

DECEMBER 2025

# CrossCountry<sup>USA</sup> magazine



**MICHAEL  
WALSH**

***A Voice Redeemed***



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**DECEMBER 2025**

### CROSS COUNTRY USA MAGAZINE

PO Box 147 • 17911 Hwy 96 • Kennedy, AL 35574  
Phone: 205-596-4371 / Fax: 205-596-4375  
(Office hours: 10:00 am - 4:00 pm CST Mon-Fri)

### WEBSITE

[www.crosscountryusamagazine.com](http://www.crosscountryusamagazine.com)

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### COVER PRICE

\$3.95 U.S. • \$5.95 CANADA

### SUBSCRIPTION RATE

\$20.00 per year (U.S. Only)

Visa, MasterCard, Discover and American Express accepted

### PUBLISHED AND DISTRIBUTED BY



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## From the Editor

### Merry Christmas!!

We are winding down the year, and if you are like me you have a very busy December planned. It's the hustle and bustle of last-minute shopping (I am finished with mine! Woohoo! Lol!), Christmas parties, church Christmas programs and family gatherings. In the rush and busy-ness of the season, let's all remember the reason for the season - the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. (Luke, Chapter 2)

In this issue, several artists - many of whom you've seen in this publication - share their favorite Christmas memories, traditions, and Christmas songs with us.

I thought I would share mine with you as well: In my family, Christmas traditions have changed. For my mother and I, it requires a lot of traveling back and forth to Alabama, visiting kids and grandkids in Kentucky and Mississippi. Also spending time in South Carolina, visiting with more family and friends. We are blessed to be able to be with family but miss those who are spending Christmas in Heaven.

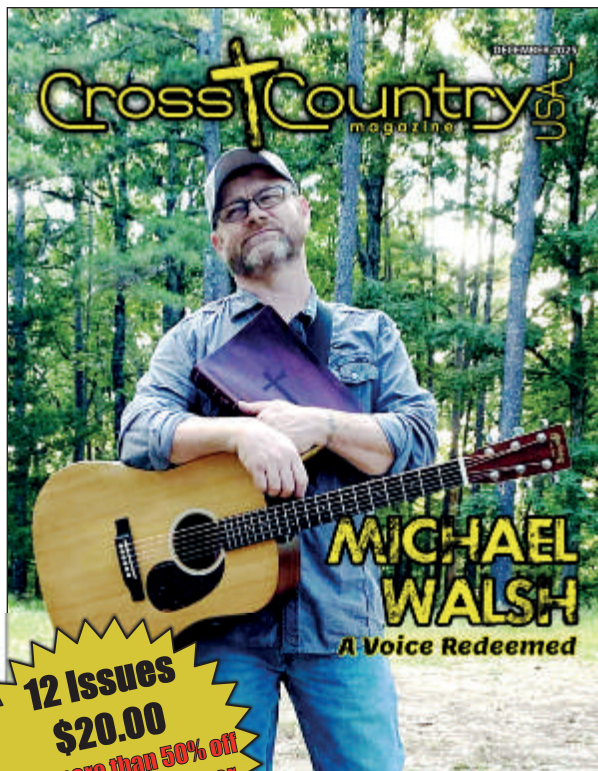
My favorite Christmas song could also be one of my favorite Christmas memories. One of the first songs that I heard growing up and learned to sing was an old song titled God Is My Santa Claus. It was recorded by Country singer Hank Snow in 1967. I first heard my uncles sing it and that was the first Christmas song I learned and sang in church. Now, several generations in our family still sing that old song. Every time our family in South Carolina are together at Christmas they sing it. It wouldn't be Christmas if it wasn't sung at our Christmas gatherings or at church. I always said if I ever record a Christmas album, that song will definitely be included.

From our staff at Cross Country USA Magazine and Wilds and Associates, we wish you a blessed and safe Merry Christmas! Enjoy all the family gatherings and fun with the kids as we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ.

*Robin*

**Robin Tanner, Managing Editor**

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### KENTUCKY JUST US

By Robin Tanner



**K**entucky Just Us, the powerhouse Americana Bluegrass band from Glasgow, Kentucky, is a family-rooted ensemble making waves across the acoustic music scene. The group features 24-year-old fiddle player and vocalist Kacey O'Neal, 16-year-old mandolinist Caleb O'Neal, 20-year-old guitarist Kolten Matthews, bassist Shelane O'Neal, and is led by 23-year-old National Banjo Champion Jesse Meador. Their motto - "Real Life, Real Family, Real Music" - says it all.

Vocalist Kacey O'Neal recalls how it all began: "Kentucky Just Us started in 2014 when we realized we could harmonize together singing along to the car radio. We went to Mom and Dad and asked if they'd help us pursue music as a career - and we haven't looked back since. Being the first artists in our family to tour professionally has been a major learning experience, and we've worked hard to develop a sound that truly embodies who we are."

Their influences span Bluegrass legends like Buddy Spicher, The Osborne Brothers, Flatt & Scruggs, and Glen Campbell. Over the years, they've had the honor of sharing the stage with many of their heroes, including Josh Turner, Ricky Skaggs, Gene Watson, Russell Moore (currently touring with Alison Krauss & Union Station), The Malpass Brothers, Dailey & Vincent, Shenandoah, and Wilson Fairchild.

Kentucky Just Us has graced some of the most iconic stages in the country, including the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum, the Station Inn in Nashville, Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds in Hiawassee, Silver Dollar City, The Mansion Theatre in Branson, and the Country Music Highway Tribute Show in Louisa, Kentucky.

Their accolades are as impressive as their harmonies. Jesse Meador earned the title of 50th Walnut Valley Festival 'National Banjo Champion.' The band was named the first-



ever ‘Artists in Residence’ at the Kentucky Music Hall of Fame and Museum, received the Bluegrass Heritage Foundation’s Johnny Lee Vincent Memorial Scholarship, won the inaugural Dailey & Vincent’s LandFest Band Contest, and took home the 2019 KSMU ‘Youth in Bluegrass’ Contest title.

A recent milestone came on November 2, 2025, when Kentucky Just Us won Fan’s Choice ‘Duo/Group of the Year’ at the Josie Music Awards, held at the legendary Grand Ole Opry in Nashville. The award coincided with the release of their new album, “10,” celebrating a decade of making music together.

“We’re so thankful and honored to be here this evening,” the band shared during their acceptance speech. “Thank you to our fans who voted for us - we couldn’t do this without you. Most of all, we thank the good Lord for giving us the opportunity to do what we love and make a living at it. And thank you to our sponsors, endorsers, and the Josie Music Family!”

Their new album, “10,” is a heartfelt tribute to their journey. It blends deep Kentucky roots with fresh sounds that resonate across generations of Bluegrass and Americana fans. The project features ten tracks - six written by band members - and includes collaborations with CMA nominee Tim Raybon and IBMA award winner David Stewart.

“10” is more than an album - it’s a celebration of where we’ve been, the music we love, and the future ahead,” the band says. “Every track takes listeners on a journey through joy, tears, tradition, and new horizons.”

The album also features appearances by five-time IBMA ‘Guitar Player of the Year Kenny Smith,’ Allen Dyer (Lorraine Jordan & Carolina Road), Pam Perry (New Coon Creek Girls, Wild Rose), and Tony Wray. Highlights include *The Oak Tree Shade*, a moving tribute to veterans, and *Wild Blue Violets*, a Blues-inspired, banjo-driven single penned by Jesse Meador. Kacey O’Neal contributes two originals - *Sing for Me Whippoorwill* and *Last Train* - while Shelane O’Neal closes the album with a deeply personal tribute to her late father, *I’m So Thankful for You Daddy*. The album also includes standout renditions of Tom T. Hall’s *That’s How I Got to Memphis* and the Osborne Brothers’ *Georgia Mules and Country Boys*.

Their latest single, *Homeward Bound*, spent over 29 weeks on national charts, reaching #1 on Roots Music Report, Bluegrass Borderline, and Mountain Bluegrass. It was also nominated for ‘Bluegrass Song of the Year’ at the 2025 Josie Music Awards.

Faith is central to the band’s identity. Jesse Meador shares the story behind one of their most meaningful songs:

“I wrote *Oh What Love* sitting in a church service. I was on the second pew from the front when I saw a sign above the pulpit that said, ‘I love you this much.’ Not saying I wasn’t listening to the preacher,” he laughs, “but by the time the sermon ended, the song was written.”



Looking ahead, the band remains grounded in their mission: “We want to keep growing as songwriters and share our music with as many people as we can, nationwide and beyond. Most importantly, our goal is to honor the Lord through it all, whether we’re playing a small-town festival or stepping onto the stage of the Grand Ole Opry.”

Kentucky Just Us continues to rise as one of the most exciting voices in Bluegrass, Roots, Country, and Americana. Their sound is equal parts heartfelt tradition and bold originality. With stunning harmonies, top-tier musicianship, and songs that stir the soul, they’ll have you laughing, tearing up, and loving every minute. Their energy and connection with the crowd make every show unforgettable.

[www.kentuckyjustus.com](http://www.kentuckyjustus.com)



By Teresa Schweinsberg

Glendil Griffin bought a little guitar at a thrift store as a young boy and taught himself to play. It all came together for him when a cousin took him into a Sunday School room at church and taught him how to hear and play the chord progressions in a song. He taught Glendil how to play a song by ear, knowing when to transition from one chord to another. In high school, Glendil started learning to play piano at around the age of seventeen. He took any opportunity between classes to hone his craft in the band room.

- Playing instruments was something Glendil loved to do but had not really thought much about singing. He sang automatically while learning chords on the guitar. One day, his pastor heard him singing while playing the guitar. He noticed how good Glendil's voice was and asked him to do a special song in church.

- "The very first song I ever sang publicly was *Come Morning* by the Nelons. I was scared to death! I had never sung for anyone in my life. I had to overcome a lot of anxiety. At the end of the song, I put my head down. My cousin tapped me on the shoulder and said, 'Look up!' When I raised my head, there were many people at the altar and others praising the Lord all over the church. I knew at that moment without a doubt God was going to use my singing in my music ministry."

- Not only does Glendil sing at other venues and churches, but he is also the worship leader on staff at Community Fellowship Church in Jonesboro, Arkansas. He took the permanent position instead of traveling during 2020 and COVID, when all traveling was cancelled. Glendil says evangelism and traveling with his message in song is still his heart. That is why he has been so excited to get his new song out to the public and start booking new places again.

- Glendil shared, "My vision for this song *When You Can't Find Your Way Back Home*, written by Cynthia Reamy, is to reach people who may think they have gone too far. I want to help draw them back to the Lord. My whole heart is to reach the person who is on the edge of disaster and let the Holy Spirit draw them back in."

- Glendil was at an event in Tennessee, singing at an outdoor venue. He didn't know anyone personally who was there. He was singing a song about his personal struggles and insecurities. He said, "The enemy wants us to feel so defeated, like we can get so far from God, He can't accept us. A person came to the altar, and as we prayed with them, the person told



us they were planning to take their life that night. They even had the drugs to do it in their pocket. During my transparency about my own struggles, the person got saved and took the drugs from their pocket they planned to take their own life with, laid them on the altar, and left them there. It showed me that being vulnerable about my own problems could help someone else who was feeling the same way."

- For more information on Glendil and his music, he may be reached for interviews at: 270-993-9074 or email: glendilg@gmail.com.



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# *Angie Gable*

## **Pick-Me-Up Gospel**

**WSKV FM**  
**Pickup Country, Stanton, KY**

By Teresa Schweinsberg

Meet Angie Gable, a favorite Bluegrass and Christian Country DJ, as part of a Country station, WSKV FM in Stanton, Kentucky. The station is dubbed “Pickup Country,” but Angie’s positive CCountry show is called “PickMeUp Gospel.” Her sweet smile and sunny disposition endears her to fans, listeners, and artists alike.

Angie grew up in a Christian home. She has a heritage in a long line of Christian family members on both sides. Music was also very much a part of life growing up.

“On Sundays,” Angie shares, “we all went to Grandma’s, where my aunt played the piano. The whole family stood around it and sang hymns. We had various instruments playing - the flute, mandolin, fiddle, and hammer dulcimer.”

“When I got married at age twenty, I married the man I had prayed for, Steve. I was saved at a young age and baptized at age eleven. In 2012, I did a Bible study on James with a ladies group at our church. It was life changing! I fully experienced a radical change. I could feel His liquid love pouring over me, drastically changing my relationship and my walk with Jesus,” Angie continued. “Gospel songs were all around me, whether on the radio, in church, or In concerts I went to hear of artists in every genre.”

Angie and her husband Steve opened a mechanic shop with the Bible verse Colossians 3:17 “And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him” on all their signs. They began to meet a lot of locals who came to them because of that verse.

One of the people who came to them was A. C. Moore, owner of the local radio station. He asked them to be sponsors of the Gospel program. Angie picks up the rest of the story. “In February 2018, Steve and I had been on a getaway. We got a phone call from A.C. Moore at the station wanting to know if I could come to work for them. I had just quit my job at Toyota. I didn’t really want to go back to work. Steve encouraged me to at least talk to him. I talked to God about it first and told Him my needs of only working two days a week,” Angie says.





particular song has touched them or how listening changed their lives. She opened the book to share a story that really touched her.

"One listener texted me from Michigan and shared, 'That last song was meant for me,'" Angie shared. "'I'm 31 years old. I got into alcohol. I am married and have a daughter. I have failed them both. That song brought me to my knees, and I rededicated my life to the Lord.'"

Angie continued to share his story. "He called back and told me he has not had any alcohol since August of last year when he heard my show. He also has his family back.

"It is stories like this that touch my heart, and I write down. I open my 'PickMeUp Book' when I need something to remind myself that this music is reaching people. Music reaches the very soul when nothing else will. It has helped me through many trials," Angie states.

Angie declares, "I'm having a ball! I'm on one of the best journeys ever! Fridays are

Angie became the financial administrator for WSKV two days a week. God heard her prayer. However, that is not the end of the story.

A.C. Moore was doing the Gospel program when he developed a brain aneurysm. He needed someone to take over the program for him. Angie had been listening to the station's music through the wall of her office and been blessed by it. She had never been behind a microphone in her life but told A.C.'s son Ethan she might like to do the show for him. That was in 2019. After six years, Angie is still behind that microphone doing the show and has not looked back. In fact, she is still going strong and being blessed by the music and the stories of listeners.

If you have ever met Angie, you know what an encourager and positive person she is, thus the name of her program. It will pick you up when you are down. For the entire six years, she has been keeping a journal she calls her "Pick Me Up Book." A listener brought it to her one day to jot down listener prayer requests. Angie also uses it to write down stories her listeners share with her about how a

request days. Bluegrass is big here in Kentucky, but now I have Christian Country to play and get requests for during another two hours. I get to share personally with them when people call or request songs. I am so blessed and thankful this is my job!"

Angie mentioned how much she loves donuts one day on the air. She now has an endless supply of donuts daily from listeners dropping them off. She is very grateful to A.C. and Ethan Moore, now the General Manager for the station, for allowing themselves to be used by God to give Angie such a great opportunity to minister and play the music she loves. Next to her husband Steve, sons Matthew and Isaac and his wife Kristin, and granddaughter Athena, getting music to the ears of those who need God or a life change is Angie's greatest gift since salvation. That is why she is "one of our favorite DJs."





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# Christmas Memories, Music, and Traditions

Compiled by Robin Tanner

Many families and friends will gather during this Christmas season to celebrate the birth of Christ and enjoy their holiday traditions, reflecting on old memories and listening to the sounds of the season. We caught up with several Christian Country music artists as they share their favorite Christmas traditions, memories, Christmas songs, and even some Christmas wishes.

## Delnora

Christmas really is my favorite time of the year. I love everything about it! Celebrating our Lord and Savior's birth and sharing His love with others... it's such a joyful time. This is especially true through the eyes of a child. Some of my favorite family traditions began when I was a very young child. We always went to my Great Grandmother's house on Christmas Eve and then over to my maternal Grandparents' house afterward. All of us kids would put on a show for my great-grandmother, grandparents and parents, aunts and uncles, and after the show we would all sing Christmas carols together. I love how the holiday brought us all together. I love that as kids we learned to do something special for our elders - my great grandmother adored the shows and Christmas carols so very much - and I'll never forget the look on her face (or my parents and grandparents) when we all sang carols together.

Of course, Mom and Dad always made Christmas morning special too, and then the rest of Christmas Day was spent with my paternal Grandparents. MaMaw Reed fixed roast beef and after we ate, we opened presents then played music as long as my PaPaw wanted to - at least until it was time for supper (or "2nd dinner"). Even as kids, I remember loving how child-like everyone got... the adults enjoyed it as



much as the kids! The excitement to bring someone else happiness was contagious. I'm no longer a kid, and now we try in this very hectic time of year to share this legacy of music and love with our son, Reed, so that he may also see and know that peace resonates when you love others more than you love yourself... just as Christ intended. What better way to celebrate our Lord and Savior!

## Michael Ray Fain

My favorite Christmas song is *Christmas Times A-Coming*. As a kid, I remember exploring the mountain with my cousins for hours searching for the perfect tree. After we cut and dragged this perfect tree home, Granny Fain would help us place it in a bucket of dirt and tie it off to the wall with string. As we all decorated the tree with silver Icicles and garland, 'Pa' would play *Christmas Times A-Coming* on the fiddle. It's just a simple Christmas memory, but it reminds me of what Christmas really is, it's love born in a stable in a little town of Bethlehem.



## Debra Camp

My favorite Christmas memory is whenever I was inspired to write a Christmas poem about my family. After we all finished eating and opening our presents, I had everyone sit around the dinner table, as I read the poem to them. The poem included each person in my family. Everyone laughed as I read "their" story in the poem. It truly was a joyous Christmas and a wonderful memory!



Traditions are very important to me, Christmas traditions especially. The very start of the Christmas season immediately brings round memories of my Grandma, and smells from her kitchen, and laughter from the whole house. Nostalgia overwhelms me, and I find myself just wanting to hug everyone and sing songs about Jesus! Pass those traditions on, my friends!!

### **Elaine Roy**

I have many Christmas memories that I hold near and dear to my heart but one of my favorite memories is probably when I was around 7 years old. I got a cassette tape recorder. I was so excited because I could sing and tape myself and listen back and hear what I sounded like. I still have those tapes from way back when. Christmas is family time, and those memories warm my heart.



### **Leon Everette**

In 1955, I was 7 years old living in Queens New York. It came a big snow on Christmas Eve. Me and Daddy built my first snowman on Christmas Day. Ain't God good.



### **Debbie Bennett**

I think that my favorite Christmas memory was dating back to 2011. In January of that year, I was diagnosed with stage 4 endometrial cancer. On February 7th I had a radical hysterectomy. I was told by nurses after my surgery that I had actually died on the table. One nurse told me, "Sweetie, all I can say is God must not be through with you yet, 'cause you had an angel on each side holding you down!" I'm so very thankful God wasn't and isn't through with me. That Christmas my heart was renewed and filled with the overwhelming joy that Christ had done a miracle in me, and I needed to share it with the world! That's what I'm doing! To this day, I am a 3-time cancer survivor and it has been almost 15 years for me being cancer free! I will sing of His love and His mercy everywhere



I go! My husband is my stronghold of strength and God is our firm foundation!

### **Jay Murphy**

My favorite Christmas traditions have to be family gatherings, seeing family I don't see the rest of the year, and driving around in the cold and looking at all the wonderful lights and displays.

Most of all, we strive to keep Christ first and foremost in Christmas. When Abigail was young, her mother and I did not want her to be distracted by all the commercial trappings of the modern observance of Christmas. We wanted Christmas to still be a magical time, but to always cause her to think of Christ. We began a tradition of our own as early as Abigail's first Christmas. I would hold her and tell her the Christmas story. I would explain that Jesus is the reason for the season and that we give gifts out of love just like God the Father gave us the greatest gift of all, his only begotten Son, because he loves us.

As she has gotten older, this has grown into a time of great conversations about the magnificent gift our Savior has given us. I love this tradition and pray that she will carry it on when she starts her own family.



### **Jennifer Dean**

Growing up, Christmas was always such a magical time and my family's favorite holiday. I remember as a little girl going out with my Papa and cutting down the Christmas tree. I was so excited to bring it home so we could put the lights and decorations up. But my fondest memory, tradition if you will, was when we would load up in the car after Christmas dinner and ride through town looking at the lights. I still have the feeling of joy every year when my daughter and I venture out to enjoy all of the glorious





lights. The quiet simplicity of it all makes everything stand still for a moment and not seem so fast paced and busy. It's such a blessing to be able to enjoy these moments as often as we can with our family. It's a timeless treasure that's locked deep inside my mind and my heart.

### **Rocky & Tamie Smith**

As newlyweds we haven't had a lot of time to make holiday traditions yet. But we do have two that we hope to continue for many years to come. The first is the annual Christmas Candlelight Service in our home church in Kernersville North Carolina. The second is to go to Christmas Town in McAdenville, North Carolina and enjoy the lighting of the tree. Since Tamie is the Christmas Queen, we are sure to make many new traditions!"



to the words, you get a vivid picture of the story the song is telling. You can imagine the night of the Savior's birth and experience what is happening, and why, through the words as if you were present. The beautiful melody and music just completes the song. It was truly a holy night, and I am thankful for the Savior that came to save us.

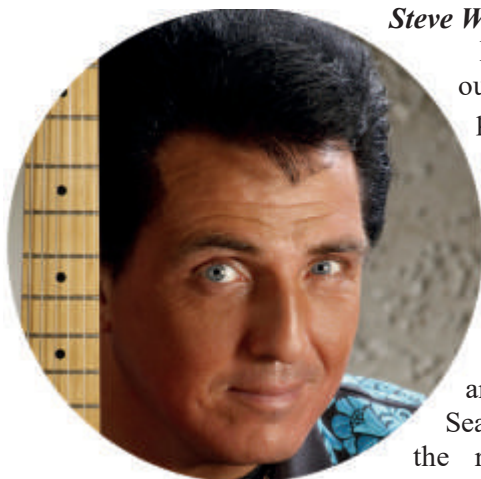
### **Cathy Guffey**

Traditions are very important to me, Christmas traditions especially. The very start of the Christmas season immediately brings around memories of my Grandma and smells from her kitchen, and laughter from the whole house. Nostalgia overwhelms me, and I find myself just wanting to hug everyone and sing songs about Jesus! Pass those traditions on, my friends!!



### **Steve Warren**

My Christmas wish for our world today is that people would find peace in God by coming to the knowledge of Jesus Christ. With all the hustle and bustle in today's society and the marketing strategies around the Christmas Season, let's never forget the real reason for the season. And that reason is a



King that came in a cradle, paid the ultimate price at the cross and won us a crown in Heaven.

My favorite memories as a child are being home with all of my family, participating in Christmas caroling and Christmas programs, and having deep fried oysters and eggs for breakfast!

I don't have one favorite Christmas song, I have three. *Carol of the Bells*, *It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year* and *Little Drummer Boy*. All of the songs get me in the Christmas spirit.

### **Violet Maynard**

*O Holy Night* is my favorite Christmas song for the story it tells. I love story songs, and this song is exactly that. The first line begins with "*O Holy Night*." This sets us up for what is ahead. As you listen



### **Victoria Steelman**

My family and I cherish traditions year-round, but they shine brightest at Christmas. For me, these rituals make the season unforgettable, weaving us back to the heart of the story: Christ, the true reason for the season.

Our newest tradition - born just a few years ago - is putting up the tree as early as possible, sometimes even before Thanksgiving, to spark that joyful Christmas spirit.

An angel crowns the top, a gentle reminder of the heavenly messenger who told Mary she would conceive a child, who would be our Lord and Savior. (Luke 1:30-33)

We adorn the branches with special ornaments celebrating our Lord and Savior. My favorites are the exquisite wooden nativity scenes I brought home from Israel a few years ago. They take me back to the holy land where it all began. We also hang sweet mementos marking milestones from our sons' younger days, transporting us to Christmases past and warming our hearts with smiles each year.



My husband's beloved ritual is diving into his Luke Christmas Bible study on the Bible app, sharing insights with me daily. It's a precious habit he's kept for more years than I can count.

I adore Christmas movies that capture the season's joy and honor our Savior, along with the timeless melodies of Christmas music. This year, I'm thrilled to release my first Christmas single - a song we crafted to celebrate the true reason for the season, intertwined with cherished traditions. So, when asked about my favorite Christmas tradition, it's this: keeping it all about Jesus. I even explain to my grandchildren that we exchange gifts because Jesus was the first and greatest gift - the reason for the season, the author of our salvation, whose story truly began on Christmas Day!

#### **Marty Smith**

Growing up in Utah, seeing the snow at Christmas and cutting down our own Christmas tree each year - it was so much fun! For our favorite Christmas traditions, we always



open up one present on Christmas Eve. The other thing we do is pick a family and buy Christmas presents for them anonymously. *Home For Christmas* by MidSouth is my favorite song. I love the message in the song! If the Lord comes back soon, we may be home for Christmas.



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# The Story Behind the Song

Staff, Cross Country USA

## WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE MY BABY?

Written by Nicole Smith

Recorded by Tate Emmons

Young Gospel music artist Tate Emmons recorded a Christmas album last year, “Christmas With Tate.” His Aunt Nicole Smith wrote a Christmas song titled *Would You Like To See My Baby*. The song has gotten a great response since its release in 2024. Read the story behind *Would You Like To See My Baby* and stream and download it. It’s sure to be your next favorite Christmas song.

School teacher, Nicole Smith shares how she got the idea to compose *Would You Like To See My Baby*. “I was getting ready to share the Christmas story with the kids at school. The Lord laid it on my heart to dress up like Mary and tell the whole story as if Mary was talking to them. As I told that story, I was holding a babydoll that represented the Christ child. I thought about that idea and Mary holding that baby more and more as I prepared and even after this particular event,” admits Nicole.

“I told those children at the end, ‘now, would you like to see my baby?’ That phrase just stuck to my heart the more I thought about it. I am not really a songwriter. I am more of a storyteller and a teacher. I thought about how the shepherds felt. When they got there, they were the ones that Mary would have asked, ‘Would you like to see my baby?’ They were the ones that got a message from Heaven that said, ‘go now!’ It was such a profound thing, they were scared but obedient. The song just came in a story form, and it meant so much to my heart and I never dreamed we would get to do this and share it with so many people today.” (Check out Tate’s YouTube channel to view the video of Tate and Nicole discussing the song.)



**Tate Emmons**

“Christmas is such a special time of year for me and our family. It really is! When people listen to this song this holiday season, I hope the Holy Spirit will take them back to Bethlehem,” Nicole expressed. “I think Christmas is different if it’s in our heart and we can go back to Bethlehem in our mind and feel the grass under our feet where the sheep are grazing. We can know what it felt like to walk down those streets of that city in the cold night air. We can make our way in to that manger and we can stare at Mary and Joseph, and the Holy Spirit says, ‘What about you? Would you like to see the Baby?’ If we can get a glimpse of what Christ did at Christmas by coming, knowing everything He was going to face - laying aside His Glory and coming as a tiny baby. If we can get a glimpse of that, this Christmas would be different.”

Tate Emmons sings the song with such emotion. You can see the story as you hear the lyrics. “This song has been incredibly special to



**Nicole Smith**



me not only because of the tender, yet powerful message but also because my aunt wrote the song. She is a role model and inspiration in my life,” shares Tate. “It has been an honor to share this song with the world. It has touched people’s lives. I believe it will continue to as time goes on”



***Would You Like To See My Baby***  
*There was something in the air that night,  
 yeah, my heart was filled with fright,  
 but angels don't show up for everything.*

*Me and the boys ran like they said,  
 made our way to Bethlehem.  
 There we saw the first manger scene.  
 Out of breath when we arrived,*

*Joseph looked a bit surprised,  
 doing his best just to keep her warm.  
 Mary lay there with a smile on her face,  
 tired little eyes with a touch of grace.*

*She held out a baby in her arms  
 And she said, "Would you like to see my baby?  
 Would you like to meet your King?"  
 She said, "Would you like you to see my baby?  
 He's Lord and He's God of everything."*

*No one there could ever deny  
 there was something special in the baby's eyes  
 that caused this shepherd's heart to skip a beat.  
 I always knew God would send someone  
 to pay for all our sins,  
 but I never dreamed I'd be kneeling at his feet.*

*In a barn gazing at his face,  
 right there I met amazing grace!  
 And I cried out, God have mercy on me.  
 My life's never been the same,  
 there's just so much He's rearranged  
 since the day Mary said "Come see."*

*And she said, "Would you like to see my baby?  
 Would you like to meet your King?"  
 She said, "Would you like you to see my baby?  
 He's Lord and He's God of everything."*

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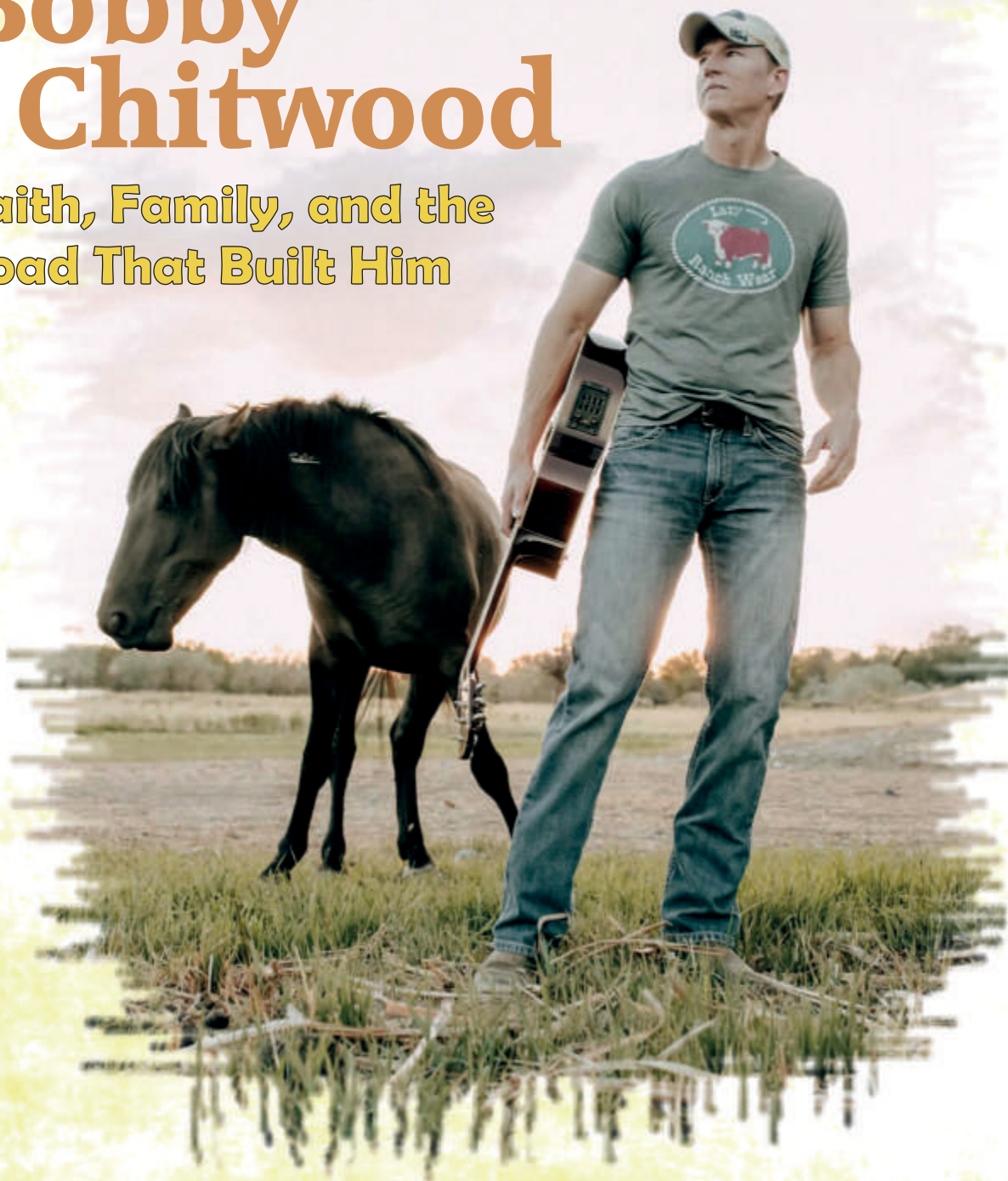
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# Bobby Chitwood

Faith, Family, and the Road That Built Him



By Robin Tanner

**Bobby Chitwood may have Texas roots, but Wyoming has become home. A seasoned Country artist with songs charting on Billboard and the Texas Music Charts, Bobby's journey has been anything but ordinary.**



**H**e has weathered the highs and lows of life on the road, including a grueling schedule of over 300 shows a year. That led to a serious vocal injury. But Bobby's faith, family, and loyal fan base gave him the strength to see it as part of God's plan. "I focused on songwriting during that time," he says. After therapy and vocal rest, Bobby returned stronger than ever, releasing a new album "It's Just Me," which is filled with songs that reflect the conservative values he holds dear.

Tracks like *That's Just Me* and *That Dash* speak to character and legacy, while his single *Redneckery* brings a bonfire-season vibe with a playful edge. He also teamed up again with Cowboy Troy for *Twisted*, a rowdy anthem that became a digital hit.

Bobby grew up in Brownwood, Texas, then moved through West Texas and Abilene. "I started playing music pretty young," he recalls. "My grandfather was a Christian singer-songwriter who had a song, *Good Morning God* on Chapel Records back in the sixties. I learned three chords from my mom to play *Good Morning God* on my grandfather's guitar."

By his teens, Bobby was performing regularly. In college, he entered the Jimmy Dean Country Showdown and made it through several rounds. "I caught the music bug from there," he says. "College was kind of my dad's thing but he said, 'I'll support you any way you want me to.'" After college, Bobby hit the road, playing honky-tonks across the country.

Bobby's family has a long history of military service: his dad and grandfather both served with other generations behind them. Bobby is also a veteran. He mentions, "I served three years as artillery." When vocal rest sidelined his music career, he leaned into that background. "Thank you, Dad, for pushing me to stick with it. I still get to do it. I maintain my commercial pilot license, and I still get up in the air."

After graduating college, Bobby had already built a strong presence in the Texas red dirt scene, covering legends like George Strait, Alan Jackson, and Merle Haggard. "Our first show outside of Texas was up in Idaho," he says. "We were still playing covers, and it all went really well in Texas. But apparently, it wasn't good enough for Idaho. They wanted more Rock, and we were playing George Strait!" Booked for a two-week gig, Bobby and his band were let go after the first week for being 'too Country.' "That really blew me away," he says. "A little Texas boy, I was definitely surprised by that!"

But fate had other plans. Bobby's drummer was from Cody, Wyoming, and suggested they play a small club there to earn gas money. "That's actually where I met my wife," Bobby says. "So, I moved to Wyoming."

Bobby appeared on the Dr. Phil Show to share his story as a touring and recording artist on the road. "At that time, I was still touring pretty heavily," Bobby recalls. "I hadn't hit 300 days a year yet, but I was close. We talked about the difficulties, the things you go through as a family. I had two young babies at the time. That's how we ended up on the show. It was eye-opening - hearing his perspective. That appearance was directly tied to the amount of time I was spending on the road."



The new album, "That's Just Me and a Little Redneckery" is filled with tracks from faith, family fun and, of course, being a redneck! "A lot of the songs on the record I wrote myself or with other writers," Bobby says. "But *That's Just Me* - that was going to be a song that was definitely just me. This is who I am."

This time around, Bobby released the record independently. "I didn't have a label behind it, so I had a lot more artistic leeway, to do what I wanted and say what I wanted to say. And *That's Just Me* had to be on the record, for sure."



Chitwood shares insight on the album's tracks. "*That Dash*," Bobby says, "is one of my favorite songs on the record. A buddy and I were talking. I don't even remember how we got there, but we started talking about how we all have a start date and an end date. And everything else is really defined by that little line between the two numbers. I knew there had to be a song in there." He co-wrote it with Nashville songwriter Cory Barker. "We kicked some ideas back and forth and ended up with that song. I think it just speaks to a lot."

"The track *Redneckery* is a fun song," Bobby laughs. "It was inspired by my daughter. We were talking about the kind of stuff I did growing up in Texas - shooting stuff, being outside all the time - and she said, 'Dad, you're such a redneck.' I never thought of it that way. That's just what we did." They coined the term "redneckery" to describe those moments, and the song was born.

Bobby shares the inspiration of *Little Fuzzy Slippers? Superman, Strong*. "I have two daughters, and they both inspired that song. I started writing it years ago but never put it on a record. When we got into the studio this time, I had just finished it, so it made the cut."

The first single was *Twisted* (feat. Cowboy Troy) "I've known Troy for years," Bobby says. "We first performed together at Cheyenne Frontier Days and became fast friends. When Big & Rich went on hiatus, Troy started his own company, and I was under his management for a bit."

Later, Bobby started writing *Twisted* and thought, 'Man, it'd be cool if Cowboy Troy threw his bit in there.' They traded ideas, and Troy jumped on board. "We were supposed to release the whole record in 2020 or 2021, but we all know what happened then. So, everything got delayed. And here we are now."

"On the track, *Bible and Sweet Tea*, that one was inspired by my daughter too," he adds. "A few years ago, she mentioned something about 'Bible and sweet tea.' I don't know if she saw it when we were visiting family in Texas, but she helped me write that one. She got her first writer credit on it, it's kind of her song."

"Being out on the road is a lot more refined now than it used to be," Bobby explains. "It used to be constant. Now I take dates as they come - in intervals. We're doing some charity events, which I really enjoy."

As for the shows? "They're always high energy. We have a good time. My connection with the crowd just seems to be organic. I've played for 30,000 people and I've played for 300, and they all have their own dynamics. Some of those smaller shows I really enjoy because you can interact with the crowd more. It's a little more personal."

Bobby has partnered with Wounded Warrior Homes, helping build accessible housing for veterans with physical disabilities. He also teamed up with Hydrate Heroes, a sports drink company that donates profits to military and first responders.

"I've got a song called *Everyday Heroes* to support Hydrate Heroes," he says. "They're putting QR codes on their packaging that take you straight to the single. A percentage of both the song and the drink goes to law enforcement, military, and firefighters."

A special moment for him was performing his song, *A Soldier's Battle*. "I wrote that one years ago - just an acoustic version on one of my EPs," Bobby says. "I got to perform it at Congress and the Senate for a Veterans Day event. That one definitely, made an impression."

Bobby - being a husband, father, and a veteran - has relied on his faith even in the tough times to keep him grounded. "There was a time I was kind of separated from my faith," Bobby shares. "And my girls honestly redirected me back toward Christ." He recalls a moment in Denver: "I was super sick in a hotel room. I missed my family. I prayed and said, 'God, I just want a reason to go home.' About three weeks later, my vocal issues started popping up. I wasn't looking to come off the road - I was paying my guys, my crew, the bills. But I knew Christ was there, directing where I needed to be. I needed to be home. I have no doubt my prayers were answered. If we just listen to the Lord, we'll go a long way."

As 2026 approaches, Bobby is planning more charity events and live shows. "I really want to interact with fans more like I used to," he says. "I'm really going to be pushing this new record." With a love for God, family, his country and music, Bobby Chitwood continues to travel down the road that built him.

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# NASHVILLE *SUPER PICKERS*



For the greatest musicians in Nashville who play on sessions, record producer Rick Schweinsberg coined the title "The Nashville Super Pickers." This story features one of Nashville's finest.

## Gary Lunn Bass Guitar

By Teresa Schweinsberg

If you mention bass players in Nashville, there is no doubt this gentleman's name will be one of the first mentioned. With a career spanning over 40 years, Gary Lunn's credit list of both touring and session work is amazing beyond words. All his experiences would be better captured in a book, without enough space here to cover them in one article.

Before Gary was a well-known touring bassist and session player, he was a young boy growing up in Nashville. As a ten-year-old, his mother took him to the Municipal Auditorium in Nashville to a Bob Harrington Crusade where Gary had his first real encounter with Jesus. His mom was a Southern Gospel pianist. Gary had started singing with his sister and two brothers at the young age of five in church. When he got his first bass guitar at age eleven, he learned three songs and played them for a concert one week later. To no one's surprise, Gary had found his niche' and could not get enough of practicing and playing the bass.

At the age of fifteen, Gary joined a Rock band with some high school friends. The drummer introduced him to a recording company where they did a demo. That was Gary's first recording session. Two weeks before the session, he lost the tip of his index finger in a lawn mower accident. The neighbors found the tip of his finger, but it was too damaged to be sewn back on. Gary persevered by using a thumb pick instead of holding the pick between his index finger and thumb. He had to use the thumb pick for several weeks until healing, but he continued to play. That perseverance led to a lifetime of studio sessions and touring experiences.

When he was sixteen and seventeen, Gary went on the road with a Southern Baptist evangelistic team. He then went to college first at Middle Tennessee State University, and then at Belmont University, until the Bill Gaither Trio came calling.

Gary later joined another Rock band, which included Steve Green, Mark Gersmehl, Billy Smiley, Gary, David



Huff, Dann Huff's brother, and Dann Huff himself, now a famous producer, songwriter, and guitar player. Gary had previously met Dann on another recording session during a high school recording class at age 18. This band eventually became White Heart, the Christian Rock band of the 1980s pursued by many Christian labels. They sold more than 250,000 records by their third album. Signed by Chris Christian to Home Sweet Home records, they toured with Michael W. Smith, David Meece, and others, launching the careers of all its members.





## Gary on stage with Dolly Parton

In the early 1980s, Gary played on some incredible songs, such as Rich Mullins' *Our God is an Awesome God*. Being well-known in the Contemporary Christian Music circle, Gary played with Wayne Watson, Sandy Patty, and in the early 2000s, with Amy Grant.

During the 1990s, Gary played on sessions for Montgomery Gentry, Earl Thomas Conley, and on John Anderson's *Seminole Wind*, among other 90's country music sessions.

Gary told a funny story from his career when he played on Peter Cetera's *(I Wanna Take) Forever Tonight*, eventually becoming a duet with Chrystal Bernard. At the time of the session, Peter had already laid down his vocal track, but the female vocalist had not been chosen yet. Not having a vocalist present to sing that part while Gary laid down his bass track, Peter sat at Gary's shoulder and sang the female vocal part in Gary's ear. Gary still laughs about it and hears Cetera's high pitched "female" vocals when he thinks about the song and session.

When Opry Mills Mall was completed in 2000, there was a celebration for those who were a part of it at Michael W. Smith's house. Gary was asked to play for several artists at the celebration. The list of artists that evening included Michael McDonald, for whom Gary played. He was also asked to play for the Peter Cetera and Amy Grant duet *The Next Time I Fall*. Gary says it was a night to remember.

Over his more than forty year career, Gary has also been privileged to play on the sessions of Larry Gatlin and the Gatlin Brothers, Babbie Mason, Dolly Parton and Dolly Parton with Miley Cyrus, Miley Cyrus' Hannah Montana, Michael W. Smith, First Call, Dion, Geoff Moore and the Distance, Michael Card, BeBe and CeCe Winans, Steve and

Annie Chapman, 4Him, Neal McCoy, Kelly Nelon Thompson, K.T.Oslin, Ray Boltz, the Archers, Billy Joe Royal, Twila Paris, Glen Campbell, Ron David Moore, Ronnie McDowell, Janie Fricke, Hezekiah Walker, Mo'Bandy, Larnelle Harris, John Michael Montgomery, Tapestry, John Anderson, Dallas Holm, Roy Clark, Mickey Gilley, Johnny Rodriguez, Toby Keith, Gaither Vocal Band, Carmen, Kim Boyce, Billy Ray Cyrus, The Martins, The Hoppers, New Song, Don McClean, Gold City, The Imperials, Brian Free and Assurance, Jeff and Sheri Easter, Jeff Foxworthy, The Cumberland Boys, Matraeca Berg, The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, Phil Cross, Kathy Troccoli, Randy Scruggs, Steve Green, Kevin Williams, Nichole Nordeman, Ty Herndon, John Michael Talbot, Dennis Jernigan, Karen Peck and New River, Vestal Goodman & Friends, The Happy Goodman Family, The Cathedrals, The Perrys, Hovie Lister & the Statesmen, Tracy Lawrence, Jessica King, The Crabb Family, Crossway, Geron Davis, Michael English, Russ Taff, Joe Diffie, Joe Nichols, The Booth Brothers, Johnny Cash, Mark Lowery, Collin Raye, Guy Penrod, Ernie Haas and Signature Sound, Kathie Lee Gifford, Idina Menzel, and Tasha Cobbs Leonard. Unfortunately, this is not even a complete list. Gary is continually adding more as well.

More recently, not only has Gary played on Dolly Parton's sessions, including her "Rock Star" album, but is presently her touring bass player. Gary says of Dolly, "The main blessing late in my career has been to play for her. It's offered me a lot of opportunities I never thought I would have."

One of the most moving stories Gary shares is one of his greatest spiritual experiences. He was asked to play for a three-day Morning Star Worship conference years ago.

Gary tells the story, "We were playing three sessions a day. One day, spontaneous praise broke out as the audience was looking toward the stage. I turned around to see that a huge cloud about 18-20 feet long had appeared over the stage behind me. It was the presence of God, just like in the Old Testament. I saw many miracles in that conference. I was exposed to things I didn't know anything about. Bob Jones prayed over me, and it was as if he had 'read my mail.' Gary continues, "I was baptized in the Holy Ghost, then went back to my place on stage and played the bass. I have never forgotten that experience or what it felt like when I looked back to see that huge cloud over the stage."

When asked what advice Gary would give to young musicians hoping to have the kind of career and longevity he has had, he offered, "Have humility. Never show off, but always listen to what everyone else is doing, and compliment them both musically and verbally. Always encourage your co-workers. Being positive never returns void." Great advice from one of the greatest bass players to ever work in Nashville.



# Merry Christmas

We want to express our sincere gratitude to all the DJs, Randall Wilds (Wilds & Associates), Cross Country Magazine, our promoter Tommy Smith, our producer Matt Butler, and to all the super kind folks that are requesting  
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# CrossCountry Report

CHRISTIAN COUNTRY MUSIC NEWS & SCOOPS

## Cashbox Magazine Wins Magazine of the Year at the 11th Annual Josie Music Awards

Cashbox Magazine was honored to receive the 'Magazine of the Year Award' at the Josie Music Awards, which is recognized as the largest and premier independent music awards globally. The JMAs took place at the Grand Ole Opry House in Nashville, Tennessee, on Sunday, November 2nd.



**Robin Tanner, Associate Editor for Cashbox Magazine, accepts 'Magazine of the Year' at the 2025 Josie Music Awards**

Cashbox's Associate editor, Robin Tanner accepted the award on behalf of Wilds And Associates. "For over eight decades Cashbox Magazine has seen many transactions over the years. Our goal for the past several years and the future of Cashbox is to continue spotlighting independent artists and honoring the legends."

"We want to thank the Josie Music Awards, their team and the fans for voting for Cashbox Magazine. Special thanks to our distributor, Wilds And Associates, Randall Wilds, and staff of editors, graphic artists, and writers. You all are a vital part of this publication!"

"We also want to dedicate this award to those who were a part of the Cashbox family that has passed away who had a heart for the artists, loved the music, and stood for integrity."

"Most importantly, we give glory to God for His many blessings. He is the centerpiece in everything we do! God bless and thank you!" - Cashbox Magazine

Cash Box was founded by Bill Gersh in 1942. George Albert took ownership from the late 1950s until his passing in 1997. In 2006, Bruce Elrod, a music professional and record producer, revived the magazine as an online publication with the revised name, Cashbox. Bruce partnered with music promoter and magazine publisher, Randall Wilds, in 2018. This partnership re-established Cashbox as a printed publication.

Today, Wilds & Associates continues the publication of Cashbox with integrity and pride, preserving the legacy of its founders and former owners - the late Bill Gersh, George Albert, and Bruce Elrod.

Celebrating 83 years, Cashbox is primarily a trade publication targeting the music industry at large. Each monthly issue includes music news, new music releases, radio airplay charts, special features, artist interviews, spotlights on industry leaders and companies, music history, latest trends and technology, and more.

Cashbox is a subsidiary of Wilds & Associates, with offices located in Kennedy, Alabama.

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## Alan Jackson Announces His Final Show

Plans have been announced for Alan Jackson's last full-length concert of his touring career. In a show called 'Last Call: One More for the Road - The Finale,' the Country Music Hall of Fame member will perform for over 50,000 people on Saturday, June 27, 2026 at Nashville's Nissan Stadium, home of the Tennessee Titans.



An all-star lineup of artists is set to join Jackson to celebrate his career and legacy. Luke Bryan, Eric Church, Luke Combs, Riley Green, Cody Johnson, Miranda Lambert, Jon Pardi, Carrie Underwood, Keith Urban and Lee Ann Womack will all perform at the event, with more to be announced.

"We just felt like we had to end it all where it all started for me, and that's in Nashville - Music City - where Country music lives," Jackson says, echoing the sentiment he offered when announcing an end to his road career this past spring.

At a May concert in Milwaukee, Jackson announced the end of his touring career, surprising many when he told the sellout crowd, "This is my last road show."

"It's been a long, sweet ride. It started 40 years ago," he went on to explain. "I've really lived the American dream for sure - I'm so blessed."

Throughout his touring career, Jackson took his music from coast-to-coast countless times. He crossed Canada from sea-to-sea and even made its way to such places as Australia,

Brazil and Europe. His 'Last Call: One More for the Road Tour,' which began in 2022 and continued through this past spring, found the Country legend playing to enthusiastic audiences at sellout and capacity concerts.

## Lee Newton, Georgette Jones, and Heidi Parton Unite for a Historic Rendition of 'Silver Threads and Golden Needles'

Country music powerhouses Lee Newton, Georgette Jones, and Heidi Parton are joining forces for a momentous collaboration honoring two legendary milestones in Country history: the 70th Anniversary of Wanda Jackson's 1956 recording of *Silver Threads & Golden Needles*, and the 80th birthday of Dolly Parton, arriving on January 19, 2026 - the same day this extraordinary new version will be released worldwide.

Originally recorded by Wanda Jackson in 1956 and later immortalized by Dolly Parton, Tammy Wynette, and Loretta Lynn in 1993, *Silver Threads & Golden Needles* stands as a timeless anthem of strength, independence, and classic Country spirit. Now, seventy years later, three of today's most powerful female voices - each carrying the flame of musical legacy - breathe new life into the song for a new generation of listeners.

North Carolina native Lee Newton has become one of Nashville's most compelling storytellers - a multi-award-winning singer-songwriter celebrated for keeping traditional Country music alive with modern heart and Southern fire. Known for her albums "Undamaged," "Homesick," and "UNLEESHED," Newton has earned an impressive list of honors including ISSA 'Entertainer of the Year' (2024), 'Song of the Year' (2025) for *Meant to Be*, and multiple Josie Music Awards, including 'Traditional Country Artist of the Year.'

A proud ambassador for Music Amplifies, Newton's voice carries the grit of the Smoky Mountains and the grace of a Grand Ole Opry dreamer. Her deep storytelling roots, inspired by her late father, a small-town cab driver who taught her guitar in the family taxi, shine through every lyric and performance. *With Silver Threads & Golden Needles*, Newton steps further into her legacy, bridging past and present through authenticity, passion, and powerful female collaboration.



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The daughter of George Jones and Tammy Wynette, Georgette Jones was born into Country music history, but she has forged her own distinguished path as a performer, songwriter, and storyteller.

At just ten years old, she recorded her first duet, *Daddy Come Home*, with her legendary father, and has since performed across the United States and internationally. Her moving memoir, *The Three of Us: Growing Up with Tammy and George*, offers a deeply personal glimpse into life behind the curtain of two Country icons. Georgette has graced stages including the Grand Ole Opry and Ryman Auditorium, continuing the family's timeless tradition while inspiring new generations with her soulful delivery and heartfelt lyrics.

Her presence on this track brings the song full circle - a daughter of Tammy Wynette revisiting the tune her mother helped immortalize alongside Dolly Parton and Loretta Lynn.

Heidi Parton embodies the next generation of the Parton musical legacy - a gifted artist whose sound merges classic Tennessee roots with fresh, vibrant storytelling. The daughter of hit-maker Randy Parton and niece of Dolly Parton, Heidi

began performing at Dollywood as a child and quickly became known for her powerhouse vocals and heartfelt songwriting.

Her acclaimed album "Reflections" (2025) features songs written and performed with members of her family, including Dolly herself, and showcases her ability to balance reverence for tradition with her own bold artistry. With *Silver Threads & Golden Needles*, Heidi brings an unmistakable warmth and vocal finesse that both honors her family's heritage and highlights her individuality as a rising star in modern Country music.

*Silver Threads & Golden Needles* (2026) is more than a song - it's a generational moment linking Wanda Jackson's pioneering spirit, Dolly Parton's enduring legacy, and the voices of three remarkable women who continue to shape the sound of Country music. Together, Lee Newton, Georgette Jones, and Heidi Parton deliver a stunning tribute to resilience, sisterhood, and timeless artistry.

The single will be available on all major platforms January 19, 2026 - the same day the world celebrates Dolly Parton's 80th birthday.

### **Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum Songwriter Session Program with Donna Fargo and Lauren Mascitti**

Country music fans from around the world filled the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum's Ford Theater for a unique opportunity as Country music legend Donna Fargo and acclaimed singer/songwriter Lauren Mascitti teamed up to showcase Fargo's numerous award-winning, number one hits.

"I am just so honored and grateful to the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum and the fans," shared Fargo.

Close to 200 fans got firsthand experience in Country music history as Donna Fargo shared her most personal feelings in the stories behind the creation of each song, along with a positive takeaway she intended for those listening to each song.

Lauren Mascitti, known from her appearance on *American Idol* and her own popular recordings, performed Fargo's string of number one hits with such emotion, stirring fans to sing along.

*Cross Country Report continued on page 39 > > >*



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The mutual respect, talents and new friendship of Fargo and Mascitti bridged two generations of Country music stars in the vein, *Will The Circle Be Unbroken* reassuring that the great circle continues on. "Wow, she is great," exclaimed Donna Fargo after one of Lauren's performances.

A highlight of the afternoon was a surprise recitation from Donna Fargo accompanied by Lauren Mascitti on guitar, on her 1977 number one recording, *That Was Yesterday*. To date, *That Was Yesterday* is the last all-spoken-word song to top the Billboard Country chart.

Following the performance, Fargo and Mascitti met fans from more than ten states across the U.S. and from countries overseas as well, as they collected autographs and photos. The day was rounded out with a special dinner for Donna Fargo's fan club and friends.

There will be video footage from the event in the upcoming months on the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum website at [countrymusichalloffame.org](http://countrymusichalloffame.org)

The Songwriter Session was just the beginning of a very busy November for Donna Fargo. As her new single, *You Can Count on Me* continues to climb the Cashbox Indie Top 100 Chart. Fargo has another exciting announcement coming soon, revealing a great honor later in the month.

In the meantime, Donna will also share her personal story of faith, which played a pivotal role in her emergence back on the Country music chart, with an appearance on the upcoming Season 9 of *Today's Nashville In Faith* with Terry Squires, airing on CTVN.

### **An All-Star Salute to '90s Country Coming to Huntsville, Alabama**

An All-Star Salute to '90s Country will bring a who's-who of Country favorites together on Thursday, February 5, 2026, for a one-night-only concert event. With a combined more than 60 No. 1 hits and over 50 million albums sold, the place to be on February 5 will be the Von Braun Center in Huntsville, Alabama. With over 40 live and in-person performances planned, the three-hour music marathon will deliver a night

of '90s anthems from the original voices who made them famous.

Lineup: Rhett Akins, John Berry, Tracy Byrd, Paulette Carlson (of Highway 101), Deana Carter, Mark Chesnutt, Mark Collie, Confederate Railroad, Billy Dean, Andy Griggs, Wade Hayes, Ty Herndon, The Kentucky Headhunters, Neal McCoy, Lorrie Morgan, Paul Overstreet, Lee Roy Parnell, Michael Peterson, Collin Raye, Ricochet, Doug Stone, Rick Trevino, Tanya Tucker, Bryan White, Mark Wills, Michelle Wright, and The Frontmen featuring Tim Rushlow (Little Texas), Larry Stewart (Restless Heart) and Richie McDonald (Lonestar).

The team producing this event also produced An All-Star Salute to Lee Greenwood, George Jones: Still Playin' Possum, and Songs & Stories of Dean Dillon - each filmed at the Von Braun Center's Propst Arena - continuing Huntsville's run as a destination for can't-miss Country specials.

### **Richard Lynch Delivers a Soulful Rendition of Kris Kristofferson Classic 'Why Me Lord' – Out Now**



Award-winning traditional Country artist Richard Lynch has just released his heartfelt version of *Why Me Lord* on November 14, 2025, the latest single from his inspirational LP, "Pray on the Radio: Songs of Inspiration."

Originally penned and performed by Kris Kristofferson, *Why Me Lord* has long stood as one of Country music's most revered Gospel ballads - a timeless meditation on faith, humility, and redemption. In Lynch's hands, the song is reborn with a sincerity and authenticity that only decades of Country craftsmanship can bring.

"This song has always spoken to me on a deep level," says Lynch. "Kris wrote it from a place of





gratitude and grace, and that message still rings true today. I wanted to honor the spirit of the original while giving it my own Country touch - something that feels lived-in, like a Sunday morning prayer on the front porch."

Lynch's warm baritone and signature 'Keepin' It Country' style give new life to the classic track, blending traditional instrumentation - steel guitar, acoustic strums, and gentle harmonies - with a genuine reverence for the song's message. Produced at Beaird Music Studios in Nashville, *Why Me Lord* captures the spirit of faith that has guided Lynch throughout his four-decade career.

The LP, "Pray on the Radio: Songs of Inspiration," continues in that same spirit. A collection of spiritually infused Country songs both classic and new, the album serves as a musical testimony to Lynch's values: faith, family, and authenticity. The collection includes Lynch's most recent radio chart hits, *The Phone Call* and *Jesus and Bocephus*.

Over the years, Richard Lynch has built a remarkable legacy as one of Country music's most genuine voices. From hit duets with Leona Williams and Rhonda Vincent to multiple chart-topping singles and appearances on RFD-TV, WSM Radio Nashville, and Billboard Magazine, Lynch remains a steadfast ambassador for traditional Country and Gospel-inspired storytelling.

### **TCT Network Premieres 'Soul of the Song' with Host Melanie Walker**

Award-winning Christian singer and speaker Melanie Walker returns to the TCT Network with *Soul of the Song*, an inspiring new interview segment that explores the faith and stories behind the music that touches our hearts and changes lives. Each Friday, Melanie invites some of today's most gifted singer-songwriters to share the inspiration, faith, and personal moments that gave life to their most meaningful songs. Viewers will experience powerful conversations about how music touches hearts, transforms lives, and connects us to the more profound message within every melody. The interview segments will air on Fridays on TCT's flagship show, *TCT Today*, at 12:00 pm and 7:00 pm CST.

No stranger to the TCT family, Melanie previously hosted the popular *Sessions Concert Series* and *Come On In with Melanie Walker*, which continues to air each week on the network. With multiple #1 Christian Country radio singles and

a career marked by honors, including Inspirational Country Music Association 'Living Legend' and induction into the International Country Gospel Music Hall of Fame, Melanie brings her signature warmth, authenticity, and spiritual insight to this new series, reminding viewers that every great song has a soul and every soul has a story worth hearing.



*Soul of the Song* will be broadcast to over 62 million households and air on DIRECTV, DISH Network, and more than 50 affiliate stations nationwide. In addition to satellite, cable, and over-the-air broadcasts, TCT programming can also be streamed online at TCT.tv and is available on iOS, Android, Roku, Amazon Fire TV, Apple TV, Android TV, Tizen, and Xbox TV platforms.

"Since moving to Nashville, I have grown to appreciate the heart of those who write the songs we love. I am excited for the opportunity to share the people and the stories behind these songs with the TCT audience." - Melanie Walker, Host *Soul of the Song*.



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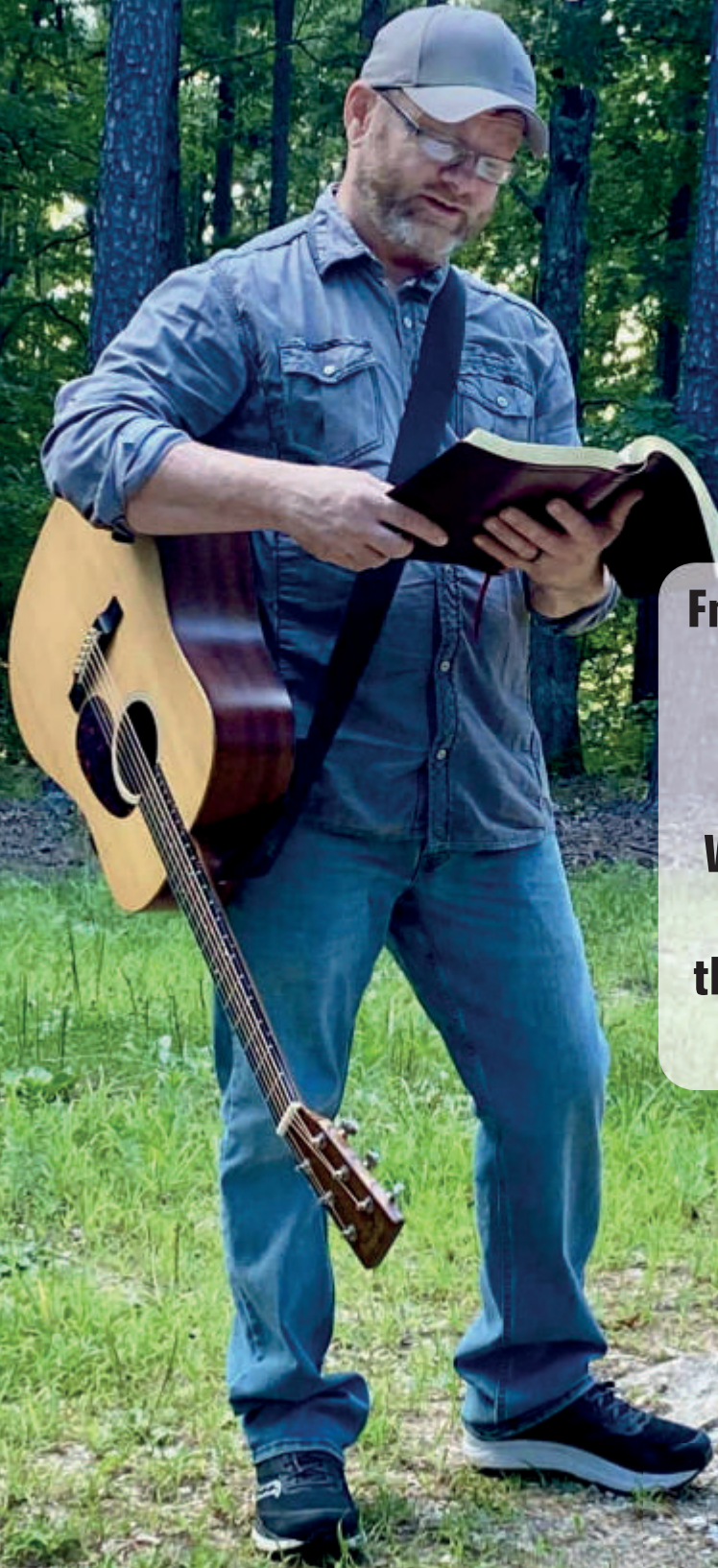
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# Michael Walsh

## *A Voice Redeemed*



**From the wreckage of addiction to the radiance of Gospel ministry, Michael Walsh's journey is a living testimony to the mercy and power of Jesus Christ.**

**By Cory Parker**



**M**ichael Walsh doesn't just sing about redemption - he embodies it. His voice, now heard on Christian radio stations and digital platforms across the country, carries the weight of a life once shattered and now restored. Behind every lyric is a story of pain, deliverance, and divine purpose.

"I came from a difficult background," Walsh shares. "My childhood wasn't always easy, but my summers with my great uncle Tony, who shared his faith with me, were a sanctuary."

That sanctuary was short-lived. At fifteen, Walsh's mother died by suicide, plunging him and his older brother into addiction and despair. Two years later, the death of Uncle Tony deepened the darkness. For more than two decades, Walsh lived in a cycle of addiction, incarceration, institutions, and self-destruction.

Then came March 2017. His brother was killed in a car wreck. In August 2019, Walsh himself was struck by a truck and suffered a severe brain injury. During recovery, he experienced several near-death encounters - visions of hell that marked the turning point of his life. "But in those moments, I was pulled back," he says. "Rescued by the grace and mercies of Jesus."

### **A Second Chance - and a Song**

"When I awoke, I knew without a doubt that I had been given a second chance," Walsh recalls. "Even more miraculously, the Lord had lifted from me all the pain, guilt, and misery that had haunted me for most of my life. To top it off, He delivered me from the grip of addiction too!"

With only twenty dollars to his name and no home to return to, Walsh experienced divine provision within hours: a ride, shelter, food, and within days, a place of his own. "He saved my life, He healed my emotional damage, and He was just getting started!"

In November 2019, Walsh surrendered his heart to Jesus. A courtroom argument landed him four months of mandated Bible reading. "That 'punishment' became a priceless blessing," he says. "It resolved all my previous legal troubles and deepened my walk with the Lord."

Soon after, he began attending a small country church. A stolen church bell led to a conversation with a remarkable woman - now Mrs. Walsh. "God blessed me with my first song while at her home," he says. Today, they share a home, a ministry, and two daughters named Faith and Hope.

### **The Music of Mercy**

Walsh's musical roots trace back to Rock and Blues. "I dreamed of shredding like Eddie Van Halen and rocking out like Metallica," he laughs. But his influences evolved. Today, he draws inspiration from Zach Williams, Casting Crowns, Crowder, and others whose music reflects the faith that transformed his life.

His debut album "My Story" dropped in November 2023, followed by three radio singles in 2024. *By Your Side* charted from March to August across Christian Voice Magazine, Cross Country USA, and Cashbox Magazine. *Forever Your*

*Praise's* reached No. 23 on Cross Country USA and continues to chart. *His Name Is...* released in January 2025, and while its success is quieter, its message remains bold.

His second album's title track, *The Way You Do*, released on September 11, 2025, is a spiritual declaration. "*Help me see the way you see me, Lord open up my eyes,*" Walsh sings. The song confronts depression, anxiety, and addiction, asking God to replace self-hatred with divine perspective. "If we could truly see ourselves through His eyes," Walsh explains, "the lies that fuel self-hatred would crumble."

### **Ministry Beyond the Music**

Walsh's calling extends far beyond the stage. He regularly visits substance abuse ministries, sharing his testimony with those still in bondage. "My message is simple: God's love can redeem anyone who trusts in Him."

He speaks candidly about addiction's grip and the rising tide of overdose deaths. "The CDC's 2024 report shows a decline - from 105,007 to 80,391," he notes. "I attribute this to the growth of addiction ministries, online resources, and the powerful narratives of artists who've found recovery."

Walsh's own story is one such narrative. "Drugs and alcohol were a desperate attempt to silence internal pain," he says. "Until that pain is addressed, recovery remains out of reach."

His dream is to launch or support a deliverance ministry through his music. "My ultimate goal is for my music to have a positive, lasting impact on as many lives as possible."

### **A Life Restored, A Savior Glorified**

From suicide attempts in December 2018 to a near-fatal accident in 2019, Walsh's survival is nothing short of miraculous. "God had bigger plans, and my life was not mine to take," he says. "That profound failure was my first true glimpse of faith."

Today, Walsh has written 54 songs and counting. He's performed in colosseums, ministered through 2nd Chance Ministry, and built a life of joy and purpose. "He protected me, spared my life countless times, and then, in His infinite grace, restored everything I had lost," he says. "He gave me a life beyond my wildest dreams. Praise and Glory be to Jesus!"

At a Michael Walsh concert, expect authenticity. "It's about genuine connection and heartfelt music," he says. "Anyone who shares the stage with me will be expected to give their absolute best, performing with the same reverence as if they were singing directly before the Lord."

This Christmas, Michael Walsh stands as a living witness: that no pit is too deep, no soul too lost, and no wound too great for the healing power of Jesus Christ.

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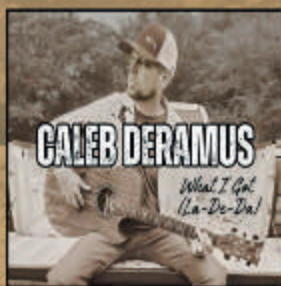
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# Melanie Walker

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## The Legacy & Music of JOHNNY MARKS (The Christmas Legend)

If you are not familiar with the name Johnny Marks, perhaps you know his music, as many of his songs are iconic Christmas standards. We honor the gentleman behind these holiday classics that have been a staple with holiday music for generations.

Johnny Marks is one of the most successful and enduring songwriters in holiday music history. Despite being Jewish and not celebrating Christmas himself, Marks specialized in festive tunes that became timeless standards, earning him the title of the “King of Christmas Songwriters.”

Born on November 10, 1909, in Mount Vernon, New York, Johnny Marks was a graduate of Colgate and Columbia Universities and studied music in Paris, France. Before his Christmas songwriting fame, he had early success with non-holiday hits like *Address Unknown* for The Ink Spots.

Marks served as a Captain in the U.S. Army during World War II, earning a Bronze Star. Upon returning, he focused on songwriting and founded his own music publishing company, St. Nicholas Music, in 1949, dedicated primarily to Christmas music. He was inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame and passed away on September 3, 1985, leaving behind a legacy of perennial holiday classics.

Marks’ brilliance lies in creating original songs that sounded like they were classic carols passed down through generations. We look back at several of these Christmas compositions.

*Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer* was the song that launched Marks's holiday career. The story of Rudolph was not Marks' idea but was created by his brother-in-law, Robert L. May, a copywriter for the Montgomery Ward department store. In 1939, May wrote the story as a free children's booklet for the store's Christmas catalog promotion. Marks set his brother-in-law's poem to music around 1947, but many major artists initially turned the song down. Marks finally convinced Western star Gene Autry to record it in 1949, and it became a massive, worldwide hit, selling over 30 million copies and launching the character's global fame.

Many other music icons recorded *Rudolph, The Red-Nosed Reindeer* including Ray Charles, John Denver, Dolly Parton, Willie Nelson, Mannheim Steamroller and many



more. Then there is the global phenomenon of the animated holiday classic TV special that has been a fixture to kids and families during the holiday season.

*Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree* was composed in 1958. Marks specifically chose 13-year-old Country/Pop star Brenda Lee to record it, despite her young age at the time. Marks believed her powerful voice and mature delivery would give the song the right energy. The song was recorded in July, famously out of season, and it took a few years to gain traction. It hit the charts again in 1960 and has since become one of the most recognizable and successful holiday records of all time, proving Marks's faith in the young singer was justified. Brenda Lee and Johnny Marks remained friends and talked to each other several times a year. Brenda stated in an earlier interview, “Johnny Marks was fun to be around. I am blessed he wanted me to sing the song. It changed my career. He was my friend and a precious man.”

*Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree* was released in 1958, making it over 65 years old. Recent press has surrounded the song's historic achievement of reaching #1 on the Billboard Hot 100 chart in late 2023, 65 years after its debut, making Brenda Lee the oldest artist ever to top the chart. To celebrate, Lee released a new music video. The song also reached a new audience in the hit movie *Home Alone* in 1990. Little Miss Dynamite’s version is iconic, but the song has been recorded by Amy Grant, Justin Bieber, Kasey Musgraves, Camila Cabello, Leann Rimes and Miley Cyrus.



*A Holly Jolly Christmas* was originally recorded in 1962 by the Quinto Sisters. However, its enduring popularity stems from the 1964 stop-motion animated television special, *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer*. Marks was heavily involved in the special, composing its entire score, which introduced several new songs. The version most people know was sung by Burl Ives in his role as Sam the Snowman, the special's narrator. *A Holly Jolly Christmas* has been covered by Alan Jackson, Michael Buble, Johnny Mathis and countless others.

This exposure from the *Rudolph* animated special cemented the songs *Rudolph the Red-Nose Reindeer* and *A Holly Jolly Christmas* along with *Silver and Gold* and *Jingle, Jingle, Jingle* (also Marks's compositions for the special). More musical favorites from the animated special included, *There's Always Tomorrow*, *We Are Santa's Elves*, *We're A Couple of Misfits*, *The Most Wonderful Day of the Year* and *Fame and Fortune*.

Other notable Christmas songs by Johnny Marks include *I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day* (1956). Marks adapted the lyrics from an 1863 poem, "Christmas Bells," by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow; *Run Rudolph Run* (1958), A Rock-and-Roll-flavored companion song to his most famous work, first recorded by Chuck Berry.



Have *A Holly, Jolly Christmas*, enjoy watching *Rudolph The Red-Nose Reindeer* and singing along with *Rockin' Around The Christmas Tree* as we remember the 'King of Christmas Songwriters,' Johnny Marks.

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# Danica Hart

Seeing God's Amazing Grace in a New Season



By Robin Tanner

Danica Hart is a dynamic singer-songwriter and former member of the Country music trio Chapel Hart, which includes her sister Devynn Hart and their cousin Trea Swindle. The group, originally from Poplarville, Mississippi, gained national recognition during the 2022 season of America's Got Talent. Now, God has placed Danica in a new season with her music - one marked by grace, growth, and purpose.



With a radiant spirit and a deep commitment to spreading joy and kindness, Danica is stepping forward with her new single, *Amazing Grace*. Her mission is to inspire others and promote a message of positivity and self-worth. As she walks this new path, Danica is witnessing firsthand the power of God's amazing grace.

She grew up surrounded by a large, loving family in Poplarville, Mississippi. "Coming from a big family might be an understatement," she laughs. "Growing up in Poplarville really shaped a lot of who I am." Her grandparents had 17 children, and the extended family grew to include 108 grandchildren. "With all the uncles, aunts, and cousins, there was always something going on," Danica recalls.

In the Hart's Chapel community of Poplarville, people of different beliefs, colors, and cultures looked out for one another. Danica remembers spending time at her grandmother's house, where faith and generosity were woven into everyday life. "There were times when she didn't have much in the pantry or freezer," Danica shares. "She would start praying, walking around the kitchen, putting pots and pans on the stove - and the next thing you know, there was a knock at the door!" Neighbors would arrive with gifts: 'Mrs. Bea, I had some extra greens in my garden,' or 'We got a cow and have more beef than we need - would you like some?' Her grandparents were deeply respected, and the community always found ways to support them.

"Growing up in that kind of environment shaped me, not just as a writer and artist, but as a person. I'll always be forever grateful that I grew up in Poplarville, Mississippi."

Danica was surrounded by music from the very beginning. In Hart's Chapel, her large family filled the children's choir with cousins of all ages. As soon as the older ones moved on, a younger crew were ready to step in. The choir often competed in Gospel music contests, and Danica fondly remembers those days.

Though Danica was exposed to a wide range of music growing up, Gospel was the heartbeat of her home. "When I got old enough to talk, I had so many questions about everything," she says. "My mama would tell my dad, 'I don't know what you gotta do, but I can't get all these chores done!'" Her dad's solution? Take Danica for rides in their old hooptie. "We'd bump down the road like two hillbillies," she laughs. "He'd play George Jones, Kenny Rogers, and John Michael Montgomery. That was my introduction to Country music. I'd ask questions about the stories and what they meant. That was our bonding time - but more than that, it's where I fell in love with the songwriting and storytelling of Country music."

Danica began performing at school talent shows, Relay For Life events, and karaoke nights. Encouraged by her teacher, she found her footing on stage. But it was a small club in Slidell, Mississippi, that truly reflected who she was becoming as an artist.

In 2014, Danica and her cousin Trea began performing in New Orleans. Devynn joined in 2018, forming the trio, Chapel Hart. They started writing original music and playing shows around the city. In 2022, the trio auditioned for

America's Got Talent. But as Danica tells it, the opportunity almost passed them by.

Their performance of *You Can Have Him Jolene* - an answer song to Dolly Parton's classic - earned them a Golden Buzzer and catapulted them into the national spotlight. The song had been in their repertoire for a year or two, but feedback had always been lukewarm. "It was never really good enough," Danica says. "But in that moment, when we finished singing, everybody was on their feet, clapping. It was the validation we needed."

Following their success on America's Got Talent, Chapel Hart went on tour, released several singles, and made their debut at the Grand Ole Opry, receiving standing ovations. In 2025, the trio announced a hiatus: Devynn and Trea formed a duo, while Danica embarked on a solo career.

Her journey continues, rooted in faith, family, and the music that shaped her. And through it all, Danica Hart is still singing in the key of grace.



Danica wanted to share her music and inspiration with others. What began as a simple idea - playing her original songs for small groups - soon blossomed into a series of intimate concerts called the Open Hart Sessions. These gatherings have not only inspired her audience but have deeply impacted Danica herself. "What if I host these little sessions with intimate groups of people," she recalls, "and share my songs to see how they connect, hopefully enough to release them on an album? What started as a side project has become my full-blown career."





Danica has hosted numerous Open Hart Sessions this year, with more planned for next year. Each one is rooted in faith and purpose. “When you sit in surrender and say, ‘God, I want You to use me as a vessel. Whatever I can do for the Kingdom, to uplift You - put me in position to do that,’ it’s like He’s been clearing the path ever since. I believe that’s what these sessions are.”

Danica’s new single, *Amazing Grace*, is deeply personal. “This song is special; it’s my praise and thanks to God for holding me through the roughest season of my life. I feel Psalm 77:1 more than ever when I sing it,” she shares. “I’ve been through the toughest times, so much so that I never wanted to return to music. But God had other plans... through my pen.”

Danica describes this season of her life as one of complete trust in God, even when the path isn’t clear. “He promised me a long time ago that He would provide for me, and He hasn’t gone back on that promise yet. I’m excited about this season. If I can tell my testimony, talk about my hurts, my trauma, and someone hears that and says, ‘If Danica can do it, I can do it,’ then that’s my mission.”

Her goal is simple to be a light in a world that often feels dark. “We all have days when the flesh gets the best of us. Even when it’s hard to get up and show joy, I believe people are searching for answers. Sometimes, you have to chase joy down. You have to get up and pray, ‘Lord, may joy find me today.’”

Her social media reflects this outlook, radiating positivity and spiritual encouragement. “Even if you’re not feeling it today, chase after joy. Find it in your life. I want to be an example of that. If I can stay focused on Jesus, I know He’ll cover me, she says. “There’s nothing any of us have done to deserve another day. Every morning, we wake up, we receive the gift of life. Even if it’s not the best day, you’re alive, and that’s enough for me.”

Danica’s mission is to bring light and love to the world. She shares a message she received from a fan. “She said, ‘I’m going through a rough time, but when I see your face on my timeline, I start smiling instantly. Sometimes I go to your page, scroll through the videos, and listen to you sing and talk.’ That’s my mission, to bring a little light and love to the world. I pray that shines through me.”

Danica says two career highlights stand out: receiving the Golden Buzzer on America’s Got Talent and debuting at the Grand Ole Opry. “Chapel Hart played the Opry over 20 times,” she shares. “There’s no place in the world like it. I visited recently, giving hugs, and they asked when we were coming back. When I say the Opry is like home, it truly is.”

Her prayer now is to return as a solo artist. “It’s on my bucket list to become an Opry member. I’m praying I get to be part of the family.”

Danica and her husband Darrick, who also serves as her manager, have been together since 2015. After years of balancing hectic schedules, they were married on January 8, 2025.

Her commitment to music and her fans remains unwavering. Through every season, Danica continues to be a source of inspiration.

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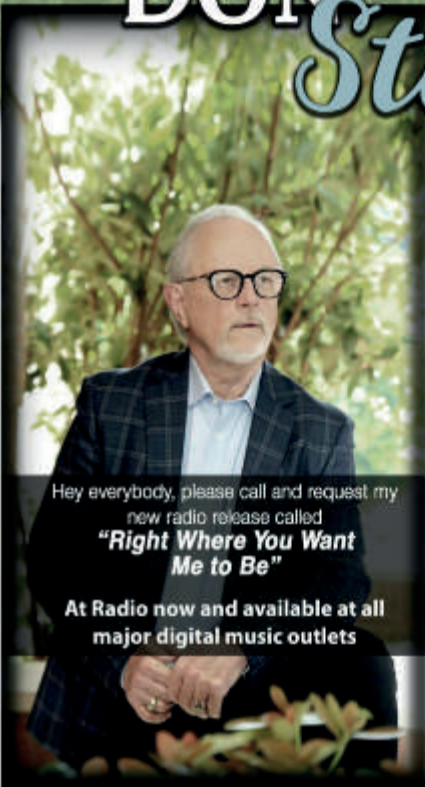
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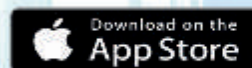
OFFICIAL CHRISTIAN COUNTRY TOP 100 - DECEMBER 2025

TM	LM	SONG TITLE	ARTIST	TM	LM	SONG TITLE	ARTIST
1	6	<b>Get On Board</b>	<b>Carl Ray</b>	51	33	His Church Went Marching On	Troy Richardson
2	4	The Phone Call	Richard Lynch	52	60	One Of These Days	Carol Barham
3	7	He Owns Both Sides Of The River	Terry & Debra Luna	53	70	Hannah Whooped The Devil	Jason Welch
4	8	Wake Up Call	Cyndi Reynolds	54	69	Even When I Fall	Thomas Brown
5	10	Somebody's Praying	Michael Knight	55	71	Take Over Me	Rex Robards
6	17	That's When God Moves	David Timms	56	83	In Times Like These	Bruce and Betsy Mullen
7	11	Father To The Fatherless	Jim Sheldon	57	79	Not On My Watch	Darin Kinser
8	12	Mama's Old Chest Of Drawers	Marvin Harrell	58	--	Honey In The Rock	Mary James
9	26	You Can't Box Me In	Fortner Brothers	59	80	Blessed Is The People That Know	Jonathan Ray Smith
10	14	Gravel Gospel	Shellem Cline	60	72	Footsteps Of My King	Todd Lee
11	19	Through Christ	Jimmy R Price	61	74	Footprints In The Sand	Dwight Sanders
12	3	Right Where You Want Me To Be	Don Stiles	62	88	Don't Need A Stone	By Faith
13	23	Grandma's Bible	Debbie Bennett	63	96	Where Are You Now	Ken Mobley
14	2	I Surrender It All	Luke Hendrickson	64	77	Pushing You Away	Mike McAdoo
15	24	Just Me	John Penney	65	84	Don't Cry For Me	Teresa Johnson
16	27	Gonna Hit Those Church Steps Running	Carey Easley	66	--	Get Out Of The Boat	Felicia Deramus Paul
17	42	Here's My Heart	Scott Peacock	67	78	Preachers In Hell	Troy Ervin
18	34	Country Sinner	Victoria Steelman	68	89	Daddy's Hat	Debra Camp
19	31	A Pew For You	Aaron Loy	69	98	My Everything	Tarrance Phillips
20	15	Heavens	Chris Hughes	70	--	Say Hello To Heaven	Steve Warren
21	48	God Talks To Me	Dawson Road	71	90	I Feel Knew	J'Lee
22	28	I Felt God Today	Heather Thomas Van Deren	72	87	You're The Man	Judy Bailey
23	29	It Matter To Him	Jan Harbuck	73	85	Thanks To Calvary	Greg Finch
24	5	When I Saw You There	Eternal Vision	74	82	Back Pew Prayer	Woodie Kitchen
25	40	Living Proof	Ken & Kim Stull	75	--	The Most Perfect Gift	Clare Cunningham
26	51	Looking In The Rearview	Daryl Baker	76	91	Somebody Bigger Than You And I	David Smith
27	21	God Does Not Change	Cowboy Joe Babcock	77	86	God Don't Waste The Hurt	Gary Russ
28	1	When The Son Comes Down	Sonshine Road	78	--	He Lives	Ed Bruce
29	54	Hand In Heaven	The Murphys feat. Abigail	79	93	Country Church	Claude Davis
30	64	It's Never Too Late	Chuck Hancock	80	--	If That Isn't Love	Bruce Minchey
31	22	Fueled Up Fired Up And Ready To Go	Billy Gregg feat. Nikki Nelson	81	92	Meanwhile Back At The Cross	Ron Hemphill
32	39	When Love Arose	Joy LaVallee	82	--	In The Morning	Hunter Logan
33	62	Hallelujah	Dust and Grace	83	99	Blood Bought Cowboy	Marty Deroche
34	13	Before You Call Me Home	Greg McDougal	84	--	Shout Of Testimony	Mike Leichner
35	41	I Saw A Miracle Today	Michael Ray Fain	85	95	My God Can	Valerie Ellis Hawkins
36	55	I've Been Thinking	Waymasters	86	94	You Can Talk To The Father	Richard Strong
37	43	Waiting In The Water	Debbie Mills	87	--	That's The Least That I Can Do	Greg Marlow
38	18	Peacemaker	Delnora with Chris Golden	88	97	Bucket List	Daniel Wheeler
39	52	Why Me	Jenny Dean	89	--	The Crossroads	Richard Sprayberry
40	59	My Home In Glory Land	Beverly Brown Simms	90	100	Longing To Go There	Robert Blankenship
41	32	The Colors And The Cross	Bobby Gibson	91	--	Love Like Jesus Does	Aaron Justice
42	50	Always Enough	Dale Rochell	92	--	No Thought To Pray	Jerry Weatherly
43	75	New Man	Chuck Day	93	--	What I Got (La-De-Da)	Caleb Deramus
44	67	If That Ain't True Love	Melanie Walker	94	--	Everything You Do	Norman Lee Schaffer
45	53	Nothing No Nothing	Rachel Taylor	95	--	Man From Galilee	Jennifer Sides
46	30	Through The Noise	Kevin Kappler	96	--	The Journey	Joe Land
47	65	Anyway	The Pauls	97	--	Wish You Were Here	Johnathan Bond
48	58	You Can Call On Him	Aaron Partridge and Steve Apirana	98	--	The Way You Do	Michael Walsh
49	66	Find Your Way Back Home	LizzyG	99	--	It'll Be Good To Be Home	The Journeys
50	81	Greatly To Be Praise	Melissa Evans	100	--	Gods Great	The Messengers



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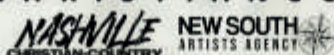


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# Mark & Cindy Maynard

## Harmony of Faith

**By Nora James**

In a world that often feels off key, some melodies emerge not just from instruments, but from lives lived in harmony through trials and triumphs. Such is the story of Mark and Cindy Maynard, an award winning husband and wife duo renowned for their powerful Southern Gospel music, close knit vocal harmony and unwavering commitment to their faith. This evangelistic ministry has shared their songs at many churches, camps, retreats, seminars, revivals and Christian organizations throughout the United States. In 2019, Mark and Cindy won the Mountain State Gospel Awards, 'Duet of the Year.' In 2024 and 2025, they were nominated for 'Duet of the Year' by Christian Voice Magazine. Both are published song writers and together they have recorded six albums. Their love for each other, music and the Lord has been their steadfast guide through some of life's most difficult seasons.



Cindy began singing at the age of four, standing on platform railings to be seen. At a very young age she also appeared on a television show that featured The Three Stooges, performing the song, *If You'll Take My Jesus*. Her love for singing grew through her teen years, performing as a soloist and a member of a ladies trio.

Mark's interest in Southern Gospel music started as a young teen. His father would invite various Gospel groups to their church where Mark would often join in, playing drums. He frequently accompanied their local church quartet as well. Soon after, a regional Ohio Gospel group who had performed at Mark's church invited Mark to accompany them for a variety of performances; it was that opportunity that would change his focus from drums to lead singer. He traveled and sang weekends during his adolescent years. His senior year in High School, he went full time with a vocal trio and finished his high school classes on the road.

### **A Story That Started In Love**

Mark and Cindy's story began the way many love songs do; unexpectedly on a blind date. They met at a local A&W Root beer stand and quickly discovered their mutual love for the Lord and Gospel music. They both were blessed to grow up in Christian homes where their fathers were ministers of the Gospel. This strong foundation and faith has shaped their lives and their music, infusing it with deep meaning and genuine desire to touch the hearts of their listeners. In their 51 years of marriage, the Maynards are no strangers to life's trials and triumphs and God's faithfulness in the middle of those struggles to carry them through.

### **Blessings Through Trials**

Eight years after their first daughter Kim was born, they were overjoyed to anticipate the arrival of another baby into the family. But their delight was short-lived as Cindy suffered a heartbreaking miscarriage. Despite this setback, Cindy's faith remained unwavering, and she felt profoundly grateful that God had blessed them with Kim, especially given her struggles with severe endometriosis.

In the early 2000s, Mark faced a daunting health challenge when he began experiencing recurring bouts of double vision. Following an MRI scan, his medical team suspected a spot on his pituitary gland, prompting an outpouring of prayers from friends and loved ones. Mark underwent a second MRI with contrast, and the results were nothing short of miraculous - the scan was perfectly clear, revealing no spot on his pituitary gland and no need for further treatment. Mark was deeply convinced that God had healed him in response to the prayers.

In 2009, Mark and Cindy faced another series of formidable health trials. Mark was diagnosed with melanoma on his arm, which was successfully removed. As they navigated this uncertain time, prayer was their instinctive response. After removal and testing, it was determined that the melanoma was confined to the surface, requiring only annual checkups to insure no recurrence. Sixteen years of

clear check-ups later, it was evident that God had answered their prayers once again. That same year, Cindy underwent major surgery due to a cancer scare, but God's faithfulness shone through once more. Throughout their ministry, Mark and Cindy have encountered numerous travel-related challenges, each one demonstrating God's unwavering love, faithfulness, and protection. They attribute their triumphs over these trials to God's sovereign hand, acknowledging that their travels and ministry are securely in His care. Through it all, they have discovered an unshakable peace that only God can provide, as well as a powerful testimony to His faithfulness.

***"Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." - John 14:27***

### **A Mother's Mind, A Daughter's Heart**

More recently, Cindy's mother, Marlys, began showing signs of dementia. At first it was small things - repeating questions, forgetting dates, etc. Soon the progression quickened and Cindy found herself becoming a caregiver alongside her other roles as a wife, mother, grandmother and ministry partner. As Cindy remarked, "There were days I couldn't find the words to even pray, all I could do was cry. Watching someone you love disappear piece by piece is a unique kind of grief. Even in those moments, when the words wouldn't come, God heard each tear. Somehow God gave me strength moment by moment." Cindy often claimed the verses in Lamentations 3:22-23, "Through the Lords mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness."

In late July 2024, Cindy's mother fell and broke her hip. Cindy was faced with the difficult decision of having her mother go through surgery at the age of 94. The odds were great for her mother to likely end up on a ventilator, should she survive the surgery. If Cindy refused the surgery, her mother would be bed ridden for the rest of her life. Thankfully, the Lord, through His compassion and mercy, made the decision for Cindy, and took her mom home, surrounded by family. Marlys received her ultimate healing in the arms of Jesus.

***"And those who know Your name will put their trust in You; for You, Lord, have not forsaken those who seek you." - Psalm 9:10***

### **An Anniversary Adventure Turned Into A Test of Faith**

In celebration of their 50th wedding anniversary, Mark and Cindy decided to take a cruise to rest and reconnect after years of care giving and ministry. The couple set sail on an 11 day voyage to Aruba and other ports with joyful hearts and plans to celebrate God's faithfulness. Their anniversary cruise turned into a test of faith. On the first night of the cruise, Cindy woke up in excruciating pain which quickly escalated, forcing them to seek emergency medical help on board the ship. Unfortunately the very first port was in 3 days,



so Cindy had to make multiple trips to the ship medical facility to allow her to manage the pain she was in. With limited equipment and medical diagnostic procedures available, the ship's doctor could only make an educated guess as to her diagnosis. They decided that they needed to get off the ship at the very first port and fly home if possible. Mark recalled, "We were in a foreign country, thousands of miles from home with our plans turned upside down. But we prayed along with many friends and family and kept believing that the Lord would make a way, and He did." Mark found that there was one flight

leaving the day they arrived in Aruba, with the last two seats being available for them. Once landed in the states, their next flight was canceled for 24 hours, so wanting to get home, they chose to rent a car and drive the remaining eight hours home. Once home, they went to the emergency room where it was discovered Cindy had a large kidney stone that she would not have passed on her own. After a surgical procedure to eliminate the stone, Cindy was able to go home to rest and recuperate. Looking back, they definitely saw God's hand in every detail. Back home, Mark and Cindy resumed their music ministry, now with deeper stories of God's faithfulness to share.

***"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your paths." - Proverbs 3:5-6***

### **A Life Composed of Faith**

Through the years, they have dedicated their lives to spreading the message of Christ in the songs that God has given them to sing. Reminding audiences that while storms may come, they are never without shelter.

Today, Mark and Cindy continue to balance family life and their music ministry. Blessed with their daughter, son-in-law, three grandchildren, their spouses, and a beautiful great granddaughter. Their love has been tested, their faith refined, and their purpose deepened. They have learned when facing trials in life, pray through it and trust that God is orchestrating something beautiful even if all you can hear is the discord. In the Maynard's lives, as in their music, the sweetest harmonies are often born from the hardest seasons.



The Maynards use their own life experiences to present encouraging, heart-warming concerts that minister to all ages. Cindy shares that, "In our song selections, we choose songs with a message that uplift our spirits and resonate deeply. We trust that each song will empower and inspire the hearts of others. It's truly a blessing when individuals approach us sharing how a particular word spoken or song sung, really touched their hearts. In the middle of a testimony or song, we look out in the audience and have seen tears flowing down someone's face. God reminds us that our struggles were not without purpose."

Mark and Cindy's deepest desire is to share God's love, grace, and forgiveness through the songs that God has given them to sing. They believe in the transforming power of music and the impact it can have on people's lives. Their constant prayer is that through their ministry, others may come to know Christ and experience incredible joy that faith brings.

***"The Lord is my strength and song. And He has become my salvation; He is my God, and I will praise Him; my father's God, and I will exalt Him." - Exodus 15:2***

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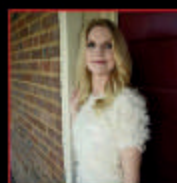
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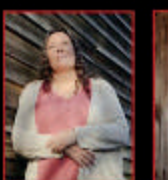
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## RONNIE MCDOWELL

By Cory Parker

In the world of Country music, where stories are told in three chords and the truth, few voices have endured with the warmth, sincerity, and lived-in authenticity of Ronnie McDowell.



McDowell's career didn't begin under the lights of Nashville. It began under fire in Vietnam. A three-term combat veteran of the Vietnam War in 1968, 1969, and 1972, McDowell's first taste of singing came during a break from combat.

"Me and Joe Hedgepath and Chuck Niche'... we entered a talent contest during a break in the fighting and sang *Blue Moon of Kentucky*. That was the first time I ever sang in front of anybody. I was 18."

That moment lit a spark. After returning home, McDowell met Country star Roy Drusky, who gave him advice that changed his life: "Roy said, 'Son, if you wanna make it in this business, you gotta write songs.' And I've been doing that ever since."

The list of Country legends who've recorded McDowell's songs reads like a hall of fame: George Strait, George Jones, Porter Wagoner, Jean Shepard, Roy Acuff, and The Wilburn Brothers, among others.

In 1977, the release of McDowell's debut single, *The King Is Gone*, marked a turning point. The Elvis tribute sold over six million copies and catapulted him into the national spotlight. That record opened doors he'd never imagined.

He became the voice of Elvis in numerous films and television productions, singing 38 songs in Dick Clark's Elvis movie starring Kurt Russell, providing vocals for Elvis and the Beauty Queen, *Elvis Meets Nixon*, and the ABC TV series chronicling Elvis's life. "Think about it... I got to be the voice of the biggest star that's ever been on the planet. That's a dream come true for me - idolizing Elvis when I was young and still do."

McDowell's Elvis inspiration is shared by giants like Paul McCartney, Bruce Springsteen, and Elton John, another sign of just how enduring the King's influence has been.

His long-time producer Buddy Killen, who worked with McDowell for 20 years, was instrumental in shaping hits like *Older Women*, *Wanderin' Eyes*, and *Watchin' Girls Go By*. "Buddy and I had so much wonderful success together. I'll always be grateful."

McDowell's life has been a constant orbit of Country and Pop icons. He toured and shared the stage with Conway Twitty for 8 years, a man he describes not just as a mentor, but as a father figure. "Conway taught me a lot, and I do mean a lot. He once told me, 'Son, just remember, you're only as good as your last record.' That advice stuck."



The circle extends far and wide: Mickey Gilley, Moe Bandy, Crystal Gayle, The Righteous Brothers' Bill Medley and Bucky Heard, and even Michael Jackson, to whom McDowell presented an award for the "Thriller" album at the 1984 American Music Awards.

Most recently, McDowell was featured on Dolly Parton's Platinum-selling "RockStar" album, alongside Paul McCartney, Judas Priest, and other music legends. "To be part of that album - right up there with *The King Is Gone* - that's one of the greatest honors of my career."

Throughout more than four decades in the industry, McDowell has remained grounded. Never one to indulge in the trappings of fame, he's chosen a lifestyle that's sustained his voice and his soul. "I've never done drugs. I always wanted to stay healthy so I could do this a long time."

Following Conway's advice to work on the weekends and rest during the week, he's kept himself in shape, vocally and physically through good food, regular exercise, and unwavering discipline.

While the industry may be increasingly youth-driven, McDowell meets that reality with grace and persistence. "Once radio stops playing your records, you have to keep coming up with something new. But never give up, because once you do, it's over."

It's a truth hard-earned, but it's also a call to resilience, something McDowell has embodied since those first songs written in a war zone.



At a Ronnie McDowell concert, fans get more than just a show, they get a musical journey that spans generations. "You'll hear my hits, some Elvis favorites, and a lot of audience participation. I want folks to feel like part of the story."

And after all these years, the story still unfolds - one heartfelt song at a time.

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# The Christmas Quilt

By Jackson McKee

There are certain sounds that mark the season: the crackle of wrapping paper, the faint hiss of tape pulled from its roll, the clatter of ornaments as they're carefully (or not so carefully) hung on the tree. But in our family, Christmas always began with the sound of Grandma's sewing machine.

It wasn't fancy - a sturdy Singer that had seen more decades than most of us had birthdays. Every December, she'd set it up in the corner of the living room, right beside the wood stove, and begin stitching together what she called "the Christmas quilt."

Now, this quilt wasn't meant to be slept under. It was too lumpy, too uneven, and frankly too colorful for that. It was a patchwork of memories: squares cut from old flannel shirts, faded aprons, worn-out choir robes, and even the occasional pair of jeans that had seen better days. Grandma said each piece carried a story, and when stitched together, those stories became a testimony of God's faithfulness through the years.

As children, we didn't fully understand. To us, it was just a funny-looking blanket that smelled faintly of cinnamon and cedar. But as we grew older, we realized that quilt was more than fabric - it was a family history, stitched with love and laughter.

## *The Year of the Lopsided Angel*

One Christmas in particular stands out. It was 1987, the year Grandma decided to add a patch from the church's old Christmas pageant costumes. The angel robes had been retired after one too many mishaps - including the infamous "Lopsided Angel Incident."

My cousin Billy had been cast as Gabriel, a role he took very seriously until his halo slipped mid-performance and landed squarely over his nose. The congregation roared with laughter, and Billy, ever the showman, delivered his lines with the halo dangling like a golden mustache.

Grandma, never one to waste good fabric, snipped a piece from that robe and stitched it into the quilt. "Because even angels get a little crooked sometimes," she said with a wink. That patch became our favorite. Whenever the quilt was unfolded, someone would inevitably point to the angel square and retell the story, laughter echoing through the room.

## *The Quilt as a Gathering Place*

By the time the quilt was ten years old, it had become a fixture of our Christmas celebrations. It wasn't draped over a bed or folded neatly in a closet. No, it was spread out on the living room floor, right in front of the tree.

That quilt was where cousins sprawled to play board games, where uncles napped after too much turkey, and where Grandma herself sat cross-legged, handing out gifts with a twinkle in her eye.

It was also where we prayed. Every Christmas Eve, before the stockings were hung and the cookies set out, Grandma would gather us on the quilt. She'd remind us that Christmas wasn't about presents or pageants, but about the greatest gift ever given - Christ Himself.

Her voice would tremble as she read from Luke 2, but her conviction never wavered. And though we sometimes squirmed or giggled, we knew those moments mattered. The quilt wasn't just fabric; it was holy ground.





### *The Year the Quilt Went Missing*

Of course, no family tradition is without its drama. One year, the quilt disappeared.

It was 1999, and we arrived at Grandma's house to find the sewing machine humming but the quilt nowhere in sight. Panic set in. Had it been misplaced? Stolen? Accidentally donated to Goodwill?

Turns out, Uncle Ray had borrowed it to cover his pickup truck bed while hauling firewood. "It was the only thing big enough," he explained sheepishly, brushing sawdust from his coat.

Grandma was furious. "Raymond, that quilt is not a tarp!" she scolded, hands on her hips.

We all laughed - even Grandma eventually - but from then on, the quilt was guarded like treasure. Uncle Ray was banned from borrowing it, and the story of "The Great Quilt Heist" became another patch in our family lore.

### *Passing the Needle*

As the years rolled on, Grandma's hands grew slower, her stitches less precise. But she never stopped sewing. Each December, she'd add a new square, sometimes with our help.

One year, she let me choose the fabric. I picked a piece from my old marching band uniform - bright red with gold trim. "Because you always marched to your own beat," she said, smiling.

Another year, my sister contributed a square from her college sweatshirt. "Because even when you're far away, you're still part of the story."

By the time Grandma passed the needle to my mother, the quilt was nearly impossible to lift. It was heavy with fabric, yes, but also with memories. Every patch carried a laugh, a tear, a prayer.

### *The Quilt Today*

Now, decades later, the quilt still comes out every Christmas. It's frayed at the edges, faded in places, and patched so many times it looks more like a mosaic than a blanket. But when we spread it out, the room feels warmer, brighter, holier.

Children who never met Grandma crawl across it, giggling as they discover the crooked angel patch. Teenagers roll their eyes at the "pickup truck tarp" story, then secretly smile when they hear it again. Parents sit quietly, remembering the prayers whispered on that quilt, the faith that carried us through hard winters and joyful springs.

And every year, someone adds a new square. Last year, it was a piece from my niece's baby blanket. This year, it will be a patch from my father's flannel shirt, worn thin from years of chopping wood.

The quilt is no longer just Grandma's project. It's ours - a living testimony stitched together by generations.

### *Why It Matters*

In a world that often rushes past Christmas in a blur of shopping carts and shipping deadlines, the quilt slows us down. It reminds us that the season isn't about perfection, but about presence. Not about flawless stitches, but about faithful ones.

It teaches us that laughter belongs beside tears, that crooked angels can still proclaim good news, and that even a patchwork of worn-out fabric can become something beautiful when stitched with love.

Most of all, it reminds us of the story at the center of it all, the one Grandma never let us forget. The story of a Savior born in a manger, who came not for the perfect but for the patchwork, not for the polished but for the frayed.



### *Epilogue: A Touch of Humor*

Last Christmas, as we gathered on the quilt, my nephew tugged at the crooked angel patch and asked, "Why didn't they just fix the halo?" We all laughed, because of course that was the logical solution. But Grandma's wisdom echoed in my mind: "Because even angels get a little crooked sometimes."

And maybe that's the point. Christmas isn't about fixing every halo or straightening every stitch. It's about celebrating the crooked, the patched, the imperfect - because that's where grace shines brightest.

So, this year, as you unwrap gifts and sip cocoa, remember the quilt. Remember the crooked angels, the borrowed blankets, the laughter and the prayers. And may you find, in your own patchwork of memories, the warmth of a Savior who stitches us all together.



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# DARYL BAKER

## Called to Point People to Jesus

By Cory Parker

Daryl Baker is an evangelist, author, and singer/songwriter from Louisville, Kentucky. He and his wife, Susie, are blessed with four daughters and five grandchildren. From a young age, Daryl has devoted his life to serving the Lord - first through music in church and later while traveling with his father's Southern Gospel band, Called Out. Over the past 25 years, he has ministered as a pastor, worship leader, teacher, and administrator in churches across Kentucky and Georgia.

**D**aryl's love for Gospel music was nurtured while traveling with his father, Gerald Baker, sharing the stage with some of Southern Gospel's most beloved artists, including The Paynes, Squire Parsons, The Spencers, and Charles Johnson & The Revivers. His passion for writing and performing original songs has been shaped by the influence of notable singer/songwriters such as Gerald Crabb and Chris Tomlin.

As a new artist emerging on the music scene, Daryl's focus goes beyond melodies - his heart is to share a message of hope and point people to Jesus.

"The greatest compliment I can receive is someone coming up to me after a concert and saying how much one of my songs spoke to them or lined up with something they've been going through," Daryl says. "Encouraging someone to keep going means I've done what God has called me to do."

### A Song Born in the Night

Daryl's debut solo release, *Looking In The Rearview*, came during a 3 a.m. moment of divine inspiration.

"I woke up with that phrase on my lips and started thinking about all the twists and turns along life's journey."



Sometimes we feel like God is nowhere to be found, but when we come out on the other side of the battle, we realize He was there all along, protecting us from life's potholes and landslides. This song is my story, and maybe it's yours too. I've made mistakes, but I don't live in the rearview mirror anymore. God's grace put me back on the road. I pray this song reminds others that His mercy is always greater than our past."

### **A Season of Brokenness, A God of Second Chances**

About ten years ago, Daryl faced a dark season that nearly brought his ministry to a halt.

"I went through a tremendous personal loss as my marriage fell apart. I felt like I couldn't help anyone ever again. Friends disappeared. Comfort and support fled. The enemy had me believing my ministry was over. But after a year of soul-searching and trying to pick up the pieces, it was like God showed up and reminded me that He is the God of second chances."

God soon opened a door in Georgia where Daryl could serve again. "He showed me He wasn't finished with me yet."

After nearly four years in Georgia, Daryl and Susie returned to Kentucky with a renewed sense of calling and purpose.

### **Writing, Worship, and Renewal**

In 2022, God stirred Daryl's heart to write his first book - a 90-day devotional titled *New In 90*. Over the next two and a half years, he authored six more books, with an eighth scheduled for release in the summer of 2025. Eight books in just three and a half years testify to God's transforming work in his life. Following a move in 2024, Daryl felt a fresh passion for songwriting, leading to a new music project now in production, anchored by his debut single. Truly, what a change God has made!

### **Daryl's Mission**

"My mission is simple: to glorify God, spread the Gospel, and help people encounter the life-changing love of Jesus. Through music, testimony, and teaching, I want to ignite faith, bring healing, and offer encouragement to those walking through dry places in life."

### **What to Expect at a Daryl Baker Event**

At a typical concert or event, audiences can expect more than a musical performance - they can expect a worship encounter.

"I believe in creating space where the Spirit of God can move freely. You'll hear heartfelt songs rooted in Scripture, real stories of grace and redemption, and moments of ministry

that invite people to respond. Whether it's a toe-tapping Southern Gospel anthem or a tender worship ballad, each song is designed to connect people to God in a personal way."

"I want those who attend to leave with more than a melody in their head, I want them to leave with a renewed heart, a lifted spirit, and a deeper hunger for the things of God."

### **Speaking Into the Culture**

We live in a time when truth is often treated as subjective and morality shaped by convenience rather than conviction. As a Christian artist and evangelist, Daryl sees a culture hungry for purpose but searching in all the wrong places.

"The breakdown of the family, the rise of self-centered ideologies, and the decline in reverence for God all point to a deeper spiritual drought."



**Daryl & Susie Baker**

Through his music and ministry, Daryl seeks to speak to the soul, reminding people that while culture shifts, God's truth remains unshakable.

"My calling and ministry is rooted in the belief that we are called to be salt and light in a world that desperately needs both. Whether it's through lyrics, sermons, or conversations after a concert, my goal is to point people back to Jesus - the one true source of identity, hope, and transformation."

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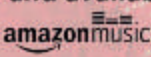


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