

Breakthrough

From Wollongong to LA, Porcelain are wowing the cool crowd. Marc Andrews meets "girl's girl" singer, Lo Roberts.



DNA: How long has Porcelain been together?

Lo Roberts: Ten years in one form or another. I've been writing songs with Ben Richards, the lead guitarist, for ten years but we've changed formats a few times. We started off as an acoustic duo. But the band as it is has been around for about five. We're an ever-changing entity but Porcelain – the music, idea and the body – has been around for about ten years. **Your sound is very radio-friendly. You're unashamedly pop, right?**

Totally. We were all raised on that type of music from The Beatles to Fleetwood Mac. I was raised on Motown like Stevie Wonder and Lionel Richie and these people never shied away from a catchy tune. I love uniting people through songs. That takes catchiness and memorability, which goes hand-in-hand with pop, so I'm not ashamed of that at all.

Are you happy getting all the attention as the front person?

I was born a show-off. Performing for me is about channelling the negative parts of being an attention seeker into something that can benefit everyone – turning it into a service instead of selfishness. Being able to evoke emotion in a person is a really powerful thing.

How do you define yourself sexually?

Australia is such a great country for diversity and self-expression. I absolutely appreciate the enormous response we've had from the gay community. I'm gay, but I'm more than just gay. I don't consider that my entire life because

my music is such an important part of who I am – it's the first thing I think about talking about. When it comes to support or standing up for rights I am the first in line. I also think there are other interesting things about me, too, and I don't want them to be lost.

What do you think about Ruby Rose, who is an out lesbian?

Ruby is a great example of turning something that people can attack into something people can learn from. She is a great pillar of the

"I'm gay, but I'm more than just gay."

community and everyone who knows her respects her, myself included. I hope more people like Ruby can help create a fuller picture of diversity on television.

And she's hot. Even the gay boys want to sleep with her!

Yes [laughs]! I've yet to meet someone who doesn't think Ruby Rose is a fox!

Do you have many gay male friends?

Absolutely. A girl would be lost without her gay boyfriends.

Even a girl's girl?

Absolutely [laughs]! I like having a boundless personality. The minute any community shuts me in the first thing I want to do is rebel. If that's the last thing you would expect a lesbian

to do then that's probably the first thing I will do. I have many gay male friends and I wouldn't trade them for anything.

So who's your diva?

Annie Lennox. Nobody gets even near her in terms of talent, control of image and complete power on stage. For a white woman she has the most intense amount of soul.

Would Porcelain ever consider performing at Sydney's Mardi Gras?

Totally. Our band is interested in being a full and participating member of the community. I'm not the only band member that belongs to a minority, though. There's a bunch of different causes we go for but that certainly does not preclude the gay cause.

What's your message to the readers of DNA?

The biggest thing about the album is to stay tuned. You'll be surprised by the diversity. Because we are a unisex outfit – two girls and three guys – we attract a unisex audience. If you come to a Porcelain gig, you're not going to be short of cute guys to check out [laughs]!

The single *The Last Song* is available through Universal Music.



SO FRENCHY SO CHIC

Here's the latest collection of delicious French pop that makes up the annual *So Frenchy So Chic* compilation. Timed with

the French Film Festival, which tours around Australia during March, it features 34 artists who range from French actress Charlotte Gainsbourg to Johnny Depp's lady love Vanessa Paradis and cover version supremos Nouvelle Vague, tackling an underground '80s hit *Under The Flag*. The music spans chanson, rock, electro and urban, with even a couple of the tracks – *sacre bleu!* – in English. For the adventurous, cock an ear to Emille Simon's *Rocket To The Moon* and ponder how much of an influence Björk has been for Francophiles.



ALICIA KEYS – THE ELEMENT OF FREEDOM

Ms Keys has long been under-appreciated in the Antipodes. Perhaps this will be the album that sees the situation turn around. The album features her hit with Jay-Z, *Empire State Of Mind*, as a proper song minus the rapping bits, plus Beyoncé adding her duet powers to *Puf In A Love Song*, which is much better than either of the two duets she recently recorded with Lady GaGa. *Doesn't Mean Anything* is Alicia going for the big Coldplay anthem while moody ballads remain Alicia's bread and butter (the '80s power ballad *Try Sleeping With A Broken Heart*, *Love Is Blind* and *Un-thinkable*). If you get off on soulful pop, this has all the right elements!