

Word Around Town: "The Voice Is Back!"

👉 **Michael Simmons** (singer, songwriter, recording artist; writer, "MOJO", "Huffington Post", "Rolling Stone"): "Some may remember the incomparable Chris O'Connell as 'the girl singer' in the original Asleep At The Wheel or as Ethyl in the duo Ethyl & Methyl, but O'Connell remains under the radar for a vocalist of her artistic accomplishment -- criminally so. She long ago mastered classic American musical idioms from hillbilly sob to jitterbug swing to jump blues without ever shifting glottal gears. Her deceptively easy, perfect phrasing and open, tugging heart is unmatched by any living songstress. That she's waited until now to release her first solo album -- the wryly titled '*Be Right Back!*' -- is simply a fact. Facts is facts and the fact is that it's a home run. 'Tis time for those who demand excellence to pay notice, listen up, and dig."

👉 **Dan Forte** (guitar player, recording artist, editor, "Vintage Guitar"): "If the Wheel had been dubbed the Chris O'Connell Band, instead of being one spoke of a multi-pronged whole, she would've probably been recognized for what she was -- the greatest female country singer of her generation. '*Be Right Back!*' proves that male, female, country, or anything else, she's quite simply one of the best singers around."

👉 **Buddy Miller** (singer/songwriter/musician/recording artist/producer): "One of my all time favorite singers has been AWOL for far too long, but now is back with a new record reuniting great players, wonderful songs, and that unmistakable beautiful voice of Chris O'Connell."

👉 **Blackie Farrell** (singer, songwriter, performer, recording artist): "Chris O'Connell doesn't just interpret a song, she slips into it and wears it like it's her own skin, leaving no doubt in the fortunate ears that hear her, she owns it. As a songwriter I'm ecstatic she chose to try one of mine on for size. And as an old friend, I'm so very proud. To say that Chris' first career solo album is overdue would be an understatement. 'What in the hell took so long?' would be more like it! Well here it is folks. Chris O'Connell's '*Be Right Back!*' is gonna leave you hungry for more. But don't worry. Chris O'Connell means what she says."

👉 **Ray Benson** (Asleep At The Wheel guitarist, singer, songwriter, recording artist): "I am so happy to hear Chris O'Connell is singing once more. Chris is one of the greatest female vocalists of her time and her range of material spans country music, rhythm and blues, western swing and her own soulful torch singing. The many years she sang with Asleep At The Wheel were epic, with a top ten record and a Grammy award as well as appearances all over the world. Take a listen and you'll be in for a real treat!"

👉 **Leon Rausch** (singer and recording artist, The Original Texas Playboys): "Chris is a joy to sing with! She is a unique vocalist who sings all styles of music - you name it! Country, blues, soul, pop, jazz, whatever, and does them all extremely well. We all wish we could do music as well as this gal does. Scale 1 to 10 in my estimation - oh I'd say about a 15! Best of the Best, and a great friend to me through the years to top it all off!"

👉 **Elvis Costello** (vocalist, songwriter, performer, recording artist, from email to Bill Kirchen): "Chris O'Connell sings so great on that terrific Roger Miller ballad . . . !"

👉 **Jerry Byrd** (legendary Hawaiian steel guitarist and recording artist): "Chris O'Connell is *much* too good not to be heard more than she is."

👉 **Bill Kirchen** ("Titan of the Telecaster", singer, songwriter, recording artist): "Chris and I met when Asleep at the Wheel was living on a farm in Paw Paw, West Virginia outside Washington, D.C. The unforgettable original female singer in that band, she is one of my very favorites in whatever genre or gender, performing country, Western swing, jump blues or torch songs equally and astonishingly well . . . as far as I can tell she can sing anything she wants."

👉 **Cindy Cashdollar** (steel guitar and dobro player, recording artist): "Music without Chris O'Connell would be like chips without salsa, pancakes without syrup. So glad she's back on board the music train, and full steam ahead. Her singing and guitar playing slayed me when I first saw her with Asleep At The Wheel, and continue to do so now more than ever. I got goosebumps while recording some of the tracks for her new CD; she's truly one of a kind."

👉 **Frank Roberts** (country music disc jockey): "This singer from Arlington, Virginia, who looks like an exotic pixie, is a combination big-band singer and country vocalist who outshines most of the women in both categories. She replaces the mechanics of singing with heart and makes it sound like the prettiest thing ever penned."

👉 **Nick Tosches** (journalist, novelist, biographer; from a review in "Penthouse Magazine"): "Chris O'Connell: the finest female country voice since Texas Ruby"