

**Sheryl Crow,**  
**1993**



## PERFORMER

# SHERYL CROW

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THIS MASTERFUL SINGER-SONGWRITER  
HAS PLOWED A RICH FIELD OF MUSICAL GENRES,  
SCORING MEGAHITS ALONG THE WAY.

BY HOLLY GLEASON

**S**he was born November 1963, the day Aldous Huxley died . . . ” In August 1993, that oh-so-smart lyric – delivered conversationally, over a spare, rolling piano and three searing electric guitar chords – kicked off Sheryl Crow’s just-released *Tuesday Night Music Club*. Lightly gospel, attenuated, and striding, the album’s first single, “Run, Baby, Run,” entwined story, musicianship, and a dusky voice that could question and witness at the same time. Intelligent, genre-curious, and featuring some of Los Angeles’ best session players, Crow’s engaging debut album exemplified what Album Rock Radio of the seventies and eighties had wrought. But it was also a girl power record for young women: chick music, the ultimate backhanded compliment. “Run, Baby, Run” would fail to chart – at the time, no one saw Sheryl Crow coming. Not the future nine Grammy Awards and thirty-two Grammy nominations, the more than fifty million albums sold worldwide, or her position as a woman who holds her own in a man’s world without sacrificing her sexuality, sense of self, or activism.

Born February 11, 1962, in Kennett, Missouri, Sheryl Crow taught music at an elementary school before she started singing professionally in 1987. She sang advertising jingles, wrote songs recorded by Tina Turner and Wynonna Judd, toured as a background singer with Michael Jackson, and contributed vocals on recordings by Don Henley, Jimmy Buffett, Stevie Wonder, and

Belinda Carlisle, among others. Her first solo album, cut in 1992, was shelved.

By the time the steel guitar-drenched “All I Wanna Do” dropped in July 1994, a seemingly last-gasp fourth single a year after the release of *Tuesday Night Music Club*, no one realized a juggernaut had been launched. In the song’s engaging video, Crow plays guitar and sings under the marquee of a dilapidated theater in the lost night hours; she’s all innocence and small-town joy, with the video seemingly a snapshot of who this writer-artist is, right down to the sly, good-hearted local tavern-style confession, “*I like a good beer buzz early in the morning . . .*”

The following year, Crow would sweep two of the Big Four – Record of the Year for “All I Wanna Do” and Best New Artist – at the 37th Grammy Awards. The single would also win Best Female Pop Vocal Performance. Having spent six weeks at Number Two on the Hot 100, while living atop the Adult Contemporary and Alternative charts with the frothy “All I Wanna Do,” Sheryl Crow was now a factor. “Strong Enough,” the followup and fifth single, became a Top Five hit. Yes, she was beautiful, but she was also a strong musician and thinker, and about to embody the zeitgeist for a new age of women. Excavating the tangle of disappointments and self-actualization, her songs balance the desire to enjoy life and achieve at the highest levels on her own merits.

After touring incessantly behind her septuple-





**Live at Irving Plaza, New York City, 1993. OPPOSITE PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: With Johnny Cash, 1995; double-Grammy winner, 1995; backstage at the Riviera Theatre, Chicago, 1993; in the studio, London, 1997; harmonizing with Emmylou Harris, 1997; with Bonnie Raitt at Lilith Fair, 1999.**

platinum debut, she chose New Orleans' Kingsway Studios to make her next album. Self-producing her sophomore effort, she played most of the instruments and wrote many of the songs herself or with one cowriter.

*Sheryl Crow* hit harder. Terse, focused, she emerged – with engineer Trina Shoemaker – a self-made woman. Funky in places, yearning in others, the album debuted at Number Six on *Billboard's* Top 200 Albums, quickly certifying triple platinum. The raw down-stroked electric guitar and chugging rhythms of “If It Makes You Happy,” released in September 1996, set the tone for her second album: a soaring vocal that sorts through random references on its way to impaling self-indulgent victimhood; it was an accountability and acceptance anthem for Gen X. Eric Weisbard's *Spin* review twinned her with Beck, as artists pressing opposing dynamics and using Los Angeles as a canvas, but singled out Crow for “bringing rootless rootsiness to the heartland.” He noted her evolution, “with bigger beats and dirtier guitar/keyboard effects – lots of fuzz, Wurlitzer, Hammond, Moog. . . . It sounds gorgeous, and current, and I suspect musicians will be learning from it for years to come.”

Not that Crow needed critical vindication. She would win her first Best Rock Album Grammy in 1997, as well as Best Female Rock Vocal Performance for “If It Makes You Happy.” Even more importantly, the sweeping “Every Day Is a Winding Road” and self-aware “A Change Would Do You Good” tumbled out of car radios across America, making her rock, pop, and country music's favorite siren.

Like her (s)heroes Stevie Nicks, Bonnie Raitt, and Chrissie Hynde, she was giving a generation of women a unique, empowering voice. Beyond lyrics cataloging

pop culture references from Coltrane to UFOs, or articulating the need to escape or truncate relationships, she found her political voice. Johnny Cash would ultimately cover “Redemption Day” on *American VI: Ain't No Grave*, while “Love Is a Good Thing” got *Sheryl Crow* banned from Walmart for a reference to kids shooting each other with guns purchased at the chain. And “Hard to Make a Stand” references a trip to an abortion clinic that ends in a shooting. Putting her convictions where her heart is has been a critical piece of her success. Crow prominently joined Sarah McLachlan's Lilith Fair for its 1997, 1998, and 1999 runs. Women supporting women, being who they are, and creating space for uniqueness shouldn't seem radical, yet it was. Lilith took in sixteen million dollars its first year, the highest grossing festival tour according to *Pollstar*.

There was no slowing Crow. If touring, guesting on Scott Weiland's *12 Bar Blues*, writing the theme for a James Bond movie, life's slings, and working on a follow-up album took their toll, her resulting *The Globe Sessions* (1998) maintained her high standards. Nominated in the Grammy Album of the Year category, it also garnered her a Producer of the Year, Non-Classical nomination on its way to a second Rock Album win. The intimate, first-person “My Favorite Mistake” debuted at Number 23 on *Billboard's* Hot 100 in December 1998. People responded not just to the song, but to *The Globe Sessions* as a whole: Adult Contemporary, Alternative, and Adult Alternative radio play followed.

And *Globe* had legs. A cover of Guns N' Roses' “Sweet Child O' Mine,” which became a bonus track, won Best Female Rock Vocal Performance at the 42nd Grammy Awards, followed by her *Live From Central Park* versions









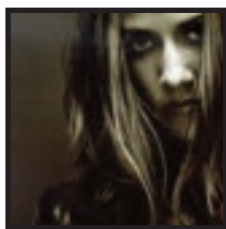
At a photo shoot  
for *Vanity Fair*, 2006

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 ”

## SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY



**Tuesday Night  
 Music Club**  
 1993 (A&M)



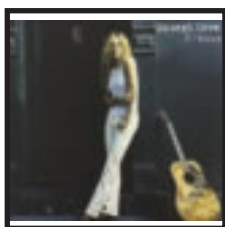
**Sheryl Crow**  
 1996 (A&M)



**The Globe  
 Sessions**  
 1998 (A&M)



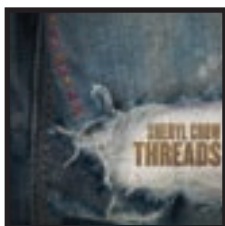
**C'mon, C'mon**  
 2002 (A&M)



**Detours**  
 2008 (A&M)



**100 Miles From  
 Memphis**  
 2010 (A&M)



**Threads**  
 2019 (Big Machine)



**Sheryl: Music From the  
 Feature Documentary**  
 2022 (A&M)

of “There Goes the Neighborhood” winning Best Female Rock Vocal and “The Difficult Kind” being nominated for Pop Collaboration (with Sarah McLachlan). Fore-shadowing her later career, *Live* also received a Best Country Collaboration nod for “Strong Enough” performed with the Chicks.

That ability to straddle genres, making a hybrid that is singularly her own, is Crow’s great gift. She spent time making music for movies, occasionally even taking a role, while losing none of her torque. *C’mon, C’mon* arrived in 2002, showing a doubled-down sense of brio and including such collaborators as Lenny Kravitz, Emmylou Harris, Stevie Nicks, and Natalie Maines.



**Onstage at the  
 Lock’n Festival,  
 Arrington, Virginia,  
 2018**





From the opening thrust of “Steve McQueen,” she created a muscle car of a record. Gleaming, buzzing, and unafraid to swing from coy softness to phased vocals, she was in the driver’s seat, clearly loving the moment. The shimmering “Soak Up the Sun” – featuring indie-rock favorite Liz Phair – is California pop perfection, an obvious first single. With 185,000 in first-week sales, the album arrived at Number Two on *Billboard’s* Top 200 Album chart, on its way to double platinum. “McQueen” took the Female Rock Vocal Grammy, while *C’mon* received nominations for Best Rock Album, Female Pop Vocal for “Soak Up the Sun,” and Pop Collaboration for “It’s So Easy” (with Don Henley). Even her greatest hits – *The Very Best of Sheryl Crow* – yielded a massive hit with her tender rendition of Cat Stevens’ “The First Cut Is the Deepest,” earning yet another Grammy nod. Her 2005 album, *Wildflower*, also went platinum.

Crow continued to traverse a diverse sonic journey: *Detours* (2008) delivers state-of-the-union political commentary and excavates shattered relationships. *100 Miles From Memphis* (2010) is exultantly blues-informed, while *Feels Like Home* (2013) is country grounded. *Be Myself* (2017) was deemed “a full-blown return to her fierce rock-queen glory” by *Rolling Stone’s* Rob Sheffield.

In 2019, Crow declared that the friends-gathering *Threads* would be her last full-length album. She teamed with longtime collaborators Jeff Trott and Steve Jordan to produce a project that merged the phases and stages of her career. The seventeen-track work features a plethora of guest performers, ranging from relative newcomers to music veterans, including St. Vincent, Lucius, Maren Morris, Margo Price, Jason Isbell, Brandi Carlile, Chris Stapleton, Gary Clark Jr., Mavis Staples, Eric Clapton, Keith Richards, James Taylor, Willie Nelson, Neil Young,



**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Live in Lexington, Kentucky, 2023; jamming with Keith Richards, New York City, 2001; singing with St. Vincent and Pat Benatar (from left), Beacon Theatre, New York City, 2023; with Mavis Staples at Ryman Auditorium, Nashville, Tennessee, 2019.**



Chuck D, Andra Day, Bonnie Raitt, Emmylou Harris, and Stevie Nicks. Such a stellar cast and the album's variety of musical genres reflect Crow's status among her peers as well as her career's rich tapestry of work.

Crow remains highly visible in the public eye. She is the subject of the 2022 Showtime feature documentary *Sheryl*. In 2023, in Nashville, she spoke out against gun violence and joined the city's transgender-supporting Love Rising concert at the Bridgestone Arena. She continues to headline at festivals around the country, from the iHeart Radio Music Festival in Las Vegas to Bonnaroo in Manchester, Tennessee.

Sheryl Crow personifies what rock & roll means in the hands of someone with clear-diamond focus and the drive to fight for what she believes is right musically, personally, and globally. Tonight, we welcome her into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame's Class of 2023.

