

Kate Campbell - Bio

Kate Campbell was born on 31st October 1961 in New Orleans, Mississippi. Her father was attending a seminary at the time, and when he qualified as a pastor the family moved to his first parish in Sledge, Mississippi. With music [in her father's church] being a prominent part of family life, it's hardly surprising that aged four Kate was given a ukulele. She later took lessons in piano and clarinet. Her family subsequently moved to a parish in Nashville. During her teens Kate was drawn to folk-rooted protest songs and became a fan of the music of Peter, Paul and Mary. Later, singer-songwriters Dan Fogelberg, Carly Simon, James Taylor and Kris Kristofferson sparked her interest. During her teenage years Kate was an active participant in high school sports, particularly basketball. At Samford University Kate studied history and music. Later, Campbell attended Auburn University in Alabama where she earned a master's degree in history. Following her university years Kate became a college lecturer, and accompanied by her husband, Ira [like her father, a pastor], they relocated to California. Although she had been writing songs for a considerable number of years, she only performed them in public when friends asked her, and never in clubs or bars.

In 1988 Kate and Ira returned to Nashville with the intention that Kate would pursue a career in music. She began performing in clubs and bars and in 1994 signed a song publishing deal with Rick Hall's Fame Studios based in Muscle Shoals, Alabama. Shortly afterwards Kate joined the newly formed Nashville imprint, Compass Records, the brainchild of musicians Alison Brown and Garry West. 1995 saw the release of her debut set **"Songs From The Levee."** Reviewers compared Kate's lyrics to the work of famed Southern writers such as – William Faulkner, Eudora Welty, Flannery O'Connor. Based on her debut release, the Farm Journal, the nation's premier and most widely circulated agricultural magazine, presented her with the prestigious "Farm Song of the Year" award for "Bury Me In Bluegrass". The same year Campbell was voted "Best New Artist" by the listeners of Boston's WUMB Radio, and received an Indie Award nomination for "Best Singer/Songwriter" from the Association for Independent Music (AFIM). As her career took off, Campbell began appearing on National Public Radio's **All Things Considered** and **Live From Mountain Stage**. Her sophomore recording, **"Moonpie Dreams"** [1997] was subsequently voted Country Album of the Year by the UK's influential MOJO Music Magazine, and it also received a "Folk Album Of The Year" nomination from the Nashville Music Awards. Among the pickers appearing on the album were Spooner Oldham, Guy Clark, Al Perkins, Buddy Miller, Bill Miller and Tricia Walker.

1997 saw Kate appearing at English folk music's major summer event, the Cambridge Folk Festival. That year she also played the Philadelphia Folk Festival. The following year **"Visions Of Plenty"** became Kate's third recording for Compass Records, and featured further story songs that focused upon her Southern upbringing and her Civil Rights movement experiences. The song lyrics on her final Compass recording **"Rosaryville"** [1999] changed tack somewhat, being consistently based on religious themes. It was also Kate's first self-produced album, Johnny Pierce having taken the helm on her previous trio of discs. **"Rosaryville"** featured her most potent work [and writing] to date. "Rosa's Corona's" is set in Cuba, where Rosa, like her mother before her, makes cigars, and ponders the life of a daughter [and precious grandchild] who *one night* took a boat to America. "Rosemary" is a fond recollection of how, when Kate's mother sang around the Campbell home [during Kate's childhood], she seemed to sound like Rosemary Clooney. "Heart Of Hearts" features a wonderful expression and image of faith - a rosary, located in a back yard, and composed out of [ten pin] bowling balls. If **"Rosaryville"** had involved a gamble with the public's perception of her as a writer, her 2001 album, and first for Eminent Records **"Wandering Strange"** further pursued a spiritual theme in the process including half a dozen Baptist hymns from her church choir childhood. It was recorded at Fame Studios, Muscle Shoals, Alabama and produced by Kate.

"Monuments," was self-released by Kate, Stateside, during the late summer of 2002 and subsequently in the UK by Evangeline Records. The album marked a return to self-penned or co-written material in the vein of her initial quartet of releases. Walt Aldridge, who ran Fame Publishing during the time Kate was one of its songwriters, produced the album in his hometown of Florence, Alabama – at the cleverly named Waltz Time Studio. Although credited on the liner as a 2003 release, **"Twang On A Wire,"** another self-release was being sold by Kate during her UK concert tour in late 2002. The self-produced album included thirteen Country chart hits, originally performed by women singers, from the period 1968-76.

In 2004 the Texas based Compadre Records simultaneously released three Kate Campbell albums. There was an extended version of **“Tales From The Levee”** featuring five extra cuts, albeit alternate or demo versions of existing album tracks. **“Sing Me Out”** and **“The Portable Kate Campbell”** contained most of songs that had previously appeared on Kate’s albums, circa 1997 - 1999. During 2004 Kate made available via outlets such as eMusic, a set of five rare recordings titled **“Sidetracks.”** Featuring new and original material **“Blues And Lamentations”** appeared in the later summer of 2005, on her own Large River Music label. Credited to ‘Kate Campbell with Spooner Oldham,’ the same label issued **“For The Living Of These Days”** in the early Fall of 2006. A collection of fourteen songs underpinned by sacred or religious lyrical themes, it included three Campbell co-writes, and mirrored her earlier works **“Rosaryville”** and **“Wandering Strange.”**

Having previously produced **“Monuments”** and **“Blues And Lamentations,”** Walt Aldridge made a return for **“Save The Day.”** Released by Kate’s Large River imprint, it included seven songs co-written by the pair, and was recorded at two studios in Nashville.

Discography : **“Tales From The Levee”** reissued in 2004 with five extra demo tracks [1995] ; **“Moonpie Dreams”** [1997] ; **“Visions Of Plenty”** [1998] ; **“Rosaryville”** [1999] ; **“Wandering Strange”** [2001] ; **“Monuments”** [2002] ; **“Twang On A Wire”** [2003] ; **“Sing Me Out”** [2004] ; **“The Portable Kate Campbell”** [2004] ; **“Blues And Lamentations”** [2005] ; **“For The Living Of These Days”** [2006] ; **“Save The Day”** [2008] :

Arthur Wood

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