

Nothing sounds quite like Mango Groove

By  Martin Myers

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The exquisite dexterity of the pennywhistle, the big brass arrangements, the lashings of doo-wop harmonies and the thundering swing and gumboot rhythms. Feed into this a modern pop sensibility and front it with the inimitable and soaring voice of Claire Johnston, and the end result is a sound that is utterly distinctive and utterly unique.

Putting it simply, nothing sounds quite like Mango Groove!

We chat with special star Claire Johnston, ahead of the group's upcoming visit to Cape Town...



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■ **What is your purpose?**

To get through life by having fun while doing as little harm as possible.

■ **What does music mean to you?**

Escape, fulfilment, joy, possibility and connection.

■ **My music is about...**

Taking myself and other people to a happy place.

■ **What is your motto?**

FFS, be kind!

■ **Fame is about...**

Being noticed enough to make an impact but not so much that it gets in the way of being able to live a 'normal' life.



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■ ***Retirement will happen when...***

I'm unable to do this anymore.

■ ***I don't do...***

Toxic people.

■ ***I would love to co-write with...***

Bruno Mars, LP and Pink (but not all at the same time!)

■ ***Where do you go for inspiration to create?***

Random things seem to spark creativity for me.

■ ***What is the most enjoyable aspect of your work?***

Being with people I like and respect and the joy of a show well done.

■ ***The song you must do during every show?***

Special Star

■ ***Any funny moments on stage?***

Too many! A stand-out is a pair of underpants landing on my head during the vocal section of *Special Star* in the '90's.



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■ ■ ***My heroes are...***

People who go out of their way everyday to make a positive difference.

■ ■ ***My style icon is...***

Debbie Harry.

■ ■ ***Which living person do you admire most and why?***

Please may I choose two? Imtiaz Sooliman and Richard Attenborough.

■ ■ ***What is your most treasured possession?***

A William Kentridge drawing from Mango Groove's *Another Country* music video.

■ ■ ***It's your round, what are you drinking?***

A good South African red wine.

■ ■ ***Dream gig to do?***

Glastonbury.

■ ■ ***What makes you stand out?***

Perhaps my quirky taste in accessories.

■ ■ ***Any nicknames?***

Clairabelle (very occasionally).

■ ■ ***If you were not a musician, what would you do?***

Forensic psychology.

■ ■ ***Pick five words to describe yourself?***

Impatient, oversensitive, intense, thoughtful and silly.

■ ■ ***Five must have songs on your Spotify playlist please***

Little Dance – Neon Dreams

Adventure of a Lifetime – Coldplay

When Doves Cry – Prince

Vulindlela – Brenda Fassie

Autumn in New York – the Bill Charlap Trio version

■ ■ ***Greatest movie ever made?***

Pan's Labyrinth.

🎲 **What book are you reading?**

All the Light We Cannot See by Anthony Doerr.

🎲 **What song changed your life?**

Another Brick in the Wall by Pink Floyd.

🎲 **Who do you love?**

My closest friends and my dogs.

🎲 **What is your favorite word?**

Seriously (seriously).

🎲 **Top of your bucket list?**

A cruise around the fjords to see the Northern lights.

🎲 **Your greatest achievement?**

Hasn't happened yet!

🎲 **What do you complain about most often?**

Injustice.



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🎲 **What is your biggest fear?**

Loss of people I love and not being believed.

■ ***Happiness is...***

Feeling safe and hopeful.

■ ***On stage, I tend to...***

Overthink.



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■ ***The best life lesson you have learned?***

We see the world not as it is, but as we are.

■ ***What has been your favorite journey so far?***

At the risk of sounding pretentious, the journey of self-discovery, how we see ourselves and the world shapes everything we do.

■ ***Do you do charity work, and if you do – what do you do?***

Have been involved in, amongst others, conservation and literacy projects and would ultimately like to set up something that teaches children from a young age to connect with the natural world as our disconnect with it is making us and the planet sick.

■ ***Wishes and dreams?***

Inner peace.

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ABOUT MARTIN MYERS

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