

STRANGE FOLK



KULA SHAKER
FANZINE

ISSUE No. 13
MAY 2025

INTERVIEW
with the band

REVIEWS
OCS tour, Brooklyn
Bowl and more

FAN STORIES
About hope & love

INTERVIEWS
The Mad Alchemist
Triparna Mukherjee
The Seasick Sailor

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Dear Strange Folks,

We know, it has been quiet on our pages for a while. The fanzine “did a Kula Shaker” so to say, as can be looked up in the Kambridge Diktionary:

« *MEANING: “to do a Kula Shaker”: A person or a group of people disappears and is not to be seen for several years but then returns with a bang.* »

So yes, now we're back, with the full team on board – everybody agreed to help and work on the zine again to collect all things Kula for you! To kick things off we put a lot of work into this issue and managed to get an exclusive interview with the band who had some exciting news to share!

We also got to interview artists that Kula Shaker recently collaborated with: Lance Gordon, The Mad Alchemist, who joined Kula Shaker's recent tour with Ocean Colour Scene with his mind-blowing light show, abducts us into his world full of liquid light and magic.

Triparna Mukherjee did not only sing on last year's double a-side single 'Bringin it back home', but also joined the band on tour. She reveals what it was like recording with them and why it was a special experience joining them on tour.

Furthermore, we managed to sit down with The Seasick Sailor, the artist behind the artwork for the new single 'Charge of the Light Brigade'.

To round things up, many many fans contributed to this issue: They shared their personal KS stories, gig reviews, photos and what it was like meeting the band at the recent VIP experiences.

We couldn't do this without all of you - please don't hesitate and get in touch with us with your favourite KS story, experience, photos, videos, artworks, rarities or suggestions, we might include them in the next issue or on our social media pages!

Let's do this together, folks!

See you soon,
STRANGE FOLK xx

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INTERVIEW KULA SHAKER





INTERVIEW KULA SHAKER

**“We’ve
managed
to reconcile
Kula Shaker
past with
Kula Shaker
present”**

Here it is, our brand new interview with Kula Shaker! It has been a while since we all spoke last, so there was quite a lot to catch up on. First and foremost, how was it on tour with Ocean Colour Scene? And, most importantly, what are their plans for the coming months? We sure got some exciting hints what’s up next...

A man with blonde hair is shown in profile, playing a guitar. The entire scene is bathed in a strong red light, creating a dramatic and moody atmosphere. The man's hair and the guitar's body are highlighted by the light, while the background is dark.

INTERVIEW KULA SHAKER

"The new album is a really nice blend of the three minute song formulas of 'Natural Magick' with our more extended free flowing live psych jams."

- Crispian

Looking back at the past two and a half years of having the original band back together, what was it like to be writing and producing music together again, but also performing live?

Paul: It's been great having Jay back in the band. Making music and hanging out with these three guys is nearly always a pleasure. We know each other pretty well, so hopefully we know when to give each other some space (to have a nap) and when to give someone a nudge musically/energetically/comically.

Crispian: It's been a joy. We've somehow managed to reconcile Kula Shaker past with Kula Shaker present. For years, the band's output was quite sparse -- in terms of long breaks, indie releases, infrequent touring and all that. We had these other lives, with our families and films, and the work we were doing. The band was in a sort of cruise control. Then Covidmania happened and

we decided it was time to saddle the horses and ride out. We needed to come together, not hide away in our homes waiting for Saruman and his goblins to tell us what to do. When Jay returned like Gandalf, that was the tipping point. It was game on.

Looking back 30 years, what has changed and what has not (and will never change)?

Paul: Well 30 years is pretty epic. I think that Crispian & Alonza are still writing exciting classic tunes. They have acquired a lot of production skills along the way too, albeit in different ways.

Crispian: We're very much the same gang, perhaps just slightly nicer versions of ourselves. Life can do that to you. Smooth off the edges, make you less of a twat.

A man wearing a black fedora-style hat and a dark, possibly leather, jacket is performing on stage. He has his hands raised in the air, palms facing forward, in a gesture of connection or emphasis. He is looking towards the camera with an open mouth, as if singing or speaking. A microphone on a stand is visible to his right. The background is dark, and the lighting is warm and focused on the performer.

INTERVIEW KULA SHAKER

"Meeting the fans was like coming together of the tribe and affirmation of the greatest medicine in the world... music." – Alonza

How did the decision come about to join Ocean Colour Scene on their tour?

Alonza: Going out with two bands feels more like an event or mini festival. We've always been friendly with OCS, our paths have crossed many times over the years. We first played together back in the early 1990's in a tiny back room of a pub in Kings Cross. When our agent suggested touring with another band, OCS seemed like the obvious partner.

Crispian: I remember playing with them at the 'Splash Club' at the back of 'The Water Rat' Pub in Kings Cross. It wasn't a very big room, and we sat on our amps and cases and watched them soundcheck. There were a lot of bands around then (some of them are successful) who couldn't really play their instruments, but OCS stood out as being a very good, very pro. Out of all those 1990s bands, I'd say Steve (Craddock) was probably the best guitarist.

Thinking back over the tour, we are sure there were a lot of highs and some lows. What were the memories that stood out to you the most during this time?

Paul: Well, it was great hanging out with Lance Gordon 'The Mad Alchemist' and his protégé, Isaac from California; hearing their stories and having them bring 'The Liquid Light Show'. The weather made for some amazing swims on Southsea beach, Plymouth Hoe, Swansea Bay, Brockwell lido, UEA Campus Lake, Aberdeen, River Cam. (Apologies to any aquatic omissions).

For the first time there was the opportunity to meet you in person at the VIP Experience, how were the meetings with the fans? Any stories to share?

Alonza: The first thing that struck us was how big they all were. From the stage perspective the fans appeared much smaller, but when we met them, it became

INTERVIEW KULA SHAKER

obvious that they are in fact life-size. We are also music fans and clearly we like the same sort of music as our fans, so it felt more like a coming together of the tribe and affirmation of the greatest medicine in the world... music with a nice cup of tea coming a close second.

Is the VIP Experience a concept that you plan to continue with?

Crispian: If people want it, yes!

Are there any plans for the 30th anniversary of the band and/or the 30th anniversary of 'K'?

Crispian: Ooooooh (rubs hands gleefully) just you wait!

How far along is the work on the new album?

Jay: I always considered it more of a height thing rather than an 'along' type of scenario? But that might just be that I'm lying down while I type? Yeah... almost there with the album (thank you for asking!). It's gonna be a monster!

Crispian: We just finished the last track. Overall, it's a really nice blend of the three minute song formulas of 'Natural Magick', with our more extended free flowing live psych jams.

"Crispian & Alonza are still writing exciting classic tunes." - Paul

"The new album's gonna be a monster!" - Jay

Can you give us a little insight into new songs and the working process so far?

Jay: Yes.. it usually all starts with a nice cup of tea, then one of us will read the leaves. They usually just tell us to put the kettle on again and read the next brew though? These sessions can take quite some time if you really require an accurate reading of course. During this said time, songs fly through the walls like starry butterflies all a twinkle. Dodge, or Alonza, or whoever is the fittest or dressed, anyway that's by the by, they have to woo the butterflies with a secret mantra only known to butterflies and very few musicians. I do hope this helps clarify the whole matter?

Crispian: We have recorded a lot of the album live. It sounds very real. I hope that's a good thing.

Are there any more touring plans for this year? What else can we look forward to?

Alonza: There's some festivals here and there, but the summer is looking a bit quiet on the touring front. We're busy in the studio finishing off a new album at the moment, as well as working on some surprises for the K 30th anniversary. We're planning a bunch of dates around the release in Autumn and shall hopefully be "coming to a theatre near you" in the Fall.

And, last but not least (on behalf of many fans), will the red striped trousers and jacket make it into the merchandise?

Jay: That's not a bad idea I must say. Or we could just give away the actual ones Crispian wore (but we will have to retrieve them from the post-tour washing machine and give them a good airing at least). Perhaps we could have a Tombola, live from the tumble dryer?

Sounds perfect! Where can we buy the Tombola tickets?

INTERVIEW: SEASICK SAILOR

CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE



THE NEW SINGLE
OUT NOW

A battle between good and evil

We have all admired his artwork for new single 'Charge of the Light Brigade'. But how did the Seasick Sailor come to work for Kula Shaker and what is the story behind his art? He was kind enough to answer our questions in an interview.

Can I begin by asking how did your career start and for long how have you been an artist?

Art was always part of my life, was really one of the things that I found joy in from my school days through to art college, whether it was drawing, painting, printing or graphic design I just loved being creative in some way or another. I've always been the hobbyist artist in my younger days as I think it's more important to enjoy what you do rather than trying to force it. So after many years of working in a very corporate world, my life circumstances changed after the birth of my daughter and I found myself using art as a form of therapy and I started professionally 7 years ago and it's lead me to working with some really cool people.

How did your name 'Seasick Sailor' evolve?

It's a play on my daughter's name and there's a Bob Dylan song called 'it's all over now baby blue' where I first heard the phrase and it has always stuck with me.

Which techniques are you using for your art?

Mixed really, traditionally I would prefer to use oils and acrylics but nowadays for the sake of space, time and mess I work a lot digitally but will always try to revert back to more traditional ways where I can, if I can scan a pencil sketch or a inked doodle I will and work from there. Usually I have deadlines and things to be reviewed before they get final approval so you need to be flexible in some of artwork that I make for music campaigns or projects. For personal

stuff I just experiment with whatever takes my interest from screen printing, gelli plate, comics, collage, linoprint or even marbling.

Which other bands, artists or companies have you worked with in the past?

I've been lucky to work with some the bands and artists that I've been a fan of first so it's kind of like a surreal moment when it happens, artists like The Coral, Chris Helme, Robert Schwartzman, PP Arnold, The Lathums, The Heavy North, Brooke Combe, Ray Meade, Stone Foundation and Ben Harper to name a few.

How did you get in touch with Kula Shaker?

I think they saw some fanart that I made and Crispian dug the style of some of my work.

How did the creative process on the artwork for "Charge of the Light Brigade" come about?

It's funny, I said to Crispian that the song reminds me of an old program called Mahabharat and some kind of battle between good and evil and we laughed as he knew the show pretty well so I just started sketching out some ideas in my head after playing the song over a few times.

What were the ideas behind the artwork for "Charge of the Light Brigade"?

Other than the obvious good versus evil theme it's quite an epic story of some pretty bad people in the world but there is still hope and the wee folk fighting back. There needed to be a villain and that's who the guy is who is drinking from his goblet, almost like a throwback like Amjad Khan from the film Sholay.

INTERVIEW: SEASICK SAILOR



What was it like working for Kula Shaker?

Pretty straight forward really, they left me to my artist freedom, then we consult with each other to make sure we are on the right track, when the music is exciting it keeps you invested to get it right.

Any fun stories to share?


Not really, after chatting with them all at Brixton, we realised that we all lived in the same towns at some point.

As your work has been well received with Kula Shaker and their fans, will there be any further plans to work together with the band?

I hope so, yesterday is gone and tomorrow's not promised, let's see.

SEASICK SAILOR 

Follow The Seasick Sailor on Instagram:
[@theseasicksailor](https://www.instagram.com/theseasicksailor)



OCS TOUR REVIEWS

Tour reviews

REVIEW: O2 ACADEMY LEEDS &
MOUNTFORD HALL LIVERPOOL
VIP EXPERIENCE NOTTINGHAM
VIP EXPERIENCE O2 ACADEMY BRIXTON

Photo: Harry Brazier

Ocean Colour Scene

PLUS VERY SPECIAL GUESTS

KULDA SHAKER



27 MAR	LEEDS O2 ACADEMY	09 APR	BRISTOL BEACON
SOLD OUT	STOCKTON GLOBE	SOLD OUT	CAMBRIDGE CORN EXCHANGE
29 MAR	BIRMINGHAM UTILITA ARENA	SOLD OUT	MANCHESTER O2 APOLLO
SOLD OUT	SOUTHEND CLIFFS PAVILION	SOLD OUT	NOTTINGHAM ROCK CITY
01 APR	SHEFFIELD CITY HALL	15 APR	GLASGOW O2 ACADEMY
03 APR	PORTSMOUTH GUILDHALL	16 APR	GLASGOW O2 ACADEMY
04 APR	LONDON O2 BRIXTON ACADEMY	18 APR	ABERDEEN MUSIC HALL
05 APR	SWANSEA ARENA	19 APR	DUNFERMLINE ALHAMBRA
SOLD OUT	TRURO HALL FOR CORNWALL	20 APR	LIVERPOOL UNI THE MOUNTFORD HALL
08 APR	PLYMOUTH PAVILIONS		

EXTRA DATES ADDED DUE TO MASSIVE DEMAND

29 APR	NORWICH UEA	03 MAY	HULL CONNEXIN LIVE
30 APR	BOURNEMOUTH O2 ACADEMY	04 MAY	NEWCASTLE O2 CITY HALL
01 MAY	LONDON O2 BRIXTON ACADEMY		



A Tale of Two Cities

BY TAZEEN KHATIB

I was fortunate to see Kula Shaker, accompanying Ocean Colour Scene, twice during their Spring '25 tour. The band's performances in Leeds and Liverpool were both exceptional. The crowd never get anything less when it comes to Kula Shaker gigs. They never fail to engage their audience with playlists flowing, in-part, seamlessly from one song to the next, intertwining their musical past, present and future. Whether you are long-standing attendee or seeing them for the first time, the verdict is consistently positive. It is always heartening when you leave a gig to see people beaming and overhearing their enthused, upbeat narratives.

The two gigs and city experiences differed vastly though. I'm not sure how much of this was directly attributable to my personal association with two cities. Both have played significant roles in my own life. The first being where I lived when I first discovered Kula Shaker (back in 1996), and the second being a place I lived for a significant portion of my adult life. Liverpool will always have my utmost loyalty because of the incredible people who make the city. I know a part of my heart will always belong to the city of Liverpool.

For fans of psychedelic rock, high quality, perfectly-timed live performances, both shows, as expected, delivered. Exceptional talent and a band who have

honed their art to an exemplary level align to the experience you get when you go to one of their performances. I may be bias of course, but all of the people I've converted to 'Kula-Shakerism' over the years quickly get it too. The two gigs made me reflect on how my own personal experience is based on friendship, crowd dynamics, location as well as the music-they all play a part in shaping the experience and memories I assign to a band's live performances.

Leeds: The First Night

I met a friend who had travelled from the my home city in The East (Midlands) a good few hours before the doors of 'The O2 Academy' opened. We spent hours catching up with our conversations predominantly featuring the usual comparison of our favourite gig experiences and artists. I'll never tire of this conversation, déjà vu with a little nuance each time. My friend is a big OCS fan with a great admiration for Kula Shaker. This was the first of his 5 booked dates to see OCS. Being back in Leeds always feels good but it is a place from my old life. This, as well as being surrounded by die-hard OCS fans, did feel quite strange. Having Kula Shaker as the first of two (great bands) was a tad unsettling. I'm clearly a creature of habit; I've been doing this Kula Shaker ritual for quite a few years now so this was new territory.

OCS TOUR REVIEW O2 ACADEMY LEEDS & MOUNTFORD HALL LIVERPOOL

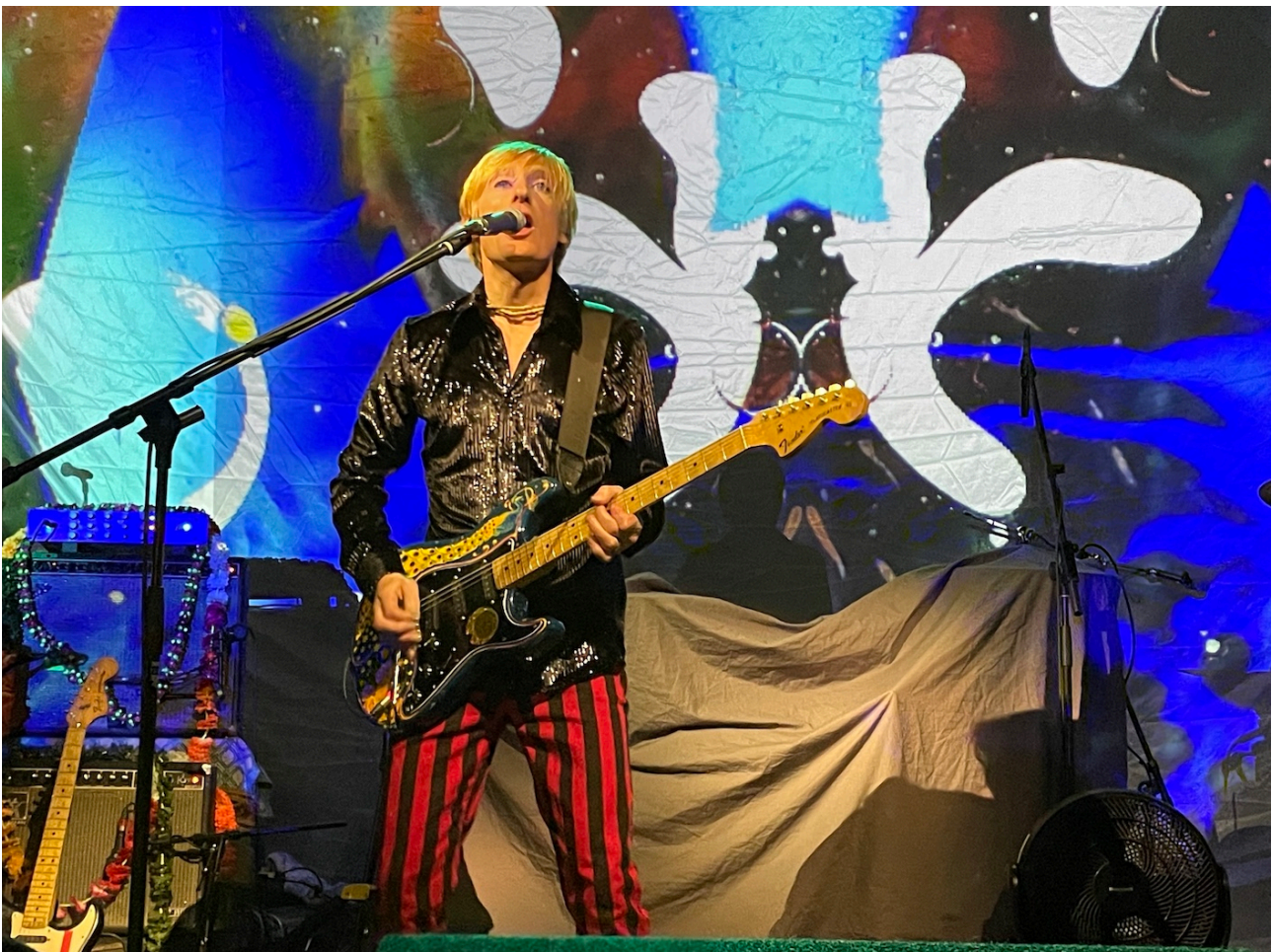
There is always the excitement of the pre-gig Kula Shaker soundtrack which has varied over the years but kept some consistency. The band then appeared and the gig was, as expected, an energy-filled affair from start to finish. We heard 'Radhe Radhe' and the lights dimmed, making way for the superb lighting visuals from 'The Mad Alchemist'. The anticipation was finally over and crowd were then spoilt with the high-octane performance. The band started with 303 which sounded a little different in a good way-the guitar seemed to roar. Crispian's theatrics on stage seem to have become more prevalent in recent years and Leeds was much of the same. There didn't seem to be very much room on the stage but that didn't stop the frontman moving around with his usual effervescent stage energy.

We were graced with a cover as well as new music. Kula Shaker, in my opinion, always seem to produce covers that are better than the originals. Sorry to (the incredible) John Lennon and also anyone else who thinks Tazeen has committed musical sacrilege(!). Python Lee Jackson's 'Broken Dreams' brought a mood of sweet melancholy, 'Charge of The Light Brigade' filled the missing parts of the puzzle from the teasers we had been drip fed on social media and 'Broke as Folk' completely blew me away. I felt as though I had been transported to my teenage years, back in 6th form college, listening to 'The Doors'. But I wasn't. I was actually in a very different parallel universe, in the present, in a city from my past, seeing a band I love

doing what they do so well-interlinking past, present and future. 'Shower Your Love' was the usual sing-along, always a crowd pleaser and it is so endearing that the crowd always know the words.

The moment Kula Shaker launched into 'Hush' the energy in the venue felt electric, with the crowd immediately increasing their volume considerably and as always, singing along with palpable enthusiasm. To my untamed auditory senses, the venue had good acoustics and this was a real positive. Songs like 'Govinda' and 'Tattva' delivered the usual sweet, timeless messages. So many of Kula Shaker's key messages have been prevalent since the outset of the band arriving on their personal musical platform. They are a band who seem to have figured out their purpose and deliver messages 'serving' the audience in their own unique way. Perhaps rock and roll 'Bhakti' isn't for everyone on paper but witnessing a crowd partaking would suggest otherwise!

The band's psychedelic elements were in full force in Leeds. Visually, the light show was a beautiful kaleidoscopic, complementing the fast pace of the gig. The crowd were fully immersed, with everybody seemingly connected and engaged with the music. The performance was shy of an hour and it did feel quite short. In the gap between Kula Shaker and OCS, I spoke with my friend and also the person next to me about how incredible Kula Shaker remain live. They seem better than ever. The band are on fire.



OCS TOUR REVIEW O2 ACADEMY LEEDS & MOUNTFORD HALL LIVERPOOL

A short while later, there was a surge of people coming forward for OCS. The devoted fans created a good-vibe, but if I'm honest, I felt a tinge of sadness because I'm a creature of (Kula Shaker) habit. OCS were incredible and they delivered a long, upbeat set. The song highlight for me being 'Up On the Downside' and above that, witnessing Steve Cradock live for the first time. Wow. There are no words!

The next morning, with a few hours to spare, I walked past 'The O2 Academy' and up to the University and surrounding areas where I spent so much time in the nineties. Past memories intertwined with the present. The gig was fantastic but different to the familiar sequence and the Leeds experience had left me feeling a little out of sorts. As my trusty steed took me back to The Northwest, Kula Shaker played on at a deafening volume. Some things change, but some things remain the same, exactly as they were when the Kula Shaker journey started back in 1996.

Liverpool: Feel another energy

Liverpool was altogether a different experience. The same friend from The East arrived the night before, one from The South on the day, another two from The North were present but arrived quite late so we didn't see them at the gig. I was more than happy to represent The West. The excitement for this gig started to build up in the days beforehand and the night turned out to be truly fantastic. With palpable excitement levels, three of us made our way to the venue to yet another location I know very well. I was happy to be the tour guide for my visitors pointing out some of the historic sites, showing them another well-experienced University campus which includes 'Mountford Hall'.

Any doubts about why we were there so early were immediately quashed as we were greeted with the fully audible Kula Shaker soundcheck. Beautiful sounds. We felt rewarded for our endeavours. I think the portion of soundcheck we heard was as long as the actual set. We were on cloud nine, the magick had already started. The band emerged and it was good to greet them and show some appreciation for their endless musical gifts. They are all so humble. We had a quick chat with OCS's Ray Meade also whose humility was also self-evident, a really nice chap.

The 'Mountford Hall' gig felt like a more intimate gig. The audience seemed equally appreciative of Kula Shaker's unique blend of psychedelic rock. The gig took on a more atmospheric tone though; the crowd appeared lost in the music, absorbing each note as if in a meditative trance. The band had a larger stage space to do what they do giving Crispian more freedom to move around. Towards the end of the show, part of Pauli's drum kit had become displaced but 'the show must go on' and you would never have known. The man is like a machine with a perfectly-timed beat that holds it all together beautifully. Jay's seemingly effortless playing adds a real 60's vibe to the shows. Alonza is just so talented, another poet who exudes humility and kindness on stage as he does when you share a



conversation with him. As a collective four-piece, they complement one another so well. 'The Mad Alchemist' light show provided incredible visuals yet again with an added layer of refinement in comparison to the Leeds gig.

I'm not aware if there was much of a time difference to Leeds with the set-list being the same but the performance seemed so much longer. Time altered for me and the buzz at the gig was great. I was feeling altogether more comfortable with the set-up, two great bands performing on one night. Amazing. The crowd were enthusiastic throughout. Perhaps my lense was distorting things but Liverpool is a city that has music running through it's veins. Perhaps Kula Shaker (and OCS) imbibed some of that energy, history and alchemy. Whatever happened, it was incredible from start to finish. I didn't want the evening to end.

I loved every minute of the Kula Shaker performance. A reference was made to The River Mersey at the outset of 'Govinda' which felt good to hear. OCS completely blew me away in Liverpool. Fully adjusted to the new set-up, I sang along throughout. I recall telling my OCS-fan friend how happy I was mid-OCS set. As we walked out, I told him I would be feeling the musical high for weeks and months to come.

OCS TOUR REVIEW O2 ACADEMY LEEDS & MOUNTFORD HALL LIVERPOOL

The Setlist

The setlist for the two gigs was the same. There was, and always is, a flow to these setlists. They seem carefully curated to keep the mainstream audience hooked while simultaneously enticing and canvassing new material:

Intro (Radhe Radhe)
303
Grateful When You're Dead
Jerry Was There
Broken Dreams
Into The Deep
Broke As Folk
Shower Your Love
Charge Of The Light Brigade
Tattva
Hey Dude
Hush
Govinda

Final Thoughts: Two Sides of the Same Coin

Ultimately, Kula Shaker's gigs in Leeds and Liverpool showed the band's remarkable ability to deliver consistently excellent performances. Kula Shaker continue to be a live force to be reckoned with in 2025. This is a band who have aligned their agency to their endeavours and many of us have subsequently been able to enjoy the fruits of their labour for years.

The journey and our memories are always personal, interpreted through our own lense. When we attribute meaning to them, as I seem to have done with Kula Shaker, they become more treasured as the years go by. This is a band I have seen more than any other and they are now very much etched into my psyche. Kula Shaker's music and gigs are intertwined with memories of friends and loved ones who may, or may not, be here any more. I've seen Kula Shaker a lot of times over the years. I've only been to two of their gigs solo but 'you will never walk alone' when it comes to music. I value the human-connectedness that music brings to our lives. We are all born with a heartbeat and so, the beat must go on.

Perhaps, one day, they will do a more intimate performance for their long-standing fans with songs we have never heard live or haven't heard in a good few years. I went to see an amazing local artist called Steve Pilgrim last week at Leaf Cafe on Bold Street, Liverpool. He was recommended to me recently by my OCS-fan friend. I feel the need to shamelessly plug here because his talent seems worthy of greater recognition. Anyway, it is an incredible intimate venue. If Kula Shaker do ever do a small gig in Liverpool, this place would be ideal. Wouldn't it be good to hear 'Troubadour' again live or even 'Space Caravan' for the first time. Or, perhaps they could revisit the noughties and play 'Peace Frog'. Perhaps Kula Shaker themselves would like to imbibe more of Liverpool's musical history and vibe. Dare to dream Tazeen, your daydreams have made you the person you are today so that can't be a bad thing...

Good wishes and peace to all. ॐ



My VIP Knight on the town

BY DAWN KENTON



I have loved Kula Shaker since the mid 1990's and have been fortunate enough to see them live many times. The first time was at the V97 festival in Leeds, from way back in the crowd. Since then, I have always dreamed that one day I'd get to meet them.

My first (and what I then thought would be my only) chance arrived when they launched 'Natural Magick' and announced a series of intimate signings. I saw them at Rough Trade in Nottingham and, with a capacity of just 150 people and the promise of a record signing I knew I'd at least get to say hello. The gig was the most intimate setting I've ever seen them play in, the four of them were unloading their equipment out of their van whilst fans were queuing. They just looked so happy to be on the road together. I thought about what I'd say when I met them inside 'I think you're incredible, it's an honour to meet you, thank you for doing what you do, you have been the soundtrack to my life, can I run away with you - I'm happy to make tea? etc. etc. etc.' When my time came, I was dumb struck, I just couldn't believe that the band I have idolised for so many years were stood in front of me, using their actual hands to write with a pen on the record I was holding. They were all very warm and friendly and Crispian did his best to engage in conversation whilst I just stared at him struggling to stifle a Beatlemania style scream.

As elated as I was after the event, I felt I had missed my chance. I had not taken the opportunity in front of me, and I would be unlikely to get this chance again. And then, earlier this year, Crispian announced the 'Kula Shaker VIP' experience on Instagram. As soon as the email landed in my inbox, I was on it and, when the confirmation went through, I felt like Charlie Bucket finding his golden ticket! I wondered how many other

fans would be taking part at each venue. Surely if we get to go on the tour bus it can't be more than 20? How much time would we get with them? Maybe 10 minutes? All I knew is that this time, I wanted to enjoy it and at least find my voice!

The day arrived, 13th April at Rock City. We (my husband Andrew and I) were messaged by the very lovely Larli with a photo of the exact spot to meet outside the venue and letting us know she would be wearing a purple hoody. We arrived five minutes before the time specified and we were the only ones there. I panicked a little, have others already gone in? We cannot be the only ones here, that was not possible.

Larli appeared in her purple hoody and was smiling and welcoming. She made us feel at ease instantly as if meeting your heroes on their tour bus were all perfectly normal for a Sunday afternoon. Larli beckoned us through the security barrier and took us the 20 metres to the empty tour bus. We sat down, she asked us if we'd like tea and told us that the band would be over shortly, she also confirmed that it was just the two of us – Andrew and I looked at each other with a wide eyed, 'WTF' stare. We sat at the back of the bus, where there were two parallel seating areas facing each other. The band arrived a few minutes later, the conversation started as they walked through the door with them telling us about the rat that had just passed by them as they had made their way from the venue to the bus, they shook our hands and introduced themselves by name.

Crispian sat facing us with Alonza, Paul sat next to us, and Jay sat on the smaller seating areas at the table. It felt surreal and at the same time totally normal as they



made us feel part of the gang from the offset. Crispian asked if we had seen them play before (er, just a few times). I asked what they would usually be doing at this time, Paul said he would be having a nap as he gets up early. He would have had a swim but did not fancy taking a dip in the River Trent, a wise decision. Crispian talked about checking out the energy of the venue. After experiencing technical difficulties at a previous venue, the mere mention of the need for an exorcism had miraculously fixed things.

The conversation flowed and covered first jobs, driving licences (Paul was the 'responsible' adult in the car whilst Alonza was learning to drive) and the fact that real rock stars don't drive and so Jay is, in fact, the only real rock star of the band! I shared some of the memorabilia from my time as a fan, this included the promotional postcards you used to get sent when they released a new album, the posters from CD singles, my favourite of which the band kindly signed and tickets from gigs gone by triggering memories of where they were when pictures were taken and anecdotes from nights in venues no longer in existence.

Crispian took us through the goody bag explaining each item, its significance and making sure each member of the band signed the poster and record. I asked if it would be ok to have some pictures and they were all so accommodating, we took some in the tour bus, the bus was dark and Crispian, having recently learned how to control the light settings, had settled on what my husband described as 'strip club blue'. In the bright sunlight we could see the long queue of people lined up waiting to go in. We walked around the side of the bus away from sight and had some more photos, we chatted (Jay said he really liked my jacket!) and we all shook hands. They exclaimed 'see you in there' as they walked back towards the venue. Andrew and I again stared at each other with the biggest smiles on our faces, in disbelief about the truly magical half an hour we'd just experienced.

We carefully deposited our goody bags in the apartment we were staying in right next to the venue and ran to join the queue making it to the second row from the front. The gig was as awesome as always, high energy, soul shaking, life affirming brilliance and this time it was extra special as we had a shared experience no one else in the crowd was part of – we were watching our new best friends perform! In honour of Robin Hood they played 'Idontwannapaymytaxes' and their set as specially invited guests of OCS ended way too quickly.

They say do not meet your idols. Well, I did, and they were everything I had hoped they would be and so, so much more. Did I say everything I wanted to? Maybe not, but I sensed that they understood just how much they mean to us and, do you know what, there's always next time.





A bad case of butterflies

BY CHILITA KATRIEL LAU

I had a bad case of butterflies in my stomach for a whole week leading to the day of the gig at O2 Academy Brixton. Like everyone else I was having issues with getting my concert ticket through the glitchy O2 app, and very little info was released in regards to the VIP experience arrangement until just the evening before the gig, when I received the phone number for our guide Larli in an email from Townsend Music.

The next day I received a text from Larli, who was ever so friendly. She asked for my T-shirt size and provided further instructions on the VIP experience, which eased my anxiety. I and a small group of fans were greeted by Larli in front of the venue at 6.30PM, which was the time the venue door was open, and people started queuing to get in. We each got handed our goodie bag with the VIP merchandise, then we were led to the tour bus.

Alonza, Pauli and Jay were already on the tour bus, I was very flattered they had recognized me from earlier gigs, despite me being shy and never too chatty. Alonza offered us biscuits and made us tea, Pauli showed us the interior of the bus where they spent their time while

they were on tour with OCS. It was an unusually warm and sunny day so of course we chatted about the weather. Crispian soon joined, greeted me with a hug and asked how I had been. They then sat down with us and signed our merchandise and other items we had brought. One of the fans brought a gig ticket from 1997 with them! As the band were signing the albums, Pauli told us about the background of "1st Congregational Church Of Eternal Love And Free Hugs", that it was shot in Glastonbury, his hometown. And Crispian shared that he and Jo were married in front of the Krishna statue on the cover of the single "Bring it Back Home". Crispian also mentioned it has been a long while since they last played at O2 Academy Brixton, and he also brought up the recent tragic accident at the venue. We chatted about past gigs, future plans, family, etc.

The VIP experience ended with photo time, we had taken group photos, and then individual selfies with the band, before they had to go backstage to prepare for the performance.

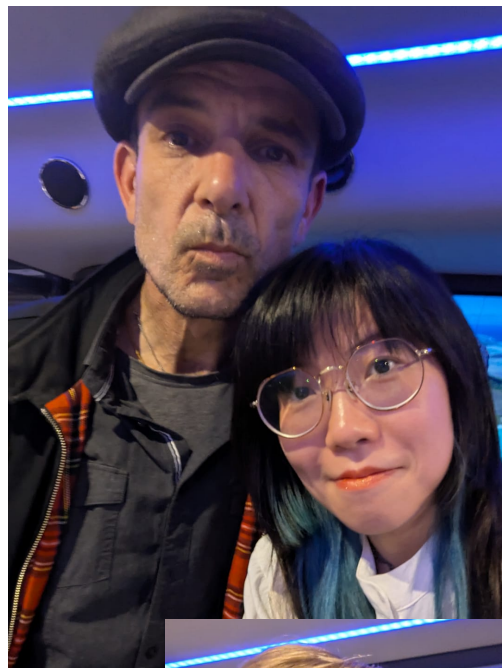
Look at the white shadow between Crispian and Karin from Germany on the polaroid! Do you think Jerry was there with us on the tour bus?!

Is the VIP experience worth it? I would argue it is a matter of perspective. With the current economic climate, undoubtedly the VIP experience could be expensive to a lot of people, on top of the concert ticket. If one can enjoy Kula Shaker's music, without loving the personalities and talents behind it, then the VIP experience might not be for you. Buying their albums and going to their live shows are still great ways to support them to continue making great music.

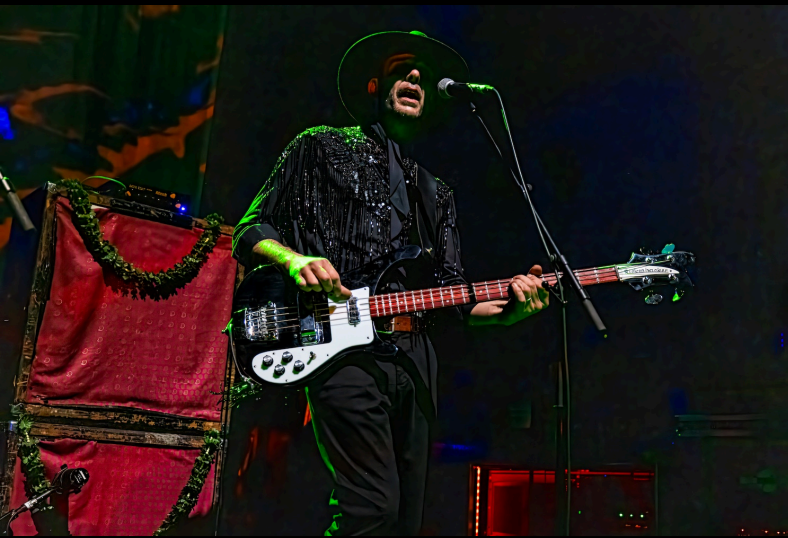
Some might call it a rip-off charging fans to meet their favourite musicians, this is simply not true. Speaking from personal experience, Kula Shaker has never been a band hesitant to show kindness to their fans, even when VIP Experience was not a thing. I have been to eight Kula Shaker's gigs the past 15 years, the majority of which were in the UK. Only twice out of the eight gigs where I did not meet the band after the gig, and twice I have been invited backstage. I was never declined autographs nor photos, and they have shared plans of future tours and albums in the making.

I have not even counted in-store-signing they did for the release of 'Natural Magick' last year, where you got to see them play the new songs up close in an intimate setting (Crispian insisted that it was not a gig!), get your albums signed and have a few selfies together, all for the price of one CD!

From a collector point of view, I would suggest it is well worth every penny for your VIP exclusive merchandise. You have all your goodies in your VIP tote bag, including the VIP t-shirt, the VIP badge, a vinyl of their new music, a poster of their new single "Charge of the Light Brigade". There was also a colourful garland that you can see decorating Kula Shaker's stage, a Tulsi necklace and a pack of incense chosen by the band, which reminds you of the Indian cultural and spiritual influence of their music. However, none of the merchandise came signed in the bag, the VIP experience gives you the chance to have them personalized to your liking, while drinking tea with the band (for the love of God).



OCS TOUR PHOTO GALLERY



Photos: snapagig.com (Instagram: @snapagig)

OCS TOUR PHOTO GALLERY



Photos: Harry Brazier (Instagram: @harry.brazier1)



INTERVIEW – THE MAD ALCHEMIST

“Kula Shaker’s playing is so inspirational”

During the OCS tour fans weren’t only blown away by the band themselves, but also by the light show they brought with them: Kula Shaker were joined by The Mad Alchemist **Lance Gordon** who is specialised in Analog Liquid Light Shows from the 1960s. Lance has been performing light shows since 1971 and describes the Kula Shaker tour as ‘one of the best he ever did’. Talking to STRANGE FOLK, he talks about his art and what it was like joining Kula Shaker for their gigs.

[ag] ash

INTERVIEW – THE MAD ALCHEMIST



ley greb

Photo: Ashley Greb / www.ashleygrebphoto.com

INTERVIEW – THE MAD ALCHEMIST



Firstly, I would like to ask when did you start doing these spectacular light shows and how exactly did they come about?

I started doing liquid light shows in 1971 at the age of seventeen.

Which artists have you worked with so far and which gigs will you never forget?

I was fortunate to grow up in the mystical 1960s, when there were some amazing bands around. Some of the musicians that I remember playing with included: Jon Lee Hooker, Big Brother John, John Cippolina and Pete Sears, who was the original keyboard player with Rod Stewart. By the time it got to the end of the 1970s, I was collaborating with musicians such as Roky Erickson. He was managed by Stu Cook of the Creedence Clearwater Revival (on a side note, I have photos of Roky Erickson and the Aliens, Capitol Records cover in 1980). I have worked with so many amazing musicians. Some more of them are, Phil Lesh and Bill Krutzman of the Grateful Dead, The Brian Jonestown Massacre, King Gizzard (7-8 shows), Temples, Joey Russo's Almost Dead – you get the picture. But there were so many amazing gigs, too. Some of the best gigs that I remember including Joey Russo at Red Rocks, The Murlocs, not to mention opening for King Gizzard and the Lizard Wizard at Frost Amphitheatre, in California. That one was for 14000 people! Other memorable gigs were Psychedelic Porn Crumpets and Uncle Acid. I could go on! But I have been doing around 175 shows annually, especially since 2012.

Speaking about the history of the Mad Alchemy Light Show, I suppose I could break it into 3 different sections. My liquid lightshow history is in several major chapters.

Early Work-1971-1980

This was all analogue. We used standard overhead projectors, all with slides and hand painted glass slides. All this work happened in the San Francisco and in high school gyms junior colleges and veteran halls in the area.

Mid Modern era 2008-2016

I was still using analogue overheads. During this time, I began the formation of my stage presence for Mad Alchemy, especially when I was working with King Gizzard and the Brian Jonestown Massacre. Temples Autumn UK tour of 2014 was notable as was my first Fillmore headline gig with them, as well as Psychedelic Fest. We had further major tours, including Russia, where we did over two hundred dates with Radio Moscow. Further to this, we did a 10-week tour of Europe with Graveyard, and a further forty dates with Folk Yeah! Around this time, there were also dates with Silver Apples, Allah Las, Electric Prunes, Country Joe and the Fish, Circles around the Sun, Night Beat and so, so many more.

Modern era 2017-Present (2025)

I began this era in 2017 and developed the show with Dennis Keefe. During this time, the type of light show

INTERVIEW – THE MAD ALCHEMIST



Photo: Larli

that you have become used to with Kula Shaker, came to be. With the introduction of video cameras, mixers and laser projectors, this fragile light form can now live on modern stages. This has been a major success, and I have performed at events including, Explosive Growth, a huge gig, performing for over 9,000 people at Red Rocks, Fox Oakland and Wiltern Theatres in Los Angeles and of course, Blue Hill Bank in Boston. Some of the most notable events were Desert Daze in 2018, which included Uncle Acid, Earth less, Ride Kikiquakamoyo, White Fence and Ty Segall. Moving into 2022, I was involved with Pond, Babe Rainbow, Levitation Room, Phil Lesh at his club, called Terrapin. During this time, I got to work with Roky Erickson, for his last performances at the Chapel. There have been so many festivals and not forgetting the chance to bring Mad Alchemy to over 30,000 people with Kula Shaker! Seems I have done way too many shows to remember!

How did you contact Kula Shaker, and what was it like working with them?

Well, Crispian reached out to me, and I ended up doing the Brooklyn Bowl show with Kula Shaker in July 2024.

Were there any visual effects that you have used especially for them?

I designed this two-plate set with custom made

reels of my work and a few digital effects on an apple mini player. Kula Shaker Band are a special band. Crispian, Jay, Paul and Alonza are great to hang with and they all deliver maximum audio excitement. Their playing is so inspirational. Great for light shows!

Can you reveal any of the plans for future gigs with Kula Shaker?

We will be touring with them again with the Dandy Warhols this September and will be back to England for some real excitement.



TOUR REVIEWS



SANTIAGO, CHILE - 3 NOVEMBER 2022

BROOKLYN BOWL, NEW YORK - 25 JULY 2024

Premiere in the Southern hemisphere

BY PABLO LAGOS

It was night-time, and my best friend sent me a message that said "Kula Shaker is coming to Chile!" I thought it was a joke, but shortly after I saw the official confirmation of this tremendous news. I couldn't be happier. After 25 years of waiting, I would see my favourite band live. Kula Shaker was going to play in Santiago (the city where I live) and the next day in Concepción, in the south of Chile. Once the day of the concert arrived, different emotions were mixed: expectation, anxiety, excitement, and a lot of happiness, all these emotions were building as I saw photos of fans with the band outside the hotel and outside the sound check. While we were waiting in line to get into the venue, we saw the band get out of a van, we all started clapping and cheering for them, and they kindly responded to our greetings.

Once the concert started, we all went crazy from the first chord. Everyone was jumping and chanting to every song, even singing along during the instrumental parts. I think most of us lost our voices, but it was totally worth it. You could feel a beautiful atmosphere, on the one hand a bunch of people who had waited almost thirty years for them, and on the other hand a band happily surprised to be so well received on the other side of the world (as Crispian said: "first time in South America, first time in the southern hemisphere"). The concert ended and we gave ourselves a spontaneous hug with my friends for the mission accomplished. I am not exaggerating that we all said that it was by far the best concert of our lives.

There was still one more concert to go, so I took the train with my girlfriend to travel 500 kilometers south to Concepción, where Kula Shaker would perform at "Rec Festival" This was a free alternative rock event that previously had bands like Suede, Hot Chip, The Cardigans or Primal Scream in its line-up. It was amazing to have both experiences: being able to see them at a solo concert and now at a massive festival. The setlist was quite similar to the previous one, and I enjoyed it to the fullest. Kula Shaker's time on stage passed too quickly. Once the presentation was over, the band gave a press conference in which Crispian described the Chileans as the loudest audience in the world, a great pride for the group of nearly 200 fans that were waiting for them outside the venue.

As soon as they finished the press conference, they approached us and were extremely nice. They took all the photos that were requested and signed all the albums that we asked for. In my personal experience I was able to say hello and exchange a couple of words with each of them: Harry signed my 'Pilgrim Progress' (and he got me the autographs from the rest, what a great guy!), I asked Paul to please come back as soon as possible, I greeted Alonza in Spanish (heh heh), and I told Crispian that I had made the fan video for "Whatever It is". He asked my name and told me that he remembered me. In the end, I was able to return to Santiago infinitely happy, with an autographed record, the autographed setlist, Crispian's pick and an unforgettable experience.





BROOKLYN BOWL, NEW YORK 2024

From Mexico to NYC to feel the power of love

BY MARIANA DALZELL

Back in April 3rd, 2024, Crispian shared a short fun video through his Telegram channel that made my heart so warm and fuzzy and made me start making plans to travel to New York City for the second year in a row just to see the band that I love. In the video Crispian invited us to a one off show at the Brooklyn Bowl and mentioned that the band had been down to this venue for a long time, that they'll have a very special guest that they'll announce shortly and, most importantly, he was sharing his enthusiasm like this: "It's going to be mad! MAD I tell you!" And for sure it was! I was there to witness it! Brooklyn Bowl was going to be my fourth Kula Shaker concert. September 2023 represented a milestone in my history as a fan of Kula Shaker because I attended my first three concerts after loving them since 1996. So, this time (2024) I embarked on the adventure of encountering the power of love, turned into live music of my favourite band.

The official announcement was made and included the full line up for the event. To my delight Tomorrowish and SeepeopleS were going to play too! I was especially happy to know that SeepeopleS were part of this show because when they opened for Kula Shaker last year in Boston. I felt that the vibe that they created was fantastic and fit very good for the atmosphere. On top of that Lance Gordon 'The Mad Alchemist' and his liquid light show was announced too. We were really in for a treat to never forget! A friend of mine and I met up on this trip. It was so great to share this experience with another Mexican fan. Julio is from Mexico City like me. It was important to be there and represent those long-time fans that have not had much chances to see our beloved band.

We learned that the day before the concert the world premiere of 'Trap', the M. Night Shyamalan film in which

Ms. Hayley Mills participates, took place in New York. Crispian was there to support his mother and the following day she was in the audience supporting her son. Before the concert waiting in line under the intense sun of late summer in New York, there was a great opportunity to share wonderful conversations, to meet with friends, to create new bonds, and to greet the members of the bands and the Mad Alchemist himself. In other words, to start the party! Devoted fans were gathered from all over the USA and at least two loving fans from Mexico City. The venue was fantastic, a very welcoming place that consisted in a large bowling alley and a cool concert venue with a huge disco ball at the centre of the roof. Lance Gordon's liquid lights set the mood with such warmth, creativity and great colour, it was a perfect amalgamation of elements feel the music with all the senses and to introject the message.

My friend and I had the opportunity to choose our place right in the middle of the first row. The room was going to be packed, and we had the best place to see the band up close. Not every day you can be part of the audience in a Kula Shaker concert. We were looking for the new merchandise, but we couldn't find anything but the 'Natural Magick' vinyl that we already had. I wish I could have supported them by buying some of the new items, but they were not available in the venue. Tomorrowish started the music for the night with songs from their album 'Almost Home' and introducing Abbie Roper, their new member and bassist. The set was short but very cool. I was pleased to be hearing new music from a young band from the Brooklyn scene. After a short break SeepeopleS took the stage. Last time in Boston their original bassist was not able to play, so I was happy to see Ian Riley this time. Will Bradford, Dan Capaldi and Ian delivered a great set. They introduced Sparxsea and invited her to sing with them.



Well, the waiting was over, here they were! Kula Shaker, the reason for my trip started one of my favourite concerts ever! I was expecting the opener to be 'Gaslighting' like in Japan, but the concert kicked off with 'Hey Dude'; and that powerful groovy intro that reminds me of a massive airplane taking off. Then 'Gaslighting'. The audience was waiting for them and was totally excited to hear the music. You could hear "Good to have you back!!!" from the audience to which Crispian replied "and it's good to be back!". When the crew was setting the stage for the band, I avoided looking at the setlist because I wanted to be surprised. However, by accident, backlight through Jay's setlist, I read that they would play 'Golden Avatar'. I could not believe my eyes! 'Golden Avatar' has been one of my all-time favourite songs and I always looked for a live version that I never found. Now I was about to listen to that treasure live for the very first time! I felt so loved.

Dan from SeepeopleS played tambourine through the whole concert, to the first to the last song. The band was very happy to have him and introduced him as the vibe man. One of my favourite moments was when I was about to put my camera away and my friend Julio let me know that I better recorded the next song. It was 'Into the Deep'! The first time I would listen to it live! Another of my most beloved songs, the very song that not only got me hooked to Kula Shaker's music, but it was the track that confirmed that this band and their sound was meant for me. That performance of 'Into the Deep' will live in me eternally. My friend knew, so I thanked him.

I was very happy to listen to 'Gaslighting', 'Natural Magick', 'IDONTWANNAPAYMYTAXES' and 'F-Bombs' as part of their latest album, an album very close to my heart. It was fantastic to listen to 'Bringing it Back Home' also, because it was their latest single. But it was a version with no ukelele... so it was "ukelele-less". Maybe next time? Before 'Narayana', we listened to an extended intro that was identified as an 'Exorcism' on the setlist. Such a magical way to start that song because it provided it with a much more mystical energy. It was another of the many highlights of the night.

I have to mention that the stunning way the liquid lights projected specially in Crispian's clothes was fantastic to see. The immerse adventure is real. Alonza's silhouette looked incredible on the wall mixed with the Mad

Alchemist's lights. It was all a vivid dream and a portal to a new spiritual dimension! Gorgeous! The music elevated us so high! We were in Brooklyn, but we were in many other places too. From what we saw printed on the setlist, the band planned to play Deee-Lite's 'Groove is in the Heart' but unfortunately it didn't happen. The end of the concert felt a little rushed but ended with a potent performance of 'Govinda' that has stayed reverberating in my body until now.

July 25th, 2024, was a perfect day and a magical night. Kula Shaker is a very straightforward band, no filters, no artifice, pure humanity, open hearts and spiritual disposition. I feel them as a band with a genuine relationship with their audience through the music. I cannot thank the powers that be enough for the fact that these four musicians ended up in the same time and space, to share their hearts with (in the words of George Harrison) those who can see it. I was lucky enough to have the chance to talk to Paul, Alonza, Jay and Crispian for a while, and deliver a few gifts from Mexico City. I even was able to give Crispian in his own hands a book that I published in honour of Kula Shaker's patron saint, George Harrison. Among the gifts I had for them there were shawls with the image of the Aztec Sun Stone and Tonatiuh's* face in the centre as a representation of the 'Infinite Sun' (we are one). To my happy surprise Alonza made the shawl part of the scenery covering some of the equipment. That very Aztec sun was summoned to the event and the liquid lights made the sun dance into the eternity of that magic moment. It was one of the most precious gifts life has given to me through Kula Shaker.

Now they have a new single and I cannot wait until I can listen to 'Charge of the Light Brigade' live. Thank you, Crispian, Paul, Alonza and Jay for creating the music that makes me feel so happy, and for being the powerhouse force that you are performing live.

*Tonatiuh is the 5th Sun in the Aztec Mythology.

A full-page photograph of a woman, Triparna Mukherjee, performing on stage. She is wearing a dark, patterned sari and is singing into a microphone. The background is a dramatic display of red and blue stage lights, with beams of light radiating from behind her. To her left, there is a keyboard on a stand. To her right, a drum set is visible. The overall atmosphere is energetic and vibrant.

INTERVIEW TRIPARNA MUKHERJEE

**“Stepping into the world of
Kula Shaker
was a whole new universe for me”**

Photo: Diego Delestre



Remember the beautiful voice that made Kula Shaker's 2024 performances something truly special? We were lucky enough to sit down with Triparna Mukherjee for an interview. She told us about how she got to meet the band, how it was performing live with them and revealed that there is more to come...

So, if I could begin by asking, how did it come about that you were invited to their shows? -

I learned through a common friend that Crispian had been looking to feature Indian vocals for his new song - 'Bringin' It Back Home'. So, I sent some demo songs. I was asked to come into the RAK studios in London and join in on the backing vocals. Before the session began, I had just a minute or two to sing a few phrases in the Indian classical, raga *Megh*, which the song is based on - sort of an impromptu audition for Crispian. He was incredibly warm and welcoming, and kindly asked me to sing an introduction to the track and some vocal layers, which ended up being included in the vinyl version. Not long after, he invited me to join Kula Shaker for a few shows... and then a few more!

Had you known the band before working with them, and if so, were you a fan of their music?

I was born in the mid-90s and discovered Kula Shaker songs quite late. I knew of two songs - 'Natural Magick' and 'Govinda' - and found their music to be eclectic. But it was only later that I truly realised how deeply the band

was immersed in eastern influences, and how beautifully they wove Indian philosophy and music into the psychedelic rock space.

Which of the songs that you performed with them did you enjoy most, and why? -

I loved singing 'Shower Your Love' and the iconic 'Govinda' the most. 'Shower Your Love' has such a joyful, sunlit vibe to it - it feels like the perfect wedding song on a warm summer afternoon. I added some scat singing and phrases in the Indian raga Hamsadhwani, I think the crowd found it very interesting!

What was it like playing in front of a crowd of a rock concert? -

It was unlike anything I've ever experienced! Coming from a background in Indian classical music, I'm more accustomed to a formal concert setting, where audience decorum is very strict, even though the music itself is largely improvised and fluid. So, stepping into the world of Kula Shaker was a whole new universe. The sheer energy of the concerts, the sea of people, and the way the crowd responded was incredible. But what truly stood out to me was how welcoming and open both the band and the audience were.

Here I was, bringing in purely Indian classical vocals, performing in a saree, singing in a language that perhaps not many in the audience understood - a striking contrast to the usual rock sound - and yet, it felt like such a natural fit. I sang a Sanskrit hymn for about 3 minutes in a festival with thousands of people and people listened, rapt! Even though it was a different kind

INTERVIEW TRIPARNA MUKHERJEE

of music and language - it was so humbling, and I truly experienced how music can truly transcend language and cultures. As a young artist, this is nothing short of a dream and I'm so grateful.

Do you have any stories from the tour?

There are so many special memories! From rehearsing with the boys - composing together, exploring new ideas before we hit the stage - to sharing delicious vegan meals, discussing the philosophies of the *Bhagavad Gita*, and even swapping notes on vocal warm-ups! The entire band shares a genuine camaraderie, and they truly embody the spirit of love and light in their own lives that you feel through their music.

Paul, Alonza, Jay, and Crispian - each of them is incredibly warm, kind, and inspiring. They're like gentle giants of music - so accomplished, yet so grounded, always encouraging. Pauli, who's super caring and very, very disciplined. Alonza, who keeps everything anchored and can talk wonderfully about anything under the sun - politics to festivals, to new music. Jay, who's always smiling and asking me to sing excerpts of Indian ragas to him while he shares stories of his musical journey with humour. Crispian with his incredible experience and depth of education in Indian philosophy, music, art and cinema - and yet so charming, grounded and funny. It was so easy to feel at home with them. Some of my favourite moments were on the tour bus, travelling together for shows, exchanging music and stories late into the night. And being on stage with them is like one big party every single time!

You also recorded the song 'Rational Man' with them. What was it like working with Kula Shaker in the studio? - The studio session was my first real interaction with the band, and it felt more focused and serious compared to rehearsals or live performances. What struck me was how open and respectful the band was in the way they brought Indian elements into their music. There was no sense of cultural appropriation—just a genuine understanding and a conscious effort to create a natural fit for Indian music within their soundscape.

Are there any plans for you to work with the band again? - I recorded sections for a new song recently and would hope to be back with the band for more concerts. I am currently taking a break from performing and recording this summer as I am expecting my first child!

Where else can we catch you this year? - With all the exciting changes happening in my personal life, I am

currently enjoying a break from recording or performing until the middle of this year.

What are the next musical projects we can look forward to? - I perform with various bands across London and am currently on the lookout for collaborators and producers for my original music series, *Navarasa* - a project that explores the nine fundamental human emotions through music and storytelling. As a first-generation immigrant and a British Indian artist new to the scene, I've been incredibly fortunate to cross paths with truly inspiring musicians.

My musical roots are grounded in Indian classical traditions—spiritual music, thumris, folk, and semi-classical forms—but my creative influences are varied. That's why I'm always on the lookout for like-minded collaborators who are eager to explore and experiment within the world music and fusion space. I truly hope to be back performing with Kula Shaker later this year after my break, and I'm always open to connecting with new bands and musicians to collaborate and perform with in and around London.

Thanks so much for taking the time to answer our questions!

Thank you for asking me to contribute to the fanzine. I'm so grateful for all the new faces I have met through Kula Shaker, how kind the audience has been to my singing and encouraged my association with the band. It is SO inspiring for me as an artist.



Follow Triparna on Instagram: [@triparna_music](https://www.instagram.com/triparna_music)



“We got it together eventually”

Why did Kula Shaker split up in 1999? Will Gouri play with the band again? Will there ever be a concert film? We collected your questions and handed them over to the band. Here is what they answered.

Which modern bands are you currently listening to and do you go to see other bands perform live often?

– Ali Walker

Crispian: That is the worst question, because if anybody ever asks what are you listening to now, my mind goes blank. I just hear the wind at the window. (pauses)
You know, my kids are my portal into the modern world and they're listening to Led Zeppelin and Snoop Dogg. So, if my kids are listening to Led Zeppelin and Snoop Dogg, then there's not much hope. (laughs).
Everything is a playlist these days. So, you're either in a record store and you're a collector and you're really into music, seriously into music, or you're a consumer and most consumers are on Spotify playlists. So, in a way, you have access to all the music, but it's sad, isn't it, as well, that the album is kind of less of an experience now. Unless you're a serious fan. So, we've not answered your question, but we've taken it somewhere.

Alonza: It's true, yeah, absolutely. I listen to Warpaint, a good girl band, great proper guitars, and great guitar tone. And they're not even that modern, they've been around for years as well.

Paul: Seun Kuti. He does really great things with a band, I think they're from Nigeria. They've done stuff with Carlos Santana as well. I also go and see modern Afrobeat bands playing in London. Obviously, there's a lot of disadvantages of living in London, but one of the advantages is that you get to see international bands play.

Crispian: Jay says he can't answer that question. He's sending psychic messages from the tour bus.

How did it transpire that Jay came back and Harry left? What has it been like to have the original line-up?

– Peter Bruce

Crispian: We had a tour in America, and Harry couldn't do it for various reasons. And Jay appeared in a puff of smoke, and he said: 'I'm around, I can do it'. It was just sort synchronicity. It was completely weird. We met Jay in a pub, in a very, very, very old pub in Edenbridge.

It was like a mediaeval pub. So we went back in time, and Jay was there looking like Gandalf. We just hung out, and it was great. And when we played again, Simon Roberts from Bucky came to the rehearsal. It was like we were all 19, and Simon from Glastonbury was there. And there was a moment when Jay was playing, and he looked around the room, and he thought 'Oh my God, what's happened? Nothing has changed!'

Alonza: We certainly all learnt to play together. We were all young kids, and we formed that style together. So, when that missing piece of the jigsaw comes back, it just fits in like an old pair of shoes. Very comfy.

Why did you split up in 1999?
– Andrew Ferris

Alonza: Because it was fucking crazy. The world went crazy. It was mad.

Crispian: We didn't really split up. I couldn't handle it. I wussed out, basically. I wasn't tough enough. I needed to regroup. I was traumatised, actually, from the pressure. I think the biggest problem was that we didn't have enough support around us. Anyway, we got it together eventually. That was our journey. And here we are.

Are there any plans to release a concert film?
Apparently, with such an amazing live band, it would be epic.
– Madhava Smullen

Alonza: I agree with that. We've talked about this, haven't we?

Crispian: A gig in a magical, appropriate location. It's about finding the right setting.

Alonza: Pompeii's booked at the moment, isn't it? It's hard to book that for years ahead. We have to find something equivalent to Pompeii where we can play.

Paul: A yet undiscovered Mayan civilization.

Crispian: Angkor Wat.

Alonza: And a blood sacrifice going on behind us.

Paul: We would respond by taking our tops off obviously and getting a bit of a tan. I don't know if we would sacrifice ourselves, would that be part of it?

Crispian: If we find the right location, we should definitely do it.

(Editor's note: the concert film, not the blood sacrifice).



Your music has a strong Indian influence. Why no live shows in India?

– Neelabh Singh

Crispian: Good question. Some questions we don't have the answer for. I do know that people are talking about it at the moment.

Alonza: Certainly, back in the 90s, people weren't talking about it. It wasn't an option. Now, India has transformed as a country.

Crispian: Last time I was in Calcutta, I walked barefoot around the river Ganges with a bunch of pilgrims. Before I flew out of Calcutta, I went into a hotel. Downstairs, they had an English pub. There was an Indian 'Earth, Wind and Fire' cover band. They were shit hot.

Paul: When I was in Rishikesh, I was sitting having some chai and I overheard a conversation. They said: 'The other day, I heard an English band singing... Govinda Jaya! Shouting Govinda Jaya Jaya!' They couldn't actually believe it.

Any chance of Gouri singing with Kula Shaker again?

– Ash Katt

Crispian: Well, Gouri has got a handful of kids and is busy with teaching. But funnily enough, Gouri's nephew Himanish, the son of Himangshu Goswami, who played on songs like 'Jerry Was There' and 'Govinda', plays tabla with us on 'Natural Magick'. And his friend, who is also Bangladeshi, Laboni Barua is singing on the album, and she sounds very much like Gouri. And that was one of the things that we loved about her voice. So, a lot of those flavours are back, and we've kept it in the family.



Alonza: The next generation, yes.

Paul: Himanish also played with us on the Chris Evans radio show. He's a great, fantastic, amazing player.

For the next anniversary of Peasants, Pigs and Astronauts, is there any chance of you playing the album in full on tour?
– Bill Carson

Alonza: That would be a good idea, actually. I think we should do that.

Paul: If we could have Bob Ezrin conducting an orchestra.

Alonza: Bob Ezrin has to come out and mix it for us. I'd love to play it live, but it would be quite tough. It's quite an extravagant record. It might be a tricky one to reproduce live.

Crispian: I'd like to do it live on Dave Gilmour's boat.

Can you tell us a bit more about the recording of 'Natural Magick'?
– Andrea Zachrau

Crispian: It was recorded fast. Slightly too fast, you might say. We would go gigging with Jay, then we would go in the studio, and we would gig with Jay, and we'd go back in the studio. So, it was a constant process of playing stuff live. One of the reasons why we were playing a lot of new stuff last year was

because we were going to go and record it, so we were breaking it in and making sure it sounded good. And we recorded it all down in Brighton, in the winter. Brighton is a seaside town, you're supposed to be there and it's hot. So, we were there, everything was closed, the wind was rattling and it even snowed. It was quite extreme weather, and we were in the studio, which is owned by The Levellers, and they have got a whole scene going there. And apart from the album being great to play, getting together with Jay in the room, we also became very accomplished at ping-pong.

'First Congregational Church of Eternal Love and Free Hugs' was a double album, we had all of these stories that we were telling, it was quite a rich meal. And just because we were playing with Jay, and because we were trying new songs out, they had to be quite short, because you can't ask an

audience, okay, everyone, you've never heard this before, and it's five minutes long. So, the songs on 'Natural Magick' became like two and a half minutes long.

It's a bit more like in the days of 'K', where we had to kind of win an audience over quickly, and we only had a half hour set. So, there's a little bit more of that focused pop sensibility on 'Natural Magick'.



FAN STORIES

About hope and **love**, (fan)stories from the heart



A memory far greater than visiting the Taj Mahal

BY TAZEEN KHATIB

We had been standing in the blistering cold waiting for the band to emerge so we could say 'hello' and importantly, 'thank you'. Simon Roberts was in and out loading up the van. After some time, he invited us in which is something we were not expecting. We sat ourselves down, had a drink and a long chin wag ensued. This photo was taken on my old Nokia phone just before we left the room. In my mind, life would have no colour without music. We are born with a heartbeat and so, the beat continues. This band keeps delivering the most incredible music. Their live performances are a finely mastered art of near perfection. Their key messages have been consistently delivered over the years in different guises. The poetic verses touch your heart and stir your soul.

My nostalgic memories associated with music and gigs span decades. I've definitely developed a very sentimental nostalgia for this particular band. KS memories feature my family, friends and strangers. Human connection. The memories/stories become richer and more valuable as the decades pass... Anyway, I was in India last month and noticed someone wearing a KS t-shirt. I approached him and we enthusiastically compared notes about gigs we had been to and, their record releases. He said KS had influenced him spiritually. He was at the 100 Club gig in 2023, too. We hugged and said goodbye. The odds of that interaction were so slim, but Magick happens every day. You just have to notice it and it just needs to find you. The interaction was one of the highlights of my trip. A memory far greater than the visit to the Taj Mahal a few hours later...



It all took off at the airport...

BY CHILITA

I first heard of Kula Shaker during their Asian Tour in 2010. Just graduated from high school with my future unknown, I had soon found myself indulging in their psychedelic rock in every waking moment in my last teenage summer.

"I have to see them!" I thought to myself. The next thing I did was to search which flight Kula Shaker might be on, flying from Jakarta to my home country Hong Kong. I could not afford a ticket to their gig, so I went for the next best thing - "If I cannot see them live, I will meet the band instead!"

I sneaked out of home early in the morning on 7th August, 2010, with a hand drawn card for the band and my Pilgrim Progress CD. It was a 2-hour bus ride from my hometown to the Hong Kong International Airport in Chap Lap Kok. I didn't eat or drink anything before I made my journey as I was just too nervous, and I kept practicing in my head how to ask for an autograph and a photo, as English isn't my first language.

And then it happened. Crispian coming out from the terminal with his sunglasses on. I said to him what I practiced. He signed the album with my gold sharpie, a neat autograph with the symbol Om at the end. Another fan kindly took a photo for us.

Looking back it still doesn't feel real. It was amazing but it was not enough, "I have to see them live!". So I took a 2-hour bus ride home, worked up the courage to tell my Mom where I had been, and I told her, "I have to see them live!". And to my surprise, my Mom, who I never really thought understood me, lent me the money for the gig ticket.

I don't remember how or where I bought the ticket from, but I got the ticket, made my way back to Chap Lap Kok again, but this time, stopping at the AsiaWorld-Arena instead of the airport. It was my first time being at a concert in the standing area, and in the first row no less. There Crispian was, in the middle of the stage with his guitar, with the rest of the band, singing Govinda, bathing in the golden stage light, and everyone was singing along, knowing the Sanskrit chant by heart. It was pure magic. How could one not fall in love with Kula Shaker?

Photos: Chilita



The soundtrack to my resurrection

BY JORDAN STRANG

It was around mid 2022, my father and I held our usual music nights where we just sit for a while and talk about music as that was both our main passion.

He then showed me the video for Tattva and I absolutely love the George Harrison spiritual side of The Beatles especially tracks like "Within You, Without You" so Tattva was love at first listen! I was hooked from there! He recommended me the *Kollected Best* of which contained 303, Hey Dude, Govinda, Mystical Machine Gun and tore through it all! I absolutely loved it!

At that time I was going through an imminent breakup where I kinda lost sight of who I was if I'm being honest and KS was the soundtrack to my "resurrection" so to speak!

I would listen to them daily on the good days and the bad days, I found that songs like 108 Battles Of The Mind and Grateful When You're Dead really helped me through it all and got me back on track again! And in the midst of all of this, KS announced that they were playing Cambridge in January of 2023 so I bought myself and my dad tickets for it. Only to find out that they were playing a warm up show at the Norwich Waterfront so I instantly bought a ticket for that and I went to the show!

The show was incredible, the band were tight and it was the first time they'd played with Jay since the 90s so it was definitely something special! They played every track you could want, including the live debut of *Gaslighting* and *Idontwannapaymytaxes*, both of which went down really well!

After the show I asked the security guard at the venue if any of the members were gonna come out and mingle with the crowd afterwards, he told me to wait and see. So I did and Paul walked out and over to the merch stand so I went over to talk to him. He was a lovely very down to earth guy! Midway through our conversation the security guard came up to me and said "I don't think they're going to come out mate Sorry", Paul turned round and said "Are drummers not included?" The security guard looked really embarrassed and soon went off!

I later went round the back of the venue and met Jay, Alonza and Crispian! All of them were really nice guys! I told Alonza that myself and my father were going to the Cambridge show, so to look out for us (more on that later!)

Meeting Crispian was a very surreal moment, I've met many of my musical heroes over the years and none of them had such a presence over them as Crispian did! I told him that Tattva basically saved my life and that KS was the soundtrack to me finding myself again. He seemed really taken back by that and took my phone from me, put it in selfie mode and we got a photo together! It was an amazing night!

Fast forward to Cambridge, myself and my dad got to the Cambridge show and secured front row! He was absolutely blown away by the show! And Alonza spied me in the front row and kept gesturing to him all night which really made him happy!

From Russia with love

BY OLGA TYAGANOVA

I was 10 years old when Kula Shaker stormed to the top of the charts with their first album. But I lived 3000 kilometres away in a completely different world, where there was no MTV, no FM radio stations, and even the trendy music magazines had not yet reached our backwoods. My mum gave me and my older sister a cassette player and we listened to horrible pop music mixed with harsh Russian underground...As the years went by, the feeling never left me, that something very important was missing from my life.

Then, at the age of fifteen, I met a hippie, and a long hitchhiking journey of ten years began. It was reckless, daring and ruthless.

There were many wonderful people, beautiful psychedelic music, discoveries and adventures. A couple of volumes of memoirs, I think, would be enough to tell my stories. On this journey I found God, walked the edge several times, rose and rose from the darkest depths and saw the highest heavens. But still, all the while I felt that I was missing; something very important...

Then began my era of parenthood. For ten years, I gave birth and raised three beautiful children, lived a deep depression, learned many new skills, the most useful of which is the ability to catch something falling behind me without turning around! It was a strange time of complete inner loneliness, when my husband was at work all day long, my children are small, childless friends lived their lives, and friends with children discuss only children's issues. The only thing that saved me was music - it helped me cope with everything. Then we all survived

Covid and the beginning of the war, I made and lost friends, did several creative large-scale projects and, as a result, built up a good portfolio. But all this time I missed my pack - and all the things I loved: sixties music, psychedelic paintings, sacred texts, culture and legends of India and England, the weirdest books, skinny dudes with painted guitars - all these things I loved for many years in total solitude, with the impossibility to discuss them with living people...

Then, in the summer of 2022 (just as "1st Congregational Church of Eternal Love and Free Hugs" was released) my loneliness among people reached its peak, but quite by chance, while walking by, I heard the sounds of 'Great Hosannah', which I had found on my husband's playlist. For the next few months, it played on replay. This song turned out to be the key to a world that had everything I loved so much! This song was a promise that when the new world (the glimmer of which I had been catching glimpses of for all twenty five years of waiting) came, I would not be the only one watching that sunrise - there were people who were also heading in that direction. This song opened me up to a band whose music has become a complete soundtrack to my life: past, present and future.

Every song, every quote and reference, for every story told by Crispian in interviews - I have a story in response, and every day adds new ones that melt into creativity and improves the lives around me. Then I saw the clips, and, 'The Once and Future King' immediately made me realise that of course I was going to go there,

up the highest mountain to these dudes in white clothing, who are making this incredible Magick right now (not in the 1960s or 1990s). And then, on Valentine's Day, I saw a recording of a live KS performance in Japan - and I was addicted and couldn't take my eyes off what had been happening on stage for the last thirty years.

(In the two years since, I've never watched all the videos on YouTube all the way through, because they just keep getting longer!)

I watched, was inspired and delighted until KS went on tour in the US in the autumn...

On 11 September 2023, the band played in Toronto. It was the middle of the tour, Crispian had a sore throat before the trip, and at the Canadian concert he lost his voice... Small club, hell suffocation, impossibility to sing, full tension of all forces - and in spite of all this, Crispian gave himself completely and played the concert. Most of the songs were sung by the audience in chorus to give him a bit of a break! It was both heartbreaking and mesmerising - because the amount of love and gratitude that was returned to him at the last ovation - I have never seen such a thing. Absolute service to his work with total dedication and boundless love. And that was when I realised finally who I wanted to stand next to and fight shoulder to shoulder until the very end...

Thanks to the beautiful Mariana, we have videos from the front row from Toronto, and I rewatch them when I think "I can't do it anymore" - I go and turn down mountains, because the strength shown in a moment of weakness is much more convincing than the strength of radiance and greatness. Although I will never refuse to stand on a mountain in a white coat!



Of course, I had a goal and a cherished desire - to go to a Kula Shaker gig. But in Russia in 2024 there were certain difficulties with it: the band could not come to us; a Schengen visa was possible to get, but under a number of conditions that seemed insurmountable; there were no direct flights; the cost of tickets was very high; and apotheosis - ordinary Russian bank cards did not work in Europe and it was necessary either to get bank cards from other countries, or to go with cash. But what could stop me if I really HAD to? Nothing, of course. It took me the summer to get a visa: getting a passport, bringing all the parameters and figures in accordance with the requirements, a long wait, a trip to the "capital of Art Nouveau" on the bank of the Volga River 800 kilometres away, and other actions aimed at the possibility of this trip...

By September 2024 the stars had come together: I had taken a working holiday, had a new passport, a Spanish visa, plane tickets and tickets to the two-day Visor Fest, where KS were performing in the wonderful company of The Charlatans and dEUS. My friend invited me to stay for a few weeks in a town on the coast, 100 kilometres from Murcia, where the festival was taking place. And as a bonus, my favourite Russian singer BG, who had a colossal influence on my formation, was giving a concert in the town where I was planning to stay. We hadn't seen each other in two years and show the promised to be epic.

It was my first trip abroad, my first single trip on holiday for the first time in ten years and, all in all, quite a highlight. The song '303 revisited' became the soundtrack to the experience. Three weeks in Spain prepared me for the KS gig thoroughly: firstly, I went to see BG and this gig was the peak of my love for Aquarium, twenty three years long, and took me to a new level. It was a long-awaited meeting full of love and joy.

As a bonus, with great surprise and honour, BG signed a copy of the Bhagavad Gita in Russian, which he translated himself, as a gift for KS. I wonder if that book made it to the recipient. Then I spent three weeks at the sea, absorbing the Spanish culture, eating mangoes and lemon yoghurt, and being surprised to recognize myself anew, while living stories worthy of a separate book. And then Visor fest came! Two fabulous nights in the suburbs of Murcia, in a stadium amongst high-rise buildings, in the company of amazing Spanish people who haven't forgotten what they were like in the 1990's. The first night the headliners were The Charlatans, and Tim Burgess, in a warm teenage jumper, despite the September heat, reminded everyone very clearly what they were like at seventeen.

I met up with fans from the UK and Russia and after the gig we had a great time walking around the epic cathedral at night in Murcia. At dawn I left for a neighbouring town to catch another sea wave before the KS gig... KS were announced to be on stage from 1 o'clock. Quite unexpected for the beginning of the concert! I arrived later, but to my luck I caught the performance of Belgian band "dEUS" - what they did with us - it was incredible. I had been preparing for the

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concert all summer and training my body to dance for an hour and a half to KS, but I didn't think that the band before them would squeeze all of us like a lemon, roll us like a roller, and then shake us so that it would revive the whole crowd back to life. Quite soon I thought that the guys would hear all this from the back side of the stage, and it will definitely not leave them indifferent. The first thing Crispian said after the first song instead of a greeting was "Madness". The tone of the performance was set!

The stage was high and far away, about ten metres from the front row and the picture of what was going on became absolutely cosmic from the first songs - imagine how a little man with white wings on his jacket starts singing 'Golden Avatar' in front of a huge southern sky full of stars, which can't be blocked by any spotlights, reminiscent of northern lights...

Almost all my favourite songs were sung, 'Jerry was there' was filmed by me completely and turned out to be a real treasure, 'Gaslighting', as usual pleased me with an insert from 'Jesus Christ superstar', the rare 'Infinite sun' was sung and a new mantra to cast out evil spirits was sung before 'Narayan'. To my great regret they skipped 'Mystical machine gun', which was in the setlist at the request of those who wanted to hear it and which they promised to play "next time".

The gig flew by in one breath and was overwhelming in terms of its impact on me. For me personally, this event was a transition to a new level of being and the beginning of a new life in the world, the door to which I had been at for twenty five years, was open. I came out with the feeling that I was connected to a common cable and the current going through me now would be enough for all the craziest feats I had dreamed of since childhood. The encore was 'Great Hosanna' and 'Govinda', chorally, under a light show in the Spanish night sky, in the courtyard of a block of flats.

A mystical experience connecting past and present. A stream of love flowing through you through and through. A dream come true.

Another dream of mine is still waiting to be fulfilled. In Spain, I brought to KS samples of sweatshirts I made based on my collages and an embroidery. I designed based on the KS logo, as examples of what our favourite band's merch could be. Unfortunately, I was not able to meet the guys in person due to circumstances, but the gifts were handed over to the band and the seed was sown. And I believe that all my ideas will sprout the most beautiful flowers at the most appropriate moment.

I know how to wait and grow my garden...

ROCK SAVES LIVES

LONG LIVE
Kula
shaker



TO SOOTHE MY TROUBLED MIND
OUT ON THE HIGHWAY OF LIFE
ONWARDS TO THE INFINITE SUN

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