

'Crazy year' leaves Elton fave Isaac, 22, on brink of stardom



KEYS TO SUCCESS: Isaac Stuart has been noticed by Snow Patrol's Gary Lightbody, above, and Chris Evans and Elton John, below



Picture: SAM BENNETT

HE'S STILL holding down a job in the same piano shop he has worked at since he was 14 – and is yet to sign a record deal.

But singer-songwriter Isaac Stuart, now 22, has already won an army of famous fans, including Elton John, Snow Patrol and David Walliams.

Isaac got his big break when he was asked to perform on The Chris Evans Breakfast Show on Virgin Radio last Christmas, which is where he caught the attention of Elton.

He was also given a guitar by Gary Lightbody, Snow Patrol's singer and songwriter. The only other artist Gary has given one of his prized Lowden guitars to is chart-topper Ed Sheeran.

Isaac, who released his second single Saved on Friday, is being pursued by a string of record companies keen to sign him up. While other artists were kept out of shuttered venues, Isaac was given special permission to film a music video in an empty Wembley

By **Ruth Hughes**

Arena in lockdown. His stripped back haunting cover of Bee Gees classic Stayin' Alive is now one of the most searched for tracks online.

Isaac, from Banbury, Oxford, said: "It's been a crazy year. I think I was probably presented with opportunities that maybe wouldn't have happened if we weren't in the pandemic.

"Going on the Chris Evans Breakfast Show was mad.

"I got called on the Thursday before Christmas asking, 'Do you want to play on the Chris Evans show tomorrow? Rick Astley's lost his voice and Chris would like you to play instead'.

"I have still got a normal job. I work for a piano shop where I have worked since I was 14.

"So I had to say to my boss, 'Do you mind if I stop working for the rest of the day? I need to practise for Chris Evans tomorrow.'"

Isaac played four songs, including his first single Do You Like It When We Lay Like This.

"David Walliams and Chris Evans walked into the performance area to watch me.

"Chris said, 'David has just been on the phone to Elton John asking, 'Who's this kid?'"

The London-based singer said: "All these stories, you can't quite believe them.

"I also did a performance in Wembley Arena that wouldn't have been empty if it wasn't for Covid."

With music industry bosses tipping him to be the next big thing, Isaac says: "It's been a busy year. It is a bit mad how much has gone on."



Dreams we left behind

THREE quarters of adults have taken a different career path to their dream job as a child, writes Steve Richmond.

And half regret not doing more to follow those goals, according to a poll of 1,000 parents and their school-age children. Threequarters now say it is important to help their kids follow their own ambitions.

Of the children surveyed, the top dream job was a scientist, picked by one in 10.

Second on the list was a team sportsman – footballer, cricketer or rugby player – while a doctor was third.

Sarah Koppens, of Birds Eye Green Cuisine, which commissioned the research, said: "We want to inspire the next generation of children."

NHS 'crisis' as elderly struggle to find dentist

THREE fifths of pensioners were unable to have an NHS dental check-up during the pandemic, while more than a third had to go private to get urgent treatment.

Pressure group Silver Voices said the UK dentist service was already in crisis before Covid, but since lockdown has gone into freefall.

A survey of 500 members showed 35 per cent do not have a dentist and nearly half who moved to a new area struggled to find one.

It found 72 per cent thought NHS dental charges were too high and the same number believed the service was worse than five years ago.

The poll was inspired by retired

By **Tony Whitfield**

nurse Jayne Cooper, who discovered hundreds of people and families living in the Waveney district of north Suffolk had struggled to see a NHS dentist or get on a list.

One had waited eight years. Even when patients are accepted on a list, some have to travel long distances, affecting those with mobility issues or no transport.

She said not all pensioners can afford to go private, such as one lady quoted £2,000 to repair a broken denture plate privately.

Regular check-ups can also spot potential health problems such as cancers or abscesses. Mrs Cooper

said: "There are people on an NHS dentist list but have to wait an awful long time for treatment, even emergency treatment. Even regular check-ups are difficult to get.

"What I would like to know is what happened, because this was never the case until fairly recently.

"Certainly you could easily get an NHS appointment 20 years ago.

"There just seems to be a lack of will to tackle it, but the longer it goes on the worse it will get."

With practices shutting down without warning, leaving hundreds of patients without a dentist or forced to go private, Silver Voices said: "This dire situation is unsustainable and begs the ques-

tion 'is there still a comprehensive NHS dentistry service?'" Director Dennis Reed said: "NHS dentistry is in crisis in all corners of the UK.

"We get so many reports of members being told no NHS treatment is available, but the same dentist is able to fit them in for a private appointment within a few days.

"Something is radically wrong with the way dentistry services are contracted by the NHS.

"The Government must take urgent action to ensure all citizens have equal and speedy access to a good-quality NHS dentist. Otherwise, dentistry on the NHS will become a distant memory for the bulk of the population."