

## Mary Black - Bio

Mary Black was born on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1955 in Dublin, Ireland. Her father, Kevin, was a fiddle player and her mother, Patty, a singer. It's natural therefore that the Black offspring all developed an interest in music. As a teenager, Mary was a member of the Young Dublin Singers, and at the age of fifteen along with her brothers Shay and Michael, formed the group Terrace. In 1975 Mary and Shay formed the traditional folk band, General Humbert. Their first, self-titled, album was released by Dolphin Records that year, and three years later Gael-Linn issued "**General Humbert II.**"

In 1982 Mary cut her first solo album, a self-titled set that was produced by Declan Sinnott. The album was an instant best seller and earned Black her first gold record. The following year Mary accepted an invitation to join the traditional Irish group De Dannan. For three years her solo career ran in tandem with her band work. She appeared on the De Dannan albums "**Song For Ireland**" [1983] and "**Anthem**" [1985]. When "**Without The Fanfare**" won another gold disc, Mary left De Dannan to concentrate on her solo career. For the remainder of the nineteen eighties, Black consolidated her career by regularly touring Ireland, and she consistently won the nation's annual music awards. Following the release of "**No Frontiers**," Gift Horse Records secured distribution of Black's recordings in the States, while King Records became her Japan label. In 1990 Black toured both countries for the first time.

Concurrent with the foregoing and following the world wide distribution of BBC Television/Hummingbird Productions music series "**Bringing It All Back Home**" [1991], Black was seen by an even larger, worldwide audience allowing her to regularly undertake domestic and foreign tours for the remainder of the decade. In 1992, a number of Mary Black compilation albums were released world wide, the British version, "**The Collection**," included a duet by Mary and Eleanor McEvoy on Eleanor's "**Only A Woman's Heart.**" That track and eleven others, by Irish female musicians, were packaged later that year as "**A Woman's Heart**" and went on to sell half a million copies in Ireland alone. Mary also contributed to "**A Woman's Heart 2**" [1994]. Through the nineties, Black continued making albums, produced by Declan Sinnott, that further consolidated her reputation as a world-class vocalist and interpreter of songs penned by others.

The partnership with Sinnott came to an end in 1995 with "**Circus**," and the follow-up "**Shine**" produced by Larry Klein, Joni Mitchell's former husband, was the first disc she recorded outside Ireland. The sessions took place in Los Angeles, and the eleven-song collection included five David Gray compositions. Gray finally hit the big time with his album "**White Ladder**" in 1999. Although Mary albums had begun to include songs by a non-Irish born writers [eg. John Gorka most readily comes to mind], "**Shine**" strayed too far from her established *Celtic* formula, even though Gray, born in Manchester, was raised in Wales. For her final disc of the twentieth century, "**Speaking With The Angel**," Black returned to her Irish roots and recorded the album at Windmill and Pulse studios in Dublin. Even though the album title cut came from the pen of a Canadian, the collection featured songs composed by *regulars* - Noel Brazil and Shane Howard.

A two CD retrospective set titled "**The Best of Mary Black : 1991 - 2001**" was issued just before Christmas 2001. Mary's latest release "**Live**," a live CD/DVD combination that included the documentary "Still Believing," was issued in her native Ireland in the summer of 2003. In addition Mary contributed to the 2003 Dara compilation recording "**A Woman's Heart – A Decade On.**" "**Full Tide**," Mary's first studio recording in six years to feature new material, was released in Ireland in late October 2006. The collection included a new departure for Mary Black, two songs composed by Mary and her twenty year old son, Danny O'Reilly.

### Discography :

with General Humbert – "**General Humbert**" [1975] ; "**General Humbert II**" [1978] :

with De Dannan - "**Song For Ireland**" [1983] ; "**Anthem**" [1985] :

Solo - "**Mary Black**" [1982] ; "**Without The Fanfare**" [1985] ; "**By The Time It Gets Dark**" [1987] ; "**Mary Black Collected**" [1988] ; "**No Frontiers**" [1989] ; "**Babes In The Wood**" [1991] ; "**The Collection**" [1992] ; "**The Holy Ground**" [1993] ; "**Circus**" [1995] ; "**Shine**" [1997] ; "**Speaking With The Angel**" [1999] ; "**The Best of Mary Black : 1991 - 2001**" [2001] ; "**Live**" CD and DVD [2003] ; "**Full Tide**" [2005] :

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