

## Christine Lavin – Bio

Christine Lavin was born in Peekskill, New York on January 2<sup>nd</sup> 1952. Along with eight brothers and sisters she was raised on the campus of Peekskill Military Academy, where her father worked as an administrator. At the age of twelve Christine's mother bought her a mail order catalogue Silvertone guitar that she learned to play while watching Laura Weber's show on PBS television. The following year Lavin began writing her own songs. The Lavin family later moved to Geneva, near the Finger Lakes in Northern New York state. Her musical influences during this period included Dave Van Ronk, Joni Mitchell, Leonard Cohen, Tom Paxton and Bob Dylan, as well as *all time* favourites, Peter, Paul & Mary. Christine went on to attend State University of New York in Brockport, NY where she majored in English, graduating in 1974. On her web site, Lavin claims to have changed her major "*seven times*." During her college summer vacations, Lavin variously worked as a telephone operator in a convent [only Lavin would claim this !!!] and a fruit picker. Christine's first paid performance was at the Crypt Coffeehouse in Brockport in 1971.

Following graduation Christine moved to Florida and then, the following year, returned to New York state and Saratoga Springs, home of Caffé Lena, where she worked as a waitress and occasionally performed. There she met Dave Van Ronk, and he encouraged Christine to move to New York. For much of 1976 Dave was Lavin's guitar teacher, and she eventually landed a job singing in one of Manhattan's Mexican restaurants. Lavin made her recording debut in 1981 on the Lifesong label, which was owned by Terry Cashman a former member of Cashman & West [as well as Cashman, Pistilli & West]. "**Absolutely Live**" was recorded at CBS Studios in New York and the original tape-only release included the song "Prince Charles" – an invocation to Charles Windsor not to marry, the late, Lady Diana Spencer. When reissued on CD in Y2K, the latter song was dropped and two previously unreleased tracks were added. In 1982 Christine became involved with Fast Folk Musical Magazine and regularly contributed to their releases until the demise of the publication fifteen years later. In addition she began performing at the co-operative's venue, The Speakeasy on MacDougal Street in Greenwich Village. Her second recording, a six song ep titled "**Husbands And Wives**," was also a tape-only release on her own label, Palindrome Records. Between the year's 1982/84, to supplement her income, Lavin worked as a secretary at Bellevue Hospital. The first version of the self-produced studio album "**Future Fossils**" surfaced in 1984 on Palindrome. Rounder Records signed Lavin in 1986 and reissued "**Future Fossils**" on their Philo imprint. Lavin's lyrics occasionally lean toward sentimentality, while others are generously sprinkled with humour. The foregoing, however, only tells half the story, as Lavin's words can also be deadly serious. An observer of life as we live it, Christine consistently captures in words - joy, sadness, irony, pathos and innocence.

The tape-only Philo release, "**Another Woman's Man**" was ostensibly an upgraded version of her 1983 ep with the addition of "Sonja Henie." The recording subsequently became a full blown, seventeen track Rounder/Philo reissue in Y2K bearing the title, "**The Bellevue Years**." Lavin remained a Rounder artist until 1993, in the process recording six albums and one ep. "**Good Thing He Can't Read My Mind**" won the NAIRD Folk Album of the Year in 1988. In 1989 and 1992 Christine was voted Folk Artist of the Year in the New York Music Awards.

Long a supporter and promoter of the work of her fellow songwriters, Lavin became involved in the production of a number of *themed* compilation albums. Initially they were self-produced, tape-only releases that Lavin sold at her concerts. Rounder later became involved and released "**On A Winter's Night**" [initially North Star had released it on CD] [1990/94] – which spawned a still ongoing series of *winter* tours by Cliff Eberhardt, John Gorka, Cheryl Wheeler and Patty Larkin. Subsequent compilation releases included, "**When October Goes**" [1991] and from the Martha's Vineyard Singer/Songwriters' Retreats "**Big Times In A Small Town – The Vinyard Tapes**" [1993] and "**Follow That Road**" [1994]. Shanachie issued compilation CD's titled "**Christine Lavin Presents – Laugh Tracks, Vol. 1 and 2**" [1996]. By way of a personal tribute to Lavin's unstinting work on their behalf, David Seitz's New York based Prime-CD label gathered together the cream of the nation's folk songwriters in 1997 to record what became a two CD set, "**Big League Babe – The Christine Lavin Tribute Albums**."

As if the foregoing was not enough, in 1990, Lavin along with Patty Larkin, Sally Fingerett and Megan McDonough formed the Four Bitchin' Babes. Lavin remained with the quartet for three albums. After her departure from Philo, Lavin released two, solo studio albums on Shanachie, "**Please Don't Make Me Too Happy**" and "**Shining My Flashlight At The Moon**," before forming her second label

*christinelavin.com* records. To date, her .com label has released four *live* recordings. **“Getting In Touch With My Inner Bitch”** was, appropriately, recorded at Caffé Lena. A studio recording, **“I Was In Love With A Difficult Man”** was released by the Chicago, Illinois based label, Redwing, in the late summer of 2002. The same year, Lavin’s .com label also released a *live* concert DVD, filmed in Indianapolis and titled **“girlUNinterrupted.”** Late 2003 saw the release, by Appleseed Recordings, of the studio recorded seasonal collection **“The Runaway Christmas Tree,”** and immediately prior to Mother’s Day 2004 [in North America], the same imprint issued the *in-concert* concept recording **“Sometimes Mother Really Does Know Best.”** In the late summer of 2005 Appleseed issued the studio recording **“FolkZinger.”** OK, it contained one live track!!!

Founder and permanent member of the FIBS [Fickle Independent Bitch Society], I like to think of the inimitable Christine Lavin as the *Mother Teresa* of America’s contemporary folk songwriters.

#### Discography :

Solo only - **“Absolutely Live”** [1981/2000] ; **“Husbands And Wives”** 6 song cassette only EP [1983] ; **“Future Fossils”** [1984/1986] ; **“Another Woman’s Man”** the **“Husbands And Wives”** EP plus the song “Sonja Henie,” as a cassette only release [1987] ; **“Beau Woes And Other Problems Of Modern Life”** [1987] ; **“Good Thing He Can’t Read My Mind”** [1988] ; **“Attainable Love”** [1990] ; **“Compass”** [1991] ; **“Live At The Cactus Café : What Was I Thinking”** [1993] ; **“Please Don’t Make Me Too Happy”** [1995] ; **“Shining My Flashlight At The Moon”** [1997] ; **“One Wild Night : In Concert”** [1998] ; **“The Bellevue Years”** the “Another Woman’s Man” cassette upgraded to a 17 track CD with unreleased recordings from the mid-eighties [2000] ; **“Getting In Touch With My Inner Bitch”** [2000] ; **“The Subway Series”** [2001] ; **“Final Exam In E\*B\*A\*S\*P\*F\*O\*101”** [2001] ; **“I Was In Love With A Difficult Man”** [2002] ; **“girlUNinterrupted”** DVD [2002] ; **“The Runaway Christmas Tree”** feat. The Mistletones [2003] ; **“Sometimes Mother Really Does Know Best”** [2004] ; **“FolkZinger”** [2005] :

#### Arthur Wood

Kerrville Kronikles 10/02, 11/02, 12/02, 04/04 & 08/05  
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