

# Jonnie White

Singer/Songwriter

## Biography

Jonnie White was born in London, UK in 1974. He played violin and piano as a child, winning a music scholarship at 13 to the King's School Canterbury. At 15, he started teaching himself guitar, composing his first songs and singing in a school band.

At 18, Jonnie started studying World Music at the School Of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in London. During the course, he learnt to play such diverse musical styles and instruments as South African, South American and Korean drumming, Zimbabwean Mbira (thumb piano) and Javanese and Balanese Gamalan. He also went to the Gambia (Africa) for 7 months to research the popular music there and learn the Kora (a 21-string harp).

Jonnie moved to Vienna in 1997. He founded Floorspot (<http://floorspot.ben.at>), an open-stage songwriter night in Tachles (2. Karmeliterplatz 1, Wien), played in a band with Raya O. Coal for a year and founded the 3 Corner Convention (<http://www.3cc.at>) with Robin Gillard.

Jonnie's interests and influences are so diverse and yet his songs aim for honesty and directness – the essence of the subject. He is currently working with Kerstin Steiner and Alex Natschev on the Skyside project, collaborating with Virgil Segal ([www.virgilsegal.com](http://www.virgilsegal.com)) and Pollard Berrier. His debut album is in the pipeline.

## Press

There are songwriters who write tunes proficiently, but whose lyrics are trite. There are songwriters who write thoughtful lyrics, but who have no sense of musical development. There are songwriters whose songs combine the right components, but the writer isn't able to perform them successfully. Very occasionally you hear a songwriter who, time after time, produces the goods, whose every word and note you'll want to hear again and again. Jonnie White's songs and performances fall into this last category. His lyrics tell of real life, experienced and interpreted, couched in poetic yet substantial vocabulary. There is a philosophical, objective bent to many of his observations but Jonnie is also at ease with humour and playful language. Musically, his songs are adventurous; melody lines are lyrical, imaginative and memorable. As he has a fine guitar playing technique, Jonnie uses the instrument as a fluid accompaniment. He uses harmonies to intensify the character of individual songs and stylistic techniques to colour his language. As a listener, I can hear how his songs could be developed within a studio setting, so strong are the instrumental voicings: string sections, keyboards, backing vocals, even brass, all are present by suggestion.

I can't compare Jonnie's music to other singer songwriters as his music is so much more than that description implies. More appropriate, I'd say, is to imagine Bjork or PJ Harvey without the resources to fully produce their material, playing in a venue with just their voices, their songs and a guitar. That's Jonnie White.

*Kate Mead – Radio NZ*

## More information:

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