

Chris Norman – Bioq 2023

Chris Norman first found fame fronting huge 70's band **Smokie**. In 1986, Chris left the band and went on to carve a hugely successful solo career. His first single 'Midnight Lady' became a massive hit throughout Europe including holding the German No.1 slot for 6 weeks!

In his career to date he has had 21 hit singles and released around 22 albums, selling over 20 million records worldwide

He grew up in a show business family going back two generations. His Grandparents toured their own concert party around England during the First World War and their daughter Pat (Chris's mother) joined a dance troupe when she left school. Pip Norman, (Chris's Dad) was part of a dancing/comedy act called 'The Four Jokers' and worked all over Europe in the 1930s/40s and had a British Royal Variety Performance to their credit.

He got his first guitar at the age of seven and his early musical influences were Elvis Presley, Little Richard, Buddy Holly and Lonnie Donegan. Later the 60's artists, in particular The Beatles, and the folk singer Bob Dylan, were a huge influence on Chris.

He formed a band at school with Alan Silson and later was joined by Terry Uttley and Pete Spencer. In 1968 the band turned professional and played all over the UK in the late 60s and early seventies.

By 1974 the group had developed their own sound reflecting their close three part harmonies and Chris's distinctive vocal sound wrapped up in a guitar rock sound, a sort of mixture between Crosby, Stills & Nash and Creedence Clearwater Revival. The band changed their name to '**Smokie**' and their first album 'Pass it Around' was released in 1975 on Micky Most's RAK records.

Smokie had started as an album orientated rock act and their many live experiences had given Chris and Smokie a good grounding in all the tricks of the Rock & Roll trade. Chris remembers: "We weren't so much interested in pop singles at first. That's why the back cover of our first LP PASS IT AROUND was designed in a way that made us look kind of folk/rocky instead of a Glam rock band."

By the summer of 1975 they had their first hit single with '*If you think you know how to love me*'. This was followed by a string of 15 hit singles including '*Living next door to Alice*', '*I'll meet you at Midnight*', '*Lay back in the arms of Someone*', etc. Plus Chris made the very successful duet with Suzi Quatro, "*Stumblin' In*" which gave him his first taste of success outside the group.

Their album sales grew accordingly and they had many hit albums such as, 'Changing All The Time', 'Midnight Cafe', 'Bright Lights and Back Alleys' and 'the Montreux Album' among others.

Chris's solo career took off in 1986 with the song, 'Midnight Lady', which was a massive hit throughout Europe holding the number one spot in Germany for six weeks. Other single and albums hits followed.

In 1994 Chris was awarded 'International video Star of the Year' by CMT Europe for the videos 'Jealous Heart', 'The Growing Years' and 'Red Hot Screaming Love'. That same year Chris formed his own new band and went on tour for the first time in six years. Since then Chris and his band have continued to tour extensively all over the world, and produce many solo albums.

In 2020 Chris released a brand new album called "Just a Man" which he has written and recorded with his old mentor and friend Mike Chapman as producer. Mike has written and produced scores of worldwide hits with the likes of, 'Blondie', 'Tina Turner', 'The Knack', 'Sweet', Suzie Quatro, 'Smokie', and many others.

Now he has a new album due for release titled 'Junction 55' with 12 new songs written by Chris or in collaboration with others. Three songs are written with his old friend and band member Pete Spencer, two with Geoff Carline his current band member, one with Mike Chapman and the rest on his own. The tracks are hallmarks of a true singer-songwriter with timeless melodies and memorable harmonies that soar. Recorded and produced in Chris's own studio.

Chris says, "the title reflects the fact that I am at a new junction in my career and it has been 55 years since I turned pro."