

## Ollabelle – Bio

Ollabelle is a six-piece band comprising Amy Helm [vocals], Byron Isaacs [bass], Tony Leone [drums], Fiona McBain [vocals, acoustic guitar], Glenn Patscha [keyboards] and Jim Zhivago [electric/acoustic guitar, dobro, mandolin]. Amy is the daughter of Levon Helm [The Band], and has been singing in blues bands since a teenager. McBain who hails from Sydney, Australia relocated to the Big Apple in 1999 to pursue a career as a singer/songwriter. Patscha is Canadian by birth, and spent a considerable number of years living in New Orleans, playing and recording with that city's many jazz players.

The band came together at "9C" a bar located at the junction of 9<sup>th</sup> Street and Avenue C in Manhattan's East Village when, during 2002, one of the barmen, Roger Davis, arranged a gospel song session on Sunday nights. The bar has a reputation for promoting themed music nights. Individually, the members of the septet possessed a diverse background in rock, jazz, pop and folk music, and what initially amounted to loose jam sessions subsequently became tightly knit sets of gospel, blues, bluegrass and country songs. At the outset of their Gospel Sunday performances the six musicians were, individually, pursuing solo careers and other music projects, but after four months of playing on Sunday nights they resolved to formalise their working relationship. Prior to getting together at "9C," Glenn and Amy had known each other in New Orleans, Jimi had already been in one band with Glenn, while Fiona, Glenn and Byron played together in another band.

Zhivago enlisted the help of Magic Studio owner Steve Rosenthal [Christine Lavin, Suzanne Vega] with the intention of recording an *on spec* album. Rosenthal and Zhivago also happened to be co-owners of Stanton Street Records, a local independent label. The band took its name from traditional country songbird, Ola Belle Reed [b. August 17<sup>th</sup> 1916 in Grassy Creek, Ash County, North Carolina, d. August 16<sup>th</sup> 2002 in Rising Sun, Maryland]. Once completed, Rosenthal sent a copy of the fourteen-song album to T-Bone Burnett, who had recently begun his own label DMZ Records, distributed by Sony Columbia. Burnett, who helmed production of the soundtrack of the hit movie "**Oh Brother, Where Art Thou,**" and went on to introduce America to it's 1930's dustbowl musical heritage via tours and recordings like "**Down From The Mountain,**" signed the band within a week of hearing Ollabelle.

The eleven-track recording was released by DMZ/Sony during March 2004. A few months later Ollabelle took part in Burnett's latest road show "**The Great High Mountain Tour,**" which also featured Alison Krauss, The Cox Family and Ralph Stanley.

Discography :

Solo : "**Ollabelle**" [2004] :

Arthur Wood

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