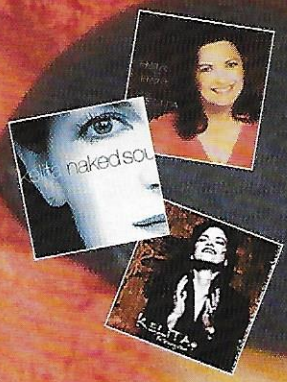
From Pain to Praise



Five-time Juno Award nominee, Kelita, is honest about her faith

by Helena Smrcek

Photo: Kelita

Canadian Christian performer and songwriter, Kelita, who tours all over the world with her full-time evangelical music ministry, has been recording for over 15 years. A five-time Juno Award nominee and recipient of many accolades and awards, she has shared the stage with Glen Campbell, Reba McEntire and Jim Carrey. Shania Twain sang backup vocals on one of her early releases. She toured the Arctic Circle with fellow Christian and performer Susan Aglukark who remarked: "The honesty in Kelita's songs and performances will draw you to a better place within yourself."

Kelita confronts life's hard-hitting issues, bringing hope and encouragement to those with their own hurts and brokenness. Her candid honesty and openness about her own life and spiritual journey encourage, challenge, convict and inspire everyone who hears her.

"I'm not just performing ... I'm healing, and through my music I am encouraging my listeners to let the healing begin in their own lives"

"Since I have been through so much, I can relate to what people are going through," says Kelita.

As she travels, Kelita opens her heart and soul to thousands, illustrating the miraculous power of God to change people. "It is my hope that He can do the same for others. My goal is to inspire, encourage and give hope to people. I want to challenge them to be honest with themselves, to make room for God's power and the love of Jesus Christ that brings emotional and spiritual healing.

"Sometimes I write songs about what is going on in my life before I even admit it to myself. From a very young age, my song writing has been a comfort to me, a way of expressing myself. My music is very simple. I write the way I speak, plain and simple."

Her CD *Naked Soul* was a great success. Her newest project, *Because of Love*, is about rejection, forgiveness and reconciliation and the journey towards God. It comes out of her personal experience.

Abused as a child, her alcoholic father committed suicide in her teens. Following the death of her mother from breast cancer, Kelita became a Christian. After her brother overdosed on heroin and died, however, Kelita walked away from God and sought for love in all the wrong places.

She married young, and her husband became her manager. Success came, but life seemed empty. Involved in a car accident, she miraculously walked away from the wreck and took a second look at her life. "I knew that God had saved my life in that ditch," says Kelita.

On her journey back to God, she knew many things in her life had to change. Her marriage ended. A major contract with Nashville fell through. "I was left with nothing. Now, God could start healing me. I was ready to fully pursue God."

Along the way, she met Gord Lemon, a bass player, music producer and Christian. They married but soon the relationship turned into another painful experience. "When I wasn't certain whether our marriage would make it or not, I grew closer to God. I grew in my faith, believing that God would heal our marriage. I prayed that God would change Gord and that He would change me."

Despite periods of uncertainty, God changed Gord's heart. "He wanted us to be a family. A song I wrote called *Change My Man* expresses this: 'If Lord You can hear me, crying when calling out to You, while I am down here, can You forgive me, and Lord can You change me, too.' " Because of His love, God gave her love for Gord and gave them a future.

"With God's power we have seen miracles in our marriage and I sing about that: 'Miracles—nothing is impossible, when you've lost it all, Don't give up—keep the faith, God will shower you with grace, if you just believe in miracles.'

"We have been married 10 years. My marriage is unbelievable. Many people would have ended their marriages going through what we went through. Never give up on God! He knows the outcome. He knows everything. You can't change him, but God can. Don't give up praying. Draw close to Him. Even when you are in the loneliest, darkest times, remember that He will never leave you nor forsake you," assures Kelita.

Kelita lives in Mississauga, Ont., with husband, Gord, and son, Keldon. She can be reached at Box 2205, Caledonia, Ont. N3W 2G6. Visit her Web site at www.kelita.com for information about tour dates and to order her CDs and tapes.

Quick Facts

Kelita

- was recognized by The Speaker of the House of Commons for her distinctive contributions to the Canadian music scene
- appeared in Italy to over 6,000 youth as part of World Youth Day 2000
- multi-talented as a TV host, actress and comedienne (four established comedy characters—Dixie Lee, Cecil, Jude Johnson and Sophelia Flanagan)
- sang *Neighbours of the World*, the official song for Calgary during the 1988 Winter Olympics
- wrote and recorded the theme song *Power to Change* for Campus Crusade's media campaign of the same name
- 2000 Juno Award nominee for best gospel album for *Naked Soul*, acclaimed as her most moving and personal work
- one of her latest projects is *Prisoners of Violence*, a video that addresses the issues of domestic violence
- works with the World Vision Girl Child Program and Campus Crusade for Christ Canada