

CHRIS MURPHY

SOVEREIGN

Los Angeles may be the City of Angels, but it’s the haunt of many a King and Queen of the music scene, too. Among the kingdom’s chief Lords of the Strings is the unassuming yet wildly prolific violin master Chris Murphy, whose latest full-length album, *Sovereign*, tips its crown to the rise and fall of the mighty and the meek in a 13-song cycle of tuneful Americana-inspired vocal arrangements and bustling rhythms from Celtic to Kansas City to Hill Country.

Joining Murphy in this celebration of his subjects—wily wenches, the prison of desire, longing glances into the valley of hope—is a robust council of roots, rock, and world music royalty. The names read like an invite to a coronation: British art-rock giant Brian Auger; Elvis Costello drummer Pete Thomas; Cuban percussion great Walfredo Reyes, Jr.; sax colossus Dana Colley of Morphine; and Iggy Pop bass man Hal Cragin, are among the first guests to arrive.

As befits a court so replete, Murphy’s electric guitar throne is no jester’s chair, either, boasting Blues Traveler titan Chan Kinchla, along with John Mayer/Lucinda Williams alum Doug Pettibone, and Nate LaPointe (Bobby Womack, Cubensis). Also, in attendance at the ball is L.A. art-punk bass icon Mike Watt (The Minutemen, FIREHOSE, The Stooges, Porno for Pyros) and the elegant Jenny Conlee of The Decemberists, who offers arch accordion on “Your Guess Is As Good As Mine.” Even primo percussionist Steven Hodges (Tom Waits, Mavis Staples) drops in for a spell, as does old-timey stalwart Bruce Molsky on “Pear Blossom.” The much-loved Lord of Bluegrass Tim O’Brien mans-up on the mandolin and sings gorgeous harmony on Murphy’s “Boxed In” and “Your Guess Is As Good As Mine”.

Still, it’s Murphy himself who takes up the sceptre on songs like the dapper “Done with Diane,” with its crooning clarinet by Bebop legend Bob Sheppard, and “Bad Situation,” a bouncy tale of the dispossessed. “Halfway Around the World,” an ode to liberation and latitude is lifted by the fiddle artistry of The Waterboys’ feted Steve Wickham, with a quick musical visit by Gilian Hettinga on whistle from Harmony Glen. Murphy’s songs are wry, plain-spoken, and from the heart, but still float on a certain cultivated charm. One might even call Murphy’s mindset here a sort of nobility—the kind that comes from years of steadfastly defending the ground where your musical roots lie. Now, that’s a banner achievement, indeed.

—James Rotondi

James Rotondi is a veteran writer, author, and musician, whose work has appeared in Guitar Player, MOJO, Rolling Stone, The Wire, Acoustic Guitar, JazzTimes, SPIN, CMJ New Music Monthly, and more. He plays guitar for Humble Pie, Hundred Hounds, and Roto’s Magic Act.



Photo by Mark McConnell

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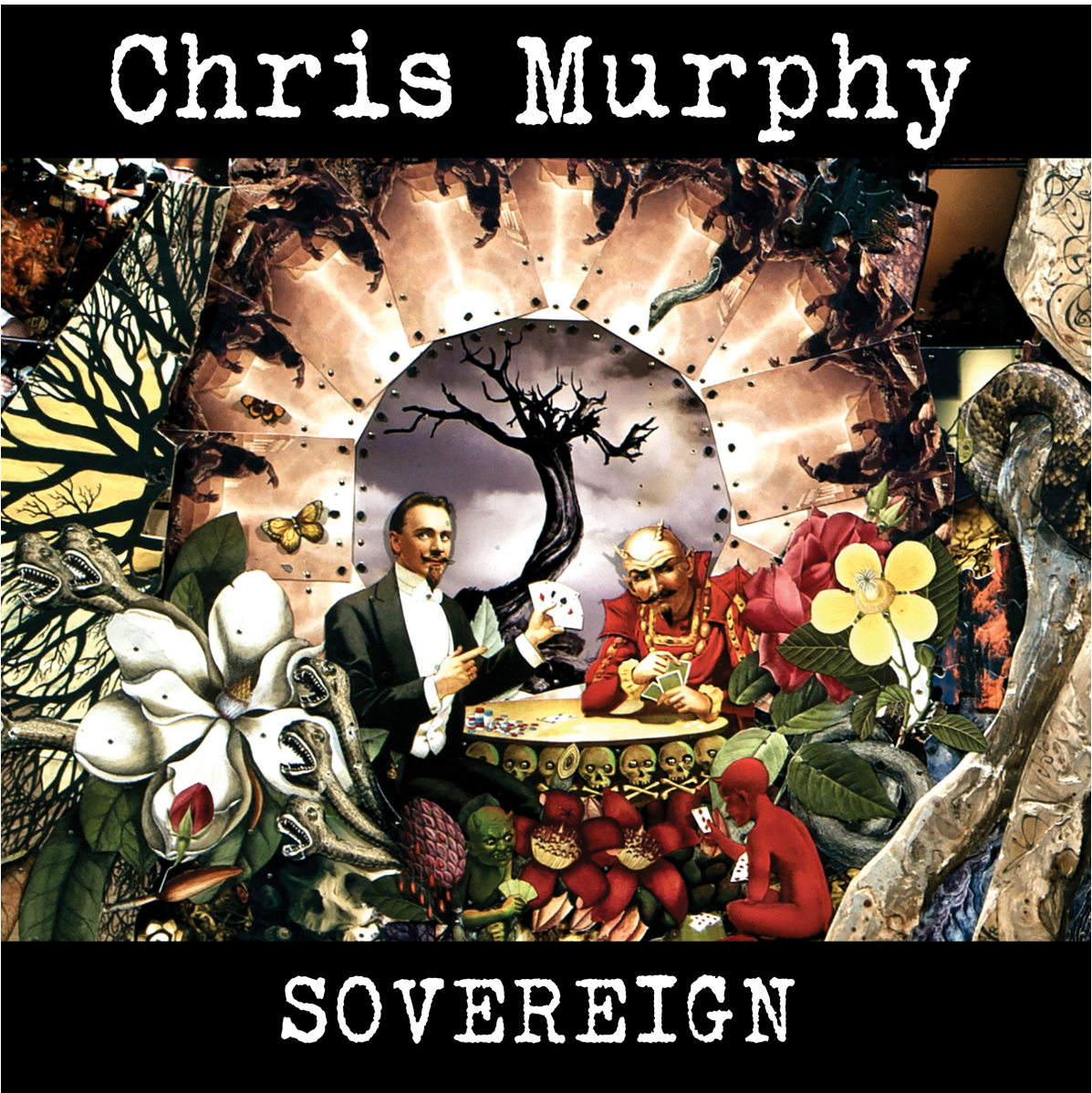
Spotify
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YouTube
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SOVEREIGN

1. **Halfway Around The World*
2. Bad Situation
3. **Boxed In*
4. **Sovereign*
5. **Done With Diane*
6. **Till The World Lifts Its Head Again*
7. Pear Blossom
8. Wind In My Eye
9. Three Feet Deep
10. I Knew It Was Over Then
11. Never The Same
12. Your Guess Is As Good As Mine
13. Hazel Creek

**Recommended tracks*

****THIS ALBUM IS FCC CLEAN**



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Friendly Folk Records
www.friendlyfolkrecords.org

ALBUM: SOVEREIGN, music and lyrics by Chris Murphy

Inspired to produce music in spite of the pandemic lockdown, American singer/songwriter/violinist/mandolinist Chris Murphy invited more than 30 guest musicians near and far to collaborate on this unique mixed-genre recording. After 36 years of professional music-making (20+ albums and 500+ songs), Murphy has traveled through diverse music landscapes meeting great talents, each with a story to tell. “There is something so unique and inspiring that happens when creating music with all these amazing musicians.” The album features some of his longtime collaborators in Los Angeles, Nate LaPointe(Cubensis, Bobby Womack), Hal Cragin (Iggy Pop, Rufus Wainwright), Andreas Geck (Kelly Clarkson, Christina Aguilera), and Mike Jerome(Richard Thompson, Better Than Ezra), Doug Pettibone (Jewel, Lucinda Williams) along with other legendary musicians: Steve Wickham (The Waterboys), Tim O’Brien(Int’l Bluegrass Music Award, 2x Grammy Award Winner), musicians from Lunasa (Trevor Hutchinson, Ed Boyd, Kevin Crawford, Colin Farrell, Cillian Valley), Bruce Molsky, Stephen Hodges (Tom Waits), Pete Thomas (Elvis Costello), Wally Ingram (David Lindley), Mike Watt (FIREHOSE), Walfredo Reyes, Jr (Santana), jazz recording artist Bob Sheppard, select artists from Harmony Glen and The Jolly Gents from Friendly Folk Records, and more. SOVEREIGN is Murphy’s debut album on the Friendly Folk Records label.

Album Credits

Chris Murphy – Lead Vocals, Violin, Mandolin, Guitar
Brian Auger – keyboards (Track 10)
Brooke Benson - backing vocals (Track 8)
Ed Boyd - guitar (LUNASA) (Track 4)
Oskar Cartaya – bass (Track11)
Jessica Childress - backing vocals (Track 1, 2, 5, 8)
Dana Colley – saxophone (Track 9)
Jenny Conlee – accordion (Track 12)
Hal Cragin – bass (Track 2, 3, 5,6,8, 12, 13)
Kevin Crawford - flute (LUNASA) (Track 4)
Colin Farrell - violin (LUNASA) (Track 4)
Andreas Geck – bass (Track 1), keyboards (Track 1),
backing vocals (Track1, 2, 6, 8, 11)
Paul Haas - backing vocals (Track 9)
Gilian Hettinga – whistle (Track 1)
Stephen Hodges – percussion (Track 1,9,) drums (Track 9)
Trevor Hutchinson - bass (LUNASA) (Track 4, 7)
Wally Ingram – drums & percussion (Track 10)
Michael Jerome – drums (Track 1, 12)
Chan Kinchla - electric guitar (Track 10)
Nate LaPointe - electric guitar (Track 10)
Bruce Molsky – banjo (Track 7)
Tim O’Brien – mandolin (Track 3, 12) backing vocals
(Track 3)
Doug Pettibone - electric guitar (Track 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9)
Luca Pino – guitar (Track 11)
Walfredo Reyes, Jr. – percussion (Track 2, 4, 11)
Bob Sheppard – saxophone (Track 5)
Robin Sylvester – bass (Track 10)
Pete Thomas – drums (Track 2, 3, 5, 6, 8)
Catrina Thompson – piano (Track 5)
Cillian Valley - uilleann pipes (LUNASA) (Track 4)
Tom van Aarle – accordion (Track 6)
Sjoerd van Ravenzwaaij – banjo (Track 1, 6)
Mike Watt – bass (Track 9)
Steve Wickham - violin (Track 1)