



BIO CHRIS WILLIS

Chris Willis is a singer/songwriter with a knack turning killer tracks into chart-topping pop songs and a divo who can go mic-to-mic with the best of the pop divas any day of the week. And you've been dancing to him for years. Ain't it about time you get to know him?

Chris Willis is the man behind the powerhouse voice currently rocking American Top 40 radio with the hot new dance song, "Love Is Gone." Lifted from "Pop Life," the third album by French superstar producer and DJ, David Guetta, the single won a World Music Award in 2007 and in 2008 won the Winter Music Conference Club Award for "Best Club Anthem Of The Year" and the International Dance Music Award for "Best House/Garage Track." "Love Is Gone" is one of five (5!) singles from "Pop Life" featuring the vocals (and often lyrics) of singer-songwriter, Chris Willis: Others are "Every Time We Touch," "Tomorrow Can Wait," "Never Take Away My Freedom," and "Love Don't Let Me Go (Walking Away)."

Drawing inspiration from a wealth of sources namely "Off The Wall"/"Thriller" era Michael Jackson, Stevie Wonder, James Ingram and Donny Hathaway, Chris Willis first gained notoriety in 1996 with the release of his spiritually-minded self-titled debut album (on indie gospel imprint Star Song). An inspirational collection of R&B-inflected contemporary gospel songs, the album didn't sell, but on the flip, it did put Chris out there as a bright newcomer whose enthusiasm for mixing gospel, soul and pop styles would bring welcome attention.

"Much of my experience and exposure in the music industry has been in gospel," Willis explains. "I've always had an obsession with melody. My parents exposed me to all kinds of music when I was young: everything from gospel, soul, Top 40 and even oldies. Growing up, I discovered other musical genres that I was passionate about as well, like classical, R&B, Rock and Roll and a bit of just about everything else. My musical heroes are the obvious: Stevie, Michael, Jefferey Osbourne, James Ingram. (Thankfully these are the ones people say they hear in my voice). But my all-time favorite is Donny Hathaway! He had an amazing blend of passion, pain, joy and reverence in his voice and songs that was so evocative and inspiring to me."

Willis soon established himself as a popular session singer and songwriter. From 1996 to the present, Chris has performed vocal duties for an impressive list of artists ranging from "American Idol" sensations Fantasia Barrino, Clay Aiken and Kelly Clarkson; gospel notables CeCe Winans and Take Six; country veterans Kenny Rogers and Dolly Parton; and influential pop legends like Quincy Jones, Desmond Child and Dusty Springfield.

Willis' work with noted songwriter and producer Desmond Child (from 1998 to 2004)—which includes providing backing vocals on Ricky Martin's multi-platinum "Sound Loaded" (Columbia) album—earned the Willis his first production credit when he co-produced Parisian pop stars 2BE3's album "Excuse My French" (Edel). His work with the group lead to an introduction to pioneering French electro-house DJ/producer David Guetta.

It was his work with Guetta that, in 2002, snapped Willis into the international pop spotlight as the featured vocalist/collaborator on Guetta's wildly popular debut single, "Just A Little More Love." The album, which included seven collaborations with Willis, yielded two worldwide club/radio hit singles—the aforementioned—and "Love Don't Let Me Go" (an innovative track that married Moroder's Euro-disco style with Depeche Mode's dark new-wave sound). Other included "Distortion" and the underground favorite "People Come, People Go" (only on the European release).

The album went on to sell over 250,000 copies worldwide, introducing Chris to dance music fans ready for a fresh new male voice in house music that could competently follow in the footsteps of singers like Michael Procter, Byron Stingily, Robert Owens, Roland Clark and Duane Harden. Willis effortlessly donned this mantle proving himself a confident, electrifying live performer on the world tour in support of Guetta's album.

"The beauty of the work I did with David is that my collaborations with him gave me an opportunity to explore my varied tastes in music," says Willis. I feel so alive and fulfilled with the work we've created together. He continues to encourage me to explore all of the different sides of myself under the blanket of dance music. I can be the gospel singer, the pop singer, the Rock and Roll singer all at once!"

In 2004, Willis once again teamed up with Guetta for his sophomore set, "Guetta Blaster" (Virgin/EMI France). Chris pushed himself further in Guetta's new musical environment, as "Guetta Blaster," placed itself at the experimental roots of house music, incorporating influences from disco-not-disco, cold-wave and soulful, moody electronic pop. Against this backdrop Willis delivered some of his best work on songs such as "Time," "Used To Be The One," "Stay" and the hooky hit single "Money." "Guetta Blaster" received rave reviews both overseas (where it went gold in France) and in the US, where, upon its 2005 release on Astralwerks, it established Guetta as one of the hottest new dance music stars of the year.

In 2007 American label Ultra Records release David Guetta's third and current album, "Pop Life," which again features Chris Willis on a staggering five tracks (three of which he wrote) including the current 2008 American pop radio hit, "Love Is Gone" as well as, "Every Time We Touch," "Tomorrow Can Wait," "Never Take Away My Freedom," and "Love Don't Let Me Go (Walking Away)."

"This has definitely been a journey and I know that there's more to uncover and explore. When I first started writing and performing, the question that haunted me most was what do you have to say that hasn't already been said and why should other people listen to it? I wasn't certain back then. But all of my experiences, the mix of the good and bad, and just being alive have given me a clearer idea and focus. I am so lucky to be able to do what I love and share some of my experiences, passions and revelations with a receptive audience. This is truly powerful, healing and uplifting." •

10 Q&As: Chris Willis on penetrationinc.com

www.chrisworldentertainment.com | www.myspace.com/chriswillismusic | press kit: www.penetrationinc.com