



BACK TO BACHARACH

Former *Australian Idol* and *The Voice* contestant Hayley Jensen joins Casey Donovan, Doug Williams and Darren Mapes in a two hour concert showcasing the songs of the legendary Burt Bacharach. With slow ballads, to boppy beats - there's something for everyone in this performance. Hayley tells us she's very excited to be a part of the show ...

Hi Hayley. You strike me as someone who's known from an early age that you wanted to sing, and you've had some pretty amazing experiences in the music industry ... Looking back over time, can you actually believe where you are today?

You're absolutely right - I think my mum would say I came out of the womb singing! I think I was born singing, and I was harmonising long before I even understood the concept of what it was to songs on the radio ... It's always been a huge part of my life, and obviously as I've gone through life I've made conscious decisions to make it the focus of my life at various stages. It's my greatest passion, and music really is my lifeblood ...

It's funny, every day you don't really take the time to think about what you have done, and it's only when you take a look back, or someone reminds you about what you've done that you go, "Oh, wow! That was awesome!" I'm completely blown away by the amount of incredible opportunities I've had - certainly in the last 10 years since *Australian Idol*. I've performed for people from the Australian Prime Minister to the Australian troops, to things that are dear to my heart, like working with disadvantaged people or helping support communities through turbulent times with music, being a good role model to young people ... Reflecting on these things, it really has been an incredible privilege and something I certainly don't take for granted. I'm incredibly grateful.

And of course, your time on Australian idol back in 2004 wasn't all smooth sailing for you; it was hard work, but you made it to number four. What do you feel is the biggest

lesson you learned from your Idol experience?

I think we were all so young (laughs)! I think what I've learned since then is to really be true to myself - it's hard in a competitive environment not to compare yourself to others, but as an artist I've learned just to be true to myself instead of worrying that she might have a higher voice, or that he can do these incredible gymnastics with his vocals. Now I concentrate on what my strengths are and focus on that, rather than getting too caught up in comparisons ...

How did you find your experience on The Voice in 2014 compared to your original TV experience on Idol? Was it quite similar?

It was, but it was actually just so bizarre, to be honest, being back in that environment. It's so dissimilar to what the music industry is like in reality (laughs), but it's what everyone who's not in the music industry probably thinks it's like - all glamorous and fabulous. It was so much fun - being a part of those massive productions, with all the lights, and everything from all the gear to the musicians were the absolute best in Australia and the coaches were world class artists - it was a little like walking into the Twilight Zone, as a lot of the people behind the scenes were the same! It was particularly bizarre when someone would come up to put a microphone on you and go, "Hi Hayley - remember me?"

As an artist, it can be such a hard slog a lot of the time - so it's lovely to be part of something

that is top class and everything is provided for you. It's just so much fun!

How did you become involved with the Back to Bacharach production, which of course you'll be starring in, along with some other top Australian talent?

To be honest, the promoter contacted me and said she remembered me from *The Voice* and *Idol* and thought my voice would really suit the songs ... and then I found out that Casey Donovan, who'd been on *Idol* with me all those years ago - and won - was also a part of the show, as well as Doug Williams ... Burt was obviously a little before my time, but I'd heard a lot of the songs over the years, so I did a little bit of research and realised how many of the songs I knew and loved. I remember Mum playing a lot of the songs and singing along to them as a child ... but I had no idea that he'd written such a huge collection of songs that were all timeless and released by legendary artists. It was such a great thrill! As soon as I'd done my research, I thought, "I've got to be part of this!"

I don't want to give away too many of the songs I'll be singing - but there are a lot of great ballads like *Close to You*, *The Book of Love*, *Alfie*, and then there are some fabulous duets, like *Walk on By*, *On my Own* ... That's what *Friends* are for is a nice group song, and then of course there are the fun ones like *Raindrops Keep Falling on My Head*, *What the World Needs Now*, and *What's New Pussycat* ...

It's a great show to be a part of. They're beautiful songs to sing - the melodies are just so lovely. As a songwriter, I'm constantly learning and inspired by Burt's style of writing. There's lots of modulation, interesting timing ... he worked with Hal David on a lot of the lyrics, and I love that unlike a lot of the songs today, they tell great stories ... One of the songs I'm really excited to be doing is *24 Hours from Tulsa*, and it's so cheeky ... I'm doing the Dusty Springfield version of that song ...

The opening performance of Back to Bacharach was at The Basement in Sydney. How did that go?

(Laughs). Yes, The Basement. No pressure! One of the most renowned venues in Sydney! It went great - really, really well. The audience was fabulous. On opening night everyone's normally a little terrified, but it went very smoothly ... actually, it's funny, because as lead performers, we can rehearse and rehearse as much as we want, but it's not actually until we get on stage that we all seem to come to life ... I admire the other performers so much, but as soon as the lights come on and the audience is there, it's just like, "WOW!" There are just so many magical moments throughout the show and some really fun sing-along moments.

Thanks Hayley. Interview by Jo Atkins.

the plug!

See Back to Bacharach at the Glasshouse on June 20 at 8pm.

 TICKETS: Adult \$59.95, Concession \$54.95, Group 6+ \$54.95.
 Call the Box Office on 6581 8888 or
 visit glasshouse.org.au for details.