

PERSONALITY PROFILE

Beck has the best of both worlds

By Mac Randall

You've got to hand it to Beck—he's one of the few young musicians to have emerged in the last decade who's both adored by the media and capable of selling lots of records. This scrawny strawheaded dude with the deep, froggy drawl and funny way of pronouncing his r's has taken a zany collagist approach to making pop music and turned it into an astonishing success. His secret: never forgetting the value of a good hook. For proof of that, look no further than the instantly memorable slacker chorus of his breakout 1993 hit "Loser," the "two turntables and a microphone" mantra that punctuates 1996's "Where It's At," or the punchy payoff line of 1999's "Sexx Laws."

Raised in what cliché-mongers would call "a Bohemian household," Beck Hansen grew up listening to American roots music—blues, folk and country—but absorbed it through the filter of Top 40 radio and his multicultural L.A. neighborhood. He has often said in interviews that as a teenager he could hear an implied hip-hop beat in the songs of old Delta bluesmen like Son House; he'd go on to make that beat explicit in his own work. As he once explained to the British music magazine *Mojo*, "I'm interested in a lot of the disposable music of our time, but I want to try and fuse [it] with things that are a little more substantial and see what kind of friction happens."

Beck Hansen

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July 8, 1970

Los Angeles, CA

Albums *Mellow Gold* (1994), *Odelay* (1996), *Mutations* (1998), and *Midnite Vultures* (1999); touring art exhibition featuring his own work and that of his grandfather Al Hansen, a founder of the avant-garde group Fluxus.

Three—two in 1996 (Best Alternative Rock Performance for *Odelay*, and Best Male Rock Vocal for "Where It's At") and one in 1999 (Best Alternative Rock Performance, *Mutations*)

Winona Ryder

Mississippi John Hurt

Beck.com

Painting

Nicotine and gravy

Beck's father, David Campbell, has been a violist and musical arranger for over 30 years, working with Carole King, Billy Joel, Linda Ronstadt, Bon Jovi, and Alanis Morissette. Although Beck didn't grow up with Campbell, the two obviously share a musical as well as a familial connection—Campbell contributed viola and arrangements to Beck's last two albums.

Beck's mother, Bibbe Hansen (bibbe.com), was a frequenter of Andy Warhol's legendary Factory in the '60s, and starred in one of Warhol's films at age 13. She also ran the Troy Café in Los Angeles, where Beck played many a gig in the early '90s.



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Beck links

Beck World
beck4beck.tripod.com

Official Beck site
beck.com

Enchanting Wizard of Rhythm
members.theglobe.com/fishbulb_2/default.html

Planet Beck
geocities.com/SunsetStrip/Club/5444/beck.html

Set lists
geocities.com/SunsetStrip/Towers/9782/beck.html

Cyanide Beck Mint
chez.com/cyanidebeckmint