**BIOGRAPHY**

Marc Almond is an internationally acclaimed and successful artist. He has sold over 30 million records worldwide and is an icon and influence to a generation of musicians.

He was born in Southport, a seaside town in the north of England, in 1957. After an unsettled childhood of moving to Harrogate, Leeds and back to Southport, of illness and learning difficulties he finally left school at 17 with few qualifications. As a teen he worked in Southport Theatre and on Southport fairground while singing in a local band, covering hits of the day. After school he spent five years at Art College including a 3-year Fine Art B.A course at Leeds Polytechnic where he left in 1979 with a B.A Honors. At Art college he developed his style of mixing experimental performance and cabaret pop with music and film studies. He began visiting London and worked in Soho in College breaks, documenting his experiences in his early performances; Zazu, Twilights and Lowlifes and Glamour in Squalor. It was at Leeds Poly that he met David Ball and together they formed the internationally successful 'electro duo' Soft Cell in 1979.

Soft Cell were signed to Stevo's underground label Some Bizzare and licensed to Phonogram as part of the new electronic music phenomena. They went on to record four albums; 3 in New York including the iconic seminal Non Stop Erotic Cabaret, and had a number of top ten hits including the international classic Tainted Love. Tainted Love broke all records as the track that remained the longest in the U.S billboard top 100 and received a Brit award for best single of that year. Soft Cell's arrangement of the track has been covered many times by artists as diverse as Marilyn Manson and The Pussy Cat Dolls and has been sampled by a generation of dance producers for artists, notably Rianna's SOS.

Soft Cell parted amicably in 1984 to pursue solo projects. Marc had already branched out with Marc and the Mambas, a loose collective of musicians, and recorded the innovative influential double album Torment and Toreros which Marc has called 'a nervous breakdown put to music'. Mambas shambolic and florid musical shows put Marc in a unique musical place that had one foot in mainstream and the other in the underground. Marc has always been one of very few artists able to comfortably move from one to the other. Torment and Toreros was influenced by Spanish Flamenco, Marc has always used World Music influences in his music from Turkish torch songs to Brazilian Macumba and Russian folk. The Mambas use of a full string section inspired a young Antony Hegarty later of Antony and the Johnsons. Antony has always openly cited Marc as the person that without whom it would not have been possible for him.

The mambas started Marc on his path as a chansonierre troubadour, a singer of the songs of others that he would make his own, Jacques Brel, Scott Walker, Lou Reed, Juliette Greco, Nico, Syd Barrett - all early influences of Marc. Marc has said that his style comes from Jacques Brel and Marc Bolan glam with a bit of Aznavour and Johnny Ray thrown in, add some 60's Joe Meek and Orchestral Pop and some 60's Northern soul, a pinch of Music Hall and you have something approaching Marc. It is this mix of styles that have made him hard to pigeonhole, but also totally unique. He has been called over the years The Judy Garland of the Garbage Heap, The Acid House Aznavour, Jim Reeves of the Bedsit Generation, Marc Bolan and Juliette Greco's love child and Britain's own Piaf.

A diverse and acclaimed successful solo career followed with over a dozen albums including Vermin in Ermine, Mother Fist and Her Five Daughters, Enchanted, Open All Night and Stranger Things, and a number of solo chart hits including Tears Run Rings, Stories of Johnny, A Lover Spurned, Adored and Explored, Jacky, The Days of Pearly Spencer and Child Star. In 1989 Marc had another number one, a duet with 60's legend the late Gene Pitney, a cover of one of Gene's hits Something's Gotten Hold of My Heart. It was number one in Britain for five weeks. The album it came from, The Stars We Are, was Marc's most successful solo album in the USA.

Marc has worked with a number of acclaimed producers including Mike Hedges, Trevor Horn and Marius DeVries as well as more experimental producers such as Iceland's Johann Johannsson. He's also had licensing deals with a number of Major labels including Phonogram, EMI. Warners, Universal, Rough Trade, Echo, Tres Bis XIII, Sanctuary and Virgin.

In 1987 he recorded two sister albums, one of French Chansons Absinthe, specially translated songs made famous by Juliette Greco, Barbara, Leo Ferre, Robert Nyal and poetry of Rimbaud put to music and an album of Jacques Brel songs, many never sung in English before, called Jacques. The estate of Brel cited him as being the best living interpreter of Brel's songs.

In 2000 Marc worked briefly again with David Ball on a Soft Cell tour and an album, Cruelty without Beauty. Critics and fans were warm and welcoming, and they even reached the top 40 with a hit, a cover of Frankie Valli's The Night a song they nearly recorded back in 1981 instead of Tainted Love.

In 2000 Marc went to live in Moscow and was invited to record a project of music that has become dear to Marc's heart, Russian Folk and Gypsy Romance. Produced by Russian Musical prodigy Andrei Samsonov, Heart On Snow features collaborations with some of Russia's biggest musical legends and stars, the icons of Russian folk Luydmila Zekina and Alla Bayanova, Boris Grebenchikov, Ilya Lagutenko as well as a the Russian Naval Choir and the famous Rossiya Folk Orchestra. Although largely ignored in the West, Marc looks on this album as one of his most successful records. It was an adventurous and highly creative project never before undertaken by a Western Artist, and it has taken him back to Russia many times to perform in public and in private beloved Russian songs to Russians. He has been dubbed in the Russian press, 'adopted son of Russia'.

Marc was going through a musical renaissance in 2004. He had performed a residency of shows at London's Almeida Theatre that had received unanimous, glowing praise from both critics and audiences alike, when he was seriously injured in a motorcycle accident. He was in a coma for two weeks and sustained near fatal injuries that took the next few years to recover from. Marc has overcome many obstacles and ups and downs in his life, including drug addiction, and it was one more battle, but the motorcycle crash was his hardest fight. He had to learn to sing again with the help of top vocal coach Mary Hammond, and regain his shattered confidence. After Antony Hegarty bought him back on stage as a surprise guest at his London show in 2005, he began to slowly gain vocal and physical strength and today he is performing and singing better than ever.

He returned to the studio to record Stardom Road, an album of songs that had been part of his life and, in a way, told his story. Produced by long time friend Tris Penna and Marius de Vries and with guests Antony, Sarah Cracknell and Jools Holland. Marc, still not back to full strength at the time of recording, looks on this album as his recovery album. It was well received by critics and fans and Marc's music was re-discovered and re-appraised. Marc undertook a number of short appearances, at Patti Smiths Meltdown performing Brecht, Marc Bolan the celebration where he performed with legendary producer Tony Visconti, and made an appearance for the first and only time with original Tainted Love singer and Marc Bolan's partner Gloria Jones on a duet of the classic song, tribute shows to Sandy Denny the late great folk artist and one of Marc's favourite singers, and Dusty Springfield for the BBC backed by a 70 piece Orchestra, and with Current 93. Marc was also a special guest singer on Jools Holland's 2006 and 2008 tours. Marc is a regular guest and collaborator with Jools and his Rhythm and Blues Orchestra. He gave a lifetime achievement award to The Doors at the 2007 Mojo Awards. He also made various D.J and P.A club appearances - all to help build his stamina and confidence after his crash. 2008 saw him back performing full sell-out shows in Britain, Europe and Russia. To celebrate his full return to the stage he performed a retrospective show on his fiftieth Birthday to ecstatic fans.

Marc has enjoyed Many diverse collaborations during his career, Nick Cave, Siouxsie, Nico, Jools Holland, Bronski Beat, Rosenstolz, John Cale, David Johannson, Kelli Ali, Current 93, Coil, PsycicT.V, Antony and the Johnsons, Baby Dee, Little Annie, Matt Johnson, Jim Thirwell, Ferry Corsten, 60's icons Gene Pitney and P.J Proby who he produced an album for in 1998 entitled Legend. He has written many songs but prefers to sing songs by other writers and artists, saying it frees him from his own baggage allowing him to express the things he wants to, in sometimes a better way than he can write himself.

He still enjoys occasionally working in electro Dance music, collaborating with underground Dance producers, though his true heart lies in the marathon Chanson, folk and 'twisted pop cabaret' shows he calls the Sin Songs Torch and Romance Shows. These shows have been recorded in 2004 at London's Almeida Theatre and in 2008, the double live album/DVD, Marc Almond in Bluegate Fields Live at Wilton's Music Hall, was released showcasing Marc back at his best as a live performer and curator of song. These recordings along with 1992's Twelve Years of Tears at The Albert Hall are the best testaments to Marc in concert.

2009, saw the release of another set of Russian Gypsy Romance and Folk songs, a collaboration with Russian producer, arranger Alexei Fedorov - Orpheus in Exile, the songs of the late Russian Gypsy Romance singer, dissident and now gay icon Vadim Kozin. The album sold in excess of 45,000 copies and received rapturous reviews. Marc is also collaborating with Musician and arranger Michael Cashmore on a series of limited singles, decadent poems of Count Stenbock and Jean Genet amongst others, set to music. The project, Feasting With Panthers, will be released in the future on the Durtro label.

As well as a huge body of recordings, Marc has also had two best selling autobiographies, Tainted Life and In Search of The Pleasure Palace, as well as three books of verse; The Angel of Death in the Adonis Lounge, A Beautiful Twisted Night and The End of New York.

In 2010 Marc recorded a brand new mainstream album, Variete, which was released in June to much critical acclaim. Variete celebrates Marc's 30th year as a recording artist and it is his first complete album of self-written songs since Open All Night over a decade before.

2010 was a milestone celebration year for Marc, his thirty years in music as a recording artist, with his most successful tour to date, All The A's, Hits And A Sides. 2010 Also saw Marc presented with the Hero Award by Mojo Magazine. The year ended with a special one off concert at the beautiful Wilton's Music Hall.

In 2011 the album Feasting with Panthers, a collaboration with musician and arranger Michael Cashmore, was released. It featured poems of Count Eric Stenbock put to music as well as decadent and homoerotic poems by Jean Genet, Jean Cocteau, Paul Verlaine and Rimbaud. Marc took part in the unique music-theatre work Ten Plagues held at Edinburgh's Traverse Theatre from 1–28 August 2011. Ten Plagues is a one man song cycle based on Daniel Defoe's journal of the Plague Year (which dates back to 1665), with metaphors of Aids and epidemics. It was a collaboration between Marc, theatre director and designer Stewart Laing, libretto author Mark Ravenhill and composer Conor Mitchell. The show won the Scotman's Fringe First Award.

In 2012 Marc took the role of the Greek Stoic philosopher Seneca in the Paris Théâtre du Châtelet's experimental rock adaptation of Poppea based on Monteverdi's original 17th century opera The Coronation of Poppea also starring ex-Libertines Carl Barat, Benjamin Biolay, Fredrika Stahl, Valerie Gabail and Anna Madison.

On 9 August 2012 Marc performed at Antony Hegarty's Meltdown Festival in London's Southbank. He sang the whole Marc And The Mambas Torment and Toreros album for the first time live. Some of the original musicians on the album also performed: Gini Ball, Anne Stephenson, Martin McCarrick, Jim Thirlwell and Lee Jenkinson. Hegarty sang "My Little Book Of Sorrows" with Marc. At the end of 2012 Marc took time off for an operation and subsequent recovery from Spleen and Gall bladder removal.

In May 2013 Marc revived the Ten Plagues play for a month at Wilton's Music Hall in London. Based on Stewart Laing's original direction and the Edinburgh Traverse Theatre's production with new direction by Hester Chillingworth. The production was a success both with audiences and critics. Also in May of that year he received an Ivor Novello inspiration award presented by Vicki Wickham. Marc recorded tracks with legendary producer and orchestrator Tony Visconti for an EP The Dancing Marquis for later release. He also recorded vocals for a project with acclaimed composer John Harle called The Tyburn Tree for a February 2014 release. He set up a production company Lab Entertainment (The name made from the initials of people involved) for development of films, television, music and books. Lab's first project is a DVD of Ten Plagues. In October Marc was awarded an Icon Award by Attitude Magazine. Marc was awarded an Ivor Novello Inspiration award which was presented by Vicki Wickham. He was special guest of Ian Anderson for a performance of Jethro Tull's classic record Thick As A Brick at the Albert Hall. He sang sections from both Thick As A Brick part one and part two. He performed singing the James Bond Theme Thunderball at a tribute to lyricist Don Black at the Festival Hall.

In 2014 the record of The Tyburn Tree (Dark London) was released to good reviews and Marc and John Harle toured the piece with a large musical ensemble and a theatrical presentation in the Spring. A Mini album collection called The Dancing Marquis (in dedication to the colourful and eccentric Henry Paget 5th Earl Of Anglesey) was released in July featuring tracks recorded with Tony Visconti and tracks written for him by Jarvis Cocker, Carl Barat and with Steve Nieve. He guested singing After All in a performance of David Bowie's classic Album The Man Who Sold The World with a collection of Musicians featuring the albums original rhythm section and producer Tony Visconti and Woody Woodmansey. He spent most of the year touring with Jools Holland while preparing projects for 2015.

2015 - The Velvet Trail.