

uni rocks



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Your recently released single 'pray' is written about war correspondent John Simpson. Why did you choose that focus?

Anemone: The idea came about at the start of the 2003 Iraq bombing campaign. John Simpson filed a report on BBC News24 I think. He was traveling with British special forces and got embedded by US soldiers because, according to the US, he and his company had been mistaken for Iraq soldiers. When he talked about it he gave it some real honour yet delivered it in a very direct way. We thought that was very powerful journalism. The aim of our songs is to make people think: to think about the human cost of war and the risks for journalists delivering these messages. This is also something that student reporters should bear in mind: that you should bring the truth, the real story, rather than the hysterical formula of wrapping it in some Bob Dylan-esque abstract story. We need it first hand.

Do you push a political message in your songs?

Anemone: I wouldn't say we're exactly political. We won't tell people that they're right or wrong because it is best that they make their own mind up. But being

in a band is an enormous opportunity to communicate. So many people don't say anything, they think it's all about selling records. Power comes with responsibility, yet we have to be careful. So many students didn't vote in the last election but we believe you should at least express an opinion so we would advocate that.

Does the fire behind your music come from external issues such as those covered in 'pray' or something inside of you all?

Anemone: The lead singer [Isobel Woodman] writes about subjects that she cares about, whether a relationship or whatever else. There's so much freedom about something we don't care about because the passion and energy wouldn't be there. We're up there to provide a reaction so our songs need to have this edge.

Kingstley, music has been part of your life for a long time. How did you first begin?

Yes, as long as I can remember, I started at four learning bass at the 'N. I've always enjoyed it and originally stuck to classical piano, which is a useful skill but one that I don't use much these days. When I was 12 I begged my parents for a synthesizer and just loved messing around with the weird electronic notes.

You've both continued in academia despite forging a musical career. Why did you not sacrifice one to put all your energy into another?

Anemone: Because you don't have to. It's something that you care about and you're good at. I didn't want to give up education for music. I studied Oceanography at the University of Southampton and, honestly, going to university pushed me further into music and I wouldn't be with Anemo if I hadn't.

Kingstley, university is good for their set of things [the lectures in informatics at the University of Sussex], it's growing up in

remote places may not get the chance to see much live music. University suddenly opens a door to that and really expands your horizons.

Anemone: I grew up in Brighton and the scene is really good there. It's a melting pot for popular culture.

Is university a good place to get involved in music then?

Anemone: Well yes! There are so many bands at university, I probably saw more gigs than want to discuss. You just meet loads of people who are up for a jam, and of course there are plenty of music societies. It's the best place to start a band. Even doing a degree you can be in a band. If you are really into music, it's good to do a music technology course so your director here oversees. Kingstley held a studio in his home and we record our music there. He didn't have the know-how then, it would be a bit more details.

Kingstley, the Anemo website hails you as chief tea maker of the band. Is this an addiction left over from your student days?

Ha, that's actually from A1week's. I couldn't study without being intoxicated with tea, and it was usually finished when I didn't have it. You start in the morning, have a 'Tea' day good teaps - a really strong hot one - and your day progresses well.

Finally, your debut album, 'Stowburn', was well-received on both sides of the Atlantic. What should we expect from the new one?

Anemone: The first was a mix of all sorts. This is like going from a theoretical study to a single track, in mixed terms of course. The second is more focused around a few band sounds. There are no drum songs. It's all live instruments. Whereas on the first one we had a lot of electronic touches, this one has the same people playing on each track, giving it a lot more cohesion.

ROCK SCHOOL

Award-winning, Brighton based rock band Anemo are on the up. Navigator caught up with keyboard player Kingstley Sage and guitarist Matt Palmer after an acoustic set in London

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