

Biography



CHRIS COOGAN

Chris Coogan is a multi-talented entertainer who, as a composer, performer, teacher, choir director and producer, is rooted in jazz and gospel traditions. Coogan performs original and traditional music as a solo pianist and singer, as the leader of a jazz group, and as director of the *Good News Gospel Choir*. In addition, he teaches jazz piano and leads workshops throughout the country to help reinvigorate church and community choirs.

Coogan as Jazz Musician

For 10 years, Coogan has lead the Chris Coogan Quartet, a combo whose repertoire includes strait-ahead jazz, fusion jazz and boogie-woogie. S'Funky, Coogan's first jazz album containing his original songs, was released in 1995 and re-released in 1999. It features the song Cranberry Isle which took the top jazz prize in the 1997 John Lennon Songwriting Competition.

Coogan's credits as a jazz musician include performing with the late Sal Salvador, Bette Midler, Donna Summer, Paul Newman, Whoopie Goldberg, Jo Anna Woodward, Alec Baldwin, Gene Wilder, Larry Corywell, Dave Liebman, Harold Danko, Ronnie Spector, James Naughton and Phoebe Show, as well as arranging for Teo Maceo, producer for the late Miles Davis. He appeared on television's *Celebrity Jeopardy* and the *Arsenio Hall Show* and has performed at Manhattan's Blue Note and the Montreaux Jazz Festival.

Coogan as Gospel Musician

Coogan also leads a successful career as a choral director; as well as a writer and arranger of gospel music. He weaves jazz, black gospel and white choral music into a new brand of music that engages a broad, cross-cultural audience.

In 1993, he founded the *Good News Gospel Choir* with 15 members. Today, this 50-voice, multi-denominational singing group performs nearly every weekend at churches, festivals, fundraisers and various community events throughout the state of Connecticut. The group has released two albums, 1997's *Joy, Unspeakable Joy* and most recently, *Light a Candle*.

Through choral workshops, Coogan has begun to help reinvigorate church and community choirs by teaching directors and members the vocal techniques and gesture that accompany Gospel music. These workshops have been offered throughout California and in Sydney, Australia and will be offered to churches throughout the country in Spring, 2001.

"I see myself as a catalyst who uses the medium of music to bring people together." Coogan said. "It's my passion to help people find joy in making music and singing from their souls."