

Gary Perkins & The Breeze

Gary Perkins is probably one of the UK's most talented singer/songwriters. A man of many talents he possesses that rare ability to have an audience rocking one minute and then spell bound another. His amazing songwriting talent is something which has held him in high esteem for many years and has given him the gift of being able to produce a number of self-penned albums, each one exceptional in different ways.

At just eight years of age he had his first taste of performing in front of an audience when he played harmonica and sang songs in junior school assemblies. He was also introduced to his first guitar and then proceeded to teach himself to play out of tune, which meant at the age of 14 he had to relearn the instrument but this time playing in tune!

In 1980, when 18, Gary was invited by Harry Quinton to sing three songs at one of his shows at the Ivanhoe Hotel, Thurcroft in South Yorkshire. Of his debut performance he said: 'I remember feeling quite numb and sick, and very nervous, but at the same time I had a feeling of excitement.' During the next 10 years he found his career ambling along working in the pubs and clubs, which was fine, but this was not giving him the satisfaction he wanted so in 1991 he took the decision to become a self-employed Country singer. In 1993 and again in 1994 he was the proud winner of the Harrogate Country Music Club Solo Artist award.

His first album, *Ride The Wind* was released in 1995, this was a self-financed album which he co-wrote with his father, Harry. Ironically his father is not a singer or a musician but is nevertheless a staunch Country music fan and one of Gary's biggest fans and critics. If Gary is playing at a gig relatively close to home you can see Harry and sometimes his uncle out there in the audience supporting him.

It was also in 1995 that he made the decision to form a band and was introduced to four musicians from Buxton, Derbyshire who were called *The Breeze*. In January of that year they all began rehearsing together and then in May they played their first gig at his uncle's pub and has never looked back. At that time *The Breeze* members were Andy Mottram on lead guitar, Gareth Ashton drums, Steve Morris keyboards and Phil Baker on bass guitar.

Free To Love was the first cd they cut together in 1997 which was nominated for Best British Album and a song from that cd, *Thunderhead*, reached number two in the European Country music charts.



From left to right: Andy Mottram, Lee Guyler, Gary Perkins, Steve Morris and Johnny Keep.

Although Gary was a full time musician, the guys in the band had day jobs to consider and it was their priority to look after those jobs which meant the band virtually became a 'weekend band' playing six to nine venues a month. This was fine for the band but not really financially viable for Gary and so he decided to have a year off and diversify into other areas of singing which would make him more financially stable.

Following many requests for bookings, especially on the festival circuit, he decided to get the band back together, although two of the original members were replaced by Lee Guyler on drums and Johnny Keep on bass guitar. This is the line up they have today.

Gary's success has continued over the years with numerous stage appearances in different guises and with various albums, including *Standing Out From The Crowd* and *Gary Perkins Sings Country Volumes 1, 2 & 3*.

At the moment you can see Gary Perkins & *The Breeze* appearing at various festivals in the UK where they wow the audiences wherever and whenever they perform.

Gary is currently working on his Volume 4 of *Gary Perkins Sings Country* which is set to be released just before Christmas, but especially watch for an album of self-penned songs due in the future. He is currently setting up a website - watch this space! Gary can be contacted by telephoning 01909 561125.