

SIMON SHLOMO KAHN

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- World-record Breaking Beatboxer
- World Looping Champion



Simon Shlomo Kahn knows how it feels to be on top of the world. For over a decade, the genre-defying, award-winning, recording-breaking beatboxer, producer and live-looper has set new standards for his craft.

As Shlomo, he burst into the mainstream collaborating with Björk and performing with famous fans from Damon Albarn, Lily Allen and Jarvis Cocker to Imogen Heap, Martha Wainwright and Rudimental. As the first ever World Looping Champion, he taught his friend Ed Sheeran some tricks. He became the first non-classical Artist in Residence at London's Southbank Centre, played the main stages at Glastonbury more times than he remembers, won rave reviews for his autobiographical one-man shows and even had a feature film made about him.

Topics

- Arts & Culture
- Creativity
- Motivation

But staying on top becomes increasingly tricky to maintain. Despite the standing ovations and the accolades, he would feel oddly empty inside. Three years ago, he took a step back to work out what he wanted and his world seemed to crumble under his feet. "I'd always been incredibly driven," says the London-born musician, now back as solo artist SK Shlomo, "but ultimately that was at the expense of my mental health."

Behind his reinvention lies a realisation – that throughout his 20s, despite composing and producing for other artists, as well as for film and commercials, he had resisted becoming the solo recording artist he desperately wanted to be for fear of failure. Last summer, determined to change, he set himself a challenge – to write a song every day for a month. For the first five days, he delivered. Then things ground to a painful halt, triggering a mental breakdown which led to six months in therapy. Diagnosed with PTSD, he was forced to confront his past.

"Talking about a major trauma from my childhood was a huge turning point," he says. "That's when I realised what this album was about. It's called Surrender because that's all the traumatised me could ever do – surrender, let go and trust. It's empowering, stopping trying to control everything around you."

Under his new moniker SK Shlomo, he found himself taking a 'dark pop' direction after listening to lots of Caribou, Jamie xx, SOHN, FKA Twigs, James Blake and Massive Attack.

This album release was the catalyst for SK Shlomo's return to performing after almost 2 years off the road fighting depression. The comeback was hailed as a triumph: a blistering tour of over 130 shows, including playing the Other Stage at Glastonbury, receiving album support from BBC Radio 1, creating a moving TED Talk, and his stage adaptation of Surrender being shortlisted for the Edinburgh Fringe Mental Health Award. SK Shlomo is back and stronger than ever.

“None of my achievements in music arrived the traditional way,” he says. “I always strived to do everything differently, to create my own path. But I’ve realised that the biggest challenge for me is to stand up on stage and simply be myself. No hiding behind clever machines, no fancy techniques, no persona. This is the real me, naked so to speak. It’s the scariest, most exciting thing I’ve ever tried.”

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