

ABBA revival

ABBA may have stopped producing hits more than 25 years ago but the recent success of the *Mamma Mia!* movie has taken the ABBA fascination to a whole new generation. Tribute group ABBA Live will be in the city tomorrow and Saturday to perform at the Townsville RSL. The show's owner, director and the woman who plays Anni, Lynelle Leighton, said hundreds of people would attend the two shows, which she expected would sell out. "We've had another revival with the movie," Lynelle said. "I am also a piano teacher and all of my students who are around nine are absolutely ABBA mad." Lynelle said the show had somewhat changed since it was last performed in the city. "The formula is the same but there's been some refining and tweaking. We've also got a new line-up," she said. ABBA Live will be staged at the Townsville RSL tomorrow and Saturday at 8.30pm. Tickets cost \$22 members and \$27 guests. To book call 4759 9500.

French duo

>> FRENCH community group Alliance Francaise will bring some French musicians to Townsville next week for a one-off concert at the Pimlico Performing Arts Centre. Guitar duo Flammes & Co — Arnaud Dumond and Vincent Le Gall — will play Spanish music at the concert on Wednesday, March 4. Tickets are \$25 adult, \$20 Alliance member and \$15 child and are available from Cafe Rouge in Stockland, by calling 0434 953733 or at the door.

Dance auditions

>> EXTENSIONS Youth Dance Company has added two new programs to its 2009 calendar, which will support the inclusion of a broader range of young people participating in dance. An audition will be held at the NQOMT Hall in Gill Park on Sunday from 9am to 10.15am for prospective dancers aged 13 to 16 years and 10.30am to noon for 17 years and over. The auditions will be for Extensions' performance of *Romeo & Juliet* in June, *Thinking outside the box* in October, *Xcite* cabaret in July and *On the Move* in October. For more info call Kylie Ball on 0418 755833.

Jazz/folk debut

>> THE Steve Martin Trio, which plays regularly at the Picnic Bay Surf Life Saving Club on The Strand, will become a quartet this weekend when Steve's 17-year-old daughter Kate takes to the microphone. Kate's debut performance will feature some jazz classics and original solo folk guitar tunes. The gig will be held at the Picnic Bay SLS Club on Sunday from 4pm-8pm.

Photo exhibition

>> AN exhibition of up to 50 photographic and moving image artworks from the Queensland Art Gallery's Asia Pacific Collection is on display at the Perc Tucker Regional Gallery. The exhibit features works by leading contemporary Asian and Pacific artists including Ai Weiwei (China), Rashid Rana (Pakistan), Tsuyoshi Ozawa (Japan), Qin Ga (China), Stephen Page (Australia) and Sima Urale (Samoa/New Zealand). This is the first tour of these works, many of which have been acquired for the Collection through the Gallery's Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art (APT) exhibition series. The works will be on display until April 19.



Toni Childs

Childs reborn

Townsville will play host to a massive concert in 13 days as Jackson Browne headlines with Toni Childs and Richard Clapton in support. Childs was on a solo tour of Australia recently and ISIS SYMES caught up with her

SHE'S been recovering from a rare disease for more than a decade but American singer/songwriter Toni Childs is on top of the world.

The singer was recently in Australia to launch her first album in 14 years and a new range of organic products.

"It's been 11 years since I've been to Australia and it's so good to be back," Toni said.

Toni, whose career came to a grinding halt when she was diagnosed with a rare immune system disorder in 1997, is best known for her hits *Don't Walk Away*, *Many Rivers To Cross* and *Stop Your Fussing*.

She hit the big time in the late '80s, when her first album, *Union*, sold more than 500,000

copies in Australia. After a string of further hits, Toni succumbed to Graves disease and has spent most of the past decade recovering.

"When I contracted the disease I didn't know if I would ever be able to get back into music and tour so when I got back in the studio I was like a little kid stepping out of my skin, I love it so much," she said.

"I already had a large amount of songs ready to go right when I contracted Graves disease and had to stop my life.

"Going back into the studio I was able to record some of that plus the new stuff I had written and it just feels really good."

Toni's music has evolved during her time away from the

industry. "What I'm doing now is rootsy and it's not done with drum loops or sequences or anything like that," she said.

"It's all organic and really old school. Every song is written on guitar so it has this rocky, rootsy kind of ode to some really great songwriters who inspired me earlier in my life like Neil Young, The (Rolling) Stones, Bob Dylan.

"The best part of re-emerging from the darkness and learning to embrace music once again, is simply the opportunity to evolve and get down to the core of my purpose.

"I feel like I'm a phoenix rising, burned down to an ash and then coming through that forest fire healthier and stronger than ever before."

With word that she was back and raring to go in the music scene, organisers of Jackson Browne's world tour were quick to jump at the opportunity to have the singer on board.

"They knew I was touring again so I just got an invitation asking if I would like to do it and I said I would love to do it because I actually know Jackson and he's really good friends with my cousin so that was a really wonderful thing," Toni said.

TONI CHILDS

Toni Childs and Richard Clapton will support Jackson Browne at his Townsville Entertainment Centre concert on Tuesday, March 10. Tickets cost \$98 pre-sold or \$100 at the door. To book call the Box Office on 4771 4000.

Electro act pops up on Groovin the Moo radar

Canadian electronic pop star Christer will be part of the Townsville Groovin The Moo festival on May 2. She talks to ISIS SYMES

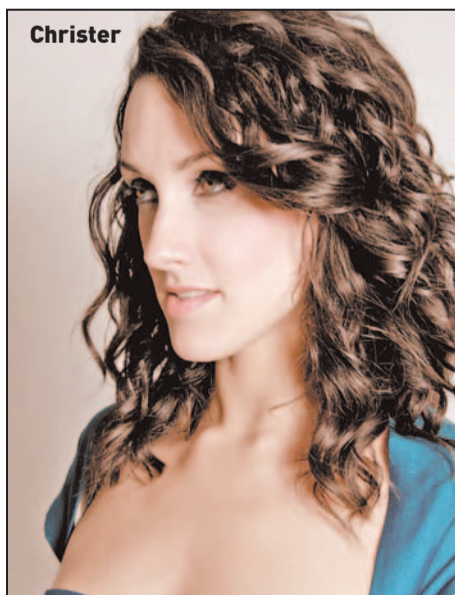
ELECTRO-pop musician Christer has played to no more than 200 people at any one time but that number is set to be more than 10-fold when she headlines at Townsville's Groovin The Moo festival in May.

"That's so crazy — it's going to be such a rush playing to so many people," the Vancouver-based artist said.

"For me it hasn't mattered if there's 100 people or five people — if the crowd is enjoying themselves then that is fulfilling enough — it's quality over quantity.

"I've been hardly anywhere and have done most of my work in Vancouver. I went to Europe this year and I sussed out the European scene which was my first time travelling outside Canada, and now I've got the travel bug and I'm raring to go."

Christer said she was added to the GTM festival line-up after a GTM publicist saw her perform in her home town. "The promoters



have an interest in up-and-coming acts and Kat (GTM publicist) saw my release party last summer and loved it and relayed my work to the promoters," Christer said.

Christer, 27, started as a classical guitarist. "I started writing my own songs and was

writing some great folk tunes in my late teens to early 20s and slowly graduated from that because I started raving and got inspired to start writing songs in the electronic genre," she said.

"Most of my songs were written about three years ago and now they're finally starting to take flight. I released my debut CD independently last summer but now it's finally got the backing and support."

Christer, who has been dubbed the 'laptop queen', says it was an easy progress to move from classical to electro.

"All my original songs were written on a very simple program but I'm studying some new, more sophisticated programs now," she said. "My laptop is always with me. It's my baby, my little toy."

Christer said her live shows were very different to the sounds of her album.

"My three-piece band throws live drums, bass, keys, guitar and synths up against my electronic tracks, pummeling the songs into a rocking, thrashing, stiletto-stomping show amid fast-paced costume changes," she said.

"The audience can expect some pretty interesting things and it's a little off-the-wall but definitely very danceable."