig.hamilton@bcu.ac.uk / 07740 358162.

Twitter: @songstudies

Instagram: @songwritingstudies

Web: <https://songwritingstudies.com>

Notes for Editors

- The **Songwriting Studies Research Network** is a two-year AHRC-funded project which unites scholars, industry workers and practitioners in a forum for the exchange of ideas about songwriting. It aims to produce new insights related to songwriting by exploring key issues, questions and themes and to then share this knowledge through publications, projects and other initiatives.
- **Sodajerker on Songwriting** is a podcast produced by co-hosts Simon Barber and Brian O'Connor. Since 2011 it has created 140+ episodes based on in-depth interviews with songwriters, including Sir Paul McCartney, Paul Simon, Alicia Keys and KT Tunstall. The podcast has entered the charts in 60 countries worldwide, has been downloaded over 2 million times, and in 2016 was the basis of a 60-minute special programme on the BBC World Service.
- The **Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)** funds world-class, independent researcher in a wide range of subjects from history and archaeology to philosophy and languages. They also fund more contemporary research including the design and effectiveness of digital content and the impact of artificial intelligence. In August 2018 the AHRC awarded the **Songwriting Studies Research Network** a grant to develop their work around songwriting.
- The **Birmingham Centre for Media and Cultural Research (BCMCR)** was established in 2009 to develop excellent research as a core activity within the Birmingham School of Media at Birmingham City University. Currently, BCMCR has over 30 research-active staff and 30 research degree students. **Dr Barber** and the core **Songwriting Studies Research Network** team operate from within BCMCR.
- **The Ivors Academy of Music Creators** is the home of songwriters and composers of all genres. Formally known as British Academy of Songwriters, Composers and Authors, (BASCA), they have for over 70 years represented music creators in the UK. They campaign nationally and internationally to ensure that the rights of their members are protected and bestow the biggest honours in the industry to giants of modern composition and songwriting via The Ivors and The Ivors Composer Awards.
- First held in 1993, **Meltdown** has grown to become one of the UK's most anticipated annual music events. Held at London's **Southbank Centre** each year the festival is curated by an iconic artist, who creates their own personal festival to showcase their interests and influences. The 2019 instance of Meltdown runs between 3rd and 11th August and is curated by **Nile Rodgers**.
- **Nile Rodgers** is a songwriter, guitarist and record producer who has sold 500 million albums and 75 million singles. He is the chairman of the Songwriters Hall of Fame, an inductee of the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame and Chief Creative Advisor at London's legendary Abbey Road Studios. His writing, recording and production career encompasses the likes of Chic, David Bowie, Sister Sledge, Madonna, Diana Ross, Duran Duran, INXS, Lady Gaga, Pharrell Williams and Daft Punk.
- **Merck Mercuriadis** is one of the most successful music executives and entrepreneurs of all time and has handled the careers of acts like Beyonce, Sir Elton John, Guns n' Roses, Morrissey and Mary J Blige. Mercuriadis is the creator and founder of Hipgnosis Songs Fund Ltd, which since its inception in 2017 has raised over \$300 million dollars in investment capital and has acquired the copyrights to a number of hit songs by the likes of Beyonce, Rihanna, Justin Bieber and Kanye West.