



Kill Your Idols

Local pop singer/songwriter **CLAIRE TRENTAIN** challenges the vacuous hegemony of instant pop stars with her independently released debut album *Loving The Blue & Green*. She tells **BRETT COLLINGWOOD** about her journey so far.

You'd be forgiven for thinking that the title of Claire Trentain's debut album *Loving The Blue & Green* is a reference to her unusually-hued hairstyle. But while the Queensland singer/songwriter does indeed love the shock of aquamarine fringe that frames her face, the title refers to a blue and green of a different kind. "I just love that feeling you get on an international flight when you are off alone on some unknown adventure – you can't wait to throw yourself into a new culture and meet the locals," the chirpy singer explains. "Yet all you can see from the plane looking down is the same picture – blue and green. I just had to write a song about it. I'm sure the man next to me was really impressed when I started humming melodies into a dictaphone at 2am in the morning!"

Observing the land and sea from a plane is something Claire has become very used to in the last couple of years. In April 2004 she got the chance to spend some time in Europe and France, collaborating on songs with writers from Murlyn Music, Sony and Multiplay Music. Time spent in creative hothouses like these has had a galvanising effect on Claire, both artistically and careerwise. "I have learnt so much from the people I have had the chance to work with," she enthuses. "This definitely improved my songwriting skills. Looking back, gaining respect as a songwriter first really helped for when I completed my debut album. You have already developed some good relationships and industry people already know who you are."

The Stockholm-based Murlyn Music (who have worked with Britney Spears, Celine Dion and Jennifer Lopez among others) liked Claire's style so much they ended up producing the entire album. The result is a diverse, inventive, surprising but always accessible modern pop album, distinguished by Claire's versatile voice, unpretentious charm and love of '80s chart pop. "I grew up on the '80s – you can certainly hear this in my music," she admits. "I'm a sucker for a strong melody, a quirky hook and an electric guitar solo!"

And aren't we all. But whereas the vast majority of chart-pop behemoths over the years have had the backing of a major label, Claire has decided to go the independent route. It's a brave and groundbreaking decision for a pop artist to choose to control their own destiny in a world of pre-fab Idols and gormless, starry-eyed puppets. But Claire wouldn't have it any other way.

"It isn't the easy road, that's for sure," she admits. "But I wanted full creative control, so that's why I chose to go independent. This is a major and ongoing challenge. Still, I feel that it is achievable. If you have good music hopefully people will support it. Look at Ben Lee! DIY pop is only new to this country but I am hoping to inspire more people to take the plunge. If the public get behind it, hopefully more of the many true, talented Aussie artists will have a better chance of breaking through."

Claire Trentain launches the *Loving The Blue & Green* album at the Brisbane Powerhouse Spark Bar on Tuesday December 14