

Katie Rhodes

Katie Rhodes was born in Manchester into a large Irish family. While Katie was young her parents and siblings had an Irish/Country band which travelled all over the UK and Europe. Sometimes Katie used to sit in the large living room watching and listening as the family rehearsed new songs or a new instrumental, laughing at the frustration of her father (a superb mandolin and lap steel player) when they couldn't get it right. Little knowing that years later she would follow in their footsteps!

Katie says she has learned a lot of valuable lessons from her family. They would often be sitting and playing instruments and singing five-part vocal harmonies for their own entertainment.

In her early days, Katie was heavily influenced by the older Country music. It was constantly listened to and performed by her parents with people like Johnny Cash, Merle Haggard and Marty Stuart being particular favourites of theirs but she has also developed a real fondness for more modern Country music.

By the time Katie was old enough to become involved with her family's band and had learned to play the bass guitar, her parents had divorced and the family band ceased to be. She went to college, learned a trade and got a job, all the time wanting to sing. It was while on a night out when she went to see an Irish band, Katie found out they were looking for a bass player and ended up joining them. However, her real passion was to sing Country music and she would stand in as bass player for other bands and also worked as a session singer, including laying down harmonies on tracks for bands needing backing vocals.

Katie then spent a short spell singing in various guises whilst studying the Country scene with a view to establishing herself as a Country act. Not knowing anybody to get advice from, she and her partner, Adrian, who thought she had a lot to offer the Country music scene, decided to go visiting

Country clubs and realised that there was plenty of room out there for another female singer.

On one occasion whilst she was watching Blue Orchid (Chrissy Byrne & Liz Rae), they invited her to get up and sing a couple of songs. She did and was immediately given her own booking in that same club. She worked solidly, perfecting her show in readiness for her debut night in May 2006. Trying to please everybody, the show



consisted of all types of Country, some slow, some fast, some old, some new, some classics, some definitely not, including an original song penned by BJ Locklin, who was in attendance on the night to hear her perform it. The evening was a resounding success and included guest spots from BJ Locklin and Pat Jordan.

Having a show and the ability and enthusiasm to perform, all she needed now was bookings which, as everybody is well aware, can be very difficult to obtain for new artists.

Since Katie's debut night, she hasn't looked back. Being a bubbly, happy go lucky type of

person and a bit of a joker in real life, she has developed her show with a touch of tongue in cheek banter with her audience. She says she has made an enormous amount of personal friends. She says artists need people like these in the crowd to give them the belief in themselves and 'without an audience, I am nothing', which is very true.

She toured with Heather Myles and her band to France, Norway and Holland amongst other places and again on two further European tours, performing in Spain, Billy Bob's C&W Saloon at Euro Disney in Paris, Norway, Switzerland (opening up for the Bellamy Brothers) and Sweden. On one particular date in Spain, Danni Leigh was in attendance and got up and did a guest spot with the band, which was another great experience.

Katie loved these tours and dreams that one day she might be lucky enough to play such venues in her own name.

She has perfected her act so that now she is able to perform to all audiences and for added professionalism has a sound man (her partner) present on all her gigs.

Her favourite songs she likes to perform are power ballads, to show her vocal talent but she knows she can't sing those kind of songs all night long. Her repertoire includes some very up-to-date material from the likes of Kellie Pickler, Lee Ann Womack and Julie Roberts.

Last year Katie played at a few festivals and has been booked to do more festivals this year, including Skipton, Oswestry, Morecambe and Ayr. She has also been booked to perform at the British Country Music Awards on the Saturday show. She is now starting to spread her wings and is playing much farther afield, including Scotland and some gigs in Belfast later this year.

Katie or Ady can be contacted on 0777 3692313 or via email at kate_ady@yahoo.co.uk.