

# CHRIS VALLILLO

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*"Vallillo is an exceptional guitarist on six string, flat or fingerpicked and bottleneck slide and has a rich, deep voice..."*

**- Danna Garcia**  
**Canadian River Music**  
**Amarillo, Texas**

## BIOGRAPHY

Singer-songwriter Chris Vallillo entertains audiences wherever he plays with music that portrays the joys and sorrows, ups and downs of Midwestern life.

In a variety of roots-based styles, Chris performs on six string and bottleneck slide guitars, harmonica and pocket instruments. His shows incorporate original and traditional material with the works of other contemporary songwriters to form a musical portrait of the history and lifestyle of the Midwest.

Vallillo's Prairie poet style has been compared to Edgar Lee Masters and Vachel Lindsay. Reviewers have also described him as an exceptional guitarist who speaks from the heart of rural Illinois. Dirty Linen magazine had this to say: "He brings to his music (an) eye for detail and a sense of history... Vivid original story songs delivered in his crisp, expressive tenor."



A graduate of Beloit College with a BA in Anthropology, Chris spend his first few years out of school as a professional archaeologist working throughout the Midwest. After settling in western Illinois, he began seriously pursuing music, writing and performing with a variety of bands before beginning his career as a soloist.

For Chris, a good song is as much a work of art as any painting or sculpture. His music has a timeless quality about it, with one foot in the past and one foot in the future. He combines traditional and modern styles of finger picking, bottleneck slide and flat picking to paint pictures using words, tone and rhythm - pictures of a community coming together to help a family in need, a childhood baseball game, or a storm rising on the prairie.

A recipient of a 1986 Illinois Arts Council Artist Fellowship Award for music composition, Chris was also a nominee for the Illinois Arts Council's 1987 Governor's Award for Individual Artist. From 1990 through 1998 he served as the performing host and co-producer of the nationally distributed, award-winning public radio performance series Rural Route 3.

Chris Vallillo is a member of the Illinois Arts Council's Artstour Roster, the Illinois Arts Council's Artists in Education program, the Illinois Humanities Council's Road Scholars program, and the Heartland Fund's Community Connections program. Each of these prestigious programs provides funding assistance for the presentation of talented professional artists to audiences throughout the Midwest. Click on the program name to get more information.

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## AWARDS

2001: **Administrative Fellowship, Illinois Arts Council** to conduct the Illinois Mississippi River Valley Project.

1998: **National Federation of Community Broadcaster's Special Merit Award** for National Music/Entertainment Series for the *Rural Route 3* Radio Show.

1995: **National Federation of Community Broadcaster's Bronze Reel Award** for National Music/Entertainment Series for the *Rural Route 3* Radio Show.

1987: Nominated for the Illinois Arts Council's **Governor's Award** for Individual Artist.

1986: Illinois Arts Council **Artists Fellowship Award** for Music Composition.

1985: Finalist at the Kerrville Fold Festival Songwriting Competition, Kerrville, Texas.

## SPECIAL PROJECTS

2003: Artistic producer and performer for the **Illinois Mississippi River Valley Project Festival**, a weekend of workshops and performances August 15th and 16th, in Galena, IL.

2003: Co producing the *Folk Songs of Illinois* CD for the Illinois Humanities Council's **Heritage Music Project** CD series.

2001-2002: Carried out the field work for the Illinois Arts Council's **Illinois Mississippi River Valley Project**, designed to document the artists along the Mississippi River.

October 2000: Performer and Producer of the **On the Farm Harvest Festival** for the Museum of Science and Industry, Chicago, IL.

1990-1997: Host and CO-producer of the award winning nationally syndicated public radio series *Rural Route 3*.

1993-1994: **The Civil War and Reconstruction**. 22 part public television series. Composed, performed and recorded the theme song, arranged, performed and recorded period music on vintage instruments for the sound track.

1993: **Echo's Of A Country Schoolhouse**. Commissioned by the Gardener Museum of Architecture, Quincy, IL to co-write and perform in a 2 person interactive play on the one room schoolhouse experience.

1992-1993: **Illinois Historic Panorama**. Composed, performed, and recorded the soundtrack for the 13 part public television series on the history of Illinois from the glaciers to the present.

1987: **The Schuyler Arts Folk Music Collecting Project**. Designed and carried out a music collecting project for the Illinois Arts Council and the Schuyler Arts Council in co-operation with the Library of Congress Folklife Center. The collection was accepted into the Library of Congress Folklife Archives in 1988.