

C H R I S

I C A N H E A R Y O U

P I E R C E

The phrase, “open your heart,” for some is a lofty saying, but for songwriter and performer, Chris Pierce, it’s a conviction that penetrates every aspect of his craft. The notion that music can cut through the isolated and static feelings of individuals worn down by the chaos of everyday life and unite them under one sonic roof to actually feel something together, be it pain, sorrow, frustration, joy, hope, or freedom, is what has driven Chris Pierce to create, perform, and sojourn for over a decade. As his latest album, *I Can Hear You*, affirms, Pierce’s musical presence is larger than life, echoing the classic R&B sensibilities originated by Otis Redding, Ray Charles, and Bill Withers while his songwriting intelligence invites spectators into a space removed from time or trend, and turns them into participants in the stories he soulfully spins.

A Los Angeles native, Chris Pierce grew up surrounded by his mother and father’s vinyl collection, preferring cuts by Aretha Franklin and John Lennon before he could walk as family legend claims. Church choir solos, piano lessons, and local theatre performances would prove the overture to Chris’ career and were marked by a tenacity and determination to learn, create, and perform that would follow him the rest of his life.

At age 15, Pierce developed a rare hearing disorder called Otosclerosis that led to the loss of hearing in one ear, a setback that would deter many young musicians forever. The reality, however, fueled Chris’ passion and determination all the more, forcing him to re-learn almost everything he had known prior to his condition. To Chris, music was, and still is, an “unconditional companion,” a friend worth pursuing to the point that it never leaves.

Chris’ uncommon pursuit during his adolescent years paid off. At age 18, Pierce received the prestigious Ella Fitzgerald scholarship for jazz studies at USC. Shortly after, he introduced himself to one of his idols, Jon Butcher, who invited Chris to tour with him as a background vocalist, an engagement that would lead to other gigs for chart-topping acts such as Sonia Dada.

Caught by the excitement of playing to sold out crowds, Pierce decided it was time to step out on his own as a singer-songwriter, playing everywhere and anywhere he was asked. One such invitation, a small party in the Hollywood hills, introduced Pierce to Seal who immediately resonated with his honest, intimate style and invited him to open for a string of worldwide tours launching his career to a new level.

A few years and four albums later (Static Trampoline, Intimate Moments, Walking on the Earth, and Live at the Hotel Café) Pierce has shared the bill with artists such as B.B. King, Toots & The Maytals, Jamie Cullum, Colbie Caillat, and Al Green and has invited audiences all over the globe to open their hearts and spirits through his soulful, energetic music and honest storytelling.

I Can Hear You, is perhaps the most raw and honest representation of his story yet. Musically, the album showcases Chris' tremendous musical dexterity for jazz ("Play with Me" & "Let Yourself Smile"), pop ("Looking for the Spark"), and soul ("Too Heavy"). Thematically, it levels with the listener, touching on everything from his at-times-rough L.A young adult years and his personal struggle to persevere against pain and loss ("Thunder or the Rain"), to the reality that at times we all feel like "invisible people," hanging on by a thread to survive the human race ("Invisible People"). A reimagining of a Bill Withers tune, "Hope She'll Be Happier," joins the track listing along with the original R&B ballad, "Meet Me in the Vineyard" which perhaps pays some homage in its title to one of Pierce's passions, wine production (His recently released Ledbetter Dry Creek Valley Syrah is getting rave reviews from food and wine industries alike). Like his "never-the-same-twice" live shows, I Can Hear You preaches a gospel to everyone, regardless of income, race, religion, or age, to feel, risk, step out and, open their heart, especially when it's most difficult.

"I Can Hear You represents an internal renewal," explains Pierce. "A rebirth. A beautiful opportunity to celebrate, to love, to apologize, to escape, to search, to educate, to cry, to cope, to laugh, to shout, to defend, to honor, to encourage, to bleed and to heal through the music. I offer this album to the strugglers in life. The invisible people. To those who make light out of the darkest of times even when it seems like no one is listening."

The new album was recorded over six months in three studios in and around Los Angeles. It was recorded and mixed by longtime friend and producing partner, Seth Atkins Horan, and was recorded mostly live on the first take in order to capture the raw feeling and energy of each track. "We really wanted to give the songs the time and space they needed to be sure that the story, vibe and picture were as complete as possible," says Pierce. "It was a true labor of love...We all stayed open and really listened to each others hearts through the music."

When Pierce says "we," he's referring to some of his favorite sought after stage and studio musicians who lent their talent to the album. I Can Hear You features Deron Johnson (Hammond B3, Wurlitzer, Rhodes), David Piltch (Upright and Electric Bass), Doug Pettibone (Electric Guitars, Lap Steel, Pedal Steel) and Tamir Barzilay (Drum Kit) among others.

The new album I Can Hear You by Chris Pierce release date is October 11, 2011.

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