



CHRIS VALLILLO PROGRAMS

Oh Freedom!

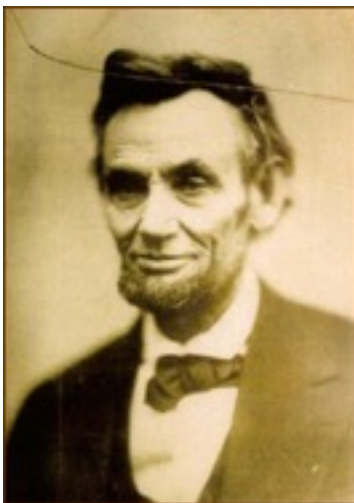
Songs of the Civil Rights Movement

The Civil Rights Movement has been described as one of the greatest singing movements that this country has experienced. From ***We Shall Overcome*** to ***This Little Light of Mine***, music played an vital role in that historic struggle both as an inspirational rallying point and as a way to spread the message of equality and justice.

From the Freedom Riders, to the the jails of Montgomery Alabama, and Parchman Prison, all the way to Washington DC, both old and new songs of the era spoke of the yearning for equal rights, the struggle and the determination to win freedom. They engaged and energized the movement and became the backbone of the nonviolent civil disobedience movement led by Dr King and others. Music was a huge part of the process both locally and nationally. In a show created to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the civil rights movement, award winning Illinois folksinger Chris Vallillo performs pivotal songs from the music that inspired and sustained this landmark movement. Intermixed with the music, Vallillo presents first hand accounts of the historic struggle and discusses the impact of music to our nations most important social cause.



<https://youtu.be/JJiyK2Y-DqE>



Abraham Lincoln in Song

Endorsed by the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission

The life of Abraham Lincoln spanned a period of change, growth and struggle in our young nation, and the music of his era movingly characterizes these remarkable times. From his days as a flat-boater, through his time at New Salem, his years as a circuit lawyer and on up through his presidency, Lincoln's life is a microcosm of the development of Illinois during that period. ***Abraham Lincoln in Song*** helps shed light on one of history's most beloved figures "not only as a remarkable leader, but as a man," who knew and loved many of these very songs himself. Special emphasis is placed on showing Lincoln 's unique bond with the common man and his desire for reconciliation, not revenge. It is an extensively researched, historically accurate program Chris uses period music Lincoln may well have known and sung, and Lincoln 's own stories to illustrate his life and put it into context.

The show is designed to be an interactive, accessible, program that educates as well as entertains. It covers Lincoln 's life from his birth on the big south fork of Nolan's Creek in Kentucky in 1809 through his death in 1865. It has been performed in association with the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum,

The Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum, The Lincoln Home National Historic site, Gettysburg National Battlefield Museum and various touring exhibits including Forever Free from the Huntington Library and “Lincoln, the Constitution and the Civil War” from the Library of Congress and the American Library Association. Abraham Lincoln in Song has recently been endorsed by the Illinois Lincoln Bicentennial Commission. The show works well for both school audiences (grade 3 and up) and adult audiences.

<https://youtu.be/axoRJrb5ZtM>

The Farmer is the Man

Traditional and Contemporary Folk Songs of the Farm

Farming has always been the backbone of rural America and that heritage has been preserved in an extensive body of traditional and contemporary folk songs that tell the stories of the hardworking people who have struggled to live this way of life for generations. From traditional songs like “The Farmer is the Man,” to the dust bowl ballads of Woody Guthrie, to the works of contemporary songwriters like Stan Rogers and Dakota farmer Chuck Sukay, the subject of farm life has long been fertile ground for folk musicians.



Contemporary folk songwriter Chris Vallillo has spent the last 35 years living and working in the small communities of rural Illinois documenting its music and chronicling its past and ever changing future in the process. He performs a hand picked selection of the most poignant of these songs as way to look at

the past and the future of the family farm.

The changes in technology, introduction of modern machinery, corporate farms and vast changes in world markets have, for years, made farming a constantly shifting playing field. Understanding how farming and agriculture are changing is critical to understanding and directing the future of Illinois and it’s citizens, both rural and urban.

As Williams Jennings Bryant said in his “Cross of Gold” speech, “The great cities rest upon our broad and fertile prairies. Burn down your cities and leave our farms and your cities will spring up again as if by magic, but destroy our farms and the grass will grow in the streets of every city in the country.”

<https://youtu.be/TwBfg3O4acc>

Parallel Paths; Poetry of Carl Sandburg, Music of Chris Vallillo

In a program created for the *Carl Sandburg Foundation*, Chris Vallillo presents a combination Sandburg’s poetry paired with his original songs and instrumentals as well as several of the songs Sandburg himself collected as a folklorist.

Vallillo’s work has long been compared to that of Sandburg. He has been described as “Illinois’ pre-eminent prairie-poet singer-songwriter” and is well known for incorporating original and traditional material to make the people and places of “unmetropolitan” America come to life. Much as Sandburg himself, Vallillo spent several years collecting and documenting the music of rural Illinois, much of which influenced his own work.



Vallillo's performance will pair his original music and traditional songs Sandburg collected with poems Sandburg wrote. "For years people have been telling me my work reminded them of Sandburg's poetry. When I began to explore the possibilities, I was struck by just how powerful the combination was."

https://youtu.be/G_w5_FPbCM

Stephen Foster and the Rise of Popular Music



From his first hit with "Oh Susannah" in 1848 through his death in 1864, Stephen Foster created a body of music that touched millions and lives on to this very day.

In his day Foster's songs were not only the hit of the Minstrel show circuit, they were performed by everyday folks, classical musicians and sung by slaves in the fields of Georgia. His music would play a large part in the creation of our nation's first emerging popular culture and one would go on to be a hit 75 years after his passing. Looking back, these songs also shed light on the complex, torturous relationship between black and white cultures in our young, growing nation.

Award winning folksinger and multi-instrumentalist Chris Vallillo performs nine of Foster's best loved songs while exploring the impact of this legendary American icon and his music on American culture.

The Roots of of Rural Music

Illinois is unique among all the states in that its access to the major waterways of the Mississippi, Ohio and Illinois Rivers as well as the Great Lakes made it a virtual crossroads of peoples, cultures and ideas. As railroads surpassed the rivers as a means of transportation, Illinois would become the Central hub for the nation's rails. This mingling of people produced a rich body of roots music which paints

a colorful portrait of our heritage and gives detailed insight into the people and times that forged the state we have become.



Chris draws on his experiences as a music collector and performer of the songs of rural America; from the first pioneers through the era of Steamboats, trains and early radio. Vallillo brings this rich heritage to life in a lively performance and discussion of roots music and its impact on our lives today while performing on a fine collection of vintage instruments.

<https://youtu.be/QvjnCGpV6UA>

Folk Music For Little Folks

In this engaging and entertaining performance, Vallillo presents an Illinois folk musical performance geared towards younger audiences. Chris introduces and discusses traditional Illinois folk music and gets kids to join in as he performs on the guitar, resonator slide guitar, Jew's Harp and an 1880's hammered dulcimer. Educational, interactive and fun!

<https://youtu.be/HmOi-ltZVBY>

