

DONOVAN Biography

Donovan was born in Maryhill, Glasgow, Scotland on the 10th of May 1946 under the sign of Taurus the Bull. His Celtic roots and his father Donald's love of poetry and literature have been a constant influence on his life and his music.

The family moved from the tough, rough and bomb-scarred city of Glasgow to the green and lush countryside of Hertfordshire, England when Donovan was ten years old.

The move to Hatfield had a profound effect on Donovan and greatly influenced his understanding of beauty and nature, themes he sought expression for in his early songs. His music reached a whole generation during the revolutionary Sixties and continues to influence the writing of poetry and lyrics of a new generation.

Donovan went to college and discovered a world of Bohemian ideas, Buddhism, poetry, art and radical thought. He went to Art school but dropped out.

In 1963 having had a string of labouring and factory jobs the call of the open road beckoned. Donovan hitchhiked down to St Ives, Cornwall where he slept on the beaches. For Donovan this was a turning point. He became a wandering minstrel, writing his own unique lyrics.

Donovan returned to his parent's home in Hatfield after the summer ended. He continued his self-education in writing and learning acoustic guitar. Most of his time was spent in local clubs around St Albans.

His influences during this period were musicians like Martin Carthy, Woody Guthrie, Alex Campbell, Rambling Jack Elliot, and an eclectic mixed bag of blues, jazz and folk songs.

His first break came when his managers, Geoff Stevens and Peter Eden introduced him to Elkan Allan the producer of the innovative TV show "Ready Steady Go" who took the unprecedented step of booking Donovan for three consecutive shows.

At eighteen Donovan suddenly found himself number three in the charts with his first record "Catch the Wind." In March of 1965 this song won the Ivor Novello award for the best contemporary folk song of that year. Pete Seeger invited him to play at the Newport Folk Festival and he sang on stage with Joan Baez.

He followed this success with such top ten hits as "Colours," "Turquoise," "Universal Soldier," along with his first album "What's Bin Did What's Bin Hid."

Throughout the sixties Donovan continued his success with such songs as "Sunshine Superman," "Hurdy Gurdy Man," "There Is A Mountain," "Universal Soldier," and "Catch The Wind."

In contrast to The Beatles and The Rolling Stones, Donovan stood alone capturing the hearts and minds of a new audience, able to hold a huge crowd's attention with his guitar and his simple songs based on his love and respect for nature and his belief in peace and harmony.

Marching against nuclear disarmament with the CND movement and writing songs that railed against injustice in a materialistic and violent world. His concern for the environment was expressed in many of his early songs and continues to appeal to a new and young audience who are searching for some deeper meaning to their lives.

In 1965, almost single handed, he introduced millions of his fans to spiritual truths, the time honoured path of Eurasian yoga. He realised the change for a better world can only come through the nurturing of love and compassion. His music carried this message of peace.

During the seventies and early eighties, Donovan continued to perform and release albums that expressed his passionate concern for the environment and his search for spiritual awareness and knowledge. His albums, "Cosmic Wheels" and "Neutronica" sparked a resurgence of the peace movement in the early eighties.

This period was a time for retreat, and living quietly with his family in Joshua Tree, California, still continuing to write and work on various projects that are now beginning to bear fruit.

In 1990, Donovan and his wife Linda returned to live in Southern Ireland. He toured the UK with the "Hurdy Gurdy Tour" and spent a few years writing his autobiography and composing new songs.

In the summer of 1994, Donovan got together with a number of musician friends, including Noel Redding (ex Jimmi Hendrix Experience), Marianne Faithful, Phil May (Pretty Things), Paul Jones (Blues Band) and his step son Julian Jones to present a tribute concert to Brian Jones at London's Marquee Club.

In 1995, Donovan presented a two-part radio documentary on Joan Baez, produced by Kevin Howlett for BBC Radio 2 and completed a radio documentary of his own life's work for the BBC, which was aired on BBC radio 2 in the summer of 1995. Donovan also starred in an Irish Legend "The Children of Lir," which played to rave notices in Ireland.

In 1996 Donovan began working on a new album with 1995's producer of the year Rick Rubin. A long-time fan of Donovan's, Rubin has also produced the highly acclaimed comeback album of Johnny Cash, and top selling albums by artists as diverse as Run-DMC, The Red Hot Chilli Peppers, Mick Jagger, and Macy Gray.

Donovan's album on Rubin's American Recordings label is rich with Donovan's unique flavours and colours. The enchanting "Please Don't Bend," particularly, reaffirms a song writing touch that is still golden.

For Donovan, this was more than an auspicious return to the public eye, it was a resumption of his journey: "Whenever I am asked where I've been all these years, my answer is that I was never an entertainer. I had to have a meaning and I had to be connected to an impulse.

"And now today I hear renewed acceptance of acoustic music with a consciousness of the planet, the environment," he says, "The very things I've tried to incorporate into my lyrics from the beginning."

The successes continue. Donovan's latest recording with German girl band No Angels, of his Sixties song "Atlantis," produced by the talented Leslie Manoki of Red Rock Studios, recently went to number 5 in the German charts, selling over 500,000 copies and going Gold. The single was released as part of the Disney launch of the movie "Atlantis: The Lost Empire."

Current projects include a new children's album "The Pied Piper," by the major USA record label Music For Little People (MFLP).

A film of Donovan's life and work by the award-winning documentary maker Hannes Rosacher of DoRo Productions Vienna is currently in production.

Donovan is in fine voice and writing better than ever. A true survivor of Rock and Roll Super Fame, Donovan represents the finest level of songwriter - performer. He continues to present his unique vision of Peace, Awareness and Understanding in his songs.