

Inside the head of Kate Nash



As the London singer whistles her way into Dubai for an acoustic gig on December 2, *Rob Garratt* shares some home truths with the dangerously honest songwriter

Quirky singer-songwriter Kate Nash burst onto the airwaves in 2007 with platinum-selling number-one debut album *Made of Bricks*, garnering comparisons to Lily Allen and earning a Brit Award for Best Female Artist. Yet fame came with a price and, following a very public 'breakdown', the now-24-year-old burst back with follow-up *My Best Friend is You* last year. Asking Nash a question has been compared to winding up a toy car and letting it go – we set the singer loose on some sensitive subjects.

'I've been asked not to swear during my Dubai gig – that should be difficult!'

On why she's coming to Dubai this week without a tour or band.

'I haven't done an acoustic gig in ages – it's going to be a challenge. The promoters just got in touch and offered me the gig. I've never been to Dubai and it's not going to cost anything, so I thought, why not? I'm intrigued – I've heard lots of things about swearing and the way you dress. I've been to the airport, where you can buy crazy things like a gold bar. No, I wasn't tempted to pick one up...'

On the tricky issue of censorship.

'I've been asked not to swear during my Dubai gig – that should be difficult! There are certain songs where it's integral, but I'll be careful. I do want to respect different cultures.'

On the painful honesty of her lyrics – described by one *Time Out* critic as 'diary scribbblings'.

'As you get older you become aware of what you're sharing. When I was 17 and writing, I didn't think about it, but now I'm more aware of the vulnerability. But it's important to be

vulnerable with your music – it's the best way to connect with people. When you confess something to a friend and they say they feel the same way, it's a huge relief. If you put it in a song, it's the same thing, and it's a good way to face up to your fears.'

On being a role model to young fans.

'I wouldn't ever claim to be a role model, but I do feel a responsibility to the young girls at the shows. Recently I was asked if it bothered me that it was mainly young girls at my shows and I just lost it at the interviewer –

it's so sexist, why is that less important than a bunch of old men? I relate to being a teenage girl because I was one – you spend a lot of time hating yourself and it's important to have people to look up to who aren't perfect. I'm not saying live your life the way I do – that's wrong – I'm saying be an individual and have your own personality.'

On criticism that she was 'too young' to win the Brit Award for Best Female Artist in 2008 – aged 21 – following her public breakdown a year later.

'I'm really proud of winning the Brit. Stuff happens and you can't change it. I wasn't particularly ready, but it made me an incredibly strong person. People can say, "You're too young," but you can't choose to be young.'

On Lily Allen's retirement.

'Everybody has a different path. She seems happy with what she's doing, and she could have more success if she came back. I think I'll keep going. I'll still be writing songs in the nursing home – it's part of who I am.'

On leading a clean-up team following the London riots in August 2011.

'I was born in London and have lived there my whole life. I've always loved it, and when [the riots] happened I was so upset – I didn't understand

Three to watch

It was Kate Nash's home-grown marketing that helped her get to the top. Here are more sassy songwriters set to make waves...



Sarah Gillespie

London-based Gillespie ably moulds jazz and folk influences into her streetwise, conversational

diatribes, marked out by original arrangements and witty lyricism. www.sarahgillespie.com



Olivia Sebastianelli

Hailing from the same south London suburb as the Brit School (which

produced Kate Nash, Adele and Amy Winehouse), Olivia has carved a reputation for her own brand of pop with grassroots gigs. www.myspace.com/oliviasebastianelli



Caitlin Murphy

Dubai-based Murphy – who will be supporting Nash on

December 2 – will be familiar to any Friday or Saturday regulars at The Irish Village. But alongside the covers work, Murphy also recently debuted a project of folky originals at The Fridge in Al Quoz. [Search for Caitlin Murphy on Facebook](#)

how someone could set fire to a building and not care that there was someone inside. [The next day] I set my alarm, found the meet-up point and met a bunch of strangers, and I became the team leader. It was incredible – it's the first time I've ever felt such a sense of community. The government really needs to think about how unhappy people are and why it's happening, why they feel they don't have a future. Yes, I'm angry – maybe I'll go and write a protest song now.'

Kate Nash plays at Unplugged by Souk Madinat Jumeirah on Thursday, December 2. Advance tickets Dhs150 from www.timeouttickets.com