



Colin MacIntyre is best known to music fans as Mull Historical Society. Ahead of his upcoming Edinburgh gig, he chats to Henry Northmore about his songwriting process, working with Bernard Butler and life growing up in Tobermory

**C**olin MacIntyre has been making soulful indie as Mull Historical Society since the release of 2001's *Loss*. However, the reality stretches even further back. 'It's always an interesting point when you start to write again, those things become albums, but in some ways I still feel a real connection to being a teenager, or even younger, when I first started writing songs. Even before I got a record deal I'd written 300 songs. It's like a tap that starts running again that you then formulate into an album.'

MacIntyre admits he finds writing music an almost subconscious compulsion. 'At the moment I have a song in my head that's plaguing me, it's involuntary, since being a kid it just seems to happen and luckily I found a place to put down those thoughts that have melodies attached to them.'

Across six albums under the MHS moniker and two under his own name (alongside a novel, a children's book, a play and a musical he's currently working on), MacIntyre's found multiple outlets for his overflowing ideas. 'Hopefully [my music is] uplifting, but I also try to make it as real as possible. It's most rewarding when it connects with another person or a live audience. Having come from quite a small community, I'm always interested in finding a community and I think my music does that.'

His latest album, *Wakelines*, once again taps into his life growing up on the Isle of Mull alongside themes of movement, migration and community. Sometimes taking ideas from old diaries, notebooks and demos, he draws inspiration from the innocence and raw passion of his younger self. 'I didn't know it at the time, it was just my way of

documenting what was going on growing up in Tobermory, there's an ongoing conversation with myself. Even on the new album there are melodies and choruses that are old lines. Ninety-five per cent of what I'm doing is new but it's nice when you find something that authentically fits into what you are doing now.'

'That idea of the child inside you is very much part of the album,' he adds. 'It was enjoyable to make but it was also quite revealing. I was writing a memoir [*Hometown Tales: The Boy in the Bubble*] at the same time and in some ways they kind of accompany each other.'

*Wakelines* was also a collaboration with producer Bernard Butler. MacIntyre had met the former Suede guitarist at various festivals over the years. Then Butler produced Mark Eitzel of American Music Club's album, MacIntyre found himself supporting Eitzel on tour and a connection was made. 'It was fun to make. I recorded it at his house, which he'd just converted into a studio. I think we'll do it again, I felt almost challenged by him, in a good way.'

After a couple of full band shows in Tobermory (at An Tobar Arts Centre on 28 & 29 August), Butler will also be joining MacIntyre for a special stripped-back MHS show in Edinburgh. 'He played a lot on the album so it's been great to have his sensibility on stage. Because he was making it [*Wakelines*] at home, he'd work on it late at night when I wasn't there, so he was putting his own flavour through it. He's such a brilliant guitar player. I was always into his rock guitar, Suede and McAlmont & Butler, but also that lightness he brings to the album and the acoustic stuff is so beautiful.'

**Mull Historical Society, Mash House, 30 Aug, 7.30pm, £17.**