

## **Christine Albert and Chris Gage – Albert and Gage**

In Austin, Texas—a town overflowing with gifted singer/songwriters and guitar players—Christine Albert & Chris Gage have a long track record of making beautiful music together, although both musicians' individual pedigrees are far more extensive. Over the course of six duet albums, the duo has demonstrated that disparate backgrounds do not preclude musical soul mates from finding one another.

The Houston Press noted, "From George Jones and Tammy Wynette to Richard and Linda Thompson, male-female duets are one of popular music's most delightful permutations. And the Austin-based duo of Christine Albert and Chris Gage easily slot right in with the best."

Onstage, Albert's slender, dark beauty contrasts strikingly with Gage's craggy good looks and how gracefully they complement each other is easily apparent. In 2003 Albert and Gage released their first live recording, *Albert and Gage at Anderson Fair*. Dirty Linen commented that the set, which is reflective of their typical live performances, had "energy, humor, really fine duet singing, strong leads, original harmonies, a strong sense of partnership, personality, and musicality" and Sing Out! called it "a cohesive and exciting exploration of the roots of popular, mostly American, music".

Gage is a journeyman musician and South Dakota native who literally began touring in a station wagon at age 15. In the mid-Seventies and early Eighties he led the popular Midwestern country-swing Red Willow Band, whose reunion shows still draw thousands of devoted fans. From there he graduated to an eight-year tenure on piano with guitar virtuoso and country star Roy Clark, which included appearances on Hee Haw, The Tonight Show and The Grand Ole Opry. After moving to Austin in 1991, Gage began commuting to San Antonio to take the reins as a musical director for the Fiesta Texas theme park.

But it was during (and following) his next incarnation, as bandleader for West Texas alt.-country singer/songwriter Jimmie Dale Gilmore, that he began to carve out his own place in the Austin scene as an in-demand session player, accompanist and producer. It was with Gilmore that Christine first heard Chris play and in 1997 Albert & Gage was formed. The duo later toured as an opening act for Gilmore and as members of his ensemble. In 2011, the Academy of Texas Music proclaimed Mr. Gage "Musician of the Year" and in 2015 he was inducted into the South Dakota Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

Christine cut her musical teeth in northern New Mexico after moving west from her childhood home in upstate New York. Along with old friend and fellow New Mexico chanteuse Eliza Gilkyson (whom she also cites as an early influence and inspiration), Albert relocated to Austin in 1982 and began to distinguish herself as a singer-songwriter in a town where the bar for such artists is set very high indeed.

Christine Albert's French grandmother lived in Paris and her mother was born in Switzerland, so perhaps it's inevitable that the occasional Edith Piaf song migrates into her sets of original material and carefully chosen covers. She has recorded a series of acclaimed albums of lovely Franco-Lone Star fusion - *Texafrance (1992)*, *Texafrance-Encore (2003)* and *Paris, Texafrance (2008)*.

Christine's latest release, "*Everything's Beautiful Now*" is an exploration into the richness of loss, and has been well received by critics and fans alike. *Everything's Beautiful Now* were the last words spoken to Christine by her mother-in-law Darleen as she was making the final move towards the other side. Originals mix lovingly with soulful covers of Warren Zevon, Jackson Browne and Texas faves Shake Russell and Dana Cooper.

Christine released several other solo albums during the years before she met Chris, and had established a solid name on the Texas scene. She was voted Female Vocalist of the Year in the Kerrville Music Awards poll and has appeared on Austin City Limits. A longtime community activist, Albert is also the Founder of "Swan Songs", a non-profit that fulfills musical last wishes by organizing private concerts for individuals with a terminal illness. Ms. Albert served for 10 years on the National Board of Trustees of The Recording Academy, the organization that presents the GRAMMY Awards, eventually rising to the position of Chairman of the Board.

With the exception of 1997's *Jumpin' Tracks*, Albert and Gage's albums have been recorded at their own MoonHouse Studio (a commercial facility in south Austin) and released on the artist owned MoonHouse Records. Chris maintains a busy studio schedule and over the years they have expanded MoonHouse Records with Gage productions by Cowboy Johnson, Michael Austin and Abi Tapia. Gage also plays lead guitar in Texas legend Jerry Jeff Walker's band and is co-produced Walker's latest CD, *It's About Time*.

The duo's most recent CD, *Dakota Lullaby (2009)*, features twelve songs by an unheralded songwriter from South Dakota - Tom Peterson. The CD landed in the top 40 on the Americana Music chart and the Top 20 on the Euro-Americana and US Folk-DJ charts. FAME described it as "a pure, unadulterated labor of love...Albert & Gage, obviously on the same page at all times, blend voices effortlessly, fluctuating between smooth country and western swing like they were born to it. Beneath those voices Gage placed a bang-up group of sidemen most musicians would kill for and handled production like the pro he has become."

Christine Albert and Chris Gage are well respected, seasoned music business veterans, but the joy they experience making music together is fresh and infectious. "They can rock, boogie, swing, trot down country roads and stride down sophisticated boulevards and make it all sound as it should: like parts of a unified whole rather than a mishmash of different styles. Albert and Gage have global class, musicality and charm." (Houston Press) You can't ask for more than that.

