

## The **ANDY BELL** story



In 1985, Andy Bell responded to a newspaper that would eventually influence the future of pop music. Vince Clarke was looking for a singer to perform on some tracks he was writing and when he chose Andy, they created music magic with the birth of the hit-making synth-pop band Erasure and their first album *Wonderland* and the single "Oh L'Amour."

While *Wonderland* actually struggled to find an audience upon initial release, their second album *Circus* was a bonafide hit that went platinum and stayed on the charts for over a year, thanks to a string of the hit singles "Sometimes", "It Doesn't Have To Be", "The Circus", and "Victim Of Love."

1988's *The Innocents* would solidify Erasure's Icon status by going triple platinum in the UK and platinum in the U.S., generating three Top 20 hits with "Ship of Fools", "Chains of Love" and "A Little Respect." *The Innocents* would become the first in a series of five consecutive number one albums in the UK, that would include *Crackers International*, *Wild*, *Chorus*, *Abba-esque* (4-track EP), and *I Say I Say I Say* and the hit singles "Stop!", "Blue Savannah", "Drama", "Star", "Chorus", "Love to Hate You" and "Always." In 1992, the duo released a singles compilation, *Pop! - The First 20 Hits*, which also hit number one and went triple platinum, featuring all the band's singles released from 1985 to 1992.

During this time, Erasure also contributed the song "Too Darn Hot" to the Cole Porter tribute album *Red Hot + Blue*, produced by the Red Hot Organization, an international organization dedicated to fighting AIDS. This involvement would take on additional significance in 2004 when Andy Bell would become the first pop singer to reveal himself to be HIV+ status. Andy had already become one of the first pop artists to come out as a gay man, telling *Melody Maker* magazine in 1986, "I don't want to go out of my way to talk about it but I'm not going to pretend I'm not [gay]. I won't portray a heterosexual in videos and we're consciously doing lyrics that could apply to either sex." He also told *Seventeen Magazine*, "I want to be known as a good performer but it's important to me to take a stance. If you're doing music, you should use it for something and have substance. Being gay and open about it is my substance."

As Erasure continued to release a series of albums and hits, Andy Bell began testing the waters as a solo artist, releasing *Electric Blue* in 2005. The album featured fourteen tracks, including three duets, with Claudia Brucken of Propaganda and Jake Shears of Scissor Sisters. The first single, "Crazy", included club remixes from his Erasure partner Vince Clarke, plus Cicada, and King Roc. *Electric Blue* was co-written and recorded with Philip Larsen and Chris Smith (working under the name Manhattan Clique) who have worked with Erasure, Moby, The B-52's, Stereophonics and Goldfrapp.

Bell released his second solo album, *Non-Stop*, in 2010. It was co-written and co-produced by Bell and Pascal Gabriel, who previously remixed "It Doesn't Have to Be" for Erasure. It also features a collaboration with Jane's Addiction's Perry Farrell.

Andy never abandoned Erasure and the duo released a total of eight albums between 1995 and 2011, plus a second greatest hits album, bringing the world such classics as "Rock Me Gently", "In My Arms", "Rapture", "Freedom", "Here I Go Impossible Again", "Breathe", "When A Lover Leaves You", and "Fill Us With Fire."

As the world waits to see what comes next for Erasure, Andy is taking some time to tour as a solo artist but he brings all of the Erasure classics with him to his shows.



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