

Shawn Colvin Bio

In an era when female singer-songwriters are ever more ubiquitous, Shawn Colvin stands out as a singular and enduring talent. Her songs are slow-release works of craft and catharsis that become treasured, lifetime companions for their listeners. As a storyteller, Colvin is both keen and warm-hearted, leavening even the toughest tales with tenderness, empathy, and a searing sense of humor. In the 19 years since the release of her debut album, Colvin has won three Grammy Awards, released eight albums, maintained a non-stop national and international touring schedule, appeared on countless television and radio programs, had her songs featured in major motion pictures, and created a remarkable cannon of work.

Combined sales of her albums total more than 2.5 million copies in the United States alone, and Colvin continues to perform at least 50–60 shows a year. Over the years she has shared the stage and toured with legendary artists such as Jackson Browne, Bonnie Raitt, Bruce Hornsby, Emmylou Harris, and Lyle Lovett. She has toured internationally throughout her career, returning to places as near as the UK and Europe as far as Asia, Australia, and New Zealand. She was honored to perform with David Broza and Jackson Browne in a very special sunrise concert at the base of the 2000-year-old fortress of Masada in Southern Israel, overlooking the Dead Sea. The concert was broadcast on PBS stations throughout the U.S. in the late fall of 2007 and in early 2008.

Colvin was born in Vermillion, South Dakota, where she lived until she was eight. A small-town childhood in the university town of Carbondale, Illinois, drew her to the guitar by the age of 10. She made her first public appearance on campus at the University of Illinois at age 15. By the late 1970s Colvin was singing in a Western Swing band in Austin, Texas—the city she now calls home. Moving to New York at the decade's end she remained in the country music field as a member of the Buddy Miller Band until she met producer, guitarist, and co-writer John Leventhal. Leventhal inspired Colvin to find her own voice as a songwriter. She began honing her skill, and was soon signed to Columbia records. Her first album, *Steady On* won a Grammy Award for Best Contemporary Folk Recording.

Colvin continued to win fans and critics with her subsequent releases, *Fat City* (1992) and *Cover Girl* (1994). In 1996, she released *A Few Small Repairs* (1996), which would prove to be her breakthrough. The murder-ballad "Sunny Came Home" gave Colvin a Top 10 hit and two of Grammy's biggest honors: Record of the Year and Song of the Year.

Holiday Songs And Lullabies (1998), recorded while Colvin was eight and a half months pregnant with her daughter Caledonia, followed. *Whole New You* (2001) and *Polaroids* (2004). Her Nonesuch debut *These Four Walls* (2006) was lauded by *People Magazine* as "the most self-assured album of her career" and "one for the ages" by the *Washington Post*. The *Austin-American Statesman* called it "an exquisite portrait of strength and vulnerability."

Colvin's newest release, *Shawn Colvin Live* (2009), was recorded in 2008 during a special three-night solo engagement at San Francisco's famous jazz club, Yoshi's. *Live* includes 12 songs written or co-written by Colvin, as well as covers of songs by Robbie Robertson, Garth Brooks, and the Talking Heads. The record was co-produced by Colvin and John Leventhal. *Shawn Colvin Live* captures the beauty and intimacy of Colvin's performances, showcasing her inimitable voice and matchless guitar stylings.

Colvin recently signed a deal with Harper Collins Publishers to write a memoir, which will be an extension of the intimate, personal, and often hilarious stories that she weaves into her live concerts.

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These Four Walls critical praise

*"[Shawn Colvin] follows the mold of ...Bonnie Raitt and Emmylou Harris on *These Four Walls*, mining her soul and coming up with the most self-assured album of her career."*—*People Magazine*

*"*These Four Walls* isn't one for the industry. It's one for the ages."*—*The Washington Post*

*"...her finest since 1996's *A Few Small Repairs*..."*—*Entertainment Weekly*

*"...richly spare, with highlights including tender, wistful numbers...and a sweetly fragile reading of the Bee Gees' *Words*."*—*USA TODAY*

"...an exquisite portrait of strength and vulnerability..."—*Austin American Statesman*

"Colvin's breathy voice conveys the emotion, yearning, sadness, and even the occasional joy and hope behind the melodies... one of Colvin's finest, most honest, and poignant collections."—*Amazon.com*

*"...a pitch-perfect collection of tracks that rival those found on her Grammy-winning breakthrough *A Few Small Repairs*...Colvin once again shines as one of her generation's most vital talents."*—*Amplifier*

"...smart, literate folk-pop...intriguing..."—*The Associated Press*

"Colvin...creates subtly textured songs that pulse with a hard-earned honesty."—*Chicago Tribune*

"The album speaks eloquently of our hope for love and, on the title track, of growing older."—*More Magazine*

"...her words and voice gleam with strength..."—Paste Magazine

"...sounding better than ever, these songs are trademark Shawn. My hands-down fave of the year."—Performing Songwriter

*"Carefully pared wordsmithery and self-possessed, intimate singing put you right beside Colvin. Graceful melodies and arrangements underpin a sense of deeply considered emotions held back with difficulty. Brilliant." * * * **
—Mojo

"One of America's warmest and wisest songwriters. Colvin's best album yet."—Sunday Times London

"Extraordinary songs, mesmerizing guitar playing, and a voice that goes effortlessly from bruise-tender to scar-hard in a matter of minutes. Just as her voice is full of longing and regret, and occasionally icy anger, her lyrics are crafted and clever, full of subtlety and polished phrases."—Guardian

'These Four Walls is a beautifully written and performed album, dexterous and graceful, a subtle tour de force. If a singer-songwriter releases anything to better it in 2006, we're in for a very good year.'—The Times Magazine

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