

Sara Hickman – Biography

Sara Hickman grew up in Houston, Texas, as the daughter of artistic parents—a mother who was a fiber artist, a father who was a painting professor. Her household was full of interactive creativity: writing, painting, jars of clay. There was never a dull moment. At 7, she started to play the guitar, which became her best friend. She wrote her first song at 8, performed it on stage, and won an award from the Daughters of the American Revolution. She was hooked as a singer/songwriter from that point on.

From 1978-1981, Sara attended the High School for Performing & Visual Arts as a vocal major, and during that time she began to perform at bank openings, in psychiatric units for other teenagers, at weddings, and even at a pizza parlour on Friday nights. She was a member of many bands, from folk to rock, and also discovered she had a love for performing for children.

From 1981 to 1986, Sara attended the University of North Texas in Denton, receiving a B.A. in Fine Arts. She planned to become an art director, but had garnered a following of fans of her music from her club performances (which paid for her art supplies). Upon graduation, she moved to Dallas and pursued her dream of becoming a recording artist and musical entertainer.

It was there that Sara created her first album, *Equal Scary People*, on her own. It won awards from the Dallas Observer and landed her a deal with Elektra Records. She released her next album in 1990: *Shortstop*, which she produced with David Kershenbaum (Tracey Chapman, Joe Jackson). After touring, performing on VH1 (as a countdown host and in music videos), and appearances on the Tonight Show, Sara recorded *Necessary Angels*. At this point, Elektra decided to shelve the project and drop the album. Sara's fans rallied together to help her raise almost \$50,000 to buy the album back. It was a moving testimony to the loyal support she had earned from her performances.

During this time in Sara's life, she started to become very involved in community issues. She helped raise more than \$43,000 as chair of the Dallas Dance for Life; visited Romania to deliver clothing and supplies to orphans; produced, directed, and shot her first video, *Joy*, which won first place in the USA Film Festival; and started a side project, the Domestic Science Club, a three-part girl group best described as "the Andrews Sisters meet the Roches." They released two CDs, *Domestic Science Club* and *Three Women*. She was actively involved in music and art therapy with ARTS (Artistic and Recreational Therapies), visiting children, AIDS patients, stroke victims, and other hospital patients, using her talents to help the healing process.

In 1994, Sara moved to Austin, Texas. During 1995, she toured the United States with Nanci Griffith and Dan Fogelberg.

In 1996, she self-produced Misfits, a collection of “odds and ends” from her musical career. During this time, Ms. Hickman went through a divorce and had her first baby, a little girl named Lily. In 1998, Two Kinds of Laughter came to light, produced by Adrian Belew, esteemed guitarist with King Crimson, David Bowie, and Frank Zappa.

The year 2000 saw the release of her self-produced Spiritual Appliances. The album explores 13 different emotions and how we deal with them. During the creation of this CD, Sara married a wonderful man named Lance and toured into her eighth month of pregnancy with her second child, Iolana.

Her portfolio has continued to grow with This Christmas Wish in 2001; the live “official bootleg,” Ready to Pop (2002); and her collection of romance songs called Faithful Heart (2003). In 2003, Sara released a 6-hour DVD retrospective of her career to date, I Am Going On a Journey.

In 1997, Sara was profoundly intrigued by a parenting class, and she became a certified instructor. While teaching “Redirecting Children’s Behavior,” Sara was inspired by the parents who felt they were unsure how to be spontaneous, creative, or musical with their children. This began her series of releases for children (and their parents), beginning in 2000 with Newborn, a CD of songs for parents to sing to their children. She followed with Toddler, a collection of 31 one-minute songs and stories, and Big Kid, for the pre-teen crowd. The reaction has been astounding, and Sara hopes to create music videos for children, as well. These children’s albums have won many awards, including: Creative Child’s Top Creative Toy Award 2005 (Toddler – Preferred Choice, Newborn – Seal of Excellence), NAPPA Gold 2004 (Big Kid and Toddler), Parents Choice Recommended 2004 (Big Kid), Dr. Toy Best Vacation Product 2004 (Big Kid), Children’s Music Web Awards Winner Classic Recording 2003 (Newborn and Toddler), Parents Choice Gold 2001 (Toddler), NAPPA Gold 2001 (Newborn), Dr. Toy’s Top Ten Audio Tapes 2001 (Toddler) and Dr. Toy’s 100 Best Toys 2001 (Toddler)

Newborn raised more than \$50,000 for the Hill Country Youth Ranch in Ingram, Texas, a safe haven for severely abused and neglected children, and the Mautner Project, which helps lesbians with cancer. The Hill Country Youth Ranch has opened the Sara Hickman Childrens’ Fund, which accepts matching grants and buys musical instruments, dance shoes, and art supplies for the children of the ranch.

Returning to the world of adult music after five years of creating award-winning music for children, Sara released her Motherlode, a two-disc CD set of 20 songs, in June, 2006. Disc One contains songs of universal woe and quiet lament in

conjunction with womankind: from depression, addiction, domestic violence, murder, insomnia, Sara's family ties to President John and Abigail Adams, a mother's hands, and finding faith in one's own song. Disc Two is a woman's heart, bright and sparkling, with undercurrents of frustration and wanting: returning to the joys of love, sex, hope, saints, children, little birds and the garden. This project includes guest artists such as Shawn Colvin, Kelly Willis, Ruthie Foster, Adrian Belew, Jimmy La Fave, and more.

Sara, her husband, Lance Schriener (photographer/designer), photographer Todd Wolfson, and designer Neil Ferguson are the founders of Stingray, a design group that creates CD package designs. They have created packages and posters for Ian Moore, Tish Hinojosa, Christine Albert & Chris Gage, The First United Methodist Chapel Chorale, The Will Taylor String Quartet, and, of course, Sara herself.

Not only is Sara musically and artistically gifted, she has a heart of gold. She has been awarded the prestigious Humana Women Helping Women award for her generous time and contributions to such organizations as Safe Place, Habitat for Humanity, House the Homeless, the SPCA, the Race for the Cure, and many other animal and human rights organizations. She was also made an honorary member of the National Association of Music Therapy for her music therapy work.

She has helped to raise funds and awareness of the need for breast milk for premature infants through the Mothers' Milk Bank, and has organized the talent for their annual Rockin' the Cradle benefit.

Other positions include the board of directors of NARAS (The National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences, i.e. the Grammys), an advisory board member for ARTS, and the Honorary Chair for Humana's WOMEN HELPING WOMEN Awards Ceremony and Convention. She was also Honorary Chair of the Umlauf Sculpture Garden, and was invited to be Honorary Chair for the Austin Race for the Cure.

With all that Sara is involved in, she spends the majority of her time with her children. She can be found at home having a picnic in the backyard with her girls or helping them to paint a wall mural in their room. She attends field trips with her children and occasionally teaches art and music.

Daisy Sour Cream, Southwest Airlines, Fannie Mae and many others are also part of Sara's portfolio—she sings national commercials, too.

And Sara has hobbies! She loves to bowl (her high score is a 197), paint murals, garden, occasionally write articles for books and magazines, and hang out with her husband doing absolutely nothing but holding hands.