

## NUNN ON ONE: MUSIC

# Erasure's Andy Bell: Giving things a spin

BY JERRY NUNN

After more than 23 years together, Erasure, the duo of Andy Bell and Vince Clarke, have sold more than 15 million albums worldwide. Andy Bell will be spinning records solo in Palm Springs, Calif., on Saturday, April 11; in addition, Erasure will have a box set out Tuesday, April 7. He gave Windy City Times "a little respect" by phoning in an interview.

**Windy City Times: Hello, Andy! Thanks for taking time out from your busy schedule to talk to Windy City Times! In what part of the country are you today?**

Andy Bell: Hi, Jerry. I am in London now.

**WCT: How does it feel to be on tour as a DJ compared to an Erasure tour?**

AB: Well, I am just going to come over to fill in this one DJ spot in Palm Springs. I love DJing anyway.

**WCT: Do you sing during the set or just spin records?**

AB: No. I don't sing. I am not confident yet with my DJing skills to start singing over the top as well. I could imagine that I would do so, though, sometime in the future. I do get really nervous. I am more nervous playing records than I am with singing, which is quite odd.

**WCT: That's interesting. It must feel like a legacy with Rhino releasing all of Erasure's singles in a box set.**

AB: Yeah. I was just saying that I took a year and half off of doing Erasure stuff. It feels like we had been going nonstop, with 13 albums, numerous tours and things.

I thought, "What is my life like outside of this band?" When the CDs landed in my lap of songs from the past to the present day, I thought, "This is what we have been doing all this time!" It's nice to have all the work in front of you and see it in one go. I am quite proud of it. Vince and myself have a great songwriting partnership. I think the quality of work is really high.

**WCT: Absolutely. From the beginning, you were basically a fan of Vince Clarke. You just went out on a limb and auditioned for him.**

AB: I really was. I was a big huge fan of Vince. I really admire him, he's a great person and a genius at what he does. In the beginning he was quite methodical and meticulous. He used to make me sing everything note for note. It

was hard for me to improvise back then. That has come to me slowly over the years. Vince and I write everything now together. It was kismet really meeting him and he seems very happy as well.

**WCT: I want to tell you that hearing you belting those out and proud lyrics with that voice meant a lot to me growing up gay.**

AB: Aw, that's lovely. I love it when anybody says anything like that to me. It's what makes it all worthwhile.

**WCT: So you are working on a second solo album?**

AB: Yes, that's why I am down in London at the moment. I am off to France on Sunday, at least for a couple of weeks. I have a dozen songs or so written already. I am working with [Belgian musician] Pascal Gabriel on it. Hopefully, it will be finished by the end of June. It won't come out until the New Year, but I will also be writing with Vince in the autumn.

**WCT: That's exciting! What's currently playing in your iPod?**

AB: Well, I have been downloading lots and lots of stuff on iTunes. I have been getting ready because when you go to do a DJ thing you need to have new stuff to play. I have been listening to Frank Musik, Ladyhawke, the new Pet Shop Boys remixes of the single...

**WCT: Oh, I like that song [Love, Etc.].**

AB: Yeah, it's pretty great. Also, Saint Etienne [has] a new one.

**WCT: Her voice is perfect for remixes. I don't know why Sarah and the band have not caught on in the States like overseas.**

AB: I like finding remixes of old '80s hits. Look at the Boy George stuff. He does all these amazing tracks with other people.

**WCT: And he does the DJ thing also like you.**

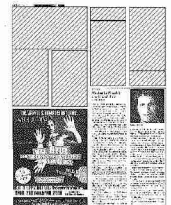
AB: Yes, he does.

**WCT: I heard you guys always visit [Boystown gay bar] Sidetrack when you are in town here in Chicago. Is that your favorite local gay bar?**

AB: We have been there quite a few times. I was there about three years ago visiting Chicago with my boyfriend.

**WCT: You live in Hastings with him now. How is life by the seaside?**

AB: It's nice. It's a very small town. There are only about 80,000 people. In the winter it's a bit grim, you can imagine with the weather and stuff. It's very working class, but there's an artist community as well. You have to muck in and make your own entertainment, which I quite like.



Feel in the mood to reminiscence with **Erasure**? Run out and buy the group's four-disc box set, "Total Pop!—Deluxe Box," or a digital-only release of "Pop! Remixed" to be released Tuesday, April 7. For more information, visit [www.rhino.com](http://www.rhino.com). For more about Andy Bell, visit [www.AndyBell.com](http://www.AndyBell.com).



Erasure's  
Andy Bell  
(front) and  
Vince Clarke.