

the syllabus had been updated since the sixties. So I moved to psychology and philosophy which was great because I'd already become hooked on the mind-body problem, which was really my obsession in philosophy."

The philosophy of mind seemed to MacInnes to be "one of the remaining live issues in philosophy." His tutor, however, seemed more interested in older, critically ill ones.

"Our head of philosophy at Brasenose was John Foster who wrote a book called *The Immaterial Self*. He was a true Cartesian dualist, probably the last remaining one. In his book, he just tried to prove Cartesian dualism by a process of elimination, by looking at all the other possible arguments and showing that they're absurd. It was great because I felt very strongly from the very start that he was completely wrong, but he was quite happy to argue the toss past the hour that we were allocated.

"He has a great bon mot to his name. Dan Dennett had his 'Quining qualia' paper, and of course Foster believed very strongly in the existence of qualia, so he stood up at this APA conference, I think, and said "Qualia should not be Quined, they should be Fostered."

In this debate, MacInnes himself sides firmly with the materialists. "I'm absolutely convinced that Dennett and that crowd are right, but they don't have the arguments to back it up. It's extraordinarily frustrating to have such strength of conviction but not have the concise arguments to back it up. I think that certainly comes across in Dennett's stuff. He's grown more irascible as his career has gone on as he realises people are still not buying into his worldview."

MacInnes's dedication to his subject paid off and he got firsts in all his papers, apart from philosophy of mind, and was top of his year in philosophy and psychology. Surprised by his success, he decided to apply for graduate work and took a place at UCLA, "primarily for the weather and glamour". MacInnes also admits that the fact that Toulmin was in Los Angeles probably influenced his decision to pursue his graduate studies there. "He was at USC at the time, but as it happened the year I went there he went to New York."

At UCLA MacInnes found himself reading more Wittgenstein. "I was interested in him as a person. He's one of the few philosophers I bothered to read a biography of." However, he was only to spend a year there before returning

home. "Even by American standards the programme at UCLA is rather long and drawn out," he explains. "David Kaplan and Tyler Burge were really good people to have around. But in the end the fact that it was six or seven years hanging over me put me off."

As did some of his peers. "To be perfectly honest, the moment when I decided to quit was during one of these endless afternoon seminars when one of these computer science/AI geeks was just droning on."

So it was that MacInnes decided to make an album, release it himself and see what happened. MacInnes was genuinely surprised when his debut single "Destroy Rock and Roll" (recorded on a cheap Mac using free software) took off in 2003. An album of the same title followed the next year, and in the autumn of 2005 he scored his biggest hit to date when "Dr Pressure" – a "mash-up" of his "Drop the Pressure" and the cheesy Gloria Estefan hit "Dr Beat" – peaked at number three in the UK charts.

Still, MacInnes comes over as a genuinely modest bloke who doesn't take what he does too seriously. He refers repeatedly to his "stupid album" and "daft tunes". He sees his pop present and philosophical past as "ultimately two completely different categories. There's not really any higher-order theory to any of the music that I do. There are people in electronic music who take it very seriously and have a kind of political, philosophical and spiritual dimension to what they do, or at least they think they do. I'm thinking of certain pompous techno DJs mainly from Detroit and Chicago, but I don't really believe in that. I really just wanted to make a pop record."

Although he says he used to "live a very different kind of lifestyle to the one I do now" the transition has been surprisingly seamless. "Any kind of personal identity change is gradual, and from day to day I feel like the same person, but looking back it was 10 years ago that I started in Oxford, and my life is so utterly different in every way."

Has he always been the kind of person who just does what interests him at the time and doesn't think too much about the long term?

"I think you're probably right," he says. "It's not how I've ever explicitly thought of myself. It's been blundering from one thing to another. I think that's probably the best way to get a lot out of life. You only really get one crack at life