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CHRIS McNULTY – SOUL JOURNEY

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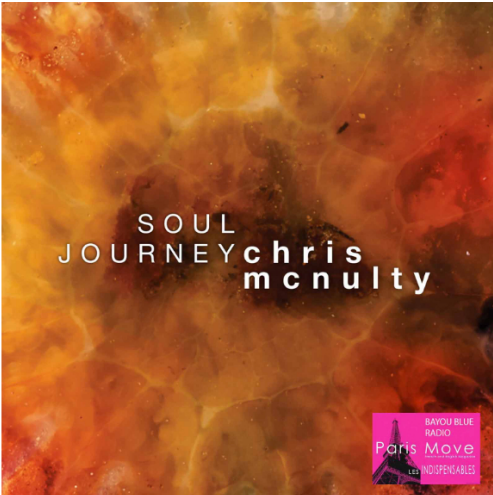
JAZZ

CHRIS McNULTY – SOUL JOURNEY

Chris McNulty Music – Street date : Available

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JAZZ



Summary: Chris McNulty's "Soul Journey" blends jazz, classical influences and poetic vocals into an intimate, sophisticated and deeply personal album.

Chris McNulty's "Soul Journey": An Intimate Journey Through Jazz

Sometimes an album gets lost. It happens. A record is sent out, disappears somewhere along the way, and by the time it finally finds its way back to us, days or weeks may have passed, sometimes even longer. Then, just when we have almost stopped thinking about it, a CD with a red cover slips out of an envelope. We put it into the player, perhaps without expecting very much, and suddenly something quite singular appears. A voice comes first, with music unfolding behind it, and almost immediately there is the feeling that we are listening to something that does not quite fit into the usual categories. The style is unusual, but what makes it compelling is not simply its originality, nor even the technical ability of the singer. There is something more elusive happening. With Soul Journey, her eighth album, Australian vocalist and composer Chris McNulty, who has lived and worked in New York for many years, brings together influences that seem to come from different sides of the world, and somehow makes them belong in the same room. It is deliciously unsettling at first, the kind of record that asks you to slow down rather than rush toward an immediate conclusion. So you settle in, put on the headphones, connect them to the big digital mixing desk, and listen. When an album is genuinely exceptional, you can usually feel it very quickly. On the opening track, "Secrets That We Keep," McNulty's voice almost becomes another instrument, while the saxophone takes on the role of narrator. It is clever, to say the least, and there is a real intelligence in the way the two seem to speak to each other. Then "Elegy for Olga" arrives, and something becomes clear: Chris McNulty is not simply a vocalist who also writes songs. She is a musician and a composer first, and the voice is one of the tools she uses to create situations, landscapes and emotional spaces that seem to correspond to a very personal inner world. That distinction matters, because Soul Journey is not really an album built around a singer. It is an album built around a musician who happens to have an extraordinary voice.

I had not heard McNulty's earlier recordings, so I came to Soul Journey without any particular expectations. After looking back at her career, however, I was not especially surprised to discover that her recordings and performances have received strong reviews and four- and five-star notices from publications including DownBeat, JazzTimes, The Irish Times and Jazzwise. Her reputation did not appear overnight, and Soul Journey makes it easy to understand why. There is also something particularly interesting about the way she approaches a song such as "Blue in Green," associated with Miles Davis, or the Italian standard "Estate," written by Bruno Martino in 1960 and subsequently interpreted by countless artists. McNulty does not simply sing these pieces. She inhabits them, reshapes them and, at times, almost seems to use her voice as a brass instrument. The words become only one part of the expression. The rest comes through tone, breath, phrasing and the strange warmth of her sound. This kind of vocal approach was certainly familiar in parts of jazz during the 1970s, when singers were increasingly willing to treat the voice as an instrument rather than simply as a vehicle for lyrics, but McNulty does something else with the idea. She gives it her own poetic character. Most importantly, she does not seem afraid

MARKS LES NOTES	
★ ★ ★ ★ ★	AVERAGE / MOYEN
★ ★ ★ ★ ★	GOOD / BON
★ ★ ★ ★ ★	GOOD / BON
★ ★ ★ ★ ★	VERY GOOD / TRES BON
♥	GREAT / COUP DE COEUR
INDISPENSABLE	A MUST / INDISPENSABLE



or silence. She does not try to fill every available space, and because of that, the other musicians have room to enter, to comment and sometimes to interrupt the emotional line of the voice. That is one of the things I particularly appreciate about this album. Nothing seems desperate to prove that it belongs there. The music has the confidence to wait.

There is also a fascinating meeting of musical cultures beneath *Soul Journey*. By now, most listeners understand that one of the deep connections between Australia, Europe and the United States is classical music, even if Australians may approach that tradition with a somewhat different perspective. These are nevertheless shared roots, and they can be felt here without ever becoming an obvious stylistic statement. McNulty's relationship with classical music seems to emerge less through quotation than through her attention to melody, structure, arrangement and color. Her Australian background and her long experience in New York give the album an unusually broad perspective, and that international character is one of its quiet strengths. *Soul Journey* feels like an intimate space that McNulty has opened for the listener, a place containing all of her complexity without feeling the need to explain it. There is nostalgia throughout the record, but it is never nostalgia for its own sake. The melodies carry memories, sometimes gently and sometimes with a little more weight, while the arrangements allow those melodies to breathe. This becomes particularly apparent in her treatment of "Estate." It would have been very easy to turn such a familiar song into another polished jazz standard, beautifully sung and quickly forgotten. Instead, McNulty takes the composition apart just enough to make it her own. She complicates it without making the complexity obvious. The music becomes richer, deeper and more spacious, and somehow the listener does not notice how much has changed until the piece has already taken hold. That is a difficult thing to achieve. It is also where McNulty's technical ability becomes most interesting, because technique is never presented as a demonstration. She is clearly a highly accomplished vocalist, but what remains with you is not the technique itself. It is the emotion that survives underneath it.

The album ultimately rests on McNulty's compositions and her approach to musical arrangements, and while there is nothing here that needs to be described as revolutionary, that does not make *Soul Journey* any less valuable. Not every worthwhile jazz album needs to reinvent the music. Sometimes the real challenge is to work inside a tradition, understand its language, respect its history and still find a way to say something that feels personal. McNulty does exactly that. There is a quiet passion in this record, but it is never careless. Everything feels considered, from the writing to the vocal work to the way the instruments are allowed to interact. She seems to know when a melody needs another voice and when it is better to leave it alone. She also understands that a good arrangement is not necessarily the one with the most things happening in it. Quite often, the opposite is true. The spaces between the sounds are just as important as the sounds themselves. For that reason, I would strongly recommend listening to *Soul Journey* in the order in which the tracks have been placed. The album has a progression, and although each song can stand on its own, something is lost if we treat the record simply as a collection of individual tracks. There is a journey here, and the title is not misleading. The further you go, the more the pieces begin to speak to one another.

In the end, what stays with me is the quality of the compositions, the voice and the recording itself, but also something much simpler and perhaps much harder to achieve. *Soul Journey* remains in the mind after the music has stopped. It is difficult to leave an album like this without finding one of its melodies returning unexpectedly during the day, without hearing a phrase from McNulty's voice in your head or remembering the way a saxophone entered a passage, almost as if it had been waiting for the right moment. This, for me, is one of the real tests of a successful album. Technical excellence can impress you during the first listen, and sophisticated arrangements can make you admire the musicians, but an album becomes something else when the music follows you after you have taken off the headphones. *Soul Journey* does that. It does not shout for attention, it does not try to convince us that it is important, and it certainly does not need to announce itself as a masterpiece. It simply unfolds, patiently and intelligently, and allows Chris McNulty's voice, compositions and musical imagination to do the work. Perhaps that is why the album feels so personal. You do not have the impression that she is trying to show you everything she can do. Instead, she seems to be inviting you into a particular place, letting you stay there for a while, and trusting that when you eventually leave, something will come with you. In the case of *Soul Journey*, it does.

Thierry De Clemensat
Member at Jazz Journalists Association
USA correspondent for [Paris-Move](#) and [ABS magazine](#)
Editor in chief – [Bayou Blue Radio](#), Bayou Blue News



**Thierry
Clemensat**

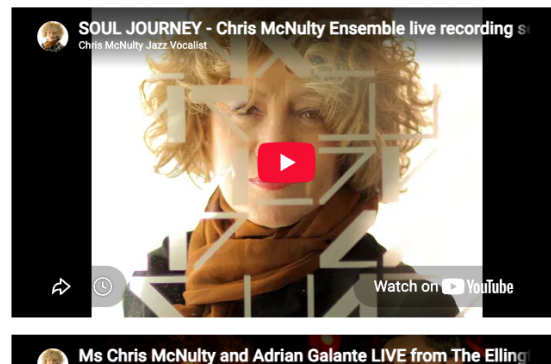
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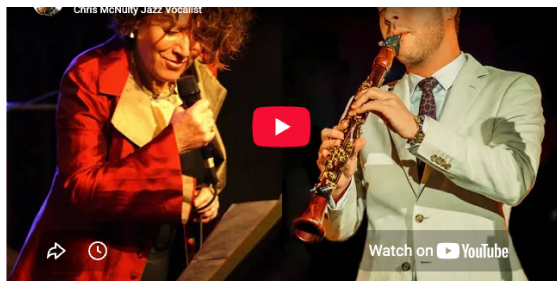
[PARIS-MOVE](#), September 4th, 2026

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Compositions and lyrics by Chris McNulty (tracks: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 9, 10)

Musicians :

Voice – Chris McNulty
Piano – Brett Williams (tracks: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 13)
Piano – John Di Martino (tracks: 4, 8, 11, 12)
Bass – Ben Robertson (tracks: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10)
Drums – Lewis Pierre (tracks: 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 10)
Saxophones (tenor/sop) – Carl Mackey (tracks: 1, 3, 5, 7)
Flutes, bass clarinet, clarinet – Tony Hicks (tracks: 1, 3, 5)
Flugel, trumpet – Gianni Marinucci (tracks: 1, 5)

Track Listing :

Secrets That We Keep
Elegy For Olga
Gratitude
Estate
The Waiting Game
The Blessing
Nothing Like You
It Never Entered My Mind
Beneath The Winter Sun
Flying Still
All My Tomorrows
There's No Such Thing As Love
Alfie

Core Ensemble Arrangements:

Chris McNulty & John Di Martino (tracks: 3, 5)
Chris McNulty (tracks: 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13)
John Di Martino (tracks: 1,10)

Woodwind and Flugel Arrangements:

Mirko Guerrini (tracks: 1, 3, 5)

Additional Background Vocal Arrangements:

Chris McNulty (tracks: 3, 5, 6)

Produced by Chris McNulty

Recorded at Brian Brown Studios, University of Melbourne, Aug 2025 (tracks: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 13)

Session engineer: Patrick Teller

Recorded at Trading 8s Music, Paramus, NJ, Sep 2025 (tracks: 4, 8, 11, 12)

Session engineer: Chris Sullit

Vocal overdubs recorded at TVOG, Bakery Hill, Ballarat, Sep-Nov 2025

Pearl Coast Jazz Studios, Soldiers Hill, Ballarat, Nov-Dec 2025

Session engineer: Dav Byrne

Mixed: Dav Byrne, TVOG, Bakery Hill, Ballarat

Final Mix and Mastering: David Darlington,

Bass Hit Studios, NYC, January 2026



A DELICIOUS BAKER'S DOZEN FROM CHRIS MCNULTY

Ian Muldoon*



Of all musical instruments, the voice may be the most subjective experience for the listener. Miles Davis had a favourite singer, Shirley Horn. My favourites include Cassandra Wilson, Sheila Jordan and Jazzmeia Horn. In live performance over the recent past Jo Lawry, Jenny Barnes and Chris McNulty have enthralled me. These three are musicians' singers with McNulty having special claim to such status. She composes, arranges, writes lyrics, leads and uses her voice very much as an instrument in her regular wordless vocals, multi-tracking and deconstruction of standards. Her new album *Soul Journey* (Pearl Coast Jazz 2026) is a generous smorgasbord of delights: almost 70 minutes of 13 compositions including seven originals.

**Ian Muldoon has been a jazz enthusiast since, as a child, he heard his aunt play Fats Waller and Duke Ellington on the household piano. At around ten years of age he was given a windup record player and a modest supply of steel needles, on which he played his record collection, consisting of two 78s, one featuring Dizzy Gillespie and the other Fats Waller. He listened to Eric Child's ABC radio programs in the 1950s and has been a prolific jazz records collector wherever he lived in the world, including Sydney, Kowloon, Winnipeg, New York & Melbourne. He has been a jazz broadcaster on a number of community radio stations in various cities, and now lives in Melbourne. In 2021 he published a collection of essays on jazz subjects, entitled "My Jazz Odyssey: Confessions of a Lifetime Enthusiast".*



Chris McNulty: she composes, arranges, writes lyrics, leads and uses her voice very much as an instrument in her regular wordless vocals, multi-tracking and deconstruction of standards...

At any buffet I head for the best which to me are freshly shucked oysters in the shell and in the musical case of McNulty's new album, it's her voice accompanied just by piano. In four songs she's accompanied by John Di Martino who in a long career has accompanied *inter alia* Billy Eckstine. We first hear him on the piece *Estate* (Bruno Martino/Joel Siegel) which is Italian for summer. But it's a summer, the lyrics tell us, which brings only darkness to one's heart reminding us of a great love once shining there.



Pianist John Di Martino: he accompanies McNulty in four songs...

Most of the songs in the programme have this bittersweet tone, or complex feelings about the tugging to and fro of relationships. In standards, it's the tone of Lorenz Hart whose classic *It Never Entered My Mind* (Rodgers/Hart) is covered by McNulty and Martino in one highlight of the programme. Sinatra, Miles Davis and Luciano Souza have each made versions of this song that is radiant and dolorous at the same time. *All My Tomorrows* (Van Heusen/Cahn) a Shirley Horn favourite, is a small gem of just voice and piano.

McNulty's a fan of *There's No Such Thing As Love* (Newley/Fraser) which she has really made her own. Listen to her final verse on this one. Her mid-register voice on it fits perfectly. Martino is masterful. McNulty has really invested in this work and it shows. This track is perhaps the highlight of the programme which leads me to reflect on the great Ella's legacy with large orchestras such as Nelson Riddle, Ellington, Billy May and Paul Weston and her two masterpieces accompanied by pianist Ellis Larkin alone. These last two works remain steadfast favourites as I think McNulty's four with Martino and one with Williams may be her best work.

Beneath the Winter Sun (McNulty) a pale, distant light that illuminates the landscape without thawing the frost, has Brett Williams and bassist Ben Robertson accompanying. Although I've heard Williams many times live, mostly he's played percussive swinging pianism supporting a group - his pianism supporting McNulty here is revelatory. The composition was a musical response to McNulty's 2024 sudden loss of her sister.



Brett Williams: his pianism supporting McNulty here is revelatory... PHOTO CREDIT IAN MULDOON

Elegy for Olga (McNulty) packs an emotional wallop and features a felt solo by Brett Williams. Her wordless vocal is enough to bring on a welling of tears. McNulty is no stranger to the personal tragedy of the loss of a young child. Her vocalese on *Flying Still* (McNulty) accompanied by Williams, Robertson and drummer Lewis Pierre is

another instance of her creative improvisational chops as it is on the ballad *The Blessing* (McNulty) again with Williams at his sensitive best.

But also on the table is the delightful Bob Dorough song *Nothing Like You* (McNulty retains echoes of her long New York residency in her pronunciation of "you") as well as multi-tracking her voice on the mid-tempo uplifting *Secrets That We Keep* (McNulty), *The Waiting Game* (McNulty) and *Gratitude* (McNulty). Appropriate to her standing McNulty draws great talents into her compass. Carl Mackey on soprano sax on *Gratitude* and *Waiting Game* shines. Long standing colleague double bass play Ben Robertson is on eight tracks but on the chamber pieces seems too far back in the mix.



Carl Mackey: on "Gratitude" and "Waiting Game" he shines on soprano sax....

Strange to think of *Alfie* (Bacharach/David) as a jazz standard, but there you have it. It's been covered by Rahsaan Roland Kirk, Stevie Wonder (harmonica version), Bill Evans and the chanteuse Patricia Barber. McNulty, accompanied by Williams, gives it the weight of a Bill Evans interpretation and makes Dionne Warwick's hit to me seem overwrought. Where a singer like Lawry has a tone of defiant irony and fun, McNulty is deeply invested in the music and gives lyrics real depth.

Popular songs, jazz standards, classical music, and poetic originals are grist to McNulty's brilliant musical mill and *Soul Journey* is a welcome addition to her recorded legacy.

ERIC MYERS JAZZ

ALBUM REVIEWS IN THE AUSTRALIAN

In September, 2017, Eric Myers commenced reviewing jazz albums in the Review supplement of The Weekend Australian. All reviews in this folder are written by Myers. As from October 21, 2025, the magazine Review was replaced by another magazine entitled Culture. From that date reviews by Eric Myers appeared either online in The Weekend Australian or as Album of The Week in the magazine Culture.

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JAZZ

Soul Journey by Chris McNulty

Pearl Coast Jazz

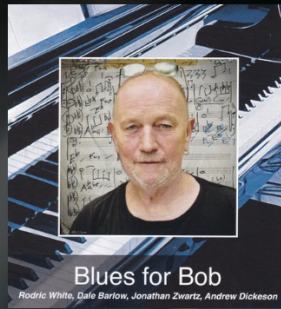
Published online in the Weekend Australian's Culture magazine on July 18, 2026.

Only a highly accomplished jazz singer produces an album like *Soul Journey*. In fact there's so much to praise that I need more space to adequately cover all the plaudits necessary. Chris McNulty's voice is blessed with impeccable sound quality and a lovely vibrato; she's a superb exponent of the wordless vocal; her compositional skills, particularly as a lyricist, are formidable; and brilliant jazz musicians, both local and international, are on hand to accompany her. There are 13 tracks here, including seven McNulty originals, and six by other composers, the highlights of which are arguably the Richard Rodgers/Lorenz Hart classic *It Never Entered My Mind*, and Jimmy van Heuson's *All My Tomorrows*. After a lovely version of the latter, McNulty closes the album with a tour de force of two ballads: Anthony Newley's *There's No Such Thing As Love*, and the Hal David/Burt Bacharach classic *Alfie*, so beautifully sung that the listener is taken to another place. This album is testimony to how well McNulty developed her artistry during 30 years in New York, before her welcome return to Australia in 2015.

★★★★★

Eric Myers

PREVIOUS PAGE



JAZZ

Blues for Bob by Rodric White

Newmarket Music Australia

Published online in the Weekend Australian's Culture magazine on July 25, 2026.

This album features three great Australian musicians playing under the leadership of the excellent pianist Rodric White. It's a tribute to legendary Sydney pianist Bobby Gebert who, in his career, pushed the boundaries of the music as a player and composer. Now 82, he's no longer playing. It's appropriate that Jonathan Zwartz (bass) & Andrew Dickeson (drums) are present, for two reasons: one, they ensure that the rhythm section is flying throughout; and two, they both played on the Bobby Gebert Trio's classic album *The Sculptor*, nominated for the 1995 ARIA Award for best jazz album. Completing the quartet is saxophonist Dale Barlow, one of a rare breed, an Australian who was truly successful in New York. His familiar tenor provides one of the signature sounds in Australian jazz. There are ten tracks here, with Barlow and White each providing two originals. Otherwise the repertoire includes jazz standards by composers such as Ray Brown, George Cables and McCoy Tyner, plus two tunes from the Great American Songbook. Not all the album's highlights can be mentioned in a thumbnail review, but one is *Bass Blues in E*, featuring Zwartz & Dickeson; another is White's solo piano version of Monk's beautiful composition *Pannonica*.

★★★★

Eric Myers

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JAZZ

Skydancer by The Vampires

Earshift Music

Published online in the Weekend Australian's Culture magazine on August 8, 2026.

This is the eighth album from The Vampires, a quartet now celebrating 20 years together as one of Australia's most creative and internationally recognised jazz groups. They include Jeremy Rose (tenor sax, bass clarinet, synthesisers), Nick Garbett (trumpet), Noel Mason (bass) and Alex Masso (drums). *Skydancer* follows up their ARIA Award-winning 2023 album, *Nightjar*, which featured The Necks' pianist Chris Abrahams. There are 11 tracks here, including seven compositions by Rose, three by Garbett, and one by Mason. The group's infectious Garbett/Rose interaction survives as always, atop the groove-based time-feels which are laid down in masterly fashion by Mason and Masso. If there's an evolution in the latter, it's perhaps that there are more backbeats than in previous albums. Importantly, The Vampires appear to be widening their vocabulary. In his liner notes, Rose puts it this way: "Each of us recorded additional parts, layering horns, synths and percussion, but always with restraint. The challenge was to create new worlds without losing the immediacy that defines the band". I feel that the band's fans around the world are likely to agree.

★★★★½

Eric Myers

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ERIC MYERS JAZZ

ESSAYS

This section includes essays on various jazz subjects, written by a number of writers. Contributions are welcome. Writers interested in contributing are welcome to contact the editor by filling out the form in the CONTACT tab. Photographs to illustrate those essays are welcome. Readers can click on the INDEX button for a list of articles in this folder.

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Chris McNulty

A DELICIOUS BAKER'S DOZEN FROM CHRIS MCNULTY

A review by Ian Muldoon

May 15, 2026

Of all musical instruments, the voice may be the most subjective experience for the listener. Miles Davis had a favourite singer, Shirley Horn. My favourites include Cassandra Wilson, Sheila Jordan and Jazzmeia Horn. In live performance over the recent past Jo Lawry, Jenny Barnes and Chris McNulty have enthralled me. These three are musicians' singers with McNulty having special claim to such status. She composes, arranges, writes lyrics, leads and uses her voice very much as instrument in her regular wordless vocals, multi-tracking and deconstruction of standards. Her new album *Soul Journey* (Pearl Coast Jazz 2026) is a generous smorgasbord of delights: almost 70 minutes of 13 compositions including seven originals...

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Sonny Rollins

NEWK LIVES: A SPONTANEOUS TRIBUTE TO SONNY ROLLINS

by Ian Muldoon

June 6, 2026

Words are one thing, but is there any evidence locally that bears out such praise? On Saturday night, May 30, 2026, I fronted up to Jazzlab in Melbourne to hear a quintet led by composer and bassist Yunior Terry. He had some local heavyweights in the band. Noting that Rollins, at 95, had died the previous Monday, he invited the quintet musicians to comment about Sonny's passing. Three did. The next paragraph is a paraphrase of what reeds player Carl Mackey said:

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NAME OF THE SONG

by Ian Muldoon

July 25, 2026

In 1955 Emmett Till was murdered in Mississippi and the first Disneyland opened in California and I was on RAAF guard duty in a small Australian town called Wagga Wagga (meaning 'place of many crows') pop 18,000. Presumably my duty was to protect the RAAF Base from Communist infiltrators, after all this was the age of McCarthyism when the Australian 1951 referendum to ban Communism had been very narrowly defeated - meaning (I thought) 49.99% were rabid anti-communists looking for reds under the bed. I was a 15-year-old RAAF engineering apprentice on duty in the guard's hut listening to Duke Ellington worried more about the pickup needle on my Nippergram than the red scare. My connection to Mississippi and California was not Southern racism or holiday destinations but jazz...

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CHRIS MCNULTY'S SOUL JOURNEY : A FIVE STAR ALBUM

by Eric Myers | October 5, 2026 | Music



Above : Chris McNulty... Photo credit John Abbott

This piece is based on a press release prepared to assist in the marketing of Chris McNulty's new album *Soul Journey*, which was released on the label Pearl Coast Jazz on April 17, 2026. The promotional spiel reads: "Vocalist, composer & arranger Chris McNulty has entered the recording studio after a ten-year absence, with her 8th album, her first in Australia since her return from New York in 2015. The new album has 13 tracks, seven of which feature McNulty's original compositions, with a stellar band of leading jazz musicians accompanying her."



Chris McNulty left Australia in 1988 on an international study grant awarded to her by the Australian government to study in the USA. She was based in New York for the next 27 years, performing and touring internationally. She regularly received 4 and 5 star reviews in leading international jazz magazines. For example, in 2015 her album *Eternal* earned her 11th place in the 80th *DownBeat* Readers Poll for Album of the Year.

In Australia she received the 2013 Australian Jazz Bell Award for Best Australian Jazz Vocal Album for *The Song That Sings You Here*, and in 2019 enjoyed a year-long prestigious Bundanon Trust composer-in-residence scholarship.

Soul Journey is a five star album. It was awarded five stars in July, 2026, on *The Australian* newspaper's Music Reviews page, where five stars is a rare occurrence. The accompanying musicians are an important part of the album's success. Well chosen by McNulty, they are a mixture of Australian, American and expatriate European jazz musicians: Brett Williams (piano); John Di Martino (piano); Ben Robertson (bass); Lewis Pierre (drums); Carl Mackey (saxophones); Tony Hicks (flute & clarinets); and Gianni Marinucci (flugelhorn, trumpet).



Eric Myers

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Brett Williams... Photo credit Ian Muldoon

The album shows how comprehensive is McNulty's jazz artistry. It's well-known that many jazz singers confine themselves to singing lyrics only, and keep improvisation to a minimum. This is not surprising considering that scat singing is widely regarded as the most difficult art form in jazz. The real acid test for jazz singers is whether they've mastered the art of the wordless vocal. Scat singing is not for the fainthearted. On *Soul Journey* McNulty throws down the gauntlet explosively in the first three tracks, all compositions by her: *Secrets That We Keep*, where there's a mixture of lyrics and wordless vocals; then two tracks where the vocals are wordless: *Elegy for Olga*, with minimal accompaniment by two musicians only, Robertson & Williams, with Olga's name mentioned at the end of the track; then *Gratitude*, another wordless vocal. These three tracks explore to the utmost the potential possibilities of the wordless vocal, testifying to McNulty's mastery of this aspect of jazz singing.

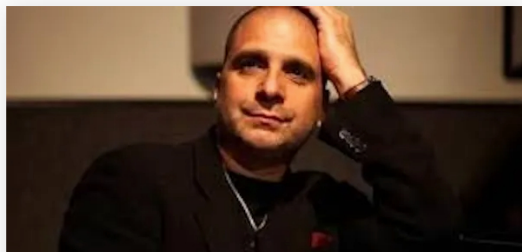
It's not for nothing that one of Australia's most prolific jazz writers Ian Muldoon, now based in Melbourne, described McNulty in November, 2023 not only as "the finest Australian jazz voice, of any gender, presently performing in Australia", but also as "the finest Australian jazz singer ever". That's a big call, but Muldoon spoke with authority. Perhaps he was enamoured primarily with the sound quality of McNulty's voice. She is indeed blessed with a gorgeous voice, a subtle vibrato to die for, and a very strong sound in all registers, throughout her whole vocal range. Many other singers would give their eyeteeth for a voice of this quality.



Chris McNulty... Photo credit Ian Muldoon

Many who have heard *Soul Journey* agree that the tracks where McNulty is accompanied by the New York-based American composer, arranger & jazz pianist John Di Martino are a highlight. His playing is featured on four standards: Bruno Martino's *Estate* (1960); Rodgers & Hart's *It Never Entered My Mind* (1940); Jimmy van Heusen's *All My Tomorrows* (1959), and Anthony Newley's *There's No Such Thing As Love* (1963). Di Martino assists McNulty to reveal her ability to bring to life standards from the Great American Songbook. McNulty is as conversant with those standards, as she is with modern jazz, and her versions of those four standards illustrate what most people consider to be the essential language of jazz. The album's final track is another standard, her beautiful take on the great Burt Bacharach/Hal David composition *Alfie*. This composition was successful at the 1968 Grammy awards, and Bacharach himself has cited *Alfie* as his personal favourite of his compositions.

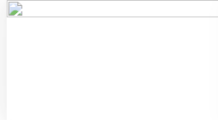
McNulty's skills as exemplified on *Soul Journey* are unusually wide-ranging. She is a unique composer in that, like Cole Porter and Irving Berlin, she writes the perceptive lyrics which grace all her songs, as well as their melodies. She has done the core arrangements for nine of the 13 songs on the album, as well as two of the tunes she co-arranged with Di Martino. McNulty speaks highly of Di Martino, saying he "was integral to bringing my originals to life and adding that extra glister to the proceedings". Also McNulty is responsible for three of the background vocal arrangements. Her involvement in so many elements of her music is such that many observers can justifiably argue that *Soul Journey* provides more than adequate evidence of the "comprehensivist" sensibility, very much in the tradition of the late Australian musician Roger Frampton, who introduced the term "comprehensivist" to jazz vocabulary.



American pianist John Di Martino...

McNulty will be following up this album's release by performing the music of *Soul Journey* at Melbourne's prestigious jazz venue, the JazzLab, on March 12, 2027. Also, she has plans to tour with some members of her ensemble in early 2027, following the JazzLab date. She will also perform the more standard material with her Magic Trio (including pianist Matt Steele & double bassist Ben Robertson) at Tempo Rubato in Melbourne, this coming October 30, 2026.

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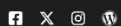
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NO ONE ASKED MY OPINION, BUT...

FAMOUS FRIENDSHIPS

by [George W. Harris](#) • October 5, 2026

Friendship, I have said, is born at the moment when one man says to another "What! You too? I thought that no one but myself..." CS Lewis AS THIS MONTH'S THEME IS FRIENDSHIPS, I THOUGHT WE'D GO THROUGH A LIST...

Read more →

HEADS UP!!!

HEAR ARE THE GIGS FOR THE UPCOMING SUMMER MONTHS...

UCLA JUST ANNOUNCED IT'S NEW SEASON, INCLUDING JAN 16 VIJAY IYER/JENNIFER KOH, JAN 22 CUERVO, JAN 31 KRONOS QUARTET INFO AT <https://cap.ucla.edu/>

OCT 02 BONEY JAMES BRINGS A SMOOTH SAX TO HOLLYWOOD. INFO AT <https://www.bluenotejazz.com/shows>

OCT 3 SNARKY PUPPY COMES TO CSUN. INFO AT <https://thesoraya.org/> OCT 02-03 JOSH NELSON TRIOS UP AT LAX. INFO AT <https://www.samfirstbar.com/upcoming-shows>

OCT 7 PUNCH BROTHERS COME TO UCSB. INFO AT <https://artsandlectures.ucsb.edu/>

OCT 15 THE YELLOWJACKETS BUZZ INTO BEL AIR. INFO AT <https://www.vibratogrilljazz.com/musical>

OCT 16-17 JIMMY WEBB BRINGS HIS SONGS TO HOLLYWOOD. INFO AT <https://www.thebakedpotato.com/events-calendar/>

OCT 22 JULIAN LAGE BRINGS HIS GUITAR TO SANTA BARBARA. INFO AT <https://www.lobero.org/>

OCT 6 HIROMI REUNITES WITH SIMON PHILLIPS IN SANTA MONICA. INFO AT <https://broadstage.org/>

OCT 8 DIANNE REEVES AND BRANFORD MARSALIS MEET AT CSUN. INFO AT <https://thesoraya.org/>

OCT 09-10 JEFF LORBER BRINGS HIS FUSION TO THE SPUD. INFO AT <https://www.thebakedpotato.com/events-calendar/>

OCT 18 CORY HENRY BRINGS GOSPEL BRUNCH TO LA. INFO AT <https://www.bluenotejazz.com/shows>

OCT 22 JULIAN LAGE COMES TO SB. INFO AT <https://www.lobero.org/>

OCT 23 JOEL FRAHM TRIOS UP AT LAX. INFO AT <https://www.samfirstbar.com/upcoming-shows>

OCT 25 JEREMY PELT BLOWS HIS HORN IN SANTA MONICA. INFO AT <https://www.jazzbakery.org/shows>

REVIEWS

Chris McNulty: Soul Journey

by [George W. Harris](#) • August 24, 2026 • [0 Comments](#)

Vocalist Chris McNulty displays multiple aspects of her ideas on this wide ranging album, ranging from intimate duets to wondrous large ensembles. She mixes and matches ideas and moods with Brett Williams-John Di Martino/p, Ben Robertson/b, Lewis Pierre/dr, Carl Mackey/ts-ss, Tony Hicks/cl-bcl and Gianni Marinucci/tp using the musicians as sonic paint brushes in order for her to create her lyrical portraits.



A few of the tunes include multi-textured vocal harmonies, serving almost like an Ellington sax section, teaming with wondrous woodwinds and brass as on the exciting Brazilian'd "Secrets That We Keep", the dreamy "Gratitude" featuring McNulty gliding around Hicks' bass clarinet, and the richly loping "The Waiting Game", with McNulty showing rich restraint in a tug of war with the rhythm section.

More nocturnal and intimate moods are drawn with McNulty dressing down and sparkling on a contemplative duet with Di Martino on a mystical "Estate" and a stark and confessional "It Never Entered My Mind". Robertson's bass tip toes in ever so slightly to make it a cozy threesome on the personal "Beneath The Winter Sun" and Pierre brings in subtle support for an assured and assuring "Flying Still". McNulty's journey of the soul is a soul satisfying pilgrimage.

<https://chrismcnulty.bandcamp.com/album/soul-journey>

← SOUNDTRACKS...Bernard Herрман: The Battle of Nerevia Soundtrack

Tobin Mueller: Blue Side Volumes 1&2 →

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