

Tracy Newman – Biography

Tracy Newman grew up in Los Angeles. She started playing guitar as a young teen, usually sitting on the diving board of her family's pool, strumming for hours each day.

Back then she was mostly influenced by the Kingston Trio, because she could actually play some of their songs, especially "Tom Dooley" which had, and still has, only two chords.

After high school, Tracy wanted to be a folksinger, but her parents insisted she go to college. She went to the U of A in Tucson and quickly dug up the "folk" community. Soon she stopped attending college and was playing on street corners for money. Understandably, this freaked out her mother who flew to Tucson and dragged her back to LA for "help." The therapist, an elderly man in a suit and tie, kept nodding off during Tracy's sessions. I guess he couldn't relate to an upper middle class teenage girl who just wanted to be a folksinger. It's taken Tracy a while to get back to her dream.

In the early 70s, she joined an improvisation class taught by Gary Austin, which soon became The Groundlings. Tracy is a founding member, and besides being in the show, she began teaching and directing there. Her sister, Laraine Newman was the first Groundling to be discovered there by Lorne Michaels for Saturday Night Live. Others include Phil Hartmann, Jon Lovitz, Julia Sweeney, Will Ferrell, Will Forte, Kristen Wigg, and Chris Kattan. And other notable Groundling alumni – Paul "Pee Wee Herman" Reubens, Kathy Griffin and Lisa Kudrow. It was at the Groundlings that Tracy met her future TV writing partner, Jonathan stark. They started on "Cheers," and worked on many shows, including Bob (Bob Newhart), The Nanny, Ellen, The Drew Carey Show and Hiller and Diller (Richard Lewis and Kevin Nealon.)

In 1997, they won the Emmy and the prestigious Peabody Award for writing the ground-breaking "coming out" episode of "Ellen." In 2001, they created the ABC comedy, "According to Jim," which recently completed it's eighth and final season of production. Tracy has been writing songs all along and is once again performing full-time. Her debut CD is "A Place in the Sun." Her current band is made up of Gene Lippmann, Rebecca Leigh, John Cartwright, John O'Kennedy and Doug Knoll. The music is essentially acoustic folk. They do a funny, moving and memorable show.

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