

Kit - THE VIEW FROM HERE (Kit Music)



This particular Kit (real name Amanda Hopkins, just to confuse matters) is a Midlands- (Coventry-) based singer-songwriter with a penchant for making bold, confident statements and entering into bold collaborative projects.

The press release for *The View From Here*, her second album release, proclaims her songs and delivery as having been variously compared to a host of celebrated singers including Grace Slick, Michelle Shocked, June Tabor, Alison Moyet and Alanis Morissette... quite an assortment, in summary almost as diverse as chalk and cheese, and a hard claim for which to vouch any deep credence, even after listening to her performances on the new album several times. In the end, such comparisons can only indicate possible reference points; although to be sure, there are isolated moments during the album's dozen tracks where any one or other of the aforementioned singers might more than momentarily be recalled or glimpsed in one aspect or another, but that's fleeting impressions for you.

I guess I'd say Vivienne McAuliffe, Kirsty McColl, The Slits and in particular early Hazel O'Connor are the ones most readily evoked, whereas on ballads like *Stay*, qualities in Kit's delivery like a slightly trained precision in diction and a malleable, Chrissie-Hynde-like sensuality serve to make the sentiment even more appealing. Kit's been fortunate too in re-enlisting Paul Sampson for production duties (he'd also produced her 2006 debut *The End Of The Rainbow*), and Paul imparts a solid sense of attack in the often quite rocking settings that he provides courtesy of his own multi-layered guitars, synth and percussion.

These backings, often redolent more than anything else of early-80s new-wave/indie (and shades of Magazine perhaps) really do complement the edgy, rugged contours of Kit's lyrics (which aren't as easy to appreciate when you go to read them in the cluttered run-on format of the insert), while the instrumentation often brings a more believable focus to the sometimes tentative nature of Kit's melodic lines. Her lyrics are direct and expressive, with a natural sense of the dramatic that's all the more persuasive for its understatement and its occasional sense of perplexed insecurity that kinda balances the more overt confidence of her expression. Even so, one or two of the songs feel a touch underdeveloped, and some of Kit's socio-commentary has the untutored, imperfect (even slightly naïve) air of the sixth-form common-room (we should've gone beyond the clumsy expressive gestures of War by now).

Overall, though, I believe that Kit's feisty demeanour, her dynamism and sheer commitment to her writing outweigh or overshadow any intermittent over-simplistic qualities in her artistic statements (well-meaning tho' they be); the majority of the album's songs grow rather than pall on successive plays, and the best of them hint at a healthy future with the projected album number three (which is already well on the way, according to the press handout).

www.kitmusic.co.uk