



# J Jams Entertainment, LLC Talent Agency Artist Management, Booking Agent



## Overview

*Instrumental and Vocal Ensemble*

**Genre:** Folk

**Secondary Genre:** Pop Adult Contemporary

**Location:** Leavenworth, Kansas

**Website:** <https://thenewchristyminstrels.com>

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/The-New-Christy-Minstrels-Still-Under-The-Direction-of-Randy-Sparks-1522855201275011/>

**Booking Inquiries:**

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**The New Christy Minstrels®, Still Under the Direction of Randy Sparks.**

**Vintage Video:** *Green, Green* - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PfxgbsXeTdE>



## Randy Sparks Bio:

Discovered and named John Denver (against his will, and his daughter recently thanked me that her name wasn't Deutschendorf), he lived rent-free with my family his first year in showbiz. Recorded him for Capitol Records long before he recorded for RCA.

Steve Martin became a stand-up comic on my stage (I had hired him as a banjo player) in just 34 weeks. Kenny Rogers and the First Edition came out of The NCM, and I gave them their first job as The First Edition. Kenny was just a bass player back then, not even leader of the group.

Invented The New Christy Minstrels (on paper) in 1961, thereby creating the very first BIG FOLK GROUP. Got the act on record and on stage in 1962, won a GRAMMY for our very first album.

Single-handedly rescued the word 'minstrel' from the landfill of Political Correctness. Successfully fought Columbia Records who refused to allow "racist word" to be associated with the label.

Several later-on-important performers got their start with me: Michael Martin Murphey, Michael Johnson, The Hagers, Gary Mule Deer, Richard & Karen Carpenter (they were members of a group billed as The Spectrum, their first job), Michael Nesmith (sent him on the interview for The Monkees), Barry McGuire, of course, Gene Clark (later of The Byrds), The Back Porch Majority (originally The NCM 'farm-team'), George McKelvey (big in Denver forever), etc.

Performed at Carnegie Hall and The Latin Quarter (for Barbara Walters' father Lou Walters) in NYC. Wrote JFK's favorite song, 'Last Farewell,' and that earned us our first invitation to The White House.

Also wrote Hi Jolly, the Official town song of Quartzsite, Arizona.

Discovered by Bob Hope (at The Blue Angel in NYC), toured with him.

Bob Hope brought Del Webb to see me perform at Paul Shank's French Quarter in Scottsdale in the early 'seventies. "He'd be perfect to perform at Sun City," Bob said, and Del replied, "Much too young." Am I old enough now? (actually, been there, done that a few times already).

Was Burl Ives' writer & opening act in concert for more than thirty years, and he was my dearest friend.

As I serve as custodian for nearly all of the Ives memorabilia, recently created a mobile museum, and shared it with family and friends on his 109th birthday (June 14th) at Newton, Illinois, Burl's hometown.

There's a dentist in Cincinnati, OH, who loves my song 'Today' so much that he has the lyrics written on the ceiling of his office ("This," he says, "for the benefit of the patients in the chair, looking up"). My words reportedly helped him through some hard times, and he's into sharing.

Owned a huge cattle ranch with Tennessee Ernie Ford, and worked with him quite often. He invited me to his show one day, but this time I didn't have to bring my guitar. "This is for you," he said, "not for me.

My guest today is Colonel Sanders, and he's going to personally cook chicken for me. I want him to cook chicken for you too."



My trio (RS3) was the first folk act to work the Vegas strip.

Gave Tony Bennett his first (and likely only) guitar lesson.

'Mama Cass' Eliot and David Crosby still owe me money.

Was Phyllis Diller's opening act the first time she ever walked onstage, anywhere.

Served as Maya Angelou's opening act, and personal bongo player.

Was Lenny Bruce's opening act and he became one of my dear friends, but never bothered me with his many problems.

Was Jonathan Winters' long-time friend and opening act.

Still married to the same old woman, 56 years, and counting! She's still looking good, but of course, my eyes aren't what they used to be (that's a joke between us, okay?).

**Vintage Video: Today - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3cELsUMcQdc>**

The world-famous group, **The New Christy Minstrels®**, **Still Under the Direction of Randy Sparks**, and the group is now BETTER than they were in their hey-day. The NCM won a Grammy for their very first album and have Gold Records galore, as well as their Star on the Palm Springs Walk of Stars. The group, now officially eight members strong, is a mix of old and new and it's now the best collection of performers ever to have been billed as The New Christy Minstrels®, Still Under the Direction of Randy Sparks.

Each performer adds a diverse and unique talent to the pool. The New Christy Minstrels®, Still Under the Direction of Randy Sparks includes the inventor/founder of the group, Randy Sparks, who writes hit songs, of past and present, of The NCM, along with Becky Jo Benson who sings soprano, and plays banjo, ukulele, guitar, and accordion;

Tholow Chan who sings baritone, and plays bass, Cousin Dave Rainwater (Brenda Lee's cousin) who sings and plays his champion fiddle and mandolin; Greg O'Haver who is the group's Chief Instrumentalist who sings and plays six string guitar, twelve string guitar, and banjo; Uncle Dave Deutschendorf (John Denver's uncle) who is the booming wonderful low bass voice; Ed Stockton, who sings tenor and plays six string guitar, and twelve string guitar; and the newest member, Julianne Theroux (yes, she was named after Randy Sparks' original song 'Julianne') sings alto and plays guitar.

"We're still alive, we're still creative, and still eager to please, so we make a deal with the audience:

We'll do all the old songs you came to hear, if you'll allow just a couple of newer ones," says the group's leader Randy Sparks. The same songwriter who penned their hits: Today, Green,Green, Saturday Night, Denver, and Mighty Mississippi, etc. is still at it, and the Randy Sparks magic is quite happily alive and well and bringing their latest CD titled "Nice Time To Be Alive", as well as their Greatest Hits CD, which includes songs listed above, titled "RECYCLED".

Autographs are given after the concert at a special meet and greet for the audience members, so that the group can thank the nice people for coming to their concert. No performing group has ever spawned so many successful musical careers as The New Christy Minstrels®, Still Under the Direction of Randy Sparks.

"For over fifty years we have been the best talent show ever," says Sparks. " We still are." Don't miss any opportunity to see this stellar group in concert!

## **The New Christy Minstrels®**, **Still Under the Direction of Randy Sparks**

Official Website: <https://thenewchristyminstrels.com/>

SoundCloud Playlist: <https://soundcloud.com/j-jams-entertainment/sets/the-new-christy-minstrels>

For more information please call:

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**Thank you for viewing and have a Folksy Day!**