



Language of Comedy

Creating a character

Graham Fellows:

John Shuttleworth is a northern character; he's from Sheffield, which is where I'm from originally, but I started doing him when I moved to Manchester and I think I was a little bit nostalgic for the Sheffield of my teens. So, I, erm, I started playing around with this, with this, sort of, er, "Now then, how's tha doing? Alright," but quite soon I, I, sort of, took him away from a Sheffield accent, from a, sort of, er, Billy Casper, sort of, Kestrel for a Knave, sort of, "Now then, how's tha doing? Alright." I can't really do that anymore, s-, 'cause, and I think living in Manchester, erm, affected the accent and it became, "Just, sort of, like that, you know. It's, you know, a bit, sort of..." Actually it's 'cause I live in Lincolnshire now, it's gone a bit Lincolnshire, "You know." Erm... or is that Staffordshire? I don't know.

[Singing].

John Shuttleworth's language is definitely from, not from the present day.

[Singing].

I think it all comes back from my dad, who, er, is, kind of, a little bit out of time. Well, he's dead now, but, um, when I started doing John I probably, in fact I know I did, I used him as a, as a template. Though, ironically, my father is from Croydon.

[Singing].

The line 'a Shandy Bass in a ladies' glass'; that really is, sort of, me paying homage to, to Sheffield, to my, to the working-men's club where I, er, used to work, erm, in, in, in Sheffield, and I'm sure these guys used to come up and they'd say, er, "Half a Double Diamond in a ladies' glass," you know, but in this very, say it in a, quite butch way. I thought it was quite, erm, quite amusing. So, um, yeah, that, I mean, I guess that's a northern expression; I don't know if it's used in the south, but, er, 'ladies' glass'.

[Singing].

That came about because, I think, I realised 'burial' rhymed with 'Mary will'; Mary is John's wife. So, I played around with the, er, undertake-... See, that was a little joke; undertake... "I'll undertake your burial, or my wife Mary will if I'm already dead."

[Singing].

I can't go back to savoury, er, i-is a song all about, er, obsession, isn't it? It's about getting, erm, listing all the things in, in, in the meal and all, all the little aspects of the meal, which, I think, er... So, it's very character driven, because John Shuttleworth, er, would do that.

[Singing].

The friend of mine who actually is, all the time he, sort of, says, "Oh, er, yes, that's a bit claggy, isn't it? Huh, good old northern word!" You know, you've met people like that, they do that sort of thing; they're, they're self conscious about the use of words 'cause they love language. Well, John loves language but he doesn't know he does.

[Singing].