

# BECCY COLE

## SWEET REBECCA

ABC/UNIVERSAL

Country songstress Beccy Cole has delighted Australian listeners and concert goers for more than twenty years. The Adelaide-born star's glowing warmth, honeyed voice, bawdy sense of humour and perpetual smile have helped make Beccy one of the nation's best-loved and most celebrated artists. With her stunning tenth release *Sweet Rebecca*, Beccy colours these winning qualities with bittersweet remembrance and reflection on her life thus far – both onstage and off.

With nine Golden Guitars to her name (including four for Female Vocalist of the Year), as well as multiple ARIA Top 10 Country and Top 40 Mainstream albums, a Top 10 DVD, three gold-certified releases, and more than a dozen No. 1 Australian country singles, Beccy Cole is one of Australia's most successful singer-songwriters.

Since 1997, Beccy has piloted a succession of stellar releases, including most recent ARIA-nominated studio effort *Songs & Pictures* (2011), featuring the Golden Guitar-winning hits 'Waitress' and 'Millionaires' (with Kasey Chambers). *Sweet Rebecca* follows hot on the heels of Beccy's phenomenal collaboration with Melinda Schneider, *Great Women of Country* (2014).

As the title promises, *Sweet Rebecca* is the most personal album of Beccy's career. The release coincides with the publication of Beccy's strikingly candid memoir, *Poster Girl*. It was the frequently gruelling task of penning this tell-all account of her life and career to date that inspired the intensely, grippingly honest songs of *Sweet Rebecca*.

"For me, every time I write songs it's a very cathartic experience, because I write about my life," Beccy says. "I think the more honest you are, the better the song is going to be. After I wrote the book, I was ready to write songs – or at least ready to write some words that rhymed!"

As Beccy's remarkable story demonstrates, the truest measure of a life well-lived lies not in personal achievement, but in the people who choose to come along for the ride. *Sweet Rebecca* is a dedication to the people who have made Beccy the treasured artist she is today: from her musical parents Carole and Jeff, to faithful friends, colleagues, and confidants met along the way.

Having served an apprenticeship in her mother's band Wild Oats, in 1991 Beccy joined Kasey Chambers and family in the Dead Ringer Band. Less than two years later, in 1993, Beccy took out the coveted Toyota Star Maker title. In the years since, Beccy has toured with Slim Dusty, Willie Nelson, Kenny Rogers, and Glen Campbell, has performed as a Young Star with Felicity Urquhart and great mate Adam Harvey, and wowed audiences as a Songbird with dear friends Sara Storer and Gina Jeffreys.

Among the most important experiences of Beccy's career, though, was her watershed tour of military bases in Iraq and the Middle East in December 2005, where Beccy performed for Australian service personnel as part of the Tour de Force program. In early 2006, in response to a letter penned by an erstwhile fan critical of what he perceived as Beccy's tacit support for the war in Iraq, Beccy penned one of her best-loved tunes, the triple Golden Guitar-winning 'Poster Girl'. The song earned Beccy admiration across the globe.



Success frequently comes at a personal cost. When Beccy married talented fiddle player Mick Albeck in the late 1990s, Kasey Chambers and Gina Jeffreys served as bridesmaids. They were also there to help Beccy mend when the marriage ended eighteen months later. In true showbiz style, Beccy took to the studio for therapy. Beccy's 2001 "divorce album" *Wild At Heart* featured trademark track 'Lazy Bones', a wry, witty dedication to Mick – who still performs as a regular member of Beccy's band.

Intimate friendships such as these also helped Beccy through what was perhaps her greatest personal challenge. Beccy's celebrated coming-out on ABC TV's *Australian Story* program in July 2012 was the culmination of years of soul-searching and personal angst. Beccy now shares the ups and downs with partner in love, life, and lights Libby O'Donovan, in her cherished hometown of Adelaide.

Sweet Rebecca, then, spans an incredible journey in life and song.

The album was written in a white heat at Aldinga on the South Australian coast. For the first time, Beccy wrote on every one of the album's twelve tracks.

"This is all fresh," Beccy says. "I literally locked myself in a shack down in South Australia on the beach at Aldinga to write. And if there are twelve songs, I was there for 12 days!"

The making of *Sweet Rebecca* was a labour of love aided by friends. The album reunites Beccy with producer-in-demand Shane Nicholson, while regular band member Duncan Toombs contributes guitars and banjo. Also featured are drummer Steve Fearnley, and Tim Wedde (*The Flood*) on accordion. There's a mandolin part from Beccy's childhood friend Kym Warner, while Libby covers backing vocals and piano. *Sweet Rebecca* is also Beccy's tenth record with old friend Jeff McCormack, who engineers and contributes bass. Another "usual suspect" is also represented.

"Mick Albeck – the ex-husband – got a guernsey. As he often does!" Beccy laughs. "It was a great process making this record. It's a real 'friends and family' kind of effort!"

From its opening bars, *Sweet Rebecca* rings with bittersweet reminiscence and introspection. Mandolin chimes, low-down guitar thrums, while piano accordion breathes the soft haze of memory into the mix.

'I came across a photograph of me – looks about a hundred sins ago; I could tell that girl a thing or two, save about a thousand bad mistakes,' Beccy sings on title track 'Sweet Rebecca'. It's a poignant introduction.

Against a backdrop of paint-stripping guitars and popping banjo, pub stomper 'Damn Fool' considers one of the more damaging mistakes Beccy counts among her "lessons learned" – falling under the spell of a toxic lover.

*'The more wicked the witch, the greater the itch, the more lies that she tells.'*

'Precious Times' finds Beccy sharing the microphone with unflagging friends Sara Storer and Gina Jeffreys – with whom Beccy has performed intermittently as *The Songbirds* since 2007.

With the uplifting 'Happy 16', Beccy gives joyous thanks for her shared life with son Ricky, celebrating the generous spirit of the "not-so-little man" who used to sleep through his mum's gigs swaddled in a velvet-lined guitar case.

Beccy also gives thanks for the love of partner Libby. 'Ours is the only first kiss that I can remember,' Beccy confesses on the sickly pop jaunt 'I Love You'. 'I even love you more than ice cream. I wish they'd let me marry you.'

Also singled out for their constant devotion and support are Beccy's mother Carole and grandmother Gloria. 'The only thing sweeter than this homemade apricot jam is knowing I'm loved by them just the way that I am,' Beccy sings in 'Tea For Three'.

With 'Broken Soldiers', Beccy lauds the strength and pride of mothers left to care for Australian veterans scarred by their wartime service. A plaintive tune to which fiddle and cello impart a sad air, 'Broken Soldiers' is a dedication to unsung heroes.

'All the battle-weary mothers are the bravest of them all. 'Cause they'd fight the war alone before they'd let their broken soldier fall.'

A classic Beccy Cole lament coloured with humour, 'I'm Easy' is a self-deprecating look at the singer's tendency to trust too readily, and the unscrupulous lovers, business associates, and false friends who have exploited her warm heart along the way.

*'I'm easy, you seem lovely, here's my account, I'll give you the PIN.'*

A soulful blues-rock cut co-written with Libby, 'Off My Chest' is a cheeky song with a serious message – Beccy approaches the subject of breast cancer treatment from the perspective of a woman betrayed by her two best friends (or, as Beccy dubs them, her "Conway Twitties").

"I know a lot of women who have been through breast cancer and who have had to have either a single or a double mastectomy," Beccy says of her inspiration for the track. "The best thing that gets them through, most of the time, is humour."

With an impish grin, Beccy farewells us with album closer 'Bumcrack', a hillbilly hoedown with blistering banjo and fiddle that celebrates the peculiar charms of a fictitious outback town that's "hot and sticky all year round."

A stunningly personal release veined with humour, *Sweet Rebecca* brims with striking, sometimes painful honesty. Above all, it reveals that, after ten albums, two decades, and countless trials along the way, Beccy Cole remains undimmed in her commitment to friends, family, and Australia's everyday heroes. *Sweet Rebecca* is a breathtaking showcase of heart-on-sleeve songwriting, softened by Beccy Cole's unwavering warmth, grace, and eternal, nourishing smile.

