

# ‘I absolutely love singing’

Published on **Tuesday 12 April 2011 08:30**

**To have a career in music that spans over 50 years is no mean feat, but that is exactly what Elkie Brooks has managed to achieve.**

With hits such as ‘Pearl’s A Singer’, ‘Lilac Wine’ and ‘No More The Fool’, Elkie is one of the most successful and popular singers that the UK has ever produced, and people can enjoy her hits and more when Elkie comes to The Lighthouse theatre in Kettering on Friday, April 15.

Elkie is well-known now for her powerful, husky voice, but success didn’t happen overnight for her.

She said: “I was 15 when I started out and at the time, as a lot of young girls do, you think you are going to be a big star overnight but it took me a lot longer than that to achieve success, I didn’t have my first chart hit until 1977.”

Elkie’s first few years were spent on the British cabaret scene, a period of her life she didn’t particularly enjoy.

She said: “I hated it, I remember thinking ‘You can do better than this.’”

But in 1970, her career took on a whole new direction after meeting guitarist Pete Gage (whom she would marry) and together they formed rock fusion band, Dada.

Then with the addition of future star, Robert Palmer, the band become Vinegar Joe.

Elkie said: “It was then that I found my direction, we were a very hard-working, gigging band but we didn’t do too well on record.

“We never really got that push and at the end of the day, no matter how brilliant you are, unless you have that big publicity machine, it’s not going to work.”

In 1975, Elkie released her first solo album on A&M records, Rich Man’s Woman and she was given a hard time due to the album’s cover, which was considered outrageous for the time.

Elkie said: “I was accused of being many things at that time but by today’s standards, with the likes of Lady Gaga, it was nothing, it was very tame.

“There’s obviously an element of getting noticed in it all, but for me it’s always been about the singing.”

It was with her next album that the combination of Elkie’s singing abilities and fantastic songwriting by legendary duo Leiber & Stoller, would really set the charts alight.

The Two Days Away album produced the hits ‘Pearl’s a Singer’ and ‘Sunshine After the Rain’.

Elkie followed this up with further hit albums Shooting Star (1978) and Live and Learn (1979).

In 1981, the release of the Pearls album propelled Elkie into the realms of super stardom, at the time becoming the largest-selling album by a British artist.

That isn't the only record Elkie holds.

The Guinness Book of Records has recognised Elkie as the most charted female album-seller of the last 25 years.

Throughout her career, Elkie has backed-up her success on record with sell-out tours, and this latest tour is to be no exception.

She said: "I'm going to be doing the hits, if I didn't do them I think I would get lynched!

"So there will be a lot of the hits in the first half and some nice ballads and songs from the new album.

"I've always held the opinion that if you can sing, you should be able to sing anything, so I like to mix it up and play different kinds of music.

"I grew up listening to people like Billie Holiday, Esther Phillips and Ella Fitzgerald, they were wonderful, they were my mainstay.

"I don't do every hit single because I like to mix it up for me and for the audience, it keeps it interesting and fresh.

"I don't constantly tour any more either, I have done the hard, gruelling tours and now I prefer to just do a number of shows across a month, I like it like this and my band do too.

"I think it helps me feel fresh for each performance this way.

"I always like to challenge myself and I learnt to play the piano, so now I sit down and play for a few hours a couple of days before a show, just to warm up.

"I like to play and sing songs I'm not necessarily going to do on the show, it just helps me prepare.

"I still absolutely love singing and I'm certainly going to continue as long as my health is fine and people still enjoy my songs and shows."

Elkie Brooks comes to The Lighthouse theatre on Friday, April 15, at 7.30pm. Tickets cost £20, £19 for concessions, and to book, call the box office on 01536 414141.