



For her Scotsman Session, kitti performed her recent single, *Must Be Somethin'*

## 'I have put my heart and soul into recording this album'

### KITTI

Award-winning soul-jazz-funk singer-songwriter kitti's choice for her Scotsman Session is a solo rendition of *Must Be Somethin'*, the recently released single from her planned debut album, *Somethin' In The Water*, due for release next year. She gives bluesy, world-weary voice to lyrics which, she explains, "kind of came out of a place of darkness – just trying to think how to escape that dark cloud of depression that comes over me sometimes".

In fact, Glasgow-based kitti – aka Paisley-born Katie Doyle – has had much to celebrate over the past few years, having twice scooped the Best Vocalist category in the Scottish Jazz Awards, in 2022 and 2020 – the latter year also seeing her win Best Female Breakthrough at the Scottish Music Awards.

While her video performance of *Must Be Somethin'* is a wryly intimate delivery at her keyboard, the online single is a powerfully funky business with full band and horns arranged by busy saxophonist about the Glasgow scene (and fellow Paisley Buddie) Harry Weir.

Kitti's soul-baring performances have seen her develop from modest venues and clubs around Glasgow to playing support to Rod Stewart's Edinburgh Castle shows earlier this year, as well as Van Morrison and Mavis Staples last year. Last month she collaborated with

### Short but sweet

Welcome to the Scotsman Sessions, a series of short video performances from artists all around the country introduced by our critics. Here, Glasgow-based soul-jazz-funk singer-songwriter kitti performs her new single, *Must Be Somethin'*.



Winner of Innovation of the Year at the British Journalism Awards

swing violinist, singer and arranger Seonaid Aitken to present kitti's Great Caledonian Songbook at the Lagavulin Islay Jazz Festival. "That was a lovely gig," she recalls fondly, set in the spectacular sea-facing setting of the island's Gaelic Centre, and one she hopes to repeat elsewhere with Aitken.

Now 27 but performing since her teens, she cites influences ranging from the classic jazz divas such as Ella Fitzgerald to more

contemporary names such as Rufus, Chaka Khan, Aretha Franklin and Betty Davis. She credits her Nonna – her Italian grandmother – for first igniting her interest in jazz at an early age. "When I was young she would always have [records by] Louis Prima, Frank Sinatra and all the old swing artists. And I think the first time I ever went to a jazz festival it was the Edinburgh Jazz and Blues Festival with my Nonna and Papa and I was just completely infatuated with it all."

In her early days as a performer, she often played the now sadly defunct Blue Arrow Club in Sauchiehall Street, where she met other musicians from Glasgow's simmering young jazz scene and started building up her network. Having fronted the Katie Doyle Quintet for three years before "Katie" morphed into Kitti then discarded the capital, kitti regards herself as poised at a crucial point in her singing career: "I have put every ounce of my heart and soul into recording this debut album."

Studio recorded and currently in the final stages of production, the album is the focus of an all-important Crowdfunder campaign, with hopes for release in June next year. She plans to include a limited vinyl run as well as 12 short videos to accompany the online tracks, "to visualise all these lyrics that have been floating about in my head".

For details, see [www.hiitskitti.co.uk](http://www.hiitskitti.co.uk)  
**Jim Gilchrist**

## Wit and heart and musical explorations

### MUSIC

#### Lloyd Cole

Usher Hall, Edinburgh  
★★★★

As this year's 12th solo album, *On Pain*, testified, Lloyd Cole remains an artist in ongoing musical exploration, and the hits in his two-part set seemed more like artefacts of his journey than reproductions so everyone felt they had their money's worth.

In fact, only two songs felt as though they'd been designed to sonically recreate his commercial heyday – the ever-sublime *Perfect Skin* and *Brand New Friend*.

Cole noted that the latter song was written by keyboard player Blair Cowan, as was *The Idiot* from this year's *On Pain*, which is a stunning, part-synthesised callback to Iggy Pop and David Bowie's relationship.

Much of the most urgent music on show here was also the most recent, in fact, including the swirling, dream-like *Night Sweats* and the heart-racing *Violins* ("the missile leaves the drone... the mother and child join the wall of flame," runs part of its lyric, with horrifying relevance to this week's news headlines), both songs from 2019's *Guesswork*.

Elsewhere the classics were played, but the pop sheen of the original *Rattlesnakes* and *Forest Fire* was certainly sanded off in favour of grit, while *Are You Ready To Be Heartbroken?* felt sparser and even more intimate than the original.

Other well-received classics including *2cv* and *Minor Character* appeared, which was appropriate as original Commotions Cowan and Neil Clark are part of this four-piece band.

Yet it wasn't a reunion

Lloyd Cole played this gig very much on his own terms

gig, muttered Cole, for the benefit of those asking about Lawrence Donegan on Twitter, and only 32 songs had been practised for the tour, so it was pointless calling out with requests for *My Bag* or anything else not included on the setlist – which people in the audience inevitably did anyway.

Despite his often-revisited lyrical themes of depression, heartbreak and failure, Cole and his music remain steeped in resilient, dry wit (talk of nudity in *Undressed* "was a reference to me being naked in 1989"; *No Blue Skies* was "the height of my abilities when it comes to getting the word 'babe' into a song").

Across 29 songs, he produced a beautiful set on his own terms.

David Pollock

### MUSIC

#### Kristin Hersh

Mono, Glasgow  
★★★★

Mono was looking particularly pretty and twinkling, with school chairs arranged in lines, all the better for the sold out audience to pay rapt attention to Throwing Muses frontwoman Kristin Hersh, an esteemed songwriter who could fill a far larger venue.

She was joined in this intimate "audience with" set-up by cellist Pete Harvey, a respected musician in his own right thanks to his warm, intuitive playing in *Modern Studies* and the evocative string arrangements he has produced for many a Scottish outfit.

Hersh is a similarly instinctive performer, who has often said that new songs wake her up in the middle of the night, demanding to be completed. Divested of rock band backing, her repertoire still sounded visceral thanks to her strident strumming on acoustic guitar and her throaty vocal, with a nicotine-

like tinge which hasn't been as obvious before.

Together, Hersh and Harvey created a sense of urgency in their delivery but new album *Clear Pond Road*, from which she carved much of her two sets, is a largely acoustic conception with subtle tonal shifts. The lovely *Dandelion* was one of the softer, more wistful numbers lifted for this show.

Her storytelling captures the southern gothic charms of her adopted home as she ended with a tale of her "melting mansion" – "everybody here wants to be haunted" she recited. This audience, meanwhile, were thoroughly bewitched.

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Fiona Shepherd



Kristin Hersh captivated her audience

## Examining the world from trees to pickled vegetables

### THEATRE

#### Murmurations

Perth Theatre at Dunkeld  
★★★★

#### Pickled Republic

Assembly Roxy, Edinburgh  
★★★★

On the banks of the River Tay in Dunkeld, on a glorious autumn day, walkers and cyclists on the riverside path find their peace briefly interrupted by strange scenes. There are two men arguing, a shouting couple, an environmental protester, a woman talking to herself as she seeks a spot to scatter her mother's ashes – and then a small group of people wearing headphones, who walk, pause, and stand and watch, apparently absorbed in the dilemmas and conflicts.

This is *Tangled Feet* Theatre's promenade show *Murmurations*, written by Steve Waters, and a veteran of several locations across the UK. Theatrical responses to the ecological crisis now facing humankind come in a huge range of forms and *Murmurations* definitely belongs to the meditative end of the spectrum, as the audience walks, thinks and reflects in one of Scotland's most breathtakingly beautiful natural landscapes.

The story told has multiple strands, involving conflict over a proposal for house-

building in this beautiful place; a dying woman protester who encounters a young estate worker clearing trees for a new road; a bird-watching couple shaken by post-Covid exhaustion and fears for the future, and the woman protester's grieving daughter, played with feeling by Jo Freer.

There's also Chloe a trainee guide – played with real charm and passion by Chanice Hird – who leads our walk into unexpected territory as she tries to interact with the characters, and reveals large fragments of her life story as a fugitive from London trying to build a life in Perthshire, and offers us some of her own poems, to cheer us on our way.

And together with music by Polly Wright, and some terrific sound engineering by designer Guy Connelly and operator Paul Falconer this remarkable company lead us on a deeply valuable journey through our times; while the great Perthshire trees whisper and sometimes roar around us, and the powerful Tay surges on its way, reminding us always of the mighty natural world on which humanity depends, for its own survival.

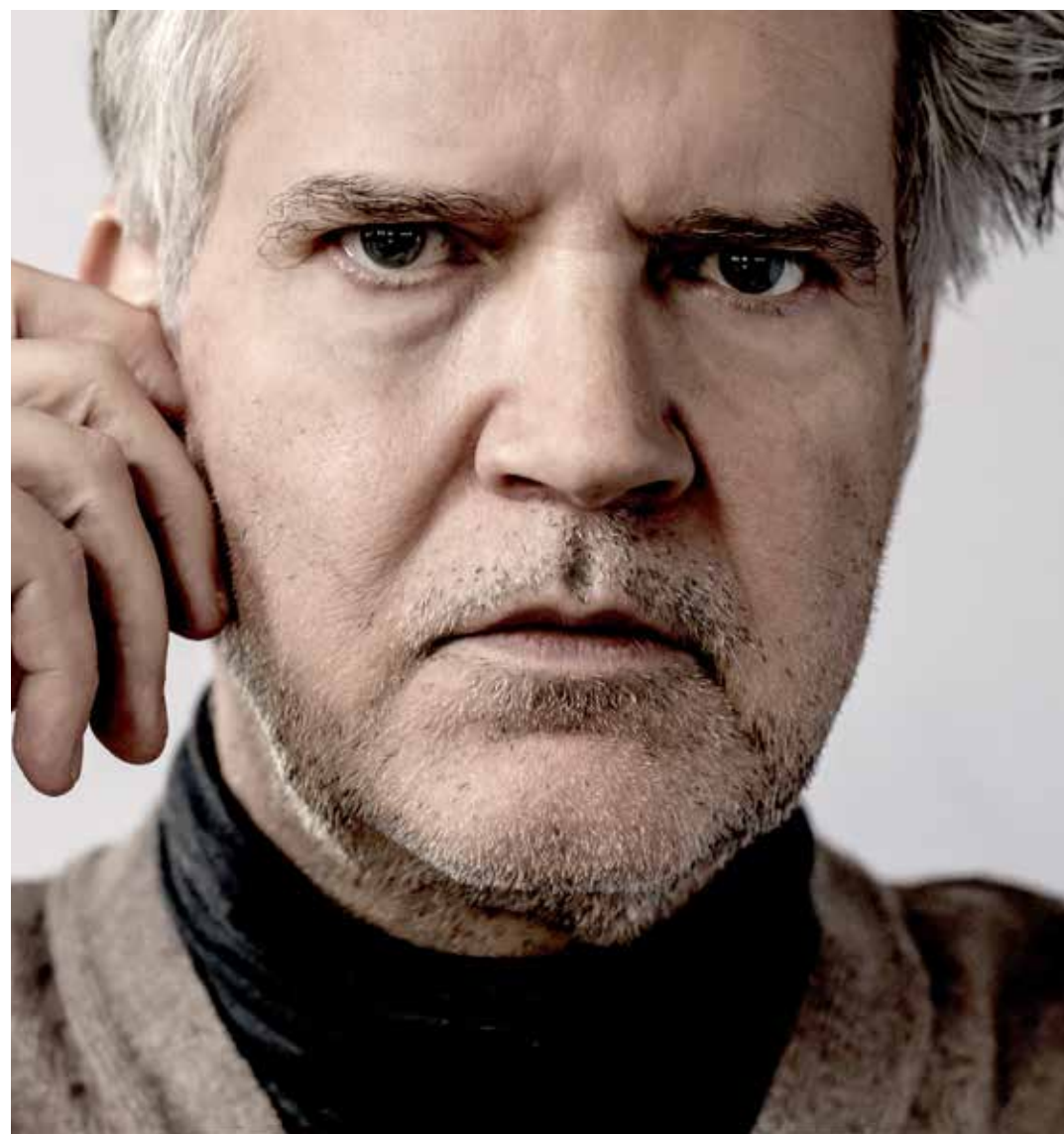
If Steve Waters and *Tangled Feet* take a pensive approach to our future, the remarkable Glasgow-based creator and performer Ruxy Cantir seems to believe that we'll never

survive without a laugh. Cantir comes originally from Moldova, where, she claims, they "pickle everything", from tomatoes to watermelons; and in her riotously vivid 50-minute show *Pickled Republic*, she chooses to see the world from the perspective of half-a-dozen pickled vegetables, caught in a limbo between death and indefinite preservation.

There's a snobbish upmarket tomato stuck in the bottom of a jar; a sexy potato chanteuse; a shy dub poet of an onion; a suffocatingly maternal carrot whose pickled baby emerges as a small nihilist philosopher, and a macho cucumber in a suit who turns out to be a bit of a clown – all played by Cantir in breathtakingly athletic style.

*Pickled Republic* is directed by Scotland's low-key queen of absurdist visual theatre, Shona Reppe, and although the whole event is frankly ridiculous, it boasts such a wealth of talent and good looks – in Fergus Dunnet's design, Alberto Santos Bellido's gorgeous lighting, and Cantor's cleverly-observed characters – that it's also completely irresistible. *Murmurations*, run ended.

*Pickled Republic* is on tour across Scotland until 28 October; find more details at <https://scissorkick.co.uk/projects/pickled-republic>.  
**Joyce McMillan**



PICTURE: PAUL SHOUL

### MUSIC

#### Songs Of Wars I Have Seen

Glasgow Royal Concert Hall  
★★★★

There's something faintly nostalgic about Heiner Goebbels' *Songs Of Wars I Have Seen*. It's the sheer nonchalance with which he assembles a spray of readings from Gertrude Stein's wartime diaries, a novelty ensemble combining period and modern (even electronic) instruments, and a restless musical idiom that time travels between the 17th century and present day, comfortable in its own skin, even where the message is sometimes hard to grasp.

In some ways, it took me back to the anarchic days of Peter Maxwell Davies' music theatre pieces for the *Fires of London* – gloriously surreal, where musical parody tickled the senses, and from which the gratification was real, even if you couldn't put your finger on why.

Goebbels' staged concert piece is hardly anarchic, but it certainly spoke for itself



PICTURE: CHRIS HART

The RSNO were on fine form at the weekend

in this slick collaboration between the Dunedin Consort and RSNO. The scene – a shady living room with scattered tables and lamps – conjured up an ambience of cosy reflection, a moodily charged setting for a nimble, precise performance conducted by the excellent Ellie Slorach.

Stein's texts, spoken in turns by the musicians, shift from the mundane (the state of food) to the catastrophic (bombings of Italians), to history repeating itself (allusions to Tudor parallels). It's in reflecting the latter that the period instrument commentary

acts like the ghost of Christmas past, punctuating the prevailing modernist soundscape with quoted extracts by 17th century composer Matthew Locke.

It was all beautifully integrated in a performance – attended by Goebbels – which played both freely and cohesively with the composer's stylistic collage, whether inhabiting the cabaret world of pre-war Berlin, spitting out jazz/minimalist riffs, or towards the end basking in trumpeter Chris Hart's haunting lament. I loved its unpretentious honesty.

Ken Walton



PICTURE: ANDY CATTEN

Ruxy Cantir in *Pickled Republic*, which our critic found 'completely irresistible'