

## SCARLETTE – ATTACK OF THE 6FT WOMAN ...

***“Music is not what I do, it is who I am.”***

Scarlette is almost certainly 6 feet tall and yet the lead track (*6 Ft Woman*) that kicks off her genuinely wonderful and defiantly outlandish new record, *Attack Of The 6 Ft Woman*, is not about her at all. Perhaps it's about “*drugs and addiction, affairs, lies and manipulation, the undercurrents of our world that people don't want to admit to but love to gossip about*” but you get the feeling that this exceptionally gifted woman is writing about an alter ego – Dorian Grey masquerading as Kate Bush? – that she's all too familiar with. The 6 Ft Woman, you see, is Scarlette's sinister shadow and her “*own worst enemy*” and this self exploratory and somewhat tantalising paradox is just one of many that you'll find when you listen to one of Scarlette's songs. Alternative and yet mainstream, epic and yet obsessed with the microscopic, Scarlette is about as close to an emo torch pop singer, songwriter and musician that you're ever likely to meet. And *Attack Of The 6 Ft Woman* is the sound of someone hitting the ground running.

***“I believe in destiny, magic, alchemy, synchronicity - and Paolo Coelho and Deepak Chopra - and more than anything, music and love.”***

Scarlette was born and bred in Hertfordshire but Cornwall is her spiritual home. This, after all, is where her grandparents lived, her mother was brought up and Scarlette spent much of her childhood exploring the cliffs and beaches of Polzeath. The latter is where Scarlette chooses to see in the New Year, the now derelict Headlands Hotel in Port Gaverne – “*we stayed there on the last holiday we had with my Cornish grandfather*” – is where she was recently photographed to promote “*Attack ..*” - and Polhawn Fort – a real Napoleonic fort complete with cannon, drawbridge and walls eight feet thick – is soon to be the venue for her marriage to Ez, the woman who inspired the bulk of the songs that make up *Attack Of The 6 Ft Woman*. Cornwall, of course, is a county that eminently suits Scarlette's nascent spirituality (she's a Reiki master and has studied crystal healing) but with a black belt in karate and an erstwhile obsession with the movie *Jaws* – Scarlette “*wanted to be Matt Hooper,*” subsequently dived with sharks and on The Great Barrier Reef and studied Chemistry, Maths and Biology to A Level with a view to becoming a marine biologist – you know that her multi-dimensionality is just something we're going to have to get used to.

***“I struggled with bulimia, loneliness, heartbreak, my sexuality, abusive relationships, and ultimately my faith.”***

The youngest of three children, Scarlette had a karaoke machine at the age of seven, hereby discovering that she liked Big Hair and Big Voices – Shirley Bassey, Barbra Streisand and Tina Turner in particular. By the time she left school, however – perhaps as a result of spending thirty-five hours a week playing sport. - she experienced some kind of burnout (her hair fell out and she found herself staying in bed for much of the day) and was diagnosed with the viral infection Epstein Barr, a form of glandular fever. The following year she recovered enough to start attending a course at Vocaltech (now BIMM) where she learned to play piano (she's now studying Grade 8 acoustic guitar and piano) as well as vocal auditions including Mis-Teeq in 2001. It's pertinent to note here that Scarlette is a constant student of music: she taught herself Logic, regularly takes courses including logic production and music for media and uses *"music and song-writing to help SEN (Special Education Needs) kids to communicate with the world – an incredible job, both humbling and inspiring."*

***"Singing and playing guitar at the same time made me feel like part of the band for the first time."***

Scarlette released her debut album *Medication Time* (as Scarlette Fever) in 2011 and further EP releases – *Single White Female*, *Saturday Night Fever* and *Helena* – saw her working with producers Steve Lironi (Bon Jovi, Altered Images, Space) and Tommy Faragher (Dusty Springfield, Al Green). She subsequently toured with Mike & The Mechanics and rewrote a wealth of material to make the songs work in a standard band line-up. *"I rapidly became a rhythm guitarist, which was fun,"* she says now and this new found eclecticism meant she had a more fluid approach to songwriting. Indeed, the resultant collaborations - with guitarist Chris Moorhead (Seth Lakeman), keyboard player Angie Pollock (Goldfrapp, Peter Gabriel), Jeff Calvert (*"a mad scientist of music production"*) and drummer/percussionist Ralph Salmins (Van Morrison, Waterboys) – recorded in studios as far apart as LA, Maida Vale (RAK), Welwyn Garden City and Crouch End (Konk) have been a revelation and become the frenetic masterpiece known as *Attack Of The 6ft Woman*.

***"She got lost due to drugs and anti depressants and then she met someone. It's an old fashioned Disney love story."***

*Attack Of The 6 Ft Woman* naturally kicks off with the aforementioned title track – produced by Moorhead, Julian Emery and Scarlette and all Kate Bush weirdness over a hard underbelly - before segueing into the Fleetwood Mac inspired and, quite frankly awesome, *Crash and Burn*, a song about Ann, a dear friend Scarlette lost to breast cancer at 27 years of age. Up next, *Helena*, is a delicious slice of epic pop (produced by Paul Simm) reminiscent of U2's finer moments and the story of how Scarlette met Ez - *"my Helen of Troy."* *"And ah, I've come alive now/And ah, I see the sky now"* intones Scarlette - utilizing her

finest heart-swelling, death-by-chocolate vocal technique – and it’s swoon-some enough to make you both forget and realise (at the same time) that *Boy & Girl* (which follows and features Scarlett on synth bass) is also about Ez but again about Scarlett confronting her alter-ego. *“On the surface it is a love song”,* she says, *“but we are all here to follow our personal treasure map to happiness, reach our potential and hopefully leave this place better than when we found it.”* These two songs - the latter is the song Scarlett is most proud of - are the fulcrum of the record and we defy you to not spend the rest of the day singing *“We are written in the planets, you and I”* after hearing its chorus.

***“Take the best rhythm section in the world, a girl who grew up wanting to sing Aretha songs, a guy who worked at Tesco and this is what you get.”***

For *Touch Me*, Scarlett reinterprets that seminal Riu Da Silva smash dance hit as a ballad (and yes it works!) before allowing herself the luxury of *“a free song”*. The song in question, *PS I Hate You* – *“Let the rain come down and wash you from inside of me/Make a deal with the devil and post me an I.O.U./Let the rain come down and wash you from inside of me/Unless now we’re through/P.S. I Hate You”* - is as vitriolic as Bob Dylan’s *Positively Fourth Street* or Siouxsie and the Banshees’ *Drop Dead Celebration* and quite obviously *“the exorcism of a very toxic relationship”*. It’s appropriate therefore that it should be succeeded by the calm after the storm that is *Sunday Best*. Recorded in LA with Davey Faragher (Elvis Costello, Sheryl Crow) on bass and Pete Thomas (Elvis Costello, Arctic Monkeys, Squeeze, Lucinda Williams) on drums, this emotive ballad may be about the death of a relationship – *“As you lay me down to rest”* – but it’s also about reaching rock bottom – *“How many stories can you get from a bottle of wine, before they call time”* – and emerging into the light. That light is provided by *Let Love Do The Rest* – which, Scarlett confesses, composer/arranger Tolga Kashiff *“practically pulled from my soul”* and the uplifting, guitar-led *Where’s The Fun*, which is naturally one of the most joyous songs on the record.

***A choir of family and friends recorded in my local church filled with memories of family weddings and love - the way I imagine great records used to be created.”***

*Attack Of The 6 Ft Woman* approaches resolution with *Good Life*, which has a Bowie/Eurythmics/Kate Bush vibe and is one of those songs that, if it didn't exist, it would be necessary to invent it. The song suggests that, despite all the hardship, we all have a good life to look forward to, a sentiment that’s confirmed when we are subsequently treated to a gorgeous cover of the Erasure number *Respect* which Scarlett *“wanted to do to celebrate same sex marriage being legalised and this felt like the perfect choice.”* In some ways,

*Respect* feels like the album's centrepiece if not its coda but it's also the perfect set-up to *Piece Me Together*, which rounds off the album. The latter, written by Scarlette and Chris Moorhead when in LA "homesick and contemplative", sounds like a reverie although Scarlette suggests that "inside it my soul was screaming." Whatever the circumstances it's a perfect way to close this damn near perfect piece of work.

Although it's true to say Scarlette is something of a one off, *Attack Of The 6ft Woman* may well be the kind of record you have encountered before – namely, a *journey* record. By that we don't mean it's like *Don't Stop Believin'* we mean that *Attack Of The 6Ft Woman* takes us from from being broken hearted and on the wrong side of abusive relationships to coming out and finding true happiness. It's also about Scarlette coming of age as a musician, writer and producer and, that four letter word again, *hope*. Or as Scarlette puts it: "Hope has saved me. Hope is what gets me out of bed in the morning. Hope and life are the same thing." Well, on *Attack Of The 6 Ft Woman* you'll find both in abundance. Enjoy.