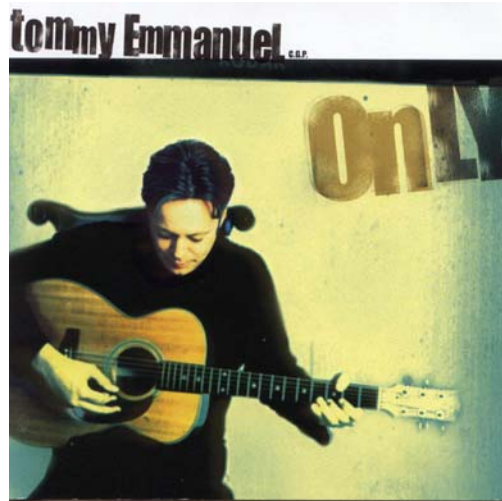
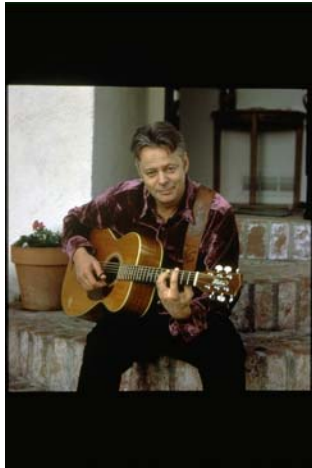


TOMMY EMMANUEL, Biography



His career spans three decades and continues to intersect with some of the finest musicians in the world, time and time again. A household name in his native Australia, he's garnered tens of thousands of loyal fans on all five continents. Known as a "musician's musician," he's been described (more than once, and by some of the biggest names in the industry) as the greatest guitar player alive today.

He is Tommy Emmanuel, C.G.P.

Emmanuel's unique style — he calls it simply "finger style" — is akin to playing a guitar the way a pianist plays a piano. While Tommy has many imitators, few approach his mastery. He even has his own annual guitar festivals, "Tommy Fest," in Newport News, Virginia, Louisville, KY and Dortmund, Germany.

Jazz legend Chet Atkins was one of the first people who inspired Emmanuel to pick up a guitar. Decades later, Atkins himself became one of Emmanuel's biggest fans, and is responsible for declaring Emmanuel a "Certified Guitar Player" — an honour shared by only two other people in the world (Jerry Reed and John Knowles). "I think he's probably the greatest finger-picker in the world today," Atkins said a few months prior to his death in 2001. "He's inventive, fearless and has a flawless sense of rhythm. You can't watch Tommy perform and not feel happy."

"I've spent my whole life from the age of 4 playing music and entertaining people. I never wanted to do anything else," says Emmanuel. "Playing the guitar is much more than a career for me. It's a passion ... my life. The best thing in the world is to make people happy and bring them together through my music. Because I'm touring so much these days, the whole world has become my home."

In his storied career, the Grammy-nominated Emmanuel has set sales records that have yet to be broken and performed alongside hundreds of other musical legends including Chet Atkins, Eric



Clapton, Sir George Martin, Hank Marvin and Joe Walsh. Olivia Newton-John, Al Jarreau and Sheena Easton have also recorded songs written by Emmanuel.

The consummate musician was voted *Rolling Stone (Australia) Magazine's* "Most Popular Guitarist" for two consecutive years and has earned four Platinum and three Gold albums. When his album "Dare to be Different" went Platinum, it was the first instrumental album to do so in Australia in more than 25 years and has not been topped since its release.

In Australia, Emmanuel's music and life are legendary. He began playing guitar at age 4, learning to play by ear without any formal instruction. Emmanuel and his brother Phil were child prodigies, starting their professional career in the 1960s when Phil was just 7-years-old and Tommy a mere 4. The Emmanuel Quartet, The Midget Safaries and The Trailblazers (with siblings Chris on drums and Virginia on slide guitar) are now part of Australian musical history. Emmanuel toured the Outback with his family, playing for audiences across the vast continent. He and his siblings worked hard to create the family's sole income for several years.

Shortly after his father's death in 1966, Emmanuel began teaching guitar lessons to help the family make ends meet ... at age 12. Emmanuel's first brush with fame and accolades came when The Trailblazers won two televised talent contests and produced an EP. Flush with success, Emmanuel, now in his early teens, left home and moved to Sydney to pursue a professional career as a guitarist. Playing clubs all over the city, Emmanuel's guitar skills were on public display and did not go unnoticed for very long. He soon found himself in high demand as a session player for some of the era's most popular performers. During the mid to late '70s and the early '80s, he joined one of the decade's biggest bands, Dragon, recorded thousands of "jingles," played on recordings for Air Supply and dozens of other popular artists. He even recorded sessions with Tiny Tim and Stevie Wonder.

For the next several years Emmanuel travelled throughout Australia, working alongside international music stars such as Stevie Wonder, John Denver, Ziggy Marley and Tina Turner. While on the road, Emmanuel taught himself the bass guitar and the banjo. In the mid-1980s, Tommy made the decision to pursue a solo career, and has since released a number of very successful albums including:

Up From Down Under (1988), which won extensive critical acclaim, charted around Australia, reached the Top 10 in Sydney and garnered him his first Gold album

Dare to be Different (1990)

Determination (1991)

The Journey (1993)

The Journey Continues (1994)

Terra Firma, with brother Phil (1995)

Classical Gas, a live recording with the Melbourne Philharmonic Orchestra (1996)

Can't Get Enough (1997)

The Day Fingerpickers Took Over the World, an album of duets with Chet Atkins (1998)

Collaboration, duets with a number of high-profile artists (1999)

Only (2000)

Chet Lag (2001)

The Very Best of Tommy Emmanuel (2001).



Emmanuel moved to the United States in 1997 then to the United Kingdom a few years later. He is now based in the U.S. again, but spends most of the year touring the world. Since the mid-1990s, Tommy has been steadily building a following in the United States and Europe. In Nashville, in 1999, his mentor Chet Atkins honoured Emmanuel when he received the Certified Guitar Player (CGP) award for his contribution to finger style guitar. It was a crowning moment for the player, who is still humbled by the honour. He has played to sold-out audiences at venues including the Sydney Opera House and the Closing Ceremonies of the 2000 Olympic Games. Emmanuel even made television history by playing “Dueling Banjos” with impresario Mark Collins live, via satellite while both musicians were in different cities.

He took Italy by storm in 2001 when he toured with Pooh, the countries most famous band. He’s now a regular performer in countries all over Western and Eastern Europe, playing to sell-out crowds wherever he goes.

With 13 albums under his belt, Emmanuel’s boundless talent and indomitable skill consistently impress music critics and fans alike. From the haunting melody of “Initiation” to the frenetic percussion of “Mombasa,” Emmanuel’s music is undeniably unique and showcases his unrivalled technical skill and emotional musical range. “(Emmanuel) is unquestionably one of the most gifted artists of our time,” says Jim Ohlschmidt of *Acoustic Guitar Magazine*, echoing the sentiments of hundreds of critics. Emmanuel’s constantly mobile lifestyle — something he says has been in his blood since he was a child — inspired the title track of his new album, *Endless Road*, released independently in the U.S. on his own label (see www.tommyemmanuel.com). His dazzling performances, flawless guitar skills and voluminous repertoire never fail to amaze audiences everywhere he goes. From the wilds of Australia’s outback to the gleaming metropolises of the world, Emmanuel’s flair and unforgettable showmanship have created an enviable fan base that continues to grow.

Awards

- 2000 Featured Appearance at the Closing Ceremonies of the Sydney Olympic Games
- 1999 Certified Guitar Player award for lifetime contribution to finger style guitar playing
- 1998 Best Country Instrumental Album — Nashville Music Awards
- 1998 Grammy Nomination with Chet Atkins for *The Day Fingerpickers Took over the World*
- 1997 Most Added Artist on Smooth Jazz Radio, North America
- 1996 Gold Award for live album recorded with the Australian Philharmonic
- 1992 Three platinum awards for album sales in Australia, New Zealand and Asia
- 1995 MO award for Entertainer of the Year
- 1995 Paul Harris Fellow, fundraising for the Rotary Club
- 1994 Best Adult Contemporary album ARIA
- 1993 MO award for Entertainer of the Year
- 1991 Best Adult Contemporary album ARIA
- 1990 Best Guitarist — *Rolling Stone*
- 1989–90 Ambassador of Music in Australia
- 1988 Best Studio Musician and Best Guitarist
- 1984–90 Best Guitarist — Juke Magazine



Discography

2004 *Endless Road*

2001 *The Very Best of Tommy Emmanuel*

2001 *Chet Lag*

2000 *Only*

2000 Live Concert Video filmed at the Sheldon Concert Hall, St Louis, MO

1999 *Collaboration* (duets with various artists) (Sony)

1998 *The Day Fingerpickers Took Over the World* (with Chet Atkins)

1997 *Can't Get Enough* (named *Midnight Drive* in the USA)

1996 *Classical Gas* (live recording with The Australian Philharmonic)

1995 *Terra Firma* (with Phil Emmanuel)

1994 *The Journey Continues*

1993 *The Journey*

1991 *Determination*

1989 *Dare to Be Different*

1988 *Up From Down Under*

1978 *From Out of Nowhere* (duets with Pee Wee Clark — Australia's first "direct to disc" recording)