

Deborah Allen

Biography

Deborah Allen was born with a gift of music coursing through her veins, cutting a path in her life as relentlessly as the Mississippi carves through Memphis, the place of her birth. Before her music encouraged her to pack a bag and set out on her heart's musical odyssey, Deborah can recall a southern childhood rich in love, color, and drama. The youngest of the three daughters of Rosetta and Leon Thurmond, their dark haired, hazel-eyed child, from the earliest age, seemed to draw from her family's well-spring of talents and optimistic strengths.



Her destiny was preordained by a prayer said by her Mother who, while pregnant with Deborah, became concerned about a vocal problem of her own. She had always prayed for the health of her babies, but with Deborah, she instinctively added, "and please let this baby have a strong voice"! Her prayers were answered, and confirmed when at a mere three years old, Deborah, confided to her that she would like to be a singer and an actress. Filled with excitement, her Mother assured Deborah that "anything is possible, there is nothing you can't do."

With a suitcase full of local talent contest and performance credits from Memphis, Deborah headed for Nashville at the age of 18. Always the romantic adventurer at heart, even the faded rented room in a boarding house on Nashville's infamous Music Row seemed full of mystery and charm. She smiles at the recollection, her wide eyes dancing with the childlike nature that even today is one of Deborah's most enduring charms. "Everyone talks about 'payin' your dues' in Nashville. I would come home to my little rented room and think to myself... 'Man, with all the dues I'm payin' right now... I should be a really big star someday! There I was with literally nothing, but I had the most important thing of all... and that was my dream."

While working as a waitress to support that dream, a chance encounter with a legend started the wheels of Deborah Allen's success train in motion. Meeting Roy Orbison that day, gave Deborah the opportunity to share her dream of a career in music with him. Obviously impressed by the spunk and personality of the young hopeful, he later hired her to sing background vocals on his upcoming session. The \$90.00 she was paid might as well have been a million. Her incredible voice, beauty, and always handy confidence quickly landed her a job at Opryland. As a regular cast member of the theme park's "Showboat." Showcasing her talents regularly at the park led in quick succession to Deborah being invited to join Tennessee Ernie Ford as a part of a cast production he was taking on tour to The Soviet Union. It proved to be an invaluable experience. When safely back home in the states, the career momentum was now officially picking up speed. Veteran songwriting genius Shel Silverstein took Deborah under his wing, and considering the sea of pretty faces and new singers vying for their own star in the skies over 16th Avenue, he had one important piece of advice for her... "write songs"! His friendship, interest, and wisdom changed her life immediately and forever. Deborah recalls, "I was so naïve, I thought if someone as great as Shel Silverstein thought I could be a songwriter... well, I guess I'm a songwriter now!"

While working on an Opryland TV special for Sandy Duncan, Deborah met singer/comedian Jim Stafford, who after seeing Deborah perform, asked her to be a part of his cast on his new summer replacement TV series on ABC. This opportunity meant a move to Los Angeles where she would spend the next two years working with Stafford on television, as well as performing on his concert dates as an opening act.

Even with all the wonderful influences and experience she gained, the seductive lure and often too slick music scene in L.A. couldn't inspire Deborah's soul. Feeling her music had deeper creative roots in her southern heritage, Deborah made her way back to Nashville, a climate and place she felt better suited for her artistry to grow. Once re-settled, there was no looking back. Her writing was flourishing by this time. RCA had become aware of her, and felt she was the right voice to overdub tracks recorded by the late country legend, Jim Reeves. Because of a unique, landmark technical innovation, the label was able to update their existing Jim Reeves tracks into brand new duets with Deborah Allen. The finished tracks that resulted burst Deborah Allen onto the national charts, and into the music mainstream. "Don't Let Me Cross Over," "Oh How I Miss You Tonight," and "Take Me In Your Arms And Hold Me," all reached the top 10, proving that Jim Reeves career on record had not yet ended, and Deborah Allen's was just about to begin. Basking in the warm glow of recognition along the corridors of Music Row, word was out with music business insiders that there was a young artist with the potential of full-blown stardom. Signed to Capitol Records, her first album release, "Trouble In Paradise," received wide critical acclaim. At that crucial time in her still fledgling career, an executive shift at her label locked Deborah's next session in the vault of corporate change. Included in that session was a song called, "Baby I Lied," which Deborah had co-written. Impressed with both the singer and the song, RCA Records picked up Deborah's session masters and immediately released "Baby I Lied." In addition to becoming a major country hit, "Baby I lied," from her first RCA album titled, "Cheat The Night," achieved huge success in the pop charts as well. This tremendous recognition in both fields garnered Deborah two Grammy nominations as a singer and songwriter.

Her next release for RCA, "Let Me Be The First," lived up to its title! Coming on the heels of Deborah's CMA new artist nomination for the Horizon Award, and two more major follow up singles, ("I've Been Wrong Before," and "I Hurt For You") the "Let Me Be The First" project was the very first totally digital album recorded and released in Nashville history! During this period, another career highlight for Deborah was a duet with the King Of Country Music, George Jones, on his Ladies Choice Album for CBS. A double treat, because not only did she get to sing with George, but also because the song, "Our Love Was Ahead Of It's Time" was a song she had co-written especially for the two of them.

Her next project, Telepathy, with the title track produced by her new studio acquaintance, Prince, The Prince Of Pop, (alias...Joey Coco at the time) broadened Deborah even further as an artist who defied the normal restraints of putting limitations on herself or her music. While establishing herself as a major recording artist, Deborah's incredible string of successes as a songwriter were fast establishing her as one of the hottest young writers in town. By this time, major cuts had come from artists as diverse

as Diana Ross, Loretta Lynn, Sheena Easton, Lee Greenwood, Mac Davis, Janie Frickie, Jon Conlee, Barbara Mandrell, Marie Osmond, Lorrie Morgan, Mickey Gilley, Kenny Rankin, Isaac Hayes, Millie Jackson, and Conway Twitty to mention only a few.

Her first recording project for Giant Records, "Delta Dreamland," in 1993, included the hit singles, "Rock Me," and "If You're Not Gonna Love Me," making a welcomed re-emergence of Deborah Allen on the charts.

Her next CD, "All That I Am," on Giant Records further displayed the passionate intensity of her singing and the lyrical beauty of her songwriting. Here was the heart of Deborah Allen. "I have always said my music was somewhere between Memphis and Nashville," Deborah reflects... "I feel like one town gave me my musical roots, and the other has given me wings to fly creatively."

The 90's brought even more great successes as a writer. In '96, the newly discovered teen-age sensation, LeAnn Rimes' "Blue" album carried two Deborah Allen songs to multi-platinum status...with both "Hurt Me," and "My Baby" included. Three more of Deborah's songs, "All The Loving And The Hurting Too," "Undeniable," and "Rock Me" appeared on LeAnn's follow up CD "Sittin' On Top Of The World." Patty Loveless, ("Hurt Me Bad In A Real Good Way"), Mindy McCready, ("All That I Am"), Tanya Tucker, ("It Hurts Like Love"), and Fleetwood Mac, ("Talkin' To My Heart," and "I've Got It In For You") added their artistry to Deborah's songs as well.

In the year 2000 the release of her CD on Curb Records "The Best Of Deborah Allen" was yet another creatively fulfilling chapter of Deborah's boundless career. During this time, her song "We Can Get There" performed by pop diva Mary Griffin on the hit soundtrack for the movie "Coyote Ugly" moved Deborah in to multi-platinum status as a songwriter once again.

A world-class singer, songwriter, and producer Deborah's creative skills are second to none. As the consummate performer, her genuine warmth and natural love of performing shines through her high energy, and in her more intimate moments as she wrings emotion into every note she sings. Now in the new millennium, with her talents culminating into international performances with world-renowned symphonies, Deborah remains as current as tomorrow mornings news. She has never stopped growing, never lost that first love feeling for the music that wells up naturally inside her. The result is quite simply the musical genius of a little girl from Memphis who had a dream ...and the faith to make her dream come true.