

# CHRIS O'CONNELL

“What a stroke of luck, riding the unpolished vocal talent of a young Virginia girl to higher ground, carrying voice and guitar everywhere, from a county fair flatbed truck to the Smithsonian Institution, from a deep Louisiana cockpit gaming house to a D.C. presidential inauguration.” ~ Ethyl Ketone

Chris O'Connell began singing and playing guitar professionally in 1970. She spent thirteen years on the road with America's premier Western Swing band "Asleep At The Wheel", with whom she recorded nine major-label albums. After leaving The Wheel in 1986 she invested fifteen additional years free-lancing in music and in advertising. She has provided source music for feature films, and she has appeared on two dozen television programs, including "Jazz Alive!" and several appearances on "Austin City Limits". Chris is the recipient of multiple industry awards, including an Addy Award for a promotion for Delta Airlines ("Addy" is the only creative awards program administered by the advertising industry for the industry), seven Grammy Award nominations, and a Grammy win in 1978 ("Best Country Instrumental By A Duo Or Group") for a swinging rendition of Count Basie's "One O'Clock Jump." Chris has also appeared as a guest vocalist on numerous recordings by an esteemed assortment of artists, including Kinky Friedman, the late, great Tom Morrell and, most recently, dieselbilly flame-thrower Bill Kirchen.



Chris thrives on musical diversity. She began her career singing old-school country music, trudging the wide wake left by Jimmie Rogers and the Carter Family, and then following in the footsteps of Tammy Wynette and Loretta Lynn in the late 1960s. But it wasn't long before she developed a taste for everything musically obscure, from cowboy tunes, Western Swing, jazz (some standard, some not so standard), jump, and rhythm and blues. Her vocal style developed over decades of study, emulation and synthesis, resulting in a unique delivery at once fresh and familiar. Chris will also frequently accompany herself on acoustic or electric archtop guitar, drawing her main inspiration from the tight, steady rhythms produced by Count Basie's Freddie Green and other big band rhythm guitarists whose job it has been to set the rhythm, hold it and color it for the sections and the soloists to use as a solid, dependable springboard.

With more guest recording and a solo album in the works, Chris continues to perform the music of the fields and the highways and the dance halls, the thrills and the heartaches and the heroes and the hustlers, the mountains and the cities of America: the music that rocks and swings and romps, and brings the love of melody and rhythm in every full measure.

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