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ROB WOOD, FOUNDER OF MUSIC CONCIERGE

15th January 2018



Our Ask the Expert this month is not only the founder of **Music Concierge**, but is also a DJ, journalist and music consultant. Who is this renaissance man we hear you cry? It's Rob Wood. Rob's company, *Music Concierge*, is a leading expert in the creation of brand identity through music. They are responsible for the signature sultry tunes of numerous internationally renowned hotel groups and iconic retailers all over the globe.

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Where did your love of music grow from?

I started collecting 7" singles around 7 or 8 years old. A close school friend's dad was a music and 'glamour' photographer. I'd go and stay at his house and we would spend hours playing records by The Clash or The Specials in his dad's photo studio surrounded by pictures of bands and people with not many clothes on! I was only there for the records though

How did Music Concierge start?

As well as being a DJ I was editor of a cutting-edge music magazine called Jockey Slut which gave early front covers to artists like Daft Punk and Dizzee Rascal. I knew how to choose music for different audiences as a DJ and journalist, so different brands started approaching me asking for help with music for their branded environments and brand communications. One of those early brands was Mr & Mrs Smith, the boutique hotel experts. I was soon working with boutique hotels and quickly realised that they had spent lots of money on being unique and looking incredible, but sound had not been thought through properly. Some sounded like everyone else, some sounded out of date, and some sounded simply terrible. They needed help to create the right ambience and sound unique.

How do you build the perfect playlist what input do you require from the hotel?

With hotels we want to understand the vision, their USP and design ethos. It's about connecting brand, design, physical space, and audience to music. Our music consultants really value spending time at each property whenever that is possible to understand the guest experience, meet the stakeholders, look at the F&B concepts, and see where the atmosphere is not working. That gives us the insight we need to design music concepts for each area and each time of day so that the music matches each space and occasion.

What has been your favourite sound track /playlist you have curated for a brand?

Curating the music for COMO Hotels in Bhutan was particularly special as I was lucky enough to visit that magical kingdom. Selecting the music with Shamil Thakar for Dishoom's restaurant and vinyl LP has always been a great source of pleasure. Working with the members club/charity The House of St Barnabas in London is brilliant because not only do they have good speakers the audience is really open minded so we can flex our creative wings. Eating flowers with Heston Blumenthal at the kitchen table at his house whilst discussing his music was also rather memorable!

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Without music a hotel is basically a good looking collection of different spaces that are designed to make guests enjoy their stay. The guests have the potential of having a good time. The music helps them achieve that. It sets the scene, the mood, the ambience. It steers them towards a great experience. If done really well it can even inspire them and make the brand more memorable. All the senses need to be impressed: taste through the menu and wine list; vision through art, architecture and design; and hearing through perfect music moments. Each guest is going to experience the hotel through sound whether you like it or not – so you should be in control of that. It's part of the guest journey.

What is your favourite book on music?

The Hacienda – How Not To Run A Nightclub by Peter Hook. I particularly love the annual P&Ls at the end of each chapter. 1989 was the peak of the Madchester scene with the Hacienda as the epicenter. They made millions that year, but spent even more.

What do you see as the future for Music Concierge?

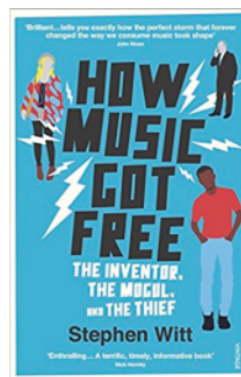
We want to continue to work with great passionate music experts in our growing team, and help them continue to soundtrack some of the best brands in the world. We are very excited about continuing to work on a global scale and are opening new offices in Singapore and Shanghai, alongside are teams in Johannesburg, Dubai and Hong Kong. South America might be next which I'm particularly interested in because of their incredible music culture.

Rob's top four book recommendations for a music lover:



Kraftwerk: I Was A Robot
By Wolfgang Flür

Told by the original drummer, Flür, we follow the fascinating journey of the infamous German band, *Man Machine*, as they transformed the face of modern music.



How Music Got Free: The Inventor, The Mogul and The Thief
By Stephen Witt

Before iPods and MP3s, the world had records and CDs – Stephen Witt explores the incredible revolution of pirate music that changed the industry forever.

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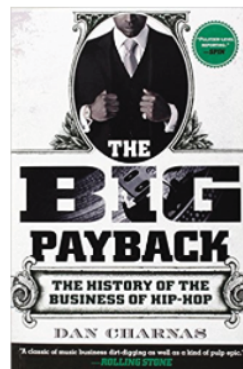
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The Creation Records Story: My Magpie Eyes are Hungry for the Prize

By David Cavanagh

A detailed and interesting book on the relationships and anecdotes of bands during the 1990's at Creation Records. Packed with interviews from staff, singers and supporters, this proves to be a real page tuner.



The Big Payback: The History of The Business of Hip-Hop

By Dan Charnas

A detailed and interesting book on the relationships and anecdotes of bands during the 1990's at Creation Records. Packed with interviews from staff, singers and supporters, this proves to be a real page tuner.