

## Beck Bio 2024

As the title of his recent album *Hyperspace* would imply, eight-time Grammy-winner Beck has traveled light years from his emergence as a reluctant generational spokesperson when "Loser" exploded from a rejected 1992 demo into a ubiquitous 1994 smash. In the decades since, Beck's singular career has seen him utilize all manners and eras of music, blurring boundaries and blazing a path into the future while simultaneously foraging through the past.

Surfacing just as the mainstream and alternative rock intersected, no small thanks to his 1994 debut *Mellow Gold*, Beck quickly confounded expectations with subsequent releases including the lo-fi folk of *One Foot in the Grave*. But the album that first cemented Beck's place in the pantheon was 1996's multi-platinum Best Alternative Grammy winner *Odelay*. Touching on all of Beck's obsessions, *Odelay* remains a key cultural touchstone from the indelible hooks of "Devil's Haircut" and "The New Pollution" to the irresistible call and response of the Grammy-winning anthem and live show staple "Where It's At."

From the world-tripping atmospheric of 1998's *Mutations* (Beck's second album to win the Best Alternative Grammy) and the fluorescent funk of 1999's *Midnite Vultures* through the somber reflections of 2002's *Sea Change*, 2005's platinum tour de force *Guero* and 2006's sprawling *The Information*, no Beck record has ever sounded like its predecessor. In the interim following 2008's acclaimed Danger Mouse-produced *Modern Guilt* and the Grammy-nominated standalone single "Timebomb," Beck eschewed the typical album/tour/repeat grind. Instead, he expanded into multi-media endeavors including a one-time-only live re-imagining of David Bowie's "Sound and Vision" utilizing 160+ musicians in a 360-degree audiovisual production, and the equally unprecedented Beck Hansen's *Song Reader*, originally released December 2012 by McSweeney's as 20 songs existing only as individual pieces of sheet music--complete with full-color original art for each song and a lavishly produced hardcover carrying case (and since recorded as an actual album by the likes of Jack White, Juanes, Norah Jones, David Johansen, Beck himself and many others).

Beck's creative tide continued unabated throughout 2013 with three standalone singles released digitally and on 12-inch vinyl ("Defriended," "I Won't Be Long," "Gimme"), custom-created performances for Doug Aitken's *Station to Station* series of transient happenings, life-affirming headline dates, and special *Song Reader* events in which Beck and eclectic line-ups brought the book to life for a few unforgettable evenings staged in San Francisco, London, and at Disney Hall in Los Angeles.

Beck opened 2014 with the 12th album of a peerless career: *Morning Phase*. Likened by some to a companion piece of sorts to his 2002 masterpiece *Sea Change*, *Morning Phase* featured many of the same musicians who played on that record--and who also accompanied Beck for the rapturously received world tour supporting the record: Justin Meldal-Johnsen, Joey Waronker, Smokey Hormel, Roger Joseph Manning Jr., and Jason Falkner. Featuring the hits "Blue Moon" and "Heart Is A Drum" along with instant classics like "Waking Light" and "Wave", *Morning Phase* harkened back to the stunning harmonies, classic Californian song craft and staggering emotional impact of that record, while surging forward with infectious optimism.

*Morning Phase* generated an instant and unanimous chorus of critical acclaim from the likes of THE NEW YORKER ("a triumph... After listening to *Morning Phase* 50 times, I can't find a single thing wrong with it... You don't get many albums like this in your lifetime... I can't imagine someone who couldn't find some succor or beauty here"), ROLLING STONE ("an instant folk-rock classic... feels as personal as it does universal"—4 1/2 STARS), THE NEW YORK TIMES ("The record's beauty approaches slowly, floats, surrounds and shuts off external awareness in the brain stem"), NPR ("If we needed any proof that albums still matter in this short-attention-span world, Beck's flawless 12th album, *Morning Phase*, is a triumphant testimony"), and more. *Morning Phase* closed out 2014 atop year-end best lists, and rolled into 2015 taking the Album of the Year top honor at the 57th Annual Grammy Awards, as well as the prize for Best Rock Album. *Morning Phase* also won in the Best Engineered Album (Non-Classical) category.

The music has flowed from Beck without pause since: from globe-spanning live shows continually hailed as the best of his storied career to the 2015 psych-dance summer jam "Dreams" that NPR

hailed as "urgently contemporary and irresistibly vintage," USA TODAY labeled "a strong contender for song of the summer," and ROLLING STONE raved "This funky little groove is giving us Midnite Vultures flashbacks in the best way possible." This creative watershed couldn't even be confined to Beck's output under his own name, as evidenced by sublime collaborations including the Chemical Brothers' "Wide Open" and Flume's "Tiny Cities." "Dreams" gave Beck his second #1 single at AAA radio (the first being Morning Phase's "Blue Moon") as he continued feverishly working up sketches at home to be fleshed out with producer Greg Kurstin (coincidentally a veteran of Beck's live band circa *Sea Change*). In summer 2016, a next single, "Wow," was unveiled in all its fluorescent mutant hip hop glory. And accompanying the retro-futuristic earworm was a virtual "Wow" world built with the help of a global collective of creators on Instagram.

Both songs showed up alongside infectious third single—and Beck's third #1 Alternative track in three decades—"Up All Night" on Beck's 13th studio album, *Colors*, hailed in advance of its October 2017 release by ROLLING STONE as a "euphoric blast of experimental pop," *Colors* let loose an intoxicating rainbow of auditory tricks and treats, rendering it a shoo-in for the summeriest smash of 2017's fall season. From the captivating piano-driven "Dear Life," which elicited Beatles and Beach Boys comparisons from THE NEW YORK TIMES, to the irresistible title track and its visual feast of a video directed by Edgar Wright, *Colors* was yet another commercial and critical milestone for Beck—one that debuted at #3 on the Billboard 200 and went on to win Best Alternative Music Album (Beck's third) and Best Engineered Album, Non-Classical (the second Beck album to do so) at the 61st Annual Grammy Awards in 2019.

The 2017-2019 touring regimen following *Colors*'s release kicked off with a headlining run met with yet more of the most enthusiastic notices of Beck's live career—and included some of Beck's biggest plays to date, including his first ever headline at New York's Madison Square Garden, as well as a summer 2019 co-headlining amphitheater tour with Cage The Elephant. Beck also accepted U2's invite to join The Joshua Tree Tour 2017 on a series of dates that ran September 3 at Ford Field in Detroit through September 22, 2017 at San Diego's Qualcomm Stadium. Across these wildly varying venues and crowds, rave reviews remained a constant: ROLLING STONE hailed "Beck's unparalleled stylistic versatility," the WASHINGTON POST witnessed a performance that "left everybody who witnessed it enthralled," and so on... Meanwhile, Beck's prolific recorded output would continue apace with "Tarantula" from Music Inspired by ROMA, "Super Cool" (featuring Robyn & The Lonely Island) from The LEGO Movie 2, and his unforgettable and unmistakable feature appearance on Cage The Elephant's "Night Running."

In April 2019, Beck would offer a first glimpse into *Hyperspace* with the stunning surprise single, "Saw Lightning." Featuring Beck's unmistakable raw acoustic slide guitar and harmonica playing, "Saw Lightning" was written and produced by Beck and Pharrell Williams (who would ultimately be credited as co-writer and co-producer on seven of *Hyperspace*'s 11 tracks). "Uneventful Days" would follow that October, reaching #1 on the Billboard US Adult Alternative chart and manifesting as a visual transmission from *Hyperspace* via director Dev Hynes. The pocket universe created for "Uneventful Days" would also feature album opener "Hyperlife," as well as starring turns from Evan Rachel Wood, Tessa Thompson and Alia Shawkat (observant longtime fans would no doubt spot the principals' references to classic entries in the Beck video canon). Following the emergence of two more stunners, the meditative "Dark Places" and epic album closer "Everlasting Nothing," *Hyperspace* was released November 22, 2019 to yet another torrent of critical accolades: "There is not a boring moment on the entire album" raved the ASSOCIATED PRESS, while PEOPLE hailed *Hyperspace* as Beck's "best in a decade," a sentiment shared by THE WALL STREET JOURNAL ("his strongest in over a decade." Even more effusive praise came from ROLLING STONE ("A dark, heavenly pop fantasy... a revelatory inner-space journey... like David Bowie's Major Tom checking in from distant orbit"), USA TODAY ("Beck has rarely been better than he is on *Hyperspace*, which shoots for the stars with bold production and storytelling that stays grounded with emotional resonance"), and a host of others...

Beck has spent much of the last few years dazzling live audiences, beginning with a handful of refreshingly freeform one-off shows— including one at The Ford in his L.A. hometown during which THE LOS ANGELES TIMES noted "he'd do something to make you think of him as having set the table for such hard-to-classify artists as Lil Nas X and Post Malone — the ease with which he switched between rapping and singing in 'Qué Onda Guero,' for instance, or how fluidly he and the band blended synthetic and hand-played elements in 'Dreams.'" More recently, Beck resurrected the full

band live show that moved THE TIMES OF LONDON to describe him as "a one-man festival... among modern pop stars perhaps only Prince had more range," embarking on the Summer Odyssey tour with co-headliners Phoenix. Summer Odyssey played to packed houses from the Kia Forum in L.A. to Red Rocks to Madison Square Garden and beyond, and was commemorated by the release of the Beck/Phoenix summer anthem "Odyssey," which turned out to be both a nightly highlight of its namesake tour and a highlight in a prolific streak of collaborations including a historic full concert performance with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, an appearance on the Chemical Brothers' "Skipping Like A Stone" and, most recently, "Beautiful People (Stay High)," one of multiple Beck co-writes on the new Black Keys album.

For further information, updates, etc., check back at [beck.com](http://beck.com) or follow him on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook or Friendster.