

# Gary Haynes

From learning Spanish, to having an aviary of budgerigars, Gary Haynes' interests outside of the music business are as varied as his tastes within it. 'Why Spanish?' I asked. 'Well, at one time, I did consider emigrating, like some of my friends had done, but I had second thoughts and decided to stay put.'

Gary Haynes was born in 1969 and has lived all his life, so far, in the same Nottinghamshire town of Sutton-in-Ashfield. Although his dad loved rock 'n' roll, and Country was his mother's favourite, the only person in Gary's family who could be loosely classed as a musician was his dad's dad, Grandad Haynes, who played accordion many years ago.

'I don't know how old that accordion is', said Gary, 'but it's still in the family to this day and we have no intention of getting rid of it, it's part of the family history.'

So, having established that there was no family input, who did influence the young Gary Haynes? 'Well, when I was young, I was into the heavy metal scene in a big way. I listened to great bands like Metallica and Kiss. Then during the punk and ska era there were the Sex Pistols, The Jam, Madness and The Specials.'

Gary developed an interest in music at a very early age and started learning to play bass guitar whilst still at school, and in his late teens joined a four-piece rock band called Victim.

'This was the time,' he continued, 'when Tommy Vance was at Radio 1, he encouraged up and coming rock bands to send him demo tapes. We sent in our second demo tape which contained all our own material and as luck would have it, a couple of tracks from it were selected for air-play on his show. Our one claim to fame.'

After four years with Victim, Gary left to join another band, a five-piece called Hellraiser.

The main difference between the music of Victim and Hellraiser was, while Victim did all their own material, Hellraiser played covers of other bands' hits.

Gary had left school at 16 and joined a local building firm as a YTS. 'I was only there for four weeks,' he says, 'the first two at college and the next two on site.'

Then a proper full-time opportunity came along and Gary started a 17-year career

as a knitter at Pretty Polly, the well-known hosiery company.

'Working three shifts (earllys, lates and nights) was a novelty at first, but after a time, I came to hate the job. I could only play gigs when I was on the 6am till 2.00pm shift, but getting up at 5am after a late band night was murder.'

Although he was into heavy metal, punk and ska, Gary admits to also liking the music of the Beatles, especially John Lennon, and even Abba, which just goes to show what a varied taste in music he really has. Even so, whether it comes

from his mother's taste in music or not, Gary has always harboured a love of Country with Johnny Cash, Merle Haggard and Hank Williams amongst his favoured artists. His all time Country favourite, however, is the much lamented John Denver.

It was whilst he was bass guitarist with Hellraiser, that he took to learning the acoustic version of the instrument.

'After we'd finish a pub gig', says Gary, 'I would start messing about with an acoustic guitar that they kept behind the bar. I think it was the only time some



by Phillip Edenborough

of the band had ever heard Country music.'

Gary began his solo career in the millennium year with one of his first bookings coming courtesy of producer, Dale Green, who sadly passed away in February 2004.

'After my first solo gig, I got home and stood in the lounge looking at the wad of notes in my hand, hardly believing that I had been paid for doing something that I enjoyed doing and promptly threw the money up into the air in celebration.'

It was during this initial year that Gary recorded his first cd, simply entitled Gary Haynes, with the follow-up Sunset Sky released in October 2002 containing Gary's version of John Denver's Leaving On A Jet Plane.

His latest cd, Coming Home To You, was recorded and released in 2003 and opens with a cracking rendition of Ain't Going Down (Till The Sun Comes Up).

After almost three years of trying to juggle his shifts at work with his evening job, the chance to get out and become a full-time entertainer came in December 2003. 'I had come to hate the shift-working so much that when the announcement was

made that Pretty Polly were seeking candidates amongst the knitters for voluntary redundancy, I made sure that I was first in the queue. They knew how much I enjoyed my music and how I felt about the job, so they didn't stand in my way nor did they try to persuade me to stay. Or maybe, I was just a bad knitter', he told me.

Gary now travels predominantly in the Midlands, the North and East Anglia (the South don't know what they're missing) singing a mix of Country and rock 'n' roll.

His repertoire also includes some of his own material, samples of which can be found on his last two albums.

His current Country favourites include, in no particular order, Garth Brooks, Alan Jackson, George Strait, Tim McGraw and Hank Williams III.

Away from the music, Gary keeps himself fit by working out three times a week, gigs permitting, and likes to get away from it all with his fishing rods. He also lists Bonsai trees amongst his hobbies, along with that aviary of 20 or so budgies and a new addition to the family in terms of a lively young puppy.

Add to that, four years at night school learning Spanish, it makes you wonder how Gary ever finds time to rehearse.

'Rehearsing isn't a problem', he concludes, 'but don't ask me when the next cd will be recorded. All I want is to keep on enjoying more of the same.'

With his enthusiasm and talent, I'm sure Gary Haynes will have no problem with that, whatsoever. Oh, and by the way, Spain's loss is definitely our gain.

