

SAM HARRIS

BETH ORTON REVISITED

Beth Orton's timeless classic **Central Reservation** has been re-released by **3Loop Music** with a bonus disc of demos, B sides and other rarities, including previously unseen photographs from the sessions we did together.



The album cover for Central Reservation – Photo © Sam Harris

I can't believe it's 15 years since I worked with Beth taking photos for the album. Released in 1999, Central Reservation received a Mercury Music Prize nomination and helped Beth earn a BRIT Award in 2000 for Best British Female. Central Reservation spent 56 weeks in the album charts, selling over 500,000 copies.

A few months back I received an email from Beth, asking if I had any photos that hadn't seen the light of day from the sessions we did together... Digging through the boxes of photographs that represent my print archive brought back many memories from that time. I love going over old photographs, not only for the nostalgia but also for the fresh discoveries. Time changes the way we view our photographs. Gone are the preconceived ideas of what a session should be and also the attachment to certain photos from within the session. It's almost as if viewing the work as an outsider for the first time.

So, with fresh eyes I poured over contact sheets and work prints I hadn't seen for many years. I remember that time so vividly. I joined Beth for a short West coast USA acoustic tour. We had a good connection and I was photographing her at every opportunity along the way; Car parks, hotel rooms, airports, thrift stores, cafés, sound checks, back stage... Most of our sessions were very short, just grabbing a quick moment on the fly, which is how we wanted it... more of a natural documentary approach.

Working with artists that inspire me was always my aim and working with Beth was great. The energy in the recording studio where I was fortunate to hang a few times and at the gigs was palpable. Sometimes you just know when something special is being created. It was an exciting time.



Beth Orton - Photo © Sam Harris



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