

BEVERLEY CRAVEN

BIOGRAPHY

Beverley Craven was born in Sri Lanka in July 1963, but her mother was from Devon and her father from Leeds - it was while he was working for Kodak in the Indian sub-continent that Beverley was born.

Two years later the family returned to Hertfordshire, and Beverley began taking piano lessons at the age of seven, encouraged by her mother, an accomplished classical violinist. At first, however, Beverley concentrated more on her swimming than her music, competing first in the Herts County Championships, and then in the Nationals and the English Schools for Division Ten against, among others, one Sharon Davies.

She didn't buy her first pop record until she was 15, but was then immediately entranced by singer/songwriters such as Elton John, Judi Tzuke, Stevie Wonder and, in particular, Kate Bush.

At 18 she left school - and home - for the bright lights of London, only to find herself spending the next few years squatting, waitressing, and auditioning for any number of quite unsuitable bands. Having failed to find any sympathetic musicians with whom to play, at the age of twenty-two Beverley decided to strike out on her own as a piano-playing singer/songwriter.

Following a brief stint touring with soul legend Bobby Womack (who tried to sign Beverley to his record label), she recorded her first set of demos and attracted the attention of Go West's manager, John Glover. He quickly set about securing her a major music publishing deal with Warner Brothers, and from there, a highly-prized 'development contract' with the Epic record label was but a small step. The seeds of a bright new musical career had been sown...

In November 1988 she was sent to Los Angeles to work with some established songwriters and to 'learn her craft' playing in bars and

restaurants. The experience was ‘unproductive’ she confesses, preferring even now to write alone. Soon afterwards, again in LA, she made her first attempt to cut her debut album with Stewart Levine of Simply Red fame. However, Beverley felt the slick professionalism of the recordings failed to capture the naivete of her work and was relieved when Epic agreed. She went on to record with Paul Samwell Smith, whose other production credits included Cat Stevens, Carly Simon and All About Eve.

The album, ‘Beverley Craven’ was eventually released in July 1990 and, although initially failed to set the UK alight, found immediate acceptance in Europe.

It wasn’t until May 1991, after an appearance on the ‘Wogan’ show and ‘Top of the Pops’ that the album finally took off in the UK. Beverley’s appearance at a charity concert at Wembley arena in aid of Kurdish refugees, (televised to an estimated audience of 50,000,000) undoubtedly gave ‘Promise Me’ its final push to arrive at number 3 a week later, and the album remained in the charts for over a year.

To date Beverley has sold more than 4 million albums worldwide and almost eighteen years later, ‘Promise Me’ is still played all over the world – a true test of longevity and of its continued popularity.

A string of hits including ‘Holding On’ and ‘Woman To Woman’ swiftly followed and Beverley secured her position as one of Britain’s most successful female singer songwriters.

An 18-date tour of the UK followed, including sell-out shows at the Hammersmith Odeon and the Birmingham Symphony Hall, the latter of which was filmed by the BBC and released by Sony as the video ‘Memories’.

Beverley has also performed at several royal and celebrity events including concerts for the Prince’s Trust, the Royal Variety Show, Save The Children for Princess Ann and Sir Bob Monkhouse’s 70th birthday celebration, as well Capital Radio’s Help a London child charity, the Night of the Proms and a Unicef gala hosted by Audrey Hepburn and Roger Moore to name but a few!

In February 1992, Beverley performed at the ‘Brits’ Awards show (following her nomination in no less than three categories), winning the Best

British Newcomer Award. Beverley was eight months pregnant when she sang at the Brits and she gave birth to her first child, Mollie Megan less than a month later.

She spent much of 1992 revelling in her new found motherhood yet found time to write and record 'Love Scenes', the follow-up to her double-platinum debut album. It reached number 4 in the UK charts the following year, spawning the hit singles, 'Love Scenes' and 'Mollie's Song'.

That same year Beverley embarked on a twelve-date concert tour, and the following Christmas played a sell-out show at the Royal Albert Hall.

Beverley has also guested at numerous corporate events including a private show on the island of Madeira where she sang with Michael MacDonald, a surprise after-dinner show for Ford motors in Portugal and even a birthday party for a prince!

Shortly after releasing her third album, 'Mixed Emotions' and somewhat "disillusioned by the music industry," Beverley famously turned her back on the glittering show-biz parties and glamorous globe-trotting to raise her three daughters (Mollie, now 17, Brenna, 14 and Connie, 12) with her songwriter/musician husband Colin Campsie.

In 2004 Beverley embarked on a 'comeback', making a handful of live concert appearances, but soon received devastating news when she was diagnosed with breast cancer. Following treatment she was finally given the all-clear and is now once again returning to the stage with a live tour and her new album, 'Close To Home'.

This latest collection of songs marks Beverley's return to the music scene after a ten year hiatus and shows that she has lost none of her ability to sing from the heart about the things that truly touch her: 'her strength is in her vulnerability - she sings about subjects that people can relate to'.