

ELLY

SOPHIE BILLINGTON
COVER HOW SHE TR
GIRL TO BRITISH ELEC



JACKSON

DELVES INTO THE LIFE OF ELLY JACKSON TO DISCOVER HOW SHE TRANSFORMED FROM QUIET SOUTH LONDON SCHOOL-GIRL TO ELECTRO-POP QUEEN IN SUCH A SHORT AMOUNT OF TIME.

If you haven't heard of powerful electro-pop duo "La Roux", then you must have been living under a rock for the past few years. The unique twosome consists of Eleanor 'Elly' Jackson and Ben Langmaid who were introduced to each other in 2006 by a mutual friend. They burst onto the British music scene in December 2008 with their first single "Quicksand" which they released with a French independent record label named Kitsuné Music. Shortly after the release of this first single, the pair were signed to Polydor Records to release their debut, self-titled, album.

Front woman and face of the band, Elly Jackson, is instantly recognisable for her distinctive androgynous dress sense, bright red hair and quirky style. In fact her unique image inspired the band's name; "La Roux" loosely translates to "Red haired one". Eleanor Kate Jackson was born on 12th March 1988 in South London to Trudie Goodwin and Kit Jackson who are both actors. Growing up with creative parents meant that Elly had a world of artistic discovery in front of her. It was her father who started Elly's first real interest in music; he played a lot of classic rock and folk music when she was young such as Buddy Holly, Chuck Berry, Carole King and Nick Drake.

As Elly's interest in music continued to grow she began to write her own songs, adding music to them with her acoustic guitar which her father taught her to play. Elly says that her father taught himself how to play the acoustic guitar in his young teens and wanted to give her the pleasure of playing as she grew up. At a very young age Elly was

singing and playing, and enjoying every minute of it. However, as she grew into her teenage years she discovered the rave scene and became fascinated by dance and techno music. Artists such as David Bowie, Depeche Mode, Erasure, Madonna and Prince were now heavily influencing her musical taste. Elly claims that she 'fell out of love' with folk music and even began to dislike the sound of the acoustic guitar in her own songs. As she advanced into the music scene in her late teens, Elly was sure of the sound that she wanted to record and the type of artist that she wanted to be. Jackson didn't want the 'singer-songwriter image' that so many artists these days have; she wanted to stand out from the crowd and share her unique electro-pop sound.

In order to make her breakthrough into the big, scary world of British music, Elly found herself auditioning and singing for many producers and record label representatives. However, it seemed that no one was interested in her enough to give her a chance at breaking out. Then, whilst singing for Jason Bacon at a New Years Eve party held in Brixton in 2006, she found her chance. Bacon phoned his good friend, Ben Langmaid, who was looking for a new musical project. He told Langmaid that he needed to hear Jackson immediately, and once the pair had been introduced, La Roux was formed.

It took the duo a good few years to create their first album. Jackson claims that the pair can't write song after song like many artists do; they work more closely with each track and may only produce one song in six months.

Regardless of the time it took to complete their debut album, it blew up pretty quickly! After the release of their first single, "Quicksand", in December 2008 they seemed to become an overnight success. They were quickly recognised as an up and coming band on the British music scene that brought something new, different and exciting to the charts. La Roux's second single "In for the Kill" debuted at Number 11 in the UK Singles Chart and made its way all the way up to Number 2 just four weeks later. Possibly La Roux's most well known track, "Bulletproof", was their third release. It debuted at Number 1 in the UK Singles Chart and clearly demonstrated the fact that the British public had fallen in love with the electro-pop sound that the pair offered.

Whilst promoting their debut album the pair supported Brit-pop princess, Lily Allen on her headlining tour of the UK in 2009. It wasn't long after the release of their album that the duo were playing their own shows. They headlined the Samsung NME Radar Tour in 2009 and performed at Glastonbury, Oxygen, Reading and Leeds festivals. In the late summer of 2009, the band completed an eight city tour of North America and sold out two Australian dates in minutes. Being the front woman of the band, Elly's fame quickly rose but her image stayed the same. She claims that she doesn't approve of stylists trying to make female artists more feminine, and likes to stick to her trademark androgynous fashion. She doesn't like what is perceived as 'normal' in fashion; she feels it is important to experiment with personal style and have her own, personal, unique appearance.

The band were quickly recognised and given the title of 'an overnight success' which was confirmed when their debut, self-titled album was nominated for the prestigious Mercury Prize in 2009.

In terms of a second studio album, Jackson sticks with her original statement which is that her and her musical partner, Ben, like to produce songs at a speed that is appropriate to them. In 2009 Elly said that she didn't think there would be a second studio album for a while, given that it took the band around three years to complete their first record. But, for those of you who just can't wait any longer, there is some promising news! Earlier this year, Elly told music magazine 'NME' that La Roux were in the process of writing a second studio album with an established indie-rock band. She said that they're not going to stop writing until they have material that is good enough to rival that of the first album and that she hopes the new record will have a somewhat 'cool and sexy' tone.

It may be a little while longer before we hear anything new from the duo but one thing is for certain; this electro-pop queen is definitely one to keep your eye on. From her incredible voice to her trademark style, Elly Jackson isn't going anywhere...we just might have to wait for her to reappear on the scene.

Written by Sophie Marina Billington.

