



With a career spanning 45 years, nobody can touch Dolly Parton (and we all know they've tried!). She's a musician, an actress, a writer, a theme park owner, and an inspiration for drag queens worldwide. One might think that, at 63 years of age, she might be ready to hang up her wig for a simpler life; but the self-proclaimed "Backwoods Barbie" shows no sign of slowing down with the release of her new box set "*Dolly: Live from London.*"

Dolly Parton,

we will always love you!

Much to the delight of Dolly addicts worldwide, the CD/DVD was filmed live in 2008 in London's O2 Arena with 13 Hi-Def cameras, capturing every note, giggle and rhinestone. Between songs, Dolly shares stories and gets personal, and on the DVD extras, there are interviews with her manager, backup singers and, most importantly, her hairdresser.

Fame and glitter aside, Dolly comes from simple and meager roots. She is the fourth of 12 children and if you've listened to a Dolly song, you know she grew up on a farm in rural Tennessee.

By the age of 10, she was already performing on local television and radio shows in nearby Knoxville. And the day after she graduated high school, Dolly went straight to Nashville to pursue her dreams. "I always wanted to be a star, it just seemed natural to me," Dolly says.

The day I spoke to Dolly (I can't bring myself to say "Miss Parton"), she was in her apartment next to her office in Nashville, "all piled up in her little bed pretending it was Christmas" with a fire going.

Outlooks: I just watched your DVD, *Dolly: Live From London* and it was great! The fans just love you there. Have you always had a big international following?

DP: Oh yes, I've been around for a long time, much longer than you (she giggles), I can tell. I've been doing this for 45 years and I have a huge following in Europe; but I hardly ever get to go. You need to plan a tour like that a year in advance, so we don't do it that often; but we sold out really fast at the O2 Arena in London which seats 23,000 people. They are so wonderful and warm. They're just so glad you're there, because they know you might not come back for a while.

Outlooks: We hear how David Hasselhoff is big in Germany. Is there anywhere in the world that you were surprised by the number of fans you have?

DP: Many years ago I was shocked to know I have a huge following in South Africa. One of my first songs, "Just Because I'm a Woman," was in the top 10 for over a year and then, when we went over many years ago, we had huge crowds. It was the same in Japan. I was shocked. When I was touring Japan, I would be telling stories and making jokes on stage and nobody got them or laughed; but when I started playing, they would know all the words to my songs. I also think the Japanese men like little short women with big boobs.

Outlooks: Do you tour internationally often?

DP: I don't go overseas much at all. It's hard for me to plan that far in advance because I do so much touring in Canada and the States. I enjoy it; but it's tricky too. You have to stay away for such a long time and keep your crew away from their families for so long. You really have to brace yourself for a long trip and financially it doesn't always make sense. I'll actually be on tour again in the fall and winter next year and will hopefully have some Canadian dates.

Outlooks: It should come as no surprise that you have a big following among the gay community in Canada, and everywhere for that matter. Why do you think that is?

DP: Well, I have many gay fans all over the world, and I love them dearly. Especially in London, I saw I had a huge gay following. I think it's because I'm just myself and I love everyone. I've had to fight for my own rights and I know what it's like to be condemned. I'm accepting though, and I say everyone should just be who they are. I'm a bit outrageous, as they are, and I love 'em for it.

Outlooks: I've read that you get a rough time from conservative groups for your acceptance of gays and lesbians. What do you say to that?

DP: I say you can't judge me! It's all these people who say they are so religious; but if you are a Christian, you hear, "Judge not lest ye be

judged.” I say, who are you to judge me for not judging others? You should be able to accept people for who they are. I wrote a song called “Be That” talking about just that. Whoever you are, “Be That.” You try to be something that you’re not and you’re a big phony anyways.

Outlooks: How would you describe your personal style?

DP: What style? It’s totally me! I don’t follow trends, and I’m glad I’ve never tried to. I wear wigs because it’s convenient and I’ve never had a bad hair day because I just grab it off a shelf. I’m no natural beauty, I’m short, I have big boobs and I have to wear what I feel comfy in. I like to look pretty if I can, but I need to wear what fits my personality.

Outlooks: Has anyone ever tried to mess with it?

DP: Oh sure! You can imagine what I say to that. I just say mind your own business.

Outlooks: What’s the key to looking so young?

DP: I don’t know that I look young; but I feel young. You have to be comfy with who you are and don’t take things too seriously. I don’t have kids driving me crazy, so that probably helps. Otherwise, I wear a lot of makeup and know a lot of good doctors.

Outlooks: You’ve been in the music industry for a long time. How has it changed for you since you started out?

DP: I just roll with the punches and, to be honest, I don’t notice the changes. I got to

Nashville in 1964 and have been coming here since I was a child. We came here whenever we could save money for gas and sleep in our car to get people to listen to me. It was harder for me as a woman; but I have always thought like a man and look like a woman. I have a lot to offer, and I can make a lot of money, so I always watch the business side of things.

Outlooks: This interview will be in our December/January issue. What are some of your holiday traditions?

DP: I’m from a big country family with 12 kids and we’re very close. They have big families; so we try to get together at our big family home in East Tennessee. We have a reunion, and then on Christmas Day, I spend time with my husband’s family. We open our gifts and sing, and eat turkey, dressing and ham.

Outlooks: What’s next for you, Dolly?

DP: I’m taking a couple of months off, writing my life story as a musical for Broadway and a movie. I’m working on that now and that’s how I’ll spend the next seven to eight months—getting organized.

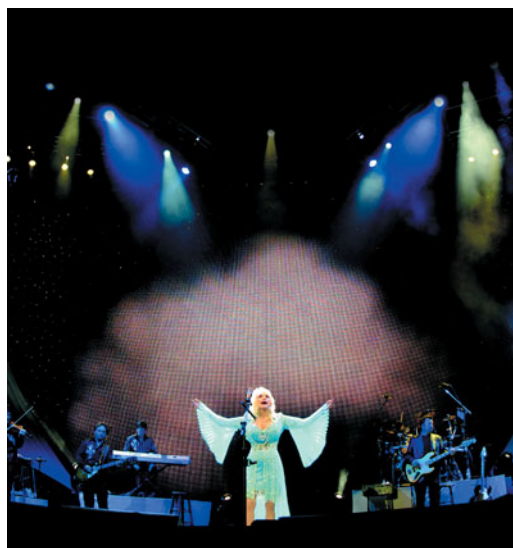
Outlooks: Who would play you?

DP: On Broadway, I like Kristin Chenoweth. She’s short, blonde, and she’d make me look good and sound good. You need that kind of voice for Broadway. For a film, though, I would sing the tracks and get someone like Scarlett Johansson or Reece Witherspoon, if I get her a big boob job. **O**



Photos: courtesy Nicola Krishna

Dolly Parton’s incredible career has included the following:



- All-inclusive sales of singles, albums and downloads of over 100 million records worldwide.
- 25 number one songs on the Billboard Country charts, a record for a female artist.
- 41 career top 10 country albums and 110 career-charted singles over the past 40 years.
- Seven Grammy Awards, 10 Country Music Association Awards, five Academy of Country Music Awards, and three American Music Awards.
- A Country Music Association’s Entertainer of the Year Award (of which she is one of five women to receive).
- The Johnny Mercer Award from the Songwriter’s Hall of Fame.
- A star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.
- A Living Legend Award from the US Library of Congress and, in 2005, a National Medal of Arts, the highest honour given by the US government for excellence in the arts.