

## **The Tim Smal Show – 18 March 2020 transcript**

*Gavin Gold, a singer-songwriter, talks about relocating from Cape Town to New York City.*

**Tim Smal (host):** Hi there and welcome to the show. My name is Tim. My guest today is Gavin Gold, a musician originally from Cape Town, who has recently moved to New York. Gavin, welcome to the show.

**Gavin Gold (guest):** Thank you, Tim. It's great to be here. Thanks for asking me.

**Tim:** Is it nice and early in the morning there in New York City?

**Gavin:** Actually not that early - it's 11 a.m.

**Tim:** Well, unfortunately at the moment, there's a lot going on in the world with regard to the coronavirus. How are things going for you there?

**Gavin:** Well, New York City, as you know, is a very crowded place. There's a lot of people around and we got to be very careful here. There subways that are very crowded. The streets - even the pavements, when you walk on the sidewalk, you got to dodge people. So you got really be careful here and keep your social distance. My wife and myself, we've been very much at home, you know, trying to keep out of the thick of things as much as possible.

**Tim:** Speaking of 'keeping out of the thick of things', you've had some shows coming up in New York that you've now had to cancel as a result of the coronavirus.

**Gavin:** Yes, we were gonna play a show - in fact, it was supposed to happen tonight. But we had to cancel, as a result of it.

**Tim:** It's quite ironic that your most recent album that came out in 2017, had the title 'World Upside Down.' Tell us more about this record.

**Gavin:** Yeah, that it is quite amazing... that title. In fact, you mentioning it, has made me think, for the first time, that it actually is quite relevant in the times of today. That album was recorded in Cape Town with a good friend of mine, Mark McCree. It was a, kind of, EP. We did about five or six songs on that record and made a couple of videos for YouTube from that. I do quite a few of those songs now - I actually incorporate them into my repertoire. I have written quite a lot of fresh stuff, quite a lot of new stuff since I've been here. I've been on this creative mission... ideas are just exploding upon me - I feel so inspired. And I've written probably about thirty songs since I've been here for the last few months, collaborating with Steve Schalchlin, who's my partner who writes songs with me - we just churning them out. So the work that I did in Cape Town on that album, I still perform a couple of them. But I think my fresh stuff now that I'm busy with, I'm more involved with and I'm incorporating that more into my live playing.

**Tim:** I'm excited to hear that you've been writing a lot of new material. It's also great to hear that you've been feeling really inspired living in New York City. As a musician moving from South Africa to the United States, what has your experience been like, in terms of integrating into the music scene in New York?

**Gavin:** I arrived here knowing nobody and I didn't know how the system worked or the

music scene at all. I didn't know how to get from A to B - I absolutely knew nothing about what was going on. And as I stepped onto that subway, that first subway, I just love it. I fell in love with the way things work here - how eclectic it is, the mixture of people, the different languages. And the city just has such an amazing energy and I just absolutely fell in love with it straight away – it was really inspiring.

I love the lifestyle in Cape Town – the surf and the sun and the mountain and the beauty. It's completely different in New York – it's just a lot of people, high buildings... 'the city that never sleeps.' It really is a very energetic city. And I came here not knowing, as I said to you, not knowing anyone. And before I left Cape Town, I went for a dentist check and my dentist David Novis, said he knew a musician that lived in New York City and I should contact him. So that's the first person I contacted and we had a long conversation and he gave me a lot of good points of what to expect in the music scene in New York City. And that, kind of, set me and gave me a nice head start and gave me some insight into what was happening.

Basically, you know, I needed to get out and play. So I started doing a lot of open mics and just every opportunity I had - I played. And I started networking, really putting myself out there. I was really dying to meet musicians to play with. And that, kind of, came together. I've met a couple of amazing people that I'm working with at the moment. There's a guy that I'm writing songs with, Steve Schalchlin, whose an off Broadway hit songwriter that really loves my stuff. And he writes a lot of the lyrics and I write the melodies. And we've formed this very strong bond and partnership in our songwriting. And then I joined a songwriting group as well, that's called the 'Jack Hardy songwriting circle'. Each person gets a chance to play the song in the group and then you get feedback from the rest of the members in the group. And that actually is quite amazing, because in my experience, nobody's really given me true feedback on my stuff – it's maybe because they don't want to hurt my feelings. But in this circle, we really give constructive, true feedback and that's really helped me to develop my songwriting to a large extent.

And so, yeah, my songwriting has, I think, really gone up a notch or too. I'm really proud of some of the stuff that's pouring out of me. And then meeting... I've met a really great player, a multi-musician that I'm partnered with and we formed this band called 'The Rebel Nerds.' We just recently teamed up with a drummer. We rehearsing and well - up until this coronavirus hit, we were getting ready to play our first gig as a trio this evening... unfortunately that fell by the wayside.

So I think, in a nutshell, it's all about networking - getting out there, playing, speaking to people and yeah... it's just about hanging at all the gigs and supporting other musicians - when they play, go watch them. And through doing that, I've met some incredible – not only people that I'm collaborating with, but just friends, you know. I've met incredible people here that are really so friendly and encouraging and have really been encouraging towards me. So yeah, that's it in a nutshell - well, maybe not in a nutshell, but that's been my experience so far.

**Tim:** Wonderful. Well it sounds like you're having a great time in New York. I'm glad to hear about your involvement in the songwriting circles - it certainly must be very helpful to receive constructive feedback on your songs. I'm also amazed to hear that you have written over thirty songs since your arrival in the States, so I guess we can look forward to a new record from Gavin Gold or The Rebel Nerds in the not-so-distant future. In fact, I'd like to know a bit more about your plans, in terms of your new project The Rebel Nerds, where you are collaborating with musician Jake Adams.

**Gavin:** I plan to really take it quite seriously, this project. I really think that we are a great combination and that we can put a smile on people's faces - really go out there and play these songs. It's a kinda quirky, pop-punk genre that we play. And I think, the reaction that we get is that we hear lots of giggles and lots of people laughing while we playing the songs, you know, 'cos they listen to the lyrics and it's fast, fun music. And I think, we would like to share the joy - these songs are quirky and happy, and we want to share that with our fans. And we are taking this seriously - we really want to reach as many people as possible and share our music. At the moment we just trying to find creative ways of virtual rehearsing and that kind of thing, just to prepare through this difficult time, while the coronavirus takes hold.

**Tim:** One of the new songs that you have written since your arrival in New York, is called 'The Flintstones' and there's a video clip on your website of you performing it with The Rebel Nerds. I really enjoyed this song, so I was hoping you could tell me a bit more about it?

**Gavin:** I don't know how many of you listening have watched The Flintstones, but it was pretty much like The Simpsons - The Simpsons actually took over from The Flintstones. And when The Simpsons was on the box, everybody started watching that and The Flintstones, kind of, melted away. But it was as big as that at one stage. It's just a fun song about the first love. When I was at school, I thought girls were contagious and that all changed, but unfortunately voice crack and teenage pimples got the better of me. And then all I wanted was a girl, but I couldn't get one. Then I met my first girlfriend and that's what the song is basically about - your first girlfriend! And just the awkwardness of having that first kiss and so on and so on.

**Tim:** That's a great story. I actually watched the live-action Flintstones film from '94 the other day and it was heaps of fun - I haven't seen it in years. Well Gavin, I must say, I really enjoy your style of songwriting - you inject a lot of humour into your music and the songs certainly appeal to a variety of different generations. Out of the shows that you've played in New York City so far, which have been some of your most memorable shows?

**Gavin:** I did the Newark Porch Festival, which was quite a nice experience in New Jersey. Most memorable... I think, some of the open mics that we've done with The Rebel Nerds have been the most memorable. The last time we played at Pete's Candy Store, we had such a great response, it was really encouraging. For me, the proof is in the pudding - when I go play a song live and people are raving and they singing before we even hit the second chorus... and then the third chorus, we took the house off - and that really tells me that I'm doing something right.

**Tim:** If our listeners would like to find out where you're playing in the future or listen to more of your music online, where is the best place for them to go?

**Gavin:** I have a website - it's [gavingoldmusic.com](http://gavingoldmusic.com)

**Tim:** Well, thanks so much for speaking with us today Gavin. It's been really cool to find out how things are going for you in New York. I'm sure it's just the start of an awesome journey for you, in terms of your musical career in the US. Of course, once the coronavirus pandemic passes, I'm sure you'll be back on stage with The Rebel Nerds doing your thing in no time, so we look forward to following your progress into the new decade.

**Gavin:** Thanks Tim. Thanks very much for the opportunity. It's always good speaking to you as a friend and now as a radio interviewer. Thank you very much for the opportunity.

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