

[Cover] local love

Down to earth

MISSY HIGGINS TALKS WITH KATRINA FOX ABOUT GROWING UP, DISCOVERING WHO YOU ARE AND REJECTING LABELS.



Three years is a long time in the music world, but Missy Higgins didn't want to rush into releasing her second album. The singer-songwriter from Melbourne, who sang with her brother's band at the age of 13, rose to fame in 2001 after she won a Triple J Unearthed competition when she was still at high school. After taking a backpacking trip to Europe with her best friend, Higgins returned home and released *The Sound of White* in 2004.

"I guess I was a teenager when I wrote *The Sound of White* so I was going through the typical angst you go through at that age and you're trying to discover who you are," she tells *CHERRIE*. "It's a really hard time for most people at that age. There's so many questions and it's a time when you're trying to figure out who you want to be, don't want to be, how you want to be represented – there's so many outside pressures."

Still only 23, Higgins released *On a Clear Night* in April of this year – inspired by time she spent in Broome, Western Australia – which shows a more mature, yet still curious young woman. "Over the past few years I've grown up a lot and figured out a lot of things," she says. "There's still a lot of questioning I'm doing and probably will be doing for a long time because that's just me; I like to question everything around me in the world. [Broome] is a place that really inspired me. There's a lot of open space up there; there's something about the red and the scrub and long white beaches, it has an amazing energy about it."

Higgins' love of the natural environment is evident as she enthuses about her new hobby – rockclimbing. "I got into it about a year ago when I was in LA," she explains. "I met this girl who said she rock climbed and I asked her to take me with her next time she went. We went into the desert and I loved it. I love that you can completely lose yourself in the moment. There's a certain sense of meditation involved in calmly trying to place your weight over the rocks so you're completely balanced and it's just you and nature and nothing in between."

It's no surprise then that Higgins uses her celebrity status to educate people about the importance of taking care of the planet – something she feels very passionately about. Her tours are carbon-neutral (concertgoers have the option to add a small amount



to the price of their ticket which will be invested in renewable energy sources, thereby neutralising some of the unavoidable carbon emissions from the shows), and unlike other artists who claim to be eco-activists yet eat meat, she's proudly vegetarian. "There's so much the earth creates that's as good, if not better for us than meat," she asserts.

But while outspoken about environmental issues, Higgins is reluctant to talk about her personal life. Over the years there's been speculation about her sexuality but she's declined to claim any particular label on that front. However, when asked if she falls under *CHERRIE*'s moniker of 'not-so-straight' girls, she opens up a bit, laughs and says, "Um, yeah, definitely. I think a lot of people fall under that broad umbrella term. I think sexuality is a fluid thing and it's becoming increasingly more acceptable to admit that you're that way."

That's about as much she'll say on the subject, admitting that she finds it difficult to talk about. "It's hard to learn to live with the fact that people want to talk about your personal life at all and to get into sexuality and that kind of thing ... I'm not that comfortable with talking about anything about my personal life. I guess it comes from being a shy person. It's very different writing a personal song to talking about your personal life with a stranger. Most songwriters or artists begin their art because they need to find a way to express themselves because they have trouble doing it the way everyone else does through conversation. Then we get put in a position where we have to try and explain ourselves, whereas that's the very reason we're in that position in the first place!"

She does, however, have a final message for *CHERRIE* readers: "I'd like to say if you're comfortable with who you are inside, it doesn't matter what anyone else thinks. I don't think it's necessary to have to define yourself by any label. If you're comfortable with who you are and you know who you are on the inside, people will love you for it."

MISSY HIGGINS 'ONE NIGHT ONLY' NATIONAL TOUR DETAILS

17 NOVEMBER Kuranda Amphitheatre, CAIRNS, QLD Ticketlink: Ph: (07) 4031 9555 or www.ticketlink.com.au

18 NOVEMBER Townsville Entertainment & Convention Centre, TOWNSVILLE, QLD, Townsville Entertainment & Convention Centre Box Office Ph: (07) 4771 4000 or www.tecc.net.au

20 NOVEMBER Great Western Hotel, ROCKHAMPTON, QLD Counter sales from venue only: (39 Stanley Street, Rockhampton) Ph: (07) 4922 1862

22 NOVEMBER Gold Coast Convention Centre, GOLD COAST, QLD from usual Ticketek outlets Ph: 132 849 or www.ticketek.com.au

23 NOVEMBER Brisbane Entertainment Centre, BRISBANE, QLD from usual Ticketek outlets Ph: 132 849 or www.ticketek.com.au

24 NOVEMBER Mullumbimby Leagues Grounds, MULLUMBIMBY, NSW Phone & Counter Sales: All Music and Vision: Ballina (02) 6686 8111, Lismore (02) 6622 5399, Byron Bay (02) 6685 7611

25 NOVEMBER Coffs Harbour Showgrounds, COFFS HARBOUR, NSW Usual Ticketek Outlets Ph: 132 849 or www.ticketek.com.au

27 NOVEMBER Port Macquarie Panthers, PORT MACQUARIE, NSW Counter Sales from venue only: (1 Bay Street, Port Macquarie) Ph: (02) 6580 2300

28 NOVEMBER Tamworth Regional Entertainment Centre *Intimate Theatre Mode, TAMWORTH, NSW Tourism Tamworth Office: (Cnr Peel & Murray St, Tamworth). Ph: (02) 6767 5300 or www.visittamworth.com

30 NOVEMBER Newcastle Entertainment Centre, NEWCASTLE, NSW Venue Box Office (02) 4921 2121 and usual Ticketek outlets Ph: 132 849 or www.ticketek.com.au

1 DECEMBER Sydney Entertainment Centre, SYDNEY, NSW from usual Ticketmaster outlets Ph: 136 100 or www.ticketmaster.com.au

2 DECEMBER Belvoir Amphitheatre, PERTH, WA Tickets available from Beat Music, Karrinyup: (08) 9446 5839 or www.heatseeker.com.au

5 DECEMBER Rod Laver Arena *Intimate Theatre Mode, MELBOURNE, VIC from usual Ticketek outlets Ph: 132 849 or www.ticketek.com.au

7 DECEMBER Adelaide Entertainment Centre *Intimate Theatre Mode, ADELAIDE, SA from usual Ticketek outlets Ph: 132 849 or www.ticketek.com.au

8 DECEMBER Homebake Festival, The Domain, Sydney City, NSW www.homebake.com.au

9 DECEMBER Wollongong Entertainment Centre *Intimate Theatre Mode, WOLLONGONG, NSW from usual Ticketek outlets Ph: 132 849 or www.ticketek.com.au

For more on Missy, visit her website www.missyhiggins.com



Missy's new single is 'Peachy', from the album *On a Clear Night*.