

Tish Hinojosa – Bio

Leticia “Tish” Hinojosa was born December 6th 1955 to Mexican immigrant parents, and raised in San Antonio, Texas. The youngest of thirteen siblings, including stepbrothers and stepsisters [her song “West Side Of Town” relates her family history], from an early age her parents instilled in the youngster a love of traditional Mexican music. Her father came from Tamaulipas, while her mother [his second wife] was originally from Coahuila. In addition, Hinojosa grew up listening to San Antonio radio stations where she heard the original music of local stars such as Jose Alfredo Jimenez. By her mid-teens Tish was listening to the music of contemporary folksingers such as Buffy Sainte-Marie, Linda Ronstadt and Joan Baez.

Already able to play guitar, and actively encouraged by her mother, Tish began playing in clubs and coffeehouses in the early seventies and went on to record four – unsuccessful – singles for Robert Grever’s, San Antonio based, Cara imprint. After graduating from high school, Hinojosa enrolled in San Antonio College and funded her studies by continuing to play in local clubs. In 1979 using the name Tish Hanley, she was one of the half dozen annual winners of the Kerrville Folk Festival’s New Folk Songwriting contest. Tish can be heard performing her composition “Twilight Serenade” on the 1980 Kerrville Folk Festival **“Live Highlights”** album. Aged 24, Tish moved to Red River, New Mexico and worked with her uncle who was involved with the progressive country music scene. He put her to work in a number of duos and trios.

Through a singing engagement with Michael Martin Murphey, in 1983 Hinojosa scored a songwriting contract with a Nashville based publisher and also met her husband-to-be Craig Barker. Barker would later act as Hinojosa’s manager-attorney through to the latter part of the nineties when they parted. 1985 brought Hinojosa back to San Antonio when her beloved mother passed, and she then returned to New Mexico. It was there, a couple of years later that she made her first solo recording, initially a cassette only release, **“Taos To Tennessee.”** The twelve-song recording, co-produced by Mike Hearne [Bill & Bonnie Hearne’s nephew and leader of the band, SXSW] Hinojosa and Barker, was a mix of Tish originals and covers, and the now defunct Austin based label, Watermleon, subsequently issued it on CD. Hinojosa settled in the Texas state capital, Austin, soon after her 1987 cassette was released.

In the late nineties, Hinojosa inked a deal with A&M Records’ new *roots music* subsidiary, A&Mericana. **“Homeland”** was produced by Steve Berlin of Los Lobos. The album allowed Hinojosa to tour more widely, particularly on the college circuit and in the nation’s listening clubs, and it scored a gold record in Asia. Although she cut a second disc for A&M it was never released. Her next full album, for the then fledgling Watermelon label, **“Aquella Noche [That Certain Night]”** was recorded *live* in early May at Austin’s Waterloo Icehouse. Initially a four song, cassette only, Christmas album, with the addition of another quartet of tracks Watermelon reissued **“Memorabilia Navidena”** on CD at the end of that year.

Rounder Records were the next label to show an interest in Hinojosa and **“Culture Swing”** which featured some of the songs slated for the unreleased A&M album [as did **“Destiny’s Gate”**], was the first of, to date, a quintet of Tish recordings issued by that label – the **“Live”** album being the **most recent** addition. A mix of Hinojosa originals, covers and traditional songs, **“Frontejas,”** truly reflected her Tex/Mex roots, while **“Cado Nino/Every Child”** [which also featured bilingual songs] was essentially a children’s album. Concurrent with her Rounder deal, and signed to Madonna’s Maverick song publishing company, Tish also scored a recording deal with Warner Brothers Records, resulting in the release of the folk/pop influenced **“Destiny’s Gate”** and the Mexican roots music inspired **“Dreaming From The Labyrinth.”** The latter collection merged Spanish and English lyrics and Warner’s also issued a Spanish only version - **“Sonar Del Laberinto.”**

Linda Ronstadt – an artist who has reflected her own cross border heritage by making Spanish language recordings - cut Hinojosa’s “Adonde Voy” for her **“Winter Light”** [1993] collection, and a couple of years later Joan Baez and Tish dueted on “Pajarillo Barranqueno” on the formers **“Ring Them Bells”** *live* album. Following a four year recording hiatus, which saw Watermelon issue a retrospective in 1997, Hinojosa returned to the fray in Y2K with **“Signs Of Life”** which featured twelve new songs sung entirely in English. Recorded in concert at UT’s famed Cactus Café in the Fall of 2002, and released the following year, **“Live”** was another *career retrospective*. Austin’s Lone Star imprint issued **“From Texas For A Christmas Night”** in late 2003, and in terms of the material featured it was a reissue of **“Memorabilia Navidena”** less “Cado Nino/Every Child” but with the addition of five *new* seasonal songs. In early 2005 Hinojosa released a collection of new songs titled **“A Heart Wide Open.”** Valley Entertainment released the disc in the States, and it appeared on the Corazong imprint in Europe.

Discography :

“Taos To Tennessee” [1987] cassette only, later issued on CD in 1992 ; **“Homeland”** [1989] ; **“Memorabilia Navidena”** four song, cassette only version [1990] ; **“Aquella Noche”** [1991] ; **“Memorabilia Navidena”** eight song, CD version [1991] ; **“Culture Swing”** [1992] ; **“Destiny’s Gate”** [1994] ; **“Frontejas”** [1995] ; **“Cado Nino/Every Child”** [1996] ; **“Dreaming From The Labyrinth”** Spanish/English version [1996] ; **“Sonar Del Laberinto”** Spanish only version of **“Dreaming”** [1996] ; **“The Best Of Sandia : Watermelon 1991 - 1992”** [1997] ; **“Sign Of Life”** [2000] ; **“The Best Of Tish Hinojosa - Live”** [2003] ; **“From Texas For A Christmas Night”** [2003] ; **“A Heart Wide Open”** [2005] :

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