



THE CLIKS 2007

L-R: Morgan Doctor, Nina Martinez, Lucas Silveira, Jen Benton

Photographer: Clint McLean

TransAtlantic!

THE CLIKS

Canadian band The Cliks are pure, unguarded, emotional rock-pop with a twist. Currently tearing down gender boundaries in the North American music scene, they're also the first ever band fronted by a transgendered man to be signed to a major label. As they prepare to storm the UK, Jade Bremner catches up with them.

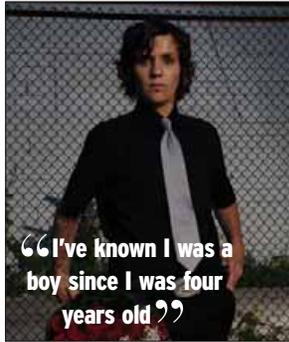
Citing artists as diverse as Amy Winehouse and Sigur Ross as influences, The Cliks formed in 2005 under the direction of lead singer Lucas Silveira. Currently touring the US to promote their debut album *Snakehouse*, they are raising a few eyebrows on the American music scene. The group is made up of three lesbians - drummer Morgan Doctor, guitarist Nina Martinez and bassist Jen Benton - and one transgendered male, Lucas Silveira.

Unsurprisingly, it's Lucas who is grabbing the most media attention as the band emerge onto the scene. "I've known that I was boy since I was four years old, which is my earliest memory," he says, explaining how he was not happy in the body he was in, and has recently gone through a double mastectomy to remove his breasts. "On a personal level, it was pretty scary; but I knew who I was what I had to do if I ever expected happiness in my life."

Interestingly, as a conscious effort to preserve his musical career, Silveira has decided not to take testosterone hormones for fear of affecting his singing voice. He does, however, insist he is comfortable with his choice as it "makes my identity more visible."

Silveira started writing songs in 2005. At the time, after a series of family and relationship dramas, his personal life was in crisis and he was coming to terms with his individuality. Lyrically sharp, poignant and emotive, The Cliks sound as fierce as they look. "I don't write it if it's not personal and some songs are more intimate than others - but that's how we all relate to the world," Silveira says. "In general, people like me are not very well received by their community and usually kicked aside."

The Cliks tracks are clearly passionate. *Snakehouse* includes a version of Justin Timberlake's *Cry Me a River*. "Everyone goes through hard times," they say, "and that is what most people don't like to talk about. It's good to have a place to go to in your head with music that hits that chord." Their self-written tracks are sharp with dark lyrics that explore the heart-felt emotion around Silveira's personal experience.



So, how are they going down in the land of the free? "We attract an extremely diverse audience because we just play straight ahead rock n' roll," they say. "Most people on this side of the world tend to relate to that." There is a fear, however, that musically The Cliks will not live up to the publicity of their individual identities or be fully understood. They were recently invited to play on the massive gay-orientated *True Colours* tour, playing alongside Erasure, Cindy Lauper and Debbie Harry. Their video, *Oh*

Yeah, is currently number one on the California Music Channel in the US. However, these are alternative, liberal and understanding audiences. But encouragingly, transgendered people are slowly gaining a mass media profile. In the UK, *Big Brother* 2004 winner Nadia Almada scored just less than 4 million votes to win the fifth series, which is seemingly a huge indication of public acceptance of trans people. More recently, in the US, the award winning film *Transamerica* and the hit TV series *Ugly Betty* are helping to bring transgendered people into the public consciousness.

"It's another lesson to learn," says Silveira. "If you give respect out and give people the opportunity to learn, they are more likely to take it in and make intelligent decisions."

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GREAT GAY LIVES

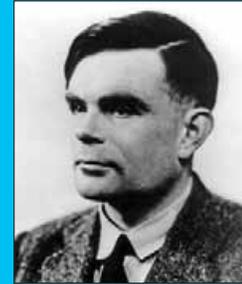
EACH MONTH, WE LOOK BACK AT THE LIFE OF A RATHER GREAT GAY HUMAN BEING

THIS MONTH...

NAME: Turing, Alan
LIVED: 23/6/1912 - 7/6/1954

WORDS: Neil Cozzi

At school Turing revealed three crucial aspects of himself. Firstly his potential in the field of mathematics, secondly his sexuality (he was having feelings for Christopher Morcom, a boy in the year above). Finally his eccentric tenacity (due to a rail strike he rode his bike 60 miles to avoid being late for his first day). All three were to define him throughout his life.



Morcom rejected his affections, and his death a year later (in 1930) seems to have driven Turing further into his love of maths. He soon advanced to Kings College, Cambridge, where his sexuality and brilliant mind flourished. He left with a distinguished degree.

He started working on the concept of a system capable of calculations: his Turing machine. This had obvious applications elsewhere and his abilities were soon pounced upon at the outbreak of war to work at Bletchley Park. He soon broke the codes of the Luftwaffe, and without his work the capture of the Enigma machine would have been useless.

Post war, he continued working occasionally for the secret service as well as on a number of projects before moving to Manchester to take up the post of Deputy Director for the computing laboratory. He was also excelling at cross-country running and only an injury prevented him making the 1948 British Olympic team.

In 1952 he was arrested for "gross indecency" after his relations with a local man became known to the police. Rather than go to prison he accepted oestrogen injections aimed at lowering the libido. This had wider consequences: the looming Cold War saw homosexuals disqualified from working for the security services. It also meant he was considered a risk by the same services he had so ably served.

In 1954, he was found dead with a half eaten apple laced with cyanide. A verdict of suicide was recorded; his mother argued that it was an accident and a result of a fatal error in handling the substance. Many argue that the ambiguity was deliberate and aimed at softening the blow to his close family.

As a gay man, his sexuality was something which defined him as much as his genius - the latter rewarded and the former punished. However, his achievements are recognised, the Turing Award is the computing world's equivalent of the Nobel Prize. A blue plaque was unveiled in 1998 at his birthplace in London. More recently a 1.5 tonne statue of Alan was installed at Bletchley Park, and another is in Sackville Park in Manchester.

FOR MORE INFO ON ALAN TURING, VISIT:

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