

# Born in Aust, made in Singapore

Corinne Gibbons is ready for the spotlight, says **CHRISTOPHER LIM**

IT'S amazing how many talented expat musicians are lurking just outside the spotlight in Singapore. Corinne Gibbons is a long way from Bega, the small Australian town she grew up in. The indie singer has been based here for three years, and she's happy enough with the rapidly growing music scene to consider applying for permanent residency.

Many people first heard about Gibbons only after she released her third album, *Melt*, on Wednesday, which ends a seven-year recording hiatus. Not that she has been twiddling her thumbs all that while.

In fact, she took on an all new career when she arrived in Singapore in 2006. "I decided I needed a real challenge so I took a job as lead facilitator for Human Rhythms, learnt the drums and moved to Singapore to conduct teambuilding workshops throughout all of South-east Asia," says Gibbons. "The first facilitation was for 2,000 bank staff."

Since then, she's worked with businesses like Neptune Orient Lines both as an entertainer for corporate events and as a team-building consultant.

But it's time to revisit her music career and the release of *Melt* is designed to raise her profile here. While she will continue her "day job", she would happily embrace any opportunities to perform in larger concert venues, such as music festivals.

"I'm really excited by how vibrant the music scene here is," says Gibbons. "I started hearing about music festivals right after I arrived here, and new things keep happening," she adds.

Meanwhile, for curious music fans, Gibbons has scheduled a series of four concerts from June 11-13, and has smartly decided to bundle her new CD with each \$60 ticket sold, which makes it a great deal. Tickets go on sale through Sistic on Monday, with a \$35 concessionary price for children.

## All original

Gibbons' previous two albums primarily comprised cover songs. *Dusk* was a smooth jazz record, which included a chilled-out version of Jimi Hendrix's *Little Wing*. *Sunday Afternoon*, an extremely limited edition live recording, came more from a folk-rock aesthetic. *Melt* is her first full album of original songs.

It's also quite different from the first two albums and has a more mainstream pop sound. "This is the first time I'm doing an album where I wrote all the songs, so this is the most accurate reflection of my musical personality so far. I've always been a pop girl," she says.

It's not bland pop music, mind you. Gibbons has a clear, expressive voice that keeps your attention. She knows how to tell a story, and *Life Goes* features very contemplative lyrics.

*Speak Of The North* is based on a lovely Charlotte Bronte poem. And *One Voice* stands out from the pack sonically with its hip production values.

Gibbons is serious about *Melt* reaching as large an audience as possible. She's embraced the digital music revolution and has already submitted the album to the two industry-leading online music stores, Apple's iTunes and Amazon MP3.

For the sake of music lovers in countries that don't have access to those two stores, such as in Singapore, she's also working on making *Melt* available on an independent online music store that doesn't have regional restrictions.

Physically, however, the album has been launched first in Singapore, at stores like HMV and Gramophone, although it will eventually reach Australia, Europe and the United States.

"Singapore is my home; this is where I'm living. This is where *Melt* was written and where I first started performing the songs, and where the album has gathered its momentum," she says, explaining why she chose Singapore as the launch city for *Melt*.

## Video twist

One of the more innovative aspects of *Melt* is a separate DVD with the album's songs set to breathtaking footage from the Lindblad Expeditions, the eco-tourism group that has a partnership with National Geographic.



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Music videos are nothing new, but the stunning Lindblad footage is far from average. And it's been lovingly edited by Australian filmmaker Toni Houston, who shot the footage over five years while working for Lindblad.

Gibbons also had a coherent eco-friendly vision for the *Melt* project, so it wasn't about looking for pretty pictures to tack on to the music.

"Part of this album has always had an element of environmental awareness, which is something I am passionate about," she says. *Melt* is also dedicated to Danielle, Gibbons' late sister.

Despite the seven-year break between her first two albums and *Melt*, it sounds like she's really hit her stride so we shouldn't have to wait as long for the next record. "I've actually been writing non-stop, so I've got a lot of songs ready to record."