

Bump And Grind With Axle

From Aussie farm boy to Aussie Idol, Axle Whitehead hosts Video Hits while carving a career in jazz. He talks eyeliner, waxing and free-balling. Interview by Matthew Myers.

DNA: Video Hits is celebrating its 20th anniversary. What are your earliest memories of the show?

Axle Whitehead: As a kid I watched the charts and hung out for the number one track every week. Although it didn't have a host, I used to love the colour and energy of the show. Now, to be the face of it, is quite extraordinary and I'm having the best time.

Who have you really enjoyed interviewing?

Kanye West. He's a well-educated man with an awesome fashion sense. 50 Cent. Alicia Keys was one of my favourites because we both come from a jazz background. Sarah McLachlan was delightful as well.

Do you have a best gay mate?

Probably my boss, Grant. He's an amazing guy to work with. Lovely and generous. I didn't really know about the gay scene until I came to Sydney, but my mother always had lots of gay friends, so I've always hung out with some really beautiful spirits. I really do love the scene because there's lots of free energy and taking risks. I'm a taking-risks type of guy.

Has anyone ever come out to you?

Yeah, some of my mates have. It's been a case of them questioning themselves over a few years. Some have even made passes at me, too!

Really?

Yeah, definitely. I've been quite flattered. I support all my friends in everything they do. If that's the way they want to go and if they feel confident they can make a pass at me. That's totally cool.

So, you've been mistaken for being gay?

I've been questioned quite a lot. Though with this new haircut [a mohawk], I'm sure I won't get any more! But I think it's nice. It shows that I'm a sort of honest energy.

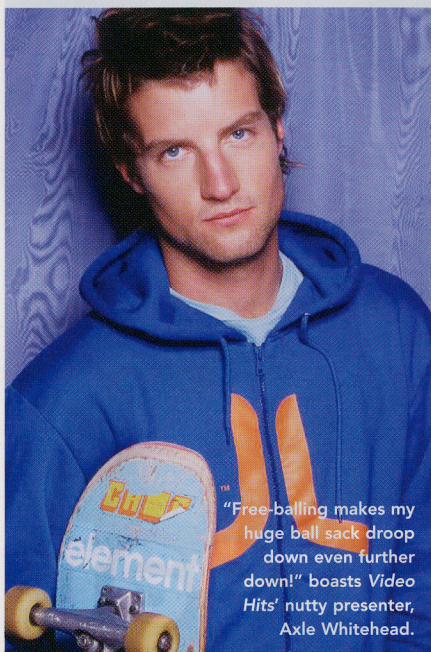
A gentle soul?

That's exactly right. A gentle old soul, I like to think.

If you could go back in time and see a band that's no longer around, who would that be?

I'd love to see Herbie Hancock's band when they made the *Head Hunters* album and I'd love to see the Dave Brubeck Quartet with Paul Desmond. These are my jazz roots coming out! Also, Stevie Wonder in his time and Michael Jackson and The Jackson Five.

Franz Ferdinand, The Killers and Scissor



Sisters are influenced by '80s music. Do you think that style will continue?

It's always evolving. Bands like Duran Duran and INXS mixed a dance and rock vibe and it's progressed. I think that electric element and the dancey disco sound will always be there. Like all things, it's a circular motion. Hip-hop comes up and then the retro rock sound comes up.

With Good Charlotte and Green Day there's been a continuing trend with the eyeliner pencil!

There is! I think that's a Simon Le Bon [Duran Duran] thing. He was always known for fantastic eyeliner. The make-up girls are dying to get eyeliner on me! I'm not sure if it's a dark, rebellious, gothic look they're going for but it's quite a sexy little thing that seems to work very well for the right acts. It's the New Romantics.

Have you ever been to Mardi Gras?

No. I wanted to go this year but I always seem to have gigs on in Melbourne. I was asked to go on a float this year and I was looking forward to dressing up and causing as much trouble as humanly possible! Hopefully next year I might get invited back.

Which float?

It was with a few celebrities. Dicko organised it. I just wanted to take Dicko's shirt off and

put nipple cups on him. I was hoping to wear a G-string and nothing else.

I'm sure we'd all like to see that!

Next year, I promise! And it'll be a G-string and a mask and a zip... and I'll be whipping Dicko with a chain and collar on him.

While he's wearing Paulini's dress?

Exactly right. Waxing his arse cheeks maybe.

How would you sum up your Australian Idol experience?

I had no idea it was going to be on television! My friends got me involved and in the end I was given an amazing opportunity to go on to a career in television. I'm very thankful for the opportunity.

Do you stay in touch with Courtney Act?

I went to her cabaret show at the Civic in Sydney, which was lots of fun. I bump into her at airports here and there. She's lots of fun to go and cause some trouble with. We've had many late nights... and we'll leave it at that!

How's your gaydar?

Very good! My mother used to say that she had fantastic gaydar and I used to laugh at how good she thought she was. As I get older, I realised that I'm very good myself.

Have you ever waxed?

I've been to a fantastic men's grooming place in Melbourne for massages and they wax your eyebrows and mono.

Anywhere else?

Sometimes my girlfriend has got me to Nads around the nether regions. A friend of mine has a terribly hairy butt crack and he absolutely swears by it. I like to try everything once – or twice!

"Some of my mates have even made passes at me. I'm flattered."

Boxers or jocks?

Boxers! I hate jocks. I've got an arse that doesn't suit jocks. They creep up the whole time. People must think I have worms when I wear them because I'm trying to pick out my wedgies! So it's always loose boxers and sometimes nothing. I like free-balling. It seems to make my huge ball sack droop even further down! 🍆

To read the full version of Axle's interview go to www.DNAmagazine.com.au