

DUKE SPECIAL

By nature Duke Special (aka Belfast's Peter Wilson) is a curious person. He is curious about music, theatre, books, poetry, art, love, life, redemption, death, 78RPM records and most recently, gardening! All of this is evidenced by the variety of musical adventures throughout his career. He has released many records and toured all over the world and has been involved in a diverse array of other projects, including writing the music for Deborah Warner's critically acclaimed 2009 production of 'Mother Courage and Her Children' at London's National Theatre and being commissioned by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York to write a series of original songs based on photographs for their exhibition of the photographers Stieglitz, Steichen and Strand.

Duke has also ventured into the world of musical theatre, often joining forces with stand-up comedian Andrew Doyle. Together they brought a brand new adaptation of 'Gulliver's Travels' to the Lyric Theatre in Belfast. They then collaborated on 'Paperboy' - a heart-warming musical drama, based on the memoirs of Tony Macaulay also staged at The Lyric in Belfast, and they are currently working on 'Breadboy' - based on Macaulay's follow-up memoir. Duke has also worked with writer Bob Kelly on a new musical adaptation of the Patrick McCabe novel 'Breakfast on Pluto', which will hopefully be premiered at the Galway International festival in 2021.

Performing live is still one of Duke Special's main passions, and over the years he has played to captive audiences across the world. Whether he performs solo, as a duo with his long-time friend and percussionist Chip Bailey, with a 3 or 4 or 5-piece band or with a string quartet or full orchestra, a Duke Special show is always a unique experience. In 2018 and 2019, he played headline shows at the beautiful Union Chapel in London, performing a retrospective of his work to date with a selection of very special guests. More recently, unable to perform live in times of lockdown, he took to Zoom to perform a series of intimate solo shows, playing some of his most popular albums in full; just him and a piano. More recently on Zoom, he has been presenting 'Duke Special's Gramophone Club' with Temperance Society Chip Bailey, where they showcase new artists and interview interesting people, as well as performing new and old Duke tunes and introducing everyone to a classic 78 RPM on the trusty gramophone. Think the Goon Show meets Tom Waits taming lions in a Victorian parlour!