

## Belinda Carlisle Biography

Belinda Carlisle, born Belinda Jo Carlisle on August 17, 1958 in Hollywood, California, was and occasionally still is the lead vocalist for the pop rock band The Go-Go's and also a phenomenally successful solo artist who still tours and, eventually, records to this day.

Belinda's first venture into music was as the drummer for the LA punk band The Germs, under the name Dottie Danger, it didn't last long what with drumming not being her natural forte and all so she left and joined The Go-Go's. After the initial breakup of The Go-Go's in 1985 Belinda picked herself up, dusted herself off and embarked upon a solo career. Her first solo album, *Belinda*, was released on I.R.S. Records in 1986 and it was also that year Belinda married Morgan Mason, son of the British actor James Mason. Morgan made appearances in Carlisle's videos "Mad About You" and "Heaven is a Place on Earth".

Belinda flaunted her glamorous image on the cover of her second album 1987's *Heaven on Earth*, her second solo album (released in the United States through MCA but in the United Kingdom through Virgin). Critics and fans noticed that not only was Belinda's image more glamorous than during her time with the Go-Go's, but also her solo music was more polished and 'professional'. The new sound was certainly due in part to producer Rick Nowels, who had previously worked with Stevie Nicks and would later work with Madonna amongst many others.

The first release from *Heaven on Earth* was "Heaven is a Place on Earth", an enormous international hit, topping the charts not only in the U.S. but also in the U.K. and several other countries. It is to this day probably her best known song. The success of the song was furthered by its video, which, under direction of American actress Diane Keaton, showcased Belinda's glamour that included her new red hair colour, part of an image change possibly inspired by Ann-Margret.

The next song released from *Heaven on Earth* was "I Get Weak", which also had a video directed by Keaton followed promptly by "Circle in the Sand", both were big hits. "World Without You" was well-hyped but didn't sell as well, peaking outside the Top 30 in the US and December 1988's follow up "Love Never Dies" also peaked outside the Top 30 in the UK.

Belinda's next album after *Heaven on Earth* was 1989's *Runaway Horses*. This album hit number four in the UK and number three in the US so proving that she was still much in demand. The first single "Leave a Light On" just missed the Top Ten in the U.S., peaking at eleven, but in the UK it hit the Top Five. The second single, "Summer Rain", missed the Top Twenty (#23) in Spring 1990, but spent a long time in the Top Seventy Five and was, perhaps surprisingly, one of the biggest selling singles that year. Belinda had even better success in the U.K. that autumn when she went to number six with the remixed

"(We Want) The Same Thing", another track from *Runaway Horses*. This underscored perhaps that Belinda's popularity in Europe now far surpassed both her and the Go – Go's success in America

In 1991, Belinda released her fourth solo album, *Live Your Life Be Free*, to be candid the album did not sell as well as her two previous albums, though it did reach the Top Ten in many European countries. Shortly thereafter her son, James Duke Mason, (named for James Mason (Morgan's father) and Duke Kurczeski (Belinda's stepfather)), was born and not long after the now notorious 1992 Los Angeles riots to place. A few months afterwards virgin seized the moment and released her first greatest hit albums, the British release of which compilation topped the U.K. album charts.

Belinda's fifth solo album, *Real*, was released 1993 on the Virgin label in the U.S. as well as Europe. Produced without Nowels, the album departed from her previous polished pop music formula, indeed some critics welcomed the change and noted that the new album was similar to her sound with The Go-Go's. The week it was released "Real" reached number nine in the UK unfortunately, the album's first single, "It's Too Real (Big Scary Animal)", failed to make a big impact in the U.S. but again achieved a respectable number twelve in the UK.

After the Northridge Earthquake in 1994, and after the turmoil of the riots shortly beforehand, Belinda, Mason and Dukey moved to the South of France.

Belinda returned to the recording studio and started working again with Rick Nowels. In 1996, she released her sixth solo album, *A Woman and A Man*, on the Chrysalis Records label. This album revitalized her solo career in Europe and included several hits. Leadoff single "In Too Deep" returned Carlisle to the U.K. Top Ten for the first time in seven years, reaching number six. "Always Breaking My Heart", written and produced by Roxette's Per Gessle, was another top ten smash, peaking at number eight. The album spawned two more U.K. hits, "Love in the Key of C" and "California"; the latter being a bittersweet reflection on why the singer left her home state.

In 1997, Belinda also released a cover of "I Won't Say (I'm in Love)" from Disney's *Hercules* as part of that movie's distribution in Europe. The single was only released in France and Germany.

In her career, Belinda had the opportunity to work with musicians from the 1960s. Michelle Phillips of The Mamas and The Papas did backup singing for *Heaven on Earth*; Brian Wilson of The Beach Boys helped with the recording of the "California" track on *A Woman and A Man*. Although George Harrison did guitar work on two tracks from "Runaway Horses," Belinda did not meet him or go into the studio with him.

She is set to return to the spotlight in 2006, with the release of her long awaited 7th album *Voilà*, her first studio album in ten years. The album is produced by John Reynolds and it's a mix of French chanson and modern pop songs. *Voilà* is to be released on February 5<sup>th</sup> 2007 via Rykodisc.