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Tom Peterson Bio

Anyone who has ever heard a Tom Peterson song recognizes immediately that this is a songwriter's songwriter, a master wordsmith who is worthy of every accolade the creative community bestows. A native of Sioux Falls, South Dakota who has spent a good part of his life there, Tom's career trajectory hasn't led to widespread name recognition (yet) but his talent is true, his writing is world class and his audience is loyal.

While living in Taipei, Taiwan where his dad was stationed, Tom received his first record player at the age of 4 and Elvis Presley records set him on his life path. Tom was intrigued by the names in small print *under* the song title - the songwriters. He has been writing songs ever since.

During his childhood in South Dakota, piano lessons, singing in the choir at the Cathedral Grade School and picking up the guitar as a young teen all helped Tom build enough of a musical foundation to craft the songs that have been coming steadily since before he could even read.

For most of the 1970's Tom was playing music and setting a very high songwriting bar for fellow band members and friends who were part of the Midwest music scene at that time – bands like Red Willow Band (Tom was a member of the beloved South Dakota band in one of its incarnations), The Rocky Mountain Oysters, Blueberry Buckle and Mission Mountain Wood Band.

In 1979 Tom moved to Boulder and then Nashville a couple of years later. Creative people are drawn to creative communities, and both cities offered inspiration that fed Tom's creativity. Indeed, he *literally* fed Nashville songwriters while working at the legendary Brown's Diner and forging friendships over conversations across the counter with some of the best songwriters of the time. Upon returning to South Dakota in 1984, Tom continued writing while working in production at KDLT.

A massive heart attack in 2013 came close to robbing the world of any more Tom Peterson songs. Thankfully, with the support of good friends and good medical care Tom survived to face a long, slow recovery. His induction into the South Dakota Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in April 2015 was well deserved and a hopeful turning point.

By September 2016 he was strong enough to load up the car with guitars and songs and he and his long-time friend and musical compadre, Boyd Bristow, drove south to Austin, Texas to begin work on Tom's long awaited *first* CD. There to welcome them was Chris Gage, fellow South Dakotan and a founding member of Red Willow Band who recorded several of Tom's songs in the early years. In 2009, Gage and his wife and partner Christine Albert (Albert and Gage) had released "Dakota Lullaby", an entire album of Peterson's songs, so their MoonHouse Records label is the perfect home for Tom's project.

Recorded at MoonHouse Studio, "Black Hills Gold" features several renowned Austin musicians playing on 11 Tom Peterson songs - Lloyd Maines on pedal steel, go-to Austin session players David Carroll and Paul Percy on bass and drums, gifted folk singer/songwriter Jaimee Harris singing with Tom on "Broken Heart of Mine", Texas fiddler Ron Knuth and of course, Chris and Christine lending their voices and Gage's multi-instrumentalist gifts to the entire project. Mixing in Bristow on guitar and vocals, Red Willow Band's Kenny Putnam on fiddle and Tom's lifelong friend Charley Smith on mandolin, the music is a diverse wagonload of country, folk, swing and Americana. South Dakota prairie meets the Texas plains.

When "Tom Pete" finally came to Austin to record and word got out that the elusive yet legendary songwriter would be sitting in around town, venues were packed with fans who had loved his songs for years, compliments of Chris and Christine. Tom's smart, honest, rough and ready delivery of those same songs and newer ones did not disappoint. Although his first CD is late in life for a typical music career, there's nothing typical about Tom Peterson and good things come to those who wait.

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