

## **Valerie Smith/ She Would Love to Do it All if She Had Time!**

Valerie Smith has developed a unique style and sound that has rocked the bluegrass world for almost two decades with a string of national and international tours, critically acclaimed recordings, and Grammy, IBMA and Dove Award nominations. Val's vocals are impressive. She has a staggeringly expansive range and the ability to portray an amazing array of emotion. As NPR radio host Dave Higgs, has noted, "*She can be sassy, sultry, siren-like, sweet, smooth, soothing and smoldering---sometimes during the span of just one song!*" Valerie Smith and her East Coast-based band, Liberty Pike featuring legendary Hall of Famer , Tom Gray on bass, are consistent audience pleasers and skilled musicians. When Valerie walks onstage with her fabulous band, expect to be inspired, amused and thoroughly entertained.

Originally from Missouri and now based in Bell Buckle, Tennessee, a charming little historic town just southeast of Nashville, Valerie Smith is an award-winning bluegrass and American roots artist and songwriter. Since 1998 Smith has made thousands of fans and friends with her music, on stages across the United States, as well as in Europe, Canada and the United Kingdom. Her band is named "Liberty Pike" after the road that connects Bell Buckle to Nashville.

When you listen to Valerie's unique voice, you can hear influences from bluegrass, blues, gospel music and even Broadway show tunes. Her personal background is just as interesting and varied. Valerie holds a Master's degree in Music from the University of Missouri in Kansas City, and she taught music for seven years in her home state before marrying Craig Smith (another fine musician and songwriter) and moving to Nashville.

Her three years as an account executive for a marketing firm in Music City gave Val a valuable crash course in promotion, video and photography to go along with her music degree. In the evening she was working on her songwriting and singing wherever she could. Country Music Hall of Fame member Charlie Louvin and the Nashville Bluegrass Band's Alan O'Bryant became her music mentors in Nashville. Louvin invited Val onstage with him at the Grand Ole Opry, and O'Bryan produced her debut album, *Patchwork Heart*—which included a duet with Charlie on "My Baby's Gone."

Valerie's hit single, "Red Clay Halo," written by Gillian Welch and David Rawlings, climbed the Bluegrass Unlimited, Country Music and Americana reporting charts, receiving heavy radio airplay for five years. BU included the song in their list of the top 60 songs of the decade.

The International Bluegrass Music Museum in Owensboro, Kentucky, commissioned Valerie Smith & Liberty Pike to create a special "Bluegrass in the Schools" program to share bluegrass music and its history with thousands of students in western Kentucky for 15 years. She later developed the "American Roots Music" program, which she continues to present in the United States and overseas.

Smith was invited by producer Bil VornDick and the legendary Ralph Stanley to be a part of the Grammy-nominated album, Clinch Mountain Sweethearts. Val and Stanley sang "I'll Remember You, Love in My Prayers."

Country Music Hall of Famer, Tom T. Hall made a special appearance on Valerie's second album No Summer Storm. Tom T guested on "Sit Down and Cry," a song written by Miss Dixie and Tom T Hall. The Halls also invited Valerie to participate in all three albums by the "Daughters of Bluegrass," featuring an all-female cast of singers and musicians, on Blue Circle Records.

Smith recorded a CD of duets with Becky Buller called Here's a Little Song, which received critical acclaim. After 10 years in Liberty Pike, Buller formed her own touring band and has become a respected singer, songwriter and band leader in her own right. And Val couldn't be prouder of her! Andy Leftwich, fiddler with Ricky Skaggs & Kentucky Thunder, also worked for five years in Liberty Pike. The list of incredibly talented musicians and singers who have stood in the Liberty Pike circle onstage with Valerie Smith is too numerous to list here.

Smith released her first gospel album, Wash Away Your Troubles, and her arrangement of "Wade in the Water" was included in the independent movie, Bell Witch: The Movie. Valerie, Kraig and Buller also co-wrote the song, "Ole John Bell," which appeared in the sound track for the film.

Valerie and her band have appeared on several television shows, including Ronnie Reno's television numerous times, including performances on Reno's Old Time Country Music on RFD, Bluegrass Underground, and Song of the Mountains, both on PBS.

Valerie recently released a project, "Small Town Heroes" with her band that is located in the Virginia, Maryland and DC area. Tom Mindte at Patuxent Studios and Valerie co-produced and engineered the project.

In addition to national and international tour dates, Smith continues to write, produce and record music released by Bell Buckle Records.

Valerie Smith/Bluegrass, Country and Americana Artist

## **CAREER HIGHLIGHTS**

### **"Year- 1997"**

Valerie Smith and J. Gregory Heinike begin to build an independent record label, BELL BUCKLE RECORDS, located in Bell Buckle, TN. The label was used to record shows in the area and Valerie produced the, "Live at the Bell Buckle Cafe Series." The record label released several projects, Grammy Award nominated artist and songwriter, Tom Roznowski, "A Well Traveled Porch", Becky Buller's, "Little Bird", John Hartford and

Jim Wood's, "The Bullies Have Come to Town" and many other talented artists to date.

Valerie collaborated with award-winning producer, singer, songwriter, member of Nashville Bluegrass Band, Alan O'Bryant to record her first CD, "Patchwork Heart." She included a song that she penned with Alan O'Bryant, Kraig Smith called, "Hand Me Down". The track 1, RED CLAY HALO, charted for at least 4 years on the Bluegrass Unlimited Survey as well as Americana Country Radio. The project included legendary, Charlie Louvin to record the classic song, "My Baby's Gone" as a timeless duet. Many legendary and award winning musicians added their talent to the project (Jerry Douglas, Roland White, Bryan Sutton, and Stuart Duncan)

The GRAND OLE OPRY invited Valerie to sing the Louvin Brother's classic, My Baby's Gone with Charlie Louvin. Later Valerie's concerts would be seen on Public Television specials throughout the world.

Her band, "Liberty Pike" was created with most members being located in Alabama. The name seemed fitting for the band because they would travel countless hours to meet for rehearsals and shows. The members of the first collaboration are Sheila Wingate, Alan Watkins, Andy Leftwich, and Jimmy Wingate. Since then she has had many different configurations ranging from, Matt Leadbetter, Megan McCormick, Lizzy Long, Rebekah Long, Chad Graves, Stephen Mouglin, Brandon Bostic, Bobby Davis, Travis Altop, Richard Baily, Becky Buller and more fine instrumentalists.

### **"Year- 1998"**

International Bluegrass Music Association (IBMA) introduces Valerie Smith by inviting her to perform at the conference.

This performance produced a large debate among the bluegrass community of "Is it bluegrass if you are not holding an instrument"?

Valerie Smith and Liberty Pike" would begin to tour across the United States and was recognized by the International Bluegrass Association and nominated for ENTERTAINER OF THE YEAR and EMERGING ARTIST.

Society for the Preservation of Bluegrass Music of America would nominate Valerie Smith for "Traditional Female Vocalist" for 12 years. Valerie Smith and Travis Altop go

to Europe as a duet and perform at several theaters, festivals and radio stations. She would later be invited with her band, Liberty Pike, to perform for several tours (15 to date).

"Red Clay Halo" is recognized as one of the top 60 bluegrass recordings of the decade by the Bluegrass Unlimited Survey.

The International Bluegrass Music Museum uses Valerie Smith as an introductory program for "Bluegrass in the Schools", since she has performed 3 of those programs in Owensboro, TN. Louisville, KY Public Television would release her show from "Festival of Bluegrass".

**"Year- 2000"**

"Turtle Wings" was released by Bell Buckle Records and Rebel Records to Americana and Bluegrass radio. The CD was produced by Alan O'Bryant and included her band, Liberty Pike (Richard Baily, Andy Leftwich, Travis Altop, and Sheila Wingate) among guests artists Stuart Duncan, Jerry Douglas, Claire Lynch, Bryan Sutton, Tim O'Bryant and many more. She would begin to tour in the UK, Germany and Austria.

**"Year- 2001"**

Ralph Stanley and Rebel Records invites Valerie to collaborate on the song, *I'll Remember You Love in my Prayer's*, on the Grammy-nominated, "Clinch Mountain Sweethearts".

Rebel Record's, Mark Newton would also invite Valerie to collaborate on IBMA award-winning, *"Follow Me Back to the Fold."*

New faces to "Liberty Pike" are introduced; Eddie Miller, Becky Buller, Randall Conn and Johnny Miller. The untimely death of mandolin player, Eddie Miller, led to another band shakeup. The new members that would finish the live recordings and tour were Becky Buller, Randall Conn, John Wesley Lee, Jessica Lee and Steven Mouglin.

Legendary engineer and producer, Richard Adler produces Valerie Smith and Liberty Pike's, *"No Summer Storm"* that features her band members. The project is released in October of 2001, track 9, Lord, I'm Ready Now, would remain on the Bluegrass Unlimited Survey Charts for 2 years.

**"Year- 2003"**

Valerie finds herself off the road to release her next CD "That's What Love Can Do",

engineered and produced by Richard Adler. Valerie and Kraig Smith wrote the title cut of the project, *That's What Love Can Do*. The project and *In Those Mines* would chart on the Bluegrass Unlimited Survey, Americana and Roots genres.

Performs a duet, *In Those Mines*, with multi-Grammy and award winning male vocalist, Russell Moore. The song (written by Becky Buller) has since been noticed in many genres and released on compilations.

Valerie Smith becomes one of the "Daughters of Bluegrass" a series released by Blue Circle Records and receives a group nomination for 2006 "Recorded Event of the Year" among many talented female artist on Blue Circle Records.

Although she continued to make appearances, she became a mother slowed down to enjoy family. During that time Valerie wrote songs, recorded and began to take an interest in filmography.

"Year - 2007"

Valerie Smith, Kraig Smith and Becky Buller write, "Ole John Bell" and record "Wade in the Water" for the soundtrack of "Bell Witch, the Movie".

**"Year 2008"**

Alan O'Bryant and Becky Buller produce and engineer duet CD, "Here's A Little Song" to be released by Bell Buckle Records.

**"Year 2009"**

Alan O'Bryant in collaboration with Becky Buller to produce Valerie's first gospel CD, "Wash Away Your Troubles."

It was included in 12 categories in consideration for being amongst the top Dove Award nominees.

The project later receives, *Best Gospel Album of 2009*, "J.P.F Music Awards" (Just Plain Folks) USA Rural Roots Music Commission National 2009 recognizes "Here's A Little Song" for Contemporary CD of the Year for 2009.

Valerie Smith receives the "*Rising Legend*" award on September 5, 2009 from the National Tradition Country Music Association at the 34th Annual National Old Time Country Music Festival.

### **"Year 2011"**

Bell Buckle Records release, "Blame it on the Bluegrass," to honor the International Music Museum in Owensboro, KY. The project was unique in that it was recorded in the museum during late hours of the night. The song, "*Blame it on the Bluegrass*" remains a favorite for bluegrass radio and was in the top 5 singles charted on the Bluegrass Unlimited Survey.

Valerie Smith and Liberty Pike performed on television shows, The Ronnie Reno Show, Bluegrass Underground and Music City Roots.

### **"Year 2012"**

Bell Buckle Records releases a compilation CD, Valerie Smith's, "Some of My Favorites!".

Valerie Smith and Liberty Pike perform for television show "Songs of the Mountain."

### **"Year 2015"**

Multi-Award winning musician, vocalist, Mike Scott produces Valerie Smith's "The Human Condition" that includes timeless songs of our generation. The project collaborates several artists in an array of genres (blues, country, folk, rock and bluegrass) to tell a story about the world around us.

### **"Year 2016"**

Valerie teams up with a fresh new look for "Liberty Pike" on the East coast with Tom Gray, Joe Zauner, Lisa Kay Howard Hughes and Wally Hughes.

"Small Town Heroes" was recorded at Patuxent Studio with Tom Mendte. The CD charts on the Roots Music Report and several other outlets.

Patchwork Heart is a mix of bluegrass, Americana, gospel and country music.

### **"Year 2017"**

Bell Buckle Radio (Valerie Smith Music and More) begins presenting several shows and artists on a 24 hour online radio station.

### **"Year 2018"**

Valerie continues to travel, record and teach. "It's a Dry Town" will be the next single released on Americana and Country radio. She is currently working on a new CD for a 2018 release.

## DISCOGRAPHY

Bell Buckle Recording Artist, Valerie Smith

Valerie has owned and operated her on Bell Buckle for 19 years

Patchwork Heart (1998) Rebel

Turtle Wings (2000) Rebel

Follow Me Back to the Fold (2001) Rebel

Clinch Mountain Sweethearts (2001) Rebel

For The Long Haul (2002) iBest Music

No Summer Storm (2002) Rebel [15]

That's What Love Can Do (2005) Bell Buckle Records

Follow Me Back To The Well (2006) Rebel

Here's a Little Song Bell Buckle Records (2006)

Wash Away Your Troubles (2006) Bell Buckle Records

"Bell Witch, The Movie" sound recording (2007) Cinimarr Studios Festivalink Presents

Valerie Smith & Liberty Pike (2007)

Festivalink.net

Some of My Favorites (2010) Bell Buckle Records

Human Condition (2013) Bell Buckle Records

Small Town Heroes (2016) Bell Buckle Records

From a Distance (2019) Single Factory

Talking to Daddy (2019) Bell Buckle Records

UPCOMING:

Unchained (2021) Bell Buckle Records

Maggie's Journal (2022) Bell Buckle Records