

# Kayleigh Dawn Larter - Kay D

Kayleigh Dawn Larter (Kay D) was born just 18 years ago, in Lowestoft, Suffolk. She began listening to Country music as she left school and discovered that as well as being something that really moved her, it was music that suited her voice.

She started out on a showcase spot at the Stradsett Country Music Festival in 2006 which resulted in her doing a second spot later in the weekend. From this, Kay D showcased at many other festivals and began to get booked back for 2007 and 2008. Slowly, clubs, festival organisers and audiences learned of her talent and her love for the music. The turning point came in 2007 at The South Will Rise Again festival where she had a fantastic reaction to both her voice and her choice of music.

As well as the positive reaction as a soloist, there was a lot of feedback which suggested she could be even better if she had her own band.

Kay D's first band cd, *One For The Rodeo* was intended to be just a demo but once in the studio, she decided to go all out for a full length album, despite her former band availability and limited studio time of just three days! 'Luckily, I didn't know that what I was trying to do was nearly impossible. I didn't realise you couldn't record, mix and master an 11 track cd in three days, so on sheer determination, we went ahead and did it anyway', she laughs. The end result is a fine piece of work, with the studio limitations adding a satisfying grittiness which could well have been lost if there had been more time available. As well as lead vocals, Kay D plays all the acoustic guitar parts on the album, a feature of which she is immensely proud. Her talents don't stop there, with the cds fifth track, *Love Left Me A Long Time Ago* being one of her self-penned Country songs. 'I put in so much hard work before we went in the studio and it really paid off, because my live playing is so much better as a result. I didn't want to be a Country singer with a guitar hung around my neck just like jewellery'.



Redneck Rodeo are from left to right as you read with Kay D in the centre:

*Pat McGrath started out at the age of 13 playing with a seven piece family band. After touring with several Country outfits, he met and married Caroline McHugh. They worked as a duo evolving into a full five piece band known as Salt Creek. With Caroline off the road for a few months, Pat has been and will be supporting Kay D throughout 2009.*

*Andy Green has been playing lead guitar since he was nine years of age. His main musical influence is Albert Lee. He has always loved Country music. Over the years he has played with many top artists including Jimmy Buckley and Susan McCann.*

*Jamie Lennon has been playing steel guitar since he was nine years of age. He is currently on tour with Hal Ketchum, Doug Stone and Georgette Jones here in the UK and will be moving to Nashville in 2010 to pursue his musical career.*

*Steve Heffernan has been playing bass since he was 12 years of age. He started in his father's band which was predominantly Irish and then made a break into Country music playing with Peter O'Dowd and continued with other well-known Country bands.*

After the band broke up Kayleigh was fortunate enough to find four more, very well known, musicians to accompany her, especially at the festivals - Andy Green lead guitar, Jamie Lennon steel, Pat McGrath drums and Steve Heffernan bass. Audience response these days is phenomenal. This year in 2009, she has played the Americana, Wolvestock and the Great North Festivals in July, plus dozens of Country music clubs all around the UK.

Kay D's energy and enthusiasm for her music is limitless. At her first band gig in March 2008, at the end of her third 45 minute set, she was asked if she felt tired. She just grinned, 'Nah. I feel like doing another hour and a half'. It's that approach which communicates itself to audiences in clubs and at festivals all over the country and which, combined with Kay D's determination

and, last but not least, that astonishing voice, will take her as far in Country music as she wants to go.

While there's no doubt that her career is important to her, more important still is her love for Country music and her desire to take it to a wider audience. 'We need a breakthrough act in Britain to boost the Country music profile. I would like to have a part in it. Everyone wants fame and fortune but the limelight isn't that important to me. Even if I wasn't recognised but I'd played a part in making it happen, that would be enough for me.'

As someone remarked about the little girl from Suffolk recently. 'She's not just going to be big. She could be important to British Country music.'

To tell you the truth, that's exactly what she deserves.