



10 QUESTIONS CHRIS WILLIS

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1 Where do you live? I live in Atlanta, GA. But I was born in Dayton, Ohio—Kettering, Ohio, to be exact—just outside of Dayton, to be exact.

2 You spend a lot of time in Paris. You like the jet-set life? I love the jet set life just like you see it in the movies. Paris is one of my favorite cities in the world. All of this music was made there, so Paris will always have a special place in my heart. I would love to travel even more, with these songs all the way to the Far East. China and Japan. Believe it or not with all the travel I've done over the past few years, there are many places I have never been like Turkey, India, Greece. I always love the chance to see new places, as long as there is time to recharge.

3 How did you come to write your first song for David Guetta, “Just A Little More Love”? I was introduced to David through a mutual friend while spending some time in Paris about 8 years ago. David was working on an album and invited me to come to the studio and see if the vibe was good. He and his production partner Joachim Garraud had a track worked up that they wanted some vocals and lyrics to. David's inspiration was the “I Have A Dream Speech” by Martin Luther King, a speech that really resonates with me. I vibed with the track and came up with about three melodies. David suggested keywords like “walking hand in hand”. I did a word play along with one of the melodies that we all liked and came up with a lyric we all loved and just a little more love was born. The lead interestingly enough was recorded in one take. Joachim has ever since called me the “one take wonder”.

4 It was huge—and fast—what was that like?

The day after we recorded “Just A Little More Love”, they invited me back to the studio for some news. They simply said, “Chris. Sit down you're not going to believe it but the record company wants to release this as a single.” I thought, “You're joking right?” This is where they tell me they were just kidding. They weren't. The song became a huge smash. I still can't believe it happened so quickly to this very day.

5 Is this happening again with “Love Is Gone?”

I think so. “Love Is Gone,” is what I like to call a slow burn. It hit Europe Dance scene and crossed to commercial radio and had a great life. What's even more amazing about “Love Is Gone” is that the same thing seems to be happening in the US. The passion and electric charm of the song world wide is much like “Just A Little More Love,” only it's even larger because “Love Is Gone” is having a great life at Top 40 radio here in the States. This is beyond amazing.

6 You wrote this too. (Hello, publishing!) What's it about, what inspired it? Truth be told, David inspired “Love Is Gone” using some of his personal life as the muse. I embellished the story by putting into the melody that popped out of me when I listened to the track, the question that we ask ourselves sometimes. What do we do when the love isn't as fresh as when it began with the one you love?

7 If you could cover any song what would it be and why? What a great question! This might take me out of genre a bit, but I think it's cool. Ever since I was a kid, I've been playing the piano and singing at the same time. That's pretty much what I did mostly back in the days when I was singing in church growing up. Fast forward to today, I love throwing parties for my friends at my house. Occasionally one of my savvy friends will initiate a gather-around-the-piano- moment. Being the big show off that I am it doesn't take much to coax me into sharing a song at the piano. So one of my favorite songs to sing and play is "Get Here" written by Brenda Russel. I'd like to record that one day. Or "I Never Dreamed You'd Leave" by Stevie Wonder.

8 And the flip, if you could write a song for any other singer, who would it be and why? I would love to write a song for Whitney Houston because I think she has one of the most honest voices ever heard. In fact I have one waiting just for her. Patti Labelle, because I love the way she bleeds in a song leaving no note sung without intensity.

9 You sing—and one would think like—a lot of dance music. Do you go clubbing or is singing on stage far better? Dance music is my new best friend. I love it. I have to admit. As a result of all that's happening for me in the Club World, I am spoiled. I love going to the club especially when I'm performing. I won't lie. I LOVE the VIP treatment. I like going to clubs on occasion to check out what's hot and see what's happening, but because I'm in the club most of the time for work, I try to explore other avenues of entertainment on my time off.

10 What do you do when you're not performing, singing, writing? (read—what? cook—favorite?, wii,...) My favorite things to do when I'm not performing are working out in the gym, eating great food, going to the movies and spending time with my friends and family. I love being at home so as often as I can I have people over and I throw parties, dinner parties or game nights. I love being surrounded with clever interesting people indulging in delicious food and stimulating conversation. I also really love quiet. So sometimes I stay home and cuddle under the covers watching hours of movies on demand. I love to eat more than I love to cook so trying new restaurants is high on my list. I have cultivated a love affair with the camera and have tons of pictures from my travels. I love taking the camera out on my time off and just looking at the world through the lens. Very therapeutic don't take as much time out to read as I should. But when I have the attention span to focus on a good book, I reach for a detective story by James Patterson. •

Chris Willis bio on penetrationinc.com.

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