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- ◆ PlanetOut Video
- ▶ Movies
- ▶ Television
- ▼ Music
  - ▼ RockOut
    - ◆ Music Downloads
    - ◆ RockOut Chart
- ◆ Celebrities Talk
- ◆ Sundance
- ◆ Tonys
- ◆ Out on DVD

# PlanetOut RockOut

Home > Entertainment

## Profile: The Cliks

by j. poet

The Cliks (Morgan Doctor, drums; Jen Benton, bass; Nina Martinez, guitars; Lucas Silveira, lead singer, guitar, synthesizer) have everything a great rock band needs -- great songs, good looks, rowdy energy, ear-splitting volume, guttersnipe attitude and a lead singer who lights up a room with his unrestrained charisma. "Snakehouse," their debut for Tommy Boy Silver, crackles with vitality.

When you see Silveira take command of the stage, it's hard to imagine that only three short years ago he was a young woman leading an acoustic folk group.

"I made the transition to rock at the same time I made the transition in my body," Silveira recalls. "The folk music I was doing was actually more bluesy, acoustic R&B, and in a weird way, the music came out



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before I came out. The music got more rock and harder as my anger started seeping through.

"Some people thought it was because I was making the transition and males are more aggressive, but it was as much a reaction to the roles society imposes. Women aren't allowed to be angry, 'cause then they're bitches. The anger was always there, I just never let it out as much before the transition. It's odd, cause as a person I'm pretty cheery, maybe because I have music as an outlet for my

intensity, rather than punching someone in the face. Or maybe I've just listened too many times to Nine Inch Nails."

Like many trans people, Silveira had the odd experience of coming out twice.

"I came out to the straight world and my parents, then had to come out again to the straight world and my parents and the gay community as well," he says. "Then I had to deal with the reactions I got from both worlds, and I don't wanna hafta do it again."

Gender aside, The Cliks are a band to reckon with. Their sound blends new wave dance beats, R&B, rock with an almost metallic edge and a trace of reggae and folk, so it's frustrating that most of the ink is directed to the fact that Silveira is a trans man leading a band of women who identify as both lesbian and gender-queer.

"They focus on the fact that I'm trans and they're queer, but if you listen to the music, we stand up tall in the mainstream music community. Success is about attitude and accessibility, and musically we don't put any boundaries on ourselves. The music will do the work for us and if it doesn't surpass (that other stuff), then the time isn't right, but I have high hopes."

The Cliks exploded out of Toronto's vibrant musical scene about a year ago, knocking people out with their cathartic anthems and blazing musicianship. Silveira's riveting stage presence and remarkable vocal range may be the group's heart, but this is a real band with tight ensemble playing and arrangements that give every tune an unmistakable power.

"Snakehouse" opens with "Complicated," an edgy new wave rocker that rides a skewed rhythm and bristles with sexual anger. When Silveira sings, "Fuck your pain away . . ." you can sense his desperation, but the song is lightened by the lyric's wry humor. "Eyes in the Back of My Head," is an R&B ballad with a 1950s feel; "Soul Black Driver" lays hard rock over a clattering reggae rhythm and Justin Timberlake's "Cry Me a River" gets made over as a rocker.

But the most shocking tune may be "Nobody Else Will," a gentle folk song delivered by Silveira and his guitar. Its gentle, swooning sentiment is given a little bit of drama and plenty of volume when the band comes roaring in to give the song an exhilarating climax.

"I did feel a bit timid about putting it on the album, 'cause this is a break-up album," Silveira says. "This is the one song that's about coming out of break-up mode and starting to feel something for somebody else."

The Cliks are now on their first American tour, but they've already been featured on an "L Word" soundtrack album, gotten strong video play on Logo and will soon join Cyndi Lauper's True Colors tour alongside heavies like Erasure, Debbie Harry and The Dresden Dolls.

"We're pretty excited to have been invited to help an amazing cause and be associated with artists of that stature," Silveira says. "We can't wait."



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