

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

BLADE INTERVIEW

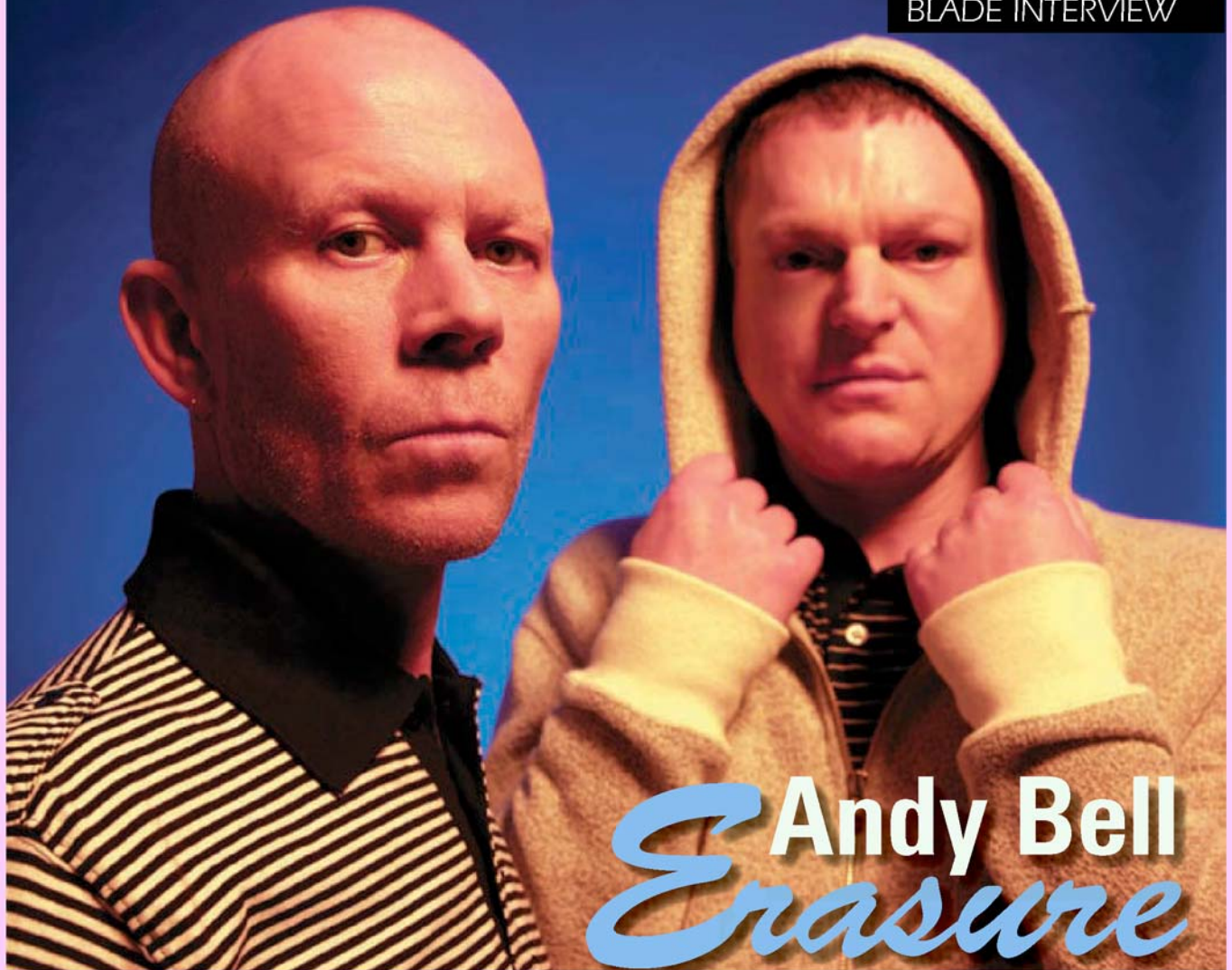


PHOTO BY STEVE DOUBLE

BY LANCE PERKINS

In advance of Erasure's new album and their joining forces with Cyndi Lauper on the upcoming True Colors tour, the *Blade* sat down for an interview with Andy Bell, one-half of the iconic British pop duo.

Erasure has sold more than 20 million albums worldwide, and now has followed

up their recent acoustic album *Union Street* with an upbeat pop album titled *Light at the End of the World*. They recorded the new album at a private home in Maine, which was temporarily converted into a music studio.

Andy Bell talks about recording that album with producer Gareth Jones, touring with Cyndi Lauper and Blondie, and about his new love.

Blade: How did you get involved with LOGO and HRC?

We were just asked. We heard they were starting up the gay channel, which is about two years or three years old now, isn't it?

Oh, definitely. How did you get involved with the True Colors tour?

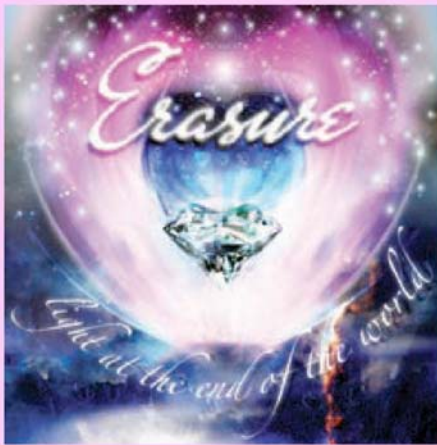
That was a plan our tour agent had. From New York, Johnny Zell. That

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was a couple years ago. He put together this whole package of bands and put it under some kind of banner like for a family kind of atmosphere, but kind of like gay-friendly for everybody.

Then I think he hooked up with Cyndi [Lauper] and she kind of like spearheaded the whole thing. She's a fan and we're fans of her. And all of these things kind of slotted into place, really.

With your new album coming out, it's really perfect timing. I saw your video for "I Could Fall in Love With You." I absolutely love how everybody sent in their pictures and videos kissing and showing love. I even saw a picture of you with Chi Chi LaRue!



We did one video first that was so boring that we rejected it. We just look so bored. We were supposed to have gone to a supermarket. The idea was to have a kind of Japanese product on the shelf, but all they were was painted soap boxes. Well, that's not very high-tech. I thought they would be like animated creatures. It was just so boring.

When we first saw the video I said, 'There's not enough gay couples.' Honestly, you really have to put your foot down. Because that was the one thing on the original video... they had this straight couple meeting up in the supermarket and snogging all the way through. And I said, 'No, that's wrong.'

It would be so cool if during the song at the concert everyone started kissing!



PHOTO BY LANCE PERKINS

Erasure joins Cyndi Lauper on the True Colors tour to benefit HRC.

An advertisement for "Friction Thursdays" at Shark Club. The background features a shirtless, muscular man. The text includes:
BoinkEvents presents
ORANGE COUNTY'S HOTTEST NIGHT
FRICITION
THURSDAYS
HEATING UP THE O.C. WITH POP HITS, TOP 40 AND HIP HOP
FERNANDO & ZACH MOOS
EXCLUSIVE DJS AT THE SHARK CLUB
21+ | 9PM-2AM | Free wait | Free appetizers | Free pool 9PM-10:30PM
Covered smoking patio | Multiple bars | Pool lounges
GUEST LIST SIGN UP: www.boinkevents.com
ADMITS 2 FOR THE PRICE OF 1 WITH THIS AD
UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENT: **MOULIN ROUGE** THURSDAY, MAY 10TH FEATURING DOLLY LAYI



PHOTO BY LANCE PERKINS

(L to R) Vince Clarke, Joan Jett and Andy Bell at the Logo / Time Warner party. Vince and Andy guest DJ'd and fought over what records to play.

So how's everything going in your life?

It's all getting a bit hectic now. It's all right. I like the building up to the whirlwind. When it starts getting all too hectic, I get a bit panicky. Once we're on the road, it's fine, because everything's been taken care of. You've got your hotel and all that sort of stuff. I get a bit panicky in the lead-up to it.

Your last album, *Union Street*, was all acoustic. It was like ode to *Brokeback Mountain*. It seems like with this one, you really wanted to go more pop and bring it out more fun. What made you decide to do that?

After we heard the *Electric Blue* record, we wanted to make a dance record. Vince [Clarke] said he'd like to make 10 tracks of music and I like just jamming along.

I like going into the studio and having jamming sessions with him. He won't let me touch anything. He said he was having a big tempo crisis, that we'd been quite slow for a while and it was time to snap out of it, make it like a more up-tempo record.

It could be played in violin and classical orchestra, but it's synthesizers. It's kind of like Disney's *Electric Light Parade*.

Yeah—Vince is almost like a one man band. We could do another album, called "Robot Work." That would be really lovely. {Laughs}

But then you come in with your lyrics. I notice you've been singing a lot deeper.

Yeah that happens with age. {Laughs}

It really sounds good. In *Storm in a Teacup* you talk about alcoholism and your mom. You really went a little bit more personal with that song.

I am not known for my heavy lyrics so this was something new for me.

The music in it almost sounds like it's underwater, like you're in a drink or something. In 2005, you disclosed your HIV. You knew since '98. What made you finally decide to disclose that?

Well, the thing was... I really hate keeping secrets. We were going on tours and having to postpone shows and things. You just can't keep making excuses. I can't keep doing it over and over again. It wasn't really helping what was going on.

How's your health now?

Fine. I have a bit of a cold now—it's all about timing, psychically. Like a cycle. The tour's coming up, so hopefully that'll all be out by the time I come on.

If Michael Jackson is the King of Pop and Björk is the Queen of Pop, what does that make you?

I'm like the gay Auntie of Pop. {Laughs}

Is David Bowie one of your main influences?

No—I would not say David Bowie, no. I would say definitely Donna Summer... Blondie, which is a huge deal, going on tour with them. You know, all the '80s stuff, all the really minimal electro stuff I really like. I love Boy George...

How's your partner Paul Hicky doing?

Oh, he's really fine. But I've been putting him through hell. Got to admit that I've been seeing somebody else. We've been working it out for a year-and-a-half. But I'm not the kind of person that would just dump somebody and walk off—because he's been part of my life for 21 years. We're still living together.

Has he responded to 'When a Lover Leaves You'?

Gareth Jones kept saying to me, 'Put the song into the first person, so he's singing about you.' So that's what we did.

Are you still involved in things like you were in the 2006 *Life After Stroke* awards?

Oh, yeah. Yeah, we do sometimes. Every now and then it does pop up. We get asked to do something, we see if we've got time and if we're around, we'll do it.

Erasure's new album, Light at the End of the Word was released in May. Erasure will also perform at the Grove of Anaheim in July. For more information, visit www.erasureinfo.com. For the True Colors Tour, visit www.truecolorstour.com. ▼