

# 63. Koshka Duff

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

experience, music, play, piano, felt, police, friends, bit, recital, year, love, songs, pain, guess, musicians, poem, policing, injuries, charged, racially aggravated

## SPEAKERS

Koshka Duff, Hattie Butterworth, Rebecca Toal

### **Rebecca Toal** 00:00

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### **Hattie Butterworth** 00:41

Hello, and welcome to Things Musicians Don't Talk about with your hosts Hattie Butterworth

### **Rebecca Toal** 00:47

And me Rebecca Toal.

### **Hattie Butterworth** 00:48

Within our vibrant musical world it can often feel that the struggles and humanity of the musicians is lost and restricted.

### **Rebecca Toal** 00:57

Having both fell in silence with mental physical and emotional issues, we are now looking for a way to voice musicians' stories, discuss them further and to connect with the many others who suffer like we have.

### **Hattie Butterworth** 01:07

The personal issues we may face with our mental health, performance injury, work pressure and finances can be overlooked as the airbrushed persona of musicians is sadly maintained.

### **Rebecca Toal** 01:20

So join me Hattie, and guests as we attempt to bring an end to stigma by uncovering the things musicians don't talk about. Okay, so welcome to this episode. Today we have the fantastic Koshka Duff with us. Koshka how're you doing?

**Koshka Duff 01:53**

I'm great. Thank you very much.

**Rebecca Toal 01:55**

That's great to hear! So I first came across you when I was browsing a bookshop in Bristol, and I came across your collection of essays, "Abolishing the Police". And then I was thrilled to read in the back or the front that you're also a pianist. And then I was like, "Ah! Yes, we could get her on the podcast!" So people that might not know who you are, could you give ... I mean, this is always the most difficult question... Could you give kind of a general summary, a little strapline maybe of like who you are and what you currently do?

**Koshka Duff 02:32**

Sure. Thank you very much for having me on. And I ... myself in a line, I guess, my ... so my name is Koshka Duff. My kind of official position at the moment is that I'm a lecturer in philosophy, particularly social and political philosophy at the University of Nottingham. And a lot of my research at the moment focuses on policing, dissent, and abolition. And one of the things that's come out of that is this... Yeah, a really wonderful, I think, collaborative collection of essays by a whole bunch ... wonderful bunch of scholar activists - a very accessible collection, I would add - Abolishing the Police, which you just mentioned. And yeah, my kind of academic interest in issues of policing, developed in large part because of my direct personal experiences with police. And that was the case in fact for for many of the people that I worked with on that, on that collection. I think it's really important to be having discussions informed by people's direct experiences of policing, and not just ... kind of academics pontificating from on high about things that they've not been on the sharp end of themselves. So yeah, that's where I'm coming from, and intertwined with that in a whole lot of ways, I'm a musician, especially a pianist and I play piano and write songs with my my band in Nottingham. We're called Stolen Goods. So we just brought out an EP, so that's something else that I'm excited about at the moment. And yeah, I think we might talk more about that in the course of the podcast, so I will, I will leave that there for now.

**Rebecca Toal 04:35**

Yeah, that was what I was so impressed by when I kind of was reading about you a little bit was just like how you kind of have these two lives going alongside each other, but also seem to be quite intertwined at the same time in terms of like creative output and stuff, which is really exciting. So I thought, if you'd be happy to, would you be able to talk just a little bit about your own experience with the police, but also, you know, we don't have to go into details because people can just Google it if they want to read about it. So anything that you want to kind of briefly mention, and ... because I wanted to talk about kind of your sustained injuries and how that impacted your life as a musician.

**Koshka Duff 05:16**

Sure, yeah so I am these days quite Google-able. And I guess the kind of headlines of what you'll find, if you Google me, is about this particular experience that I had in 2013 when, at that time, I was a post-grad music student at the Royal College of Music, and I was just about to finish a Master's in piano performance. And I lived in Hackney at that time. Essentially, I was ... on one kind of sunny evening, I was arrested at a community garden next to my flat for offering "Know Your Rights" legal advice card to

a 15 year old who was being subjected to a racist stop and search. And, uh, yeah, I got involved in that situation, because there was this kid who was clearly terrified, surrounded by police, calling for his mum asking, asking for his mum to be there. And in that broader context, which I was already very aware of the kind of racism of stop and search, and that I was kind of seeing in action there. And so yeah, I wanted to kind of help practically by making sure that this young person knew their rights, but also I felt like it was important for somebody to show that they cared about him and his welfare that he wasn't alone. So that was ... that was kind of why why I got involved. I was kind of pretty quickly grabbed by the police, accused of obstructing them and subsequently accused accused of assaulting them, although they were assaulting me. And I was, after some palaver, taken to Stoke Newington police station and there I was strip searched. And that was quite a ... That was a distressing and I guess traumatic experience. It involved being kind of pinned down by to the on the floor of a cell by three police officers, they cuffed ... they had my hands cuffed behind my back, they tied my legs together with leg restraints, and they cut off my clothes with scissors and kind of mocking me while they did this. It was ... it was ... ripped out by ear piercings. And actually when I said at the start, the headlines you'll see if you if you look at this, I'm afraid the phrase "grabbed breasts" is actually quite prominent in some of the media coverage, which wasn't my decision. But that was something that, you know, when I was completely naked, when they put my clothes off. So they, they kind of grabbed at my breasts and stuck their hands between my legs. And yeah, kind of, overwhelmingly the memories of the pain of the handcuffs cutting into my wrists and arms, because they kind of ... they're used in sort of like little torture implements, like jerking them around behind my back, twisting my arms in different directions and kneeling on you with their full weight. And then yeah, I guess the fear of that scenario where they were just on a kind of power trip where they clearly felt that they could get away with anything and they seemed determined to humiliate me and kind of break me and that ... the kind of reason ... they gave various different kinds of quote unquote "reasons" for the strip search over the years, but essentially, it was a means of intimidation and punishment, because I didn't tell them my details when I arrived at the police station, because I thought that what they'd done was completely unjust. And I didn't want to go along with it. I didn't want to comply with it. 'Cos I thought it was wrong.

**Rebecca Toal** 09:08

Yeah. How are you doing, first of all?

**Koshka Duff** 09:10

I'm okay thank you.

**Rebecca Toal** 09:14

Okay. Don't hesitate to say, "Okay, I need a break now" or anything because it's ... I mean, it's hard to hear, let alone recount.

**Koshka Duff** 09:21

Aw thank you. Yeah, I kind of ... I always feel torn on this, because on the one hand, it is quite challenging to talk about. On the other hand, I know that police are doing this ... you know, day in and day out. And most people that they do it to are not lucky enough to get a hearing, and so it feels really important for me... Yeah, it feels important to kind of take every opportunity to describe what it's kind of like from the side of somebody who is being criminalised and targeted by the police. Because that's the

side of the story that so rarely gets heard and there's such a kind of gulf between the people who are ... and the communities that are experiencing that day in and day out, and then the people who kind of have no idea really what goes on behind the cell walls, because what happened to me is actually really normalised in policing. That is the kind of bread and butter of their work that I ... you know, I do, I do try to communicate that with a wider group of people as much as I can.

**Rebecca Toal** 10:26

Yeah, well, thank you, like, it is clearly really essential to keep talking about it and to use whatever horrific experience you've had to just keep putting it out there, which is, yeah...

**Koshka Duff** 10:38

Thank you.

**Rebecca Toal** 10:39

In total awe. You were studying...

**Koshka Duff** 10:41

Yes. Yeah, in the immediate aftermath of this incident, I was such a mess. I was kind of, had been kept in the police station for 24 hours. And, and then when I was, when I was released, I was on bail and and then subsequently charged with obstructing and assaulting police, and that kind of criminal case against me went on for months. I was eventually acquitted of everything at the trial, but that was ... that was quite unexpected, to be honest, because there were a whole line of police officers ready to stand up and lie about me and that's usually what courts and judges believe. And the process of being on trial is itself a form of punishment. And the police kind of ... seen it in a lot of other cases as well, the police kind of can use it quite cynically, as a way of inflicting punishment, even when they know that they might not get or they won't get a conviction. And so they'll kind of string out the process of you facing these charges for months and months, and then ... and then drop the case on the day of the trial or something like that. And I've seen that happen to quite a few friends who were like targeted for engaging in protests.

**Rebecca Toal** 10:42

Wow. ...the Royal College. So what was your experience, like in the days after? I mean, I think you were preparing for your final recital? Like how on earth could you be in that mindset of having to just go back to music college?

**Koshka Duff** 10:42

Yeah, the kind of injuries from ... like the handcuff injuries in particular, just completely mashed up my wrists and my hands, and, and yeah, I wasn't able to play the piano. And so I certainly wasn't going to be doing my final recital. Then the psychological impact was quite intense, as well. And actually, that kind of lasted for many years with like, kind of flashbacks and panic attacks and that kind of thing. But in the immediate aftermath, it just sort of spiralled into every aspect of my life because I was working as a philosophy tutor, like freelance tutoring, and I found that I was in such a mess with my mental health that then I couldn't carry on doing that job. And so then I lost my income and so then I couldn't carry on renting a room. And so then I was kind of moving around between friends' sofa and things like that for

quite a few months and didn't have access to a piano during that time. And yeah, so it took quite a long time to get back on my feet after that. And that was from sort of starting situation of being ... of having a lot more support and kind of background advantages to draw on than most of the people that the police are targeting, who kind of are overwhelmingly kind of oppressed, marginalised, vulnerable people. So a year later, I was able to do the final recital, and I was really, really happy about that actually. I was uh... because it seemed so completely out of reach, but I suspended my studies and I went back and I just did the recital a year later. And I kind of incorporated my experience into the performance, in that ... so I had my programme for the recital was that I played a late Schubert sonata and I played Four Dirges by Bartok. And I had been going to play some Bach, but instead of the Bach, a friend of mine, who was a the composer at the Royal Academy, wrote me a piece of music for piano and electronics that I kind of interspersed... .. through the whole programme. So a bit at the start, a bit in between the Schubert and the Bartok and then a bit at the end and the the electronic component involved, like this really incredible poem that a friend of mine had written that was Danny Hayward, an absolutely incredible poet, like ... look up their stuff cos it's so brilliant. And it was just kind of quiet like I there and Italy's poem. And it was another friend of mine recorded a reading of it. And then it was like, incorporated into the music, which involve quite a lot of extended techniques, kind of messing around inside the piano and tagging the lead and getting getting out. And I really am incredibly grateful to my piano teacher actually, for being so I mean, is a wonderful teacher in general, but also really gave me the space to do this thing, which I think was light outside of, of, as I understand it, his own experience, but supported me in doing the best I could with this with this music, which I think you know, quite bizarre. But for me, I really love the ways that it reflected on the other more kind of, quote unquote, conventional aspects of the programme are they say, quote, unquote, conventional, because, um, you know, I imagine this will have come up in, in other discussions on this podcast, but there's so much like in the Western classical music tradition, there's so much rebellion and, and like, social complexity, and I find out through this process that shuba also was arrested, which was not not something I knew before. And yeah, I finally find out this story about how he was arrested in as part of the kind of crackdowns in the Austro Hungarian empire on kind of students than radicals and kind of the sorts of artistic gatherings and one of the friends Johansson was deported for these alleged political different offences. And Schumer and some other old his friends were arrested and the court I find was severely reprimanded for inveighing against officials with valid appropriate language. Which, that's crazy. Like this similarity. Yeah. which I felt was like the closest I could think of to That was Section Five of the public order i, which is something that people often arrested or, you know, swearing up to the assaulted person thing. We're doing actually another another musician, a Watty, who is really worth looking up or his amazing music. And also, his case was recently successful in overturning the gangs matrix, the police gangs matrix database, which is this kind of incredibly racist database that's been kind of recently through his case rule to be unlawful. He was working with liberty and some others to challenge that I thought of a Wati right now because he was charged with section five of the Public Order Act for his participation in an anti EDL protests. So again, it's the kind of far right racist and Islamophobic group the English defensively and or added absurd insult to injury in that case was that he was charged with racially aggravated sexual vibe as a black Muslim guy confronting this extremely Islamophobic or right hate group, he said something like, But Cuba flagged for Cuban fried, and that was deemed to be grounds to charge him with racially aggravated public border fence, which I guess Yeah, shows clearly that what the police are there to protect and promote.

**Rebecca Toal 19:03**

And yeah, and that is still happening from Schubert's time to literally right now. Okay, so in terms of, you know, the year that followed, then preparing for the final recital again, which by the way, the programme just sounds like just incredible and like, I can't imagine the panel knew what had hit them after like, a normal recital of just like loads of Bach and some, you know, some piano concertos and stuff and then they're faced with this. That's brilliant. Um but yeah, like, tell me about the process of like, getting back to the piano after like, cuz you know, we've we've spoken to a few people that have been injured, you know, just randomly without traumatic circumstances, like, how was it to get back into the piano with not only like a physical injury, but like a psychological trauma as well?

**Koshka Duff 20:03**

It's a bit of a complex story for me in that, on the one hand, playing music, and as time has gone on also increasingly writing music and kind of improvising music and making up music, making and making up music has been just extraordinarily healing and important for me. So I have often felt like my kind of intensity of emotion around a lot of things would be just impossible to live with if I didn't make music. Like it, it can be a really great thing. It could also be like, yeah, something that like needs an outlet, and like needs expression. And so I've felt just lucky beyond measure in having ... different people have like loads of different ways. And for me, music has been a way that ... I couldn't live without it. At the same time, the kind of physical consequences of those injuries have been really long lasting and complex, in that I now have chronic pain that kind of first developed in my hands and wrist through that process of having the quite severe injuries and then because of all of the kind of chaos in my life, as well as the injuries, not playing the piano for a period of time, during which I didn't realise - I wasn't thinking of it then - but the muscles deteriorate quite significantly, because you're used to using them for a few hours every day, and then you aren't doing that. And so then when I went back to it just ... and kind of prepared for that recital - and it wasn't just one recital, I also had a chamber music recital and I had a recital with the singer and, oh I was ... like it was ... I was delighted to do those things. But going back to those, just going for it in the way that I had before, actually inflicted further their injury on my hands because the the joints were not supported by the muscles in the same way as they had been. And so then I develop this kind of initially twinging and then like burning and quite debilitating pain in my hands, and then subsequently in my back and and it was basically, it transpired that I have a hypermobility condition, which I'd always had, because it's something that you always have, but ... which I'd never had identified before, and which certainly hadn't impacted me in anything like the way that it that it did after those experiences. But for a long time I kind of ... while I was waiting for referrals to come through and just kind of like "why am I ... Why am I waking up every morning with my hands seeming like they're on fire? Why does it hurt if I touch the piano? Why do I need to lie on the floor for hours every day because my back hurts so much?" When I was in in that state, I guess I was quite seriously confronting the possibility that I wouldn't be able to play the piano again. And yeah, when I thought that I might not be able to play the piano again. That was that was devastating. I also ... I guess I also felt through some ways in which being a musician for me was about more than just that ... I guess kind of was more of me than than just the physical production of the sounds. And I spent a bit of time reflecting on how I experience listening to music in a way that was still thanks to the time that I had spent playing it. And that being something that was, you know, not not taken away by the kinds of physical incapacity, the love and appreciation and the forms of listening that become possible through through the practice of making music. But then, very luckily for me, I did you eventually get diagnosis to explain what was



going on. I got a lot of physiotherapy and I got, kind of most transformatively for me, to take part in this NHS pain management course over...

**Rebecca Toal** 24:43

Oh wow.

**Koshka Duff** 24:43

It was ... it took over a year to get on to it with the waiting list, but it was yeah an extraordinary and transformative experience in that it was a full day or sometimes two days a week over the course of a couple of months. Kind of one-on-one and group work that kind of combined the the kind of physical with the psychological and more broadly kind of holistic aspects of pain. And through that, with other people who were experiencing somewhat similar hypermobility-related pain to what I was, and the group of us that - this must have been 2017 or 2016 - at this stage, the group of us that did that pain management course together are still in a WhatsApp group. ...because it was such an important experience, I guess. And it kind of helped me to learn to work with my body and be, I guess, more accepting of doing things in the presence of pain. And also, like taking care of letting myself rest. And as well as kind of, yeah, so a lot, a lot about pacing, a lot about kind of, I guess, reflecting on what's on what's really valuable to you, and how to be able to do more of what you value, sometimes in the presence of pain, like not being completely ...

**Rebecca Toal** 25:39

Aww. Yes.

**Koshka Duff** 26:19

... not be completely kind of dictated to by the pain. And it helped me to, yeah, I guess, learn what a incredibly complex phenomenon pain is and to, you know, in some ways, come to terms with that being part of my experience as a companion, rather than always an antagonist.

**Rebecca Toal** 26:41

Yeah, that's a really good point.

**Koshka Duff** 26:44

There's a really wonderful performance ... piece of performance art by somebody who I knew way back many years ago - Sarah Hopfinger - at the what was then RSA&D, but now is the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland or something....But they have a performance, kind of multimedia movement, audio, kind of incredible performance called Pain and I, which I ... this is much more recently, but I find it really, really resonated for me about that kind of relationship with a pain that's a part of yourself.

**Rebecca Toal** 27:22

Wow, there's also a really good documentary, like radio documentary by Hannah French, on, oh, what's it called the Silence of my Pain or something like that. And it's, as somebody who doesn't experience chronic pain, it was just so amazing to hear somebody go into such like depth about something that I've never heard discussed in relation to music.

**Koshka Duff** 27:46

Oh, thank you for that. Yeah, I will, I would really like to check that out. Through that pain management course, I built back up to playing the piano again, through a process of, you know, starting off with five minutes every couple of days with loads of stretching and stuff before and after. And, like, adding to that baseline just little bit week on week until I was able to play for longer. And so yeah, I was able to kind of get back into playing the piano. And I think after that point, I had just a really different appreciation for being able to play than I had ever had before. I felt kind of ...

**Rebecca Toal** 28:37

Yeah, I know exactly.

**Koshka Duff** 28:39

...Liberated from a lot of pressures and judgments that are really present in a lot of classical music education, that, like if it's not perfect, it's worthless. And, you know, it needs to be the big repertoire and that kind of thing. And I was like, I was just really freed from that, because I was so delighted to be able to play a little piece. But I just loved it and I wanted to share it with people and that kind of, like I was became so happy to play to friends or mess around and make music with friends, where before I might have been held back by being like, "Oh, I haven't prepared anything to concert standard." And but just loving every minute of being able to play did transform my relation to music in a way that I'm really ...

**Rebecca Toal** 29:38

That's so special. Like I yeah, I mean, out of such a terrible thing, that is such a beautiful thing to come out of it. So talking about your relationship with music now ... so you said you're in a band that's just released an EP.

**Koshka Duff** 29:56

Yep.

**Rebecca Toal** 29:56

Had you always been into kind of writing less ... like being involved in kind of less classical music before or was this something that started solely after the incident?

**Koshka Duff** 30:09

This this band Stolen Goods has been a wild ride and wholly new experience for me in I had I had never written songs before. I've never written poetry before which I also kind of got into this ... what it kind of came out of was meeting this new friend, Tom, who plays guitar, and is also one of the authors in the Abolishing the Police collection, because they do really amazing work on resisting detention centres and deportations and kind of border violence. But we kind of were like ... started messing around and kind of jamming a bit together, just like to start off with in his attic with me playing like a MIDI keyboard just absolutely for fun. We were trying to reconstruct Daft Punk songs, I think was the ...

**Rebecca Toal** 31:12

Yes!



**Koshka Duff 31:12**

... where it began, and then reading a lot of poetry together. I think I mentioned before, my friend Danny, whose poem had been part of that, of that piece at my final recital. And yeah, other poets that I was really inspired by and I'd done a bit of translating of poetry, this really incredible poet, Frances Kruk, who is a friend of mine, and her collection of poems called 'Pin', which is like, really quite weird, Gothic, sort of stuff about like gendered and domestic labour and the history of factory girls' struggles. And I just find it absolutely incredible and I translated that collection into German as initially just for fun, but then I got so into it and it came out as like a little, a little collection with a small press run by some of these friends in Berlin. And I'd also spent some time in Berlin. I was ... I did a Erasmus semester while I was at the Royal College of Music at the University der Kunste Berlin and so I was kind of they're having piano lessons back in 2012 time. Anyway, yeah, long story short, I'd kind of got into some poetry and I was reading a bunch of poetry with Tom, and that's sort of where the songs started to appear was just that we started making some songs out of poems, and then it just escalated from there. I moved off the MIDI keyboard onto the piano and got myself an electric piano, which I had previously been very opposed to, but it turns out they can actually be great. And yeah, that was part of the sort of genesis of the name Stolen Goods was because sometimes we would ... yeah, we would like take words from other people's poems. And also take musical ideas I mean, you know, like as happens with full stop just not everyone talks about it, you know, became really obsessed with the Schumann's Kinderszenen because I could only play little pieces. And so those were little pieces that I loved to play and were very special to me - some of the first things that I was able to play again after the after the kind of pain hit and actually the last song on the EP has a little chord sequence ...

**Rebecca Toal 33:38**

Yeah.

**Koshka Duff 33:39**

...from one of the Kinderszenen that's like buried in it. I don't know ... I don't imagine it would be immediately apparent to people but ... and also another song on there "We Are" which kind of starts with all this noise that we recorded a protest against this immigration detention centre ...

**Rebecca Toal 34:01**

Oh wow!

**Koshka Duff 34:02**

...Morton Hall in Lincolnshire which has since been turned into a prison, so that's not really progress but that song is ... also uses some chords from a Chopin Prelude that I, again, was one of those pieces that I was like...

**Rebecca Toal 34:17**

I can play this!

**Koshka Duff 34:18**

A little piece!

**Rebecca Toal** 34:20

Yeah.

**Koshka Duff** 34:20

I love you, little pieces.

**Rebecca Toal** 34:21

You're saving me. That's incredible. Yeah, it feels like your voice as an artist in the band is like, you're using your life experiences and things that, you know, philosophical ideas, to kind of almost make political action through kind of art, which, I guess is kind of the basis of so much art but is that intentional, or is that just ... that's just what's happened?

**Koshka Duff** 34:51

Um, I don't think much of the trajectory of, of the band is kind of intentional in the sense of being envisioned ...

**Rebecca Toal** 35:00

Wow.

**Koshka Duff** 35:01

But I would say like, the songwriting process is so intensely collaborative, that it's, it's kind of, it's like, a protest in that it's the kind of thing that I couldn't do... I couldn't create that by myself. But it's so very me...

**Rebecca Toal** 35:24

Yes.

**Koshka Duff** 35:25

... that is creating it. That kind of, you know, enhanced agency, through a collective. And I guess, it being, like, it definitely is political, it kind of couldn't not be, that's my experience of life. And at the same time, I think it's way more weird that it is didactic, like... I think, like, we run an open mic night at our local pub, which is something that I really love ...

**Rebecca Toal** 36:01

Amazing.

**Koshka Duff** 36:01

Because it's that kind of community building, that sort of making... like helping create, kind of co-create a space in which people can share all kinds of creative endeavours in a hugely supportive environment. And it creates, yeah, it creates kind of community and connections, and you see people coming who've never performed before, and then they have a really good experience, and they come back ... and they become a regular, and it's ... it feels really special to get to be ... to get to be part of that. And like we play our songs there, and they do have a lot of ... yeah, I guess a lot of intense experiences of policing of all kinds of resistance, like embedded in them and kind of, you know, mental health challenges and

the kind of wildness of emotions present there, but I think people can connect with it without that being in the forefront of their mind, if that makes sense? Or at least ...

**Rebecca Toal 37:08**

Yeah, yeah.

**Koshka Duff 37:09**

...the fact ... been really lovely experiences when it feels like people are connecting with it from all kinds of different places. Not ... it's like - this was something I got from that crew of poets - is sometimes we don't have to know exactly what's going on and spell everything out really clearly. Sometimes being kind of... I love that. ... kind of confused, and there are these residencies going in all different directions, but it's really quite baffling and ambiguous is like a joy of art of many different kinds. So yeah, yeah, I feel lucky to get to play around in that, in that sort of way, and I guess another big part of my experience, my musical experience that I was drawing on in this, is the I played in a ceilidh band for many years. So...

**Rebecca Toal 38:09**

Oh wow!

**Koshka Duff 38:10**

Yeah, cuz I grew up in the northeast of Scotland, in Aberdeen. I went to kind of state music school in Aberdeen and yeah, I played in a ceilidh band. And so played a lot of folk music and, and like, still still really love that music. And the like, that introduced me to a whole lot of skills around like improvising and sort of ... that I didn't get from my other training. And so ...

**Rebecca Toal 38:46**

Yeah.

**Koshka Duff 38:46**

...and that was like a really crucial bit of the jigsaw for me in like enabling me to then kind of start getting like way more wacky and doing my own thing is that I had that the kind of the background in that folk tradition, which also has, I mean, it's got so many different themes around it, I don't want to homogenise but like, the value of just having a good time and not worrying about whether it's perfect is something that is like present in a lot of folk music making. And and I think I've come to, I've come to embrace the tension, the kind of generative tension between the value of having a vision and trying to make things better and better and better. And, and the value of loving it in the here and now. I don't want to resolve it into one side, or the other, like that kind of generative tension between them.

**Rebecca Toal 39:49**

That is such a beautiful, beautiful thing. And that kind of the perfect way to kind of bring our conversation to an end. It's just so beautiful to hear that your ... about your relationship with music as it is now. And yeah, we talk a lot on the podcast about kind of perfectionism and this idea that there is one right way to be a musician, that yeah, it's just so refreshing to hear someone just so eloquently be like, "No, it's not...It's not about that." So thank you, it's just honestly amazing to hear you talk.

**Koshka Duff** 40:28

Thank you very much.

**Rebecca Toal** 40:29

Yeah, so just to round off our episodes, we usually do a little win of the week. So just something ... because, you know, we talk about pretty heavy stuff on the podcast, and it's nice to just like give something kind of light at the end to just make sure everybody's not all depressed. No, but it's been a very uplifting conversation to be fair, this one. So, my win of the week is that ... I can't actually think of one right now. Oh, yeah, to be fair, I like let some of the household chores like slide a little bit to like prioritise my rest and wellbeing this week.

**Koshka Duff** 41:08

Yes!

**Rebecca Toal** 41:08

Which sounds so boring, but it's like so impressive for me. I'm like, "I'm not gonna Hoover. You will Hoover instead!" And nobody has but it wasn't me.

**Koshka Duff** 41:18

Clap clap clap clap!

**Rebecca Toal** 41:21

Thank you. Big bows everywhere. Do you have anything ... your small win of the week Koshka?

**Koshka Duff** 41:29

Well, your win of the week has just reminded me the last song on our EP which does have a significant chunk about how much I hate housework.

**Rebecca Toal** 41:39

I literally can't wait to listen to this EP.

**Koshka Duff** 41:42

But um, okay, win, win, win, win. Oh, yes.

**Rebecca Toal** 41:46

A small win.

**Koshka Duff** 41:47

A small win. Yeah, I'll put away my massive wins I've got over here.

**Rebecca Toal** 41:52

We've had some big wins! Honestly, we've had so many people be like, "oh, yeah, like I you know, wrote a book or something," and we're like, "okay, but ... but ...okay." Now I feel bad about myself. So you can have any kind of thing you want but, you know, just saying.

**Koshka Duff** 42:11

I hate to say I happy about thing that I've been writing which is an article that I've nearly finished, which is a critical article about policing, but I...

**Rebecca Toal** 42:24

That's pretty good!

**Koshka Duff** 42:25

I think just ... just I experienced the love of a number of kitty cats this week. I've got two who live with me like two little familiars, my tiny comrades Pickles McWickles and her baby, Croissant. And then one of McWickles' other ... well, she had two kittens and the other kitten, Wicket, has been climbing over me in the course of this of this recording because Wicket lives with my partner, Chris, in Bristol and then Chris' other little cat, Anares, is just popping their head around the door right now and so my win it's spending time in the presence of those ...

**Rebecca Toal** 43:09

I can't cope!

**Koshka Duff** 43:11

There's such music in their existence when they just don't give a shit and they like lick their butts and they're like...

**Rebecca Toal** 43:19

"I'm a cat, there's nothing you can do about it and I'm gonna like enjoy being a cat."

**Koshka Duff** 43:23

Yeah, exactly. And sometime when like music is playing, they like get up against a speaker and they're like "mroogh".

**Rebecca Toal** 43:29

My little vibrating butt!

**Koshka Duff** 43:31

When Stolen Goods starts playing, McWickles is like "this is too noisy." And like, this is like "mroooogh".

**Rebecca Toal** 43:39

I mean I play the trumpet... like none of my cats like the trumpet.

**Koshka Duff** 43:42

Awww I'm sorry. I'm sure they appreciate you in other ways.

**Rebecca Toal** 43:46

Uhh I think they appreciate that I buy them food, I guess.

**Koshka Duff** 43:50

Yeah,

**Rebecca Toal** 43:50

That's a big one. I mean, I don't know if they realise that but that's ...

**Koshka Duff** 43:54

Basic. Yeah absolutely.

**Rebecca Toal** 43:55

I do a lot for them. But, no, honestly Koshka, like thank you so so much for chatting with me, like it's just been one of those interviews where you're like, "I can't wait for people to hear this and ... urgh! I love you!"

**Koshka Duff** 44:15

Aww thank you! Delighted to have been on the show and yeah, thank you. Thank you very much!

**Rebecca Toal** 44:24

But yeah, thank you so much for coming.