

Cilla Black – Child Of The 60s

By **Alexander Baron** - Aug 9, 2015



Cilla Black (Credits: Rex Features)

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Cilla Black died August 1; the announcement of her death the following day was covered by all the UK media, and quite a few outside the UK. Her photograph graced the front page of major newspapers on August 3, Monday. It is fair to say that apart from the usual suspects, no one had a bad word to say about her.

For many, probably most people, Cilla Black was primarily a TV presenter of entertainment programmes that almost but not quite pandered to the lowest common denominator, but she began her career as a singer, and although not a songwriter she was a child of the 60s music scene in every sense of the word.

Cilla Black was a war baby; she was born Priscilla Maria Veronica White at Liverpool on May 27, 1943, the same year as her fellow Liverpudlian George Harrison. The 1950s saw

the birth and ascent of rock 'n' roll which crossed the Atlantic like a whirlwind, not only generating record sales for American artists but stimulating local talent, and what talent it was. Although for obvious reasons London has always been the epicentre of music for the entire British Isles, Liverpool saw an enormous explosion of talent, most notably the Beatles, but the entire Mersey Beat sound including Gerry And The Pacemakers, Kingsize Taylor, and Billy J. Kramer.



Cilla Black hung out at the now world famous *Cavern Club*, including working there as a cloakroom attendant. A stunningly attractive blue-eyed redhead, she could naturally be selective with her suitors, but it was John Lennon who gave her her big break by introducing her to Beatles manager Brian Epstein. As Lennon was always noted for his cynicism, an endorsement from him certainly counted for something.

It was Lennon and McCartney who supplied her first single release, *Love Of The Loved*. This didn't quite flop but was clearly disappointing. Her second release was a different story. *Anyone Who Had A Heart* was written for Dionne Warwick by Burt Bacharach and Hal David. An unusual number in 5/4 time, it was not an obvious choice, but at this time it was not unusual for songs to be covered so quickly in that fashion. Black did not have a

great voice like Shirley Bassey, but it was arguably even more powerful than the Tiger Bay Diva's, and the cover was clearly superior to the original.

After that, there was no looking back. Lennon and McCartney also wrote her signature song, *Step Inside Love*, but probably the most endearing song she ever recorded was *Liverpool Lullaby*. Although she continued as a singer, her recording career petered out in 1978, but by that time she was moving into related fields. In view of her loud, infectious personality it was inevitable she would front some sort of TV programme, albeit trash TV.

Like many media personalities, she did her fair share of charity work, and was a patron of the Scannappeal.



Cilla Black, 27 May 1943 – 1 August 2015

Cilla Black was married to the same man for thirty years, until his death in 1999. She gave him three sons, and was a Roman Catholic. Although she once admitted to having smoked

cannabis in the 1960s, her name has never been linked to any sort of scandal. That and the fact that she was a woman means she is unlikely to suffer the calumny heaped on other dead celebrities of late, but don't count on it in the current climate. Messages of condolence are being left on her [Facebook page](#), and her [official website](#) is still being maintained.

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