

# SUCH A HASSLE

Stylish Swede **Erik Hassle** sings pop soul that will seriously stir you. **Stuart Brumfitt** grabbed a coffee with him in his adopted East London and they gassed about fashion, L'Uomo Vogue and supporting Mika.

#### How long have you been in London?

I started to go back and forth between London and Stockholm in May and in August I moved here permanently.

#### Do you live in this area?

Yeah, near Colombia Road where the gorgeous flower market is.

#### Are you down there every Sunday buying posies then?

No, I haven't even been there yet.

#### I hear you're from a town that was voted the most boring place in all of Sweden.

Yeah, it was really quiet. I lived there until I was 15, and then I moved to Stockholm.

#### What's your music like for our readers who don't know?

I grew up listening to soul music, so that's affected how I sing. And then I got introduced to lots of old pop, like Depeche Mode, Radiohead and that kind of stuff. It's really fun to mix that. Also, a lot of music from Sweden is quite minimalist, so it's fun to mix that up with soul.

#### You've been working with a fashion designer haven't you?

Yeah, with Martyn Bal. He's a Dutch designer. He worked for Dior I think and now he's decided to do his own label. He saw me in a magazine and listened to the music and he wanted me to be in his spring collection. I really liked his stuff. I modelled for him, which was fun, because he really nailed the way I've been dressing, although in a more high-end way.

#### You were in L'Uomo Vogue weren't you?

Yeah, there was a feature on our collaboration.

#### What's your style?

I think Scandinavians tend to dress pretty plain. So plain that it could almost seem boring in many people's eyes. There's always a lot of grey and black.

#### Stockholm's so stylish.

Yeah it is. There are so many good Swedish brands too, like Acne and The Local Firm. They're really good.

#### Are you going to London Fashion Week?

I hope so, to the parties and the shows.

#### Do you have many gay friends in London?

Over here I think it's more gay than in Sweden. I have more gay friends here than back home.

#### It's nice that the gays and straights mix nicely in London. Places like Dalston Superstore are totally mixed and cool.

Yeah, I really like that place. I like that kind of mix, when you're not really sure about who's who. A straight friend actually got a handjob in the toilet there without knowing because he was really drunk. He was having a piss and then all of a sudden, a guy started to grab his dick and he let him go for half a minute, then was like, 'OK, I've got to go.'

#### Do you get approached by a lot of gay guys?

Yeah, but they're just into my hair. It's a real talking point. People want to touch it and take pictures of it.

#### There are two ginger guys in the Boyz office and we're always sniffing out ginger stories on the web, the latest being that dinosaurs had ginger feathers.

Haha!

#### Do you look out for stories about gingers?

No, I don't.

#### Do you think you connect more with gay people because you know what it's like to be in a minority too [jokes]?

Yeah, exactly! No, but I get the feeling that it's a bigger thing being ginger over here than where I come from.

#### You're supporting Mika soon aren't you? What's he like?

He's a nice guy. I supported him at the iTunes Festival and in Sweden too.

#### Do you like his stuff? I guess you have to say yes to this question!

I'm not going to lie, I'm not fully updated on the new album.

#### Any message for the gay readers?

Stay gay!

• Erik's single 'Hurtful' is released 8 February and the album 'Pieces' is on 22 February.



'A STRAIGHT FRIEND ACTUALLY GOT A HANDJOB IN THE TOILET... ALL OF A SUDDEN, A GUY STARTED TO GRAB HIS DICK.'