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Screamfeeder

In the song Army, Ben Folds sang, "citing artistic differences the band broke up in May, and in June reformed without me, and they'd got a different name." It looked like that was happening to Screamfeeder bass player Kellie Lloyd when drummer Dean Shwreb quit the band and soon after formed a two-piece with guitarist/ singer Tim Steward called The Whats.

As Lloyd explains, "I had a hard time dealing with it at first because we were a three-piece so I was thinking they just wanted to be in a band without me. I had a few issues I had to work through, that was when Screamfeeder went on a break, but once I got used to it, now I don't have a problem with it at all. I was able to step back from it and did other things, so it was a good growing time.

"At first I felt excluded - I have a paranoid personality anyway, so that was quite awkward, but it also happened at a time when Dean had left the band so I thought, this was the end of Screamfeeder. But it wasn't, they just needed to get this thing out of their system, so good on 'em."

Not only are Screamfeeder still going but they are about to embark on a tour, bringing the Nineties world back by playing their break through album 'Kitten Licks' in its entirety. Why 'Kitten Licks'?

"It's an album that gets a lot of attention. It's the album people always talk to us about. We did actually play the whole album through at a gig before it was released in Brisbane, under the name The V Necks, and it was heaps of fun, but this time we decided we want to do it as close to the album sound as we can, including the little piano bits in between the songs."

The 'Kitten Licks' tour is no mere nostalgia trip or belated dash for cash, though, and Lloyd confesses that from here they are aiming to head back into the studio.

"When Dean got back from London he decided he wanted to do another album. We haven't done it yet, but we've played some shows and hopefully this 'Kitten Licks' tour will inspire us to get back into the practice room to write songs together."

One of the biggest changes for indie music since the early Nineties is how bands view their songs being used by companies for TV commercials.

"Years ago you would have been heavily scorned by your peers for having a song on an ad, but now that's how people hear music," Lloyd agrees.



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"People hear a song on an ad and they Google it and that how people discover new music. Everything's changed, the whole way we digest and consume music is completely different. It's a lot to do with digital music and the Internet - I think it's much more accepted to have your song on an ad and I don't think it aligns you with that product like it used to. Brisbane bands An Horse and Yves Klein Blue both have music that have been on car ads but I don't think people associate them with that car. I was always very against it, but it would be great to make some money from hearing your song played.

"One of my favourite bands is Black Rebel Motorcycle Club and I heard they said no to \$300,000 for some ad campaign because they didn't believe in the product, and I think that is completely righteous and I love them for that. They have a strong ideals and I really admire that, but they also sell a lot of records and they live off that, while each of us in Screamfeeder have day jobs."

So looking back at a career of nearly two decades, what would Lloyd change in hindsight?

"I don't know if I'd change anything, but there were some decisions we made that were detrimental to our career that I'd possibly do differently if I could. Mostly label stuff - we were offered what we thought was a good deal from a US label, but it turned out to be bad and really screwed us over, so after 'Kitten Licks' we couldn't really do anything in Australia for ages; they had our hands tied for about five years. It was a kind of a disaster at the time, but we were all unscathed as people and nothing really bad happened in the end. Even the bad times have been character-building; still being together after all these years is really important for me."

Scott Berry

Screamfeeder play 'Kitten Licks' in its entirety (including b-sides) at The Ed Castle on Friday 5 June.

The re-issued version of 'Kitten Licks' is out now through Low Transit Industries.

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