

### Keren Ann

Arts Theatre  
30 July

Keren Ann, now on her fifth album, is not 'one to watch'. She is not a 'talent for the future'. She is very much the finished article, and very much in her prime. Therefore, it was a mild shame that there were many empty seats at the Arts Theatre. Those in on the secret saw a lady ignorant of a rather deflated atmosphere produce a performance of such depth and passion as to set bottoms lips a-quiver amongst the more sensitive among us here, of which there were many. Comparisons with the Velvet Underground, Nico in particular, are not too far wide of the mark. Keren Ann's leftfield arrangements, melodies that take unexpected but somehow entirely natural directions, and startlingly poetic lyrics that belie (or perhaps reflect) the fact she is French, allow her to be spoken of seriously alongside the heavyweight names of female singer-songwriters; Joni Mitchell (whose 'Big Yellow Taxi' she covered in the encore), Sandy Denny and maybe Cat Power or Saddle Creek's Maria Taylor of today's crew. In her demeanour she is disarmingly similar to KT Tunstall, but comparable artistically speaking only if the Scottish chanteuse had read more Kafka, or maybe that's a bit harsh. On Keren Ann.

Her way with words is a pleasure: rarely do lyrics come across so hauntingly in a live setting, especially when the music behind is so inventive. Lines such as "No, we can't change the world/It's Been Done/By someone/Long ago" from 'Where No Endings End' (from her latest album, eponymously titled) reached out of the songs that hold them, the Leonard Cohen-influenced 'Chelsea Burns' being another aching example of her unusual imagery and imagination: anyone who uses the term 'boreal wind' (in more than one song, too) or 'pink tourmaline' is worthy of our attention.

Though backed by a drummer, guitar/bass player and trumpeter throughout, the most compelling moment came when she wandered back on stage as the audience filed out to sing a French romance with all the house lights off. Enchanté, Madame. **Barnaby Smith**

### Brinkman

Monto Water Rats  
31 July

The British indie music scene is a strange beast these days, with bands from all corners of the country doffing their caps to great songwriters of the past without ever taking a sound further. So here we have Brinkman, a three-piece London outfit who on the face of it look like yet another set of indie pretenders with everything to prove - but prove it they did. Lead singer Paul Cook's seductive voice tells tales of love and love-lost and coupled with his social commentaries, that somewhat echo that of Ray Davies with a contemporary twist, bringing *Village Green Preservation Society*-era Kinks to a new generation, no more so than on the quirkily titled 'Curse Of The Girlfriend.' Following Davies and co is not hugely original I grant, but its sounds pretty great all the same. Other highlights include new single 'Change It' and 'A Real Thunderbolt' a slow burner that uses both melodic ramshackle guitar and the intensely sweet harmonies between Paul Cook and bass player Tom Brown to great effect. If anything they surpassed their own recordings for sheer harmonic bliss. The English summer has finally arrived.

**Greg Alexander**



photo: Kevin Wong

### Momo

Bush Hall  
24 July

Momo's dedication of his show to 'love, in all its magnitudes' was a good indicator of the ambition of his performance. In the dimly lit, Ambassadorial interior of Bush Hall, an atmosphere of Desdemona's bedroom, a string quartet, and the lean Frenchman's unassuming manner belied the sweeping grandness of the show. Momo takes the best of 90s trip-hop and teaches it a classical lesson over seven pieces of music. Amid thumping backing tracks of heartbeats and a slideshow of urban images on a big screen, one singer has the duty of singing the plaintive verses overlaid by the high operatic notes of her partner. The string quartet and conductor further heighten the haunting combination.

Our French composer, almost left out of his own band at the back of the stage sitting down, played very little himself, introducing instead each piece of music with a slush of poetry: "Can you hear that voice that comes from the sky?" Err, yes, Momo...

Verse aside, the show is rich in well-placed bursts of piano (unseen), beautiful singing from the four vocalists and a note-perfect quartet who are duly given morsels of solo space. Ending the show with Shakespeare's most famous sonnet - first a spoken recital, then an operatic interpretation - was impossible to not balk at. But for those who don't mind rather high self-regard, a night combining Massive Attack and Mendelssohn remains interesting. **Ben Roberts**

## Marcus Brigstocke

**Marcus Brigstocke, as listeners to *Just A Minute*, and watchers of *The Late Edition* will know, is a comedian. South London-based Brigstocke has also appeared on *Have I Got News For You* and in the film *Love Actually*. He will be appearing at the Edinburgh Festival this August with *The Early Edition*, and is touring in the autumn. After he'd told us that: 'my biggest passion after comedy is music and like most blokes of my age I can talk about it endlessly', we had to delve deeper.**

**What is your favourite album and song ever?**

Blimey. Favourite album is *Dark Side Of The Moon*. Favourite song is too difficult because it changes all the time. Today it's probably 'Keep The Car Running' by Arcade Fire, but that's not an all-time favourite.

**What was the best year for music?**

Well, *Dark Side* came out in '73, and if that's my favourite album I ought to say '73. But when Hendrix took off in the UK (1967), that saw people whose game was already incredibly high like Cream and The Who raise it even more because Hendrix was so completely astonishing. So that year. Personally speaking, when *Purple Rain* came out, 1984, was a very exciting year too.

**What is your earliest musical memory?**

Listening to *Parallel Lines* in the car with my dad. He had two tapes: that and *The Greatest Hits of Johnny Cash*. I was into Blondie then and still am. I also remember forcing my family to listen to music from *The Muppet Show*, which I would still hold up as great music. The Dr Teeth band was fantastic: a pianist based on Tom Waits, a band leader based on Dr John, a female guitar player based on Janis Joplin, a sax player called Zoot, based on Zoot Sims, and of course Animal based on Keith Moon. That's a fucking rocking band, which I'd pay to see.

**What's the most embarrassing record you own?**

There's a lot. I bought a Lighthouse Family record once. That fucking stings.

**Is there any particular album or song you never want to hear again in your life?**

'Loveslack' by the fucking B-52s.

Every party you go to someone puts it on. That and anything by ABBA.

Everyone assumes 'Dancing Queen' is good to dance to, but you watch, after thirty seconds they look lost because it's slow, dull and annoying.

**If you could go back in time, which musical figure would you like to meet?**

I'm a bit iffy about meeting my heroes, as I've met a couple already and it was very, very disappointing. It would probably be someone I was pissed off with rather than impressed with. Maybe go back to about 1994 and advise Prince to keep away from religious nutters. If I could travel back in time to any gig, it would be Hendrix playing in London.

**Who would you put in your fantasy band (drums, bass, guitar, vocals)?**

It would be the Dr Teeth muppet band! No, on drums Keith Moon, bass Roger Waters, Hendrix on guitar, and for a band this powerful, Robert Plant up front. Or perhaps something softer like KD Lang, she's a great front man.

**What is the best concert you've been to?**

I saw Roger Waters in Hyde Park last summer and then at Earls Court this year, and that really blew me away. Close behind that is the first time I saw Prince. It wasn't until the *Diamonds and Pearls* tour, so I came to him quite late, but it doesn't get much exciting than that for a gig.

**What was the first gig you went to?**

I'm not sure I can remember. I think it was Bowie actually. Bowie at Milton Keynes on the *Sound and Vision* tour.

**What was the last gig you went to?**

I was at Latitude Festival, which was fantastic. I saw The Good, The Bad and The Queen who played their album note for note, which was very disappointing. The album's great, musically fabulous, but its nothing to see live. No connection with the audience at all. Jarvis Cocker was really good, but you can't help thinking, it's just not Pulp.

**Seated or standing?**

By instinct I'd say seated, but every fucker stands up, then you're standing with no space and a chair jabbing your legs. So I'd have to go with standing, which is against my natural instinct.

