



Culture Club hires Sam Butcher after placing ad on Gumtree.com

Iconic band Culture Club has found a new lead singer in the shape of Sam Butcher, after placing an ad on popular UK classified site, Gumtree.com.

Butcher, 29, applied to join original band members Jon Moss, Mikey Craig and Phil Pickett thinking the ad was a wind up – he joked “I wouldn't prefer a cup of tea to sex, but I wouldn't mind a Brandy Alexander.”

The band, who enjoyed a string of hits across the Eighties, took the unusual step of advertising for a new lead singer on classifieds website Gumtree.com in a bid to find a rising star with a unique voice and look. And Butcher certainly fits the bill with his feminine appearance.

The advert for the position, posted on Gumtree.com, the UK's busiest site for jobs*, received a staggering 50,000 hits in its first day. Sophy Silver of Gumtree.com said, “Gumtree.com is the UK's most popular local classified site** and a great place to find anything – from a flat or a car, to a singer in a supergroup! The music section of Gumtree.com is hugely influential and many people use it to put together bands. We wish Sam lots of luck in his new role.”

As the UK's busiest employment site Gumtree.com has 50,000 job postings live on the site at any one time.

Here are some of the more unusual jobs posted on Gumtree.com:

- Office superhero at Innocent Smoothies
- Energetic and friendly hovercraft instructors

- Funeral Parlour seeks mortician's assistant
- Couple to look after Scottish island
- Crew for a luxury yacht sailing round Northern Europe
- Hot air balloon ground crew to support team in Europe
- Chocolate fountain operators
- House sitters in the foothills of the Andes for six weeks
- Cook/Deckhand for tall ship sailing around the Scottish Highlands
- Roadie to drive South American band from London around South America for six months
- Horse and Carriage drivers on the island of Sark in the Channel Islands for the summer

Q&A with Sam Butcher

1. What made you apply for the job as Culture Club's lead singer?

Obviously you don't just wake up one day and say..."Ok, I'm going to apply to front Culture Club". The opportunity—like a lot of things in life--has to come to you. Gumtree played a big part in that process. But I'm a great believer in destiny. There's no doubt the planets have all suddenly come into alignment for me this year. Everything feels 'different'...like I've been walking on the spot....but now it's my time and everything is a little brighter and a bit more positive. I actually didn't see the ad initially...the link to Gumtree was emailed through to me by a friend. She knew I was absolutely dedicated to song writing and singing and said..."you SO should be going for this." I wasn't convinced the ad wasn't a joke...but she made me send a reply anyway. The rest is history.

2. Have you always been a fan of Culture Club? If so, what is your favourite Culture Club song?

Like most people, I've always been aware of Culture Club's music but I couldn't have called myself a fan. I guess I'm just a huge fan of ALL good music—whatever the genre. If the songs and the recorded productions are compelling, I'll be into them. You can't fail to be impressed by the quality of Culture Club's back catalogue, though. I was really into their 1999 hit song, "I Just Wanna Be Loved" and I loved the video too. My favourite Culture Club song ever though is 'Black Money' (from the

'Colour By Numbers' album) followed closely by "Love Got Lost" (a new song we've just finished) and "Cold Shoulder" (from the most recent Culture Club album).

3. Tell us a bit about your background. What was your first band? How many have you been in?

I guess I was very shy as a youngster—but always into music and always dreaming of making music. As I became a teenager, expressing that musicality became more important and being in bands was a way to do that but yet not to be 'too exposed' in the way that solo singers are. I've lost count of the so called bands that I was in at school—some of them only lasted a few days and were more fantasy than reality! Really connecting with the others you've teamed up with and jointly striving to create wonderful songs and to 'take on the world' can be more important than anything else at that age. Fronting Culture Club is really no different...so maybe I've still not changed to this day.

4. How would you describe your style?

Extravagant, artistic, expressive—and sometimes, a little misguided!!!

5. You say you're not a Boy George replacement – is there anyone whose style you admire? Who would you say were your biggest influences?

I admire the style of lots of people. You see loads of people with amazing street style every day in London. Pete from Big Brother 7 is currently a favourite—he's just 'out there' and completely confident with it--whether he's in pyjamas or with dungarees, a mohican and face paint. My designer friend Kurt Jones is amazing. He actually helped to style part of our look for my first show with Culture Club last week. He changes his look more often than Madonna and always looks 'fresh' though he's a busy working guy and a dad. In the public eye, I often admire those with a 'less is more' philosophy of fashion—Audrey Hepburn, Coldplay's Chris Martin, new Bond actor Daniel Craig. I rarely follow their restrained example though!!!

6. What would you say "qualifies" you to be the new lead singer of Culture Club? What are you going to bring to the band? What is unique about you that will make the band great?

I'm sure the rest of Culture Club thinks my voice is what qualifies me. I think it's more likely to be my hidden streak of complete craziness that is in stark contrast to the usual combination of creativity and common sense, which I try to portray. Let's face it, you have to be mad to be working musician—in Culture Club perhaps more so than in any group! Have you ever read up on the history of this group??? Anyway, whether we're working in the studio or just walking down the street, I want it to be art! I also mix a mean cocktail, which the guys are going to benefit from in due course! They'll be SO glad they picked me then!

7. How long have you been using Gumtree?

I was a Gumtree 'virgin'! Luckily, my first time was just great so I'll certainly be back for more. In fact I have several times already. (Call me a floozy if you must!) Have you ever read through the ads from those looking for 'afternoon delight' shall we call it...or offering themselves up to live in your house for no rent ("I can't pay anything but you'll really enjoy having me around,"—hilarious!!!

8. How did you first hear about Gumtree?

When my friend sent me the link to the Culture Club ad. "Give it a go," she said, assuring me that the site is nothing to do with eucalyptus cultivation or tree care!"

9. Have you applied for other band roles on Gumtree? What made you think of Gumtree when finding band jobs?

No...but maybe I should? Got anyone else big about to advertise? Maybe Madonna's looking for a writing partner? Or maybe Blur want to reform and I could take Damon's place in between Culture Club gigs??? Ha ha.... I just see the look on my new band mates' faces now!

10. Would you recommend Gumtree to other budding musicians?

Sure. Anything that gives you a channel that you can use to get noticed or to find other like-minded artists can't be bad.

11. What's your favourite section on Gumtree and why do you like the site?

The missed connections page is the coolest. (If the polish girl at La Havana Latin Club last Saturday is reading this, her future husband is trying to contact her there today for another dance! In case she's wondering, he had no intentions whatsoever to make her believe he was stalking her and also felt ashamed not to be able to think of anything more memorable to tell her than that she is a good dancer and a gorgeous girl.) Classic. Hats off to him for bravery, anyway.

12. Can you recall a memorable experience or unique/funny posting from Gumtree in the past?

The only one that sticks in my head was shown to me by a friend. It was from an American student coming to London who was looking for accommodation. "I'd like to have a double room with it's own seating and television area plus its own separate kitchen and bathroom — jacuzzi preferred. It should be in Zone 1 with a private garden with direct access to lots of sunshine and secure parking—oh and I'd like to pay £40 --£50 per week maximum." Poor love. I really thought she had a LOT to learn about surviving in London!