

Starting again at home

PORCELAIN

April 16, 8pm:
Beaches Hotel, Thirroul
Free entry

If the buzz in Hollywood is anything to go by, Wollongong pop powerhouse Porcelain is destined for great things.

The quintet has been slogging it out on Sunset Blvd for the best part of a decade, commanding the attention of Universal Music and a litany of industry heavyweights along the way.

Now Porcelain is back with a fistful of punchy pop songs, ready to knock out home crowds with their personal brand of kick-arse music.

Speaking from her parents' Albion Park property, Porcelain frontwoman Lo Roberts is excited to be tackling the home frontier - even if that means ditching the glitzy Hollywood lifestyle for a while.

"The line is breaking up and I'm on a landline, would you believe it?," Roberts laughs as she discusses the band's pending assault of the Australian music scene.

Lo, I've a feeling you're not in Hollywood anymore.

But Roberts, who has returned to the country with Austinmer's Ewen Penberthy-Groves (bass), Ben Richards (guitar), Asha Mevlana (electric violin) and Michael Avenaim (drums), says the band is exactly where they want to be.

"We always knew that we would come back to Australia to release the record first," the 29-year-old explains.

"We just wanted to go over and make it over there, and create the record in an environment where our influences would really shape the record in a more global (manner).

"It's interesting to be a small fish in the pond again, after going to LA and

really working ourselves up to be a more notorious band, and to then come back here and basically start from scratch. (It's strange) but it was totally worth it.

"Now we're back here getting it out there, where the story began, which was the plan the whole way along."

Porcelain's upcoming album *Freedom and Release* was carefully crafted by the group, who patiently recorded the album twice before settling on the tracks.

If the album's first single, *The Last Song*, is anything to go by, it won't take long for Australian audiences to take notice of Porcelain.

Roberts powers through the vocals, capturing the angst and heartache often associated with break-up music.

This is the record Roberts has been dying to make, ever since Porcelain left Australian shores in search of their dream.

"We went to Los Angeles to experience one of the music capitals of the world and really carve our craft there, but the side effects of that were we had to really pull our socks up - from a live point of view - because there were so many bands breaking through," she says.

"When we arrived our work ethic (changed dramatically), we played 200-and-something shows in the first year, four shows a week.

"But we've ended up coming back not only with a record that we're proud of - the band came back sounding tighter, a more efficient machine."

During the writing process, the group worked with a variety of industry greats including Linda Perry (who wrote songs for Pink), Mike Elizondo (who has written songs for Maroon 5), songwriter Holly Knight (Aerosmith, Pat Benatar), Mike Chapman (a songwriter for Blondie)



Lo Roberts (centre) and Porcelain are taking on the Australian music scene after a fruitful stint in Hollywood.

and producer Mike Green (Yellowcard, Paramore).

It was as the group sipped champagne and waited for their session with former 4 Non Blondes singer Perry (she had booked them in between Christina Aguilera and Enrique Iglesias) that they finally realised how far they had come.

"For me, that was the point when I really realised that I belong to the same infrastructure as these mega-stars ... and that's a big thing for a kid from Wollongong to comprehend,"

Roberts says.

"That was when I started feeling that our dream was coming true - so that was a massive buzz."

Back at home now, the band is prepared for the hard yards that lie ahead, though Roberts is excited to get reacquainted with Australian fans.

"We're basically just going to start from the beginning, go town by town, fan by fan carving a new relationship with our country and bringing the fruits of our labour to the Aussies."

BREE FULLER

Free download

Go to www.illawarramercury.com.au for a free download of Porcelain's latest single, *Bittersweet*. *The Last Song* will be available digitally from April 30 on iTunes and getmusic.com.au.

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