

"Those books have been around for a while, and it was nice to have them suddenly resurface and get some attention," Machell said.

Machell admitted to having read many prior meet & greet interviews in the *Saugerties Times*, though he still paused to consider each question asked, even those familiar to him.

*What is your favorite virtue?*

Probably common sense. Can we have that be a virtue? Good old-fashioned common sense.

*What profession other than your own would you like to attempt?*

A full-time musician would be a lovely second choice.

*Who is the most interesting person you've met in Saugerties?*

Many, many people. It would have to be (fellow Maldenite) Malcolm Cecil. He's something else, an icon. Every time I talk to him he brings up something I didn't know about him.

He was doing a lot of stuff in the UK when I was a teen listening to the radio trying to find cool stuff to listen to. We were talking about the whole sort of British blues boom, and where it came from first. It was an American thing but really took off in the UK. Did that then influence the musicians in the States, or was it kind of a mutual thing, and he said, "Ah, well that's a good question, because I used to play in Alexis Corner's band," and I said, "You used to *what*?" Alexis Corner had this great late night blues radio show, and he had this gravelly voice, very distinctive, and was a phenomenal blues player. It seems like there's nothing Malcolm hasn't tried.

One of my roles at the school is as an advisor to visiting artists in residence. We have a pretty good scheme there that's well-financed, so I approached Malcolm and asked if he'd be an artist in residence there, and he said, "Okay, what would I do?" and I said, "Basically you tell me what you'd really like to get out of it," and that led to several conversations about the sad demise of quality field recording, and how he wanted to pass that on. We ended up with three sessions, and what he did was sort of an open lecture workshop on recording in general; analog

## ON SUNY ULSTER

"I was really impressed with the college, and everyone I spoke to from the interview committee right on up to the president was saying that what they wanted was to build the arts identity of the college, because Ulster County is so thick with creative people and they really wanted to be part of that community. And that really, really appealed to me.

and digital. And then he formed a cadre of young students to help him construct a recording studio on the campus. And the second session was more involved, where they would record some music with him. The third one, Malcolm performed with his band, and from his teachings the students used his techniques for recording live music. He wanted to pass on this knowledge, and he totally came alive. I've never seen him so animated.

*What is your idea of a perfect Saturday?*

My perfect Saturday would include a visit from my fiancée, Rachel, who lives in Wisconsin. She's here now, and we're working on her move here. But we've been doing a long-distance thing for over four years. A perfect Saturday would include brunch at Love Bites, a wander around and spend as much money in Saugerties as possible.

*What qualities do you admire most in others?*

Honesty is a good one.

*What is your idea of happiness?*

I'll go out on a limb and make myself really unpopular. I'd like to be locked in my studio with no interruptions.

*What is your idea of misery?*

No cheese. There's a kind of Stilton that I like. It's called Shropshire Blue, it's an orange Stilton with blue veins that's really creamy, and I always try to get some when I'm over there.

*What is your main fault?*

Thinking too much.

*For which fault in others do you have the most tolerance?*

I never like to think of faults. I find it hard to tolerate a lack of imagination.

*What is your favorite motto?*

It's a quote I used regularly. It's from Michelangelo, and on his deathbed this is the last thing he said, to his assistant. "Draw, Antonio. Draw and do not waste time."

*What advice do you have for anyone interested in following in your footsteps?*

Don't follow in my footsteps. Don't do what I did. This is pretty classic, but don't ever give up.

*Do you have any heroes?*

I have some artist heroes, but I can't think of anyone I would put into that category. I don't know Buddha.

*What character in history do you most dislike?*

I'm trying to think of something really clever here. I guess the obvious would be someone like Hitler. Henry VIII is an interesting one.

*What is your present state of mind?*

I would say busy.

*If Heaven exists, what would you like to hear Saint Peter say when you arrive at the Pearly Gate?*  
Something like, "Leave your bullshit at the door."  
-Interview by Crispin Kott