

## **English - Short, in 3rd person**

CHRIS FOSTER - English singer and guitarist

Chris Foster is a master of his trade recently described as "one of the finest singers and most thoughtful inventive guitar accompanists of English folk songs." In an article in fROOTS magazine Colin Irwin wrote "Chris Foster merits legend status, one of the very best in the second wave of the Brit folk revival, as important as Martin Carthy, Dick Gaughan and Nic Jones in the way he modernised and invested traditional songs with inventive guitar arrangements and potent vocal delivery." His album 'OUTSIDERS' was one of the runners up in the 2008 fROOTS magazine best CD poll of 300 critics and broadcasters.

Chris grew up in Somerset, in the south west of England, where he first heard and started singing folk songs; tales of romance, magic, murder, liquor, love, adultery and cross-dressing. These shared experiences of the human condition are instantly recognisable to all audiences, crossing boundaries of urban and rural experience, of past and present. On stage his fine musicianship is underpinned by his urbane wit and engaging enthusiasm for his music that draws the audience into his performance.

Over the past 40 plus years he has performed and recorded throughout the UK, Europe, Canada and the USA and even once in China.

## **English- Long, in 3rd person**

Chris Foster is a master of his trade, recently described as "one of the finest singers and most thoughtful inventive guitar accompanists of English folk songs."

As a story teller in song, Chris takes the evocative tunes of dark ballads alongside the upbeat rhythms of rogue's tales and sometimes jagged lines of Leon Rosselson's contemporary verses and provides guitar accompaniments that range from fine filigree lines to beautifully paced punchy, rhythmic counterpoint harmony, weaving words and music together to complement the action of the story.

Chris Foster's own history is as varied as one of the protagonists' from his songs. He grew up in Somerset, in the south west of England, where he first heard and started singing traditional songs. Following a visual arts training he became a full-time musician, clocking up 8 years of continuous solo touring throughout Britain, Europe and North America. Along the way, he picked up musical influences and songs from traditional musicians in the coastal villages of East Anglia, intriguing and unusual songs from the manuscripts of the Victorian and Edwardian folk song collectors of his native West of England and awards and critical acclaim for his recorded work in 1977 and 1979.

Then, in the 1980's, he changed focus, settling in Salisbury, in the south of England, where he co-founded Mobile Arts, a mixed media community arts company. Using music, drama, visual arts, oral history and print, Mobile Arts established a reputation for exciting, original work, much of which researched and re-interpreted the musical traditions and customs of the area.

In the 1990's Chris moved to the midlands and re-emerged onto the folk scene with innovative visual and musical interpretations of English songs and traditions in two shows 'Sting in the Tale' and 'Traveller's Tales'.

In 2001, as well as solo performing, Chris started working with the Icelandic traditional singer Bára Grímsdóttir, adding the traditional Icelandic instruments, langspil and fiðla to his repertoire. As the duo FUNI they have been performing, recording and broadcasting and teaching in Europe, North America and China as well as Iceland and the UK. In December 2004 they took up residence in Reykjavík where they continue to explore and perform the musical traditions of their two islands, Check out Funi at: [www.funi-iceland.com](http://www.funi-iceland.com)

## English - Short, first person

I first got really interested in traditional folk music as a teenager, growing up in Somerset in the southwest of England. It set me on a path or should I say paths? that I am still exploring several decades later. It has taken me all over Europe, North America and once, even to China. I have been privileged to meet and hear many great musicians and I have made many friends along the way. It also led to me living in Iceland, where I am one half of the duo Funi, along with my wife Bára Grímsdóttir.

Here in Iceland, as well as making music as a solo and duo artist, I am the programme co-ordinator of the Vaka Folk Arts Festival in Akureyri.

With Bára, I teach a course on Icelandic folk music at the Iceland Arts Academy in Reykjavík, and we regularly travel abroad to perform and lead workshops.

## English - Long, first person

I first got really interested in traditional folk music as a teenager. Growing up in Somerset in the southwest of England, I was immediately struck by the idea that there were songs that had been collected from people who had lived within a few miles of where I lived. These songs spoke of my world in my own vernacular language and they had great tunes into the bargain. It set me on a path (or should I say paths?) that I am still exploring several decades later. It has taken me all over Europe, North America and once, even to China. Over the years, I have been privileged to meet and hear many great musicians and I have made many friends along the way.

After I left school, I studied visual arts for five years, finishing up at Chelsea School of Art. On arriving in London I became co-organiser of Dingles Folk Club, when its founder John Kirkpatrick moved to live in the country. We have remained in contact ever since and he plays on my new album Hadelin, released 2017.

When I left art school, I became a full-time folk singer overnight, and over the next eight years I clocked up many thousands of miles of solo touring throughout Britain, Europe and North America. I released two solo albums, Layers and All Things in Common, which were both very well received. In the late 1970s I lived for a while in Suffolk, where I got to know and learn from traditional singers like Jumbo Brightwell who gave me some great songs that I still sing to this day.

In the 1980s, I changed focus, taking up a job at Salisbury Arts Centre and co-founding Mobile Arts, a mixed media community arts company. We used music, drama, visual arts, oral history and print, working with local community groups in the area. Many of these projects included researching and re-interpreting the musical traditions and customs of the area.

In the 1990s I moved to the midlands, continuing my community arts work and also resuming performing, touring visual and musical interpretations of English songs and traditions in two solo shows 'Sting in the Tale' and 'Traveller's Tales'.

While working on a project for Wren Music in Devon, based on the work of the Victorian / Edwardian folk song collector and polymath Sabine Baring-Gould, I discovered Icelandic folk music and met the Icelandic traditional singer Bára Grímsdóttir. We started working together in 2001, and I added the traditional Icelandic instruments, langspil and fiðla to my kit bag, as well as developing and adapting my guitar style to the modal melodies of Icelandic folk music.

As the duo FUNI we have been performing, broadcasting and teaching in Europe, North America and China as well as Iceland and the UK. In December 2004 we took up residence in Reykjavík where we continue to explore and perform the musical traditions of our two islands. We have released four albums and you can find more information, music and videos at:

Here in Iceland, as well as making music as a solo and duo artist, I am the programme co-ordinator of the Vaka Folk Arts Festival in Akureyri. With Bára, I teach a course on Icelandic folk music at the Iceland Arts Academy in Reykjavík, and we regularly travel abroad to perform and lead workshops.