

Sweet voices from the honey pot

By REBECCA LANG

IT'S 10.20am in the UK and Melissa Brooke-Belland has just climbed out of bed to do another interview about her band, Voice Of The Beehive.

It's hard to reconcile the croaky, throaty tone to the melodic voice that sings in perfect harmony on the band's latest album *Honey Lingers*.

Listening to their high-charting single *I Think I Love You*, it's hard to expect anything but an upbeat array of songs from Voice Of The Beehive, and their most recent effort lives up to the expectation.

It is surprising that such a talented group has not yet achieved greater recognition in Australia prior to their latest hit, but then tracking the history of Voice Of The Beehive you'll only find surprises.

For two young American girls to move country to start a band with a certain "sound" is unusual, when you consider most groups head to America, not away from it, for a slice of the pie.

"About six years ago Tracey and I moved from Los Angeles to London," Brooke-Belland said. "There were a couple of reasons for that, first of all we wanted to make a demo tape and we wanted a British guitar player in it and kind of a British sound to the music. We were also kind of fed up with LA, and for some reason we had always talked about moving to London."

Their move in 1986 had them meet up with guitarist Mike Jones, bass player Martin Brett and drummer Daniel "Woody" Woodgate of Madness fame, hitting the cut-throat world of rock music with their first single *Just A City* on the Food label.

From there they started to climb the charts with *I Walk The Earth*, *Don't Call Me Baby*, and *I Say Nothing*, releasing their first album, *Let It Bee*, with London Records.

Voice Of The Beehive climbed to No. 12 in Australia earlier this year with *I Think I Love You*, a tribute to the *Partridge Family* Television.

"The reason that song came about is Tracey

and I were invited to LA to work with Don West for the weekend and they said 'will you do *I Think I Love You?*,'" Brooke-Belland said.

"*The Partridge Family* were just massive, I was madly in love with David Cassidy, I used to watch it every day.

"I was disappointed it wasn't a success in England because I thought it would be, but I'm surprised that it was in Australia because we've never really had any success there before.

"You must have had *The Partridge Family* at some point or you wouldn't have gotten the joke, whereas in England they never had it."

What the girls lack in vocals, which isn't much, they make up for with their zany hairdos, huge earrings and lampshade dresses.

"We're very different on the album than we are live, and I'd like to bring out more of the live side of the band on the third album . . . although with a big record company like we're signed to, they like to have guaranteed returns.