



## KAT FRANKIE – BAD BEHAVIOUR

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Kat Frankie says she likes things “messy”: untidy, teeming, excessive, rich – and the luxuriant diversity of her music reflects that. No question, Kat Frankie writes the most artistic songs you’ll hear in local pop music: rhythmically complex, like the most sophisticated R & B, with divinely intricate vocal harmonies reminiscent of old-time doo-wop and folk. Yet – and this may be the best thing about it – none of it ever seems redundant or fabricated. Kat Frankie sings the most beautiful and readily accessible melodies one can wish for, and she sings them with a voice that is at once so clear and excitingly enigmatic, so impressively mature and at the same time enticingly brash, that after one verse they stick in your head.

Kat Frankie is from Sydney and has been singing since she was a little girl. Her first compositions were sung letters that she recorded on tape and sent to her grandmother. As a teenager she loved singing R & B songs: “Boyz II Men were huge role models of mine,” she says. Her parents didn’t have the money to pay for music lessons, or to buy a guitar or piano for that matter. All she had were two tape decks, so she started practicing beat-boxing. “I would record a beat on one cassette, then play it and sing along with it while recording it on the second cassette.” She basically developed the musical technique that has stuck with her to this day. Her favorite piece of equipment is a loop station, which she uses to lay down a chorus to accompany herself or to play a one-woman guitar duet.

She came to the guitar late in life: “I was 17 the first time I played one,” she notes. Even now she seems to have a somewhat distant relationship to the instrument, although it is responsible for jumpstarting her artistic career. While studying design she started playing in pubs. “I played guitar and sang songs, some angry, some sad – it was totally cliché.” But it was successful. In 2004 she quit her job and moved to Berlin. “I was a big fan of Chicks on Speed. In an interview they said Berlin was the best place in the world to make music, and I believed them.”

When Kat Frankie arrived in the German capital “antifolk” was the most popular music genre in the city. Singer-songwriter Kitty Solaris took her under her wing and released Kat’s debut album *Pocketknife* (2007) on her own label. “That’s how I slipped into that scene back then, although it didn’t suit me at all. Antifolk always has this cutesy, superficial quality to it, whereas I always wanted to be truthful and write emotion-laden songs.” In the years that followed very serious artists – like PJ Harvey, Tom Waits and Rufus Wainwright – became her role models.

She then released two more albums on her own label Zellephan, *The Dance of a Stranger Heart* (2010) and *Please Don’t Give Me What I Want* (2012). They, too, had a cadence informed by singer-songwriter pop, but her music grew ever richer and more diverse. Kat Frankie discovering and beginning to work with a loop station was a big reason for that. “It is such a simple device, but you can do so much with it! On the one hand it felt like going back to my childhood, but the vocal harmonies I could sing with myself allowed me to venture into completely new styles.” She moved beyond singer-songwriter folk and returned to the music of her youth, R & B and soul; she also listened to lots of gospel and 1940s doo-wop.

Kat Frankie is sure of one thing: “I never wanted to be just the sad girl with a guitar.” The numerous side projects she has undertaken in the five years since her last solo album are enough to prove she never was that. She played guitar in Olli Schulz’s backup band, composed “Get Well Soon,” the title song for the Schulz & Böhmermann talk show and competed in the preliminary rounds of the Eurovision Song Contest in 2016 as part of the duo Keøma. That same year she sweetened Erfurt-based rapper Clueso’s single “Wenn du liebst” with her vocals.

To Kat Frankie, the somber world of singer-songwriter music and the bright, sometimes dazzling world of mainstream pop are not mutually exclusive: "Everything I do," she says, "propels me forward; I never want to stop learning." That's why the work she did with Keøma was so important to her; she wasn't only participating as composer, she also recorded and produced the songs. She worked with synthesizers and used Ableton, the software techno DJs use to produce tracks. The Kat Frankie of today is as autonomous as a musician can be. She commands every step of the creative process with virtuous ease.

Her new album, *Bad Behaviour*, will be released in February 2018 and it embodies all of her musical qualities. Yet one also notices that Kat Frankie has again taken things a step further: she has never so fearlessly and virtuously intertwined the "somber" and "bright" sides of her music, and she has never unleashed so many surprises.

"I didn't want to be the least bit melancholic anymore. This new album was a joyous album; I wanted to be a bit *obnoxious*... Somehow there's just not a good German word for that." Perhaps one could put it this way: she did what she wanted to do, disregarding expectations. The record delights the listener at every point and one the wonderment never ceases: Wow, what kind of a rhythm is that? Where did that crazy power riff come from? What's are the horns playing now? Why does she modulate the pitch of her vocals so much that she sounds like James Blake as a dragqueen? (Her simple answer: "I liked the timbre."). And the jubilantly radiant "Californian hippie" chorus in the background – did she really pre-record it all by herself on her loop station?

Indeed she did. Kat Frankie is capable of doing everything necessary to grip her listeners – and can and wants to do much more, like embracing a new relationship with her songs. *Bad Behaviour* is not only artistically elaborate, it is also extremely intimate. We have never been as close to this artist as we are listening to these new songs; they are songs about love and suffering from love, but especially about the joy of loving. Sex is another central theme: "I have never made an album as loaded with sex as this one is," says Kat Frankie.

Yet the intimate images of togetherness that she conjures up with romantic sounds and introspective musings are also outward looking, examining the world as a whole with a political bent of the kind only revealed in private. *Bad Behaviour* is a major, boundary breaking work; a creative climax for an exceptional artist and an album that will continue to engage us for a long time to come.

**Album release: 02.02.2018**

**On Tour: March 2018 –** Tourdates: [www.katfrankie.com/events](http://www.katfrankie.com/events)

**Pressmaterial:** [www.becktomusic.de/katfrankie-presse.html](http://www.becktomusic.de/katfrankie-presse.html)

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