

FOUND! The perfect mascara

womanandhome.com

woman&home

FEBRUARY 2021 £4.99

TAKE TIME *for you*

- ✦ Gain an extra hour
- ✦ Try mindful exercise
- ✦ Relax and revive

**WE FOUND
LATE-LIFE LOVE**
REAL STORIES

SWINDLED
*Don't let it
happen to you*

**FASHION
resolutions**

- ✦ Wear more colour
- ✦ Ditch the joggers
- ✦ Learn how to accessorise

**SOLO
HOLIDAYS**
*Yes, you can
go it alone!*

**KATHERINE
JENKINS**
*On marriage,
therapy and
turning 40*

**50%
OFF AT**
SAKS HAIR & BEAUTY
**25%
OFF**
PRAI SKINCARE
T&Cs apply

W&H SPECIAL
Healthy
LIVING

- ✦ The secret to midlife weight loss
- PLUS**
- ✦ Immunity-boosting recipes
- ✦ Fabulous veggie dishes
- ✦ Delicious low-alcohol drinks

Make a FRESH START

New year, **NEW YOU!**

'SINGING was my obsession'

Katherine Jenkins, 40, talks to Gemma Calvert about the highs and lows of 2020, the power of therapy and why her six-year marriage feels as fresh as ever

Every Saturday night, for four months during the first lockdown and beyond, Katherine Jenkins performed a concert from home, singing live over Facebook – a total of 20 times to more than five million viewers. During a period of intense worry, fear and, for many, isolation, the mezzo-soprano's music and infectious radiance worked like virtual magic, elevating the nation's spirits while bringing a much-needed injection of stability.

But today, chatting over Zoom from her sitting room in west London, Welsh-born Katherine has a confession, that the weekly concerts saved her too.

'It's OK to say it's been hard. I've been through the ups and downs like everybody else,' she admits. 'Having something to work towards and knowing that other people were also relying on the 6pm meet got me through.'

Katherine's music career began 15 years ago when she got noticed performing at Westminster Cathedral, in honour of Pope John Paul II's Silver Jubilee. She became the Welsh rugby team's mascot before releasing her debut album *Première* – part of a £1 million six-record deal with Decca Records – in 2004. Fourteen No.1 albums later, Katherine recently broke her own record when her classical album, *Cinema Paradiso*, topped the Classical Albums Chart, making her the UK's most successful classical artist in chart history.

On top of a new career in film – she has two under her belt – Katherine is an adoring mum to Aaliyah, five, and Xander, two, her children with husband US artist and film producer Andrew Levitas, who she married in 2014.

As she reflects on the past 12 months, including a stay-at-home 40th birthday celebration, it's abundantly clear that Katherine's deep sense of gratitude and happiness is unwavering.

Lockdown has clarified what's important. I'm thankful for the time I've had with the kids and my husband. Normally, we aren't in the same house for many consecutive nights. I'll be away touring or he'll be on a filmset. It's been amazing having so many nights sleeping in the same bed as Andrew and I've become more besotted with the kids because I've been here for their different milestones. Aaliyah learned to read at the start of lockdown and Xander was just speaking words but is now a chatterbox. It has been a real bonding time.

It never crossed my mind that I was good enough to have a career in singing. In the beginning, singing was my obsession. I was a choirgirl in St David's Church in Neath, and in 1990, I joined the Royal Academy of Music but Mum was adamant I had a back-up plan to a career in singing, so I trained to be a music teacher. Even after recording >>



PHOTOS: DAVID VINNE; STYLING: ROMA BURY; HAIR: PETER LUX; MAKEUP: CHARLOTTE REED



my first album, I remember doing shows like *Today with Des and Mel* to promote the release, then going back into school to teach the kids!

Motherhood has given me clarity.

I used to go on tour for months but will now literally fly to Japan, do the concert and come home because I don't want to be away from my children or miss anything. I might feel horrible by the end [because of tiredness or jet lag], but at least I'm back. I always said I'd take time off after having children but having a girl first immediately made me think of my own mum's example. Growing up, Mum [Susan, 71] was a radiographer and the main breadwinner. She was really hard-working and I wanted Aaliyah to see that I'm dedicated to something too.

It's nice to see my children have a passion for music and enjoy it. Xander has been singing since he was six weeks old – I didn't think babies sang like that but he did! – so it wouldn't surprise me if he ends up singing in some capacity. My daughter definitely has the performing gene. During my Facebook concerts she was dancing around, saying, 'Hi everybody, I'm here. It's my show!' Of course, the children are going to do their own thing when they grow up. If they go down either of our paths, great. But if they don't, I'm happy if they're happy!

As a mum, my biggest worry is our children losing one of us. As children, Andrew and I lost our fathers, so we talk to the kids about loss and grief, which I know sounds quite morbid but in our house, death is a reality. I work with Grief Encounter, a charity helping children who have lost a parent or a sibling, and after my dad died when I was 15, I saw a child grief counsellor. I don't think I'd be the same person today if I hadn't put those feelings into perspective and processed them through therapy. Now and again, I see a therapist because looking after our mental health is as important as our physical wellness.

When Andrew asked me to act in *Minamata* [a film he directed and co-produced], I said, 'Yes, on the condition that these are the only few days of your life you're allowed

'Looking after our mental health is as important as our physical wellness'



'I didn't properly celebrate being 40 in lockdown, so I'm apparently still 39!'

to boss me around!' Our marriage works because we have a very fair relationship, share the same views on family and both love being parents, which is great because it's a team effort. We've been married six years and I still feel like we're newlyweds!

I've done risky things in my life.

I've been to the war zones – Iraq, Kosovo, Afghanistan – multiple times, done shark diving and darted a rhino for one of our conservation projects. When I did *Dancing with the Stars* in 2012, it felt crazy to go and live in LA but it was a massive leap of faith that worked out. Aside from making it to the final, it was a great experience emotionally and mentally. My best achievements have come from being pushed out of my comfort zone.

As a singer I have to be able to use my face so I've never had Botox.

I keep my skin healthy by drinking lots of water, I use Sarah Chapman Stem Cell Collagen Activator serum at night and I love FaceGym, which involves lots of hand massage and electrical waves to encourage lymphatic drainage and lift facial muscles. It makes me feel refreshed.

If I'd asked my teenage self 'Where do you want to be at 40?', where I am now is the best-case scenario. I've a husband I adore, children I'm obsessed with, I get to sing as a job, and we're all healthy and happy. Of course, having a big birthday in lockdown was a different experience. Andrew cooked us lunch with the kids. I had all my friends on Zoom and felt spoiled. And the best bit? Because I didn't properly celebrate being 40, I'm apparently still 39!

✦ Katherine will embark on a 13-date tour of the UK in November and December 2021. Tickets are on sale now, to book, visit gigst.rs/KathJ