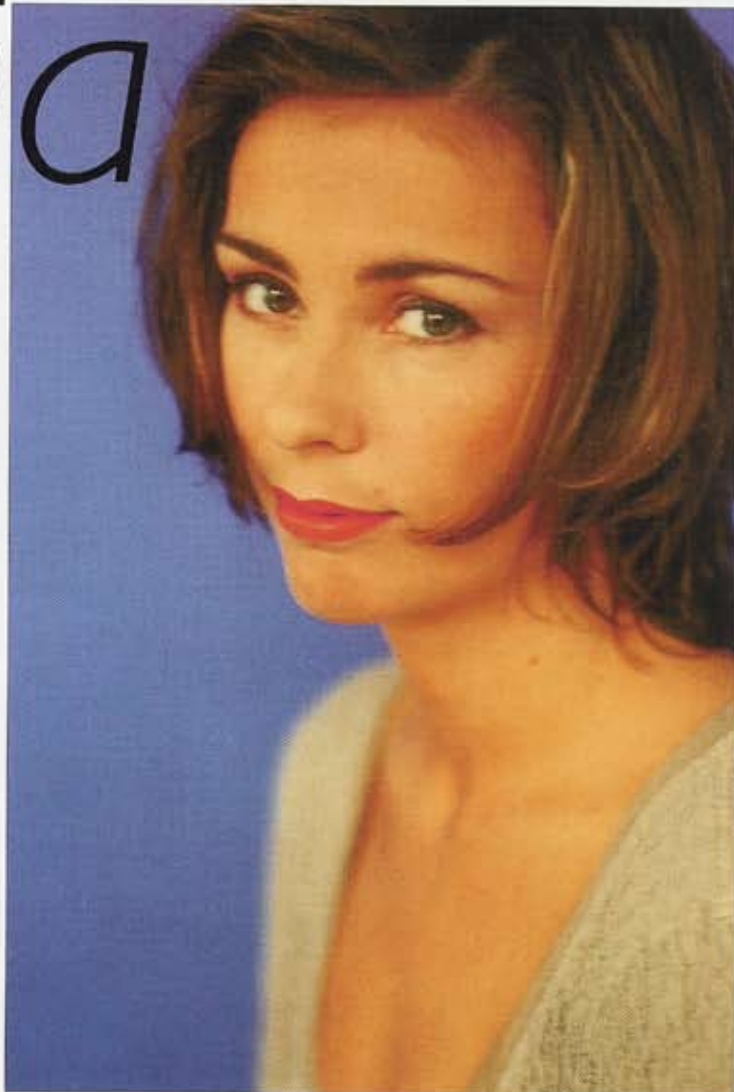


Cecilia

By Karen Farley



The natural freshness of the ocean sets the scene, stirring the yearning call of the whale. Imagine the peace, the stillness. Then as clear as a bell, the most beautiful female voice pierces the tranquillity, uplifting and inspiring with a natural freshness and classical purity, a timeless song. "Amazing grace how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me, I once was lost but now I'm found, was blind but now I see..."

This beautiful voice belongs to Norwegian born singer Cecilia and *Amazing Grace* is one of the impeccably performed songs on her brilliant first album *The Voice of the Feminine Spirit*.

Not only does classically trained Cecilia have one of the most beautiful voices in the world, her music is a little different. The lyrics of most of the songs sung by Cecilia are written by world renowned inspirational writer and speaker Stuart Wilde. Indeed, Cecilia has toured with both Stuart Wilde and that other famous inspirational writer and speaker Louise Hay to uplift and inspire their audiences.

Amazing Grace has a special significance for Cecilia, featuring in the circumstances that set her on her path to become a successful inspirational singer, but more than this, the words in a way are a reflection of her experience in finding this success.

Cecilia grew up amidst the remote natural beauty of the very north of Norway - the land of the midnight sun - above the Arctic Circle. There was no musical influence in her upbringing - in fact her parents owned a sports shop. She did, however, develop a love of nature which shines through her music today. She says: "I was very much out in nature, walking and skiing. I had a healthy childhood. Very quiet. No music schools, no concert halls."

Cecilia remembers a love of music from a young age but it wasn't until as an 11 year old she was captivated by an Opera on television one day that singing really touched her heart and a dream of becoming a classical singer began. In her remote corner of the world, however, singing lessons were not a possibility. Nevertheless, the aspiring diva started piano lessons with a teacher who did help her a little with her voice and so one small step was taken towards her goal.

After completing her schooling at the age of 19, Cecilia was free to go out into the world to train in preparation for fulfilling her dream. She attended the conservatory of music in Oslo for 3 years before going on to further training in Denmark. However, moving closer to her external focus of becoming a classical singer was not resulting in the fulfilment that Cecilia had anticipated. She started becoming interested in spiritual things and questioned aspects of her life including

the training she was undergoing.

Cecilia remembers: "That was a very hard time, my mother had cancer and was very sick. When you go through a period like that you really do think about life. I started to change my focus in life, how I wanted to live and started to think: 'Is this really what I want to do? You can hear all the best singers in the world on CD now, they have done it perfectly, why should I do it? Can I do something new that they haven't done? Can I contribute anything different?'"

In spite of her questionings after completing her training in Denmark, Cecilia went to Germany to take up a highly sought after place at the famous conservatory of music in Munich a further sign of success. But that inner happiness remained elusive. She reflects: "It was very hard to get into this school and I should have been very happy to be able to go there, but I wasn't."

It was in this state of disillusionment that Cecilia discov-

In an exclusive interview the woman with one of the most beautiful voices in the world talks about her life...



ered that Stuart Wilde, whose books she had avidly read and enjoyed, was going to be in Denmark to conduct a 5 day seminar called *Warrior Wisdom* at a castle. It was to be all about finding your strength and clearing out

the things you no longer want in your life. On impulse Cecilia decided to attend the seminar which unbeknownst to her would mark a turning point, setting her on a new pathway, one which would enable her to blend both her inspired singing voice and her spiritual interests.

Having discovered the singer in their midst, one day whilst in a restaurant with a group of a hundred people, Stuart approached Cecilia to sing. A very powerful man, she remembers: "He said: 'Get up on the table I want to hear you sing.' He clapped his hands and announced: 'I want to hear this girl sing, so can you all please be quiet.' I was kind of horrified. The only song I could think of was *Amazing Grace*. So I stood up on the table and I sang this song." Moved by her performance,

Stuart said he would like to have the chance to help Cecilia and thus began an inspired musical partnership!

Stuart initiated the idea of making a CD with a difference, one which included spiritual lyrics and singing. At last was the opportunity to break into the new ground that Cecilia had been searching for. Whilst inspirational music did exist, it tended generally to be instrumental pieces, rarely involving singing, and certainly not in the style of Cecilia's highly versatile and polished voice! Stuart would provide the inspirational lyrics and Cecilia the voice.

At last the puzzle of Cecilia's life was beginning to fit together and make sense. She reflects philosophically: "Many people don't have the strength to do something about their life when they are unhappy. I think crises always happen when we need to do something about our life. It can be a crisis, an accident, a divorce, a breaking up or whatever, just to get us to think about a new way of living. That was what really happened to me. I was really down as far as I could go, but then everything started to change after I met Stuart."

Cecilia says that she doesn't believe in coincidences and now realises that there is meaning in everything that happens, good and bad: "From all the people we meet to all that happens, all the bad things turn out to be good in the end. With this kind of belief it's easier to go through life."

Cecilia embarked on her own inner cleaning process, particularly when her mother finally died a couple of months later. She also ended a relationship and quit the school in Munich.

An unfulfilled dream that Cecilia had had was to train with an 85 year old singing teacher she had heard of in New York who was renowned for finding a singer's natural voice rather than trying to shape their voice. To date, she had always put off the opportunity. She says: "I always thought, I'll do it later. When my mother died, I thought: 'No, if you have something you want to do in life, you have to do it now.'"

Cecilia had started to find the classical training restricting with her voice being moulded according to a strict set of criteria. She remembers: "The more I had singing lessons, the more afraid I was to open my mouth because every time I did somebody said it was wrong or said: 'No, no, no!' I wanted to find my natural voice without all these people telling me how to sound."

So Cecilia went at last to New York and synchronistically arrived whilst Stuart Wilde was also in America. He invited her to join him to sing at some of his seminars, curious to see if and how the music would affect the audience. The impact of Cecilia's lone voice singing had a profound effect.

Cecilia says: "Music goes beyond your intellect right to your heart and I think that is why it affected people. You can

really reach people differently particularly when you, the singer, really believe in what you are singing."

Cecilia at last had not only found an avenue for her singing that was different, she was also indeed contributing something profoundly important to humanity.

And Cecilia's

lifestyle matches the essential messages of her music. She enjoys the excitement of travel, meeting new people and getting new inspiration that her work involves. However, time to herself is vital - reading, doing aerobics, meditation and yoga. She says: "I really live a quiet, harmonious life. I enjoy being with people, but I have to have the space to be on my own. When you give out energy, you have to fill the bottle again. I've always tried to grow as a person and if I grow as a person, I grow as a singer. So in a way I feel that I practice all the time as I experience life."

"If I have nothing happening I can take a break from singing and just be. Stuart has a very good saying - we have to remember we are not human doings we are human beings. I think that's great. I try a lot to just be and find peace and quiet. I don't look for happiness outside myself. I try to first find it inside and then it will happen on the outside."

Cecilia can see clearly now that when she was studying, she worked very hard, but she was struggling, and she didn't seem to be getting anywhere. In contrast, now she relaxes and she finds more and more things start to happen - her outer world reflecting her inner world

Herein, according to Cecilia, lies the key to success. She says: "It really depends on who you are and what kind of values you have and I know for me I can see it doesn't mat-

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ter if you have outside success if you don't have inner peace and happiness.

"People tend to think if only they were to get this and that, become famous, have money or a husband, or whatever, then they will become happy. But when they get this they are still, maybe, not really satisfied within because they haven't worked enough on the inside. Once you reach one goal, you want another and it is a never ending story. But if you have that inner happiness, then it is fine if something happens, and it is also fine if something is not going to happen. I really believe that things happen when the time is right and not before, so I try to relax."

And Cecilia is going from strength to strength with her music available around the world and it is now even reaching Japan and China too. Recently, Cecilia has been in England recording her second album *Voice of the Violet 19*

due to be released in October this year. This album is being produced by David Lord who has worked with such acclaimed artists as Peter Gabriel, Kate Bush and Jean Michel Jarre. Again breaking new ground, the lyrics of *Voice of the Violet 19* are linked to a book, more precisely Stuart Wilde's new book *Violet 19* which is to be published next year. Once *Voice of the Violet 19* has been released, Cecilia will be appearing with Louise Hay, in November, at her Women's Empowerment Day in San Diego.

This inspirational singer, once lost now found, hopes that her music will reach more and more people, she says, "to uplift and inspire, and create something beautiful, that's my goal through singing."

Highly recommended, *Voice of the Feminine Spirit* and *Voice of the Violet 19* (Tolemac International Ltd.) are available at music stores and in new age shops.