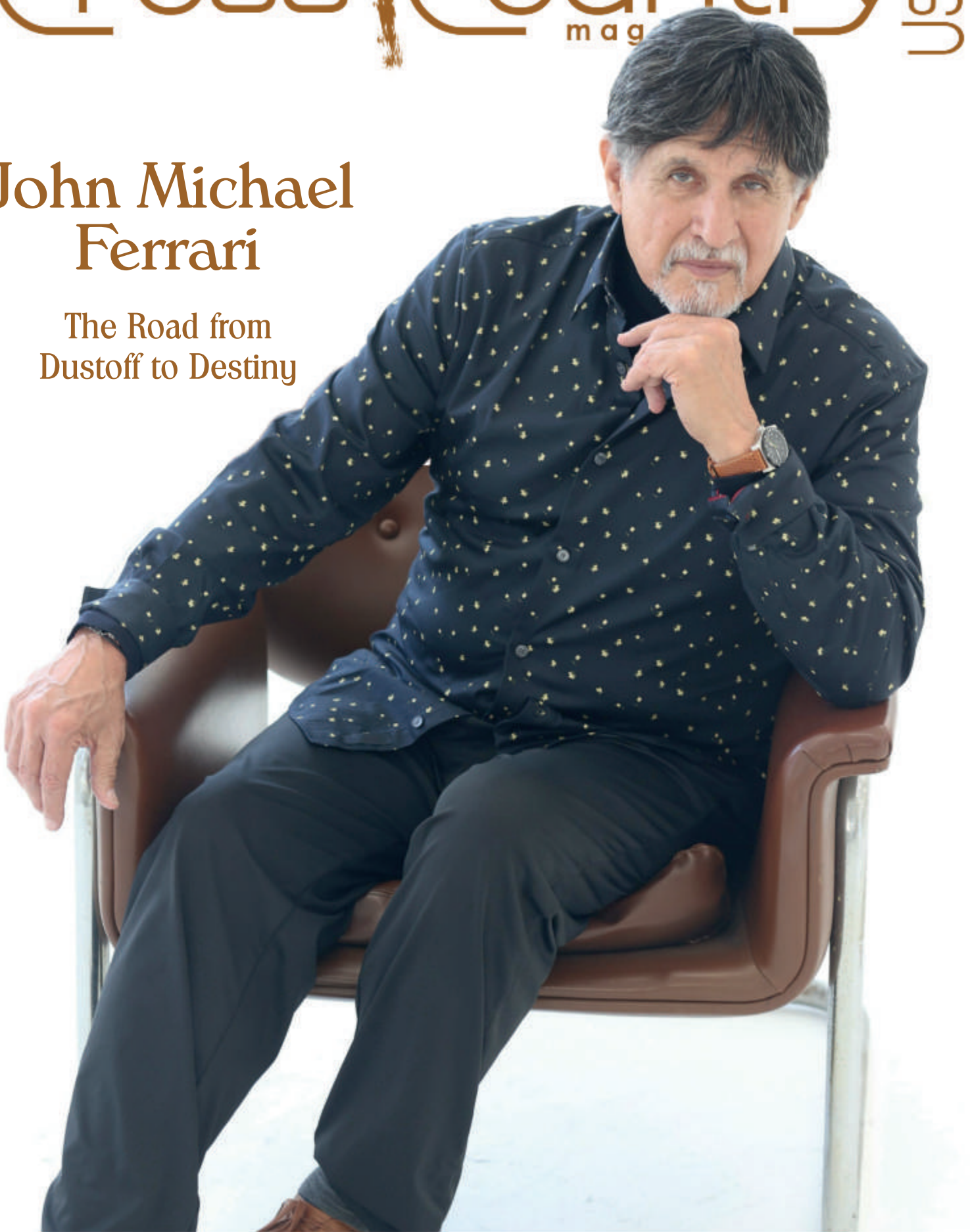
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Cross Country mag USA

John Michael Ferrari

The Road from Dustoff to Destiny



COUNTRY MUSIC WITH A MESS AGE









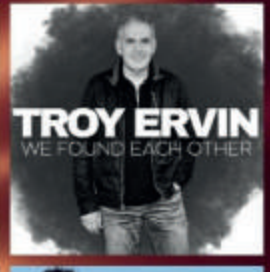








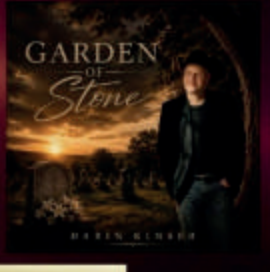
















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NOVEMBER 2026

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BUSINESS OPERATIONS / C.O.O.
Randall Wilds

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
Codi Lanier

MANAGING EDITOR
Robin Tanner

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
John Lanier

FEATURE EDITORS
Teresa Schweinsberg
Malik Riaz
Jackson McKee
Cory Parker

WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT
John Lanier

GRAPHIC DESIGN
Christine Scott • Gatlin Dean

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From the Editor

Faith, Family & Freedom

November is a month that always seems to slow us down just enough to remember what truly matters. It is a season of reflection on our nation, our freedoms, our families, and the faith that carries us through every moment. We are blessed to live in a nation where we can gather with loved ones, worship God without fear, and exercise our sacred right to vote. Each of these privileges exists because of God's grace and the courage of the veterans who have defended our liberties. For all of this, we give thanks to the Lord, honor those who served, and remain grateful for the freedoms we enjoy every day.

This month brings three important dates that shape the American spirit: Election Day, Veterans Day, and Thanksgiving. Each one reminds us of the blessings we enjoy and the responsibilities we carry as citizens of this great country.

Election Day calls us to participate in one of our most sacred civic duties. Casting a vote is more than marking a ballot, it is a privilege secured by generations who fought to preserve our freedoms. I encourage everyone to approach this season with prayer, humility, and respect for one another.

Just days later, we pause for Veterans Day, honoring the brave men and women who have worn the uniform of the United States Armed Forces. Their courage, sacrifice, and unwavering commitment to freedom deserve our deepest gratitude. Many of our readers have family members who served or are serving now and we lift each one up with appreciation. Freedom is never free, and November reminds us to say "thank you" to those who paid the price.

Thanksgiving, a holiday rooted in gratitude to God for His provision. Families gather around tables, share meals, tell stories, and reflect on blessings both big and small. In a world that often feels divided, Thanksgiving invites us to slow down and remember that God is still good, still faithful, and still working in our lives.

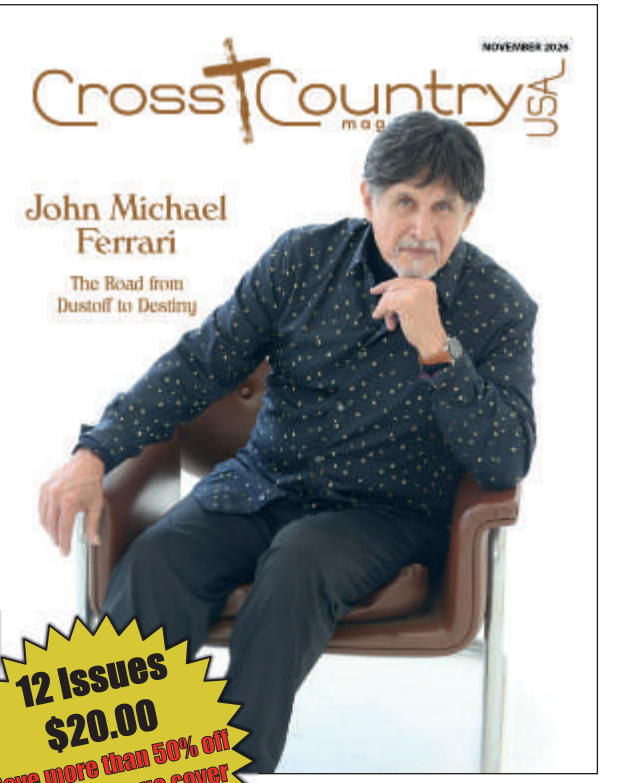
As we move through November, may we carry gratitude in our hearts, prayer on our lips, and kindness in our actions. Let us honor our veterans, participate responsibly in our elections, and celebrate Thanksgiving with joy and reverence. May God bless you, your families, and this nation we love.

From all of us at Cross Country USA Magazine, we honor our Veterans and thank them for their service. We wish you all a very blessed Thanksgiving.

Robin

Robin Tanner, Managing Editor

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One Heartbeat Away
The Journeys



Everybody Smiles
Greg Marlow

BEN STONE

By Robin Tanner



For six years, our Young Country column in Cross Country USA Magazine has highlighted talented young artists who are growing in their calling. One of those artists is Ben Stone, a young man whose God-given talent continues to open new doors. Ben is recording new music, traveling every weekend, and following the path the Lord has laid before him.

Ben began singing and playing guitar at just three years old in his church in Corydon, Kentucky. He sang locally for many years, but in 2020 his ministry began to expand. Like many artists during the pandemic, Ben turned to social media. "I started singing for a Facebook page called Praise On The Porch in 2020, and that led to being invited to sing at churches!" he says.

Ben is grateful for those who encouraged him early on. "My grandparents encouraged me to get started in music. Mark Ross from The Southlanders and Ray Wolford have always supported me and given me advice in the ministry."

In January 2021, Ben released his first project. He expresses deep appreciation for everyone who has helped him along the way. "I'm thankful to my parents for allowing me to be on this journey, my grandparents for pushing me to keep singing for the Lord, and my family, friends, and fans for always supporting me. And a special thanks to Jeff Napier for doing such an awesome job on my projects!"

Ben has made many memories with fellow artists. One of his favorites was at Gospel Music Fan Fair 2024, where several singers gathered in a tiny room, laughing and talking late into the night. He also enjoys attending Believer's Camp Meeting, hosted by Tim Goshen & The Believers and The King Family, where he often shares original songs led by the Spirit.

Ben has received numerous honors, including the 'Male Horizon' award from Christian Voice Magazine, along with thirteen awards from the Lake Cumberland Gospel Music Association. In July 2024, he hosted his first Homecoming Sing with The Moreheads from Bandana, Kentucky.

His previous single, *Thank You For The Rain*, written by Steve Stone, appears on his latest album, "We Shall Stand," released in early 2024. The project also includes two original songs, *Jesus Cares* and *In Your Time of Need*. Ben is currently working on a new CD.

Ben shares his favorite song; "A song that has ministered to me personally is *He Didn't Throw the Clay Away,* which reminds me that the Lord always picks us up and helps us along the way."

He is blessed with a supportive family. His parents are Scott and Brooke Stone, and he has a younger sister, Emily. He laughs about his sister's excitement: "Emily always says we're 'going to a big church,' no matter how big the church really is!" His father is also a preacher. Ben graduated from Haven Christian Academy in May 2026. His home church is Corydon Holiness Church, where he sings and plays music when he is not traveling. He stays busy with fishing, singing, helping his dad coach baseball and basketball, and working seasonally for WSON Radio in Henderson, Kentucky, filming home games for live stream.

Ben hopes to continue singing, recording new albums, and spreading the Word of God across the nation. At one of his services, listeners can expect about an hour of old Gospel songs mixed with meaningful moments. After concerts, he enjoys meeting fans and friends at the product table.

Ben's heart for ministry is clear. "I thank the Lord for all He is doing in mine and my family's life. He keeps us safe and well. It's important that lives are being touched and blessed, and that more doors are opening to sing. My mission is to win souls for the Lord and minister to people's needs."

The Lord continues to bless Ben's ministry as he sings at churches, homecomings, assisted-living facilities, fall festivals, fairs, and other events. Ben and his parents are grateful for radio support and for God's guidance every step of the way.

Follow Ben Stone Ministries on Facebook to keep up with his music and travels.

Norman Lee Schaffer



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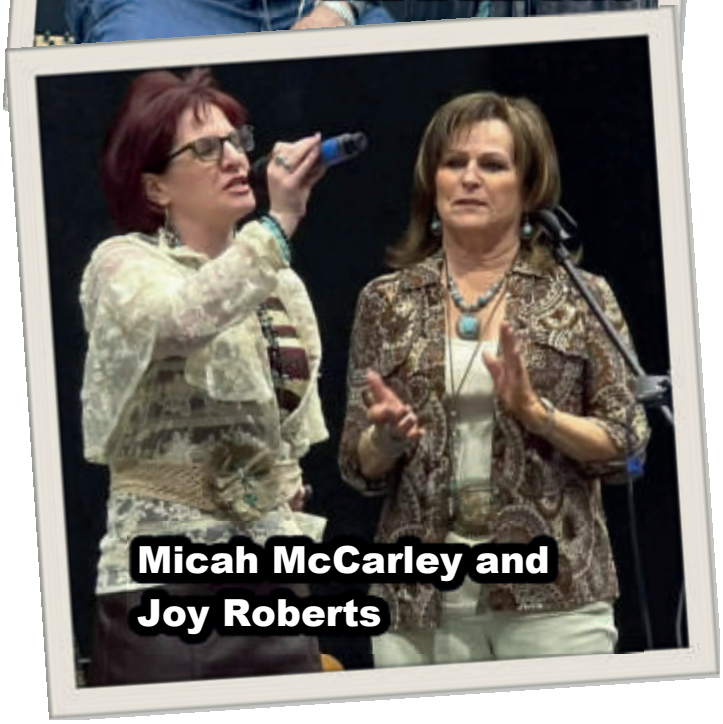
The Texoma Gospel Music Association hosted their fall gathering on October 9-10, at The ROC in Sulphur Springs, Texas. Southern and Country Gospel artists from all across the USA came to lift their voices in praise to the Lord. President of Texoma GMA Mary Fay Jackson reflected about the fall gathering on social media, saying, "My Heart is full! What an anointed Fall TGMA Gathering. Thanks to all the members, volunteers and guests. Surely the Presence of the Lord was there."

www.TexomaGospel.com

Photos courtesy of Mary Fay Jackson and attendees.









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ARTIST SPOTLIGHT

JANE SOMMER

By Teresa Schwiensberg



Eight-year-old Jane Sommer (Schweinsberg) is following in some family footsteps with her first release on Nashville Christian Country. The song, written by her grandfather, Rick Schweinsberg, is a favorite of Jane's, which she asked to record herself instead of letting another artist do it. Her daddy, Micah Schweinsberg, thought maybe she was too young to put out a national single, until he was reminded his first single release, which charted nationwide, *I've Got the Devil by the Tail*, was recorded at age five.

Jane's musical heritage is lengthy. Her maternal grandparents are Rich and Lisa Crist, who with her mommy, Jackie Crist, her great aunt and uncle, Tammy and John Starkle, and aunts Breanna Crist Henderson and Valerie Crist Freeman, formed the Southern Gospel group, the Crist Family. Her paternal grandparents, Rick and Teresa Schweinsberg and daddy, also traveled with True Gospel Sounds, another Southern Gospel group, for twenty-three years. Her brother, Bruce Wayne Schweinsberg, has gained attention playing drums and acting in the latest Diamond Rio video, with his daddy, the drummer for both Diamond Rio and previously for the Crabb Family. Jane began singing as soon as she could talk, and though she is shy at times, never shies away from a chance to perform when holding a microphone in front of family.

When asked why she wanted to sing this song *Me and My Friends*, Jane's answer was simple. "It was really fun," she said. "I think my friends will like the song. I like that it talks about my friends and Jesus."

One of Jane's favorite singers is Martina McBride, along with Sonya and Beckie Isaacs. Her Pappy produced her song in the style of Martina for her. In her free time, Jane likes to do music, draw, paint, journal, and play with her friends at school and neighbors. She also likes to try to write songs and play games on her tablet.

Jane continued, "I have a friend, Maya, at school who talks with me about Jesus. I like to go to church and learn about Him. Also, sometimes at night, when I'm waiting for Mommy or Daddy to tuck me in, I look up Bible verses. My Bible has some pages that are big and thick. If you have something you want to know about, it gives you verses to help with that. Like, if I'm worried about anything, there is a page that says 'WORRY' at the top, and it has Bible verses about worrying on that page. I go in there and see how it can help me."

When Jane grows up, she says, "I kind of want to be a hair stylist, but I have a cool family who is very talented in music. My brother, Bruce, even has perfect pitch, so I don't know if I will do something in music maybe. I know that I don't have to worry about any of that, because Jesus will help me decide later."

For now, Jane is excited for everyone to hear her new song *Me and My Friends* and see how people like it. Her song can be heard on radio and all streaming platforms. Listen to it on Apple Music or Spotify and add it to your playlist for your children and grandchildren.



A BABY'S BORN IN BETHLEHEM

~ A New Christmas Song Written By Daniel L. Johnson ~

"A Baby's Born In Bethlehem" is a new radio single which was written by award-winning Nashville song-writer Daniel L. Johnson. It was written to tell the traditional Christmas story of the birth of Jesus Christ. However, the song comes to life through a very non-traditional melody, making it an unique sounding Christmas song. You'll enjoy the tight har-monies as The Pearly Gates perform their new song.



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Cross Country Report

CHRISTIAN COUNTRY MUSIC NEWS & SCOOPS

Diamond Rio Announces New EP "America Works'

GRAMMY Award-winning, multi-Platinum country group Diamond Rio is stepping boldly into a new chapter with the announcement of their forthcoming four-song EP, "America Works," arriving November 13 via Rio Records 2.0 / One Riot Records. The project launches with its powerful title track, *America Works*, a song rooted in service, sacrifice, and the everyday acts of kindness that keep the nation strong.

The release comes during a milestone year for the legendary band. Diamond Rio celebrates 35 years since the debut of their newly certified 2X Platinum breakthrough single, *Meet In The Middle,* and their Platinum-selling debut album "Diamond Rio." More than three decades after making Country music history with their first No. 1, the group continues to honor that legacy with fresh original music. Their hits *Beautiful Mess* and *One More Day* also received new Platinum certifications from the RIAA, underscoring the band's enduring impact.

Written by Diamond Rio's Jimmy Olander and Jeffrey East, "America Works" champions the idea of Americans showing up for one another, whether through military service, community support, or simple selfless gestures. The song arrives with an official music video that premiered on The Heartland Network's Country Music Today. Directed by Diamond Rio drummer Micah Schweinsberg, the video was filmed in part at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, featuring military personnel alongside the band's own family members, friends, and crew.

The storyline follows three individuals at different stages of life as they navigate personal challenges, give back to their communities, and serve their country - mirroring the song's message of unity and compassion. "We started at Fort Campbell getting shots of our military on the base," says Schweinsberg. "I've always respected our military, but seeing them train and function reinstated my respect for their willingness to sacrifice in order to keep our freedom in this country."



Diamond Rio
Photo Credit: Robby Klein

Olander adds that keeping the production close to home made the video especially meaningful. "Other than a few soldiers at Fort Campbell, every cast member in the video is connected to us personally," says Olander. "It made the whole thing feel incredibly meaningful."



Following the EP's title track, Diamond Rio released *Other Side of The World* on October 16. Written by Olander, Marty Roe, and Heather Morgan, the deeply personal song was inspired by Roe watching his eldest daughter move to Australia after high school to attend Hillsong College to study music.

The track marks a first for Diamond Rio, featuring Carson McKee on lead vocals in a duet with Roe. "The inspiration was trying to create a special piece of music that tells some of Marty's pride and heartbreak as his daughter moved to Australia," explains Olander. "Marty was very open and transparent when we wrote it, and things got emotional a time or two. Now, with Carson McKee in the band, it created a great opportunity to cut the song as a duet."

For McKee, the song's emotional weight was deeply familiar. At just 24 when she recorded her parts, she had recently graduated college and was living in Nashville far from her own family. "This was emotional for me," says McKee. "I was homesick, and there's a line in my verse, 'I miss you Dad like you'll never know.' I remember having to cut it over and over because I couldn't sing it without crying. It's a powerful song, and getting to sing it as a duet with Marty was really special."

The full "America Works EP" arrives November 13, including Pink Guitar, featuring McKee on lead vocals. Written by Olander, Hayley McLean, and Josh Shilling, the track marks another milestone for Diamond Rio's newest vocalist. The EP is rounded out by the previously released instrumental *The Kick*, which showcased Diamond Rio's two newest members for the first time. All songs were produced and co-written by Olander, with accompanying music videos written and directed by Schweinsberg.

With more than 10 million albums sold worldwide, Diamond Rio's legacy remains one of the most decorated in Country music. Their accolades include a GRAMMY Award, a Dove Award, four CMA Vocal Group of the Year wins, and two ACM Awards for Top Vocal Group. The band made history when *Meet In The Middle* became the first debut single by a Country group to reach No. 1. They went on to deliver a long list of chart-topping hits including *How Your Love Makes Me Feel, One More Day, Beautiful Mess, Unbelievable, I Believe, Love A Little Stronger,* and *Norma Jean Riley*.

Known for their unmistakable harmonies, world-class musicianship, and instantly recognizable sound, Diamond Rio continues to honor their legacy with new music and live performances proving that America still works, and so does Diamond Rio

For more information, visit diamondrio.com.

Neal McCoy Receives Opry Member Invitation During 'Opry 100 Honors Charley Pride'

Neal McCoy, one of the most dynamic entertainers and philanthropists in Country music, was invited to become an official member of the Grand Ole Opry September 22, during Opry 100 Honors Charley Pride, a special show celebrating the life, music and enduring legacy of Country Music Hall of Fame member and Grand Ole Opry member Charley Pride.

McCoy performed three Pride classics and reflected on Pride's friendship and mentorship. "If there had never been a Charley Pride there would never have been a Neal McCoy," he said, sharing that in the very early days of his career he would mow yards for a living during the week and travel with Pride on the weekends, opening his shows.

After concluding her set, Opry member Pam Tillis welcomed Pride's wife Rozene Pride to the stage to share memories of her late husband, and Mrs. Pride asked McCoy to escort her onstage. As she concluded her thoughts, Pride shared, "Charley would be so happy with what you're going to do next, Pam."



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Tillis then stepped in with an official Opry invitation on behalf of Charley and Rozene Pride and the entire Opry family. “Oh my gosh, a near-speechless McCoy said. “What a great night. What a great night to be invited.”

McCoy has often credited Pride’s guidance, encouragement and example with helping shape both his career and his approach to entertaining audiences. In 2013, McCoy released the album “Pride: A Tribute To Charley Pride” to honor his longtime friend and mentor.

The Opry 100 Honors Charley Pride also featured performances by Opry members Darius Rucker and Tillis, as well as McCoy, Pride’s son Dion Pride, Tony Jackson, The Malpass Brothers, and The War & Treaty.

Neal McCoy is best known for his No. 1 hits *No Doubt About It* and *Wink*, the 15-album artist has completed 17 USO tours, earned multiple humanitarian honors, and raised more than $11 million for East Texas families through his East Texas Angel Network charity.

McCoy will officially join the Opry family later this year on a date to be announced.

Donna Fargo’s Fans Line Music Row Rallying for the Legend’s Induction into the Country Music Hall of Fame

Donna Fargo fans for fifty years and more from around the globe gathered outside CMA offices playing *The Happiest Girl In The Whole U.S.A* and holding signs with a simple message, "Induct Donna Fargo County Music Hall of Fame"

"Can you believe they are doing this?" The words of Country music legend Donna Fargo, humbled by the outpouring of love and devotion from her fans who were rallied together October 7th and 8th for her place in the Country Music Hall of Fame.

The beloved star's many fans for fifty years or more, lined Nashville's Music Row with signs and her recordings. They kept multiplying in front of the CMA offices.

Vonnie Watson traveled from Pennsylvania to lead the rally. She has also organized petitions for Fargo's Hall of Fame induction. For Vonnie, this is personal, sharing, "I have loved and admired Donna Fargo since I was 12 years old. Her music has been like a life coach for me. The recitation in her song, U.S. of A., made me want to be a good person!"

Donna Fargo has earned Grammy, CMA, ACM and numerous songwriting awards. The history-making singer/songwriter has also been honored with induction into the the North Carolina Music Hall of Fame, Carolinas Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and the North America Country Music Association International Hall of Fame.

But Fargo, who set records for her million-selling debut singles in 1972, *The Happiest Girl in the Whole USA* and *Funny Face* also wrote those two hit songs and about 90-percent of her recordings which are still recognizable standards to this date. She set a new standard for women in music, a point made by Vonnie Watson.

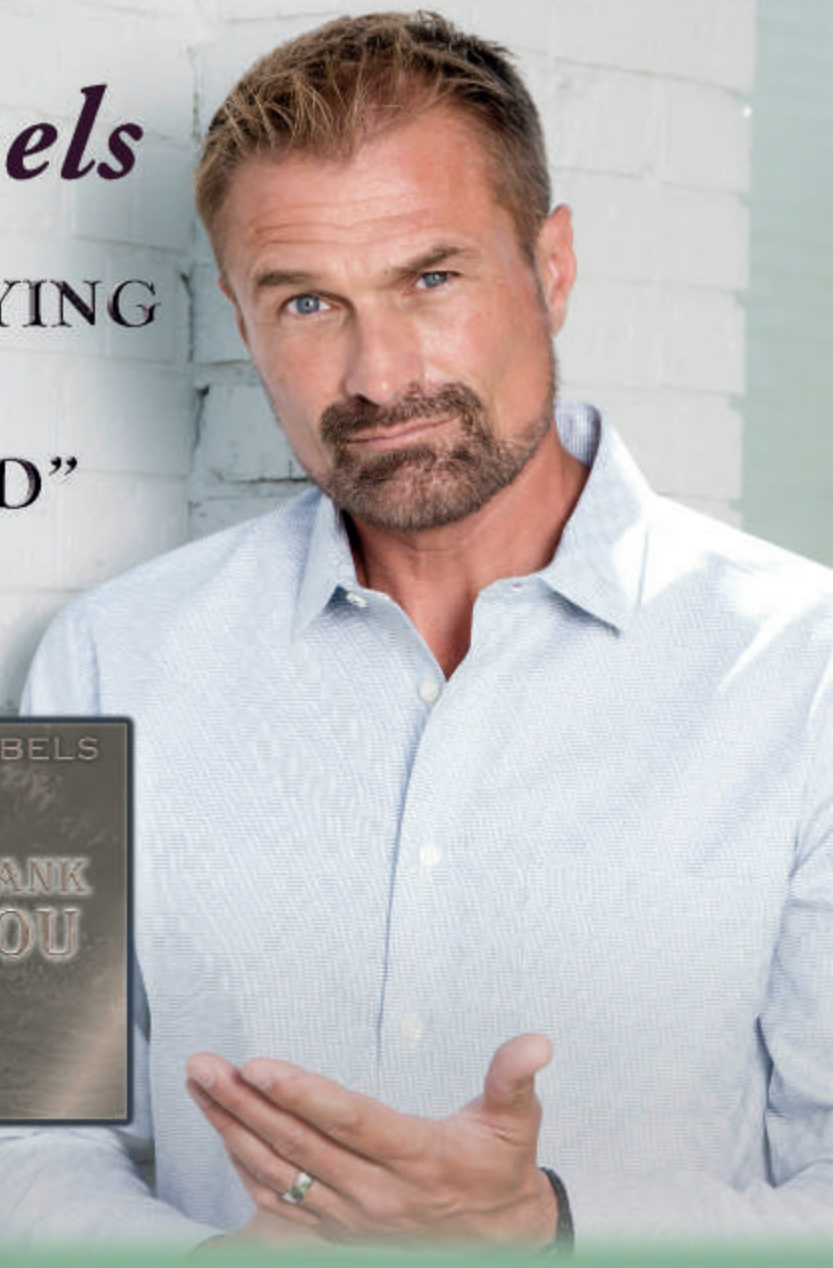


Fargo wasn't afraid to release a recitation to radio or even a song with unexplored cultural sounds, recording with Johnny Rodriguez and Little Joe and La Familia. Watson adds, "It only seems right to induct her. The wall in the Country Music Hall of Fame Museum doesn't look right without "The Happiest Girl in the Whole U.S.A." on it.” Vonnie Watson is not alone. Donna Fargo's talent, music and kindness continue to inspire.

Continued on page 21 > > >

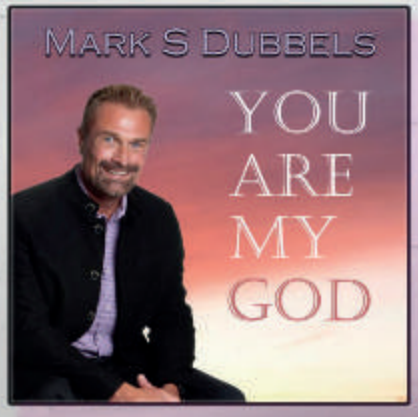


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Donna Fargo established herself as an award-winning singer, songwriter, and performer with the first single release of a song she wrote called *The Happiest Girl in the Whole U.S.A.* This song was also the lead song in her first album by the same name, which achieved platinum album status and earned her 3 Grammy nominations and a Grammy. Her second single release called *Funny Face* won Donna the title of the first woman in Country music history to have back-to-back million-selling singles, both of which she wrote. Both songs reached beyond Country and became Pop hits also, and many hit singles and albums followed. Some of her credits include seven Academy of Country Music awards, five Billboard awards, four ASCAP awards, and two National Association of Recording Merchandisers awards for best-selling artists. In addition to the Robert J. Burton Award that she won for "Most Performed Song of the Year," her most coveted awards as a writer are her Million-Air Awards, presented to writers of songs that achieve the blockbuster status of one million or more performances. Together, Donna as the writer and her husband Stan Silver as the publisher, have six Million-Air Awards and thirty BMI Awards. Her performance on a show at Carnegie Hall interested the Osmond family enough to produce the syndicated television variety show, The Donna Fargo Show. In 2009, the state of North Carolina named a highway after Donna, and in 2010, she was inducted into the North Carolina Music Hall of Fame.

Donna's inspirational books include Trust In Yourself, To The Love Of My Life, I Prayed For You Today, 10 Golden Rules For Living In This Crazy, Mixed-Up World, I Thanked God For You Today, My Prayer For You, My Prayer For You, My Friend, and now, Everything Is Possible With God. Her writings also appear on Blue Mountain Arts greeting cards, calendars, and other gift items. Donna and producer her late husband Stan Silver, together forged Donna's trademark sound solidifies not just the magic they shared in the studio but also in life. There is no doubt… Donna Fargo is distinctively Donna - one of a kind!

Kent Blazy Presents Inaugural Legacy Legend Award to The Bluebird Café at Alive Hospice Breakfast

Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame member Kent Blazy honored The Bluebird Cafe for their longstanding support of Alive Hospice by presenting the venue with the inaugural Legacy Legend Award at the first Alive and Legacy Breakfast.

Blazy performed *If Tomorrow Never Comes*, which he wrote with Garth Brooks, and reflected on the care Alive provided his wife during her battle with cancer. Blazy's tribute reflected both his gratitude for the care given by Alive Hospice and the enduring commitment of Nashville's songwriters to supporting patients and families throughout Middle Tennessee. His participation brought a personal perspective to the celebration of Alive Hospice's 50 years of service to patients and families across Middle Tennessee. The inaugural Legacy Legend Award was accepted by The Bluebird Cafe founder Amy Kurland and Erika Wollam Nichols, COO/GM of The Bluebird Cafe, accepted on behalf of the Nashville Songwriters Association.



L-R: Amy Kurland, Kent Blazy, and Erika Nichols.
Photo Credit: Howard Ezell

"The Bluebird Cafe and Alive Hospice have been a team for 33 years. I feel honored to be a part of it," Blazy shared. "I am grateful to have been part of the benefit shows at The Bluebird Cafe supporting Alive Hospice over the years, sharing the stage with Pat Alger, Vic Shaw, Tony Arata, Garth Brooks, Leslie Satcher, Cory Batten and so many other wonderful songwriters."

"It was most significant to have our own Bluebird family member, Kent Blazy, not only present the award but share his



story. Kent's experience with Alive Hospice was instrumental in developing the partnership and his commitment to the organization has anchored the month-long benefit through the years. We are grateful that he helped establish the connection that has allowed The Bluebird and our community of songwriters to give back in such a meaningful way," expressed Erika Wollam Nichols, COO/GM of The Bluebird Cafe.

"Kent was the perfect person to present this inaugural award because his connection to both Alive and The Bluebird Cafe is deeply personal," said Amir Hamad, CEO of Alive Hospice. "He has shown up for Alive time and again over the years, both as a supporter and as someone whose own family has experienced our care. Kent embodies the same spirit of generosity, friendship and commitment that this award was created to honor."

Since 1994, The Bluebird Cafe has donated proceeds from its January shows to Alive Hospice, uniting Nashville's songwriting community in support of hospice care.

Alive Hospice board member C.T. Stevens and his father, Turney Stevens, served as chairmen of the breakfast, which recognized individuals and organizations whose philanthropic contributions have advanced Alive Hospice's mission. The event also highlighted the expanding services of Alive Hospice, including grief support for adults, teens, and children, regardless of whether their loved ones received care from the organization.

In 2025, Alive Hospice cared for more than 4,600 hospice patients and nearly 10,000 palliative care patients. It also supported nearly 9,000 people through grief services and provided more than $1.6 million in charity care and uncompensated support across its service region of 12 counties. For more information, visit alivehospice.org.

Kent Blazy is a celebrated American Country music songwriter, recording artist, and performer whose work has helped shape the modern Country music landscape. A member of the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame Class of 2020, Blazy was honored during the organization's Golden Anniversary celebrations, with Garth Brooks presenting the induction and performing their breakthrough hit, *If Tomorrow Never Comes*. Blazy's catalog includes seven No. 1 hits, His songs have been recorded by Brooks, Chris Young, Diamond Rio, Patty Loveless, and others. As a recording artist, Blazy has released multiple acclaimed albums, most recently "Where I Am Now", and continues to tour nationally and internationally, sharing the stories behind the songs that have become part of Country music history. He continues to tour nationally and internationally, sharing the stories behind the songs, from intimate songwriter rooms to global stages. (www.kentblazy.com)

The Bluebird Cafe is one of the world's premier listening rooms, where the songwriters behind some of music's biggest hits share their songs and the stories behind them. Located in Nashville, the intimate venue seats 90 and is renowned for its signature In the Round performances, showcasing emerging and established songwriters across genres.

Randy Travis' 12-Track Album "Same Old Way" Coming November 13



Country music legend Randy Travis and his label home Warner Records Nashville has unveiled all the details on his never-before-heard, highly anticipated new album "Same Old Way" set for release on November 13. This is the first album of completely new material that Randy has released in over 18 years, full of tracks that span Randy's distinguished recording career from 1986 to 2013.



The announcement came with the release of the title track, *Same Old Way*, penned by Travis with his longtime producer and friend, Kyle Lehning. It is the only song the pair has written together, and the first time Lehning has had a major songwriting credit.

"When life throws you a curveball, swing for the fences the 'same old way' and hope you knock it out of the park! Team Travis helped me run the bases on this one, and it feels like a home run! It's a joy and a blessing to be able to bring new music to my listeners - thank you all for still showing up for me," said Randy Travis.

Following his 2013 stroke, fans and music industry insiders alike weren't sure that a project like this would ever be possible again, but Randy continues to make history, and this album is living proof of that. Lehning uncovered the tracks on this album after years of them being locked away in the vault. He assembled, remixed, and remastered the recordings with Randy's input, giving the world 12 more original Randy Travis songs and bringing back his iconic, irreplaceable voice that still holds true to this day.

Randy has already released two singles from Same Old Way, *Fish On* and *I Don't Care*, in addition to the title track, which have received praise from Entertainment Tonight, Parade, Billboard, Whiskey Riff, Country Central, Holler, All Country News, and many more.

2026 marks 40 years since Randy's debut multi-platinum album, "Storms Of Life." This Fall, he will wrap up the More Life Tour, which will have toured over 54 cities and 24 states and reconnected Randy with fans across the country. It has touched tens of thousands of music lovers in a deeply personal way, further cementing his legacy as a living legend in Country music.

With his first No. 1, 1986's *On The Other Hand*, Randy Travis helped usher in a new traditionalist movement in modern Country music. With his resonant baritone and pure music sense, *On The Other Hand* and *Forever and Ever, Amen* won back-to-back Country Music Association 'Song of the Year' Awards on the way to selling more than 25 million albums, seven Grammys, 23 No. 1 hits, 31 Top 10s, and a 2016 induction into the Country Music Hall of Fame.

Following a near-fatal stroke in 2013, the four-decade Grand Ole Opry member's recovery and enduring commitment to fans and the music has inspired millions. It has also earned him CMT: Country Music Television's Artist of a Lifetime in 2021 and Academy of Country Music's Milestone Award in 2025.

With ground-breaking AI assistance, "Where That Came From" was released by his longtime home, Warner Records Nashville, in 2024. The record launched a new chapter of advocacy as Randy and his wife, Mary, used it as a platform to champion creators' rights and responsible AI protections for artists. His More Life Tour with his longtime band and guest vocalist James Dupré continues allowing Travis to bring his music to generations of true country fans.

Grand Master Fiddler Championship Presents 2026 Dr. Perry F. Harris Distinguished Fiddler Award to Randall Franks

The Grand Master Fiddler Championship, Inc. presented the 2026 Dr. Perry F. Harris Distinguished Fiddler Award to Appalachian fiddler, entertainer, and longtime championship host Randall Franks during the 55th annual Grand Master Fiddler Championship, September 12–13, 2026, in Franklin, Tennessee.

Through Randall's dedication, actions, and deeds, fiddle music continues to grow in popularity, and his efforts to promote fiddling have made a meaningful difference in the lives of many people," said GMFC Chairman Howard Harris. "His celebrated love of fiddling and fiddle music helps support our championship's rich heritage and helps make the Grand Master Fiddler Championship the premier fiddling competition in the world."

The award, named for championship founder Dr. Perry Felton Harris, M.D., D.D.S., F.A.C.S., Colonel U.S.A.F., is given to an individual who exemplifies the highest qualities of enthusiasm and support for the fiddle and fiddle music, and in appreciation of a lifelong passion for supporting and preserving the art form. Dr. Harris, known as the "Opry Doc," organized the first Grand Masters in June 1972 with the support of the Grand Ole Opry. Franks, of Ringgold, Georgia, joins honorees including Roy Acuff, Charlie Daniels, Dolly Parton, Porter Wagoner, Buck White, Woody Paul, and Alison Krauss.

Continued on page 26 > > >

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Grand Master Fiddler Championship Presents 2026 Dr. Perry F. Harris Distinguished Fiddler Award to Randall Franks

"Dr. Harris was a tremendous encourager to me," Franks said. "He fostered opportunities for young fiddlers to grow and use their gifts to reach for goals we couldn't even dream about. Receiving this honor emboldens me to continue helping my fellow fiddlers of all ages reach for the stars. It's such a privilege to be included in this august group of recipients."

He was designated the Appalachian Ambassador of the Fiddle by organizations in Georgia and the Carolinas. Through his role as "Officer Randy Goode" on In the Heat of the Night, his Appalachian musical stylings reached more than 150 million viewers worldwide. His playing has also been featured in films, including Lawless, and on stages from the Grand Ole Opry to the National Folk Festival.

For 36 years, he has led Randall Franks's Hollywood Hillbilly Jamboree, now in it's 81st year and he hosts the TV Show Appalachian Sounds. He is also a former member of Bill Monroe's Blue Grass Boys, Jim & Jesse's Virginia Boys, The Marksmen Quartet, Doodle and the Golden River Grass, The Peachtree Pickers and David Davis and The Warrior River Boys. Franks competed in the Grand Master Fiddler Championship in the early 1980s, later appeared as a guest performer during his years as a Grand Ole Opry guest star, and has served as celebrity host since 2007, following in the tradition of Roy Acuff and Porter Wagoner.

In 2024 he was named Musician of the Year - Fiddle at the Josie Music Awards at the Grand Ole Opry House. He received the Fiddlin' John Carson Award in 1992 and has been inducted into multiple halls of fame, including the Atlanta Country Music Hall of Fame, the Independent Country Music Hall of Fame, America's Old Time Country Music Hall of Fame, the Georgia Country Music Hall of Fame, the Tri-State Gospel Music Hall of Fame, and the Georgia Southern Gospel Music Hall of Fame.

Beyond the stage, Franks has worked to preserve contest fiddling through the Randall Franks Trophy, first awarded at Lake Lanier Islands in the 1990s and later at Ringgold's 1890s Day Old Time Fiddle Convention, where he helped nurture emerging talent including multi-time winner Maddie Denton. He has also judged contests including the Smithville Jamboree and Bluegrass Along the Harpeth.

At the 55th annual Grand Master Fiddler Championship, McKenna Peterson of Texas won the Youth title at Historic Franklin Presbyterian Church, and Bubba Hopkins of Oklahoma won the Open Championship at Turner Theater at The Factory at Franklin.

For more information, visit www.grandmasterfiddler.com and about Randall, www.RandallFranks.com.

Randall's passion for fiddling extends beyond performance to preservation. Since 2007 he has served as celebrity host of the Grand Master Fiddler Championship in Nashville, playing a vital role in the nation's premier contest. He has judged numerous events, including the Smithville Jamboree and Bluegrass Along the Harpeth.



Kentucky Governor Andy Beshear Honors Exile with Official Acclamation

American Country Rock legends, Kentucky Music Hall of Fame inductees, and one of Kentucky's most enduring musical success stories, Exile, has received official recognition from Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear, honoring the band's remarkable 63-year career and its lasting contribution to the Commonwealth of Kentucky.



The Acclamation, signed by Beshear and dated February 10, 2026, traces Exile's story back to Richmond, Kentucky, where the group was founded as The Exiles in 1963 before becoming Exile in the early 1970s. It recognizes the perseverance that carried the band from its Kentucky beginnings to international success and a career spanning both the Pop and Country charts.

The governor's recognition specifically notes Exile's first No. 1 song, the beginning of a run that would ultimately produce multiple chart-topping hits. The document also acknowledges the band's songwriting legacy, including songs written for other artists, and the generations of fans who have traveled to see Exile perform. The recognition from the Commonwealth brings Exile's story full circle: a Kentucky band whose music traveled around the world and whose roots never left home.

"Music is a part of who we are in Kentucky, and I am always grateful for the opportunity to celebrate artists who have helped shape our legacy," said Gov. Andy Beshear. "For over 60 years, Exile has represented our commonwealth values on the world stage through their hard work and perseverance. We wish them nothing but continued success."

"To be recognized by our home state after all these years means more than we can put into words," Exile shared. "Kentucky is where our story began, and it has always been part of who we are. We were young musicians with big dreams when we started playing together in Richmond. Sixty-three years and a million miles later, we are still making music together. Having the Commonwealth of Kentucky recognize that journey is an incredible honor, and we are deeply grateful."

The acclamation concludes by recognizing Exile, stating that "a million miles and 63 years later," the band continues to represent the Commonwealth of Kentucky and remain Kentucky Proud.

Exile's longevity is matched by a catalog that has crossed musical genres and generations. The band has earned 11 No. 1 songs, sold millions of records, and recorded three Gold albums. Its signature crossover hit, *Kiss You All Over*, spent four weeks at No. 1 on Billboard's Pop chart in 1978 before Exile went on to build another chapter of its career as one of Country music's most successful groups. Current members J.P. Pennington, Les Taylor, Sonny LeMaire, Marlon Hargis and Steve Goetzman continue to perform together.

The band's Kentucky connection has remained central to its identity throughout its career. Exile was inducted into the Kentucky Music Hall of Fame in 2013 and continues to perform throughout Kentucky and across the country.

Ricky Skaggs Announces 2026 Christmas Tour

Fifteen-time GRAMMY® winner and Country Music Hall of Fame member Ricky Skaggs will once again bring the spirit of the season to audiences nationwide with his 2026 holiday tour, Ricky Skaggs & Kentucky Thunder Christmas. Skaggs and his award-winning band Kentucky Thunder will perform 12 special Christmas concerts this December.

Skaggs' 2026 Christmas tour will visit Boone, NC; Knoxville, TN; Louisburg, NC; Charlotte, NC; Hopewell, VA; Nashville, TN; Johnson City, TN; Lynchburg, VA; Greenville, SC; Cincinnati, OH; St. Charles, IL; and St. Louis, MO.

The show will feature a mix of holiday favorites, new arrangements, and signature Kentucky Thunder





instrumentals, performed with the tight harmonies and acoustic mastery that have defined Skaggs' legendary career.

"I'm really happy to be coming to so many new venues this year for our Ricky Skaggs and Kentucky Thunder Christmas shows," says Skaggs. "We might have some Christmas songs that are a little new to us, but we won't forget to do lots of the old standards that we've all come to love. Bring out the family, your friends, and maybe someone who might not be able to afford a ticket this year. It will make them feel blessed and cared for. We look forward to seeing you all there."

Concertgoers can expect classics like *Christmas Time's A Comin'*, *New Star Shining*, *Let It Snow,* and *Mary, Did You Know?* alongside Kentucky Thunder's instrumental showcases including *Deck the Halls*, *Ancient Christmas Tones*, and *Icy Vine Grove*. Each night includes sing-alongs such as *Joy to the World*, *Rudolph* and *Silver Bells*.

Earning 12 #1 hit singles, 15 GRAMMY® Awards, 13 IBMA Awards, nine ACM Awards, eight CMA Awards (including Entertainer of the Year), two Dove Awards, the ASCAP Founders Award, three honorary Doctorate degrees, inductions into the Country Music Hall of Fame, IBMA Bluegrass Music Hall of Fame, National Fiddler Hall of Fame, Musicians Hall of Fame, and GMA Gospel Music Hall of Fame, the 2013 Artist-In-Residence at the Country Music Hall of Fame® and Museum, an Americana Music Association Lifetime Achievement Award in the Instrumentalist category along with countless other awards, Ricky Skaggs is truly a pioneer of Bluegrass and Country music.

Since he began playing music over 60 years ago, Skaggs has released more than 30 albums and has performed thousands of live shows. He started his own record label, Skaggs Family Records, in 1997 and has since released 12 consecutive GRAMMY®-nominated albums. And the Grand Ole Opry member has released his first-ever autobiography, "Kentucky Traveler." The book details the life and times of Skaggs and provides a descriptive history of Country and Bluegrass music, as told by the master himself. In addition to his regular touring schedule with his band, Kentucky Thunder, he has added Country tour dates as he plugs in and plays full shows of his chart-topping hits. Skaggs was a 2020 recipient of the National Medal of Arts, the highest award given to artists and arts patrons by the United States government.

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Bringing Country Back to Its Roots



By Maren Blake

In a world where Country music often feels pulled between nostalgia and noise, Fred Winston steps forward with a quiet conviction that speaks louder than any trend. He isn't here to reinvent the genre. He's here to restore it.

With roots stretching from Oklahoma's red dirt to Tennessee's storied stages, Winston carries the grit, honesty, and heart that built country music in the first place. "My music reflects real Country sound," he says. "I'm dedicated to keeping traditional Country music alive, while introducing my own voice to a new generation of listeners."

That voice- warm, lived-in, and unmistakably authentic - was shaped long before he ever stepped onto a stage. At thirteen, long before he ever imagined himself as a recording artist, Winston developed a deep respect for Country music. His uncle handed him a guitar and clicked something. He began playing in local bands, absorbing the sounds of Merle Haggard, George Strait, Alan Jackson, and George Jones. "I'm not chasing trends," he says. "I'm focused on honoring and preserving traditional Country music through my own voice."

But music wasn't his only passion. Before the spotlight, there was the racetrack. Fred spent years competing in motocross, earning trophies and qualifying for elite events like the AMA Amateur National Motocross Championship at the Loretta Lynn Ranch, the GNC Nationals in Texas, and the NMA Nationals in Ponca City. The sport demanded grit, discipline, and resilience, qualities that would later define his music career. After a series of injuries and the realities of balancing racing with his welding career, he made a life-altering decision: he stepped away from motocross and stepped fully into music.

Oklahoma became his training ground. In the college town of Tahlequah, he immersed himself in the rising Red Dirt scene, performing with local bands and eventually joining The Messenger Dogs. That connection led him to the Red Dirt Rangers and opened doors to country clubs throughout the Tulsa area. The stages got bigger, the crowds louder, and the music deeper.

A new chapter began when he met his wife and moved to Tennessee. Nashville sharpened him. Songwriter nights, late-night sessions, and the humbling grind of Music City

shaped his artistry. He auditioned for the first season of Nashville Star, advancing through the early rounds and earning a feature in Country Weekly Magazine. “After my performance I was eliminated,” he recalls, “but while leaving through the lobby a media representative stopped me and wanted a short interview. They even used a picture from my performance.” It was a small moment - but a defining one. Proof that he belonged.

Today, Winston stands on the edge of a breakthrough. His debut EP, “Home Away from Home,” is set to introduce him to the world. “Bringing my first project to life is very personal and exciting,” he says. “I can finally share my music with an audience.” The title track, his debut single, is already making waves. “Home Away from Home puts Fred Winston on the map as a new voice for traditional country music,” his press release declares, and it’s right.

The song is a portrait of real life, built on themes listeners can feel in their bones. It’s the kind of Country music that doesn’t just entertain - it reminds. Reminds people of who they are, where they come from, and what matters.

“The ability to create music that reflects who I am and to connect with an audience who want to hear the traditional sounds they miss is rewarding,” Winston says. But the road isn’t without challenges. “The challenge is the same as other artists face - staying true to my sound and navigating an industry that shifted away from the traditional sound of Country music.” Still, he remains grounded. “Being able to connect with the listeners is a great feeling.”

His accomplishments are growing performances with a full six-piece band, expanding his fan base, live shows across multiple states, and a growing online presence through livestreams. He is currently working with Faye Baldwin management, opening doors to performances in casinos, the TN state fair, Vet Fest, Reagan Community Center, and receiving 9 nominations for the Infinity Awards at the historical Troubadour Theatre in Nashville, TN. Fred is heading back to Branson to perform at Nashville Roadhouse’s live taping on RFD TV and CW TV and making a guest appearance on The Hot Hits Theatre. And now, with his debut EP “Home Away from Home,” set for release in February 2027, he’s stepping into the moment he’s been preparing for his entire life.

But behind the music is a man shaped by lessons that go far beyond the stage. “One of the biggest lessons I’ve learned is that timing and perseverance matter just as much as talent,” he says. “Life doesn’t always take you where you think you want to go, and sometimes the detours shape you the most.” His journey from motocross tracks to honky-tonk stages is proof of that. “You don’t have to rush it,” he adds. “But you do have to stay true to who you are, never give up, and keep going.”

Winston believes Country music still has a job to do. “Country music has always been about real life and real struggles,” he says. “Right now, people want something real again, to eliminate all the noise in the world. Music can bring people back to what matters: family, faith, hard work, and connection to something or someone real. His hope is simple: “If people can see themselves in my music while having fun and feeling comfort, understanding, and courage, then I’m doing what I intended to do.”



His mission is clear. “My mission is to keep traditional Country music alive while making it relatable and fun for the audience,” he says. “I want to create songs that will live on, songs people can come back to because they feel real.” At his live shows, fans can expect exactly that. “It’s about the music, the stories, and the connection. I want people to feel like they’re part of something. It’s going to be real Country.”

From Oklahoma roots to Tennessee stages, Fred Winston isn’t just stepping into the spotlight, he’s carrying a legacy. He’s a reminder of what Country music was, what it still is, and what it can be again. And as he prepares to release his debut album, one thing is certain: he’s not just making music. He’s making Country.

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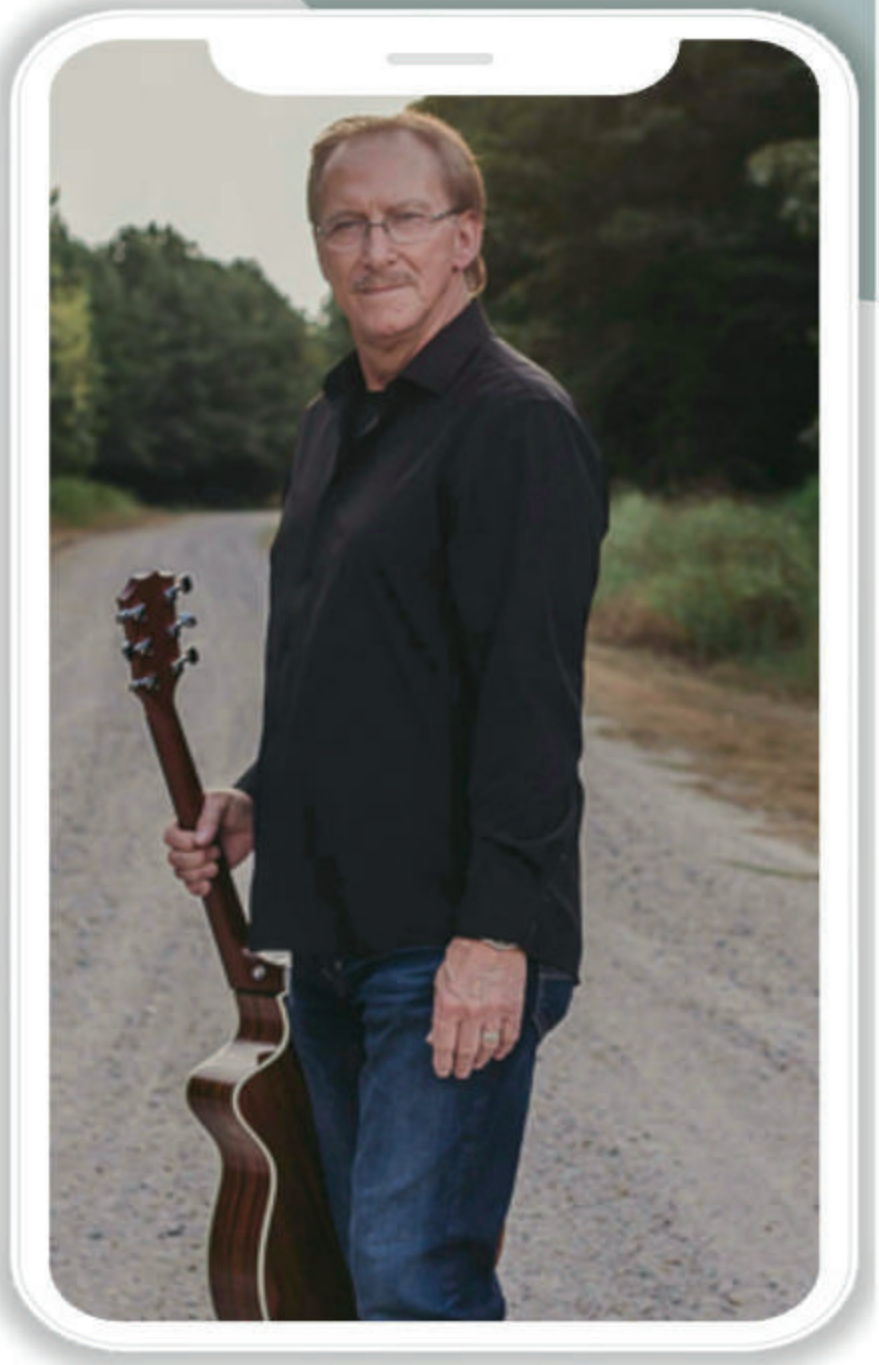
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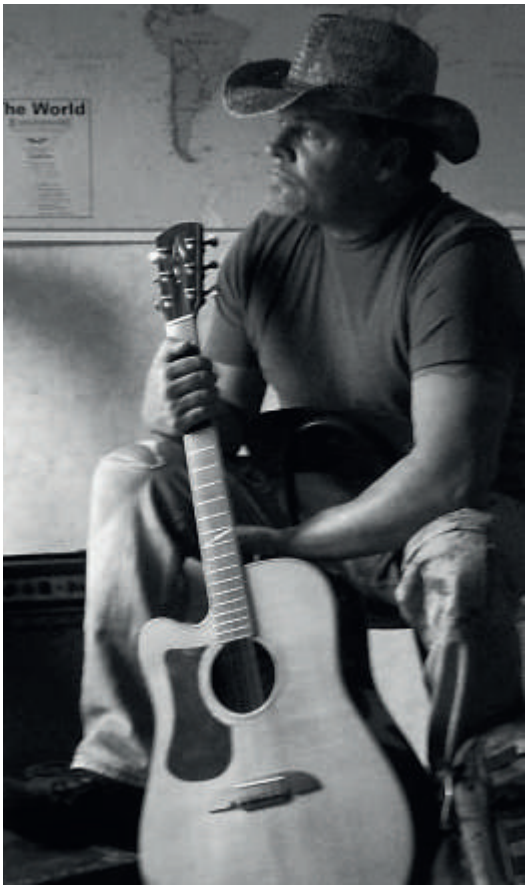
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ARTIST SPOTLIGHT

ERIC JOHN HORSEY

The Outlaw Who Met the Cross

Staff, Cross Country USA



Eric Horsey didn't clean up his story; he ran straight through it and met God somewhere in the wreckage. He still sounds like a barroom thunderstorm, gravel in the throat, steel in the spine, but now there's something else in it. Not polish. Not perfection. Something heavier. Like a man who's been face-down in the dirt and decided to stand up anyway… not because he's strong, but because he finally knows Who is.

For years, they said his songs read like rap sheets. Now they sound more like confessions, raw, unfiltered, and stripped of any altar-call gloss. When Eric sings about chains, it's not poetry. It's memory. When he sings about grace, it's not theory. It's survival.

Before the music, before the redemption, before the testimony that now stops rooms cold, Eric served as a U.S. Fleet Marine Force Corpsman. He walked the front lines of war, carrying the weight of lives in his hands and the brutality of combat in his mind. What he witnessed left scars that didn't fade when the uniform came off.

The trauma followed him home. It settled into the quiet hours, into the corners of his mind, into the places he couldn't outrun. Alcohol became a crutch. Relationships fractured. Isolation tightened its grip. He wrestled with abandonment - by God, by the world, by the man he used to be. Memories he couldn't escape turned into nights he couldn't survive. The war didn't just change his surroundings; it shook the foundation of his identity.

There were days when hopelessness felt absolute. Days when the darkness whispered louder than anything else. Days when he questioned whether life had anything left for him at all. But God has a way of sending rescue into the rubble.

For Eric, that lifeline was Kathleen - the love of his life, the woman who reintroduced him to Jesus Christ, not as an idea, but as a Savior who steps into the mess instead of waiting for it to be cleaned up. Through her love, Eric found a path back to faith, back to hope, back to life.

The songs he writes now are born from that journey. They carry the weight of war, the ache of addiction, the sting of regret - and the unmistakable light of redemption.

Eric is known for moments when the show stops being a show. Mid-set, mid-song, mid-sentence, he'll step up to the mic and tell it straight: where he's been, what he's done, what it cost him… and how Jesus Christ met him right there. Not cleaned up. Not fixed. Just willing. No script. No filter. Just truth that lands like a hammer.

He still plays loud enough to rattle windows, but now redemption cuts through the riffs like headlights on a midnight backroad. Scripture slips between stories. Testimony rises between guitar lines. And every now and then, a late-night set turns into a prayer circle - strangers walking in drunk and walking out shaken.

Eric talks about freedom with the authority of a man who's fought for it in two worlds. There's the kind you defend with your life, and the kind you receive when you finally lay your life down.

His songs come from a breaking point that didn't end in another spiral, but in a quiet, stubborn kind of faith. A faith that doesn't pretend the past didn't happen. A faith that refuses to let the past own him anymore.

Eric Horsey isn't pretending to be a preacher. He'll tell you that quickly. He's just a man who hit the end of himself and found something real enough not to walk away from. The outlaw is still there, the grit, the fire, the edge. But now it's aimed at something eternal.

His life is proof that God meets people in the wreckage, not after it's swept clean. His music is proof that grace can sound like gravel and redemption can roar like an amplifier turned all the way up. And his testimony is proof that no matter how far a man falls, Jesus is willing to meet him exactly where he is and lead him home.

www.ericjohnhorsey.com

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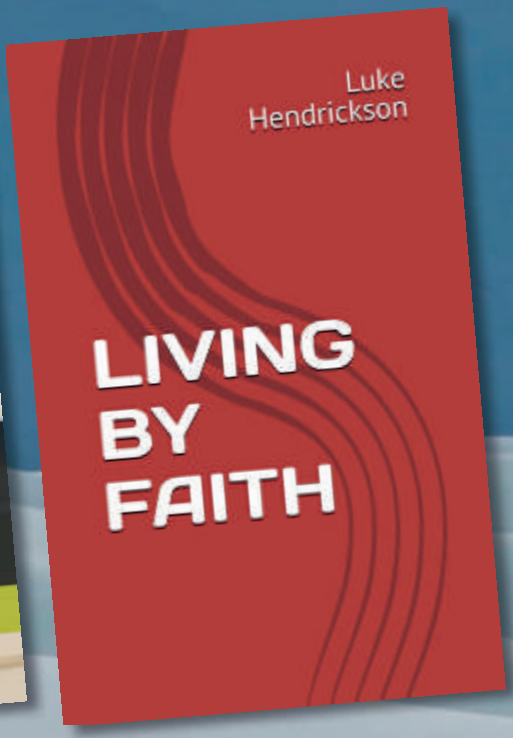
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JESUS IS COMING, GET READY AND STAY READY!

The Story Behind the Song

By Josh Griffin

EVERYBODY SMILES

The Song That Highlights The Unique Perspective Of An Autistic Mind

Written and Recorded by Greg Marlow

There are moments when a song does more than fill a room. It opens a door. For many families living with autism, that door does not get opened very often. Their world is full of love, creativity, and depth, but it is also full of misunderstanding, isolation, and the quiet feeling of being overlooked. That is why Christian Country music artist Greg Marlow's new song, *Everybody Smiles*, matters. It does not try to speak for autism. It simply makes space for it to be seen.



Greg Marlow

At the heart of the song's inspiring music video is Gregory Inman, the brother in law of Christian Country artist Greg Marlow. Gregory is an artist in his own right. He loves to draw, especially magazine covers. Page after page he recreates familiar layouts that resemble publications like Time, but with one consistent difference. Every person on the cover is smiling.

It is a simple detail, but it carries weight. In a world where headlines are heavy and faces are serious, Gregory's instinct is to draw joy. Not forced happiness, but genuine warmth. It is how he sees people. It is how he understands the world.

The video lingers on that perspective. It shows Gregory working, concentrating, interacting with his family, and expressing himself through his artwork. He is not presented as a diagnosis or a talking point. He is presented as a person with a gift and a point of view. That quiet dignity is what gives the song its center.

Everybody Smiles officially released on March 2, 2026, and it arrives at a time when Greg Marlow's music is reaching a growing audience. In recent months his work has gained momentum within the Christian Country scene, opening doors for wider exposure and new listeners. His rise has been marked by songs that carry a strong sense of testimony and a clear commitment to ministry through music.

A brief look at his catalog shows a consistent theme. He writes from lived experience, from family, and from faith that is meant to be shared rather than performed. That approach is what makes this project feel personal rather than promotional. Even as his platform expands, this song turns the spotlight away from the artist and toward someone whose voice is rarely heard in Country music.

That choice matters. Too often autism is discussed in statistics and clinical language. Here it is shown in color, creativity, and relationship. For families affected by autism, representation matters. It matters to see someone like Gregory not only included, but celebrated. It matters for churches and communities to be reminded that inclusion is not a program. It is a posture.

Gregory's artwork becomes a quiet metaphor for how we are called to see one another. He draws people the way we are meant to see them. Not by their limitations, but by their humanity. Everyone smiling. Everyone included. Everyone worthy of being on the cover.

This is where the ministry of music becomes clear. A song can travel into places a sermon never will. It can sit with

a parent who is tired, with a child who feels different, with a family that needs to know they are not alone. Country music has always told stories about real life, and when those stories carry faith within them, they reach beyond the walls of a church.

Everybody Smiles does not try to explain autism. It honors a person. In doing so it invites the listener to slow down and notice the gifts that are often overlooked.

Scripture reminds us that every good and perfect gift comes from above. Sometimes those gifts look like voices on a stage. Sometimes they look like a stack of hand drawn magazine covers where every face is joyful. Both reflect the same Creator.

Gregory Inman's drawings are more than a detail in a music video. They are a reminder that the Kingdom of God makes room for every voice, every mind, and every way of seeing the world. When we slow down enough to notice, we often find that the people we thought needed our help are the ones teaching us how to love better.

In a culture that moves quickly and judges quickly, a song that chooses to notice is a gift. And sometimes that is where awareness begins. With a melody, a story, and the courage to let everyone be seen. Because when we do, Everybody Smiles.

Gregory has lived with Greg and his wife for over 30 years. Thank you Greg for writing this personal song. Thank you Gregory for being an inspiration to us all and making everyone smile.

Josh Griffin is a freelance writer and reporter/writer for The Volunteer Times covering County Government, Sports, and Local Culture.



Gregory Inman, the artist and the inspiration behind the song, *Everybody Smiles*

Everybody Smiles

To some he may seem a little different
Most of the time he's misunderstood
But wrapped in his mind there is a genuine
And he can't unlock it if he could he would
He's got more love wrapped in his little finger
Than this world does stretched out from end to end
And when he opens up and lets you come inside
You will never have a better friend

A pencil and a crayon and a paint brush
Is all he needs to make his whole world right
No matter what is going on around him
In Gregory's world everybody smiles
In Gregory's world everybody smiles

One day when we all get up to Heaven
I'm gonna look him up up there in Gloryland
And for the next 100 hundred years he can set and tell me
All the things I did not understand
I know there are Angels all around us
And they come in every shape and size
So don't look down on someone a little different
Cause sometimes God wraps His blessings in disguise

A pencil and a crayon and a paint brush
Is all he needs to make his whole world right
No matter what is going on around him
In Gregory's world everybody smiles
In Gregory's world everybody smiles

In Gregory's world everybody smiles
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John Michael Ferrari

The Road from Dustoff to Destiny

From the dust of a troubled childhood to the bright lights of global award stages, John Michael Ferrari has lived a life shaped by fire, faith, and the unbreakable pull of music. His story is not merely one of survival - it is the saga of a man who turned every hardship into a verse, every battlefield into a melody, and every unexpected turn into a chapter of triumph. Today, Ferrari stands as one of America's most compelling singer-songwriters, a veteran whose songs carry the weight of lived experience and the warmth of a storyteller who has walked through darkness and chosen to sing anyway.

By Jackson McKee

John Michael Ferrari's life reads like a film - a story of survival, grit, and the unstoppable force of music. From a childhood marked by volatility to standing on award stages around the world, Ferrari has spent decades turning hardship into harmony, pain into poetry, and lived experience into songs that resonate across generations.

He was eight when a pawn shop guitar first landed in his hands. His stepfather forbade him from playing it indoors, so Ferrari learned outside, studying Elvis Presley's posture to figure out how to hold the instrument. "I didn't know whether to play left-handed or right-handed," he recalls. "So I just watched Elvis and thought, yeah, that looks right." That guitar became his refuge - a shield against chaos and a compass pointing toward a future he couldn't yet imagine.

By eleven, he was sent to juvenile detention. At fifteen, a judge labeled him "incorrigible" and placed him in a Carson City orphanage, a moment Ferrari describes not as punishment, but as rescue. At seventeen, he enlisted in the United States Army, serving with the 25th Infantry Division during the Vietnam conflict. Combat changed him forever. After surviving a brutal firefight in a swamp in 1966, Ferrari wrote *Dustoff*, honoring the helicopter crews who risked their lives to save the wounded. When an officer heard him perform the song, Ferrari was pulled from the front lines to entertain at the Officers Club, a gesture he appreciated but couldn't accept. "I couldn't just sit there singing while my brothers were out there," he said, requesting to return to his unit.

Music followed him home. After his honorable discharge, Ferrari performed in clubs, resorts, and steakhouses across California and Nevada. In 1990, fate intervened when he met Pepper Jay at Highland Springs Resort. She became his producer, performance coach, and manager - the creative partnership that would transform Ferrari from a lounge performer into a main-stage entertainer with a signature storytelling style.

His career ascended steadily, but one night stands out above the rest: performing at the Oscars Watch Party at the Beverly Hilton Hotel. Surrounded by Hollywood's elite, Ferrari delivered a performance that earned him the 'Peace Song of the Year' award for *Like a Rock n Roll Band*. "I was in complete shock," he says. "I thought, 'Are you sure you've got the right guy?'"

The pandemic brought unexpected challenges - canceled tours, isolation at his Nevada ranch - but also unexpected triumphs. His 2020 album "Be the Smile on Your Face" flourished, and *So Beautiful* climbed to #2 on multiple radio charts. Ferrari and Pepper Jay turned adversity into creativity, producing work that reached global audiences.

Then came 2024 - a watershed year. Ferrari collected a wave of honors across genres and continents:

- Crossover Artist of the Year
- Artist of the Year
- Best Single of the Year
- Best Male Americana Vocal
- Top 10 Folk Song Finalist
- Best Male Album - "Silver"
- Best New Country Song of the Year
- Best Male Gospel Songwriter of the Year
- Best New Country 50+
- Best Cowriter

His "Soldiers Prayer" EP earned Top 10 recognition, further cementing his reputation as a storyteller who writes from the soul.



Ferrari's philosophy on performance was shaped early. In the 1970s, he accepted a free drink before going on stage at a Las Vegas club - a common practice among performers. The club owner confronted him: "If you ever need a drink to get on my stage, don't ever come back." When Ferrari asked why he was singled out, the owner replied, "It's too late for them. You're young and very talented. You don't need that." Ferrari never forgot the lesson. To this day, he rarely drinks, and never before performing.

As his career expanded, so did his influence. Ferrari and Pepper Jay began mentoring emerging artists, co-writing and producing songs for Allison Iraheta, Sophie Love, Pearl

Seeback, and Peggy Sue Fletcher. Their guidance has helped shape new voices in the industry.



Today, Ferrari splits his time between Nashville and Pahrump, recording his sixth album at Beaird Music Group. His 2026 releases "Love is …" and "Old Gravel Road" have already earned major awards, including 'Best Country Album,' 'Best Country Song,' 'Best Folk Song' and 'Vocalist of the Year,' "Silver." His Limited Edition Anthology vinyl, "Love Is" prepared for Grammy consideration, celebrates decades of songwriting and storytelling.

He has earned more than sixty major awards since 2019, graced magazine covers, written performance books, and received the Quilt of Valor for his military service. Yet among all honors, he treasures most the Act of Kindness Award presented to him and Pepper Jay by the citizens of Pahrump.

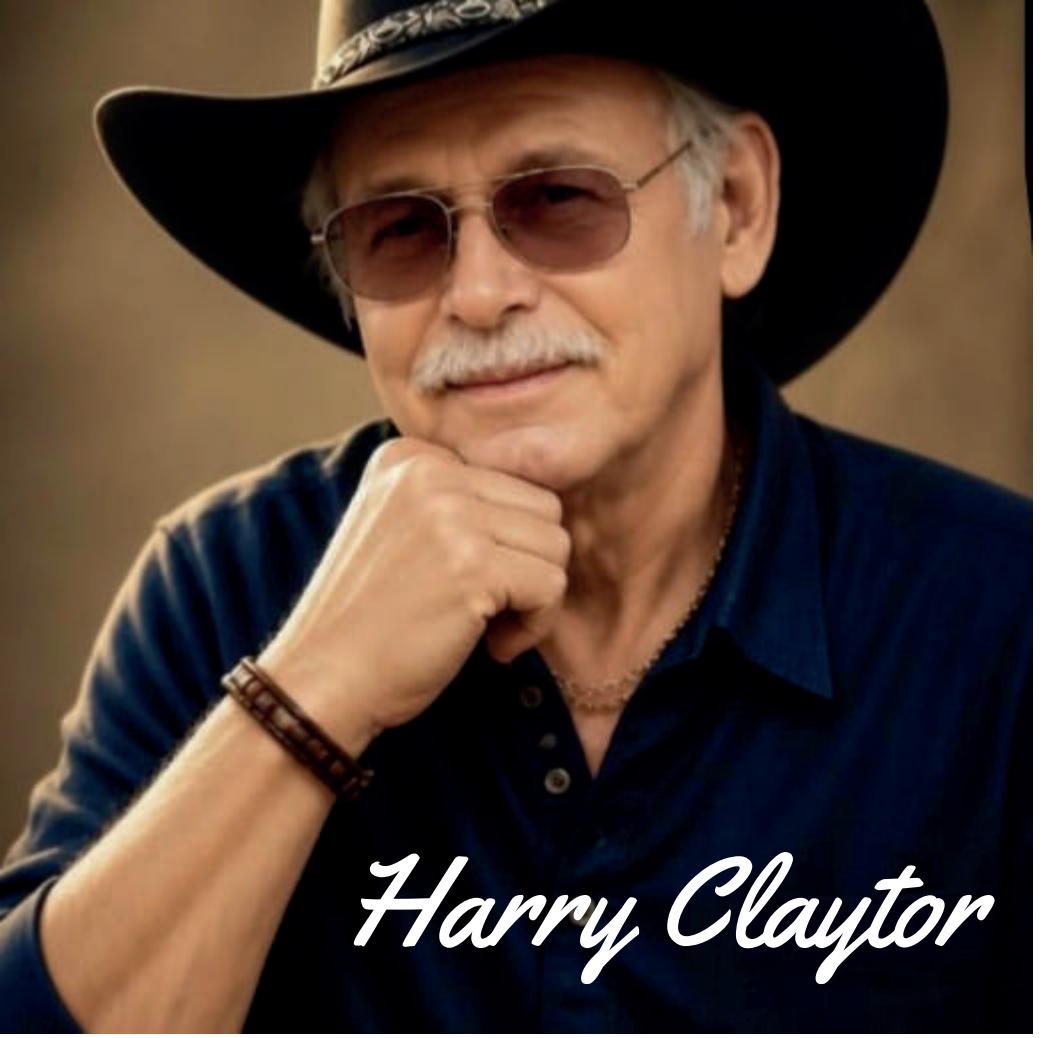
Through it all, Ferrari remains grounded. "There's never a stranger in the audience," he says, a motto that defines his approach to every stage he steps onto.

From a troubled childhood to global recognition, John Michael Ferrari's journey is a testament to resilience, creativity, and the healing power of music. As long as there is a melody to write, a story to tell, or a soul to uplift, Ferrari will keep rolling on - one song, one stage, one act of kindness at a time.

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The Hand That Was Reached, the Life That Was Restored

There are stories of success, stories of hardship, and stories of redemption. The life of Gospel recording artist and minister Harry Claytor is all three woven together into a testimony of grace. From humble beginnings and devastating personal struggles to chart success and a ministry that has touched countless lives, Claytor's journey stands as a powerful reminder that no life is beyond the reach of God's restoring hand.

By Cory Parker

"I grew up in modest circumstances in a family where church was central to our lives," Claytor recalls. "I accepted Christ at age 10, and music soon became a lasting source of inspiration."

That foundation of faith and music would shape the course of his life, though not always in ways he could have imagined.

At age 15, Claytor moved to Texas to live with his mother. It was there, while attending high school, that he met the young woman who would become his wife. After graduation, the couple married and began building a future together. As his career took him overseas, opportunities multiplied. The young family enjoyed many of the blessings people work hard to achieve: a comfortable home, nice cars, and the excitement of seeing the world.

By his late twenties, Claytor was the father of three children, living what many would consider a successful life. Yet beneath the surface, troubling choices threatened to undo everything he had built.

"Despite these blessings, I made destructive choices," he says candidly.

Alcohol and drugs gradually tightened their grip on his life. What began as poor decisions eventually became a destructive path that nearly ended in tragedy. During a violent barroom altercation, Claytor suffered serious injuries. Later, the situation worsened when he lost his job and found himself facing the possibility of losing everything he had worked so hard to achieve. It was a season of despair.

At what he describes as the lowest point of his life, Claytor had drifted far from God and had nearly given up hope altogether. Then came a conversation that would change everything.

"My mother asked, 'Why don't you give God a chance? What do you have to lose?'"

Those words struck a chord deep within him. "That day I rededicated my life to God," he says.

The following morning, he went back to church. It was not merely a return to a building. It was the beginning of a complete transformation.

As Claytor immersed himself in church life and renewed his relationship with Christ, something remarkable happened. The music that had always lived in his heart found a new purpose. He began writing songs inspired by his testimony

and formed a band to share messages of faith, hope, and restoration.

One of his earliest releases, *He Took Me by the Hand*, resonated with listeners and reached the Top 100 on multiple charts. The title itself seemed to summarize his life story. Just when he felt abandoned by hope, he discovered that God had never let go.

Music had always been a part of Claytor's life. His earliest influence came from his mother, whose piano playing filled their home with melody and inspiration.

"My mother played the piano and helped foster my appreciation for music," he says.

Without formal training, Claytor taught himself to play guitar through determination and persistence. He listened carefully, learned chords by ear, and developed his abilities through countless hours of practice. What started as personal enjoyment evolved into a calling.

"Music became the foundation of my ministry," he explains. "It gave me an avenue to share my testimony, encourage others, and communicate messages of hope, restoration, and God's faithfulness."

That ministry would continue growing over the years. Claytor eventually launched a business that prospered beyond his expectations. Looking back, he credits God for the restoration that followed his surrender.

"God richly blessed the business," he says. "He not only restored what I had lost but also placed me in a position to help others facing financial hardship and encourage them through my testimony." The same man who had once faced losing everything became someone who could help others rebuild their lives.

His music continued gaining momentum. All four of his radio singles earned Top 100 placements on multiple charts: *He Took Me by the Hand, I Thank God for Saving Me, I Wish We Had a Little More Time, Can You Still Use a Fool.*

Those accomplishments expanded both his recording career and his ministry outreach, allowing his testimony to reach audiences far beyond church walls.

Along the way, Claytor earned respect within the Gospel music community. He was elected Oklahoma State Director for the International Country Music Association (ICMA), an honor that reflected both his leadership and commitment to Christian music. Although the COVID-19 pandemic limited his ability to fully serve in that role, he still considers the appointment a meaningful milestone.

His influence has extended beyond performing. He has organized concerts, promoted fellow artists, hosted a Sunday morning radio program, appeared on television and radio broadcasts, and helped grow the Facebook Gospel Singing Page into a vibrant community exceeding 5,400 members.

"I've had the privilege of performing on the same stage as some really great artists," he says. Yet his greatest satisfaction comes not from personal recognition but from helping others share their gifts and messages.

The road of ministry has not always been easy. One of the deepest challenges came after the passing of his wife. Traveling alone became a reality that tested both his endurance and commitment. Long drives of 12 to 15 hours became common as he continued ministering to churches, events, and audiences across the country.

"Since my wife's passing, I have often traveled alone," he says. "Sometimes driving 12 to 15 hours in a single day and stopping only for fuel and meals."

Financial challenges have accompanied those journeys as well. Traveling ministry can be costly, especially while living on retirement income. Yet Claytor continues forward because the mission remains bigger than the sacrifice.

"The opportunity to encourage others and make a positive difference through my ministry makes every journey worthwhile," he says.



Perhaps nowhere is the impact of that ministry more visible than in the personal stories of lives changed through his music. One encounter remains especially meaningful. While awaiting an overseas assignment, Claytor accepted a temporary position in the United States. During that time, he met a cleanup inspector who appeared to be struggling deeply. The man kept to himself, drove an older truck, and seemed burdened by hardship.

Claytor intentionally reached out to him each day, offering friendship and encouragement. Before leaving for his next assignment, he gave the man one of his CDs. That evening, his phone rang. The man was crying.

Listening to the songs had stirred something within him. During their conversation, Claytor shared his own testimony

of hitting bottom, returning to God, and finding restoration. In turn, the man revealed that he had once owned a business and enjoyed family life, but had lost nearly everything. His wife had left with their children. His business had failed. He was living in his truck and battling alcoholism.

Years earlier, he had taught Sunday school, but he had drifted far from God. "He believed the songs were calling him back to his faith," Claytor remembers. The story did not end there.

About a month later, the man called again with good news. He had returned to church, begun rebuilding his business, and started reconciling with his family. Over the years, he continued sharing updates. The last Claytor heard, he had returned to teaching Sunday school.

For Claytor, moments like that define success. "Experiences like this reaffirm the purpose of my ministry and remind me that every effort is worthwhile."

His newest song, *Can You Still Use a Fool,* carries that same spirit of humility and redemption. Written during a season when business demands began crowding out his relationship with God, the song reflects a deeply personal realization.

Despite everything God had done in delivering him from addiction and restoring his life, Claytor recognized he had begun to lose focus.

The song asks a question many believers have asked at one time or another: After all my failures, can God still use me?

Claytor's answer is found in both the lyrics and the life behind them. Yes. His testimony stands as evidence.

Today, Claytor continues pursuing the mission that has guided his ministry for years: demonstrating the transformative power of a life surrendered to God and encouraging those struggling with addiction, disappointment, regret, or the consequences of past mistakes.

Through heartfelt Gospel music and transparent storytelling, he reminds audiences that hope is never beyond reach.

In an age marked by uncertainty, division, and rapid cultural change, Claytor remains convinced that lasting answers are found not in human achievement but in faith.

His songs tell the story of a man who lost his way, found grace, and never forgot the hand that lifted him up.

For audiences who hear him sing, that may be the most powerful message of all: no matter how far someone has fallen, God's grace can still restore, redeem, and use a willing heart.

And for Harry Claytor, that truth is more than a lyric. It is the story of his life.



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By Robin Tanner

Country music favorite Clay Walker is ushering in the holiday season with a project close to his heart. His new album, "A Clay Walker Family Christmas," arrives November 6 and shines with the voices of the people he loves most; his wife Jessica and their five children, Will (18), Mary-Elizabeth (16), Eli (13), Ezra (8), and Christiaan (5).

Produced by Keith Stegall, the album blends timeless Christmas classics such as *All I Want For Christmas Is You, Little Drummer Boy, Feliz Navidad, Beautiful Star of Bethlehem, Holly Jolly Christmas* and *O Little Town of Bethlehem* with the unmistakable warmth of a family celebrating the season together.

"What's better than doing a Christmas record?" Clay asks. "Recording it with your family! I'm so incredibly grateful for and proud of my kids for their involvement in this project. The memories we made creating this will last forever, and I'm glad I get to listen to them every Christmas from now on." That joy arrives early with the album's lead single, *All Wrapped Up in You,* available now.

The celebration continues on the road as Clay launches the first-ever A Clay Walker Family Christmas Tour, beginning November 27 in Warren, Ohio. Select shows will include a Toy Drive, inviting fans to bring gifts for children who may be facing a more difficult holiday season. Clay's family will join him onstage for spirited performances filled with festive carols, twinkling lights, and the beloved hits that have made him a Country music staple. The Walker children, known for their natural musical talent, bring an extra sparkle to the show, making each night feel like a family gathering wrapped in holiday magic.

"Christmastime is all about family, and it's our favorite season to come together. We can't wait to spend the holidays with you and celebrate in song, welcoming back the most wonderful time of the year!" Clay shares.

Clay Walker's career continues to shine as brightly as a Christmas star. With multi-PLATINUM sales, 11 No. 1 hits, and 40 charting singles - including classics like, *If I Could Make A Living, Live Until I Die, Rumer Has It, The Chain of Love* and *She Won't Be Lonely Long,* he remains one of Country music's most enduring voices.

Since his MS diagnosis in 1996, he has become a passionate advocate and fundraiser, establishing The Clay Walker Foundation and hosting the annual Clay Walker Charity Classic at Pebble Beach to support MS research. Last year, he released two heartfelt singles, *Cowboys in Heaven* and *I Know She Hung The Moon*, originally written by his friend, the late Toby Keith. His most recent album, "Texas To Tennessee," debuted at No. 1 on the iTunes Country Albums chart, inspired by legends like George Jones, James Taylor, and Bob Seger.

He also celebrated a milestone by headlining the Ryman Auditorium for the first time, performing to a sold-out crowd, and appearing at major festivals in 2026 including CMA Fest, Tortuga, Boots In The Park, and Two Step Inn. A member of the Texas Cowboy Hall of Fame, Clay continues his headlining Doin' What I Love tour while working on multiple new studio projects.

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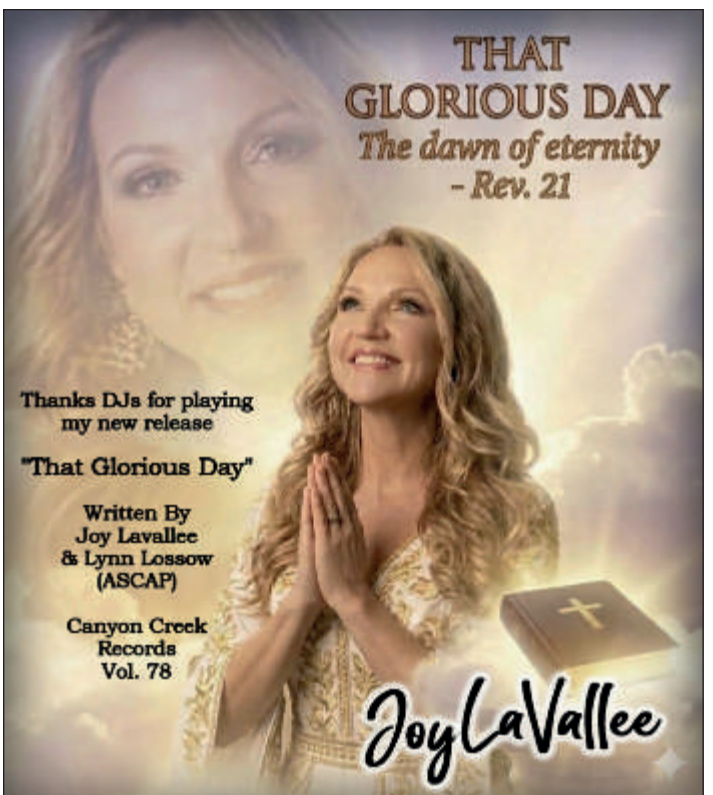

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The Music & Legacy of PORTER WAGONER



Porter Wagoner's legacy is woven into the very fabric of Country music - a bright thread of rhinestones, heartfelt storytelling, timeless classic songs, his long-running television show, and his fifty years as a proud member of the Grand Ole Opry.

Born in the Ozarks of West Plains, Missouri, he rose from humble beginnings to become one of the most recognizable and influential artists the genre has ever known. Wagoner formed the Blue Ridge Boys and by 1950 was singing on the radio from a local butcher shop. That small opportunity led him to KWTO in Springfield, Missouri, and eventually to a recording contract with RCA.

In 1956, Wagoner moved to Nashville with his wife and three children, joining the Grand Ole Opry the following year and beginning a lifelong relationship with the show he loved. He was an early mainstay on ABC's Ozark Jubilee from 1955 to 1956, and in 1960 he was invited to host his own syndicated television program, The Porter Wagoner Show. He expanded his act immediately, adding comedian Speck Rhodes, singer Norma Jean, and musicians Mack Magaha, George McCormick, and Buck Trent. The Porter Wagoner Show quickly became a cornerstone of Country entertainment.

Porter introduced a young Dolly Parton to the show in 1967, beginning one of the most beloved partnerships in Country music history. Parton replaced Norma Jean, and she and Wagoner began recording duets that produced many hits. Wagoner produced many of their duet albums and also supervised Parton's RCA solo records during the same period. Together, they recorded more than twenty charting duets, blending their voices in songs filled with joy, heartbreak, and unmistakable chemistry. Their hits included *The Last Thing on My Mind, Just Someone I Used to Know, Daddy Was an Old Time Preacher Man, The Right Combination, Please Don't Stop Loving Me,* and *Making Plans*. The duo won CMA's 'Vocal Duo of the Year' award in both 1970 and 1971.

Parton eventually left the show to pursue her solo career, and their partnership ended in 1974 over creative differences. She wrote *I Will Always Love You* as her farewell to Wagoner. Though the split was emotional, the two later reconciled, and Parton performed the song for Porter at his 50th Opry Anniversary celebration. She has often credited him for giving her the platform that helped launch her legendary career.

The Porter Wagoner Show brought Country music into millions of homes each week. His flashy Nudie suits and warm personality made him a household name, and the show itself became a defining part of Country culture. It featured stars such as Tex Ritter and Cowboy Copas, along with newcomers like Willie Nelson and Waylon Jennings. The program ran for two decades, aired in more than 100 markets,

and averaged over three million viewers. Reruns continue today on RFD-TV, keeping his spirit alive for new generations.

Wagoner's long career produced a string of memorable hits that helped shape the Nashville sound of the 1950s, '60s, and '70s. His signature songs include *Misery Loves Company, A Satisfied Mind, The Cold Hard Facts of Life, Green, Green Grass of Home*, and *The Carroll County Accident*. Each showcased his gift for emotional storytelling and his connection to the everyday struggles of working people. His catalog continued to grow with favorites like *Your Old Love Letters, I've Enjoyed As Much of This As I Can Stand,* and *Company's Comin',* securing his place as one of Country music's most enduring hitmakers.

Beyond television and radio, Porter's influence stretched into Gospel music. He earned multiple Grammy Awards for his Gospel recordings. He was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame in 2002, honored not only for his chart success but also his role as a pioneer who shaped the sound of Country music for generations. Porter Wagoner Boulevard in his hometown of West Plains, Missouri, stands as a tribute to the boy who followed his dreams all the way to Nashville.

Even in his later years, Porter remained a beloved figure at the Opry. After Roy Acuff's passing in 1992, Wagoner became the unofficial spokesperson for the Grand Ole Opry. He co-hosted TNN's Opry Backstage for nearly a decade and continued touring with his band, The Wagonmasters. He had also formed an all-girl band, The Right Combination, and toured with them for several years. His final album, "Wagonmaster," produced by Marty Stuart, was released in June 2007 to rave reviews.

On August 12, 2007, his 80th birthday, the Grand Ole Opry honored Wagoner for his fifty years of membership. The celebration aired on GAC's Grand Ole Opry Live and featured performances by Dolly Parton, Marty Stuart, and Patty Loveless. Porter Wagoner passed away on October 28, 2007, in Nashville, Tennessee, at the age of 80, surrounded by his family along with Dolly Parton.

His presence still lives at the Grand Ole Opry House, most notably in the Wagonmaster Dressing Room, designed by Marty Stuart as a tribute to Porter's signature style and personality. His spirit echoes across the stages of Nashville and in the hearts of fans who grew up watching him on television or hearing his songs on the radio. His music, his showmanship, and his commitment to tradition continue to inspire artists today. The rhinestones may have dimmed, but the legacy shines on. In every heartfelt lyric, every Gospel harmony, and every Country storyteller who steps onto the Opry stage, Porter Wagoner's influence lives on as a reminder that true Country music never fades.





By Teresa Schweinsberg

Stephanie Burrow's story may not be like anyone else's story. Tissues may be needed to finish reading how God took a devastating loss and healed her heartbreak to make her testimony one of victory instead.

Stephanie grew up singing in her parents' Southern Gospel group The Gomillions. Not long after graduating from high school, she married Chad, the love of her life, a Christian man she knew she would spend the rest of her life loving. They had a baby girl named Katelyn and life was good. That all changed in a heartbeat.

When Katelyn was just three weeks old, Chad was coming home from work one night while three semi-truck drivers were headed down the highway in front of Stephanie and Chad's home. The truck drivers were joking around on their CB radios, but one of the three had been drinking. Due to his impaired judgement, he decided to pass the other two in the lane coming the opposite way with his lights turned off. This happened just as Chad was turning into the driveway of the house he and Stephanie had just bought to spend their lives together. He was ready to reunite with his beautiful wife for the evening and spend precious time with his new baby girl on whom he doted.

With no headlights on, Chad never saw the truck coming and was killed. The driver was not given any tests at the time of the accident, was allowed to drink coffee with an officer, and was never served time for Chad's death. That moment, Stephanie and Katelyn's lives were truly changed forever without the driver having to pay any consequences for his careless actions.

Stephanie says she went through the usual stages of grief, including bitterness even towards God. Though she had been a Christian since age twelve and sang Gospel music all her life with her parents, the weight of it all took her away from what she had known. She was not only questioning why but was angry with God for the things she experienced as a young mother just starting her adult life.

"Growing up in church, I always thought if you live right and do right, everything will be all right," Stephanie says. "I quickly learned that you could do all of that and still experience bad things."

Stephanie turned away from everything she knew to rebel for the pain she was feeling. She shares, "I was mad at everything and everybody. It made me question my own faith. There are people who go their whole life and never have a love like I had, and then to have it all taken away was so devastating." She looks back on that time now with regret, but also knowing that God took care of her, even when she was not living for Him.

"Katelyn was two years old before I finally realized it wasn't about me," Stephanie shares. "I had a daughter to take care of. I couldn't live my life only for me. People ask me if I wish I hadn't gotten away from God during that time. I'm not proud that I pushed every limit, but I have parents who fought for me and prayed for me. A lot of people never

find their way back to God, because they don't have parents like mine. I came to the realization I could continue down the road I was on and be miserable, or I could raise my daughter. I had a blessing right in front of me that was part of Chad. Nothing could bring him back, but I was wallowing in self-pity and not giving her the life she deserved."

Stephanie's daddy, Ray Gomillion, was diagnosed with cancer when she was ten years old. He was not given very long to live, but God completely healed him.

Stephanie continues, "I realize now God kept my daddy here for me when He healed him of cancer. God knew I would need my daddy when I lost Chad. He also knew my daughter would need someone there for important events, like walking her down the aisle at her wedding. God was good, even in my rebellion. I can see how He kept me, even when I wasn't living for Him. My daddy got to live to raise me, and then he got to help raise my daughter when I needed him most," Stephanie shares.

Stephanie eventually remarried and has a son Will, who has been a tremendous blessing in her life, too. Recently, she was going through other struggles in her life and marriage. Her parents were singing and asked her to practice a couple of songs and sing with them like she used to. Her Aunt Frances, who had since passed away, loved to hear her sing the song *The Promise* by the Martins. She practiced that one and another one. While singing that night, she became so blessed.

"I had such joy and contentment for the first time in a long time," says Stephanie. "I felt God letting me know everything was going to be all right. Mom and Dad had been singing and recording for a long time without me. Everybody told me I needed to start singing with them again. They were ready to record a new project in Nashville and asked me to sing a couple of songs with them. Once I got there, I got the opportunity to do a couple of Christian Country songs on my own."

"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end." - Jeremiah 29:11

Stephanie's new release, *I Love My Job* is not about her career, but about another job given to her by the Lord. Look her up on your favorite streaming platform and request her muisic on your favorite radio station.



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JIMMY R. PRICE



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

By Deborah Baliles

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

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

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

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

Although faith in God was deeply embedded very early on, it would be many years down the road when Jimmy would accept and surrender to God's ministry calling, in 1992 and at the age of forty. The Reverend Price served as pastor of Noble Baptist Church from 1995-2020. Forever carrying on that preaching passion, Jimmy serves as a pulpit supply when needed in addition to ministering at concerts, senior meetings, revivals, etc.

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

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

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

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

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

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



Jimmy & Ann Price

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

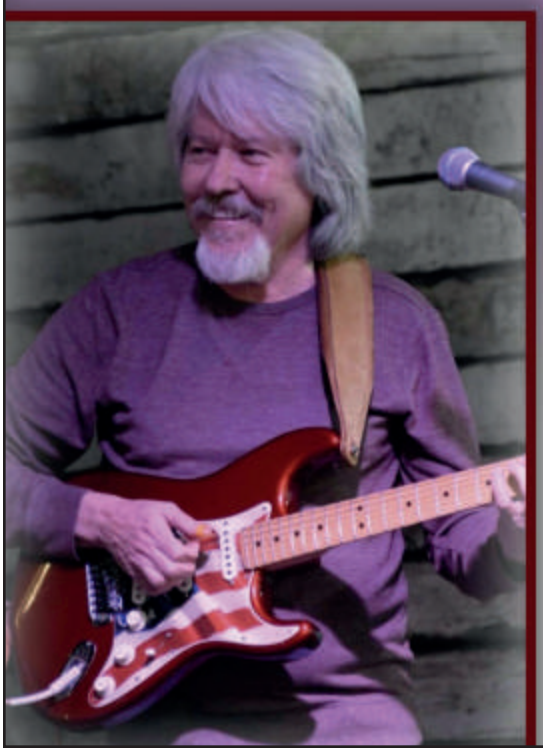
Jimmy is fully vocal that all of the issues facing our great country (and our world) are solely contributed to a nation that has been steadily turning away from God and His Word. No one human can fix it, but the remedy is rather simple… “If my people”… (Chronicles 7:14) From the proverbial podium, Jimmy preaches, “Lord, we need a great move of God, sparked by man’s genuine REPENTANCE!!!”

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

Jimmy’s newest EP is called “Seven” and his latest single that he penned is a moving song about hugging those that you love and miss so tight, that you don't want to let go - *Squeeze Your Guts Out.*

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Cross Country USA HOT 100

OFFICIAL CHRISTIAN COUNTRY TOP 100 - NOVEMBER 2026

TM	LM	SONG TITLE	ARTIST
1	**7**	**At War With Myself**	**Cyndi Reynolds**
2	12	There's Power In The Name Of Jesus	Jonathan Ray Smith
3	5	If I'm Guilty	Thomas Brown
4	9	Soldier Of The Cross	John Penney
5	11	Old Gravel Road	John Michael Ferrari
6	4	Healer	Allen Frizzell
7	1	Piano For Sale	Chris Golden
8	18	America I Will Stand Up For You	Mike Leichner
9	13	The Good In Bye	Small Town Sunday
10	29	Jesus Hotline	Bobby Gibson
11	17	Georgiana Alabama 1939	Michael Ray Fain
12	30	Little More Like Jesus	Dave Edwards
13	6	Snowy Sunday Morning	Biscuits and Gravy Band Indiana
14	22	I Know A Carpenter	Michael Knight
15	43	Without You (I Haven't Got A Prayer)	Fortner Brothers
16	28	I'm Yours	The Murphys
17	15	The Bridge	Daryl Baker
18	3	That's The Way Mama Raised Me	Luke Hendrickson
19	27	Strength Of A Survivor	Aaron Justice
20	37	Squeeze Your Guts Out	Jimmy R. Price
21	31	Rocks	Heather Thomas Van Deren
22	2	God Is Good Ya'll	Wings of Love
23	16	Looking For The Light	Delnora
24	63	Raised In Nashville	Victoria Steelman
25	38	One Man	Bruce & Betsy Mullen
26	40	Me And Jesus Gonna Get It Done	Norman Lee Schaffer
27	42	The Eastern Gate	Ava Kasich & Martha Lambert
28	14	Preacher Man	David Timms
29	55	I Just Walked	Gary Russ
30	52	We All Need Jesus	J'Lee
31	53	The Great I Am	Steve Warren
32	23	Jesus On My Mind	Bruce Hedrick
33	60	Grace	Dawson Road
34	26	Getting Back Up	Troy Richardson
35	71	A Little More Jesus	Daryl Baker
36	75	Songs Like Those	Debbie Mills
37	54	The Storm	Jan Harbuck
38	32	Somebody Here	Linda Lanier
39	25	River Of Life	Sonshine Road
40	68	Let Go Of The Reins	Daryl Jorden
41	77	When Was The Last Time	Chuck Day
42	61	Far Side Banks Of Jordan	Julie Reese
43	65	Footprints In The Sand	Dwight Sanders
44	24	This One's For You	Rocky and Tamie
45	45	Leading Me Home	Melissa Garner
46	66	The Devil Cried	Jason Welch
47	92	No Funeral	Ken Mobley
48	85	Not On My Watch	Darin Kinser
49	72	Someday Things Are Gonna Get Better	Johnny Jones
50	–	Walk A Mile In Love	Felicia Deramus Paul
51	74	Route 66	Donna Kilmurray
52	90	Wait For Me	Richard Lynch
53	70	If I Could Talk To Daddy Again	Roger Barkley, Jr.
54	79	We Found Each Other	Troy Ervin
55	–	Sunday Sunrise Service In Iran	Chuck Hancock
56	58	Trade Your Story For Glory	Marty Deroche
57	73	Drinking From The Fountain	Daryl Branson
58	95	Feelin' Good Again	Dallas Dugger
59	78	The Scars You Can't See	Debra Camp
60	84	What Can I Say	Barbara Jean
61	86	Talking To Your Chair	Marshal McKellar
62	–	Listen To The Wind	Waymasters
63	82	A Prayer I Never Prayed	Tyson Leamon
64	89	Ashes To Ashes	Kenneth Hall
65	69	Stand Up For The Flag Kneel At The Cross	Ray Epperson
66	91	Heartbeat	Barbara Fairchild & Marvin Harrell
67	99	Welcome Home	Jerry Grant
68	–	Always Give Love	Johnathan Bond
69	98	Holy Ghost Loving	Ricky Paul
70	–	Don't Get In A Hurry	Shay + Michi
71	97	Look Up	Kimberly Goins
72	–	Follow The Cowboy	Tim Fulgham
73	93	Living Proof	Rusty Gilliam
74	96	I Know That Jesus Will Be There	The Singing Byrds
75	100	Get Down On Your Knees	Angela Seng
76	94	Jesus Takes Good Care Of Me	Brenda Gross
77	–	With You In This Fire	Gina White
78	–	Everybody Smiles	Greg Marlow
79	–	I'm Already There	Dale Rochell
80	–	Think About You	Hammond Brothers
81	–	A Long Way For Nothing	J R McEntyre
82	–	Hit 'N' Run	Woodie Kitchen
83	–	New Creation	Jennifer Sides
84	–	I Pressed Through The Crowd	David Smith
85	–	That Glorious Day	Joy LaVallee
86	–	Queen Of The Barflies	Luke Hendrickson
87	–	Prayer	Southern Reign
88	–	Remember The Preacher At The Alamo	Mike McAdoo
89	–	Heaven Has A Party Going On	JC James
90	–	Up In Chicago	Randy Free
91	–	Trophies Of His Grace	Gena Hamilton
92	–	One Heartbeat Away	The Journeys
93	–	Rags Fit For A King	Ron Hemphill
94	–	Need A Little Jesus	Caleb Deramus
95	–	Can You Still Use A Fool Like Me	Harry Claytor
96	–	Dirt Road Drivin'	Ken and Kim Stull
97	–	Middle Of A Miracle	Rachel Taylor
98	–	Sunday School Days	Jeff Hamilton
99	–	Thank You Jesus	Tackitt
100	–	The Gospel Truth	Tommy Horton



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NOVEMBER 2026

CROSS COUNTRY USA MAGAZINE

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ARTIST SPOTLIGHT

TYLER AMMERMAN

A Little Outside the Box

By Teresa Schweinsberg



Brand new artist Tyler Ammerman is not your typical Christian Country artist. He is a little bit Southern Rock, a little Folk, a little bit Blues, and some of all his influences over the years, including Southern Gospel from his dad. He describes himself as an "artist," because he likes to think outside the box, not doing the typical.

Tyler is well studied when it comes to scripture and knows what he believes. He studied with Harvard X, Harvard's study of scripture, but enjoys studying on his own to support what he believes.

Tyler shares his musical heritage, "When my father Eric Ammerman was young he used to play drums with Phillips, Craig, and Dean before they were famous. Whenever we visit Texas, we still visit with Dan Dean. I'm a distant relative of Johnny Cash. My grandpa was an award-winning songwriter and played on the Louisiana Hayride circuit. My great-grandfather Otis was a professional violin player in the St. Louis Orchestra and reportedly got to play as a stand-in for Buck Owens. My cousin Dana McDowell is married to Ronnie McDowell's son, Ronnie Jr., and I've had the opportunity to play harmonica with Ronnie's band before. As a professional harmonica player, I've had the opportunity to play on stage with people like The Crabb Family, the Gospel Enforcers, Jeff and Sheri Easter, and many others."

Tyler carries quite the heritage and musical experience. He plays several instruments as he explains, "I started playing harmonica first. After that, I learned drums and then guitar. Apparently, when I was four years old, my family bought me a blues band harmonica at Cracker Barrel, and by the time we got home, I was playing what sounded like music to them. I still like playing blues harmonica the most on stage. When I'm alone, I like playing guitar, because it's the most versatile. I started playing guitar seriously when I was around 13. I play drums, guitar, bass, harmonica, a little bit of keyboard, a bit of steel guitar, and most woodwind instruments."

Being a songwriter also came at an early age for Tyler. He was around ten when he started to write songs but says he did not become truly passionate about it until he was closer to fourteen. Tyler says it became therapeutic for him to express himself. Most of the songs he only wrote to and for himself, "not for anyone else to ever hear, but to help something deep inside to come out," he shares.

When asked what he was thinking that drove him to write *Thinking Just Like Satan*, Tyler went deep scripturally as he answered, "Theologically, the Bible describes Satan as the 'god of this world' or 'the ruler of the kingdom of the air, who influences disobedient people' (2 Corinthians 4:4, Ephesians 2:2). I John 5:19 states that 'the whole world is under the control of the evil one.' According to Scripture, anyone who is not united with Christ by faith is still walking according to the spirit of the air or Satan himself. So, believe it or not, this song is a theological point, rather than a personal statement."

Tyler would like to have the biggest impact and ministry in music he can while living a simple, quiet life with his family. Tyler is a semi-truck driver who loves the Lord, his wife, Sarah and his son, Caleb (CJ). Tyler's wife, Sarah Manghi Ammerman is a licensed minister from the Philippines. They met while she was doing ministry trips in Thailand. CJ is a dual citizen, born while doing ministry in the mountainous Luzon region of the Philippines. Both Sarah and CJ were able to come to America in July of 2025 and now live with Tyler in Missouri. Tyler is grateful for his parents, Eric and Lisa Ammerman for all the help they have given him to record his first single and get it to streaming platforms and radio.


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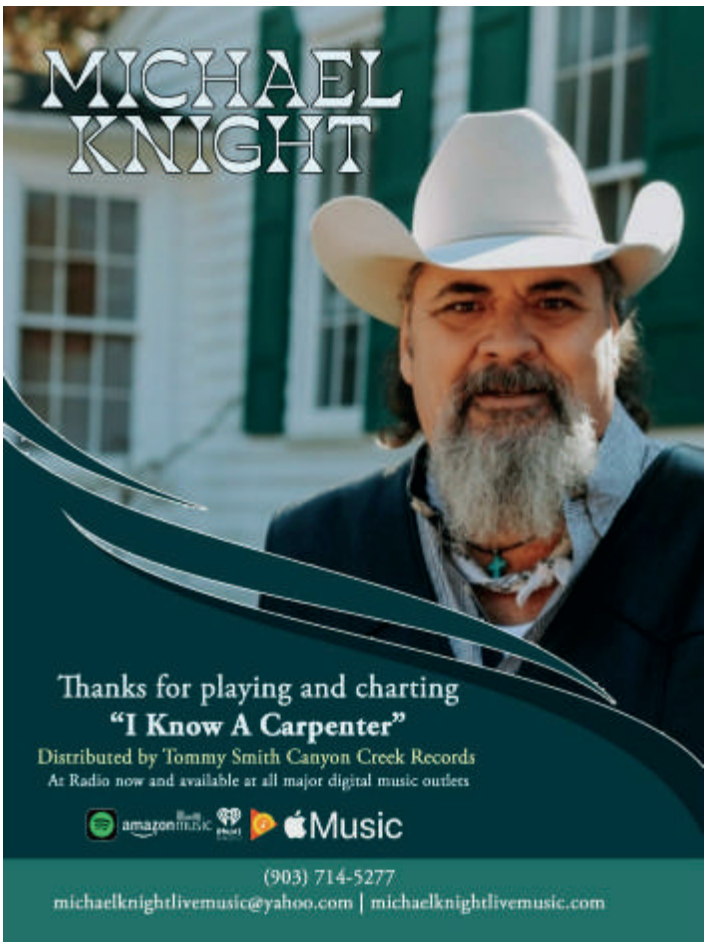

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Country Gospel artist Marty DeRoche brings a storyteller's heart and a worshipper's spirit to every stage he steps onto. His music blends faith, hope, and classic Country charm into songs that lift the soul and honor the God who carried his dream all the way to Nashville.

Marty DeRoche

A Country Gentleman Carrying the Gospel to Nashville and Beyond

By Cory Parker

Award-winning Nashville Christian Country artist Marty DeRoche has a way of stepping onto a stage that makes listeners feel like they already know him. Maybe it's the smooth Country voice. Maybe it's the uplifting message. Maybe it's the unmistakable "Country gentleman" charm that seems to follow him wherever he goes. But at the heart of it all is something simpler and deeper: Marty sings because he believes God still uses stories to change lives.

Born and raised in Louisville, Kentucky, Marty grew up with a dream that felt bigger than the world around him. He imagined one day standing in Nashville, singing on the legendary Grand Ole Opry stage. For years, that dream lived quietly in his heart while he served faithfully in pastoral ministry, wrote songs, and carried the Gospel through every avenue God opened. But in May 2024, the dream became reality. Marty performed his breakout hit *A Bullet and A Bible* during the ICMA Awards show, standing in the famous Opry circle - the very place where Country legends have stood for generations.

It was more than a performance. It was a moment of destiny.

Thirteen members of Sgt. James Hawkins' family were in attendance that night. Marty had dedicated the song to Hawkins, a U.S. Marine whose life was saved in World War II when a bullet lodged in the Bible his pastor had given him before deployment. Marty remembers the moment he held that Bible - the bullet still embedded in its pages - and met Mrs. Hawkins and their children. "Recording *A Bullet and A Bible* was unforgettable because it was a true story," Marty says. "Meeting Mrs. Hawkins, holding that Bible… it meant everything."

That authenticity is the thread running through all of Marty's music. His voice carries the gritty warmth of Kenny Rogers and the smooth sincerity of B.J. Thomas, yet his sound remains completely his own - a blend of Country storytelling and Gospel conviction. Now living in Southern Illinois, Marty continues to travel, sharing positive, faith-filled music with audiences across the country. His songs carry messages of hope, encouragement, and redemption, delivered with the honesty of a man who genuinely believes every word he sings.

And listeners believe him too.

Every song Marty has recorded has reached the Top Ten on Radio Music DJ at some point. His single *Blood Bought Cowboy* climbed all the way to #1, while *Trade Your Story For Glory* is currently in the Top 50 on the CVM Christian Country Chart. His album, "A Bullet and A Bible," made the second round of the 2026 Grammy Awards, and his album, "A Cowboy and A Cross" - along with its title track - is in Grammy consideration for 2027. In 2026, Marty was inducted into the Indie Music Channel Hall of Fame, and he has received multiple Josie Awards nominations, marking him as one of Christian Country's rising voices.

But for Marty, awards are not the reward.

"The greatest reward," he says, "is that I get to share the Gospel through song with a positive inspirational message."

He tells stories of students at the school where he works approaching him with excitement: “Hey Mr. D, love your music on Spotify!” Their parents follow his music too. For Marty, those moments matter just as much as standing in the Opry circle. They are reminders that God uses every platform - big or small - to reach hearts.

His latest release, *Trade Your Story For Glory,* carries a message he believes deeply. “We all have a story,” Marty says. “A time that other people may not know about. But no matter your story, God, through His grace, mercy, and forgiveness, can turn your story into glory.” It’s a message shaped by his own journey. After 35 years of pastoral ministry, Marty recently retired from the pulpit, but not from ministry. “Now that ministry continues through music,” he says. And it shows. Every concert, every event, every song is offered with the prayer that someone will be encouraged, uplifted, or drawn closer to Christ.

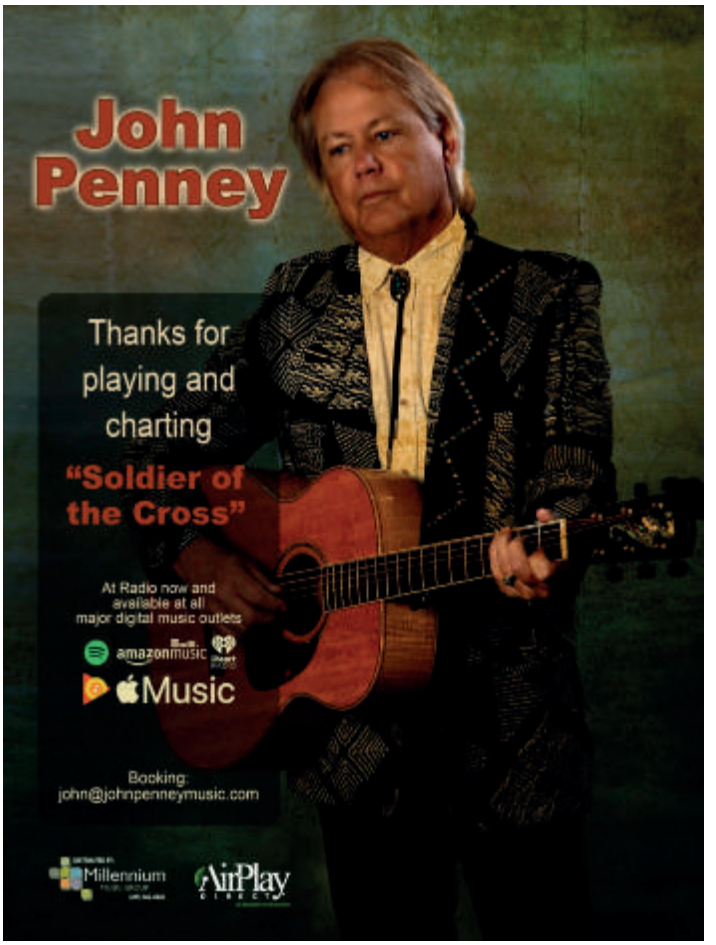
“My heart’s desire,” Marty says, “is that God continues to receive glory in every concert or event I get to sing at. I pray people will see I’m passionate about the One I get to sing about - Jesus Christ, my Lord and Savior.”

And behind that passion stands someone who prays just as fervently: Marty’s wife, Delora. “Every concert I do,” Marty says, “she comes to me before and takes my hands and prays for me - and more importantly prays that God will be lifted up, and someone may receive a blessing from the song. Nothing better than having a praying wife in your corner.”



Marty & Delora

From Louisville to Nashville, from the pastor’s pulpit to the Opry circle, Marty DeRoche continues to prove that faith and perseverance can carry a dream farther than anyone imagines. His music is warm, honest, and unmistakably Country. But his message is eternal. And as long as God keeps writing his story, Marty will keep singing it.







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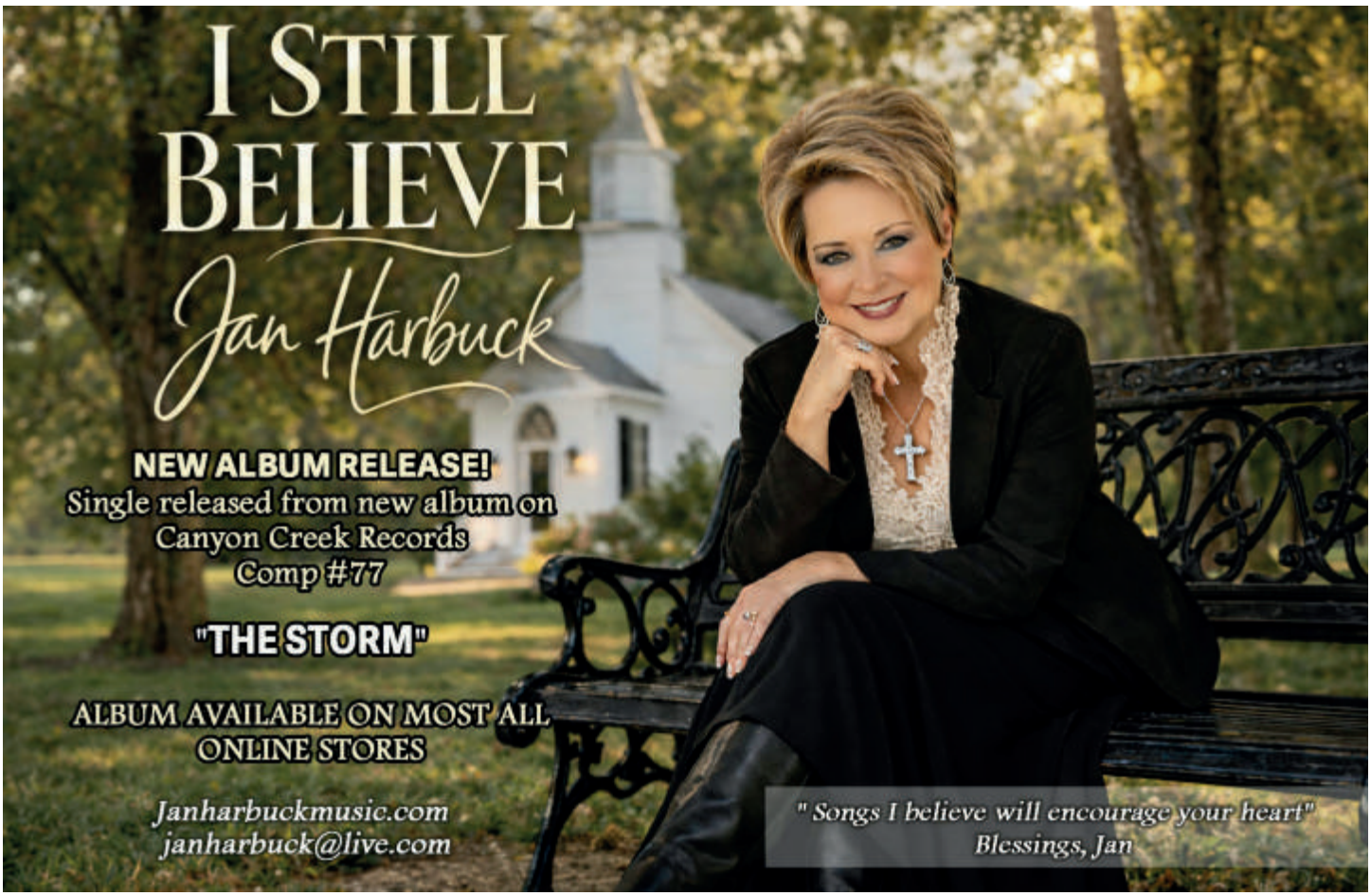
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Brei Carter is not waiting for a lane to open - she is boldly creating one of her own. A commanding Country-Soul singer-songwriter with an unmistakable voice and magnetic presence, Brei brings together the heartfelt storytelling of Country, the emotional depth of Soul, and the unapologetic fire of Southern Rock. Her extraordinary journey is proof of what becomes possible when faith meets purpose, preparation meets opportunity, and perseverance refuses to surrender.

Born and raised in Monroe, Louisiana, Brei's foundation was built on faith, family, service, and the rich musical traditions of the South. She grew up surrounded by the Bible, the soul-stirring harmonies of the Lone Star Missionary Baptist Church choir, and the timeless sounds of Charley Pride, Loretta Lynn, and Aretha Franklin. Those influences did more than shape her sound - they instilled in her a reverence for authentic storytelling, a love for music that moves the spirit, and the courage to sing from a place of truth.

Long before commanding stages, Brei was building a remarkable life defined by scholarship, leadership, and service. She earned a Bachelor's degree in Business from the University of Louisiana at Monroe, a Master's degree in International Relations from Webster University, and a Doctorate in Theology from New Foundation Theological Seminary. A proud United States Army veteran, Brei served her country both as an enlisted soldier and as an officer - an extraordinary journey that strengthened the discipline, resilience, and quiet confidence she now carries into every room and onto every stage.

Brei's lifelong commitment to serving others has also earned her one of the nation's distinguished honors: the Presidential Lifetime Achievement Award. This recognition reflects more than a record of service - it represents the heart of a woman who believes true success is measured not only by the stages one reaches, but by the lives one touches along the way.

Since making Nashville her home, Brei has emerged as a dynamic performer, compelling songwriter, and distinctive voice within the music community. Smooth and soulful one moment, fearless and edgy the next, she creates music for those who have lived, loved, lost, fought, and found the strength to rise again. Brei does not simply perform songs - she delivers testimony, truth, and lived experience with a voice audiences can feel.



Her growing influence extends far beyond the stage. Brei serves as a CMA Ambassador and is a member of both the Academy of Country Music and the Recording Academy. She also brings her natural warmth, intelligence, and magnetic personality to television as a correspondent for Nashville Insider. Away from the spotlight, Brei enjoys horseback riding and remains passionate about advocating for veterans and supporting those affected by mental health challenges.

Brei was named 'Artist of the Year' at the 9th Annual Mississippi Music Awards and earned a nomination for 'Modern Country Female Artist of the Year' at the Josie Music Awards in Nashville, Tennessee. Her empowering single *Prove Me Right* has also been submitted for Grammy consideration - another defining milestone in a career built on faith, excellence, and the courage to defy expectations.

Artist. Veteran. Scholar. Woman of faith. Humanitarian. Advocate. Storyteller. Brei Carter is the rare kind of talent whose life story is every bit as powerful as her music. Her authenticity draws audiences in, her presence commands their attention, and her message remains with them long after the final note.

Brei Carter is not simply an artist to watch - she is a voice to hear, a story to experience, and a force destined to leave an enduring mark. To meet her is to understand her purpose. To hear her is to remember her. And to book her is to bring audiences an experience they will not soon forget.

The Thanksgiving Table That Almost Wasn't

By Eleanor Vale



Thanksgiving had always been the brightest day on Margaret Ellison's calendar. She was eighty-one now, her silver hair pinned in soft curls, her hands seasoned by decades of kneading dough, basting turkeys, and wiping tears from the faces of children and grandchildren who had grown up around her table.

But this year felt different. Her house, once overflowing with voices, laughter, and the clatter of dishes, had grown quieter with each passing season. Her husband, Harold, had gone to heaven five years earlier. Her oldest daughter lived three states away. Her grandson was deployed overseas. And her youngest son, Michael, had recently taken a job that kept him on the road more than at home.

Margaret tried not to let the loneliness settle too deeply, but as November rolled in with its crisp mornings and golden leaves, she felt the ache of an empty table more sharply than ever.

She still planned to cook - she always cooked - but she wondered if this would be the year she finally set aside the tradition. What was Thanksgiving without the people who made it meaningful?

The Wednesday before Thanksgiving, Margaret stood at her kitchen counter peeling apples for her famous cinnamon-brown sugar pie. The house smelled like memory - warm, sweet, familiar. She hummed an old hymn under her breath, trying to keep her spirits up.

Then came a knock. She wasn't expecting anyone. Wiping her hands on her apron, she opened the door to find her neighbor, twelve-year-old Lily Parker, bundled in a red scarf and holding a small paper bag.

"Hi, Miss Ellison," Lily said, cheeks rosy from the cold. "Mom made extra rolls for tomorrow and wanted you to have some."

Margaret smiled, touched by the gesture. "That's very kind. Tell your mother thank you."

Lily hesitated, shifting her weight. "Are you… having Thanksgiving here tomorrow?"

Margaret paused. "Well, I'll be cooking. But it'll be a quiet one this year."

Lily's face fell. "Oh."

Something in the girl's expression tugged at Margaret's heart. "Why do you ask, dear?"

Lily looked down. "Mom and Dad are working tomorrow. They said we'll do something small later, but… it's just me and my little brother tomorrow."

Margaret felt a warmth rise in her chest - the kind that comes when compassion pushes loneliness aside.

"Well," she said gently, "no one should spend Thanksgiving alone. How would you and your brother like to come here? I'll have plenty of food."

Lily's eyes lit up like Christmas morning. "Really? You mean it?"

"I do."

The girl threw her arms around Margaret, nearly knocking the breath out of her. "Thank you! I'll tell Mom!"

As Lily ran back across the yard, Margaret closed the door and leaned against it, feeling something she hadn't felt in months. Purpose.

Thanksgiving morning arrived with a soft sunrise and the smell of roasting turkey drifting through the house. Margaret moved through her kitchen with practiced grace - stirring gravy, whipping potatoes, brushing butter across golden rolls.

At ten o'clock, the doorbell rang.mLily stood there with her little brother, Jonah, who clutched a stuffed dinosaur and looked both shy and hopeful.

"Happy Thanksgiving, Miss Ellison," Lily said.

"Happy Thanksgiving," Margaret replied, ushering them inside.

But the surprises weren't over.

As she turned toward the kitchen, she heard another knock. Then another. And another.

One by one, neighbors appeared - Mrs. Carter from across the street, the retired couple from the corner house, the college student who lived alone in the rental next door. Each carried something: a pie, a casserole, a basket of fruit, a pitcher of sweet tea.

"We heard you were hosting," Mrs. Carter said with a smile. "And we thought… maybe we could all be together this year."

Margaret blinked, overwhelmed. "I didn't plan a big gathering."

"That's the best kind," the college student said. "The ones that happen because someone opened their door."

Before she knew it, her quiet Thanksgiving had transformed into a lively, bustling celebration. Children ran through the living room. Adults chatted over steaming cups of cider. The dining table, once too large for one woman, was now barely big enough for the crowd.

Margaret stood in the doorway, watching it all unfold, her heart swelling with gratitude.

Harold would have loved this, she thought. He always said the best blessings were the ones you didn't expect.

When everyone finally gathered around the table, Margaret took her usual place at the head. The room fell quiet as she lifted her hands slightly.

"I didn't expect company today," she began, her voice warm and steady. "But I'm grateful beyond words that you're here. Thanksgiving has always been about more than food. It's about remembering that even in seasons of loss or change, God still sends us reasons to give thanks."

She looked at Lily and Jonah, then at the neighbors who had filled her home with laughter. "Today, you are my blessing."

A soft chorus of "Amen" rose around the table.

They bowed their heads, and Margaret prayed - not a long prayer, but a heartfelt one. She thanked God for community, for kindness, for the way love finds its way into the cracks of loneliness and fills them with light. When she finished, the feast began.

Lily declared Margaret's mashed potatoes "the best in the world." Jonah asked for seconds of turkey. Mrs. Carter insisted on sharing her secret pecan pie recipe. The college student offered to wash dishes. And Margaret, for the first time in a long time, felt her home come alive again.

After dessert, the group moved to the living room, where Margaret kept an old photo album on the coffee table. Lily picked it up and flipped through the pages.

"Is this your husband?" she asked.

"Yes," Margaret said softly. "That's Harold."

"He looks kind."

"He was."

Lily studied the picture - Harold in his favorite flannel shirt, smiling as he carved a Thanksgiving turkey. "I'm glad you weren't alone today," she said.

Margaret touched the girl's shoulder. "I'm glad you weren't either."

As the afternoon sun dipped low, casting golden light across the room, Margaret realized something profound: Her table wasn't empty. Her home wasn't silent. Her heart wasn't lonely. Thanksgiving had come - not in the way she expected, but in the way she needed.



Sometimes blessings arrive quietly. Sometimes they knock on your door. And sometimes they come in the form of neighbors who bring rolls, children who need a place to belong, and a community that remembers what it means to gather.

Margaret closed her eyes for a moment, letting gratitude wash over her like warm light.

This was the Thanksgiving she would remember for the rest of her life - the Thanksgiving that almost wasn't, but became the most beautiful one of all.


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