

Claire Lynch Biography

Long recognized and praised as a creative force in acoustic music, Claire Lynch is a pioneer who continually pushes the boundaries of the bluegrass genre. The current Claire Lynch Band is a powerful juggernaut, a quartet that has the innate ability to perfectly interpret the beauty, subtlety, and genre-defying sophistication of Claire's music.

Claire's career is fittingly bookended by two IBMA Female Vocalist of the Year awards: in 2010, in recognition of her current work with the Claire Lynch Band, and in 1997, for her influential work with the Front Porch String Band, and as a solo artist

Blazing her own trail in the mid 70's when there were few role models for a young woman in the genre, Claire Lynch made history when she led the Front Porch String Band, which evolved in the 80's and 90's into "one of the sharpest and most exciting post-modern bluegrass bands on the circuit." She formed her own Claire Lynch Band in 2005 and has consistently been a top pick of prestigious publications, critics and audiences across the nation ever since.

Claire grew up in Kingston, N.Y. until the age of 12, when the family moved to Huntsville in northern Alabama. There she began her education in country music and got caught up in the bluegrass revival of the 1970's, joining a band called Hickory Wind. Later, the band changed its name to the Front Porch String Band with Claire's vocals as its centerpiece.

In 1981, after their first nationally released recording, the group retired from the road, and Claire pursued dual careers in addition to raising a family. As a songwriter, her tunes have been recorded by such luminaries as Patty Loveless, The Seldom Scene, Cherryholmes, Kathy Mattea, the Whites and Stephanie Davis. At the same time, she became a much sought-after session vocalist

In 1991, the Front Porch String Band was resurrected with the album, "Lines and Traces", a move that ultimately led to the launching of Claire's solo career in earnest. *Friends for a Lifetime* was released in 1993 followed by *Moonlighter* in 1995 (Claire's first GRAMMY nomination) and *Silver and Gold* in 1997 (also nominated for GRAMMY glory). She was named the IBMA Female Vocalist of the Year in 1997 and enjoyed many chart successes. The band wrapped up the 20th century with the album "Love Light," in 2000. At that time Claire took what she thought would be a full-fledged break from music, stepping away from the grind of daily touring. She wasn't sure when—or if—she would return. "I never thought I'd come back. Then one day I opened my catalog of songs and realized that I'd written my life," she said.

Little by little, the lure of music worked its way back. She sang harmony on "The Grass is Blue" and "Little Sparrow" which led to promotional touring as backup vocalist for Dolly Parton (Dolly has described Claire as "one of the sweetest, purest and best lead voices in the music business today.") She graced albums by other artists with her background vocals including Emmylou Harris, Linda Ronstadt, Pam Tillis, Alison Brown, Patty Loveless, Kathy Mattea and Ralph Stanley. Today, the impressive list of other guest appearances continues including spots on albums by Donna the Buffalo, Sara Watkins, the Gibson Brothers, Jonathan Edwards and Jesse Winchester.

In 2005, Lynch struck out on her own, forming the Claire Lynch Band and releasing the aptly named "New Day" CD. It was a hit on the bluegrass charts and earned her IBMA nominations for "Song of the Year" and "Female Vocalist of the Year." In 2007, Rounder

Records featured her brilliant catalog of music from her previous five albums on their label and titled the anthology collection, "Crowd Favorites". More IBMA nominations followed as well as an induction into the Alabama Bluegrass Music Hall of Fame.

"Whatcha Gonna Do," Claire's most recent release (2009) has been called "a stripped-down production with sumptuous acoustic atmospheres" showcasing Lynch's award-winning vocals and the instrumental brilliance of her four-piece band — described by *The Bluegrass Blog* as what may be "the best backing lineup of her career." After a busy touring schedule in 2010, Claire received three IBMA nominations including "Song of the Year" and "Recorded Event of the Year," winning the 2010 trophy for Female Vocalist of the Year

As one observer writes, "Listening to Claire Lynch sing is not something to be undertaken casually. Her songs and stage presence demand the listener's rapt attention. She's an intensely soulful singer, whose distinctive voice resonates with power and strength, yet retains an engaging innocence and crystalline purity. She's also a songwriter of extraordinary ability who can bring listeners to their feet with her buoyant rhythms or to their knees with her sometimes almost unbearably poignant and insightful lyrics." (Dave Higgs, *Bluegrass Now*)

The current Claire Lynch Band, in particular, has Claire animated and energized. Her career has come full circle: once again, she's a creative powerhouse at the top of her game, performing with one of the sharpest and most exciting post-modern bluegrass bands of the current decade.

"Her original songs display her gifts as a songwriter of uncommon skill, and her outside song choices reinforce her artistic self, one who feels deeply about home, family, strength, resilience and courage."

– Mary Chapin Carpenter