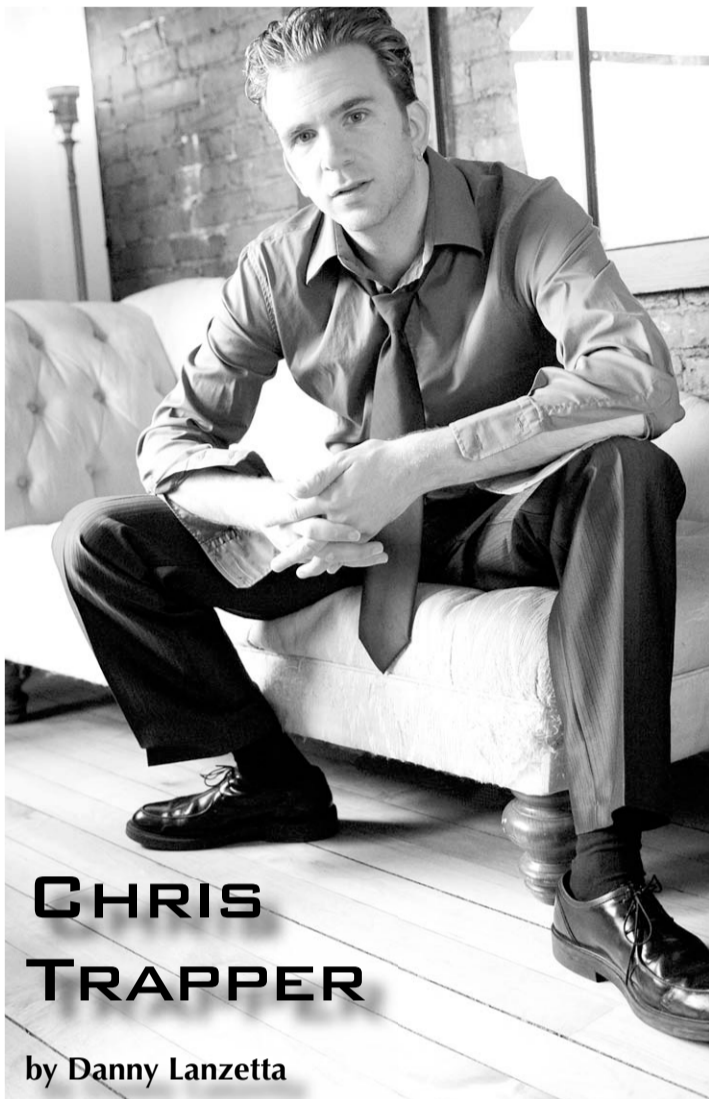


About the

Artist



**CHRIS
TRAPPER**

by Danny Lanzetta

Chris Trapper is best known as the lead singer and songwriter for The Push Stars, a pop/rock band from Boston that has played alongside Matchbox Twenty, Train, Third Eye Blind and Vertical Horizon. The band has had songs in the soundtracks for the hit films "There's Something About Mary" and "Me, Myself & Irene." Originally from Buffalo, Trapper is now out on tour in support of his recent solo effort, "Gone Again." He is an introspective and versatile songwriter, and though

there is a pop sensibility to his material, he has developed a loyal fan base that reveres his sing-a-long melodies and melancholy lyrics. Trapper will appear at the Towne Crier Café in Pawling this Sunday, Oct. 16, at 8 p.m. with special guest Kim Leaman. To make reservations, call 845.855.1300. Visit www.townecrier.com for more information.

Danny Lanzetta (DL): Describe your lifestyle and how it contributes to your process as an artist.

Chris Trapper (CT): My lifestyle is actually a combination of two lifestyles – my home life, which is fairly normal and healthy, then the touring lifestyle, when a suitcase, hotel room and club are my last links to civilization. After touring for a while, it finally settles into a job. But the cool thing is, you see how diverse the landscape of the country is, and get to play music at night, but your one-minute conversation with a hotel clerk can make or break the whole day.

DL: Talk a little bit about how music, and art in general, has affected your emotional life. Do you remember the moment when music first dazzled you?

CT: I can remember walking across the campus of the University of Buffalo, preparing for my career as a college dropout, playing U2's "Unforgettable Fire" cassette in my Walkman. Suddenly, I felt everything disappear around me, almost like a religious experience; my troubles were gone, and I felt greater than I actually was. Still, on any given bad day, I'll resort to a shot of scotch and my turntable to get me through. There's something about the sound of old vinyl records that makes me feel connected to something greater.

DL: Who have been your musical influences and why?

CT: I think my musical influences break down like this: Simon and Garfunkel made me want to write songs, The Replacements made me

want to sing songs in dirty rock clubs and Sam Cooke's songs have become a goal to strive for.

DL: What non-musical experiences have contributed to your artistic life?

CT: This is actually a great and scary question, because the non-musical experiences are actually the driving force for an artistic life. I remember the first time I ever wrote a song. I had just been picked on in junior high for having a stutter. I got home from school feeling like my life was over, picked up a guitar and started humming a slow, sad tune over some chords I was making up. An hour later, I had a song about finding solace at home. I haven't stopped writing songs since, because the healing power was remarkable. It was like taking the negative, and actually using it to create a positive.

DL: Describe the difference between playing with the band and doing your solo material.

CT: Playing with the band is, after 10 years doing it, like a family reunion. Every time I see (bassist) Dan (McLoughlin) and (drummer) Ryan (MacMillan), we have catching up to do, but the bond between us never has to be spoken. We can finish each other's thoughts, and the touring can be chaotic.

Playing solo is actually how I started in music. I was a hungry songwriter looking to be heard in any venue, so I became a coffee house staple in Boston. It's the ultimate test for any songwriter, because if you can pull it off with nothing around you, and actually move somebody with just an acoustic guitar and a voice, it feels very fulfilling.

DL: How would you describe yourself as a performer? What kind of relationship do you have with the audience when you're on stage?

CT: I would describe myself as a grateful performer, because every time I'm up there, I can't believe I've been lucky enough to make a career out of music, and I'm even more amazed when people show up and tell me a song I wrote moved them. I have now had people tell me my song was their wedding song, the song they conceived their children to and even the song they played at the funeral of their parent. Now, imagine going from a hotel job, where I worked in a storeroom in the basement with no windows for \$8 bucks an hour, to that.

DL: From where do you derive your lyrical inspiration?

CT: To me, lyric writing is like photography. It reports where you were, what you were doing and how you felt. Sometimes, the photos don't come out clear, and that might be a song you throw away. Sometimes, I'll hear an old song of mine, and I forget where I was and who was in the picture with me at the time. But the best songs, and lyrics, are the ones that take

you back like a time machine, to the porch or the windowpane, the backyard, the dressing room. Wherever you were when you took the time to report what you were feeling.

DL: Do you prefer larger shows, playing with national acts like Matchbox Twenty, or more intimate performances like your upcoming show at the Towne Crier Café?

CT: The weird thing about the Matchbox Twenty tour was that it was almost like playing an audition for a committee you can't see, because the arena's big, dark and vacuous. When people would clap at the end of a song, it was like, "Oh, yeah, there's people here!"

The beauty of the Towne Crier show is that it's the closest you can actually come to hearing how a song was originally written. It's also, for me, a chance for some real connection. I can see who I'm singing to, and I can see if it's working. So many songwriting legends have passed through the doors of that place, and every time I'm there, I wonder if I deserve it. Fortunately, I keep getting asked back, so it's become a second home to me.

DL: What's on the horizon for you and The Push Stars?

CT: I am actually touring now to support my new solo CD, "Gone Again." I actually cut this record with the legendary Wolverine Jazz band. They are Boston's best example of a Dixieland/New Orleans-style jazz band. I got the idea to collaborate with them a few years ago when we (The Push Stars) were covering a Steely Dan song for the "Me, Myself & Irene" soundtrack. I realized I wasn't a good enough lead guitarist to pull off the solo section, so I thought, "How cool would it be to turn the guitar solo into a Dixieland/chaotic horn type of thing?" It worked out well, as the review in Entertainment Weekly picked our tune as the best on the soundtrack. So, this record is all new, original songs that we recorded in the old-fashioned way. No pro-tools or computers, just all live. So, we did the record basically live in one night, and then mixed it over a few days.

As for the future, especially creatively, I will never predict it, because I'd always be wrong.

DL: What is your personal definition of art?

CT: My definition of art is whatever a human being is driven to create that enhances, enlightens and endures our survival. There's a museum about a mile away from my house in Boston that's called the "museum of bad art." The cool thing about it is, even though the paintings are chosen for their lack of continuity, sensibility and overall structure, there is a beauty to the fact that someone tried – tried to create what never existed before, tried to feel their most beautiful and their most constructive and tried to break the silence. ■

Under the Artistic Direction and Guidance of Wing's Castle Creator, Pete Wing Stanford Recreation Department Proudly Presents

FRANKENSTEIN'S FORTRESS

Not your ordinary haunted attraction... ..It's Theme Park gone Mad... Very Mad!

WEEKENDS IN OCTOBER

Fri & Sat 6:00 – 9:30 PM • Sun 6:00 – 8:30 PM

\$10 Adults - \$5 Children 10 & Under • Guided Daytime Tours

Located on Creamery Road, Stanfordville, New York • Following the Signs from Route 82

- For Further Information:
Call 845-868-7782

Or visit our website: www.haunteddutchess.org

