

Pierce Pettis - Bio

Pierce Pettis was born in Fort Payne, DeKalb County, Alabama in 1954. His mother, Laura, had been a music mayor in College, while his father, Rayvon, ran a Western Auto store, which happened to sell Harmony guitars. When he was a youngster, his mother insisted that Pierce sang in the church choir. His early musical influences were rock n' roll [Beatles, Stones, Who] and black music [Otis Redding, Aretha Franklin, James Brown, Wilson Pickett]. Introduced to folk music by his older sisters when they brought records home from College - Bob Dylan, Peter, Paul & Mary, Kingston Trio, Tom Paxton and Donovan became his new heroes. Pettis actually wrote his first song when he was 10, but kept his writing a secret till his late teens. Also at age 10, Pettis began studying guitar with Don Phillips, a former Nashville sideman. Phillips introduced the youngster to Appalachian folk, country and gospel music. Graduating from High School, Pierce went on to study at Florida State University, and around this time began performing in local coffeehouses. In the late seventies, he chanced to accompany some musician friends on a visit to Muscle Shoals Sound Studio. Pierce ended up being signed as a songwriter, and in the ensuing years he witnessed Bob Dylan, Paul Simon and Bob Seger making records at the famous studio. Pierce's first album, "**Moments**" was released in 1984 by Small World Records of Huntsville, Alabama. Produced by label owner Doug Jansen Smith, the collection included "Moments," "You Need A Love" and "Grandmother's Song" three Pettis compositions that reappeared on his third album "**Tinseltown**" [1991]. Between 1985 and 1992 the New York based **Fast Folk Musical Magazine** featured a number of songs by Pierce on their compilation discs. The title song of the 1989 Windham Hill songwriter compilation album "**Legacy**," penned by Pettis, was taken from his Doug Jansen Smith produced, sophomore solo album "**While The Serpent Lies Sleeping**." Originally intended to be a Small World release, "**Serpent**" was released in 1989 by Windham Hill. In time, the *new age* label set up the singer/songwriter subsidiary, High Street Records. That label issued the aforementioned "**Tinseltown**," a disc produced by a singer/songwriter in his own right, Mark Heard. Dedicated to Mark Heard and Gamble Rogers [both of whom had passed on recently], Pierce's fourth solo outing, produced by David Miner, was titled "**Chase The Buffalo**." Between 1993 and 2000 Pettis had a songwriting deal with Polygram. Miner also produced the 1996 follow-up "**Making Light of It**," a recording that saw Pettis move to the Nashville based independent, Compass Records. Pierce received an ASACP Country Music Award in 1999 for "You Move Me," a song co-written with Gordon Kennedy. The song was covered by Garth Brooks on his album "**Sevens**," having first surfaced on Pierce's "**Making Light Of It**." "**Everything Matters**," the next Pierce Pettis album was produced by Gordon Kennedy, and appeared in 1998. 2001 witnessed the arrival of "**State Of Grace**" Pierce's third Compass Records collection. Produced by label co-owner Garry West, it was the fourth consecutive album to open with a Mark Heard song. The new collection also includes a cover of the Bob Dylan song "Down In The Flood" as well as numerous new, well-crafted Pettis gems. With Garry West once more at the helm Pierce's ~~latest recording~~ "**Great Big World**" was released by Compass Records during the late summer of 2004. It was his fourth consecutive release for the Nashville based imprint. In recent times, Pierce has had a number of his songs covered by other artists on their albums, including David Wilcox "**Into the Mystery**" ["If It Wasn't For The Night" and "City Of Dreams"], Art Garfunkel, Buddy Monlock and Maia Sharp "**Everything Waits To Be Noticed**" ["Perfect Moment"] and Tom Kimmel "**Shallow Water**" ["You Did That For Me"].

During late 2007, Pierce began working with solo performers Kate Campbell and Tom Kimmel as The New Agrarians. The twelve song Pierce Pettis collection, "**That Kind Of Love**," produced by Garry West, was released by Compass Records in late January 2009.

Discography: "**Moments**" [1984] ; "**While The Serpent Lies Sleeping**" [1989] ; "**Tinseltown**" [1991] ; "**Chase The Buffalo**" [1993] ; "**Making Light Of It**" [1996] ; "**Everything Matters**" [1998] ; "**State Of Grace**" [2001] ; "**Great Big World**" [2004] ; "**That Kind Of Love**" [2009] :

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