

Directors' Statement

THIS AIN'T NO MOUSE MUSIC!

A film by Chris Simon & Maureen Gosling

Sometimes the most obvious story takes a long time to recognize. We've known Chris Strachwitz and have been an intimate part of the Arhoolie Records family for over 35 years. However, it wasn't until eight years ago that it occurred to us that we should make a film on Chris. Happily, he agreed that we would be the perfect team to entrust with his story. Maybe he thought he could boss us around, since we had worked with him and his oft times partner, documentary filmmaker Les Blank, on numerous projects for many years. Or maybe he didn't know what he was getting into. He certainly didn't realize (nor did we!) that it would take so long to complete the film.

We hit the road with Mr. Chris in the spring of 2005, filming with him as he visited old friends in Texas and Cajun country, and recorded in New Orleans and later, in the Blue Ridge Mountains and at Berkeley, his home. If the film seems to have the intimacy of a home movie, that's because it was also a journey into the places, music and lives of people we know and love, as well. It was also a chance to explore the massive treasure trove of Strachwitz' personal photo and home movie archive. It was a fun and fascinating adventure and we want to make sure the audience has the same intimate experience.

For us, the film represents an opportunity to share the story of an unsung hero, a German immigrant who left an indelible mark on American culture – in fact, on the culture of the world. The film is just the tip of the iceberg of the musicians and genres of music that Strachwitz has documented while following his passions for eight decades. Today, at 80+, his enthusiasm has not waned. He's an example to us of the riches following your personal vision can bring and how one person can literally change the world.