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From the Editor

The Greatest of These is Love!

There is something special about seeing a married couple celebrate a 50th Anniversary (or beyond.) They shared good times and bad but stayed together through thick and thin. It's a love that stands the test of time. Then, to see a young couple who are just starting out and the happiness and love they feel on their wedding day. They don't know where their path will take them as they begin their lives together. If it's God's will and love conquers all, they will be like the elderly couples that have been married over fifty years.

Love is unconditional, a special bond between a husband and wife, companions, and close friends. If you are blessed to have a true love in your life, never take them for granted.

It's time for the Valentine's Day celebrations! Go buy the flowers, candy, cards, nice dinners, or jewelry would be nice too! Right, ladies?? Lol! These sweet gifts and gestures are given to that special love of your life, a family member, or a close friend. Even though the gestures are kind and thoughtful it should go beyond Valentine's Day and all throughout the year.

Now more than ever, we need to show love to everyone we come in contact with. Many are alone, recently lost their companions, depressed, or just need a friend. In this unsettling world we are living in everyone needs encouragement. I love the words to an old song, "What the world needs now is love, sweet love, It's the only thing that there's just too little of. What the world needs now is love, sweet love. No not just for some, but for everyone."

Sometimes, to show your love and appreciation, it's the little things that mean the most. Just some examples come to my mind: a kind word, a smile, paying for someone's food in the drive thru behind you, letting people in the workplace know how much you appreciate them. But most importantly, tell someone every day you are praying for them, and Jesus loves them. This is what God's Word tells us to do.

1 Corinthians 13:4-8, Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.

With all the chaos that our country is dealing with, including all the current events, many will show hate, be unkind, angry, be easily offended, but let us be better than them. Love one another. We all have our God given right to stand for what we believe. I heard someone say recently that there's a right wing and the left wing, but they are on the same bird. As Americans, we are the same bird or should I say eagle! We need to show the love of God, love of Family and love to our country.

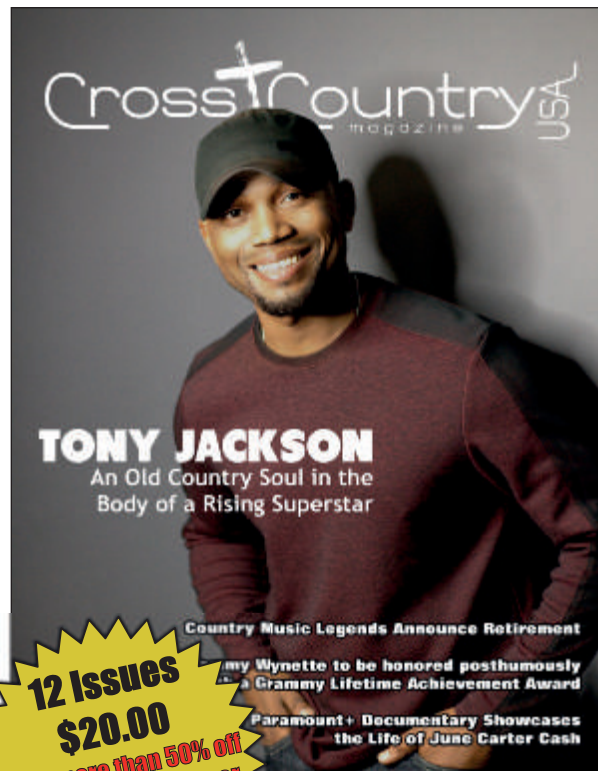
When all the chocolates are gone, the flowers have wilted, and the cards are put away, let's continue to show love to our significant other, family, friends, and anyone God puts in our path.

1 Corinthians 13:13, And now abide faith, hope and love, but the greatest of these is love.

Robin

Robin Tanner, Managing Editor

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heard it yet, have a listen and
resjoice in the safety of Jesus!



REED ELLIOTTE

By Robin Tanner

Reed Elliotte is a thirteen-year-old from Corbin, Kentucky. His favorite things in life are church, singing, playing music, and U.S. Presidents. Although he is a teenager, Reed calls himself an old soul. He has been invited to sing and play at many political events, social functions, funerals, local festivals, and church functions, to name a few. He is also an actor and works with agents, managers, and casting directors out of Los Angeles, California. He loves life and has a special love for people and for God.



This young gentleman started singing in church at four years old. That led to singing in school and community plays and musicals, as well as local talent shows. That was only the beginning for Reed who has enjoyed many special moments so far in his life, which he shares - "I was blessed to sing a song onstage with the Oak Ridge Boys when I was eight years old. Then my love for Loretta Lynn took me to her ranch where I have gotten to know and love her family. Loretta's granddaughter, Tayla Lynn and Conway Twitty's grandson, Tre Twitty, sing tribute concerts honoring their grandparents. Tayla has invited me on stage to sing at multiple concerts. I even got to sing a song at Loretta Lynn's 90th birthday bash at The Nashville Palace. Recently, one of my dreams came true when I was invited by Tim and Roxanne Atwood to sing at Ernest Tubb's Midnite Jamboree at the Texas Troubadour Theatre in Nashville Tennessee. It was amazing!"

Reed began playing the piano at nine years old, the Omnichord at ten, and the guitar when he was twelve. He credits Loretta Lynn, The Oak Ridge Boys, Dottie Rambo, and The Walkers (his pastor and his family) as his musical influences.

Reed loves United States Presidents and has been honored to sing for some of the former Presidents at special events. "Some highlights and most memorable events would be singing for President George W. Bush and President Bill Clinton, and singing for Jimmy Carter's 99th birthday concert in his hometown of Plains, Georgia." The young historian also shares, "I sung at the Peanut Festival in Plains after having my own float in the parade that President Carter and Rosalynn rode in as well." These are impressive accomplishments for this young man who has stated in TV interviews that he would like to be a politician someday. His goal is to get the Republicans and Democrats to agree and work together. (He has my vote!)

Reed has performed at the (NACMAI) North American Country Music Association International competition at the Country Tonite Theatre in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee; He sang at Renfro Valley in Mount Vernon, Kentucky; and was invited to sing on the WoodSongs Old-Time Radio Hour on two separate occasions as well as appearing on Hour of Harvest on the TV station WLJC on five occasions. Another special experience was when Reed recently sang for the swearing in of five of the newly elected state officials in Kentucky.



Reed, who aspires to be a future U.S. President, performed at the 99th birthday celebration of former President Jimmy Carter. Reed is pictured here with the former President and First Lady Rosalynn Carter.

The talented youngster has won numerous awards in recent years. He won an award for singing at the iPop! (International Presentation of Performers) in L.A. at age eleven. He won first place at the NIBROC festival talent show in Corbin, Kentucky at age twelve. He was also honored to win several awards for 'Male Vocalist,' 'Entertainer of the Year,' and 'Instrumentalist of the Year' at the North American Country Music Association International competition at the Country Tonite Theatre in Pigeon Forge in 2023.

Reed will be releasing his first music project with the release date to be announced soon. He can add songwriter to his list of talents. One of his original songs will be featured on the new album.

In Reed's thirteen years, he has endured many obstacles in his young life. He is a kidney transplant recipient

and two-time cancer survivor. He explains, "I have learned to trust God in whatever I do because He will never let you down! When I was two and a half years old, I had a kidney transplant, and my dad was my donor. Not long after I had turned six, I developed lymphoma and spent three and a half months at Cincinnati Children's Hospital where I received chemotherapy, which cured my cancer. The next year when I was getting ready to turn seven, the lymphoma returned. The doctors removed one of the tumors in my lungs and studied it and said this time it was worse and I would have to spend 6-9 months in Cincinnati Children's Hospital receiving more chemotherapy."

Here is where Reed's faith and belief in God changed his life. "I had just gotten saved at church not long before we got the news that the lymphoma had returned. We asked the doctors if we could go home for the weekend because I wanted to be baptized. They said yes but be back on Sunday night. The next night was Saturday and in 24 hours we had planned my baptism. I wanted a "Singing With the Saints" for my service. Hundreds of people showed up for my baptism. I was anointed with oil and prayed over by around twenty preachers. I went back and the cancer was gone! I thank God that He healed me!" Reed has shared his testimony for thousands to hear. He has been a guest on the Ellen Degeneres Show a couple of times for being a Presidential expert and cancer survivor. The videos have reached over 60,000 views on YouTube and counting!

Reed shares his hopes and goals for his music career. "I would love to sing on the Grand Ole Opry! I would also like to keep the old Country and old Gospel music alive!"

Do yourself a favor and attend a concert or event with this talented young artist. You can expect a mix of Traditional Country and Traditional Gospel as he delights the audiences with his talents and down-home personality. He states, "I also try to share my testimony when I have the opportunity. You may also see me playing a note or two on my piano and even with my foot like Jerry Lee Lewis!"



Facebook/Reed Elliott

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David Smith

By Deborah Baliles

David Smith grew up in Eastern Kentucky. He was influenced by many different styles of music from the Gospel songs of the church, Country music, and Rock and Roll. He's been singing all his life. He started so young that he learned to sing at the same time he was learning to talk!

David recalls the impact growing up in church had on him. "I remember as a child attending church with my friends and hearing the congregation sing, shout, and praise the Lord. We grew up in the hills and attended a small country church where families attended together; I call it that Little Mountain Church House, just like the song. Back then, almost everyone attended church, there would be 50-75 on a Sunday, but during revival we would be full to the point some would stand outside looking in the open door or peer inside the windows to hear because there was no room on the inside."

David's family sang together at church. He remembers a song that changed his life. "I can remember a time when I came to love the song, *How Great Thou Art*. I was younger and had just given my life to the Lord; I was in some trouble and had prayed for answers but received none. While at my mother's house I went out back and began to climb the hill. While climbing, I began to sing those words, 'Then sings my soul, my Savior God to Thee, how great Thou art...' While singing this old song, the Lord began to bless me, and I say that I was saved while singing."

Since David received Jesus in his heart as a young man, he felt the call of God on his life to sing Gospel music. By his side for over thirty years throughout life and ministry is his lovely wife, Shirley. Together Shirley and David offer love and encouragement everywhere they go. David has served as a board member of Music City Christian Fellowship and USAGEM.

David has served our country as an Army Veteran while being stationed in Germany. David shares his testimony with dealing with cancer diagnosis. "I was someone who thought if the doctor told me I had cancer, I would just fall apart. When the diagnosis was given to me that 'yes, it is cancer,' I did not fall apart, I simply stood on the Word of God. 'I will never leave you nor forsake you,' those words stuck with me, and the song *I'm A Winner Either Way*. I knew the Lord was with me as I drove back and forth taking radiation treatments. I knew that no matter what the outcome, I was a winner either way!"



A highlight for David was becoming a member of the Music City Christian Fellowship and singing in the Country Chorale for Sunday Mornin' Country at the Grand Ole Opry House as well as the Ryman Auditorium. Since then, David has performed on the historic stage in the iconic circle for these events. He shares what that experience meant to him. "Just to be there and sing Gospel music in Nashville, looking out at the audience and feeling the Spirit of God, seeing the crowd and feel the love. Music City Christian Fellowship is one of the greatest organizations today, I love being a part of such a group of diverse people. They are all wonderful, spiritual people who are trying their best to keep Gospel represented during CMA Music Fest."

David concludes, "I love the Lord and desire to do what God wants to do, not what I want, or others want, but what He wants me to do." His latest release to radio is an original song written by David called, *A Better Way to Go*. David is a sincere Christian and loves to visit churches and minister through music. He loves nothing more than to sing God's praises and point someone toward Christ.

Facebook/David Smith

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Remembering...

DAVID SOUL • CALE YARBOROUGH

Staff, Cross Country USA



David Soul

August 28, 1943 - January 4, 2024

David Soul was an actor and singer. He was best known for his role in the 1970s co-starring as the blond half of the crime-fighting duo "Starsky & Hutch." As a performer, he topped the music charts with the ballad Don't Give Up on Us.

Born David Solberg on August 28, 1943, in Chicago, Illinois, Soul began his acting career in the 1960s, when he joined the avant-garde Firehouse Theater in Minnesota. He continued to appear on stage and screen well into the 20th century, but he was best known for his work in the 1970s.

Soul portrayed detective Ken "Hutch" Hutchinson alongside dark-haired Paul Michael Glaser as detective David Starsky in "Starsky & Hutch," which ran on ABC from 1975 to 1979 and grew so popular it spawned a line of children's toys.

He also had success as a singer, starting in 1976 with Don't Give Up on Us and following with such hits as Going in With My Eyes Open and Silver Lady.

Soul first gained national fame in the 1960s appearing on "The Merv Griffin Show" as "The Covered Man," a singer disguised in a stocking cap who shouted out lyrics such as "That is why I hide my face, because a man has to be free."

His other TV credits included early appearances on "Star Trek," "All in the Family" and "I Dream of Jeannie," the miniseries "Salem's Lot" and a short-lived version of the film classic "Casablanca," in which Soul took on Humphrey Bogart's role as nightclub owner Rick Blaine.

Soul's movies included "Magnum Force," "The Hanoi Hilton" and a cameo with Glaser in the 2004 big-screen remake of "Starsky & Hutch," starring Ben Stiller as Starsky and Owen Wilson as Hutch.

By the 1990s, Soul had moved to Britain, where he performed several stage roles. In 2001, he won a libel case against a journalist who called "The Dead Monkey," a play that Soul was in, the worst production he had ever seen - without having seen it. He also played the titular talk-show host in "Jerry Springer - The Opera" in London's West End.

David Soul passed away on January 4, 2024, at the age of 80. His wife, Helen Snell stated, "David Soul - beloved husband, father, grandfather and brother - died after a valiant battle for life in the loving company of family."

"He shared many extraordinary gifts in the world as actor, singer, storyteller, creative artist and dear friend," Snell said in a statement. "His smile, laughter and passion for life will be remembered by the many whose lives he has touched."

Cale Yarborough

March 27, 1939 - December 31, 2023

William Caleb "Cale" Yarborough was born March 27, 1939, in Sardis, South Carolina, to Julian Caleb Yarborough and Annie Mae Kelley Yarborough. He grew up in the Sardis Community with his younger brothers Jerry and J.C. who survive him.

Cale was a star football player at Timmonsville High School and was offered a football scholarship to Clemson University. It was racing cars that Cale loved more than football and he decided instead to pursue a career in stock car racing. His father, Julian, instilled in Cale a love of flying and fast cars and took him to Darlington to watch the building of the raceway there. He raced in his very first race in a soap box derby at the town square in Darlington. His father died in a plane crash when Cale was eleven years old, but his love of flying and racing did not die with the death of his father.



Yarborough's racing success began in 1967, when he won six races that year, including the Daytona 500. He won a career-high ten races in 1974, but still fell short of winning the year's championship series. However, in 1976 he began a run that remains among the most dominant in NASCAR history, winning the Winston Cup three years in a row, including a 1977 season in which he finished every race and defeated Richard "the King" Petty by over 380 points.

Yarborough won 83 races, placing him sixth on the most NASCAR victories of all-time list, and he had 319 top 10 finishes and 69 pole positions. His first and last wins came two decades apart, in 1965 and 1985. He was inducted into the NASCAR Hall of Fame, along with the International Motorsports Hall of Fame, National Motorsports Press Association Hall of Fame, and Motorsports Hall of Fame of America, among others. He is widely considered one of the greatest drivers of all time.

Cale Yarborough, passed away at the age of 84, on December 31, 2023, after an extended illness. He died surrounded by his loving wife and daughters.

There are many records detailing Cale's successful career in NASCAR. However, he will be remembered by those closest to him as a loving son, brother, husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather.

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The Story Behind the Song

YOU'RE MY BEST FRIEND

Staff, Cross Country USA Magazine

Written by Wayland Holyfield
Recorded by Don Williams



Don Williams



Wayland Holyfield

As Valentine's Day approaches, we look back on one of the best love songs in Country music, *You're My Best Friend* by Don Williams. If you have been blessed enough to marry your best friend this classic love song will be relatable to you.

Don Williams, known as the 'Gentle Giant' released *You're My Best Friend*. The song brought Williams his second No. 1 hit on Billboard's Hot Country Songs chart. *You're My Best Friend* has since become one of William's signature tunes and paved the way for several songs by Williams to enter the Country charts.

Written by songwriter Wayland Holyfield, *You're My Best Friend* is a simple, genuine sentiment of love and friendship to a long-term romantic partner. He was actually new in the songwriting business when he penned this song about his wife. But he knew it would resonate with every person who is in that type of special relationship.

In a 2020 interview with Bart Herbison of Nashville Songwriters Association International Holyfield shares the back story of the song. "I wrote that one about my wife, Nancy. That was my second #1...which I wrote by myself. As a writer, it validates you. I want to hear what someone has to say by themselves. When I talk to other writers, I want to hear what they've written by themselves. As a songwriter, I am so proud of that song on a lot of levels. One of them is that when Don, after a while, he stops the song and everyone in the audience sings the chorus. I have a picture of Albert Hall in London and Don is singing and the entire London audience is singing my lyrics."

From the article in *The Tennessean* Wayland reflects on the relationship with Don Williams. "It was a good connection. We thought a lot alike about music and lyrics. These are love songs, and I'm a big sap for love. I've been married to the same woman for over 50 years. I was going to get a distinguished Lifetime Achievement Award but I told him I've already got one (laughs). These are love songs that Don recorded. What a great singer he was!"

The song also marked a long and fruitful partnership between Williams and Holyfield. *You're My Best Friend* and many others would see him writing songs for some of the most notable Country artists. In addition to his collaborations with Williams, Holyfield's songs have been recorded by numerous Nashville singers including George Strait, Reba McEntire, Barbara Mandrell, Kathy Mattea, Tammy Wynette, Conway Twitty, Charley Pride, Randy Travis, The Judds, Mark Chesnutt, John Anderson, The Oak Ridge Boys, Anne Murray and many more.

During his career Holyfield was writer of over forty Top Ten hits and fourteen #1 hits. Some of his best-known songs are *Could I Have This Dance*, *Some Broken Hearts Never Mend*, *Til The Rivers All Run Dry*, *You're the Best Break This Old Heart Ever Had*, *Only Here For a Little While*, *Meanwhile*, and *Nobody Likes Sad Songs*.

Holyfield is an award-winning songwriter who has won 14 BMI Performance Awards and 16 ASCAP Performance Awards. Holyfield was the 1983 ASCAP 'Country Writer of the Year' co-winner and in 1992 he was inducted into the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame and to the Arkansas Entertainers Hall of Fame.

You're My Best Friend

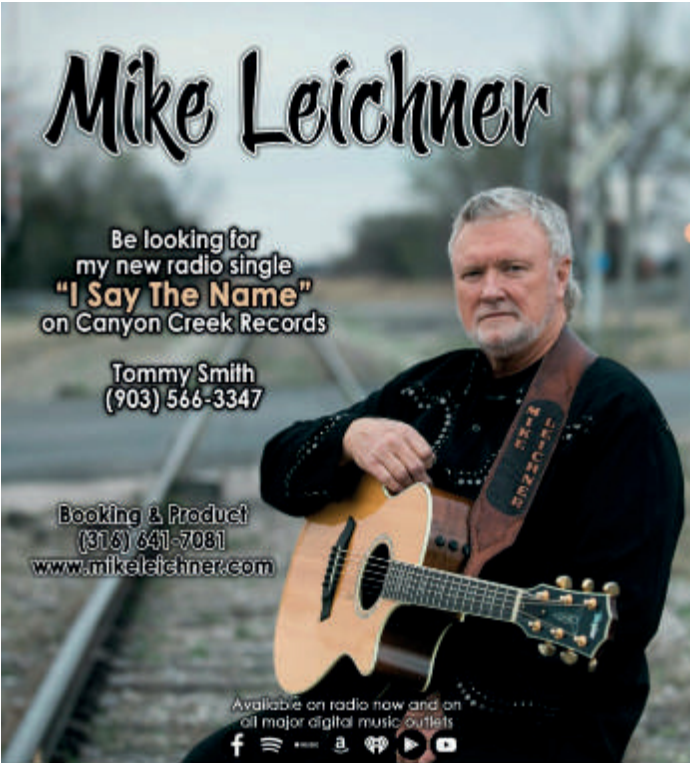
*You placed gold on my finger
You brought love, like I've never known
You gave life to our children
And to me, a reason to go on*

*You're my bread when I'm hungry
You're my shelter from troubled winds
You're my anchor in life's ocean
But most of all, you're my best friend*

*When I need hope and inspiration
You're always strong when I'm tired and weak
I could search this whole world over
You'd still be everythin' that I need*

*You're my bread when I'm hungry
You're my shelter from troubled winds
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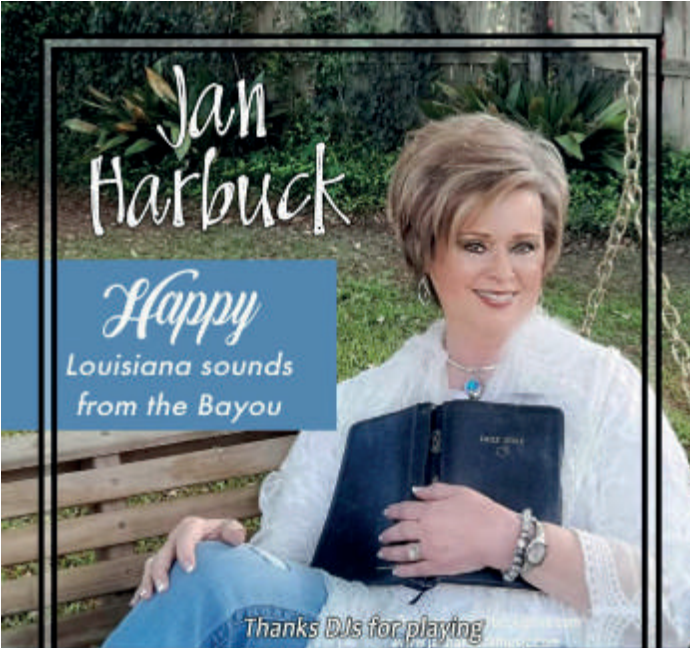
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Three Country Music Legends Announce Their Retirement From Touring

Staff, Cross Country USA

Three Country music legends, after decades on the road, have announced their retirement from touring. These three gentlemen are fifty-year veteran of the Oak Ridge Boys, Joe Bonsall, and 90s Country hitmakers John Michael Montgomery and Doug Stone. Each artist has brought great music, entertainment, and inspiration to many of their fans and friends and great respect from their peers in the music industry. We celebrate these talented individuals and wish them the best.

Announcing his plans to retire, Oak Ridge Boys tenor shared this message with the group's legion of fans: "Many of you know I have been battling a slow onset (over four years now) of a neuromuscular disorder. I am now at a point where walking is impossible, so I have basically retired from the road. It has just gotten too difficult. It has been a great fifty years, and I am thankful to all the Oak Ridge Boys, band, crew, and staff for the constant love and support shown to me through it all. I will never forget, and for those of you who have been constantly holding me up in prayer, I thank you and ask for you to keep on praying. There is a young man named Ben James singing for me out there, and he needs your love and encouragement... his sound is different than mine, but he brings a ton of talent to the table! The Oak Ridge Boys will finish the Farewell Tour without me, but rest assured, I am good with all of it! God's got It!!!"

At a December 30 concert in Greenville, Mississippi, Duane Allen, William Lee Golden, and Richard Sterban introduced Ben James (Doyle Lawson, Dailey & Vincent) to an enthusiastic audience.

Ben James was no stranger to The Oak Ridge Boys, being introduced to them in 2022 during a concert in Wheeling, West Virginia, where Dailey & Vincent were also on the bill. "Joe handed me the mic and said, 'You've got the next verse,'" James said. "And I'm not sure I will ever get over that moment. *Elvira* was always on repeat when I was growing up. It's still one of those timeless songs that never grow old."

The Oak Ridge Boys have sold over 41 million units worldwide and are synonymous with "America, apple pie,



Joe Bonsall, Tenor Singer for The Oak Ridge Boys, Announces Retirement From Touring

baseball, and Country music." In addition to their awards and accolades in the Country music field, the Oaks have garnered five GRAMMY® Awards, nine GMA DOVE Awards, and two American Music Awards. The group, Duane Allen, Joe Bonsall, William Lee Golden, and Richard Sterban, members



Ben James, known for his work with Doyle Lawson and Dailey & Vincent, will join The Oak Ridge Boys on the road.

of the prestigious Country Music Hall of Fame (2015 Inductees) and the Grand Ole Opry (since 2011) - is known worldwide as one of recording history's most extraordinary musical successes. They have charted single after single and album after album - gold, platinum, and double-platinum, and more than thirty Top 10 hits, including No. 1 chart-toppers *Elvira*, *Bobbie Sue*, *American Made*, and *Y'All Come Back Saloon*, among dozens more.

For more information and to view upcoming tour dates for The Oak Ridge Boys, please visit oakridgeboys.com.

John Michael Montgomery has devoted over thirty years to his music career and now at 58 years old, he's announced that by the end of 2025, he will be retired from his days of touring. He shared the news via social media on New Year's Day. His caption read, "HAPPY NEW YEAR!!! I hope everyone enjoyed bringing in 2024 and may it be a wonderful one for all my friends out there. For me it will be the start of my farewell tour as I have decided to wind down my touring career over this year and 2025."

In another statement shared in a recent press release, Montgomery went on to reflect on his career that began in 1992. Montgomery stepped onto a tour bus for the first time and had released his first single, *Life's A Dance*, to Country radio. "It was so surreal to me. And of course like any new artist would, I worried about how long it would last and hoped it would not be a 'flash in the pan' career," he admitted before adding, "So every album, every song, and every year of being able to do what I love for so many years, and for the fans who have supported me and my music, I've cherished those moments very deeply."

He added a special note to his fans. "So, a BIG thank you to them all! I'm not saying I'm never gonna step on stage and perform again, I still love that feeling of entertaining and the crowd cheering and singing along with my songs as much as that first show over thirty years ago, and it all started when my parents got me on stage when I was a kid. So, I'm sure there will be some situations where I just need to do a show here and there because I'll miss that too much. But I just feel the time has come to say goodbye to the road life," the Kentucky-born artist concluded.

Throughout his pursuit of music, John Michael Montgomery has racked up 36 radio singles, sold 16 million albums and earned numerous hits, seven of which went on to reach No. 1 on the charts: *I Love the Way You Love Me*, *I Swear*, *Be My Baby Tonight*, *If You've Got Love*, *I Can Love You Like That*, *Sold (The Grundy County Auction Incident)* and *The Little Girl*.



John Michael Montgomery

His love for music stems from his household, where both his parents instilled a passion for the arts in him and his brother, Eddie Montgomery. They performed together in a family band for several years before breaking off into their own pursuits. Eventually, Eddie and their friend Troy Gentry formed the legendary Country duo known as Montgomery Gentry.

The two prominent musical figures now get the chance to watch the next generation of Country music come to life through the emerging career of John's son and Eddie's nephew, Walker Montgomery. The three generations of artists recently came together to celebrate Walker for achieving the great milestone of making his Grand Ole Opry debut. John took to social media to celebrate his son's major achievement

with a post that included a slideshow of images from the memorable evening. He wrote, “Congratulations to my son, @walkermontgomery for your Opry debut. Eddie and I were honored to announce Walker to the stage. He stepped into the circle and gave an amazing performance. We are so proud of him. It was a great night celebrating family and Country music. Thank you to @opry for keeping the magic alive!”

For tour information visit the www.johnmichael.com.

Country music legend Doug Stone announced his farewell tour in an exclusive with procountrymusic.com. After more than three decades of bringing his signature brand of Country music to fans around the world, 90s Country hitmaker Doug Stone has decided it’s time to hang up his cowboy hat, but not before giving his fans one last opportunity to catch a show and sing along to songs that shaped the 90s era of Country music on his farewell tour.

Stone says after spending so much time on the road, he’s looking forward to spending quality time with his family. “I’ve been on the road for 34 years, and I’m still in pretty good shape,” says Stone. “I’ve missed a whole lot of family life. I’ve got a seven-year-old daughter now, and it’s time to come off the road and have a home life.”

Though the eight-time chart-topper doesn’t have a set date for the end of his farewell tour, he says the end is in sight. In saying so, Stone is looking forward to spending time with his wife, Jade, and their daughter at home, instead of out on the road. “We’ve been on the road ever since I met Jade ten years ago, so she’s probably tired of it,” Stone says with a laugh. “My daughter used to go out on the road with us. We asked her the other day if she wanted to go, and she said ‘No, I’m tired of going on the road. I know your show, I’ve seen it!’”

Though he admits it will feel “strange” when he walks off the stage at the end of the tour, Stone says he will miss the fans that have packed his shows for three-plus decades the most. “When Country fans love you, they love you until you die,” says Stone. “When I first started, I would see people from nine to ninety at my shows, and it’s still that way. Some of ‘em probably sing the songs back to me better than I do!”

Though they won’t be seeing him on stage (aside from potentially private events and one-offs), Stone isn’t done lending his voice to his fans, as he is keeping the door open on releasing new music. “I’m working on rebuilding my studio. I’ve built so many of them in my life to make my



Doug Stone

records in. We just moved, so I’m putting together another one,” says Stone. “I’ll probably put some stuff out and have it up on my website. I’ll still be writing and pickin’ and grinnin’!”

For Stone, his 34 years on the road have been an answered prayer, and he plans on stepping off the stage with the same gratitude with which he stepped onto it. “I asked the Lord to allow me to do this more than thirty years ago. He’s let me, and I’ve had a lot of fun. I’ve given everything I’ve got to my fans, and it’s about time to give some to my family,” says Stone. “I just want to thank all the fans for letting me do this for a lifetime and loving the music.”

Doug Stone found his mark in music as a lonesome baritone balladeer with a career that spans 34 years with eight #1 singles, fifteen top 10 singles, and over ten million album sales. His timeless Country hits include the 1990 debut single, *I’d Be Better Off (In a Pine Box)*, the first release from his 1990 self-titled debuted album. Other hits that followed were *A Jukebox with a Country Song*, *In a Different Light*, *I Thought It Was You*, *Too Busy Being in Love*, *Addicted to a Dollar*, *Why Didn’t I Think of That*, *Warning Labels* and *Made for Lovin’ You* and many more.

Visit Doug’s website at www.Dougstone.com.

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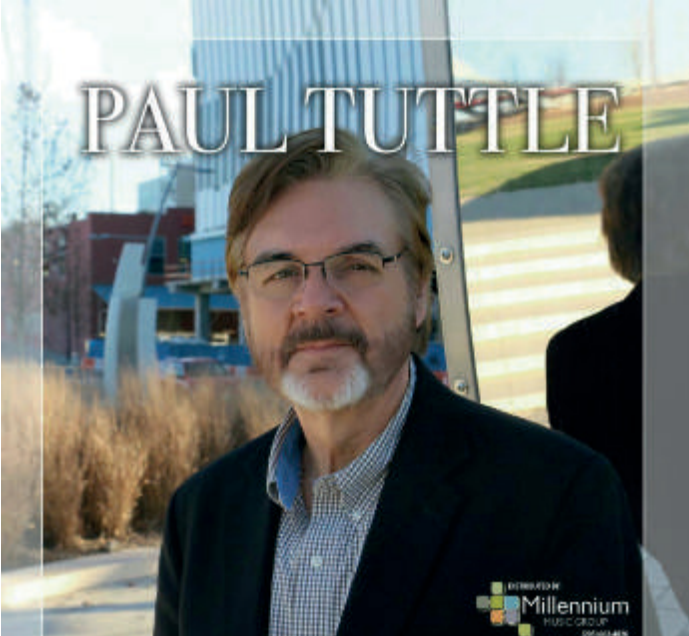


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TONY JACKSON

An Old Country Soul in the Body of a Rising Superstar

By Robin Tanner

Tony Jackson has been a regular performer on the famed Grand Ole Opry and has become a viral sensation with over 80 million views and 1.2 million shares of his videos. He has served our country as a Marine and enjoyed a successful career in the banking industry, but with one listen to Tony Jackson's new album, "I've Got Songs to Sing," it is obvious Country music is his true calling. With a distinctive voice that embodies Country's best traditions yet teems with an infectious energy that propels the genre into the future, Jackson is an old country soul in the body of a rising superstar.

Born in Portsmouth, Virginia, Tony grew up in a military family with his father serving in the Navy. He recalls, “We moved to Spain when I was ten years old and lived there for mostly three years and moved back to Virginia. My dad was stationed mostly in Norfolk Virginia.”

Jackson was greatly influenced by the music of Armed Forces Radio. “The DJ played whatever people asked for so there was no such thing as the radio dial where you picked a specific genre. I listened to different types of music, but I was mainly influenced by Country music. Country music has always been the type of music that speaks to me the most.”

An artist that was an influence on Tony was Randy Travis. It was while his family was living in Spain, that 10-year-old Tony had an encounter that he would always remember. He mentions a big concert on the base that he and his friends went to check out. “They were setting up for the concert and that’s when this guy came out and talked to us. He was curious about what our lives were like living overseas.

Most people think you’re just in an alien land and away from everything familiar, but we were having a ball, and we were all too happy to tell him about it. We didn’t find out until later, that was Randy Travis. I am a big fan of Randy’s and I enjoyed the opportunity to talk with him for a few minutes.”

Growing up, Jackson says he really had no designs on performing or being an entertainer. But he eventually found his way into a band in the Richmond, Virginia area. “We were doing the weekend warrior thing and put a video up on YouTube as a tribute to George Jones and the video went viral.”

He met Donna Dean Stevens, widow of the late Jimmy Dean, who heard Jackson and was impressed. She invited him to perform at the Old Dominion Barn Dance, a show which is Virginia’s oldest Country music tradition. He fondly recalls, “She got me to Nashville and that is when we made that first record, and we got a booking deal and I’ve been on the road ever since.”

Jackson has worked with veteran manager Jim Della Croce from the beginning, who produced his highly acclaimed 2017 self-titled debut album which featured the viral hit *The Grand Tour*, *Old Porch Swing*, *Nashville Cats*, *Do I Ever Cross Your Mind* and his remake of Conway Twitty’s *It’s Only Make Believe*. Jackson’s talent and reputation won the respect of Nashville’s top musicians and such notables as Little Feat’s Bill Payne, George Marinelli, Steve Cropper,

Vince Gill, John Sebastian, Paul Franklin, Mickey Raphael, Joe Spivey and Billy Thomas were among the cadre of A-listers who played on his first album.

The pandemic struck and scuttled plans for his sophomore album. Like most of the country, Jackson took some time to regroup and get back on track. He did just that and began work on “I’ve Got Songs to Sing.” Thematically, the album covers a lot of territory. Like his previous album, “I’ve Got Songs to Sing” also attracted some of the top session musicians in the business. Produced by Chuck Rhodes and Buddy Hyatt in Nashville, and John Sebastian and Della Croce in Woodstock, the album features such talented musicians as Spivey, Thomas (who both contributed to Jackson’s last album) Kenny Vaughn, Brent Mason, Lonnie Wilson, Waddy Watchel, Cindy Cashdollar, Clifford Carter, Joel Key and CMA’s reigning ‘Musician of the Year’ Jenee Fleenor, as well as acclaimed indie artist Sean Della Croce on background vocals.



After serving several years in the military as a Marine, Jackson got an IT job with Bank of America. He reflects back to when he gave it up for his dream of music. “When I’d left the bank, I’d had some apprehension about it. I thought if I don’t make it in music, I’ll be the world’s biggest idiot. I had this wonderful secure job with this wonderful company and all these benefits. Music is what I love to do so when I left, it felt like a big risk and then when Covid came and shut everything down, it was tough, but I wasn’t looking back. So, with everything that has happened in recording this album it’s an affirmation for me that if you stick with your dreams and give it all you got, things will happen.”



On the album, “I’ve Got Songs to Sing,” Jackson is joined by his hero Randy Travis on the album’s closing song, *Do You Remember Country Music*. It’s a full circle moment from meeting Travis on a military base in Spain. Tony admits, “It means the world to me and such an honor to have him on the record. Country music is all inclusive and it’s about friendship and family and these people epitomize all those things. I’m just thankful that I have the opportunity to do it. We also shot a video with Randy. It felt like I was watching it happen to someone else. I felt like a spectator. It’s been just wonderful.”

Co-written by Mo Pitney, Bobby Tomberlin, and Aaron Brown, *Do You Remember Country Music* is Tony’s current single. He says, “It’s a nostalgic song for people that remember a certain kind of Country music. I am not one of those people who complain about the music that people are making. There is something for everyone and fortunately for us we have SiriusXM radio. We can find what we want to hear. Even though it is not the most profitable in the industry these days, there are those of us who still want to make Traditional Country music. Fortunately, there are those who still want to hear it. It’s a nod to music makers and fans alike.”

He also turned to some of Nashville’s top songwriters to contribute material for the album with Erin Enderlin and Jamey Johnson penning the title tune, *I Got Songs To Sing*. “Erin is a friend of mine and understands what I want or what I have to say. When we got ready to do this record, she sent me the song and I am thankful she did. It really tells the story of me, and it says it better than I could. It’s like a soundtrack of my life for the past ten years or so, making the transition from working that 9 to 5 to pursuing music. It comes with some risks, but every career has its challenges. That song speaks to the things that we all go through. We all have something we are passionate about and working towards.

a high level of energy and great work ethic that I really admire. We did a Larry’s Country Diner cruise several years ago, so I was on the boat with her for a week. We wanted to have her on this record, and I am thrilled she agreed. She just has that phenomenal voice and just the ability to draw a listener in.”

Other tracks on the album include an impressive cover of Glen Campbell’s *Wichita Lineman* while the upbeat *I’m All In* showcases Jackson’s skill as a songwriter.

When Tony is not performing out on the road, you can find him spending time with his family and his three-year-old daughter Madeline, for whom he lovingly refers to himself as ‘Maddy’s Daddy.’ “When I am home, I run sound for the church I attend. I don’t do any singing there and I am thankful for that. It’s nice just to be a part of the service. We also do a food bank with them. No one knows me as an entertainer which is fine with me it keeps me grounded. I am thankful for them and all that they do for me.”

Jackson has always felt at home on the stage. “With my background and moving around, I was always the new guy. I learned from an early age there are no strangers anywhere. We are all the same,” he says with a smile. “So, any community I’m in, I feel comfortable. I feel a connection to the audience. I truly love it. Music comes easy to me and connecting with folks has always come easy and that translates to a good performance. I hope the messages that come from this album are things that people can identify with and that they enjoy it. And of course, I hope that it brings them out to see us live. So, I hope this new record is something we can rally around and get back into some togetherness going forward. I feel good about the future.”

Being able to perform it and mean it and have it mean something to someone else, there’s nothing better for me.”

Five Dollar Bible is a faith-based song that focuses on things in life that truly matter. Chuck Rhodes, the label chief and album’s co-producer sent Tony the song for the album. “He’d had it for a while and just had it in his pocket waiting for the right person to come along for that message. When I heard it, I said, ‘Yup, that’s mine!’ It’s an amazing composition. We sang it live a couple of times and got a great response. We had to put it on this record for folks that wanted to hear this song. It has gotten a great reception and I love it!” *Five Dollar Bible* was written by Karen Staley (who wrote *Keeper of the Stars*) and singer/songwriter and comedian, Cledus T Judd.

The Queen of Bluegrass music, Rhonda Vincent joins Tony on the fun up-tempo track *Leave the Light On*. Tony explains, “She is an amazing entertainer and person. She has such

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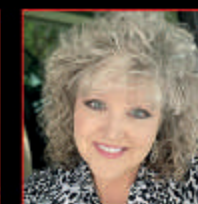
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CrossCountry Report

..... CHRISTIAN COUNTRY MUSIC NEWS & SCOOPS

Tammy Wynette to be Honored at the 2024 Recording Academy's Special Merit Awards Ceremony

Fans of Tammy Wynette learned the exciting news that the late Country music star will be honored posthumously with a Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award at the 2024 Recording Academy's Special Merit Awards Ceremony.

In a press release, the Recording Academy announced all of the honorees of the Special Merit Awards, which include the Lifetime Achievement Award, Trustees Award, Technical GRAMMY® Award, and Best Song For Social Change Award. The ceremony will take place on February 3rd at the Wilshire Ebell Theatre in Los Angeles.



CEO of the Recording Academy, Harvey Mason Jr., said: "The Academy is honored to pay tribute to this year's Special Merit Award recipients - a remarkable group of creators and industry professionals whose impact resonates with generations worldwide. Their contributions to music span genres, backgrounds, and crafts, reflecting the rich diversity that fuels our creative community."

Georgette Jones Lennon, daughter of Tammy Wynette and Country music legend George Jones, posted the exciting news online, adding that their family had been keeping the secret for months. She shared, "Our family couldn't be more thrilled to

announce: The 66th annual Grammy Awards are giving our mom the highest possible musical award. She's receiving the Lifetime Achievement Award... We are so grateful for such an honor for mom!"

According to the Recording Academy, the Lifetime Achievement Award is presented to "performers who, during their lifetimes, have made creative contributions of outstanding artistic significance to the field of recording." Tammy Wynette made an immeasurable impact on the Country music industry during her thirty-year career. She made a name for herself when she released *Stand By Your Man* in 1968 which went on to sell more than five million singles and became the largest-selling single ever recorded by a female artist.

By 1970, Wynette had racked up five No. 1 hits, was named 'Female Vocalist of the Year' at the CMA's three times, and won two Grammy Awards. She was the first female Country music singer to sell more than one million albums and to date, has sold over 30 million records grossing more than \$100 million, earning her the title "The First Lady of Country Music."

Tammy Wynette passed away in 1998 at the age of 55. Her contributions to Country music will never be forgotten, and this Lifetime Achievement Award is evidence of that.

Oklahoma Music Hall of Fame Inducts Ricochet, Bryan White, and Other Recipients on February 17, 2024, in Muskogee, Oklahoma

The Oklahoma Music Hall of Fame is set to honor the 2023 inductee class with a ceremony and concert at the Muskogee Civic Center on Saturday, February 17, 2024. The class is made up of several genres or styles of music, including Country hitmakers and touring musicians Ricochet and Bryan White, beloved Nashville songwriter Verlon Thompson, one of Oklahoma's most well-respected music educators, Jerry Huffer, world-renowned conductor, composer, and concert pianist Timothy Long, long-time touring and featured fiddle player Shelby Eicher, and concert booker and promoter David Webb.

In 1996, the members of Country super group Ricochet watched their debut single, *What Do I Know*, rise to the Top 5, earning the band the honor of the highest charting debut single of the year. The follow-up single, *Daddy's Money* became an immediate across-the-board hit, rising to #1 on the Radio & Records Country Singles Chart, the Gavin Country Singles Chart, and the Billboard Country Singles Chart (where it stayed #1 for two consecutive weeks). The band's distinctive musical style and intricate harmonies earned them recognition as one of the most popular vocal groups in Country music, a mantle they still wear today.

More than fifteen years later, "The Hardest Working Band In Country Music" is still going strong. The band continues to create great Country music, sung with distinctive harmonies that are their hallmark. They log thousands of miles on the road each year,



thrilling audiences of all ages across the United States and abroad. For more information, visit ricochetonline.com.

Bryan White is a CMA, ACM, and Grammy Award-winning Country music artist, producer, and songwriter. Six of his charted twenty-one hit songs have climbed to number one. CMA's 'Horizon Award' in 1996, 'Top New Artist' from the Academy of Country Music, and multiple CMA and ACM 'Male Vocalist' nominations. Bryan teamed up with LeeAnn Rimes in 1998 for their *Something to Talk About* tour and recorded with Shania Twain on the hit duet *From This Moment On*. Bryan was also voted in People Magazine's 'Top 50 Most Beautiful' issue.

In addition to the induction ceremony and concert show, the Oklahoma Music Hall of Fame will host a private VIP event for past inductees and an evening of music on the Hall of Fame stage on Friday, February 16th.

New Paramount+ Documentary on the Life of June Carter Cash

The new Paramount+ documentary called "June" showcases the life of one of the most formative - and most mysterious - female figures in Country music history.

The movie follows the life and career of June Carter Cash, who grew up in the legendary Carter Family but often slipped into the shadow of her larger-than-life superstar husband, Johnny Cash.

The documentary, first announced last November, focuses on Carter Cash's career prior to her marriage, shedding light on a prominent piece of Country music history that might not be as well known to even history buffs.

The official trailer for the project flips through archival footage of the singer's career. Meanwhile, stars like Kacey Musgraves, Willie Nelson, Reese Witherspoon - the latter of whom portrayed her in the 2005 film "Walk the Line" - and more reflect on Carter Cash's life and legacy, from her prominence as a Country performer and songwriter to her family life to one of the genre's most luminous figures.

"She was tough, and she was funny," Nelson quips at one point during his interview. "If you're married to Johnny Cash, you gotta be tough."

The trailer also advertises more star commentary from Dolly Parton, Ronnie Dunn and Larry Gatlin offering their perspective on Carter Cash's life and legacy, as will Robert Duvall, who acted alongside Carter Cash in the 1997 movie "The Apostle."

Born to Maybelle and Ezra Carter, June Carter Cash was an active member of the Carter Family band beginning at age ten. She performed alongside her mother, her aunt Sara, and her uncle AP, and when the family band stopped recording music together, Maybelle started a new singing group with her daughters and June as the lead singer.

Later on, she would maintain her quietly prominent role in Country music. As the trailer for "June" notes, Carter Cash was an influential songwriter who wrote one of Johnny Cash's most enduring hits, *Ring of Fire*. She died in 2003 at the age of 73.

"June" arrived on January 16 and is currently available to stream on Paramount+.



Cross Country Report continued on page 36 > > >

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Billie Jo Jones Signs Exclusive Recording and Publishing Contract with Get Joe Entertainment



Country singer Billie Jo Jones has signed an exclusive recording and publishing contract with Get Joe Entertainment, LLC in Dallas, Texas. Billie Jo signed the contract with the help of producer Kent Wells, who is well-known for his work with Dolly Parton in Nashville. He is excited to see Billie Jo's success on radio this winter. Her writing style will blend well with that of other writers in Nashville and Texas as she works on a full-length album set to be released in the spring of 2024.

Billie Jo's new EP, "Right Now Kinda Girl," was released on December 1 through BFD (Bob Frank Entertainment and The Orchard) and is now available on all DSPs. Her debut single, also titled *Right Now Kinda Girl*, is now being played on the radio.

"Billie Jo has a different, very authentic East Texas sound that's all her own. We love her traditional soul with the new crossover potential of some of her hit songs just now getting some airplay," said Len Snow, President of Get Joe Entertainment. "When we first heard her perform live, she opened a show for Billy Bob Thornton and the Boxmasters in Lindale, Texas. We said wow, what a voice, and she has that special something that only superstars have. I believe that young lady could sing the phonebook and make it sound awesome."

"This incredible milestone would not have been possible without the unwavering support and encouragement of my loved ones and fans," says Billie Jo. "Their belief in me has been the driving force behind this accomplishment, and for that, I will be forever grateful. Thank you all from the bottom of my heart!"

Billie Jo has attained remarkable achievements in her music career, which have paved the way for her to open for iconic artists such as Gene Watson, Linda Davis, Barbara Fairchild, Diamond Rio, and The Oak Ridge Boys. A personal highlight for her was opening for Ray Price, an artist she remembers listening to with her grandparents, who remain one of her biggest inspirations. She has also performed alongside other renowned artists such as Justin Moore, Wade Bowen, Pat Green, Stoney LaRue, Roger Creager, Sam Riggs, Bryan White, Josh Abbott Band, Band of Heathens, and many others.

Billie Jo was a finalist in the Jack Ingram Texas Songwriter U competition in Austin.

www.billiejojones.com

Vision Films Sets Theatrical and VOD Release for Country Musical 'A Nashville Wish' With Country Favorites Lee Greenwood, T. Graham Brown and Waylon Payne

Vision Films Inc. ("Vision") announces the theatrical run of coming-of-age and following one's destiny story, "A Nashville Wish," on February 2, 2024, followed by transactional VOD (video on demand) across the U.S. and Canada on February 27. The film is Executive produced by Niraj Bhatia and Dan Burks of Om Films,

with Robin Capehart, Stephen Emmett Jackson, Frank Thomas Parker, and Markus Niepraschk.

During the month of February, the film will have a limited theatrical release in Tennessee, Kentucky, Texas, Louisiana, Georgia, Virginia, Iowa, Utah, Arizona, and more. Visit and follow at facebook.com/anashvillewish for up-to-date information.

The full-length feature, directed by Demetrius Navarro and written by Ty DeMartino stars Maxfield Camp (The Glee Project), Kaileigh Bullard (ABC's Nashville), Alexis Gomez (American Idol finalist), Kevin Sizemore (Woodlawn, Into The Spotlight), Kourtney Hansen (ABC's Nashville), Ryan O'Quinn (Believe, Paul's Promise), Kate Orsini (NCIS), Molly Malady, Fletcher Olson, Caleb Shore (The Hunger Games: Mockingjay - Part 2), Candace Randolph, Erlinda Navarro (Anything is Possible), Craig Shumaker (Parks and Recreation) and features Country music stars T. Graham Brown, Waylon Payne (portrayed Jerry Lee Lewis in Walk The Line), and Lee Greenwood.



Music producer, composer, and vocalist Kevin Dorsey rescored and rerecorded the film's seven well-known classic and modern-day Country songs with the cast that now includes the legendary Lee Greenwood, T. Graham Brown and Waylon Payne all updating hits *Born Country* by Alabama, Vince Gill's *Whenever You Come Around*, Trisha Yearwood's *She's In Love With The Boy*, Rascal Flatts' *My Wish*, Patsy Cline's *Crazy*, Garth Brooks' *The Dance* (Duet), and *Keeper of The Stars* by Tracy Byrd.

The film is based on the award-winning stage musical 'Ticket to Nashville,' a family-friendly musical featuring many of Country music's most treasured songs. Most of the original stage cast reprise their roles that won Broadway World West VA Awards' Best Musical, Best Technical Director, Best Theatrical Director of a Musical (Demetrius Navarro), and Best Musical Director (Kevin Dorsey) in 2017.

Synopsis: A talented young Country singer dating the most beautiful cheerleader in high school dreams of nothing but going

to Nashville to become a music star. As the stars would have it, his music career takes off at the same time as their relationship, and he must choose between his love of music and the girl of his dreams.

Lise Romanoff, CEO and Managing Director of Vision Films says, "With an incredible soundtrack and a follow-your-dreams story, "A Nashville Wish" is the perfect family film with just the right amount of faith that audiences will fall in love with... and will sing along with for years to come!"

Executive Producers Stephen Emmett Jackson, Frank Thomas Parker, Robin Capehart, and Director Demetrius Navarro share, "Country music is the heartbeat of America and captures the magic of our hopes and dreams; come sing together with us and make "A Nashville Wish" come true!"

"A Nashville Wish" will be available on iTunes, Vimeo, Amazon Instant, Google Play, Vudu, and Vimeo, and across hundreds of U.S. cable providers, including Comcast, Spectrum, Charter, Cox, Dish, DirecTV, and more on February 27, 2024. DVD will follow at all major online retailers.

Country Music Artists Andy Griggs and Wes Hayden Launch Dirt Row Disciples Podcast

Dirt Row Disciples podcast features Andy Griggs and Wes Hayden. The Podcast kicked off the first week of January and will be released weekly on Wednesday nights, 7PM. Dirt Row Disciples podcast description states, "We're taking it outside the religious box and paving a way in the wilderness."



Andy Griggs



Wes Hayden

Andy Griggs mentions, "Into the wilderness we go! I've been waiting on this for a long time"

Wes Hayden adds, "This podcast has been years in the making, and I couldn't be more excited to be a part of this. Y'all get your popcorn ready!"

Visit and subscribe to Dirt Row Disciples on Youtube.



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CrossCountry^{USA} **HOT100**

OFFICIAL CHRISTIAN COUNTRY TOP 100 - FEBRUARY 2024

TM	LM	SONG TITLE	ARTIST	TM	LM	SONG TITLE	ARTIST
1	3	Hold My Halo	James Payne	51	50	Gonna Be Leaving	Jerry Grant
2	13	What Does It Profit A Man	Carolina The Band	52	24	If Not For You	Chris Golden
3	11	Surrounded	Jimmy R. Price	53	61	The Old Sinner	Jamie Coulter
4	9	Between The Pulpit And The Pew	Ken & Kim Stull	54	68	Victory Song	Russell Gilbert
5	7	I Know The Man	Mike Leichner	55	69	Where Time Is No More	Greg Finch
6	16	Tattoos And Scars	Steve Warren	56	77	Folks Don't Pray Anymore	Kenny Hatcher
7	15	One More Time	Terry Davis	57	72	I Need Your Grace	Michael Tetrick
8	10	Heaven's Grand Tour	Wayne Atkins	58	66	Come To The Cross	Zac Clifton
9	1	Take Up Your Cross	Mary James	59	88	Six Feet Deep	David Timms
10	14	In Jesus' Name We Pray, Amen! Amen!	Melanie Walker	60	89	He Never Really Went Away	Debbie Bennett
11	19	How Big God Is	Terry and Debra Luna	61	59	Traces Of Your Love	Johnny Jones
12	17	Child Come Home	Waymasters	62	47	The Father's Hand	Suzette Michaels
13	23	I'll Send It Up	Mike Haemmerle	63	38	Rich In His Love	Bobby Jones Family
14	48	The Old Rugged Cross	Carl Ray & Rhonda Vincent	64	41	Jesus Has A Mountain	Danny Thomas
15	22	America I Love	Michael Ray Fain	65	71	Momma's Wall Of Fame	Michael Lusk
16	27	Small Town Girl	Victoria Steelman	66	90	Old Hymns	Cyndi Reynolds
17	25	I Bleed The Color Free	Deano Graham	67	97	The Day That My Sin Died	Kesha Parish
18	30	The Prodigal Story	Jonathan Ray Smith	68	28	Grace Led The Way	Michael Knight
19	34	High Above The Midnight	Richard Lynch	69	-	Never Stop Believing	Tim Fulgham
20	35	A Good Place To Turn Around	Ron Hemphill	70	51	Papa's Love	Ben Coulter
21	40	Hello Mama	Sherry Damron	71	95	Never Easy To Say Goodbye	Debbie Mills
22	44	Rest On The Waters	Wink Kelso	72	79	Don't Take His Job Away	Gena Hamilton
23	31	Look What I Found	Keith Buchanan	73	74	Get On Out Of Here	Mike Walker
24	33	From Afar	Paula Slow	74	86	Mama's Endless Love	Steve Anthony
25	26	A Better Place	Stella Parton & Johnathan Bond	75	92	You're Worth It All	Ty Hodges
26	52	My Guilt Was No Match (For God's Grace)	Chuck Hancock	76	29	Used To Be's	Bill Baker
27	2	He's To Blame	Don Stiles	77	83	We Could Leave Any Day	Dena Clark
28	32	Turn My Eyes To Heaven	John Penney	78	73	Rapture Ready	The Gospel Friends
29	36	In His Eyes	Katie Estes	79	53	Appalachian War Cry	Lonnie Hardy
30	55	Dying To Save Me	Melissa Evans	80	91	Bethlehem, Virginia 1 BC	Steve Bridgmon
31	37	A Better Way To Go	David Smith	81	42	Sweet Beulah Land	Gregg Walker
32	75	Not Just On Sunday	The Pauls	82	63	I'll Speak For You	Jacky Jack White
33	46	I'm Heading In A New Direction	Elaine Roy	83	-	The Fingerprint Of Jesus	Carol Barham
34	62	What'll I Do	Barry McGee	84	-	Back Home Again	Johnathan Bond
35	98	You Get To Me	Delnora	85	85	When Jesus Swings The Wrecking Ball	Alan Bibey & Grasstowne
36	4	We Are Here Together	Jan Harbuck	86	76	Thank You For Trying	Jeff Napier
37	8	Don't Hide Your Scars	Johnathan Bond & Young Harmony	87	-	The Sinner And The Saint	Mark Umfleet
38	45	That's What Really Matters	Paul Tuttle	88	94	Blood Sweat And Tears	Todd Tilgham
39	6	Going Back Home	Shay & Michi	89	100	It Had To Be God	Tim Livingston
40	87	Once Upon A Cross	Barbara Fairchild	90	96	You Carry Me	Joy Lavallee
41	21	Broken Vessel	Marvin Harrell	91	93	Men Like These	Paul Staggs
42	64	No Prayer Requests	Lorraine Howard	92	-	Thank You	Tarrance Phillips
43	82	Old Time Feeling /Soul Fillin' Station	Dale Rochell	93	-	That's What I Love About A Sunday	Small Town Sunday
44	78	Called	Donna Kilmurray	94	-	Appalachia Blue	Marty Falle
45	58	Lovin' Me	Gina White	95	-	I'll Be Gone	Jim Huddleston
46	54	I'm Good	Steve Roberson	96	-	Love Won't Let Me Go	Norman Lee Shaffer
47	20	Let Him In	Chris Darlington	97	-	They Gotta Go	Lizzy G
48	12	All Alone	Roy Morris	98	-	I Felt God Today	Winnie Cooper
49	99	Living In His Glory	Troy Richardson	99	-	The Voice Of God	Don Rigsby & Midnight Call
50	18	When I Didn't Have A Prayer	Sonshine Road	100	-	The Father's Hand	Eddy Mann



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A photograph of James Payne, an older man with white hair and a goatee, wearing a dark, patterned shirt. He is holding a dark-colored electric guitar with a light-colored pickguard. The background is a dark, textured wall.

JAMES PAYNE

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The Legacy & Music of ROY ROGERS & DALE EVANS

He was the King of the Cowboys, and she was the Queen of the West. In their music, movies, and television, they would ride in on their horses, Trigger and Buttercup. This moment would make everything right with the world as millions gathered to watch them on the silver screen and television, while listening to their iconic song *Happy Trails*. Even through hard times, their faith in God made them a shining example of what a real Hollywood couple should be. We look back at the life and career of this extraordinary husband and wife, Roy Rogers and Dale Evans.



Roy Rogers was born Leonard Slye on November 5, 1911, in Cincinnati, Ohio. Roy came West with his family during the Great Depression, working, picking peaches in Southern California. He began singing on the radio with the Sons of the Pioneers, becoming co-founder of the Western group. By summer 1934, the popularity and fame of the Sons of the Pioneers extended beyond Los Angeles and quickly spread through short, syndicated radio segments that were later rebroadcast across the United States.

The Sons of the Pioneers signed a recording contract with the Decca Label and made their first commercial recording on August 8, 1934. One of the first songs recorded was *Tumbling Tumbleweeds*. Over the next two years, the Sons of the Pioneers recorded thirty-two songs for Decca, including the classic, *Cool Water*. The Sons of the Pioneers continued their popularity, continued to perform from the time Rogers started the group, replacing members as they retired or died. All original members have passed away. Although Roy was no longer an active member, they often appeared as his backup group in films, radio, and television, and up until his death, he would occasionally appear with them in performances.

When Roy heard Republic Pictures was looking for a singing cowboy, he literally fell in the stage door. In 1937, he signed the contract and the rest is history. Rogers became

one of the most popular Western stars of his era. The King of the Cowboys appeared in over one-hundred films, and numerous radio and television episodes of *The Roy Rogers Show*. In many of his films and television episodes, he appeared with his wife, Dale Evans. His show was broadcast on radio for nine years, and then on television from 1951 through 1957.

Dale Evans was born in Uvalde, Texas in 1912, as Frances Octavia Smith. As a single mother, Evans began pursuing a singing career in Memphis, Tennessee. As her budding music career grew, she took the stage name of Dale Evans. A career singing for radio stations led to a screen test with 20th Century-Fox, opposite Bing Crosby in *Holiday Inn*. Though she didn't win the part, she secured herself a one-year contract with the studio. Her big break in Hollywood came in 1943 when she was cast opposite John Wayne in *In Old Oklahoma*. The following year she was cast opposite her future husband, Roy Rogers, in *The Cowboy And The Senorita*.

Both Rogers and Evans were previously married. Roy's wife, Grace passed away shortly after giving birth to Roy Jr., from complications with her delivery. Roy and Dale were married on New Year's Eve in 1947. The couple had finally found forever love and would remain together until Rogers' death in 1998. The couple only had one child together, Robin Elizabeth, who sadly passed away shortly after her second

birthday from Down's Syndrome. Their daughter's death had a profound impact on Evans, inspiring her to write the book "Angel Unaware." The book is still available and has had multiple printings throughout the years. It is a comfort to many families that experience the loss of a young child. Rogers and Evans mourned the passing of two children during their marriage. They shared nine children between their multiple marriages, as well as four adopted children of different ethnicities.

Evans went on to write more inspirational books and was very involved in her religious pursuits, regularly joining Billy Graham crusades with her husband.

Rogers and Evans starred in eight films together, including *Bells Of Rosarita*, *The Man From Oklahoma*, *Along The Navajo Trail*, *Sunset In El Dorado*, *Don't Fence Me In*, *Song Of Arizona*, and *Rainbow Over Texas*. Fans fell in love with the couple and couldn't get enough of their chemistry. Throughout the 1950s, the couple starred together in their successful television series, *The Roy Rogers Show* where they continued their signature cowboy/cowgirl roles. Evans even wrote the show's theme song, *Happy Trails* which they performed together at the end of every program. The couple also starred in their own variety show in 1962, *The Roy Rogers and Dale Evans Show*.

Dale, Roy, and his parents answered every fan letter which came in by the thousands. Opening up their hearts to several adopted children, they started the Happy Trails Children's Foundation. Always, at every live performance, they provided invitations to children without the ability to afford a ticket, seats up front and center were filled with these young fans. At each stop on the road, Roy would put rubber booties on Trigger, and they would visit children's hospitals across the country. Trigger would hold one end of the jump rope, Roy the other, and the children would jump, laugh, and have the memory of the King of the Cowboys and the Smartest Horse in the Movies as their playmates for the day. Even today, as their son Dusty travels from performance to performance, there's no end to the number of Roy Rogers stories he hears.

Jeff Kramer, Producer of "Happy Trails: The Real-Life Adventures of Roy Rogers and Dale Evans," shares a special memory on their website. "As I write this short passage on Dale, I still live with a clear vision of dancing with her at The Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York City. She was a most amazing woman (and a great dancer) who had an impact on everyone that came in contact with her. Roy, Dale, Dusty,

and I were in New York City in 1995 for the opening of Robin's Nest, a neo-natal intensive care unit built at Our Lady of Mercy Medical Center in the Bronx, named for Roy's and Dale's daughter. While dancing together on the evening of the gala, she whispered in my ear, 'We love you. Whenever you're standing at the edge of the cliff, never be afraid to jump. God will either catch you or teach you how to fly.' These words have, and will stay with me forever, and I have passed them on to my four children."

"Happy Trails: The Real-Life Adventures of Roy Rogers and Dale Evans" is the world premiere musical about the extraordinary rise of Hollywood's iconic Western stars. It was created by a renowned team of Tony, Grammy, Academy Award, and Olivier Award winners. The book was written by Marshall Brickman, music and lyrics by T Bone Burnett, directed by Des McAnuff, and produced by Jeff Kramer. "Happy Trails: The Real-Life Adventures of Roy Rogers and Dale Evans" will make its world premiere on a date to be announced.



Roy Rogers passed away in Apple Valley, California on July 6, 1998. He was eighty-six years old. Three years later, Dale passed away on February 7, 2001, at age eighty-eight. Both have stars on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, and were inducted into the Western Performers Hall of Fame at the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City. The couple had successful solo music careers as well. Rogers was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame and Evans released several religious albums.

"Thank you," Roy Rogers and Dale Evans for being an inspiration to many of your fans and peers in Hollywood, and in the music industry. You rode your own trail with grace, generosity, talent, and undeniable faith in God. In the words of your famous theme song, "Happy Trails. Until we meet again!"

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Staff, Cross Country USA

The journey is always sweeter when you have someone to share it with! In the spirit of Valentine's Day, we spoke to a few couples who not only share their lives together, but also a ministry. They each have a love for God, love for one another, and a passion for music and ministry. (And, perhaps, a funny story or two!)



Bud & Ina Gore

Bud and Ina started their ministry together when they married in 1982 after what Ina describes as a “whirlwind courtship.” She explains, “We met in a local restaurant – I, coming from church, and Buddy coming from a bar. The place was crowded, no place to sit. A friend who was with Buddy asked if they could share my table. Buddy and I were married thirty days later! That was over forty years ago (and they said it wouldn’t last!)”

Ina continues, “When God has a plan and people who are willing to obey, things can happen really fast. We would like to encourage couples who are in ministry together that just because things may sometimes get difficult and personalities clash on how to “obey” God, just remember - If He brings you to it, He will see you through it! Keep your focus on Him and the gifts He has entrusted to you. Try to remember in times of stress that it’s not always about how YOU feel - it’s about how YOU respond. Stay cool and show respect. I guess the most difficult times to keep our cool is when we are lost, can’t find the venue, and don’t have any time to spare! That’s really the time to blame each other, right? That will stress you out, big time! We just want to thank God for choosing us to carry His Word in song to a lost and dying world. It just can’t get any better than that - except for Heaven!”



Candy & Jeremy

(Candace and Jeremy Bear)

Candy & Jeremy are a husband-and-wife acoustic duo based out of Nashville, Tennessee, whose roots run deep in Gospel music. Jeremy and Candace Bear have been married 24 years. While the two were dating, they started traveling in ministry together in Candy’s father’s group. Candy says, “All our dating was done mainly in church services, Gospel signings, camp meetings, or revivals! We were married for twelve years and traveled in full time ministry on the road before we had our first born, Colter (11/06/2009), and then the Lord blessed us with a second son, Kayden (07/02/2012.) They both have been on stage since birth, literally. As soon as the boys could stand, they had an instrument (fiddle, guitar, banjo, small bass) in hand while we sung, and they also sang solos.”

Speaking of her sons, Candy continues, “They are our miracle babies! Doctors said we’d never have children, but God showed just how awesome He is and who to trust! All these years together, the ups and downs have truly been a blessing! With each passing day we love each other more than the day before and our love grows stronger as long as we always put God first in our lives. We pray the Lord gives us many more years together! Our hearts are focused on doing all we can for the Lord while we can!!”



Terry & Debra Luna

Love at first sight? Probably not. Terry and Debra met as teenagers at the same local church and started building a relationship as they sang and ministered with other local talent. Their passion for singing, writing, ministering, and seeking God's will and direction brought the couple together, opening the door for many opportunities to answer their calling. They were later married and continued the call of ministering in various aspects. After their third child was born immediately following a singing engagement at the California State Fair, the couple began to work in the local church as music ministers. However, the call to travel and minister in song at churches and venues grew even stronger. Terry mentions, "We've been married now for 50 years! We're still singing, ministering, and seeking God's will."

Terry and Debra's commitment to God, family, and ministry has brought many blessings throughout the years. Debra said, "It hasn't always been easy, but when you know your calling, there is no turning back. We are thankful God brought us together at an early age so we could fulfill the plans He made for us."



Sonshine Road

Kevin & Rachelle Nelson

The award-winning duo, Kevin and Rachelle Nelson - known professionally as Sonshine Road - actually met at a nursing home. Rachelle says, jokingly, "No, he [Kevin] was not a resident. I was the Activity Director and had scheduled the Gospel band that Kevin was a part of to come and sing for the residents. God surely has a sense of humor! We have been singing, loving, and laughing together for eight years (come April 23rd) as husband and wife... and we wouldn't change a thing about any of it!"

Sonshine Road is dedicated to spreading the "Good News" of Jesus Christ through music and reaching out to everyday people with everyday problems. You can feel the love they share for each other and the love and compassion they share with everyone they meet.



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for all that you are doing for Inspirational Country music.

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LEGENDS SERIES

JIMMY R. PRICE

"I don't need to be a star." These are among the most noble words that could ever be uttered from the lips of a Christian. Behind words such as these, most always will be the person who loves family, loves life, and above all else, loves their Lord. Meet singer, songwriter, and pastor – Jimmy R. Price.

By Deborah Baliles

Born November 2, 1952, to J.C. and Evelyn Price, Jimmy lived out his childhood in West Texas and California before moving to live the rest of his life in a small Northwest Louisiana town. Born-again by the Holy Spirit at the age of twelve in a little Baptist church in Converse, Louisiana, already with a love of music, he picked up a guitar that same year and started playing. Seems the age of twelve marked the beginning of the life God had chosen for Jimmy.

For a few years, he and a few friends formed a band in high school playing Rock, Blues, and Country music. In the early 80s, Jimmy's playing and singing would find a new venue, the church. There he fell in love with Country Gospel music.

Jimmy married "Miss Ann" in 1974, blessing the couple with two children (Jason and Kylie), and five grandchildren (Lexi, Joshua, David, Jase, and Max).

A decade later, Miss Ann was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis. Such a devastating moment would be the inspiration for Jimmy's first written song, *Eye Of The Storm*. How does one know when a song is definitely inspired by God? When that song is effortlessly written, within a few, short minutes. Recorded years later, this song of hope would receive 'Song of the Year' award, at the 2012 ICGMA Awards in West Plains, Missouri.

Although faith in God was deeply embedded very early on, it would be many years down the road when Jimmy would accept and surrender to God's ministry calling, in 1992 and at the age of forty. The Reverend Price served as pastor of Noble Baptist Church from 1995-2020. Forever carrying on



that preaching passion, Jimmy serves as a pulpit supply when needed in addition to ministering at concerts, senior meetings, revivals, etc.

On the music side, Jimmy was introduced to Tommy Smith at Agape Fest, in Jefferson, Texas. Jimmy notes that day as one of the most important encounters in his Gospel music career. After listening to one of his CDs, Tommy agreed to promote and release one of Jimmy's songs. The first release, *I've Got A Feeling* would grace the Christian Voice Magazine chart at #11. Jimmy is ever grateful to Tommy and Canyon Creek Records, the Country/Gospel DJs, and Christian Voice Magazine for this amazing music career launch.

Since then, Jimmy has released at least ten singles that charted in the Top 5, with three of them rising to #1. Awards that followed included ICGMA's 'Male Horizon' (2011), 'Album of the Year' (2013), 'Male Artist of the Year' (2014), along with King Country Agape Fest 'Christian Country Cares' Award (2013).

Jimmy describes how he feels about all of this, "GOD DESERVES ALL THE THE GLORY...not me!!! The March 2020, #1 single says it all. *I don't need to be a star, rather be a moon - reflecting the light of the Son so bright, a mirror of the truth. Lord, I pray that when others look at me, Jesus will shine through. I don't need to be a star, rather be a moon.* The music that God has given me is ALL ABOUT HIM, not me!"

Jimmy's previous #1 single, "T-I-M-E" reflects on the love we have for each other, simply by the time we spend with others. All material things will pass away, but time is

eternal. "The most valuable of all earthly gifts, demonstrating our love, is time spent with family, children, each other, and most importantly, our Lord," exclaims Jimmy.

He goes on to say, "God has been so good to me and my family that I could never thank Him or praise Him enough. But I am going to spend the rest of my life on earth trying to let everyone know what I know about Him. As long as I have breath, I'm going to sing, write songs, preach - whatever it takes to point souls to his Son, Jesus!"

Jimmy's favorite scripture, *But God commended His love for us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.* (Romans 5:8) Favorite hymn, *Jesus Paid It All*. Words and lyrics contently confirming that Jimmy truly has no need to be a star.

Jimmy is fully vocal that all of the issues facing our great country (and our world) are solely contributed to a nation that has been steadily turning away from God and His Word. No one human can fix it, but the remedy is rather simple... "If



Jimmy & Ann Price

my people"... (Chronicles 7:14) From the proverbial podium, Jimmy preaches, "Lord, we need a great move of God, sparked by man's genuine REPENTANCE!!!"

While Jimmy's favorite thing to do is be in front of an audience, personally connecting with them in a local church or public venue, he understands the impact of Christian radio. The potential is there to reach untold numbers, never met or never finding their way to a church or a building. "This is why I continue to record and release Gospel music to radio. With every hope and prayer, it will be worth it all if but one song speaks to a heart, leading even one to Christ. Thank you to all other artists, record producers, promoters, radio stations, DJs, Christian Magazines, and everyone who takes a part in sharing the Gospel (and the moon) with the whole world!"

Jimmy is currently working on a new project to be released later this year. Distributed by Canyon Creek Records, his latest single is titled *Surrounded*, which will be on his upcoming album.

www.jimmyprice.com

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MICHAEL KNIGHT

**Rooted in Country,
Grounded by
the Cross**

By Tina Wakefield

Guitars, boots, cowboy hats, and a smooth Texas rhythm can transport one into a world full of Country music outlaws that once filled the airwaves with their unique style of music. Many artists today have taken their traditional County roots and integrated their talents and style into a genre full of musicians and singers. We call it Christian Country. With ballads of life and family intertwined in the lyrics, it is no surprise that the genre has resonated so well among music fans. The smooth rhythm of guitars, and fiddles along with a message of Jesus provides a platform to reach many who may never listen to a traditional Gospel song. Christian Country artists possess the ability to relate to everyday life and people who live and work to provide for their families while loving God and their country. One such artist is Texas native, Michael Knight.

Michael Knight took the roots of Waylon and Haggard, mixed them with his love for God and created a sound all his own. Michael did not have the traditional upbringing like many Christian artists. He shares, “My mother left when I was eleven years old and didn’t return in my life until I was 25 or 26 years old. I was raised by a woman I call Mama Mary, who took me in along with her four boys that became brothers to me. Mama Mary loved me and raised me as her own son. When I was fifteen years old, I began to play music with my new dad, Alvin Murray. I could say that I grew up playing fiddle and guitar in the Honky Tonks of Texas.”

As one of Christian Country’s successful artists, Michael relates to the average man who may not have led such a “perfect life.” While his songs now tell a story of simple truth, about the changing power of Christ, he admits he lived the rough and rowdy cowboy life for a great many years, playing in venues such as Gilley’s, Billy Bob’s, Cotton Eyed Joe’s and many other country clubs across Texas. He opened for acts such as Moe Bandy, Johnny Rodriguez, Restless Heart, Randy Travis, and many other well-known Country stars.

His big break came soon enough, when he was invited to Nashville to accept a record deal. Coming from the rough and rowdy side of Country music, however, Michael admits, “I just wouldn’t behave myself. I was young and rough, but bar brawls and things of that nature just would not be tolerated by the labels, and I just had not learned my lesson yet. I had several great cuts

and lots of promise and contacts in Nashville, but I was 32 years old and burnt out playing in joints so after four and a half years in the Nashville scene, I came back home to Texas and played around town.”

Michael Knight would become a changed man at the age of 47, when he accepted Christ into his heart and started on a path to reach others who may have led a less than perfect life. “After I was saved, my listening, driving, and drinking music changed from old school Country to a new genre of Country music - Christian Country. I discovered men like James Payne and Chuck Hancock and their style of Country Gospel. I found myself driving the old roads with a bottle of water and a good Country Gospel song on my radio, and I was hooked! My life was forever changed when I was saved, and my daily prayer became ‘Dear Lord, thank you for letting me live long enough to get saved.’ I knew I could have left this world many times through the rough life I had lived.”

One of Michael’s songs that led to his popularity in Christian Country music is entitled, *Bible On My Dash*. Knight explains, “This song opened so many doors for conversations with people because I do have a Bible always on the dash of my truck. I was playing a rodeo in Ft. Worth, Texas, unloading my equipment, when I overheard a



Michael and wife, Rhonda

changed. I want them to know that if God saved me, He can save anybody. God’s grace and mercy is why I am saved today.”

Keeping a very active touring schedule, Michael has no plans of slowing down, even though he’ll turn 61 in July. He played 120 dates last year, with bookings into 2024 and 26 weekends already booked for 2025. Possibilities for Michael seem to just keep on appearing. He was signed to a contract with Fired Up Productions - a rodeo company where he has provided music on Friday and Saturday nights for their events for the past five years.

Christian Country Music is blessed to have an artist as gifted and talented as Michael Knight to share his music and testimony with the world. His current single, *Grace Led the Way*, written by James Payne, became his sixth #1 hit in January. Be listening for Michael’s brand-new single, *Angel Just For Me*, arriving to radio any moment.

Michael has received numerous awards and award nominations, including 2018 TCMA Songwriter of the Year, 2019 TCMA Songwriter of the Year, 2019 ICGMA Male Horizon Artist of the Year, 2020 ICGMA Video of the Year, 2020 ICGMA Male Vocalist of the Year, 2020 and 2021 ICGMA Gold Cross Male Artist of the Year, 2020 TCMA Christian Country Single of the Year (*Bible On My Dash*), 2022 Crossover Artist of the Year, and 2023 Male Gold Cross Winner

Pastors and promoters are encouraged to reach out and book Michael for their next event and let the testimony of a changed man speak to hearts as they enjoy the sweet rhythm of Country Western music mixed with the message of God’s saving grace.

www.michaelknightlivemusic.com



A portrait of Terry Davis, a middle-aged man with a mustache, wearing a black jacket with red floral embroidery over a black shirt. He is holding a black leather-bound Bible with both hands. The background is a warm, orange-brown gradient.

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Roots date back to a long heritage of Gospel singers in Violet Maynard's Family. Saved at the age of nine, her greatest desire has always been to serve the Lord. She has always enjoyed singing and playing music.

As a result of a challenge from a family friend, Violet learned to play the piano at the age of eleven. Dean promised to sing a song if she would learn to play the piano. Taking this challenge to heart, Violet learned to play, and her friend followed through on his promise. As Dean sang *Jesus Loves Me*, accompanied by Violet on the piano, there wasn't a dry eye in the church house. This young man had never sang before in his life - he just wanted to be an encouragement to a young girl to follow her dreams.

The VIOLET MAYNARD Family

Together for the Lord's Glory



By Jackson McKee

In 2005, the Lord led Violet from a group ministry into a solo ministry, with her husband Will joining her as sound technician. Violet's daughter, Holly Maynard Newton, joined her as a vocalist for a season. She now serves in ministry at her home church.

Violet's son, Joshua, made the choice to accept Christ as his personal Savior at the age of nine. He first learned to play the drums, with bass guitar and acoustic guitar to follow. Through the years, he has become skilled on several other instruments as well. He explains, "I always thought music would only be mom's thing, but that never stopped the burning in my heart to do it myself. I am very grateful for the musical encouragement I received from many, as well as my long-time guitar instructor Bryon Shepherd. That said, my music ministry would not be what it is without the influence of my Southern Gospel heroes. One of my greatest memories is getting to play with Chuck Compton of The Comptons. The brief time I spent with him opened my eyes to how I would do ministry for the Lord. The same can be said about Ken Adams of Living Water, who has continually uplifted my personal music walk for my Savior, Jesus Christ. Chuck and Ken have both been wonderful Christian mentors to me. I consider both masterful guitarists, as well as upright men with genuine hearts for God."

Violet states, "We met Kendra Kent several years ago at a fall sing in Cambridge, Ohio. I was one of the artists scheduled to appear. Prior to the concert, this young lady was singing so beautifully during an "open mic" session. You could tell she loved the Lord and what she was doing. I knew I had to book her on an event I was hosting in the spring. I spoke with her parents, gave them the information for the event, and they all agreed she would participate, thankfully. Kendra was a little shy at that time of the event. But she did a wonderful job singing and playing the piano, and she blessed everyone that attended. I knew from the first time I met her that God had big plans for her."

Kendra adds, "Prior to meeting Violet, leading worship was where I ministered for a season. It was a wonderful time in my life that helped me grow and mature in many ways, until God showed me that the seasons were changing. The Lord showed me that I would be traveling, and I listened and kept that vision in my heart. Later, with the help of Violet and my loving supportive parents, I started traveling with my own ministry and I began to see the new season that God had revealed to me, but little did I know that there was something much greater to come. God blessed me with the opportunity to be a part of the most humble, loving family. I never thought that I would have a second family who truly loves and supports me. There's only one explanation for us coming together, and that is God. I know that we were brought together for something more than just singing, we were



brought together for the Lord's glory. That is something I will always be thankful for."

While they had separate ministries through the years since their first meeting, Violet, Joshua, and Kendra have been booked together at several church services and events. They would help each other out with vocals and with playing instruments. In the last year, however, many of the church leaders and promoters asked if they could book the two artists together. Violet states, "A strong friendship between the Kents and Maynards had grown through the years into becoming family to each other. So, when the question was asked of us, it was an easy decision to say yes."

Kendra officially joined the Violet Maynard Family January 1, 2023, with their first official date together on March 5. "We believe this has been God's plan for us all along. We just had to wait upon his direction and his timing," Violet said.

When someone is added to an existing group, sometimes it is difficult for everyone to find their place. This was not the situation here. Violet, Joshua, and Kendra each have the same goal and that is to serve the Lord to the best of their ability. They want the light to shine on Him and not them. There is team unity in the group and in their common ministry goal.

The Violet Maynard Family has become a fan favorite with their family vocal harmonies and their presentation of well-known songs and hymns as well as original compositions they have written. They all play instruments for the group as well. The fans have shown them appreciation by nominating them for several fan-voted awards. From those nominations, they have won several awards presented by Gospel Music Showcase Convention and Christian Voice Magazine's Gospel Music Fan Awards.

Looking forward, Violet says, "If you come to see and hear the Violet Maynard Family in a church service or concert, be ready to worship the Lord. We love what we do, and we want to do it to the best of our ability. But, most of all, we want the Lord to be lifted for His glory, not ours. Our motto is to bring back the heart of worship and to share God's love, grace and mercy in song.

Listen for the group's latest single at radio now, *It Is More Than Just A Story*.

Joy LaVallee

You have made known
to me the path of life;
you will fill me with
JOY IN YOUR PRESENCE...
Psalm 16:11

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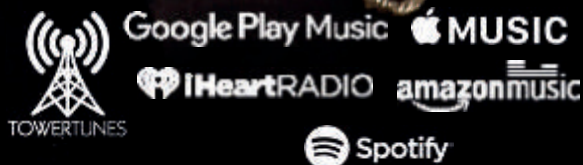
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*Melanie
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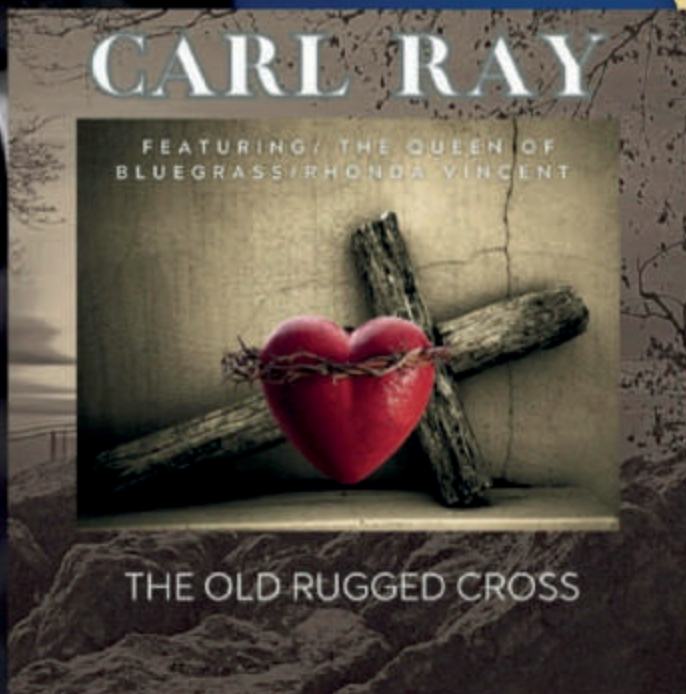
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