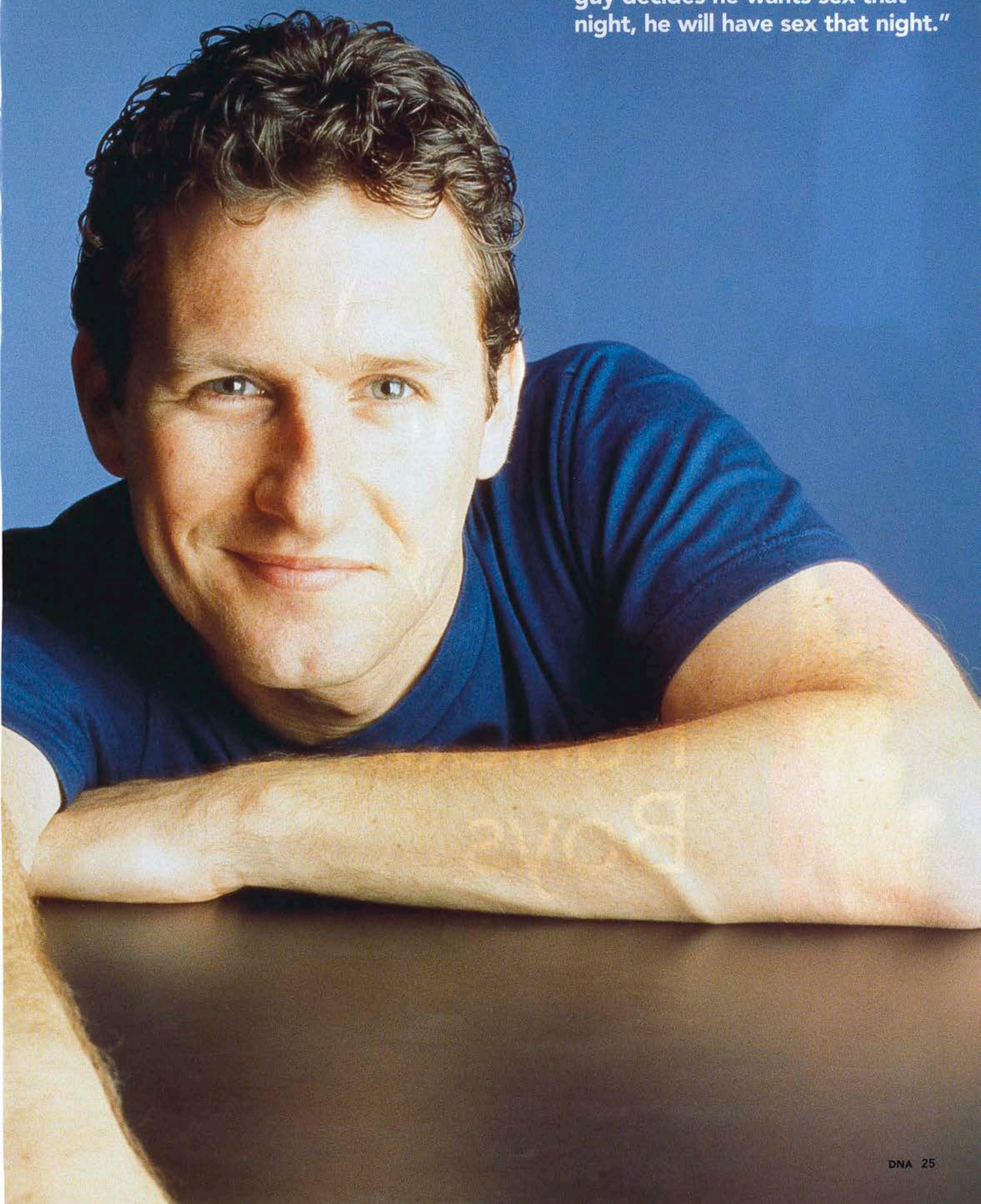


**"From what I understand, if a gay
guy decides he wants sex that
night, he will have sex that night."**



CHARACTER LINES

Adam Hills, comedian and host of ABC's hilarious pop quiz, *Spicks And Specks*, discusses glam rock, Adam Ant and his homo mates. Interview by Matthew Myers.

DNA: What's been your most memorable *Spicks And Specks* moment so far?

Adam Hills: It would have to be Jimmy Barnes singing *Tears Of A Clown* to words from a self-help book. There was just something about it. He's got such an idiosyncratic voice that we've grown up with, and the fact that he was doing that on our little show was pretty much my highlight.

Given the changing climate of world politics, do you think that politically incorrect humour will survive?

Oh definitely. The more politically correct we become, the funnier politically incorrect humour will be. When society becomes more conservative the only way to rebel against it is to tell politically incorrect jokes.

How is that?

For example, I'll sit around the office with a few of the writers and we'll say jokes that are just horribly wrong because we know that that's not how each other thinks. We're saying wrong jokes for the sake of saying wrong jokes. There's a difference between that and just telling a racist or sexist joke because that's what you believe.

What about the threat that censorship will get out of hand and things will eventually go backwards?

I don't think that will happen. There are countless cases of movies, songs and operas that were written under a regime that outlawed anything that was against the government at the time. But by making a politically incorrect statement or telling a little story that might be a metaphor, you can still get away with having a dig at the people in power.

Who are your favourite comedians?

For movies there is Buster Keaton and the Marx Brothers. For stand-up I'd say people like Lenny Bruce, George Carlin and Richard Pryor, and again, they all spoke out about what they believed in.

Apparently you had a very homophobic moment at high school. What happened?

Yeah, when I was in high school we read a play called *The Old Familiar Juice* and it was about three guys sharing a prison cell. Looking back, it was very interesting

psychologically. It was about how one prisoner started to feminize another and eventually forced himself on him. It was an interesting statement on what happens to people in prison. I was at an all-boys school so you can imagine we were fairly uncomfortable with the subject matter.

So you got fired up?

Basically our teacher suggested that we found it disturbing because we were all unsure of our own sexuality and I arked up about it for the wrong reason in what was, at the time, quite a homophobic rant.

Then you found out your favourite comedian, Kenny Everett, was gay.

Yeah, it wasn't long after that that Kenny Everett came out and, loving comedy, it made me look at things differently.

You've certainly come a long way, then.

I've spoken out a lot about gay rights on stage. I think I'm trying to make amends for my ridiculous high school rant.

Do you have a best gay mate?

I've got a few gay mates. I used to do a radio show in Adelaide with a guy that was gay. Every day we'd be in the studio and I'd talk about girls and he'd talk about boys. In the comedy and entertainment industry half the people I work with are gay. Like Adam Richards and Scott Brennan.

Has anyone ever come out to you?

Yes, the guy at school who was on the teacher's side when we had the homophobic argument. Four years later he called me up and said that he'd come out. And a guy I worked with in radio came out at about the same time we started working together.

Were you expecting him to come out?

No, I don't think anyone was. He was quite overtly macho in a way – I guess he was compensating. In fact, now that you mention it, there are three or four people I know who have come out, and I think that's something really lovely about the entertainment industry, in that these guys are so immediately accepted. It must be horrible thinking, "Right, how am I going to tell people? How are they going to take it? How are they going to respond to me?"

How's your gaydar?

Pretty good. I'm quite aware of people around me and what other people are thinking. It's partly because of working in comedy with audiences and always being aware of what's going on.

Do you think that gay guys have any advantages over straight guys?

Definitely. Sexually, if a gay guy decides he will have sex that night, then he will have sex that night, from what I understand.

If you were into boys, what guy would do it for you?

Well, although I haven't seen *Brokeback Mountain* yet, I'd have to say Jake Gyllenhaal. I also have a bit of a thing for Maggie Gyllenhaal, so maybe there's something about the Gyllenhaal gene!

What is the campest CD in your collection?

A compilation that was made for me by one of my dancers. It has tunes from *Hair*, *Godspell*, *Little Shop Of Horrors*, *Hedwig And The Angry Inch*. If you distilled the campest songs of all time and put them on a CD then this would be it. It's even got *Wuthering Heights* by Kate Bush.

Why do you think the camp antics of glam rock were so universally acceptable to straight people?

Because we didn't know it was camp!

Ever been hit on in a gay club?

Yes. I usually hang out with a whole bunch of gay guys in Adelaide, and one of them said, 'Listen lovely, I know you bat for the other side, but if you ever want to join our team, come to me first.' I thought that was lovely.

Who makes better comedy material – Boy George, George Michael or Elton John?

George Michael because he was found passed out at the wheel of his car in Primrose Hill in London. He had a mask and rubber gloves. You can't go past that for comedy material!

What can audiences expect from your new show, *Adam Hills – Characterful*?

It's a comedy about making sure that you grow old with lines on your face because you've laughed too much. 🍷

See Adam Hill's *Characterful* from May 19-21 at the Octagon Theatre, Perth. For bookings go to www.bocsticketing.com.au or call (08) 9484 1133.