

Irvine's punk inspiration

Irvine Welsh says punk music changed his life after it inspired him to abandon his trade to pursue a career in the arts.

The Trainspotting author, 66, became an apprentice TV repairman after leaving school in Edinburgh.

He said hearing punk music for the first time encouraged him to do something more creative.

He said: "You headed into labouring jobs or you headed into trades and that's the cultural thing.

"It was like 'get a trade, get a trade'. I think to be a creative artist of any kind is very very difficult."

He added: "The punk thing was cataclysmic. My life was never the same – my days were numbered as an apprentice.

"I just heard this and thought 'I've got to do something creative. I've got to be part of this thing'."

Welsh left Edinburgh for the London punk scene in 1978, and played guitar and sang in punk bands.

Describing himself as "a failed punk, a failed musician", he has gone on to become one of Scotland's best known authors.

His seminal novel Trainspotting was released in 1993, followed by a string of best-sellers, several of which have been adapted for film and TV.

Welsh revealed his punk inspiration in a BBC Scotland

documentary on Simple Minds, the rock band that originated from Glasgow punk rockers Johnny & The Self-Abusers.

Welsh was aware of the band, including Jim Kerr and guitarist Charlie Burchill, early on, and predicted their huge success.

He said: "They always seemed to me to be the kind of band that would become a big stadium band because they always played every gig in such a scale.

"They always seemed to have brilliant sound even in the smallest, crappiest place."

* Simple Minds: Everything Is Possible is available on BBC iPlayer.



photo Andy Earl