

# the world

and "Your Cheatin' Heart".

That's what Bragg hopes to achieve with his own compositions — lyrics that touch people in a very personal way.

"I think that it's those powerful songs that make you sit down and think, or even more powerful, sit down and cry, that are just as important as the ones that make you want to jump up and be happy. And when I set out to make music I must admit that that's the sort of music I set out to make, music that really touches you."

"I have a letter at home from a girl who told me about her life, which was not particularly going very well — like any adolescent life, it had it's problems — but she finished off by



saying, 'Thank you for being in my empty room when nobody else was there'. Now Smokey Robinson did that to me, and if I met him today I would have to say exactly that to him. If my songs are moving people the way that Smokey and the Four Tops and Elvis Costello moved me, then, you know, that's much more job satisfaction than filling out the Maple Leaf Gardens," said Bragg.

Since Bragg eschews commercial success for personal satisfaction, he works in the music industry on his own terms. His albums and e.p.s. usually bear the label "pay no more than . . ." to avoid over-pricing and he refuses to cut singles that only give fans two songs. Bragg does not forget his days as a working-class kid from Barking, East London and he has not changed his lifestyle much to accommodate his new-found notoriety.

"In my spare time, I watch the tely, catch up on my letters, hang out with my chums, visit my mum. Same as most folks, I suppose."

And although he's been called "the new messiah of British folk" and "the British Bob Dylan", Bragg sees his chosen career in very realistic terms.

According to the former bank messenger, store clerk and house painter, "This is just a job . . . the best job I've ever had . . . but it's still a job."

by Beth Ryan  
(CUP)



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