

Cliff Eberhardt - Bio

Cliff Eberhardt was born in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania on January 7th 1954. He was raised in Berwyn, Pennsylvania which lies on the northern edges of Philadelphia. His mother was Jewish and played the piano, while his father was a guitar playing atheist. The legend goes that by the age of 7, Cliff knew he was going to become a singer and songwriter. Introduced to guitar playing by his father, during his mid teens Cliff began performing in public as a duo with his brother Geoff. While growing up Eberhardt was influenced by the music of James Taylor, Joni Mitchell, Springsteen, Howlin' Wolf, Muddy Waters, Bonnie Raitt and Mississippi John Hurt. Concurrently, he also listened to the music of Cole Porter, the Gershwins, and Rodgers and Hart. At the age of twenty-one, Eberhardt settled in Carbondale, Illinois. During this period he worked in a masking tape factory, while continuing to work as a performing music. Colorado was Cliff's next stopping off point, but he soon moved on to New York arriving there in 1978. The Songwriter's Exchange had begun meeting at the Cornelia Street Café in late 1977, and Cliff soon became a regular attendee. In 1980 he was one of the featured Café artists on the Stash Records compilation **"The Songwriter's Exchange."** The collection was reissued on CD in 1990 and featured four of Cliff's early songs, including "Summers In N.J." and "The Right Words." During the 80's Cliff worked as lead guitarist for Richie Havens, Eric Andersen and Melanie. In December 1984 "Nickel And Dime" his first contribution to the catalogue of Fast Folk recordings appeared on the disc that accompanied Issue #110. In the ensuing years Cliff recorded further contributions for the Fast Folk catalogue. During the period 1986 – 1989 Cliff also appeared on the annual Canadian CBNC –TV Superthon. He also became the voice on jingles for Coke, Miller Beer and Chevrolet during that decade. His "The Heartbeat of America" for Chevrolet, is remembered to this day. In 1989 two compilation albums were released, both of which had a considerable impact on Eberhardt's solo career. **"On A Winter's Night"** released by Rounder/Philo was a collection of seasonal songs by various artists compiled by Christine Lavin. As a result of the compilation, groups of artists featured on the recording began touring the nation's major folk venues, annually, during the winter period. Those tours continue to this day and have regularly featured Cheryl Wheeler, John Gorka, Patty Larkin and Cliff, even though he didn't appear on the aforementioned album. The same year, the previously instrumental music only, New Age music imprint, Windham Hill, issued a fifteen cut contemporary songwriter compilation titled **"Legacy – A Collection of New Folk Music."** The disc included a performance by Eberhardt of his song, "My Father's Shoes." Produced by Peter Gallway [Fifth Avenue Band and solo], Cliff's debut solo album **"The Long Road"** was released by Windham Hill in 1990. Eberhardt appeared on Lavin's second Rounder/Philo seasonal compilation **"When October Goes"** [1991] performing "The Long Road." Eberhardt's sophomore album **"Now You Are My Home"** produced by Danny Weiss, surfaced in 1993 on the Shanachie label. The same year, Eberhardt contributed "Is It Wrong To Feel So Good (At This Time In My Life)" to yet another Christine Lavin compiled disc, **"Big Times in a Small Town – The Vineyard Tapes."** The latter disc had been recorded during the, Lavin organised, first annual Martha's Vineyard Singer/Songwriters Retreat at The Wintertide Coffeehouse. Cliff performed "Life Is Hard" on the 2CD second Martha's Vineyard collection, **"Follow That Road"** [1994]. That year Cliff relocated from New York to the songwriter's enclave in Northampton, Massachusetts. Produced once more by Peter Gallway, Cliff's third solo album appeared in 1995 and was titled **"Mona Lisa Café."** A friend of John Gorka's since his Fast Folk days, Eberhardt met Red House Records boss, Bob Feldman, at Gorka's mid-nineties wedding. In 1996 Cliff performed "Good For Nothing Saint (Mr. Christopher)" on the two disc collection, **"Christine Lavin Presents Laugh Tracks."** Self-produced, **"12 Songs of Good and Evil,"** Eberhardt's third, and first, solo album for Red House Records appeared in 1997. The latter collection featured Eberhardt's song, "Memphis," which was covered the following year by Richard Shindell on the *supergroup* disc, **"Cry Cry Cry"** [1998]. When Cry 3 [Richard Shindell, Dar Williams and Lucy Kaplansky] took to *the road*, Cliff appeared on a number of their concert dates. In tribute to one of his main mentors, Cliff, accompanied by Julie Gold, appeared on the compilation disc **"Big League Babe – The Christine Lavin Tribute Album Pt. 1"** [1998] performing Christine's "Artificial Means." When Cliff's fifth solo disc, **"Borders,"** appeared in 1999, it turned out to be another self-produced collection. Apart from those already mentioned, artists who have covered Eberhardt's compositions, to date, include Richie Havens, Shawn Colvin, Russ Taff and Buffy St. Marie. Cliff Eberhardt's first album of the third millennium AD, was released by Red House in the early fall of 2002 and was titled **"School For Love."** In 2002 Cliff suffered significant back injuries after being involved in a near-death car accident, and subsequently had to undergo two back surgeries and months of intensive physical therapy. Following a five-year long silence, Eberhardt recorded the Eric Peltoniemi produced album **"The High Above And The Down Below,"** which was issued by Red House Records during the Spring of 2007.

Compilation : **“The Long Road”** [1990] ; **“Now You Are My Home”** [1993] ; **“Mona Lisa Cafe”** [1995] ; **“12 Songs of Good & Evil”** [1997] ; **“Borders”** [1999] ; **“School For Love”** [2002] ; **“The High Above And The Down Below”** [2007] :

Arthur Wood.

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