

# STYLE

THE SUNDAY TIMES

5 MAY 2019



EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

KYLIE

ON LOVE, DESTINY AND  
NEW BEGINNINGS

YOUR HOLIDAY  
WARDROBE  
7 PIECES TO BUY TODAY

HOW I CURED MY  
ADULT ACNE  
BY BEAUTY DIRECTOR  
SARAH JOSSEL

PHOTOGRAPHED BY JACKIE NICKERSON



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# 'I'VE MET SOMEONE WHO I FEEL GOOD WITH. IT FEELS RIGHT'

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*She's in the legends slot at Glastonbury, a new album is out soon and she's hit the love jackpot. Kylie superfan **Scarlett Russell** meets a woman who has conquered her demons (almost)*

Photographs **Jackie Nickerson** Styling **Jeanie Annan-Lewin**

**KYLIE MINOGUE IS GLOWING.** Of course she is. As the blue-eyed, blonde princess of pop music and golden girl of pop culture, idolised by millions since the 1980s, Minogue, I imagine, floats around in a perpetual state of looking luminous. She has also been dancing in front of our photographer for an afternoon and, as she puts it, "should be glowing after all that make-up!" It's not just the make-up. On the brink of releasing a new album, the gig of her career, her 51st birthday and with the thrill of a new man, she is happy. "I could say nothing and you could read everything," she laughs, pointing to her smiling face. "I've met someone who I feel good with. It feels right."

Post-shoot, Minogue sits upright and cross-legged on a sofa in our east London studio, her 5ft frame wrapped in a barely-there slip dress. Much has been written about her dabbles with Botox, something she admitted in 2009, but today she looks beautiful and natural — faint lines on her face, yet still miles younger than 50. She speaks so softly that I strain to hear her and she answers many questions with a giggle. On the surface, dainty and delicate. Underneath, nerves of steel. "None of this was handed to me," she says, "but this was my destiny. I was meant to do it."



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SEQUINED MINIDRESS,  
£2,615, DUNDAS;  
NET-A-PORTER.COM



**THIS PAGE AND  
OPPOSITE** WHITE  
MINIDRESS WITH  
EMBELLISHED HEM,  
£1,155, DAVID KOMA.  
CLEAR PLASTIC  
SHOES, £515, MANOLO  
BLAHNIK. EARRINGS,  
KYLIE'S OWN





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DRESS, £16,300,  
GIVENCHY. CLEAR  
PLASTIC SHOES, £515,  
MANOLO BLAHNIK

The first music I remember was a 1989 VHS tape of Kylie's videos. Aged five, I watched nothing else for months. *Fever* (2001) and *Aphrodite* (2010) — the CDs scratched from overuse — made up much of the soundtrack to my clubbing twenties. Interviewing her is an excruciating test, as I attempt to maintain professionalism while trying not to touch her face. (Full disclosure: when we hug at the end, I scream a bit. She doesn't mind.) But aren't we all Team Kylie? In 2005, when, at the age of 36, she revealed her breast cancer diagnosis, support from fans and the press came in floods. When her highly public relationships end, it is always her the world sides with. She is, perhaps, the only non-Brit considered a "national treasure" by the tabloids — The Sun ran a campaign in the early Noughties to have her bottom listed as a World Heritage Site on the grounds it was an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Brand Kylie has mastered the near impossible: triumphing for three decades, with gold- and platinum-certified records, scandal-free and to global adoration. She's still considered both a reigning disco diva and a bubbly, Aussie girl next door. Underestimate her at your peril, though. Being Kylie, she says, "takes a lot of work, graft and insecurity — not always what the wrapped-up end product looks like. There have been times when I've thought, 'I just can't.' But you've got to take the knocks because they're always coming. It ain't all roses." A pause. "But maybe otherwise it wouldn't be as sweet in the end."

She values her private life as "precious", and admits that she has "sacrificed some anonymity", no doubt because her romances have been tabloid fodder for years. Her most high-profile relationship was with INXS frontman Michael Hutchence from 1989 to 1991. In 1997, long after they broke up, he committed suicide. For four years, she dated the French actor Olivier Martinez, who supported her through her cancer diagnosis and chemotherapy ("Olli was there all the time," she said in 2006). They broke up in 2007, but were rumoured to have reignited their romance in 2017, claims that she has never addressed. Then there was an engagement to the British actor Joshua Sasse. The two started dating in 2015 and that December she told *Desert Island Discs* that Sasse, then 28, was "my love". They announced their engagement in February 2016, but broke up 12 months later; last September, he married an Australian entrepreneur. It strikes me as sad, but her steeliness quickly reappears.

You've had your heart broken, I begin. "I don't know about heart-broken," she flashes. "I've made mistakes." Such as? "I regret lying to myself. Like, 'This is OK,' and doing the merry dance. When that honest bit inside of you knows, but you're busy covering it up? I regret doing that. It's not fair on yourself. And yet I think we've all been there, we've all done it. But I don't see myself doing it again. I've met someone who I feel good with." She has been dating Paul Solomons, the 45-year-old creative director of British *GQ*, for just over a year. When talk turns to him, she lights up. "I can feel my face going," she says. "People say, 'Your face changes when you talk about him,' and it does. Happiness. He's an inspiring, funny, talented guy. He's got a real-life actual job! It's lovely."

Their weekends are generally spent in her Knightsbridge home, watching documentaries on Netflix — "We liked the *Ted Bundy Tapes*. I was too scared to watch them on my own" — or listening to podcasts — "Have you heard *Dear Joan & Jericha* [Julia Davis and Vicki Pepperdine's mock agony-aunt podcast]? I've literally creased myself to that, it's so inappropriate." He does most of the cooking.

"He's got me cooking too, actually. He's the first to do that. It can no longer be the family joke that I can't cook." Her family are all still in Australia. Her parents, Ron and Carol, worked as an accountant and dancer respectively, and her younger sister, Dannii, followed in Kylie's showbiz footsteps as a pop star. She also has a younger brother, Brendon. They are a close family who text daily and speak frequently. I imagine they are overprotective about any new boyfriends. Minogue tells me that the first time Solomons met her clan was spending last Christmas with them. "They [already] could tell I was good within myself. They liked him before they met him, and they liked him more after they met him."

Her Australian accent is still distinctive, but she has lived in London since the early 1990s, when Soho was her stomping ground. "I was really deep in London nightlife back then," she says. Now, generally, the only time she's up until the early hours is when she's on tour. Her last big night out was her 50th birthday party, a year ago, at Chiltern Firehouse, complete with performances by Rick Astley and Jake Shears. "I went to bed at about 5am, but probably had no more than a glass of champagne all night. I was talking and dancing and high on life. The icing on the cake was that I had my special someone to share it with."

It's remarkable that Minogue has the stamina to dance until 5am at an age when many women are experiencing the menopause. Indeed, she's already been there, done that. As is common with younger breast cancer patients, her menopause was medically induced when she had treatment, to suppress her oestrogen levels. On *Desert Island Discs*, she stated that she would love to start a family. It's a difficult subject to broach, but I wonder if she feels the chance to have children has passed. "I can definitely relate to that," she answers. "I was 36 when I had my diagnosis. Realistically, you're getting to the late side of things. And, while that wasn't on my agenda at the time, [cancer] changed everything. I don't want to dwell on it, obviously, but I wonder what that would have been like. Everyone will say there are options, but I don't know. I'm 50 now, and I'm more at ease with my life. I can't say there are no regrets, but it would be very hard for me to move on if I classed that as a regret, so I just have to be as philosophical about it as I can. You've got to accept where you are and get on with it."

Born and raised in Melbourne, she attended acting school in her home town and became a superstar at 18 as Charlene in the Australian soap *Neighbours*. Charlene's wedding to Jason



Donovan's Scott in 1987 was witnessed by 20m viewers in the UK. Despite no formal singing or dancing training, she left the show to pursue music, and her debut album, *Kylie*, released in 1988, was No 1 in the UK for six weeks. She has since released 13 more studio albums, as well as dozens of compilation, live and remix records. Next month she is releasing *Step Back in Time*, her latest greatest hits album. All the big hitters are on there: *Spinning Around*, *I Should Be So Lucky*, *Confide in Me*. She doesn't have a favourite, but points to *Where the Wild Roses Grow* (1995) and *All the Lovers* (2010) — "just glorious". She had to brace herself, she says, to listen to some of the older tracks. "I recorded *Locomotion* when I was 18 or 19. I was so young and I felt so young." She shakes her head in bewilderment.

Minogue has just finished the Golden Tour, six months of shows in Europe and Australia. "I don't know how much time I've got before my showbiz hips and knees start to protest," she laughs. "They'll be like, 'You've been treading those boards for a long time, we think you should slow down a bit.'" This summer, along with gigs in London, Manchester and even Scarborough, she will take to the Pyramid Stage at Glastonbury in the Sunday afternoon "legends" slot, previously filled by the likes of Dolly Parton, Barry Gibb and Lionel Richie. It is particularly poignant as she was set to perform there in 2005, but her cancer diagnosis meant that she had to pull out. She sang at the festival in 2010, as a guest of the Scissor Sisters, but has never performed solo. "I'm bound to cry," she says. On stage? "It's going to happen. When I was meant to be there, I watched it from Australia. I was dealing with much bigger things back then, but when I'm there it will take me back to when I wasn't there. But I'll work through that."

She confirms there will be guests joining her on stage, but won't tell me who. Dolce & Gabbana designed the Greek goddess-inspired costumes for her *Aphrodite: Les Folies* tour in 2011, but her on-stage style now is "more human, more real". "But even Elvis had a few diamantés on him," she continues. "Come on! I'm thinking of it as a big sing-along. It's daytime, so you can't have the lights, effects and lasers that I normally have. I think the simplicity is part of what makes that slot so magical. Dolly Parton just walked on out. Lionel Richie just walked on out. I mean, I'll sashay on out."

Minogue's manager then intervenes. The car is waiting and the star has somewhere to be. "I keep threatening my team that I'm going to retire," she winks, safe in the knowledge that there are decades left of her career. And, with that, she sashays out. Glowing. ■

*Step Back in Time* is released on June 28



ORANGE HOODED DRESS,  
POA, GARETH PUGH  
**HAIR** CHRISTIAN  
VERMAAK  
**MAKE-UP** GEORGINA  
GRAHAM AT  
MANAGEMENT + ARTISTS  
USING CHANEL LUMIERE  
ET CONTRASTE AND  
L'EAU MICELLAIRE  
**NAILS** SABRINA GAYLE  
AT THE WALL GROUP  
**SET DESIGN** LISA  
JAHOVIC AT LALALAND