

Mention Glenn Tilbrook and most people may immediately think of Squeeze. After all, with his writing partner Chris Difford, Tilbrook was responsible for Top Ten hits all around the world such as “Tempted”, “Hourglass”, “Cool For Cats” and “Up The Junction”. Ever since their first EP in 1977, Squeeze has delighted audiences with their brand of honky-tonk new wave and pithy lyricism, while their stock in the music world has seen the likes of Jools Holland, Paul Carrack and Elvis Costello all contribute to their work.

However, since an acrimonious split in 1998 Squeeze has been on the backburner. Although you might forgive him for resting on his laurels after 13 albums and countless tours all over the world, Tilbrook has continued to write and perform with the same enthusiasm that he brought to Squeeze’s earliest recordings. With his two solo albums, “The Incomplete Glenn Tilbrook” and “Transatlantic Ping-Pong”, he proved he’s lost none of the joie-de-vivre that became Squeeze’s trademark. For 2009’s album “Pandemonium Ensues”, he injected some fresh faces by recruiting new band The Fluffers and some prestigious guests in the shape of Johnny Depp and Vanessa Paradis. This has been complemented by a conversational live show that is delightfully shambling in its approach – Tilbrook loves blurring the boundary between crowd and performer by performing requests and even taking his audience for walkabouts to set up impromptu gigs!

Although a Squeeze reunion had always looked unlikely, Tilbrook and Difford’s paths slowly began to cross with more frequency, leading to a series of low-key gigs together in 2007. In 2008, super fan Mark Ronson presented them with the Ivor Novello Award for Outstanding Contribution to British Music, while Lily Allen called them the Robert De Niro of music when they received the Nordoff-Robbins Icon Award. With the addition of former Squeeze bassist John Bentley, and Fluffers pair Stephen Large and Simon Hanson, this lineup has been winning fans all over again with gigs and festival appearances at the likes of V, Oxegen, T in The Park, Guilfest and Latitude, reminding us all of the outstanding back catalogue that Squeeze possess.

Yet it is away from music that Tilbrook is now making his most important contribution. He is a member of the charity Love Hope Strength, set up by his good friend Mike Peters (The Alarm). Work for this has involved record-breaking treks up the likes of Everest and Kilimanjaro with fellow musicians, raising money to buy equipment to help cancer sufferers across the world.

Clearly, for Glenn Tilbrook playing is about enjoying the moment, and it’s that desire and enthusiasm that sets him apart from so many of his peers. Whether he’s playing to a room of 50 people or to a festival crowd, either with Squeeze or solo, Glenn Tilbrook still gets the buzz from playing and making music that is all too rare among his peers or those he has inspired, and marks him out as a performer to be cherished.