

Review – Shonen Knife, Summerhall

Currently, on a 40th-anniversary tour the all-female Japanese punk-pop rockers Shonen Knife get straight to it with Konnichiwa.

The sold-out Summerhall audience is loving every moment by the time we get to the Pixies-flavoured Banana Chips with its infectious riff and killer guitar hooks. Fronted by sisters Naoko Yamano on vocals and guitar and Atsuko Yamano on bass, they know how to put on a show head-banging at the front of the stage. They are dressed in colourful costumes (designed by Atsuko) and Risa Kiwano brings a potent energy when hammering the drum kit ten-to-the-dozen.

A few Nirvana t-shirts in the audience reference the Seattle band's connection to the Osaka trio. Kurt Cobain helped bring Shonen Knife international recognition when taking them on the road for a European tour shortly before the release of Nevermind.

There's a fascinating Edinburgh connection in all of this, just around the corner at the Southern Bar Nirvana's Kurt Cobain and Dave Grohl performed an acoustic set including a cover of the trio's Twist Barbie back in 1991. When they perform the song tonight there's an evocative charm and the same spirit that captured the imagination of Cobain all those years ago.

Green Tea delivers a Black Sabbath intro before going full-on punk rock while Jump Into The New World has an early 70s Kiss

rock groove spliced with classic 1960s girl band vocals. A final encore of Sushi Bar Song was followed by a jubilant cover of The Ramones 1976 single Blitzkrieg Bop.

It was the perfect end to what will undoubtedly be one of the most memorable gigs of the year.





All photos Richard Purden