

Where are you talking from today on Zoom?

I'm home - this is actually my bedroom. I'm in north London, I'm renting. It's a nice apartment but, yeah, I wouldn't choose this quite strange wallpaper. It's quite bachelor pad, my apartment. I've filled it with plants and witchy materials so it's a bit more like me.

This year began with you starring in acclaimed C4 drama *It's A Sin* and ends with a new album and a New Year's Eve BBC1 show with Kylie and the Pet Shop Boys. Any pinch-me moments?

It's A Sin is one of them, for sure. Performing with Elton John at the Brits, lying on top of his piano - that was amazing. And duetting with Kylie was a dream come true.



Love at first sight: Kylie Minogue

SIXTY SECONDS

With **Olly Alexander**

THE YEARS & YEARS SINGER AND ACTOR, 31, ON HIS NEW YEAR'S EVE TV SHOW, DOCTOR WHO AND FALLING ASLEEP ON THE NIGHT BUS

INTERVIEW BY PAUL SIMPER

Is your NYE show already recorded?

It is. I know it spoils the magic slightly but I am very happy we did pre-record it because who knows what's going to

happen with restrictions? It was a mad filming experience but amazing. I'm so excited. It's a proper show.

Is there a particular Kylie or Pet Shop Boys song you wish you'd written?

Kylie's *Love At First Sight* is genius. So many of her songs are captivating and memorable but *Love At First Sight* has this positive, happy feeling about it that I just love. It's so simple but the simplest things are always the hardest to get right. *Pet Shop Boys*, oh my gosh, they just have such a phenomenal back catalogue. Maybe *Domino Dancing*. That's the one that I put on to dance around to the most still.

Your new album, *Night Call*, sounds like a clarion call to every dance floor in the land. Were you dancing at home while you were writing it?

Yes, I really was. I totally used the whole album-making process to exorcise all the fun that I wasn't really having in my actual life. I live alone. Obviously lockdown made us all very isolated. The only music I wanted to listen to was dance or uptempo music. I had just come off making *It's A Sin* so I'd spent those few months immersed in 1980s music. It really informed the music that made me feel good. Making music wasn't making me feel good for a while. I didn't know what to make. It felt like, what was the point of anything? I had that sort of crisis but when I got back into how much I loved dance music and that particular heartbreak on the dance floor, which I love so much, it started to make sense to me.

My best New Year's Eve ever was in Maui - there was a nude part where you'd swim naked

in such intense secrecy so it's almost unspoken about among us. But I know how excited Russell [T Davies, the creator] is. He is the biggest *Doctor Who* fan in the world so his next iteration is going to be fantastic.

What can you tell us about your new song *Muscle* for those who haven't heard it yet?

I really wanted to write a house club track. I wrote this song in LA. I would go to this gym in LA called *Body Builders*, this really old-school gym. Lots of gay guys work out there. I just found that a lot of the gay guys I was seeing in LA were these really big, muscly dudes so I thought it would be funny to write a song about that, which was a bit tongue-in-cheek.

You've said some new songs are patchworks of random memories and hook-ups with men you've met. Will any of them recognise themselves?

I don't think anyone will recognise themselves. It depends how closely they listen. If someone had the confidence to straight up ask me, 'Is this song about me?' I would be impressed. But you never want to give them the satisfaction so I would always say no.

Yourself, Lydia West and Omari Douglas are all bookies' faves to be the next *Doctor Who*. What have the three of you made of it?

Gosh, I think it's quite amusing to us and sort of bizarre. *Doctor Who* is shrouded

Have you a best and worst New Year's Eve?

A few years ago I took this amazing holiday to Hawaii. My friend's family lived there. I went to stay with her on Maui and spent New Year's on the beach. I could see whales. There was an amazing sunset. There was a nude part where you could take off all your clothes and go swimming naked. That was the best New Year's ever. A not so great one would be where you can't get in anywhere. You're arguing about where you are going to go next. The night all just falls apart.

And then you get the dreaded night bus...

Oh yeah, the worst is falling asleep on the night bus and waking up at the other end. That happened to me once, waking up in Ealing. I had to get the bus all the way back to Hackney.

Is there one new thing you would love to do in 2022?

I would love to learn how to make beautiful pottery. I was thinking of gift ideas and I thought it would be so cool if I could make people little dishes, little ceramic things.

The Big New Years & Years Eve Party is on BBC1 at 11.25pm on December 31. *Night Call* by Years & Years is out on January 21



Never boring: Pet Shop Boys