

BIOGRAPHY - ADAMS, OLETA

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PEOPLE

It's Oleta's turn: A career in song is turning golden

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There's no question Yakima's Oleta Adams has arrived, especially after her Grammy nomination for "Get Here."

Adams, a Yakima native and Davis High School graduate, was nominated in the category of best pop female vocalist for the song, her second single off last year's "Circle of Love" album.

The nomination came as no surprise to at least one local fan, Davis High School music teacher Deb Wagner, Adams' former best friend.

"She outsings the rest of them, especially on that tune. I don't think they (the judges) are going to be able to deny her best female vocal performance," Wagner said before this week's awards show.

Currently in Europe, working on a new album, Adams was unavailable for an interview, but it seems clear she's getting there herself, musically and professionally.

For the petite chanteuse, 1991 was a good year. A tour last summer as opening act for Michael Bolton was "excellent" and played to "rave reviews," according to Adams' director of East Coast publicity, Walter Greene. He says she has no plans for a new tour any time soon.

"When she gets into her writing, that's her total focus," Greene explained from New York.

Adams' story is a familiar one to Yakima residents. Her performance in the title role of the now-legendary Davis production of "Hello Dolly" was followed by her first "real gig" as a singer in Peggy Fleming's "Concert on Ice." Then came the years of working in nightclubs until being "discovered" in 1985 by Curt Smith and Roland Orzabal of the British super-band "Fears for Fears." That led to Adams' haunting vocals and piano work on "Woman in Chains" from the group's successful album. "Seeds of Love" marked her entry at last into the big time.

The words uttered by singing waiters so long ago to Adams' "Dolly" still seem appropriate.

"You're still growin', and you're still glowin', you're still goin' strong. ..."



Oleta Adams belts out a song at last year's Central Washington State Fair. Adams was nominated for a Grammy this year.