



HAPPY FAMILY!

In-laws join Katie for Edinburgh gig

SONGSTRESS Katie Melua will be swamped by IN-LAWS in Edinburgh next week — as it's the closest gig to her hubby's hometown.

The 34-year-old will complete the final date of her sold-out European tour at the city's Assembly Rooms on Thursday, which will also feature the Gori Women's Choir, *above with Katie*. And she reckons there will be nothing mellow about the aftershow party when she is joined by her World Superbike Champion hubby James Toseland and his Yorkshire family.

Katie says: "My husband is from Sheffield and all his family are coming. "Edinburgh is the closest gig to their home, but it's also the one they all want to come to because of the city and



EXCLUSIVE by **MATT BENDORIS**

it's so near Christmas time too. So we'll have a very long guest list that night. But it will make an excellent last gig of the tour — we will definitely be having a huge party."

The Georgian-born singer shot to fame 15 years ago with hits including *Nine Million Bicycles* and *The Closest Thing To Crazy*, steered by Wombles composer Mike Batt.

Her debut album *Call Off The Search* was a global best-seller, earning her a place on *The Sunday Times Rich List* with an estimated worth of £18million. But her sudden fame took some time to get used to at home with her heart surgeon dad, Amirra and nurse mum Tamara.

Katie says: "It was strange going from my dad, who was always the

WEDDED BLISS... Katie and hubby James

provider, to suddenly I'm the biggest income maker.

"But I was able to buy a flat for them in London."

Katie married 38-year-old hubby James in London in 2012. And despite being set up for life she insists she still has the ambition to perform live.

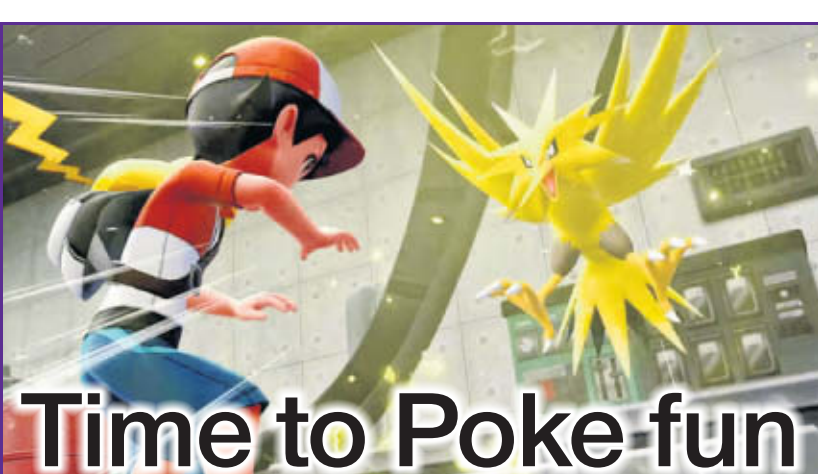
Katie says: "The biggest thing for me after so many years is I still feel a warm glow from the songs and the music and how they have affected people."

Katie has gone her separate ways from her 69-year-old mentor Batt, who also penned Art Garfunkel's 1979 worldwide No1 *Bright Eyes*.

But she says: "Mike and I went our separate ways after my sixth album. I'm so proud of the work we did together. He changed my life forever and I will always be grateful to him."

Katie can't wait to bring the curtain down in the capital after months on the road. She says: "To finish in Edinburgh will be fantastic as the gig has been sold out for weeks. "But I imagine it will end up a very long night!"

● **Katie's latest album** *Ultimate Collection* is out now.



Time to Poke fun

THE world went Pokémon Go crazy so it is no surprise that Nintendo has tweaked the core idea and gone again.

There are now two versions of the game on the Switch. Basically, they retell the classic Pokémon Red and Blue tale but are called Pokémon: Let's Go Pikachu or Eevee.

Your aim is to become a Pokémon master by battling and catching your way to the top. You need the best team to battle the Elite Four — the best Pokémon trainers in the Kanto reign.

You can pick a Pikachu or an Eevee as your best buddy,

depending on which game you have, and they ramp up the cute factor, especially as you can dress them up.

"Kids" of a certain age will remember the tale and the enemies, but you will be stunned by the new look. The 8-bit graphics have been replaced with an amazing 3D almost-cartoon world. The classic tunes have also been remixed.

The biggest change is the gameplay

Pokémon: Let's Go! Pikachu Switch £44.99

— it has been built from the ground up. Catching Pokémon is no longer a random encounter. This takes on Pokémon Go's real-time catching mode. You need to throw the perfect Pokeball,

which is a great move on the Switch although it is a bit hit and miss and can be a struggle for younger gamers.

You also catch more Pokémon than ever before as you try to complete your Pokedex and find the rare Pokémon. But battling is still key to the game and you level up your team with each fight instead of grinding things out with each one of them.

There is also a light online mode where you can fight or trade. Pokémon fans will love this. We reckon younger gamers will get the most out of it, but be prepared for 30-somethings to be playing on the train.

★★★★

STUART CULLEN



SHOT IN THE DARK

DARKSIDERS is a slow-burner — it may have slipped under the radar for some gamers, but each title has raised the bar on the last.

The third instalment has picked up the baton and improved things once more. You are Fury — one of the Horsemen of the Apocalypse — who aims to take out the seven deadly sins. You track them down through a comic book-art style world that is a battlefield for the forces of Heaven and Hell.

The lead character is OK, if a little over-confident at times, but it is still a good extension of the previous two titles.

There is a step back from the Zelda-esque style of play in the past. Now it is more Dark Souls style where you focus on fighting. That requires timing rather than an ability to mash buttons. Try that and you will soon see a loading screen.

The boss fights are the highlight. They are the most challenging part of the game — we actually spent two hours trying to work out how to bring one down.

Darksiders III Xbox One, PS4 and PC £44.99

You can upgrade along the way — beefing yourself up and adding weapons — but we reckon you'll stick with Fury's whip. And beware, as you get stronger so do the forces you battle against.

Away from the fights, you can explore good-sized areas where you'll find upgrades, unlocks and a few environmental puzzles.

It is all wrapped in the art style that wowed in the first two games, but it is riddled with technical issues from texture popping to rough characters and poor framerate.

The soundtrack does back up the tale and the voice acting is good, especially Cissy Jones as Fury. Overall, this has loads of good points, but the glitches will infuriate you. If you like Souls, give this a try and join the legions of fans who already have it on their Christmas list.

★★★★

STUART CULLEN



● IT'S safe to say Bethesda are not feeling the Christmas love with *Fallout 76*. "Bag-gate" saw players up in arms over a "canvas" helmet bag that was actually made

from cheap nylon — not great for a £179.99 edition. Bethesda's offer of 500 Atoms of in-game currency — about £3.99 — was slammed so now they are making canvas bags.



● WE love a good crossover — so let's hope rumours of *Resident Evil 2* and the mobile version of *PUBG* really are getting a mash-up event. Details are a bit light, but a crossover makes sense as *Resident Evil 2 Remake* is out in January. Teaser footage appears to be from that — and *PUBG* mobile has a huge player base. Smart move.

‘New game is all about teching a chance’

NEW technology and an unwavering belief have breathed new life into the Hitman series, according to the team behind the new game.

IO Interactive have seen the series grow from its PC roots at the turn of the century to the latest game.

In an exclusive chat with **STUART CULLEN**, the Danish firm's Sven Liebold insists they are really proud of their new baby.

He said: "Hitman has been around for over 20 years now so it's been through a few generations and we are very proud of what we see as an evolution of where we started. New tech and our new ideas always opens new doors so I think that is really exciting and refreshing. It has an almost old-school appeal but it also has a lot of elements that make it appealing to gamers now."

The headline change has been the chance to put previous gaming content under one umbrella as the world of assassination. It also takes a stand against the trend of offering the base game then

charging for extra content or what is known as "games as a service".

He said: "I think we have taken some huge steps with the introduction of the IO Interactive have seen the series grow from its PC roots at the turn of the century to the latest game. In an exclusive chat with **STUART CULLEN**, the Danish firm's Sven Liebold insists they are really proud of their new baby. He said: "Hitman has been around for over 20 years now so it's been through a few generations and we are very proud of what we see as an evolution of where we started. New tech and our new ideas always opens new doors so I think that is really exciting and refreshing. It has an almost old-school appeal but it also has a lot of elements that make it appealing to gamers now."

"In terms of the world of assassination, we went back to the first season and remastered it all then added the new Hitman 2 features and put it into the second game within the same timeline.

"That also means that everything we release under the Hitman brand from now on will live under one roof like one big Hit-

man hub. Essentially, in a few years' time you'll be able to play *Hitman 2016* all the way to *Hitman 3*, 4, 5. I don't know exactly what will happen but they will be all available and when we release a new one, they will get brought up to par with the rest of the content."

The key to Hitman's success is that the team are all big fans. They all have their favourite scenes and shots. Sven admitted: "The one that stands out for me is a level with a house on a cliffside with a pool over the edge.

"You can shoot the glass out from the bottom of it with a sniper rifle — that's one of my favourite ways to do a hit in the series as it just feels so powerful. As for the new game, one of my favourites is the new Colombia level. We have a full-blown jungle so you can hide bodies in the bushes. I think that puts the gameplay on a whole new level." Choice is also key — what you

decide will shape your game. And that produced its own challenges.

Sven added: "We have an opportunity system where we take you by the hand to show you how things work, but after that it's like chess, as the better you know the rules the better you become. Then you are set free to make your own ideas. We are tracking some of them.

"We sort of know what will happen but there are always things that pop up on YouTube where we go: 'Oh my God, we didn't think about that'."

But there are still hurdles to overcome. Sven admitted: "The co-op in the sniper assassin mission is like one of our first baby steps into the world of multiplayer because Hitman is a very hard game to work that into.

"We want to find the right formula — we bring in two new characters, which I think is a great step, and the way it plays out is cool as it divides up your ammo so no one player has all the special rounds. You have to talk to each other."



EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

Killer's top of the Hit parade

GET in the crosshairs of one of the best hits of 2018 — there, we have said it.

The original *Hitman* — two years ago — was a real gaming adventure, but it has just been knocked out of the park by the latest version.

The least exciting thing about this game is the somewhat unimaginative name — *Hitman 2* — but, apart from that, this is a thriller that is hard to put down.

IO Interactive could have delivered an episodic month-to-month reboot, but instead they went for a full-on feast of entertainment.

You get six new playgrounds, from Mumbai to Miami, as Agent 47 has to eliminate a host of targets.

But there is also a revenge theme as Agent 47 and his handler believe they have been played. Drama, tension and conspiracy theories abound.

There are tags to the 2016 game and that adds a depth and realism to the quest, but you will just be eager to find fun and over-the-top ways to take out marks.

However, you will need to replay levels a few times to get the most out of them — you'll want to unlock challenges because they change how you will play and how difficult it will become, although some players may not like the return-and-proper element.

That all makes sure there is a fresh feel to the gameplay and you can boost your skills and see new story snippets and background details on the hits.

Fans of the first game will be pleased that this one is built on the same core, but with a few tasty additions.

A lot of the gear and weapons return,

Hitman 2 Xbox One, PS4 and PC £ 44.99

as does the fan favourite — the briefcase that gives you some more beefy toys.

The new mechanics include mirrors and windows showing reflections — so your target could see you sneaking up on them. You need to turn on the hot tap and steam things up. The crowd-blender is also a great way to escape or get closer to your mark.

But the highlight is still the sniper challenge. It's a blast. Just as good is the new Versus mode, Ghost, where you and another player race to get the most hits in a set time. The twist is that you are playing in different worlds and can only throw a coin to interact with them. That may not seem much but time it right and you could ruin their hit. It's fun and addictive.

It is also a neat touch that owners of the original can download and play the missions again — but with the new mechanics.

The game has had an arty boost that gives it a nice real-world feel. The sound is good and voice acting is OK with a deadpan David Bateson as 47.

There are a few minor gripes, like not being able to jump down single floors from the roof or when hanging, while the AI can be a bit rosey.

However, it is a strong step forward for the series and a big hint at how the developers see the future.

Instead of a yearly update, you get a platform with an array of fun challenges. The thrill is truly in the kill.

★★★★

STUART CULLEN



LOVE SICK

WHO: Julie Knox (vocals), Shaun Canning (production/keys/guitar/drums).

WHERE: Glasgow.

FOR FANS OF: Dua Lipa, Drake, Sigrid.

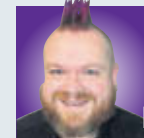
JIM SAYS: Pop music is in a stronger place than it's been for a while... and in Scotland we have some incredible acts.

Part of pop's resurgence may be because the live scene is more important than ever. Back in the day pop acts would do the club PA circuit, often coming on to mime a couple of tracks and promote their latest single. I used to hate that.

Thankfully the climate has changed and, perhaps helped by the accessibility of technology, artists are doing proper tours. Glasgow duo **LOVE SICK** are no exception. Gritty pop music that oozes class, their gigs have been going down a storm.

The pair have been crafting their sound for a few years now, but only emerged as **LOVE SICK** in September last year.

Shaun had been doing some great electronic music on his own, later forming a duo with Julie. He said: "We met at the Christmas party when we were both working full-time in life insurance call centres... Julie in Stirling and me in Glasgow. We discovered that we shared a very similar music taste and were both making music on our own. Julie had been singing for years and I'd been writing



NEW MUSIC

By **Jim Gellatly**

songs and producing music, though I was never strong enough vocally to take the lead."

Several tweaks along the way, they've launched their compelling take on synthpop. Shaun said: "We've learnt a huge amount over the past couple of years. Creating **LOVE SICK** was a reflection on our changing musical influences."

LOVE SICK have regularly featured on Sir Elton John's Rocket Hour radio show on Apple Music's Beats 1. Shaun added: "It was pretty surreal. We got an email out of the blue saying that Elton had heard our first song *Bullet* and wanted to play it on his show. He's been supporting us ever since."

New EP *No Sleep* is out now.

MORE: facebook.com/thisislovesick ● Jim presents a weekly showcase of New Music on Amazing Radio, Sundays 2-4pm.

amazingradio.com
imgellatly.com



Watch a video of **LOVE SICK** at thescottishsun.co.uk

TOP 5 GAMES THIS WEEK

- 1 FIFA 19
- 2 Red Dead Redemption 2
- 3 Call Of Duty: Black Ops 4
- 4 Battlefield V
- 5 Forza Horizon 4



● **RED** Dead Redemption 2 came to the fore at the gaming Oscars in LA — but still couldn't hold off *God Of War* in the battle for top game.

Thousands of British gamers stayed up late to see what won the *Games Awards*... and *Red Dead* saw Roger Clark get Best Performance as Arthur Morgan, as well as awards for narrative, music and game audio.

But *God Of War* was Game of the Year as well as best game direction and Best Action Or Adventure Game.

However, it was great to see indie title *Overcooked 2* win best family game while *Celeste* won two awards, including the best indie game.

Dragon Ball FighterZ was best fighter and *Forza Horizon 4* was Best Sports/Racing Game.



But the show has always been a chance to see what games are in the pipeline.

The main news was:

● **Team Ninja** is developing *Marvel Ultimate Alliance 3: Black Order* as a Switch exclusive.

● The next chapter in the *Far Cry* series, *New Dawn*, has a Rage-meets-Mad Max feel.

● **Bloware** showed off a story-focused trailer for *Anthem* and a teaser for the new *Dragon Age*.

● **Crash Team Racing Nitro-Fueled** is heading our way and is a remake of *Naughty Dog's 1999 kart racer game*.

● **Mortal Kombat 11** promises a gore-fest.

● The *Stanley Parable* will finally make it to consoles next year.

● **Devil May Cry 5** demo is available to download on the Xbox One.



MUCH excitement from *Campo Santo* — *Firewatch* is coming to Nintendo Switch on December 17. The game was first launched on other platforms in 2016 and is a must for Switch owners.