

The Sixsters is a Ukrainian rock band founded in 2018 by drummer Kateryna (Kate) Kuziakina in a town near Kyiv. Kate began playing drums at the age of six. Her father, Alex, noticed her growing passion for music and, seeing her deep interest and motivation, suggested they form a band together — one that would include other girls who shared the same enthusiasm for playing. This idea led to the creation of The Sixsters, where Alex has remained closely involved with the band since its formation, serving as its producer and creative lead, supporting the group in both its artistic development and long-term direction.

Between 2018 and early 2022, the group actively participated in the Ukrainian rock scene, performing at festivals and local events. Their early repertoire included songs in both Ukrainian and English. During this period, they developed their sound through rehearsals, songwriting, and live appearances. They played their first live gig in July 2018 at Chornomorski Ihry festival in Skadovsk. In 2021, they won a competition organized by the Ukrainian band Antytila, which opened new opportunities for them. As a result, they were invited to take part in a stadium tour with Antytila, which was scheduled for June 2022, but the tour was ultimately canceled due to the outbreak of war.

In February 2022, the Russian invasion of Ukraine disrupted the band's plans. Some members were forced to leave the country, while others stayed in shelters during the first months of the conflict. Despite being separated and facing uncertainty, the group stayed in contact, each member expressing the desire to continue working together when possible. As the war escalated, the band members found themselves in different parts of Europe. Some left Ukraine early, while others spent time in shelters or were forced to flee later. During this uncertain time, communication between the members was difficult, and the future of the band remained unclear.

Some months later, Kate approached her father and asked, "Dad, is The Sixsters over?" That question became the starting point for a new chapter. Determined to keep the project alive, Alex and his family began traveling across Europe, reconnecting with each of the girls — some now living in Spain, others in Switzerland and Germany — to ask if they wanted to continue. All of them said yes. By mid-2022, the band reunited in Essen, Germany, where they were offered space to rehearse and record at Future Campus Ruhr. This opportunity came after Kateryna's father, Alex, initially planned to relocate the family to the United Kingdom. However, during that time, a fan of The Sixsters suggested he connect with his friend Peter, a creative industry professional based in Essen. Taking this advice, Alex reached out — and Peter not only welcomed the family into his home, but also generously offered his studio space at Future Campus Ruhr. This gesture became a turning point for the band, giving them a place to regroup, rehearse, and begin recording their first English-language material. Their first session after regrouping resulted in a new song titled "Happiness." This marked the beginning of a new creative phase for the band, now working and living in different parts of Europe but centered in Germany.

In December 2022, they released their first English-language studio album, *I'm Gonna Be*, recorded at Future Campus Ruhr. On December 17, 2022, The Sixsters gave their first solo concert in Germany at Zeche Carl in Essen, where they performed songs from the new album.

In June 2023, The Sixsters reached a major milestone in their international presence by performing at the Glastonbury Festival in the United Kingdom. As one of the most well-known music festivals in the world, Glastonbury brought together artists from across genres and countries. The Sixsters shared the lineup with established acts such as Måneskin, Foo Fighters, Elton John and Slowdive, presenting their material to a diverse and global audience. Their

appearance at Glastonbury marked not only a step forward in their touring experience, but also introduced the band to new listeners outside of Eastern Europe. Performing their English-language material in front of an international festival crowd allowed them to further develop their live presence and strengthen their connection with audiences beyond their home country. That same month, The Sixsters also took part in the Come Together Festival in London, continuing their engagement with UK-based music events.

In 2023, the band built their own professional recording studio in Essen, supported by their producer and creative lead Alex. In this new space, they recorded their second full-length English-language album, *To Be Continued...*, released in 2024.

In 2024, The Sixsters were selected as Fair Play Ambassadors by JMI, joining a global network of young artists committed to using music as a tool for social change. As part of this role, the band has participated in several international initiatives and forums aimed at promoting fairness, anti-corruption, and youth empowerment through the arts. Their involvement included appearances at the International Anti-Corruption Conference (IACC), the Break Free Festival, and two major youth events in 2025: the EYE2025 (European Youth Event) at the European Parliament in Strasbourg, and the JMI EQ Youth Training and Global Conference in Debrecen, Hungary. A particularly symbolic moment took place during their performance at the Break Free Festival in Lukiškės Prison, Lithuania, where the band played in a decommissioned prison space—turning a place once associated with confinement into a platform for artistic freedom and dialogue. The Sixsters see their ambassador role not only as a recognition, but as a responsibility to advocate through their music. They actively use their performances and platforms to spread awareness about justice, freedom of expression, and youth empowerment, believing that music is a powerful way to connect with and inspire people across borders.

In autumn 2024, The Sixsters performed as the support act for Beatsteaks in Munich and Vienna, playing in front of more than 7,000 people at each show. This marked a major step forward in the band's live performance experience and allowed them to reach new audiences in Europe.

Later in 2024, The Sixsters reached #18 on the German Metal Rock Charts (MRC), reflecting their growing recognition within the German rock and alternative scenes. The band was also selected as official Endorsers of Fame Instruments, a German musical instrument company. That same year, they were featured in Gitarre & Bass magazine under the headline: "*The Sixsters: Ukrainian Riot Girls*". Since relocating to Germany in 2022, The Sixsters have steadily grown their presence in the European music scene through a series of high-profile festival performances. Their appearances include Glastonbury (UK), Open Flair, Bochum Total, Juicy Beats, EselRock, Ackerbrand, and Essen Original in Germany. They also performed at the Break Free Festival in Lithuania and the Youth Festival organized by JMI in Hungary. In 2024, they had the opportunity to support the German punk rock band Beatsteaks during shows in Germany and Austria, playing in front of crowds of over 7,000. These performances have played a key role in establishing The Sixsters as an energetic and rising live act across the European rock circuit.

The current lineup includes:

- Mariia Krutsenko – lead vocals, rhythm guitar
- Anna Voloshyna – solo guitar, backing vocals
- Sofiia Chernova-Kurkykina – keyboards, backing vocals
- Kateryna Kuziakina – drums, backing vocals
- Polina Zagnoi – bass guitar, backing vocals