

# the Sunday MUSIC & GAMES



## NEW MUSIC

By Jim Gellatly

### KENDAMA

**WHERE:** Prestwick, Ayrshire  
**WHO:** Stuart Edgar (vocals/key-board), John Davidson (drums)  
**FOR FANS OF:** Twenty One Pilots, Awoination, Chvrches  
**JIM SAYS:** Kendama emerged in February with their striking debut single Wake. I was first introduced to them last year as EDGR.

Despite starting to get a decent reputation they admit it fizzled out. With a fresh approach the duo are now starting to fulfil their potential with an electrifying take on synth pop.

Stuart and John first met while studying music at The University of the West of Scotland's Ayr Campus. Stuart said: "We were in separate bands. I'd been working on some demos at the time and John said he had an interest in getting back into playing drums, so I sent them over."

"After a few exchanges we locked ourselves in a rehearsal room in Uni and figured it all out.

"There were a few false starts, such is the nature of working with technology. After we filtered through all the nuances, we hit the road and haven't looked back."

It's gloriously hooky pop music, but with enough of an edge to keep it interesting. John said: "It's not quite pop, not quite rock. It's just what we feel like writing about at that time. If people want to label us as a pop act that's totally fine. If they want to label us cool that's also fine but we quietly chuckle to ourselves every time it happens."

Many of their influences lie outside the realms of pop. Stuart explained: "It's maybe not evident in the music but we are both massive pop-punk fans. Bands like Neck Deep and Blink 182 have a say in how we write. Deaf Cab For Cutie, Frightened Rabbit and Enter Shikari have also had a huge influence."

He reckons that's what makes Kendama stand out. He added: "We want to perform like Enter Shikari and other heavier bands like that. It's still shimmer pop music at source but bringing it to the live setting means that we can let loose."

A more obvious similarity might be Twenty One Pilots, who they cite as the biggest inspiration. Stuart said: "Visually, the comparison is there. Two guys on stage with a keyboard. Their use of technology convinced me that this type of 'thing' is possible. It opened that door and we marched right through it!"

Kendama have just followed Wake with another cracking single called Closure. Stuart said: "Both are kind of about similar things. Wake deals with wanting to remove yourself from a terrible situation and Closure is about accepting something has run its course and moving on."

Having just wrapped up a short tour with Fife favourite Amy Lou, Kendama will play Amy Lou's Christmas Doo at the Monarch Bar in Dunfermline on December 15. Into next year, they kick things off in style with a Glasgow showcase as part of King Tut's New Year's Revolution on January 16 alongside fellow rising stars One Nine, Shears and Konner.

**MORE:** kendamaband.com

● Jim presents a weekly showcase of New Music on Amazing Radio Sundays 2-4pm.

amazingradio.com

jimgellatly.com

Watch video of band at thescottishsun.co.uk

## HEAVY METAL BASH IS A BLAST



**THIS** is a brutal and unforgiving blaster that mixes old-school run-and-gun fun with a heavy metal mash-up.

You'll love the retro feel and marvel at the modern suit of armour Steel Mantis has given it. Therion returns home to try to find out why the Valfaris fortress has suddenly reappeared after many years.

Our Tel also finds that the paradise has become twisted as an arcane evil has set up shop.

The story stays fairly solid throughout the excitement but the focus is on the action where everything you see wants to eat, kill or hurt you. So you'll need to perfect your bashing skills — and practice makes progress because Steel Mantis have ramped things up to 11 and this is a truly challenging game where you will respawn more often than you'd like.

The game does have a solid checkpoint system but it comes

### Valfaris

Xbox One, PS4, PC and Switch £20.99

at a cost because you unlock them with tokens you can collect or change into points to spend on upgrading your kit. It's your call on what takes precedence.

You get all the shooting power you need to get the job done but a lot of combat will see you juggling between weapons to find the best one for the job.

You also have a shield but your powerful weapons use the same energy so that introduces a neat risk-reward system which adds depth to the game. Then there is the look — a stunning piece of work with a strong Heavy Metal/2000AD/Warhammer vibe and a rocking soundtrack that will make your blood pound.

Play it loud and stay proud. This game rocks.

★★★★★ STUART CULLEN

## Magical treat

GREAT action in a magical world and a gripping story. What's not to like?

Lab Zero Games have served up a treat of an action role-player with Indivisible. It's a thought-provoking tale with awesome anime art.

You are Ajna, a young teen who has known nothing but peace until it is shattered when a banished evil spirit returns to bring darkness over the land. It's up to Ajna and her pals to get rid of it for good.

It may sound like a well-worn tale but it's worth sticking with it because it breaks away from the template and the writing starts to shine through with a blend of smart and funny tones that keep up an excellent pace.

The gameplay is split into two main styles — 2D platforming for when you're not in the thick of it, and then a party-based combat system when the fists fly.

The platforming has a real Metroidvania feel as you unlock new skills as you go — like an axe that helps you reach new areas — so it's worth backtracking to old areas when you have a handful of new skills. The combat is a

### Indivisible

Xbox One, PS4, PC and Switch £33.49

blend of real-time and turn-based fighting. And, with there being 20 characters, you can recruit new faces. You will also find that some have a combo style effect when played with others.

That all adds a real depth to the combat as you try to find the most powerful as well as the ones best suited to your play style.

We can't finish without a word about the hand-drawn animation. It's a visual feast and an epic piece of work that never drops below sensational.

Indivisible is a beefy 60-hour tale that is easy to lose yourself in. It has real heart and the constant flow of new characters keeps things fresh and challenging. Then there are a few difficulty spikes before the combat becomes a lot easier in the last third. Mind blown.

★★★★★ STUART CULLEN



### Nacon Revolution Unlimited Pro Controller

PS4 and PC £119.99

If you're a PS4 gamer, the fact that there is a real lack of an official all-singing, all-dancing "Elite" controller is no secret. But that's about to change.

The Revolution Pro is a serious bit of kit that, like the Xbox Elite, comes with all the bells and whistles you could ever want.

Nacon have teamed up with Sony to make a beast that comes with a hard carry case, heavy duty 3m charge cable and even a microfibre cloth to cover those extra tense matches. You also get a wireless dongle.

The controller is well weighted and feels the part with a nice finish. As you would expect, there are a host of buttons and triggers on the underside though they do lack a little bit of feedback when you get to work on them.

You will notice that the sticks are offset in a similar way as the Xbox controller — that scored highly with us because the Xbox controller is very much our weapon of choice.

When it comes to customisation the little box of tricks comes with a number of plug and pop parts from sticks to risers and one of the coolest features is that you can add weights to the stock to counter-balance the controller.

If you want to customise the buttons then you'll need to head to the PC and download an app and make an account. But then you can tweak away.

You can also play with the light colours which is way more cool than it should be for a grown-up gamer.

Gripes? Well, we only had one. There are no physical trigger stops, instead, you have to change them on the app. Grr.

This controller is a solid controller that has real bite and few cons.

It is leagues ahead of the competition on the PS4 especially at this price.

★★★★★ STUART CULLEN

IT'S that time of year when gamers are filled with joy at the thought of getting new stuff from Santa.

So STUART CULLEN has over what's hot this festive season.

He has already written about Santa and it has everything from games to consoles, then PC kit and everything else in-between.

He just hopes Santa throws a very, VERY good boy no

### Street Fighter II: Hyper Fighting

POSSIBLY the best known game title in the Home Arcade library, this is a Capcom masterclass.

The third in the Street Fighter II sub-series, Hyper Fighting introduced a faster playing speed and special moves as well as refinement to the character balance. It



## HONOR

THE modern trend is for retro games to get smaller and more affordable. But retro can still be amazing.

There are plenty of 3D games that would make them hanker after their gaming days in disbelief.

But now we can all take the lane as retro classics have been made over.

Now Capcom have gone giving you the ultimate retro reduced and spiced up. The C isn't so much a mini-console, of warm fuzzy feelings.

If you are considering one for even as a personal treat then this is not cheap.

It will set you back £200 for other mini-consoles. So make it worth that amount? For monster-size duel controller shaped like the Capcom logo.

That will be Marmite straight the prettiest and its overall challenge, especially when all late boxes and socks are fight

### TAKE CONTROL

XBOX fans will be clamouring for the Elite Series 2 with adjustable-tension thumbsticks, shorter hair trigger locks and wrap-around rubberised grip. It also has re-engineered components as the first model didn't last too long. Yours for £159.99.

YOU won't go far wrong with the Scuf Prestige controller.

It is a solid, no-messing unit that scored 5/5 in our recent review. It has a host of cracking customisation options. Starts from £134.99

