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LEISURE » In the Spotlight

Horse has LK in the frame

Published: 22 January, 2010

IT has been a while since singer Horse MacDonald made an appearance on video as well as disc, but for her return to the medium, she has enlisted a familiar face.

GMTV chatshow queen Lorraine Kelly has been recruited by the Fife-born singer, who appears at The Ironworks on Thursday, to explore her naughty side on Horse's latest release.

"She's actually a fan," Horse explained.

"I was doing an open air concert in Manchester and she was walking past and I asked 'Can I have my photograph taken with you?' because somebody was wanting to take my picture for a magazine, so I put my arm around her and she put her arm around me and I said: 'I'm Horse, by the way.' And she went: 'I love you!' Since then we've always kept in touch.

"The single, 'Something Wicked This Way Comes', is about how everybody has a wicked side and when we were doing the video, I immediately thought of her. She has that girl-next-door thing going on, but having had numerous e-mails from her, there's very definitely a wicked side to her!"

Having made the offer to Kelly, who jumped at the chance of appearing in the video, Horse is delighted by the end result.

"It's exactly what I'd envisaged. She's got that look and that wicked smile and when I was talking to her the day before about what she'd be wearing, I had to bring up the cleavage because it's one of her features isn't it?" Horse laughed.

"So she brought a couple of low cut things. It's probably one of the main draws of the video - apart from the brilliant song and the band performance, of course!"

"It's a win-win situation. It's great publicity for me and she loves it. Now she's hit the big 5-oh she wants to try different things. I don't know what she'll do next mind you!"

This is the first video Horse has made for her own record label, Randan, even though current album "Coming Up For Air" is her sixth album release, but she had plenty of video experience back when she was signed to major labels Capitol and Universal at the start of the 1990s, including one freezing shoot at the top of Ben Nevis.

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"Although I'm on an indie label, I'm not an indie artist, if you see what I mean," she said. "To make a wee scratchy video would not have been appropriate for the material I put out, but I had this offer to have this made and I was able to control things and ensure the quality was there."

Being her own boss brings both benefits and difficulties.

"It's almost the complete opposite of a major label," Horse said.

"I'm not saying you're cushioned in a major label, but there is someone in different departments taking care of different elements of the product, whether it's the video or the design of the album.

"It comes with the territory. You roll up your sleeves and get on with it. I've done everything in the last nine years pretty much myself. I enjoy the control, I just find it pretty stressful, so when you get on stage you're thinking about the journey home."

Back in her major label days, especially with the critical if not commercial success of her debut album "Under The Same Sky", chart success was an obvious goal. Today Horse's goals are different.

"It was most frustrating," she recalled.

"We were always at 52 or 44 on the chart. If you get inside that Top 40, you go onto different playlists and the attention is increased. I feel very disappointed about that, but I haven't given up yet. You want that for all sorts of reasons, but now chart success would mean a bigger audience and just being able to keep doing my music.

"I meet the audience after most shows and the music has affected their lives, whether through bereavement or happier things. That's such a gift and I feel really, really grateful that I've got that."

The last decade has not only seen Horse run her own label, but emerge as a solo songwriter after an almost 20 year partnership ended and she admitted that she had been nervous about her lyrics, but her confidence had been boosted by another celebrity fan, bestselling crime writer Val McDermid, who told her that "Ship to Shore" was one of her favourite songs.

Her new album contains some of Horse's most personal writing with songs dealing with the deaths of her parents just six weeks apart.

"Because people know about some of the topics you could hear people weeping in their seats. It's very cathartic for them," Horse said, agreeing that writing about her parents had also been cathartic for her.

"I just wrote the songs because I needed to talk about it," she added.

"That was my way of dealing with it."

However, the song written expressly about the death of her mother, "End of Days" is only now going into the live set and will be heard at her Celtic Connections concert at Glasgow City Halls on Sunday along with the Gospel Truth Choir.

"I haven't been able to sing it yet," she admitted.

"I'm fine until I start getting towards the end and I just start welling up with tears."

*** Horse and her band play The Ironworks next Thursday.**

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