

A full-page photograph of Louise Redknapp. She is smiling broadly, looking slightly to her right. She has long brown hair styled in two braids. She is wearing a grey suit jacket over a white collared shirt. The background is a solid red color. There are several circular, bubble-like effects scattered across the image, some of which appear to be floating over her. The word 'louise' is written in a large, white, outlined font across the middle of the image.

louise

the **official** annual

the **official** annual

COLISEUM





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Hi! I'm Louise...

She's the princess of pop. She's got everything...talent, looks, brains, Jamie Redknapp, and what's more she's a really nice girl too! Say hello to Louise...

Whether she's producing Top 20 single after Top 20 single or posing as a cover girl on the latest men's magazine, Louise will make a success of it. She's a young lady that will always be top of the charts – pin-up or record! Just wait and see...

'I'd be delighted if this book can inspire people. When I was younger, anything I saw to do with artists I liked inspired me to go out there and want to do what I'm doing now. I hope that, in the same way, I can put an idea in people's heads to do the same as I've done – and enjoy it!

'If that's what you choose to do, you should be prepared for a lot of hard work. It's not all fun and games. You have to give a lot up, but you gain a lot too. Most important of all, you should always remember never to be too busy trying to have a career to have a life...as my dad always said.'

One day
Louise
x



Curtain Up!

The early years of a singing superstar

So how did it all begin for Louise? Born in Lewisham, South London, on 4 November 1974, Louise Elizabeth Nurdling ('cos that's the

name she was given on that winter's day 24 years ago) was the first-born child of mum Lynne and dad Tim. She remembers her childhood fondly. 'My granddad had a fruit and veg stall down at Lewisham market and he used to clear a space underneath it for me to play in. I used to help him sell tomatoes – people used to buy them from me just to shut me up!' she jokes.

Louise had star potential even then, it seems, but admits, 'I've always wanted to be a singer, or sometimes a dancer or an actress. I went through a phase of

saying I'd be a lawyer, if all else failed – but that was never going to happen, I'm afraid.'

After a move to Eltham the family, including younger brothers Joe and Sam (now 12 and 10), moved to the leafier suburbs of Surrey, where her mum sent her to elocution lessons. 'I went for eight years. I wanted to lose my strong South London accent, so I'd go and recite poems and stuff. I actually enjoyed it. But I don't think I'm that well-spoken now, to be honest.'

At the age of 11 Lou landed herself a place at the internationally famous Italia Conti Stage School where she met many of her friends who she still sees. 'Everyone's got the wrong idea about stage school,' says Louise, quick to point

out that most of the people at the school work really hard to get there. 'Ten per cent are just brats, the other ninety per cent are serious people who work hard – it's not a money thing at all. I got a scholarship, I could never have gone otherwise, because my parents wouldn't have been able to afford it.'

Though bright, Louise is the first to admit that she didn't exactly excel in the academic sense.

'I was a real chatterbox and a daydreamer. It's worrying when I speak to people who say, "I've got so many GCSEs and A levels," and I think, "Oh no, I spent all that time at school."' School reports tended to come in the 'could do better' variety which Lou admits to being ashamed of.

'I think that if I'd worked harder, I'd have done better, but I wasn't naturally bright. I was useless at French and Geography. Oh, and Maths too.

I used to have a teacher called Miss Flynn and she'd shout across the class, "Don't think Louise – it's dangerous." If you're reading this, Miss Flynn, you scarred me for life!

Away from school she developed a passion for soul music – hardly surprising, since it was the type of music her parents played at home. 'Ever since I can remember, my parents have listened to Stevie Wonder, Diana Ross, Randy Crawford...all they were into was Motown and 1970s soul and funk. Listening to that the whole time is what made me want to sing. Well, that and Boney M!'

Music may have been her first love, but that didn't stop her landing a part in *Grange Hill* in which she played alongside two other future pop



'Don't think Louise – it's dangerous.'
Miss Flynn,
teacher





stars: Michelle Gayle and Sean Maguire. Lou realised from an early age that whatever she did – acting, singing or dancing – she was born for the spotlight. 'When I was younger I just wanted to perform... I was one of those really sad girls! I didn't discover boys until I was older. I did have my rebellious phase, though – I wasn't actually doing anything wrong, it was just coming home late and stuff like that. You still felt rebellious because your mum imagined you must have been doing something wrong! But I got on well with my mum and dad so I never had to rebel to prove a point – they always listened to me.'

Her first schoolgirl crush, at the tender age of eight, was on a blond-haired boy called Terry Hill. Louise says he was the best footballer at her school. 'I haven't seen him for about ten years, but I hope he has made it as a footballer because that's what he's always wanted to do.' Lou obviously had a thing about footie players even then!

Life wasn't a complete bed of roses, though. 'I was a podgy teenager,' Louise confesses. 'I had a huge appetite and would eat more dinner than my dad. I still have to be careful now.' Fierce competition at acting auditions put pressure on the girls to look thin and served to reinforce Louise's firm belief she was fat. This wasn't improved when Kelle Bryan, who would later join her in Eternal, was told she couldn't take her ballet exam unless she lost weight!

'If you didn't have the long, blonde hair and that brilliant lithe body, it could be terrible,' Louise recalls. 'I used to diet and diet and never lose weight. I used to go through stages of saying, "I won't have any dinner tonight, I'll have an apple", but I soon got over it.'



'I've always wanted to be a **singer**, or sometimes a dancer or an actress. I went through a phase of saying I'd be a **lawyer**, if all else failed – but that was never going to happen.'

And all such thoughts were forgotten when, at the age of sweet 16, she left the stage school to join a new four-girl pop group.

'I was so young when I joined Eternal,' laughs Louise. 'I've grown up in the industry and it's become a way of life for me. Maybe I don't recognise how different I am?' Little did she know what was in store!

Louise Factfile

Name:	Louise Elizabeth Nurdling
Nickname:	Lou
Family:	Mum Lynne, dad Tim and brothers Sam and Joe
Early childhood memory:	Selling tomatoes on her granddad's fruit and veg stall in Lewisham
Age:	24
Height:	5 foot 4 inches
Date of birth:	4 November 1974
Star Sign:	Scorpio
Dress Size:	Ten
Colour of eyes:	Blue-grey with a mischievous twinkle
Colour of hair:	Honey blonde
Likes:	Food, especially Italian
Dislikes:	Ignorance
Achievements:	Voted best female vocalist by <i>Smash Hits</i> , sexiest girl star by <i>Melody Maker</i> and sexiest woman in the world by <i>Sky Magazine</i> .
First hit:	'Stay!' with Eternal
First solo hit:	'Light Of My Life'
First solo UK tour:	1997
Fave expression:	'Live each day like it's your last!'
Coolest person in the world:	Stevie Wonder – 'He's my idol and I had the chance to meet him once. But I missed it because I got stuck in traffic. I was gutted.'
Fave Eternal track:	'Stay'
Hobbies:	Fencing and horse-riding
Pet:	Hattie, her dog
Car:	BMW 3 Series
Best kept secret:	She used to be a podgy teenager
Best friend:	Sophie
Ambition:	To be a Bond girl – the guns and fighting kind. 'I'd love to do that.'





'Ever since I can
remember, my parents
have listened to

**Stevie Wonder,
Diana Ross, Randy
Crawford...**

all they were into was
Motown and 1970s soul
and funk. Listening to
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what made me want to
sing. Well, that and

Boney M!

Cover Girl

When it comes to being famous, Louise isn't a girl to do things by halves. Not content with being the biggest solo female pop singer of the 1990s, she's now the sexiest woman in the world. Yep, it's official – *Sky* magazine said so...

One minute she's one of the four girl singers in Eternal, best known for their ultra cool pop-soul...the next she quits the multi-million-selling girl group that most budding pop stars would give their tonsils to sing in, and forges out on her own. Is this girl completely crazy? No, she's simply Louise – pop pin-up extraordinaire. Though things could have gone badly wrong, as has happened with numerous pop stars who attempt to 'go it alone', it took barely a year for her to be proclaimed not only a resounding success as a solo artist, but the nation's most popular cover star! So how did the 'nice girl of pop' manage to get the world's men drooling at her feet?

'It was strange,' she confesses. 'I wore a suit and a bikini top for one of my early photo-shoots and the media were like, "Wow, she's got a suit and a bikini top on!"' From that moment on, the press just couldn't get enough of the delectable Louise. Mention a poll with 'sexy' in the title and you can bet your slinky underwear Louise pops up somewhere in it. 'I'd be a liar if I said it wasn't flattering but I would like to win an award for my music.' *Sky* proclaimed her 'the sexiest woman in the world' and *FHM* have featured her twice on the cover, no doubt because she always scores

so highly in their reader polls – voted fourth 'sexiest woman in the world' in '97, third in '98. With her ever-increasing popularity, maybe 1999 will see her hitting that top spot!

Anyone who thinks Louise is after projecting a more raunchy image, though, has got their wires crossed. There's method in her madness. 'Those magazines have really helped me reach people who would never have heard my music otherwise,' she explains, though admitting, 'some of the things are not written the way I'd have liked.'

But are they after her music or her body? That's the question! If the sales of her second album, 'Woman In Me', are anything to go by they are after her vocals as much as her vitals, proving that it's her indisputable talent as a singer that has made her the pin-up she is.

Louise is philosophical about her new-found fame. 'A lot of people say, "Doesn't it annoy you that you win sexiest this and most fanciable that?" Of course it's not annoying. Why would it be annoying?' she asks slightly incredulously. So what does she really think about all this attention she has created in the media? 'It's all very flattering but I don't try to take it too seriously. At the moment the time is right for me, but it won't last forever.'





She's clearly a girl who's got her feet firmly planted on the ground, despite all the adoration. 'I do think it's nice when men tell me they've got pictures of me on their walls,' she laughs, 'but they haven't seen me first thing in the morning. My fringe sticks straight out and my eyes are all puffy.' With no airs or graces she adds, 'I know a lot of people think I'm faking modesty, but I suppose at the end of the day, looks are obviously important to my career. They are to anyone in music.'

Though Louise is sussed enough to realise that tabloid interest comes with the territory, their ability to 'invent' news to quench their insatiable appetite does affect her. 'I'm still quite a sensitive person,' she admits. 'When magazines and papers say something bad, it bothers me. Of course it's hurtful. I wish I could do what I enjoy and ignore it but I can't.' Thankfully for Louise, a genuinely likeable person with no skeletons in her closet, the papers have been kind on the whole. 'The worst story was that I'd had a boob job! I wouldn't waste my money on something like that. Sometimes I feel like ringing in and asking, "How can you say that?"' says an indignant Lou – but, seeing the funny side, adds, 'I suppose it helps my record sales.'

But even this open, approachable star prefers to keep some things private... like, for instance, her love-life. But since she's been involved with dishy Liverpool and England soccer star, Jamie Redknapp, she seems to have been fighting a losing battle. 'I don't talk about it very often,' she admits, 'because you have to keep some things to yourself – if only because you never know what's around the corner.'

'There's a way to ask a question about someone's private life and when people are hard-hitting you just think. "Nah"... I don't know. I don't mind talking about it slightly but some people

expect you to go into real depth and if you don't give them what they're after they'll just write what they want anyway. I don't think they realise the kind of problems they can cause in your personal life.'

Louise really does think she's just your average 'Sarf Lundun' girl who happens to have fallen into a career that's a lot of fun. 'I'm five foot four inches and a size ten,' says



Louise. 'I think that's quite normal – I'm fairly average.' Normal she may be but average she certainly isn't. How many women you know have been on two covers of *FHM*? For that matter how many pop stars have been on the cover of *FHM* twice? Yep, that's exactly what we said! None!

Fame, Friends & Family



Though she's rich and famous, Lou – unlike some other pop stars – hasn't let it go to her head, and she doesn't reckon it's changed her one jot. Her family and friends are still the people Louise holds most important to her, as she reveals.



Lou turns on the charm with Martine McCutcheon from *EastEnders*

Being a mega-successful pop star

obviously has its attractions – fame, glamour, money and adoration – but it has its downside, too. Constant touring and travelling to promotional events means frequently being away from home, friends and family. It can be tough on the road being in a different city every night and the support of family and friends is very important.



Lou at the Brits with Ben Elton and Zoe Ball

'I've got a lot of **guys** who are **friends** so I can be quite laddish with them...

I can go out with them and I don't have to be all girlie which is nice.'

When you become famous old chums often lose touch and new friends are hard to make because there isn't much time to meet new people and there's always the question of whether someone wants to be your friend because of what you are rather than who you are.

One of the things Louise found hard about being in *Eternal* was the limited amount of time she got to spend with family and friends. 'I appreciate them all so much more now. Four years ago, I'd have thought "no way" if my parents had asked me to go out to dinner with them. Nowadays I can't think of anything better,' she admits cheerfully.

Her family are very important to her – particularly her mother, whom Louise thinks did a great job bringing her up: 'Mum did her best.' Having two younger brothers to tease her helps Lou remain an ordinary South London girl. 'I've got two brothers and they're lovely. I'm really protective towards them. They don't say much about me being a pop singer – I think they're a bit embarrassed! They come home and say, "They've asked for your autograph, I don't know what to say!" or, "Oh no, you're not on the TV again, are you?"'

Louise is one of those rare individuals who, despite fame and fortune, has kept her feet firmly on the ground and hasn't turned her back on her roots. 'My friends are still the same as at school. One's a girl called Sophie who I've known for years and years. I have a group of five or six friends who are very close. They stuck by me when I was in *Eternal* and when I decided to leave. They see me as me. I was worried I'd start clinging on to people when I left, but I'm more in control now. And the *Eternal* girls are still my friends, particularly Kelle,' says Louise.

She's also got a lot of fellas who are friends and she admits to enjoying being one of the lads every now and again. 'I've got a lot of guys who are friends so I can be quite laddish with them – I can go out with them and I don't have to be all girlie which is nice. It would be interesting to be a guy for the day. I'd be able to go on a real lads' night out...and it would be weird chatting girls up!'

But her closest and dearest confidant right now has to be her man, Jamie Redknapp. 'You can talk to your close friends, and he's a close friend,' confessed Louise when she first started dating him. Eventually she came clean, revealing,



'It's just a very personal thing for me. It's a private thing. I know some people would love to shout it from the nearest rooftop, but that isn't me!

'At the time when everybody thought I was having a relationship with Jamie I wasn't. We were honestly just good friends, for about two and a half years before we started having a relationship. We hit it off as friends from day one and now it's nice because the friendship existed first. It was never like an instant, "Cor, I fancy you." That happened after a few years.'

They are now head-over-heels in love, and it was a happy and joyous occasion when she and Jamie married on 29 June 1998, on a yacht in Bermuda. A perfect match – it's sure to be a long and happy marriage!

Louise now has a whole new family in the Redknapps. 'Jamie has a lovely family,' she says. And maybe one day she and Jamie will have one of their own...


'You can talk to your close friends, and he's a close friend.'

Lou on Jamie

Louise: THE EXCLUSIVE Interview

There aren't many performers who'd let journalists into their dressing room – but luscious Lou is the exception that proves the rule. As she prepared for what must have been her twentieth *Top Of The Pops* performance, she gave us an exclusive insight into her life, thoughts and feelings. Stand by to be amazed as Louise reveals all...



A full-page photograph of a woman with long, light brown hair and bangs, sitting on a modern black leather chair. She is wearing a black pinstripe suit with a wide lapel and matching trousers. Her left leg is crossed over her right. She is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background is a solid, light blue color. In the top right corner, there is a quote in a serif font, with the words 'famous' and 'life' in a bold, yellow font.

'I don't think
being **famous**
is the be all and end
all of **life**.'

'There are certain things that I **want** to be portrayed as and certain things that I **don't want** to be portrayed as. If I feel it's ever getting slightly out of control then I'll put my foot down... I know what I want at the end of the day.'



You must be used to *Top Of The Pops* by now...

'I don't know if you ever really get used to it, to be honest. It's a nerve-racking show to do, no matter how many times you do it.'

How does it compare to going out on stage live?

'It's a different feeling. When you go out on your own concert, everybody's there specifically to see you and they're going to enjoy you whatever happens.'

How has the 'Woman In Me' album gone for you?

'I'm happy with it, but now I need to move on, I feel stuck in a bit of a rut. I want to move on, make a new album and do some different things.'

So what can we expect on your third solo album?

'Something slightly different. I think I've grown up a lot in the past few years and my music has taken a natural progression that reflects that. Now it's coming to a stage where, lyrically and musically, I want to sing about other things in my life, more personal things that maybe I haven't wanted to sing about in the past.'

'It could be writing songs on my time in Eternal or what it was really like when I left: the pressures, the hardship and of course the excitement of leaving a group and entering the unknown. I'm a few years down the line now, and I've got more feelings and things to write about.'

Will you be writing songs yourself?

'Yes. You learn the tricks of the trade as you go along. Writing is just something I've learnt over the years. It is possible to go and write a song, even without any formal musical knowledge.'

Do you write on your own or with others?

'Both! I enjoy working with other people because I enjoy the feel of other people's ideas, and I also think that I have come up with some good lyrics on my own.'

Would you consider doing a duet – and if you could choose a dream partner who would it be?

'I'd definitely love a duet on my album. My dream partner? George Michael, no doubt about it! He's got it all – a great voice, so individual as a singer, individual in style, in everything. He never follows a trend, he's a creator. A leader rather than a follower. He's inspired me, coming from a

teeny-pop band and managing to take the young fans with him as well as gain a number of older fans. I was a bit of a Wham! fan. Their "Greatest Hits" is on regularly in my car, and I know every single word!'

If we came round and looked at your record collection, what would be the most embarrassing record we'd find?

'"I'm In The Mood For Dancing" by the Nolans, they were my favourites when I was younger.'

Do you have any superstitions before you perform?

'Not really. I always say a quick prayer before I go on: "Please let me sing in tune".'

Have you ever had stage fright?

'Of course I have, loads of times! When I'm doing a live show, when I get out there and once I've seen the audience and done the first song it kind of dwindles away. When you're doing one song on TV, one song's a song too late to get over your nerves, so you have to try and do that at the beginning of the song.'

As someone who went through stage school, do you have acting ambitions?

'Yes, I'd be interested in doing acting if the right part came along. It wouldn't take over my singing, but if the right opportunity did come along then it's definitely something I'd like to try.'

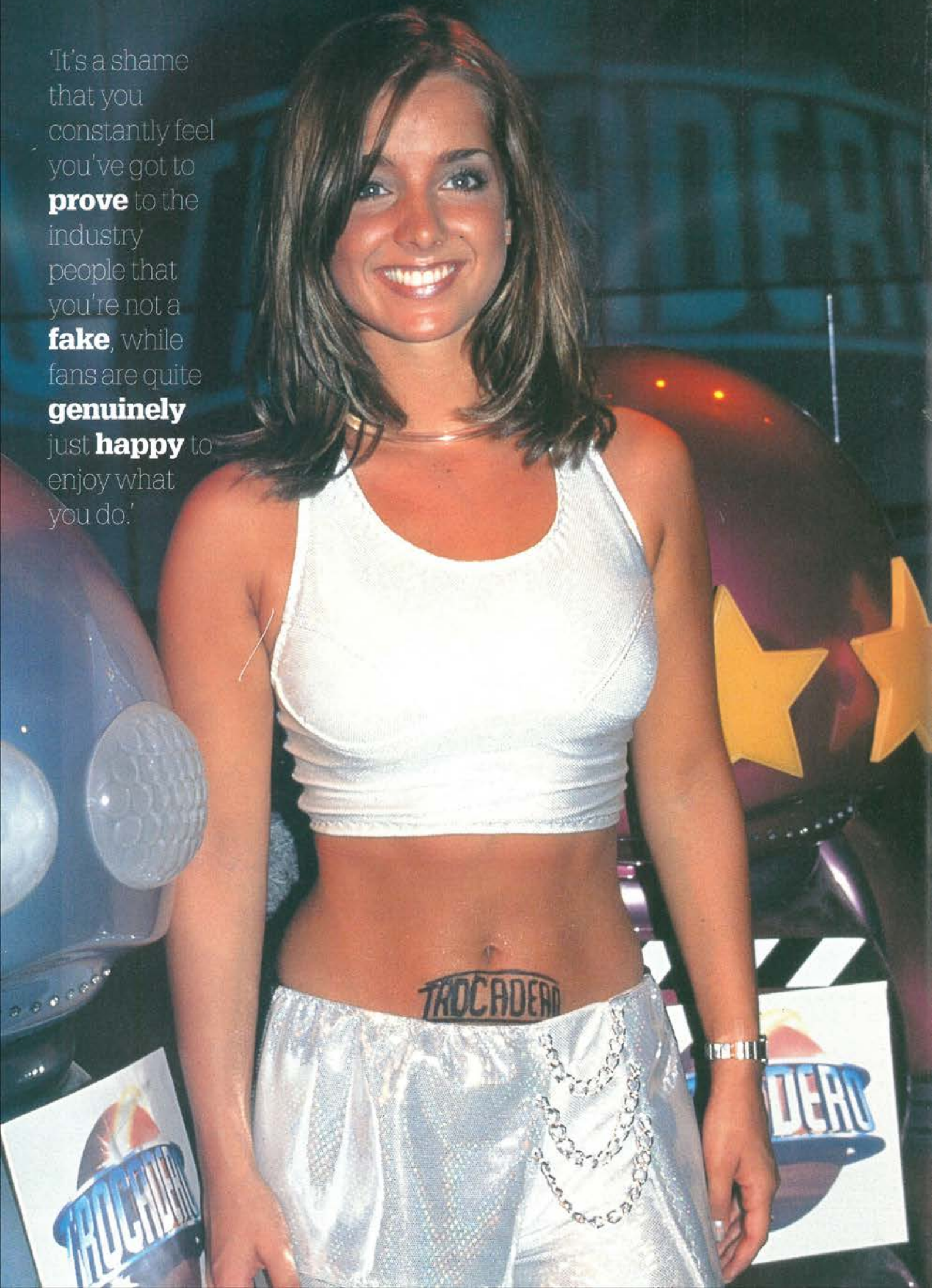
Would any particular show appeal?

'I was offered a little part in *Friends* while they were in England. Unfortunately, it was filming today – the day I was doing *Top Of The Pops*. I tried desperately to try and work out the scheduling so that I could get there and get to the *Pops* in time... Unfortunately, I couldn't do both – and, being a singer, there was no real choice to make.'

We saw you on the *O Zone* with Jamie Theakston trying out a flying lesson. Would that be something you'd like to take seriously?

'If I had time to learn... It would be great if, in ten years' time, I could have my pilot's licence, but it's not something that I'm planning at the moment. There's other things I'd like to do. I'm interested in photography, I'd like to direct as well... music videos, even films.'

'It's a shame that you constantly feel you've got to **prove** to the industry people that you're not a **fake**, while fans are quite **genuinely** just **happy** to enjoy what you do.'



You seem a very together, focused person – but do you feel the music business takes you seriously?

'It's a shame that you constantly feel you've got to prove to the industry people that you're not a fake, while fans are quite genuinely just happy to enjoy what you do. At the end of the day it's the public who put their hand in their pocket. I just think it's sad that our industry doesn't get behind a lot of British artists.'

Do you feel you're in control of your image, how you're portrayed?

'I've done some different things going through the phases of leaving Eternal and finding myself. There are certain things that I want to be portrayed as and certain things that I don't want to be portrayed as. If I feel it's ever getting slightly out of control then I'll put my foot down and say I don't want to go this route, I want to stop here. But I do know what I want at the end of the day.'

What do you look for in a friend?

'My friends are from school, the same ones I've known since I was about eleven. I think I get honest opinions from all of them. I'm not really into all this hanging out with rock stars...my friends tell me the truth and I rely on their opinions.'

What's the most important thing about friendship?

'Honesty. Being a singer is a great life, but you do need friends around you. Just because you're famous doesn't mean you don't go through problems, maybe with boyfriends, or feeling down. You get the same emotions as everybody else and you need your friends just as much.'

How do your brothers cope with having a star in the family?

'The youngest one, Sam, isn't old enough to let it bother him. But the older brother, Joe, he's chuffed – it makes his day.'

Do you feel Eternal paved the way for All Saints and the girl groups of today?

'A lot of people have said that, but I think it's so easy for people to compare because they're female or maybe they wore army pants or something stupid like that.'

'They're out there doing their own thing, like Eternal did our own thing and the Spice Girls are doing their thing. It all links in because we're all women in pop bands – but I think that's really the only link.'

If it all ended tomorrow, could you cope with being an ordinary person?

'I think I'd have to. I'd just have to get on with my life and find other things that would make me happy. I don't think being famous is the be all and end all of life. I love to sing, but I would just get on with my life and try and be successful in something else.'

Who's the most famous person you've met, and who would you most like to meet?

'I met Whitney Houston, and to be honest I was a bit starstruck. It was years ago, when Eternal did a show for the Sultan of Brunei with her. We did a photocall together, and she was a pleasure to meet. As to who I'd like to meet, I think I'd choose Stevie Wonder. My parents are big Motown lovers so I grew up with him. Could something musical happen? I'll keep my fingers crossed, and who knows?'



Lou's Music

The sounds that turned Lou's head in her youth have a lot to do with what we hear from her today.

Louise has been surrounded by music

since she was a little girl being bounced up and down on her father's knee. Though her parents Lynne and Tim are not in showbiz careers – Lynne's a housewife and Tim's a builder – they

subjected little Lou to a diet of their favourite artists. Soul singers like Stevie Wonder, Randy Crawford (Shola Ama's a fan too!) and Diana Ross were undoubtedly responsible for Louise's later tastes in music and her desire to perform on stage.

Eternal were very much soul sisters, turning out music that had as much appeal on the dancefloor as on the radio waves. Louise loves Motown-influenced soul even now, and appreciates the sort of material Eternal have brought out since she left them. 'Their new album, "Power of a Woman", is amazing!' she was to say of their first album after the split. Now she's a solo artist she has expanded into a mixture of soul-pop and more summery ballads and love songs. She loves upbeat artists like Janet Jackson and Whitney Houston, and this is reflected in much of her music. Her love of 1970s disco anthems is also obvious from the material in both albums with her cover version of 'Let's Go Round Again' by the Average White Band, and the Earth, Wind and Fire song she performed on her first solo tour.

Though she has a passion for swingbeat, Motown and 1970s funk, Louise is open to any music that gets her feet tapping and her hips wiggling. She said of Coolio's 'Gangsta's Paradise', 'I'm not usually into rap at all, but I do like this one a lot. There's something very different about it and I can sing along to it – I know the words!' This is reflected in her latest album which she says is a step forward from 'Naked'. 'We've had more time to play around on this one; it's not like I've gone really rock or rave, but it's a progression from the last album,' Louise says. You can rest assured there'll be no Prodigy or Oasis-style songs – just pure Louise!



'We've had more time to **play** around...it's not like I've gone **rock or rave**, but it's a progression from the last album.'





The Eternal Years

Louise's big break came in 1993 when she was chosen, along with her pal from stage school, Kelle, to team up with gospel singers Vernie and Easter Bennett.

Dennis Ingoldsby of First Avenue Management had spotted Vernie Bennett singing in a club and was impressed with what he saw. Even more so when he discovered Vernie had a sister, Easter, who could sing just as well. He knew that he could make his dream of an all-girl band a success – and Louise and Kelle, plucked fresh from Italia Conti, completed the line-up.

Eternal's first album 'Always And Forever' was released in November 1993 and was an instant hit, going on to become one of 1994's best-sellers by shifting 1.5 million copies.

Singles were released one after the other, each storming up the charts – of the 14 tracks on the album, a staggering six reached the Top 15, marking Eternal as *the* girl group of the early 1990s. The girls embarked on their first tour in 1994 which culminated in a fixture at the legendary Hammersmith Apollo in London. The tour was such a success that more dates had to be added and, to top it all, the single 'Oh Baby I' zoomed all the way up the charts to Number Four.

Louise loved doing what she did best – performing to an audience. 'The best thing about being in Eternal,' she recalls, 'was performing onstage, and the worst was being away from home so often.'

Eternal were happenin'! Not only were they the fans' favourite girl quartet, they were darlings of the press too! The *Mail On Sunday* held all four up as shining examples of clean-living pop-stars who, as teenage idols, were a credit to the nation. Picking up Best Dance Act at the International Dance Awards was the icing on the cake, and everything was rosy in the Eternal camp.

Like all good things, though, this wasn't to last, and on 17 June 1995 an announcement was made in the *Sun* that was to devastate Eternal fans everywhere. 'Louise to quit – but the band will play

on,' shouted the headline alongside a cruelly 'ripped' picture of the quartet. Though Robbie Williams had announced his parting of the ways with boy band Take That just the day before, Louise's decision to leave was the more shocking because it was totally unexpected!

Explaining her decision later, Louise said: 'Everyone expects you to be happy because you're successful and you're earning money, but it's really not a good enough reason to stay doing something you don't want to do. I wasn't happy and I wasn't giving it my all, and the other girls were. Simple as that.' Though the press suggested animosity and 'rows', Louise insisted that was not the case, explaining no one thing made her make the decision to split. 'No, it just felt wrong. It got to the stage when the unhappiness took over, and I wanted a chance to do something different. But I do miss the girls and there is no bad feeling. Basically, different people want different things.' For her part, Easter Bennett insisted the only arguments they had were 'trying to convince her to stay.'

On her last day tears flowed as fast as the champagne had just weeks before. 'It was so sad,' Louise recalls, 'because it was at the Silver Clef Awards. We all had to go up to get an award, and everyone knew I was leaving. I can remember Easter holding up my hand when we went up there. I was thinking, "I can't do that, I can't leave." But something inside me had made that decision and I had to do it. Now people say it was because I was too big for my boots, but I just wanted my freedom. I felt the time was right to strike out on my own.'

Only time would tell whether she had just made the biggest mistake of her life...



'Everyone expects you to be **happy** because you're successful and you're earning money, but it's really not a **good enough** reason to stay doing something you don't want to do.'

Lou's Lifestyle

With her glowing complexion, naturally clear sparkling blue eyes, thick honey hair and gleaming white-toothed smile, Louise is Beautiful with a capital B. If that weren't enough, at five feet four inches and a petite size ten she's got a figure most women would die for, not to mention the men! Louise lets us in on her secret of staying trim, healthy and beautiful.

'I'm like every other girl. I don't like my legs. I've got knees like a footballer.'

Beauty may be only skin deep for many people in the public eye but that's certainly not the case with Louise. Her beauty comes from within, and that dazzling smile of hers just can't stop it fizzing through to the outside.

Ever-modest Lou really doesn't think she's anything special to look at, though. 'It's flattering when someone calls you a babe or something – it's a lot better than being called an ugly cow! – but it's not the most important thing in my life. I don't actually think people really look at you; it's just that when one person says you're this, other people believe it!'

Like most young women, she does worry a little about her looks. 'I'm like every other girl. I don't like my legs. I've got knees like a footballer. And I don't exercise as much as I should – I can feel myself gaining a few extra inches.'

Now when it comes to worrying about weight gain Louise, like most British women today, knows

how easy it is to fall into that frustrating trap of dieting.

'Up until the age of eleven the whole issue of dieting never crossed my mind and I used to eat as much as I liked. It wasn't until I was thirteen or fourteen that I became aware of my body-shape. I decided I was getting puppy fat and thought my cheeks were chubby. I got annoyed by girls at school who seemed to eat what they liked and never put on weight, so I decided to start dieting,' she confesses.

The future singing superstar began by simply missing out lunch and then she started avoiding certain foods, like meat and cheese, that she thought would make her fat. 'I dieted on and off for about four years, from the ages of fourteen to eighteen. My weight fluctuated a lot during that time,' she admits.

Now she has an altogether more healthy approach to keeping fit and well. 'I didn't eat chocolate for two years because I thought it would give me spots. Then I realised I was getting spots anyway, so it's back to the Milky Bars and Minstrels.'

Chocolates or not, she manages to stay looking really good but she's the first to admit working-out really isn't her thing. 'I'm a nibbler you see. I pick at things in the fridge. I even leave







'It's **flattering** when someone calls you a babe or something...but it's not the most **important** thing in my life.'

fingermarks on the food. It never used to matter because when I was in Eternal we did so much dancing, I didn't need to exercise.

'I ought to go to the gym,' she continues, 'but I'm worried it would be too flash. I'm not one of these people who go in there with a thong on, to prance around in front of a mirror. I'd be there in my tracksuit, a

T-shirt, basically 145 layers of clothes! I live in tracksuits.' Instead she tries to eat lots of health food like fruit and vegetables and burns up energy with her exhausting schedule of performances and promotional appearances.

Louise reckons she's no natural beauty, and admits that just like most of us she needs a bit of a helping hand from her make-up.

'When I get up in the morning I definitely need my blusher brush! Cindy Crawford is naturally beautiful. You

look at people like that and it's a different world. I'd like to look like her if I could.' Her beauty regime isn't exactly a regime, as she confesses to needing very little time to get herself ready before she goes out. 'It takes three quarters of an hour to get ready to go out. That's with a bath and everything. I like to keep my make-up simple and I've got some nice sexy hipster trousers I wear, then I'm ready.'

She often has make-up artists fiddling about with her, particularly for photographs: 'I did go home and cry the first time I had my eyebrows

plucked for a photo shoot,' she admits. Apart from her make-up she has her legs done. 'I get them waxed, which is a bit painful. They put stuff on your legs and then put a plaster over it and just rip it off. It *really* hurts,' wails Louise. She also thinks it's important to keep her nails up to scratch: 'People tell me I have nice



hands, but I do go and have my nails done so maybe that's why!' Louise admits to having had her make-up disasters. 'Once when a friend and I were experimenting with make-up I rubbed a pot of something on my face. It went bright orange – I'd rubbed fake tan all over my face!'

But, like everything else in the Louise philosophy of life, she thinks there are more important things in life than beauty. As far as she's concerned, 'What you see is what you get!' And that's exactly what we like about her...

Musically Speaking

Louise's discography

Eternal Album 'Always And Forever'

Released: November 1993

Highest UK chart position: Number 2

Tracks:

Stay

Crazy

Save Our Love

Oh Baby I

I'll Be There

Sweet Funky Thing

Never Gonna Give You Up

Just A Step From Heaven

Let's Stay Together

This Love's For Real

So Good

If You Need Me Tonight

Don't Say Goodbye

Amazing Grace

Eternal Singles

'Stay'

Released: September 1993

Highest UK chart position: Number 4

'Save Our Love'

Released: January 1994

Highest UK chart position: Number 8

'Just A Step From Heaven'

Released: April 1994

Highest UK chart position: Number 8

'So Good'

Released: August 1994

Highest UK chart position: Number 13





'Oh Baby I'

Released: October 1994

Highest UK chart position: Number 4

'Crazy'

Released: December 1994

Highest UK chart position: Number 15

Louise Solo Albums

'Naked'

Released: June 1996

Highest UK chart position: Number 7

Naked

'I badly wanted to do a dance song, but not really a mad, club-like track. It's swing beat, and the video's dance routine is fantastic. It was by the same guy who did Madonna's "Human Nature" video. A lot of people have compared the video to Janet Jackson which is very flattering – I love Janet!'

In Walked Love

'This song is written by Diane Warren who's written massive hits for Celine Dion, Whitney Houston and Michael Bolton, and now me – mad, eh? I like this song a lot because it's so happy-go-lucky; it's just a feelgood song with no deep message to get across.'

Light Of My Life

'I see this record as a marking point in my career, because it was the first song I released after I left Eternal. I met up with Simon Climie who said he'd written a brilliant song and said, "How about it?" I really went for it. Shooting the video was great – it was in Hawaii on a beautiful beach with black sand.'

Best That You Bring

'This was written by Dave James, who worked with Take That. It's a summery uplifting tune. It hasn't got any personal meaning, it's just a nice love song.'

One Kiss From Heaven

'This is one of my favourites. It's the type of stuff I'd listen to at home myself – laid back, easy, not hard work. Again, it's not the type of song you should analyse – it's just a nice, mellow tune.'

Thinking About You Baby

'Very funky, very different – this has a real 1980s feel to it which I'm very pleased with. I like to experiment and try different things all the time, so I like the fact that this song sounds totally different from everything else on the album.'

Discussions

'The good thing about this track is it isn't about the usual subjects of love, boyfriends and stuff. It's about a girl who's sick of everybody talking about her and making up rumours behind her back. It's about how frustrating it can be when nobody ever says anything to your face. I can identify with that because the press always make things up about me and I can't answer back.'

Back To Love

'The way to sum this up is just to say that love is bigger than anything – any difficult situation you're going through, any problem. Don't give up, love is the biggest thing in the world! It's really happy and I like it a lot!'

Never Too Late

'This is brilliant! It's like watching a film because the story is so brilliant. It's about a girl who's sitting at the back of a church watching her ex-boyfriend get married to another woman. She's basically saying, "Don't do it, it's not too late to change your mind!" It's a very dramatic song.'







Solo Singles

'Light Of My Life'

Released: September 1995

Highest UK chart position:
Number 8

'In Walked Love'

Released: March 1996

Highest UK chart position:
Number 17

'Naked'

Released: May 1996

Highest UK chart position:
Number 5

'Undivided Love'

Released: August 1996

Highest UK chart position:
Number 5

'One Kiss From Heaven'

Released: November 1996

Highest UK chart position:
Number 9

'Arms Around The World'

Released: October 1997

Highest UK chart position:
Number 4

'Let's Go Round Again'

Released: November 1997

Highest UK chart position:
Number 10

'All That Matters'

Released: March 1998

Highest UK chart position:
Number 11

Goodbye To Love

'If you read the title of this song you'd think it'd be a sad song, but it isn't at all. It's about somebody walking out on a relationship saying, "I can't be bothered with you messing me about any more. I don't need you, I'm on a high." It's about walking out, not looking back and knowing you'll survive.'

That's The Way I Like It

'This song is the naughtiest on the album. It's about a girl saying she really likes the way it feels when her boyfriend... well I won't go into details. Listen to the lyrics and work it out for yourself! I won't do a raunchy dance routine to it though – I think the lyrics are steamy enough on their own.'

I'll Fly Away

'This is about how strong you have to be in a relationship sometimes if you want to escape. I've been in that position before, but this isn't about me.'

I Gave You My Love

'This last track also sounds different from the rest of the album. It's a big, 1960s brassy thing and I think everyone will like it. It's good that it's at the end of the album because I think it leaves you on a real high.'

'Woman In Me'

Released: October 1997

Highest UK chart position: Number 5

'Neat balance of energetic pop and mature soul.'

Daily Mail

Arms Around The World

Sounds a little like Janet Jackson's 'Runaway'.

'All we've done is use the same instrument at the beginning which has created the same sound. I hope people don't penalise me for one little bit sounding the same. It wasn't done intentionally, it was only when the song was finished I noticed it, and because it led so nicely into the song I decided to keep it.'

All That Matters

I Pray

Let's Go Round Again

Woman In Me

Trust In You

Reminds Me Of You

Shut Up & Kiss Me

Healing Love

When Will My Heart Beat Again

New York Moon

Happy Love

Who Do You Love?

Don't Be Shy

Running Back For More

Love Will Bring You Back To Me

'Woman In Me' reflects a more mature Louise and features essential ingredients of classic British pop-soul – up-tempo dance numbers, smoochy ballads plus the obligatory cover of an old disco tune, in this case, 'Let's Go Round Again' by the Average White Band.



Naughty...But Nice!

She may not be the baddest girl of pop, but this mischievous pop funster is no goody two shoes either...



In the summer of

1997 Louise took a much deserved extended holiday from the hectic touring and promotional schedules to relax and have fun as well as concentrate on decorating her new home. But though she was hoping she would also have a break from being in the public eye, her Bermuda

holiday with fella Jamie Redknapp proved irresistible for the tabloid press – and before you could say ‘telephoto lens’ sneaky pictures of Lou and Jamie were splashed all over the front pages!

‘I didn’t exactly look my best in them,’ complains Louise good-naturedly. ‘It’s an invasion of my privacy – but as much as I try and get mad, they didn’t actually say anything nasty about me.’ Poor Lou didn’t even realise the stir she had caused back in England until she phoned a friend at home, ‘She’d bought the papers and said what a good time it looked like we were having – my holiday photos beat me home, that was a shock!’

‘Not content with a few sizzlin’ pics in the *Sun*, rumours began circulating that Louise was

spending much of her time having a complete make-over of her image. Gone was the winsome, naive young Lou and a new ‘raunchy’ adult-oriented image was set to win over an older audience. ‘Raunchy!?!’ she guffaws. ‘Maybe I did one photo shoot where I showed a bit of cleavage, but hardly a new image.’ As a matter of fact, Louise adds, ‘One day you’re raunchy, the next day you’re anything but. I’m not going to get on stage in my bra!’

She may not have gone on stage in her bra but she certainly adopted a daring pose on the cover of *Sky* magazine. ‘I didn’t go naked,’ she insists: ‘I wore a bra top and they covered it up with the headline to make me look naked. I recently did photos for *FHM* magazine and I felt just as nervous. Did I take my top off? Ohmigosh, nooo! I’d never do that and I don’t think I’d be asked as people know what I’m like.’

Though she gets a lot of press attention, Louise tries not to let it affect her too much and realises her pop image of slinky sexuality is just a persona invented by the press rather than the real Louise. ‘I’d say I’m a pretty straightforward person,’ she smiles. ‘I generally enjoy what I do and my career really is the most important thing. I don’t try to be anything I’m not and I don’t think I’ve changed since I’ve been in this business – I think I’d be much the same person if I hadn’t done this! I don’t think there’s anything about me that would surprise you...’

Even being voted the sexiest woman in the world didn’t phase her, ‘Oh, I’d be lying if I said I wasn’t flattered about it, it would give anyone’s ego a boost for a day. But I wake up the next morning and I’m still the same in the mirror. It makes me laugh, it really does. I’m just me... I don’t feel anything like that,’ she says modestly. All we ask, Lou, is – don’t change!

T’d say
I’m a pretty
straightforward
person...
I enjoy what
I do and my
career is
the most
important
thing.’



'One day
you're **raunchy**,
the next day
you're anything
but. I'm not going
to get on stage in
my **bra!**



Solo Stardom

When Louise went out on her own she had a lot to prove – if she was to survive as a solo performer, she knew she must get in the recording studio straight away.

'I really didn't know what to expect. I was scared and, in the beginning it was very hard,' admitted Louise. Fans are fickle and if you're out of the charts you're likely to be yesterday's news. Louise said at the time, 'I'm a bit nervous, but excited. I hope the fans will bear with me 'til my new stuff's released. I'll really miss Easther, Vernie and Kelle.'

Work began on her first album in August 1995, just two months after the split, with producer Simon Climie, US songwriter Diane Warren and Eternal producers Charles and Wilson. Everyone was speculating on the Louise 'sound' and, though it was suggested she might be pitched 'somewhere between Kylie and Madonna', Louise was quick to insist she didn't want to be limited by comparisons: 'I don't like to say "I'm going to be the British Kylie." But at the end of the day I'm not going to look that different. I'm not going to look amazingly sexy. It's not me, it's not in my nature. We all like to look sexy sometimes, but maybe I'll do it in a bit of a funky or harder way.'

Fans didn't have to wait long to hear just what Louise was going to deliver when her debut single, 'Light Of My Life', was released in September 1995. A summery ballad with more of a romantic feel than her previous Eternal stuff, it waltzed up to Number 8 in the charts. After jetting off to Hawaii for a video-shoot, she flew back to England to appear on the kids' Saturday morning show *Live & Kicking* – and found her first solo appearance very nerve-racking. 'There are lots of

things going through my mind. It'll be easier when I can dance about!' confessed Louise at the time. Even being in the studio on her own felt odd. 'The strangest thing was hearing my voice on its own. I was like, "Where's Easther gone?" I'm getting used to it now, but I do miss them.'

At first, she struggled to come to terms with splitting from her friends. 'My lows came probably after a couple of weeks after I left Eternal,' Lou admitted. 'I knew I'd done the right thing, but nothing felt right, nothing fitted in – it was so different. And when the girls phoned me up, I'd feel awful and really alone.'

But things picked up with the single release of the title track, 'Naked', in May 1996, shortly before the album hit the record stores. A catchy, danceable little number, it shot to Number 5 in the charts. Louise was a hit, and not just in the UK – in Japan she was mobbed by supporters at the album launch party. Louise was fast acquiring superstar status as 'Naked' went platinum, selling over a million worldwide and two further single releases off the album reached the Top 10.

One short year after leaving Eternal, Louise was a star in her own right – and, as she remarked at the time, 'I'm really happy for the first time in my life.' She deserved to feel good – she'd worked hard to get there and kept going despite her own anxieties. 'I'm so scared. I've never been so nervous. Some mornings I wake up and think



I'm proud
of what
I'm doing
because
I'm going
in the
direction
I want to go.'



"what have I done?", then other mornings I wake up and think, "yeah, come on Lou, you've got this chance you've got to take it." I am so nervous – but with excitement,' she confessed.

Now all she had to do was the dreaded 'follow-up' album, a bigger test than even the debut had been. But we needn't have worried. Combining talents with writers and producers Simon Climie, Steve Levine, Nigel Lewis, John Holliday and Trevor Steel who had worked on 'Naked', she passed the test with flying colours!

'Woman In Me' was well received by the critics and showed a maturity beyond Louise's years.

The hit potential in every track was obvious. As Julian Close, EMI's A&R Executive, said, 'For my money there are ten potential singles on the record. The problem is choosing the five to release!' Her first, 'Arms Around The World' was a Lisa Stansfield-style groove that got to Number Four in the charts, while tracks like her cover of the Average White Band's 1970s classic 'Let's Go Round Again' (another hit, her first of 1998) gave the album a distinctly groovy disco feel.

'I'm aware of where my audience is at,' Louise explained, 'but I also wanted to grow with this record. I'm two years older, so obviously I'm more confident and the music sounds a lot more mature. This album is definitely a step up for me. I wanted to reach an older audience, but I also wanted to hold on to the people who bought the first LP. I'm proud of what I'm doing because I'm going in the direction I want to go. I still don't know if it was the right career move – I'll never know that. It just felt right, like it was something I had to do,' she added.

Things had taken off on the personal front too

with her announcement of engagement to Liverpool soccer star Jamie Redknapp. 'We are really good mates, but when all the tabloids started saying we were going out together it put a lot of pressure on us, but we both know the system so it hasn't affected us that much. I never speak to him about football though – I speak to him about... shopping!' joked Louise.

To top it all, she's drooled over by half the male population in Britain and is quietly racking up nearly as many magazine cover poses as hit singles.



Louise, though, knows when to count her blessings and isn't going to let any of it go to her head. She acknowledges that it takes more than just talent to survive in the pop business. 'I've been lucky so far,' she smiles, 'and up until now the opportunities have just come along – touch wood.' Let's hope they keep on coming!

Top Fashion

From clean-cut girlie to glam-goddess, Louise has run the style gamut with ease. The queen of fashion gives us a sneaky peek in her wardrobe full of on-stage and off-stage gear!



At five foot four inches, Louise would never have made it to supermodel status – you have to be at least five foot ten nowadays – but at a sylph-like size ten, complete with womanly curves, she's got the figure of the superbabe

she's become. With vital statistics like hers, she'd look good in a bin bag and there's many who'd prefer her to wear nothing at all!

Though she likes to look good, Lou says it isn't the be all and end all. 'There's so much more that's important in life to be worrying about,' she muses. 'I know people will think it's easy for me to say that, being where I am. But I've flicked through *Vogue* since the age of fifteen thinking, I want to look like that, be like that. It can make your life hell!'

Like most girls, there's nothing Louise likes more than slopping about in tracksuit bottoms and a T-shirt – and she's the first to admit that, when she's

relaxing at home, that's what she's most likely to be wearing. The Louise style has matured and altered since the *Eternal* days when she was more likely to be photographed wearing jackets and cropped fluffy jumpers or starched shirts and suits.

Since going solo, her image has become more sophisticated and sexy, tight clinging dresses, smart suits teamed up with a bikini top or leather pants. Though she likes buying clothes, a lot of the gear she wears is selected for her – and that's led to a Louise daydream. 'Rather than being given clothes, I'd like a whole day to go shopping round London. I'd whizz round Knightsbridge, Covent Garden and Oxford Street and buy everything I fancied.'

Lou's best-kept fashion secret however is 'a big fluffy teddy-bear sleepsuit my mum got me. And big, white, soft fluffy slippers, like trainers. I look like I've got cartoon character-sized feet,' she reveals. What's more, she also thinks 'thermal underwear's great.' Whatever she's wearing and wherever she's wearing it, Louise is always going to look 100 per cent glam – and that means even more of an image to live up to.

'I think I'm more conscious of myself. It's hard not to be a lot more paranoid about what you're wearing, what my shoes are like, what my hair looks like, *everything*. But I think I've become more confident in my character, especially recently.' There's no doubt she's got nothing to worry about – she looks gorgeous, 'Naked' or not!





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life **hell!**

The Louise Superquiz



1 Which school did Louise attend?

- a Lewisham High School
- b Italia Conti Stage School
- c Sylvia Young Theatre School

2 Which hunky footballer is Louise married to?

- a Jamie Redknapp
- b Gary Lineker
- c Ryan Giggs

3 Who would Lou like to be as famous as?

- a Janet Jackson
- b Janet Street Porter
- c Madonna

4 How old was Louise when she joined Eternal?

- a 16
- b 14
- c 17

5 Where was Louise born?

- a Leicester
- b Leeds
- c Lewisham

6 What type of car does she own?

- a Vauxhall Frontera
- b BMW 3 Series
- c Land Rover Discovery



Find out if you're the ultimate Louise Superfan by completing these 20 testing questions!



7 How many sisters does Lou have?

- a Two
- b None
- c One

8 Who is her all-time idol?

- a Oasis
- b Darren Day
- c Stevie Wonder

9 How many albums has Louise produced as a solo artist?

- a One
- b Two
- c None

10 Which magazine voted her the sexiest woman in the world?

- a Sky Magazine
- b FHM
- c Smash Hits

11 What didn't she eat for two years because she thought it would give her spots?

- a Chips
- b Fried Eggs
- c Chocolate



12 Which *EastEnders* did she star alongside in *Grange Hill*?

- a Michelle Gayle
- b Patsy Palmer
- c Paul Nicholls

13 On 'Woman In Me', she covered a hit of which 1970s band?

- a Earth, Wind and Fire
- b Average White Band
- c Kool and the Gang

14 What did she used to sell on her granddad's market stall?

- a Records
- b Bric-a-brac
- c Tomatoes

15 What's Louise's favourite nosh?

- a Italian
- b Curry
- c Fish and Chips

16 What does she need most when she gets up in the morning?

- a Her lipply
- b Her hairdryer
- c Her blusher brush

17 When did Lou announce she was leaving *Eternal*?

- a 17 June 1995
- b 17 July 1996
- c 1 April 1997

18 Which record company is Louise signed with?

- a London
- b First Avenue/EMI
- c Virgin



19 What is the name of her dog?

- a Hattie
- b Battie
- c Mattie

20 What is her dad's profession?

- a Builder
- b Postman
- c Carpenter

How did you do?

Score between 0-8

Oh, no! Are you sure it's Louise you're a fan of and not Prodigy? Read this book from cover

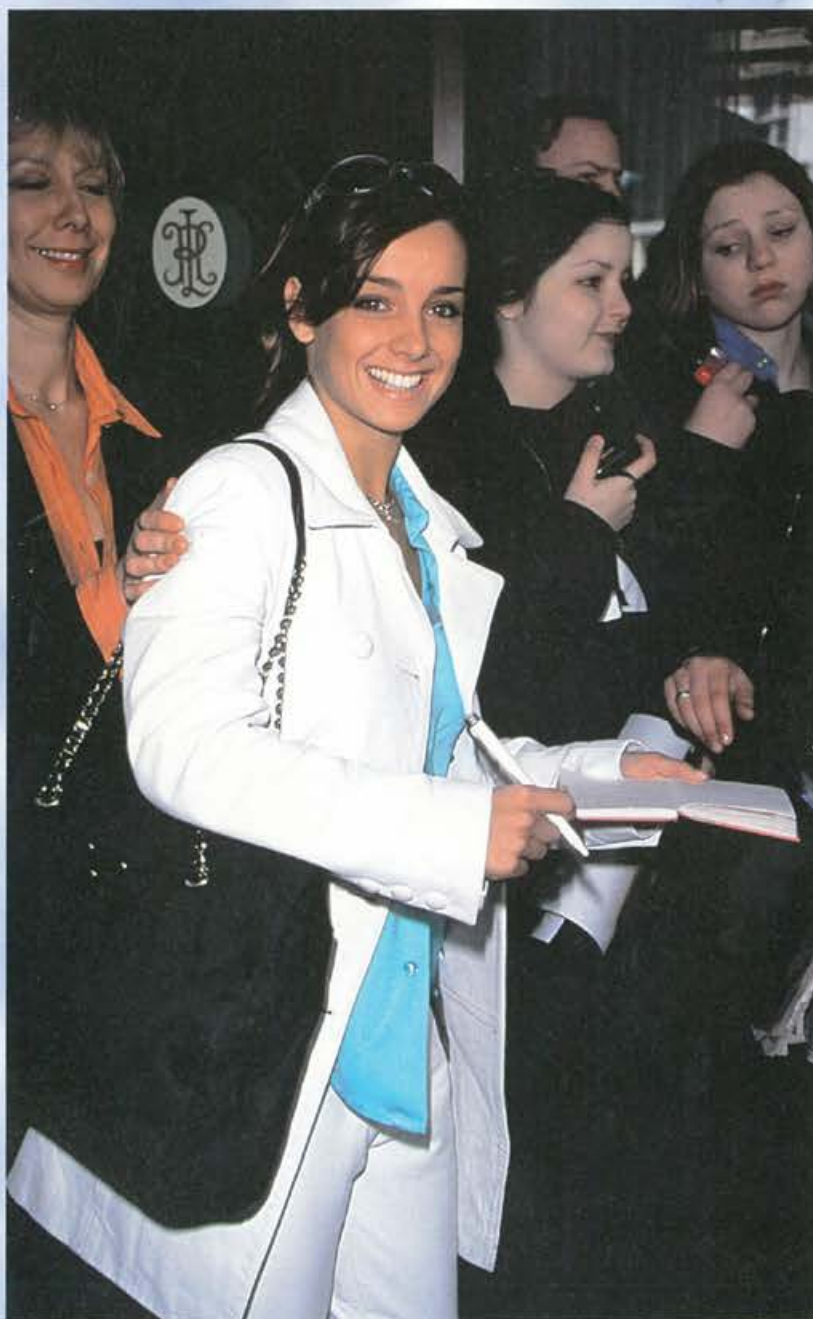
to cover and then do the test again – that way, you'll really prove your dedication to our Lou.

Score between 9-16

Not bad, not bad! But there's certainly room for improvement. Put on those Louise albums, remind yourself just why you're a fan – and maybe you'll improve your score still further.

Score 17 and over

Wow! What a Nutter! You know so much about the singing South Londoner you could be her mother! If you are – stop cheating! If you aren't – well done, you truly are a fan worth having.



Answers

- 1 b, 2 a, 3 c, 4 a, 5 c, 6 b, 7 b,
- 8 c, 9 b, 10 a, 11 c, 12 a,
- 13 b, 14 c, 15 a, 16 c, 17 a,
- 18 b, 19 a, 20 a



A full-page photograph of Louise Linton. She is a young woman with long dark hair, smiling and looking towards the camera. She has her hands raised behind her head. She is wearing a dark blue velvet crop top with a large, ornate lace collar and dark blue velvet pants. A small black microphone is clipped to her top.

Lou's Views

When it comes to quotes Lou's never short of an opinion. So sit back and sample the world according to Louise...

'I think everyone has been given a gift in their life. I enjoy singing and dancing and acting but I think I've got a long way to go before I can say that I'm talented. I think Whitney Houston and Michael Jackson have got real talent. I've got about thirty per cent of their talent so far.'

'I'm not into **curries** – they make my nose **run**.'

'I find guys with dark hair really attractive. I like a man I can have a laugh with. I like a nice smile. It shows he's warm and friendly. Looks are important to begin with 'cause that's what first attracts you but I've ended up liking guys who I didn't like straight away!'

'I'm too shy to **ask** people out and I never say anything. I had a **crush** on someone at school for about a year and then he moved to work in a hotel in **Spain**. He was called Jason...'



'I'd like to go on a skiing holiday. I've never been skiing before but I'm up for having a go at it. The trouble is, I love the sunshine — you can't beat a bit of sun, sand and sea. Maybe I could have both.'



'The mind's important but I'd be lying if I said the physical thing wasn't. I think everybody has to feel a bit of physical attraction to make a relationship work. It's important to go, "Ooh yeah", every time you see them. But it does change. In the beginning it's more lustful and then it changes to affection.'

'I'm not saying I'm as talented as Kelle, Vernie and Easter put together, but I think that sometimes you can have other things on your side, like luck. I'm just going to work really hard at building up the things I'm good at.'

'I kind of know for a fact that on a first date I would **never** sleep with anybody. It's completely against everything I stand for.'

'Well, I've been known to go for a **"bad boy"** in the past but I prefer somebody I can **trust**. I do like a guy who's got his own mind and who's a bit cheeky too! Not a complete **goody-goody**.'

'As a person I've had to become slightly more my own boss because I haven't got other people to rely on. I used to be able to sit back and know that Vernie would sort everything out, whereas now I have to do everything.'

'I'd like to do a bit of a tribute to them (Eternal). We spent so much time together and I still get lonely without them which is strange because I'm always surrounded by so many people. It's got a lot to do with everyone just needing a certain part of you, but no-one actually needing you.'



Louise Live



If making the split from Eternal was 'the hardest decision' of Louise's life then her first solo live tour was the most gruelling test of her pop career. Share the experience...

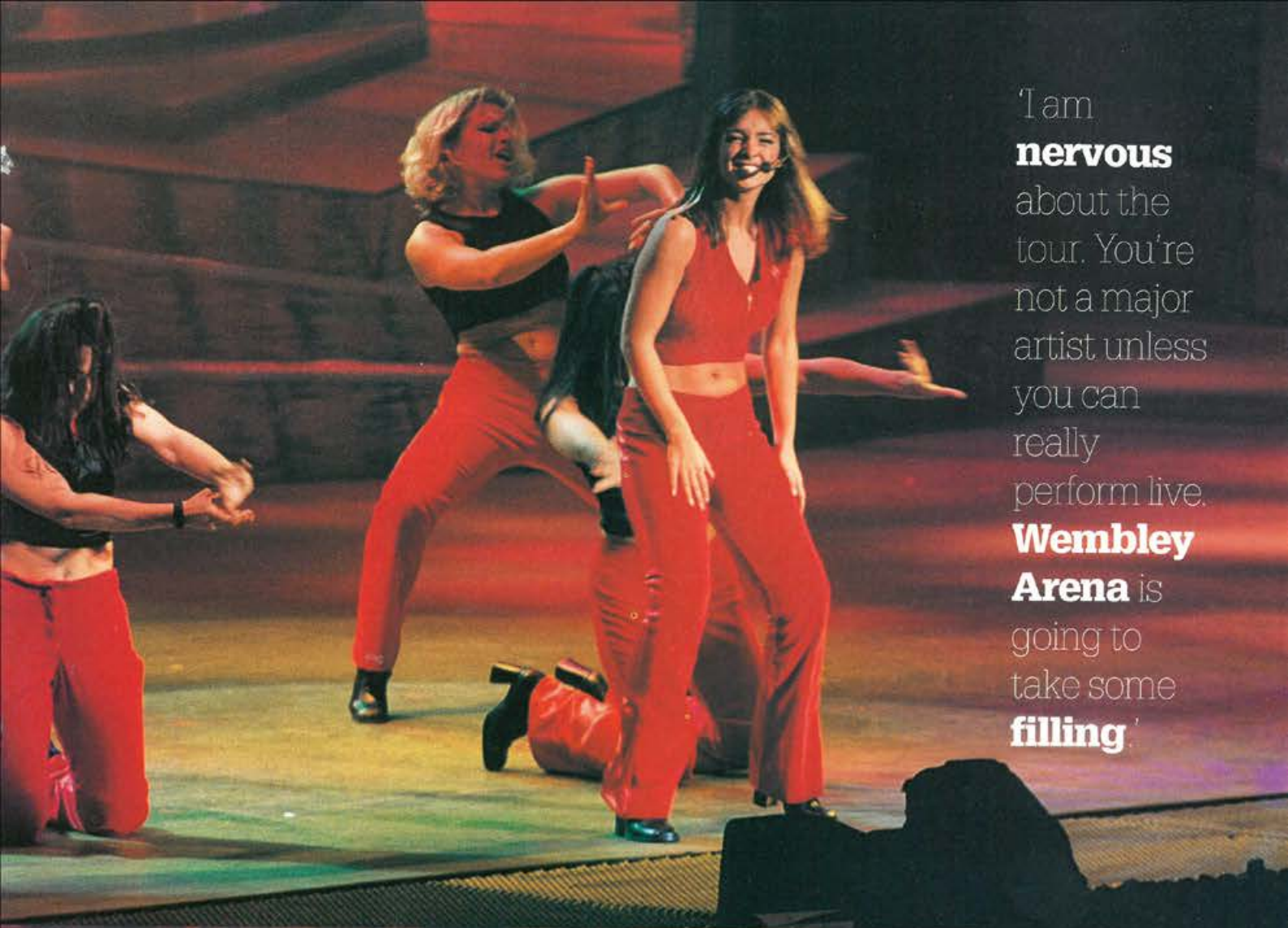
When little Lou made the decision to part from pop-soul quartet Eternal, she had no idea what the future would hold for her. All she knew was to make it work she'd have to work darn hard and that meant getting an album out quick! After the success of 'Naked' and the release of a second album, 'Woman In Me', it was time to take to the road.

Touring is a gruelling experience at the best of times – up there singing live with nothing to hide ►





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**First Avenue
Management**

behind but the power of the singing voice. If it's a daunting prospect when you are up there performing with three close friends, imagine how Louise felt knowing that soon she would be on-stage, all alone and with no protection except her talent!

At only 22 she embarked on her first solo tour, a 21-date nationwide trek which included a

'But because this is my first live tour on my own, I'll go and see a coach.'

As well as singing live alongside her nine-piece band, she had back-up in the form of dancers who were auditioned in each town to give some unknowns their first step to stardom. 'I'll have backing vocalists too because some of the songs are difficult to sing at the same time as

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dance routines. It'll be **good** to have some **help**.'

show at Wembley Arena. 'I am nervous about the tour. It's the next big thing that I had to do. You're not a major artist unless you can really perform live. Wembley Arena is going to take some filling,' she gasped. The No Sweat Tour sponsored by Soft & Gentle deodorant was planned to promote her second album and give Louise's fans a chance to finally see her live. It kicked off at Sheffield City Hall in November 1997, and then Louise travelled all over Britain strutting her stuff, and wowing audiences wherever she went!

First Avenue Management said, 'This is a big tour which will take Louise to a new level. She wants to be seen as a serious, credible artist and this is a big step in that direction.'

Louise knew her first solo stint was going to be one of her biggest tests so she made sure she was well prepared. A few weeks before curtain-up she visited a voice coach. 'I do my own vocal warm-ups, or the producer I'm working with in the studio will do them with me,' she revealed.

doing the dance routines. It'll be good to have some help in the big dance breaks, like in "Naked",' said Louise.

Lou admitted to getting scared when she performed on stage, describing the feeling as 'sort of *excited* scared'. And she certainly didn't apologise for the fact that Soft & Gentle wasn't the trendiest of brands to be associated with.

'It wasn't about trendsetting,' she explained, 'it was about keeping the ticket price to my shows as low as possible: by having Soft & Gentle as my sponsor, I can do that. In return for promoting their product they pay an amount of money and we use that to make the tour good. If they hadn't paid it, the extra costs would have been added to the price of the tickets.' Typical of a girl who is more interested in her fans than her pocket!

With the success of the first tour and both albums she's released to date, we can be sure that it won't be long before Louise is back on the tour bus again...

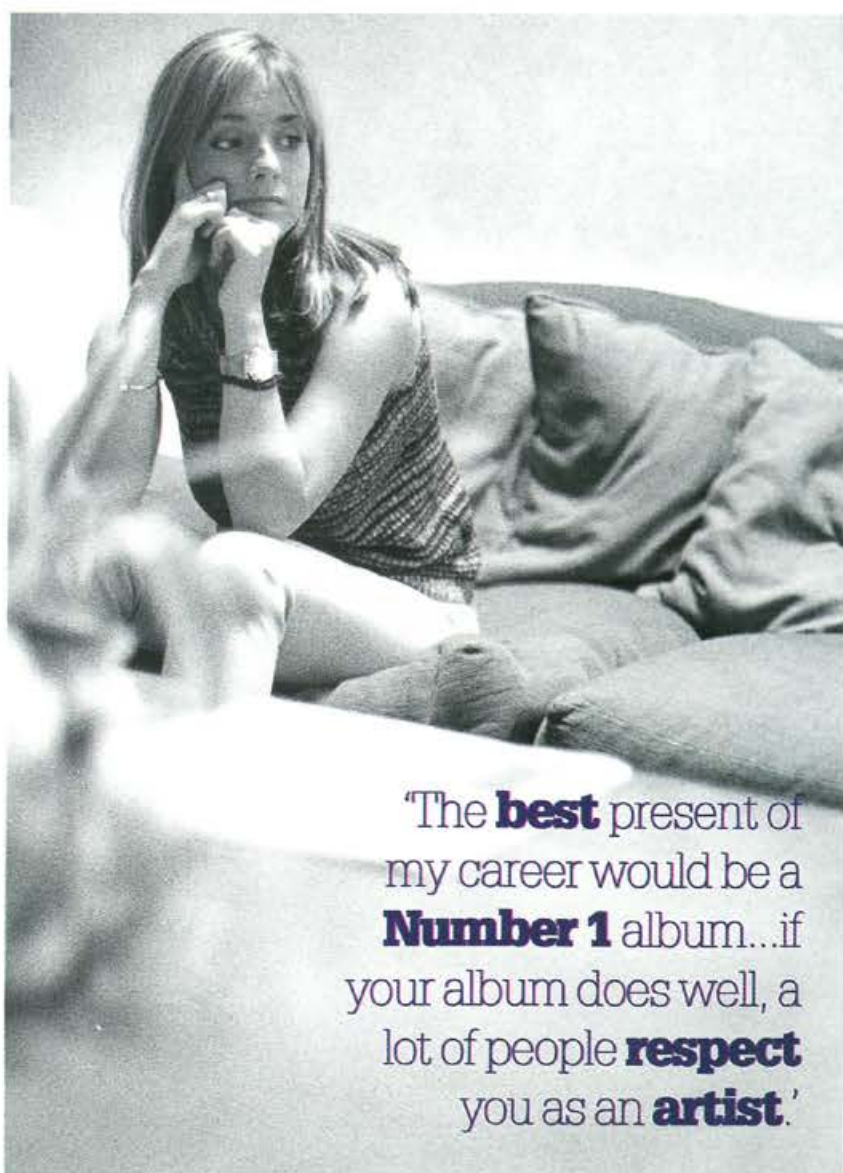


The Next Step

Solo stardom has come Louise's way relatively quickly – at only 24 she's a successful solo artist, cover girl extraordinaire...and the best is yet to come!

Having successfully completed her UK

tour, the next step is to conquer Europe. She's already making it big in Southeast Asia so it won't be long before America beckons. With two albums under her belt, Lou will be itching to get to work on a third to develop her talents further.



'The **best** present of my career would be a **Number 1** album...if your album does well, a lot of people **respect** you as an **artist**.'

'I would like to be as famous as Madonna,' she admits. 'I think that as long as you can remain true to yourself then you're all right. In *Eternal*, the more successful we got, the more I kept my feet on the ground. It makes you appreciate what you have and just how special the people close to you are!'

As far as fame goes, she's already reaching the giddy heights of Madonna status, with magazine covers clamouring for her picture and fans desperate for her autograph – but will she follow her idol in other ways? Now that she's married, the pitter-patter of tiny feet might one day be on the agenda. Before that happy day, she might well go to Hollywood to make a movie – there's bound to have been offers.

Louise insists that for now, at least, performing is her first love. 'Singing is what is important to me at the moment, that's what I've got to establish,' she'd said when first embarking on her solo career. 'With *Eternal* we were always guaranteed a hit. It was like, "we're in *Eternal*, the song will go in the charts". And I think now I've really got to work to prove myself and get an album done. Who knows, in a few years time... I've always wanted to be a Bond girl – the guns and fighting kind. I'd love to do that!'

As far as Lou is concerned she has plenty of time for settling down and having a family. For now, she'd settle on an album that goes straight to the top. 'The best present of my career would be a Number 1 album. I wouldn't complain about a Number 1 single either, but an album would be fantastic. If your album does well, a lot of people respect you as an artist.' We don't think it will be long before Ms Nurdington's dream comes true.







Louise



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