

Cross+Country^{USA} magazine

**Susan
Agee
Hicks**

"Well...Glory!"

**KEN & KIM STULL
A Ministry That Almost Wasn't...But God!**

SNAPSHOTS: NACMAI Hall of Fame Induction

PLUS... Hot 100, News, and more

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From the Editor

In May, we celebrate Mother's Day, Foster Care Awareness Month, Graduation, and Memorial Day. All of these occasions have made an impact on us in many different ways.

We celebrate many amazing mothers. These ladies are the very reason we all are here! Our mothers have many jobs! I have heard it said, "I am just a stay at home mom!" That is a 24/7 job that includes being a housekeeper, chauffeur, cook, referee, counselor, and nurse. She is also a caregiver, consoler, prayer warrior, protector, and defender. Our mothers would stand up for us, discipline us, and even fight for us if she had too!

We all are blessed to have our moms or a mother figure in our lives. Being a mother is the greatest accomplishment I could have. To see your child succeed and grow to love God and his family and become a parent brings joy and happiness to every mother's heart. I am thankful for a praying mother always there giving compassion and encouragement. Where would we be without the love and care from our mothers.

Please cherish the time you have with your mom. I know many mothers are in Heaven this Mother's Day. Thank God we have the assurance that we will all be together again for eternity. There is a song entitled *The Hand That Rocks The Cradle Rules The World*. This old world has gotten very far from God. But I would hate to see what it would be without our mother's love and prayers. Please know, ladies, you are a valuable treasure and loved on this Mother's Day and every day.

Then there is the exciting time of graduation. What a great achievement to finish twelve years of schooling and embark on their next endeavor such as college, new job, or marriage. These young adults need our prayers and encouragement as they make their life choices.

May is also Foster Care Awareness Month. We pray for all the many foster kids and foster parents. These kids have dealt with many hardships in their lives. We pray and uplift these kids that were placed in this situation. Thank you to all the foster parents that have taken kids in their home and helped raise them as your own, and for many that have become a permanent part of their families.

We also take time to remember all the soldiers that paid the ultimate sacrifice and gave their lives that we can live in freedom. Please let us not take our freedom for granted. We honor all those men and women who fought to keep this country free. It's more than a mini vacation, picnics, and BBQ. We can enjoy all of this because of those soldiers who gave their lives and left their families to serve our Country. Those that served and continuing to serve need our utmost love, respect, and prayers.

Robin

Robin Tanner, Managing Editor

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TATE EMMONS

By Robin Tanner

Tate Emmons is an up and coming young Gospel artist who grew up surrounded in a musical family that dedicated their lives to spreading the Gospel of Christ. His music has been described as soulful, inspiring, and heartfelt. The fourteen year old is constantly pushing himself to grow as an artist and to connect with people in new and meaningful ways. His passion is to reach as many as the Lord will allow with his music, songs, and voice. He is committed to delivering high-quality music that is both uplifting and meaningful.



Tate began singing in his church in Mississippi at the young age of three years old. He says, “I always grew up singing from a young age and was exposed to Southern Gospel music. Groups came to our church and I would get the opportunity to sing with them on stage. I feel like meeting these groups and getting the chance to sing with them really boosted my confidence and opened doors through these relationships.”

Tate has a good mixture of different artists who have influenced him. “I definitely look up to the band Cain - their music really inspires me to be who I am. Another inspiration of mine is definitely Southbound! I love their sound, their music, and I just love them as people. They are true inspirations for me and have given me so many opportunities.”

Southbound’s Clint Brown was quoted as saying, “This young man is gonna shake up the world. He will be a force to be reckoned with. He’s anointed, gifted, humble, and totally focused on his purpose.”

“I cannot forget this one... my personal inspiration is Brother Ronny Hinson, legendary singer and songwriter in Southern Gospel music. He has always been so good to me and my family over the years and has always shared his abundant wisdom with me. I know I say this about everyone, but I just love him!” Ronny Hinson stated, “Tate is the now and the future of Christian music.”

Just four years ago In 2020, Tate posted on social media for the first time with the Zach Williams song *Chainbreaker* and received over one million views. Since then, Tate has had over seventeen million views across all social media platforms. He is not only a talented singer, but gifted songwriter and musician, playing the guitar and the saxophone.

When asked about his career highlights so far, the young singer pondered on his response. “This is a wonderful question. You’ve really made me think deep here! I would say some of my most memorable moments was just getting to record the album, “Means Something To Me.” I told my producer as we were trying to decide the title of the album

that not only (in this song) do the hymns mean something to me, this entire experience means something to me! From writing the songs, recording tracks, tracking vocals, photo shoot, advertising, etc, the whole experience has truly meant something to me. But, the highlight of my career lately has definitely been getting to sing on the main stage of the National Quartet Convention in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee! Getting to sing on the biggest stage in Gospel music has for sure been my highlight.”

Tate’s latest single released to radio is the title cut of the album *Means Something To Me* and features a companion video of the song. *Means Something To Me* has done exceptionally well on the radio. He has written six of the ten songs on the album. Along with his original songs, he recorded top notch versions of *A Little Song Coming On*, previously recorded by Three Bridges, The Country hit by Cody Johnson, *‘Til You Can’t* and *The Original Superman* from the Hinsons.

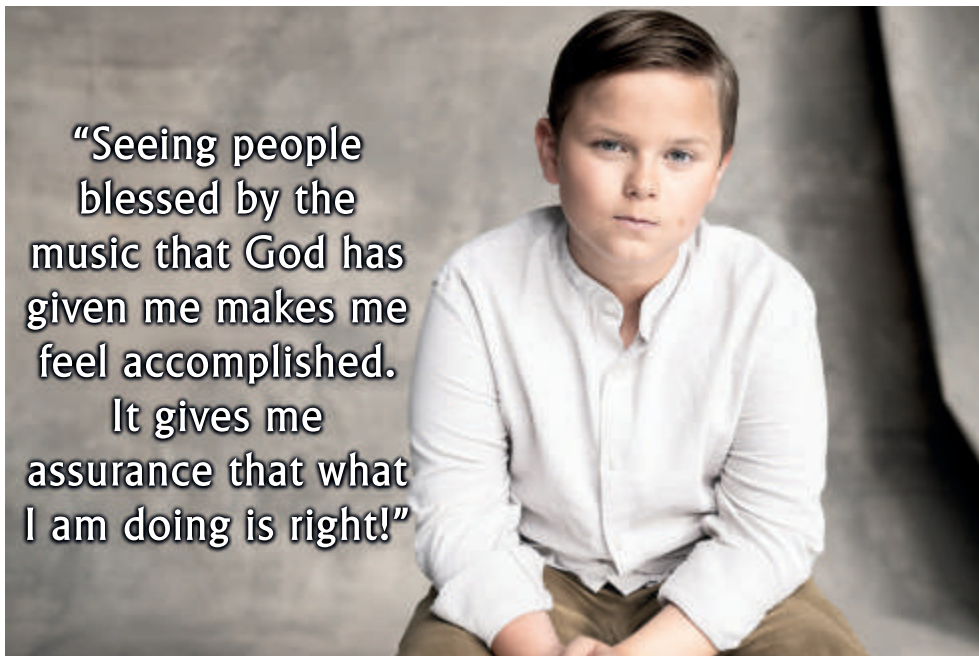
Tate says he’s grateful for the response to the new album. “I have received many letters, texts, and messages from people expressing their love for the song and the whole album in general. That in itself is a personal award for me! Seeing people blessed by the music that God has given me makes me feel accomplished. It gives me assurance that what I am doing is right!”

This young man definitely has a heart for ministry as he shares God’s love with others. “I have learned in my short life that there are times that you can’t feel God or find Him. You’re looking for an answer, but it is nowhere to be found. But even when no family or friends are with you and you cannot see or feel God, He is still there with you every step your walk, whether you are conscious of it or not. If you are feeling like that today, HE’S RIGHT THERE WITH YOU!”

He continues, “Are you fighting a battle with what feels like no help? There’s One in the fire with you! Call on Him today. Pray that He will reveal himself today. I promise if you do that, things will start to fall in place in your life that you wouldn’t believe.”

Tate has many goals for the ministry God has called him into. “Well there are many worldly things that I would like.

I think all of us have those and if that happens for me, I’ll give God the glory. But my treasures are being laid up in Heaven. My goals are the goals God has for me. I don’t know what is going to happen in the future, but I’m not worried about it. Because I know who holds the future, and He does not forsake his children.”



“Seeing people blessed by the music that God has given me makes me feel accomplished. It gives me assurance that what I am doing is right!”

He has been blessed to share the stage and be mentored by artists such as Jason Crabb, Mickey Bell, Greater Vision, Southbound, Jeff & Sheri Easter, Ronny Hinson, Tribute Quartet, Scotty Inman, The Browders, Justified Quartet, Todd Tilghman, and the Hinson Family.

When Tate is not traveling and singing on the road, he is involved with his children’s and youth group at church, Bible Drills, and Fellowship of Christian Athletes. He has a strong compassion for people and a love of Christ that manifests in his every day activities.

God is leading and directing the path for Tate Emmons. With God walking with this young artist, great things are in store for him. More importantly many lives will be blessed by the ministry of Tate Emmons.

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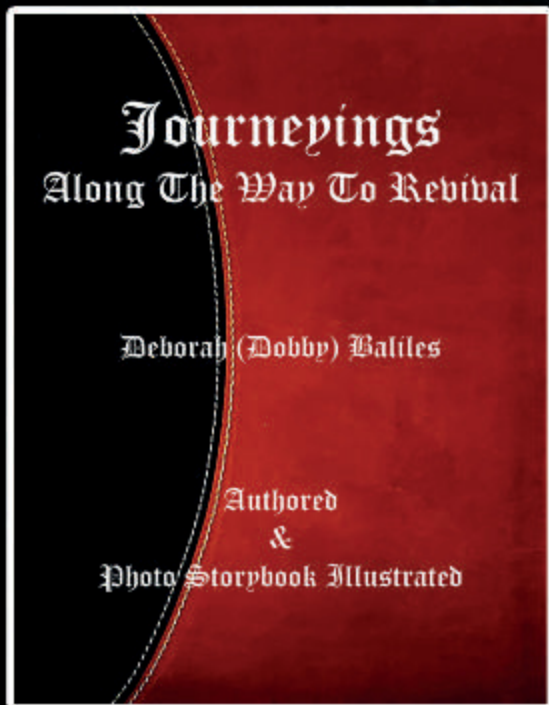
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ARTIST SPOTLIGHT

Mary Burke

Staff, Cross Country USA

Mary Burke has always sung and felt the call from a very young age. Her greatest influence was her grandma, who took care of her as a young child. Her Grandma taught her that it is better to give than to receive. She also taught Mary how to be a servant of God.

In 2009, Mary and her family moved down to Knoxville, Tennessee from Michigan where she had been most of her life. She felt like God had called her and her family to move south. Her husband suffered a traumatic brain injury in 2007 and the family needed a fresh start.

Her latest album, "I Talk to God" was an album that started her journey in Southern Gospel and Christian Country radio. She has been nominated for Gospel Music Fan Awards 'Favorite Female Vocalist' and her song I Talk to God was nominated for 'Song of the Year' in the SGN Scoops Diamond Awards in 2021.



Her upcoming album, "Headed to Heaven" will be a family album with her son and husband each singing a song on the new album. Mary's husband has a testimony that has a wonderful impact on men and woman. Together, their story will encourage people and has led many people to the Lord. David and Mary, along with their son David, Jr. are very excited about their upcoming album.

Together, they will travel and sing and testify of God's healing and his faithfulness.

You can find Mary on Facebook, Tik Tok, Instagram, and YouTube. Her music can be heard on Amazon Music and iTunes. For booking, call or text 865-803-2062.

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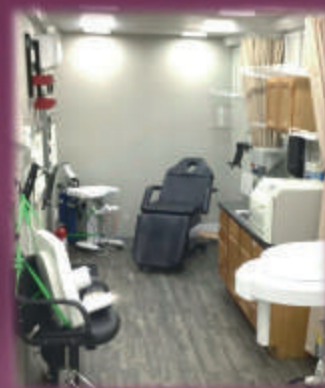
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— Dr. Peter Kunkle, Executive Director

Remembering...

DONNA (HICKS) HALE • NORAH LEE ALLEN

Staff, Cross Country USA

Donna (Hicks) Hale

September 11, 1953 - March 26, 2024

Donna was born on September 11, 1953, in Moro, Arkansas, the daughter of J.W. and Bobbie Craig Hicks. She had been a resident of the area for several years and was 'First Lady Administrator' of the Country Gospel Music Association (CGMA) which she had been a member of since 1998. She was also a member of the Inspirational Country Gospel Music Association (ICGMA) and of the Jimmy Jack Foundation.



She enjoyed traveling, visiting several foreign countries. Celebrating birthdays and holidays was very important to her. She also enjoyed going to the Branson shows and reading her bible. She passed away on March 26, 2024, at her home.

Donna is deeply missed by her family, friends, and CGMA family.

Norah Lee Allen

February 14, 1948 - March 31, 2024

Norah Lee Allen, a luminary in the Country music scene, was born and raised in Bowling Green, Kentucky. She was a beacon of talent, grace, and kindness throughout her remarkable life.

Norah Lee's journey into the music world began at a tender age, singing with her sisters in The Stuart Sisters Trio under the guidance of their father. Her innate talent blossomed early, leading her to join the legendary Chuck Wagon Gang in 1968, where she honed her skills as a Country Gospel

singer. On September 22nd, 1969, she married Duane Allen, lead singer of The Oak Ridge Boys, embarking on a partnership that lasted over five decades.

Her career took her to Nashville, where she became renowned for her exceptional vocal ability. From her early days at Benson Publishing Group to her tenure as a background vocalist at the Grand Ole Opry, Norah Lee's versatility and professionalism shone brightly. Over forty years, she graced the Opry stage, lending her voice to countless performances alongside some of the biggest names in the industry.



In 2022, Norah Lee was honored with induction into the Kentucky Music Hall of Fame, a testament to her enduring impact on the music world.

Norah Lee passed away peacefully March 31st, at the age of 76. Her legacy as a devoted wife, mother, and grandmother, as well as her contributions to Country music, will forever be cherished.

Norah Lee will be remembered not only for her extraordinary talent but also for her humor, kindness, generosity, and faith. Her gentle spirit touched the lives of all who knew her, leaving an indelible mark on the hearts of many.



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CLASS OF 2024 NACMAI HALL OF FAME INDUCTION

During NACMAI's Country Music Week in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, four legendary Country artists were inducted into the North America Country Music Hall of Fame.

**North American
Country Music Association, Int'l**

By Robin Tanner
Photos courtesy of NACMAI

The North American Country Music Association International (NACMAI) hosted their 2024 Hall of Fame induction ceremony for four true legends - John Berry, Barbara Fairchild, Mel Tillis, and Randy Travis. The special night was held March 16th at the Country Tonite Theatre in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee.

The NACMAI Hall of Fame ceremony began with the posthumous induction of Country music legend, Mel Tillis. Renae Johnson, also known as 'Renae the Waitress' from RFDTV's Larry's Country Diner, inducted Mel Tillis with Mel's daughter Cindy Tillis Shorey accepting on behalf of the Tillis family. Country artist and family friend, Kenyon Lockry performed two of Tillis's hits.

John Berry performed two hits that included *Your Love Amazes Me*. Robin, his wife of 35 years, came out to sing with John for the acoustic version of the song, making the performance a special moment. The editor of Cross Country USA Magazine, Robin Tanner was honored to induct John Berry into the NACMAI Hall of Fame.

Barbara Fairchild took the stage with husband Roy Morris and Johnathan Bond as they performed two songs including *The Teddy Bear Song* - which is celebrating its 50th Anniversary. Barbara was inducted by Johnathan Bond and Bev McCann who serve on the NACMAI Hall of Fame board.

Country Music artist Cody McCarver was honored to perform for Randy Travis. He sang hits, *On The Other Hand* and *Forever and Ever Amen*. Randy sang the last part of his hit song *Amen*, to fans

cheering with a rousing standing ovation with love and admiration for this Country Icon. Music publicist and DJ, Jennifer Herron honored Randy with his induction.

Each artist was filled with love and gratitude for this prestigious accolade with their fellow 2024 inductees. The finale featured the 2024 NACMAI Hall of Fame members, their families, staff and artists as they joined together for *Amazing Grace*, closing out this memorable night.

www.nacmai.org



The famous Country Tonite Theatre in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee... site of the 2024 North America Country Music Hall of Fame induction ceremony.



Barbara Fairchild gracefully accepts her induction



John & Robin Berry together on stage



Cross Country USA Magazine Editor Robin Tanner backstage with John Berry



Cody McCarver and Randy Travis



Johnathan Bond, Barbara Fairchild, and Roy Morris performing Barbara's classic "Teddy Bear Song"



Rena Johnson, Kenyon Lockry, and Cindy Tillis Shorey



The grand finale



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The Story Behind the Song

Staff, Cross Country USA

I BLEED THE COLOR FREE

Written by Deano Graham, Billy Lee Cox, and James Payne

Recorded by Deano Graham

We are thankful to still live in the Land of the Free and the Home of the Brave. Even with the shape this country is in, we still live in the greatest country in the world. We honor those who fight for our freedom, past, present and future. We remember those who gave the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom. In our May issue, Deano Graham shares what inspired his number one song, *I Bleed The Color Free*.

The song idea, or as songwriters like to say, the song hook, came during one of the patriotic holidays. Deano says the hook came immediately. “We all bleed the color free because of the sacrifices that were made by so many who fought and defended this great country of ours. The flag colors came to me and I quickly added “I bleed the red and I bleed the blue.” I shared the song idea with a friend of mine who I’ve played Bluegrass with, Billy Lee Cox, who is also a veteran. We started trading emails and texts back and forth until the song map started to take shape. I used to play with G.I. Joe when I was a little boy. My dad retired from the Army in Ft. Knox in 1968 and my first toy that I can remember was G.I. Joe. What an opening line... “*He plays with G.I. Joe, has a tank in each hand, Someday he’ll sign up to go fight on foreign land.*” My brother joined the Navy when I was eight years old. I remember being devastated as he left home to serve our country.”

He continues, “Billy Lee Cox and I had the song shaping up nicely when I happened to share the song idea with my friend James Payne over dinner in Nashville. By the time he and his wife Lori drove across town to their home, he had texted me saying, ‘The verses are very strong, but this is what I’d do with the chorus.’ Now when James Payne offers his input to a song, it’s wise to receive what he has to give. He made the chorus so nice and strong, and we ended keeping most of what he wrote in the text.”



“In the bridge, I wanted to use the line ‘*The color of our skin didn’t matter to these kids*’ because of all the racial unrest that is present in our society.”

The song was recorded in Nashville at Watershed Recording with an all-star lineup of musicians including Wanda Vick Burchfield playing dobro, Shaun Richardson on acoustic guitar, Mark Burchfield played upright bass, and Andy Leftwich was on fiddle and mandolin. Deano mentions about the

recording session. “When we were charting the song out, I felt we needed to end with an instrumental version of *God Bless America* on the fiddle, and Andy Leftwich nailed it perfectly.”

Audiences everywhere are showing their patriotism when the song is performed in concert. “Whenever our band plays this song at festivals all across the country, the audiences are always standing at attention and in honor of our flag and for those who fought for our freedoms. They’re usually singing the lines of the song and following along as we move throughout the song. It’s a beautiful thing to see patriots and their families of all ages respond to this song.”

The official song video and the lyric video of *I Bleed The Color Free* is on Deano Graham's YouTube channel.

www.deanograham.com

I Bleed The Color Free

*He plays with G.I. Joe, has a tank in each hand
Someday he'll sign up to go fight on foreign land
On the land or in the air, even sailing out to sea
Because of those like him, we all bleed the color free*

*I bleed the red and I bleed the blue
I stand here today to proudly honor you
You made the sacrifice by laying down your life
You did all for me, and because of you
I bleed the color free*

*Broken hearts of moms and dads,
a welcome home that won't be had
Those who died to keep us free,
just know they never took a knee
A flag draped coffin sits, there's a thousand memories
Because of the red white and blue
We all bleed the color free*

*I bleed the red and I bleed the blue
I stand here today to proudly honor you
You made the sacrifice by laying down your life
You did all for me, and because of you
I bleed the color free*

*The color of our skin didn't matter to these kids
They stood for liberty, I want the whole world to see*

*I bleed the red and I bleed the blue
I stand here today to proudly honor you
You made the sacrifice by laying down your life
You did all for me, and because of you
I bleed the color free*

Deano Graham, Billy Lee Cox, James Payne
(Blue Oceans Muzik, ASCAP)

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CrossCountry Report

CHRISTIAN COUNTRY MUSIC NEWS & SCOOPS

Alabama Announces 2024 Roll On II North America Tour, Presented By Kenworth

Alabama, the most successful band in Country music history, revealed its 2024 Roll On II North America Tour, presented by Kenworth. The GRAMMY, CMA, and ACM-Award winning group will tour the countryside, performing in arenas, amphitheaters and at festivals in over 20 cities. Tour stops include Clearwater, Florida; Norfolk, Virginia; Hershey, Pennsylvania; Orange Beach, Alabama; Columbia, South Carolina; Columbus, Ohio, as well as a stop in Dauphin, Manitoba, Canada.

"I look forward to singing *Mountain Music*, *Tennessee River*, *Feels So Right* and so many more," says Alabama front man Randy Owen. "It's just a matter of getting up on stage and enjoying it. We can't wait to see the fans who made it all possible."

This year's Alabama tour will feature special guest artists at select live concert dates. Special guest performers include The Marshall Tucker Band, Diamond Rio, Jamey Johnson, the Bellamy Brothers, Lee Greenwood and more.

Earlier this year, Alabama also announced June Jam XVIII, set to take place June 1 at the VFW Fairgrounds in Fort Payne, Alabama. Owen and Teddy Gentry plan to unveil this year's talent lineup in the coming weeks. Last year's resurrection of the historic event drew nearly 11,000 fans and raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for charity efforts throughout the state.

Additionally, CMT will honor the multi-platinum selling band later this year with "CMT Giants: Alabama." The star-studded TV special will feature performances and appearances by Blake Shelton, Brad Paisley, Evander Holyfield, Jason Aldean, Jamey Johnson, Lionel Richie, Little Big Town, Lorrie Morgan, Luke Bryan, Martina McBride, Old Dominion, Pam Tillis, Riley Green, Sam Hunt and Vince Gill. A broadcast date will be announced later this year.

Over fifty years ago, Jeff Cook, Teddy Gentry and Randy Owen left the cotton farms of Fort Payne, Alabama to spend the summer

playing music in a Myrtle Beach, South Carolina bar called The Bowery. It took them six long years of tip jars and word-of-mouth to earn the major label deal they'd been dreaming of. Then, seemingly, no time at all to change the face of Country music.

Alabama, Country music's first band, was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame in 2005. The group is known for hit songs including *Mountain Music*, *Roll On*, *Dixieland Delight* and *If You're Gonna Play In Texas (You Gotta Have A Fiddle In The Band)*.

From humble beginnings picking cotton in the fields, to international stars, Alabama went on to sell 80 million albums and charted 43 No.1 hits, becoming the most successful band in the history of Country music.



In November 2022, Alabama co-founder Jeff Cook passed away following a lengthy battle with Parkinson's disease. With his prior encouragement and wishes, Alabama continues touring on a limited basis, keeping the iconic music they created alive for the current and future generation of fans.

For tour information, visit www.thealabamaband.com.

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Charley Pride's 'Kiss An Angel Good Mornin' Inducted Into 2024 Grammy Hall of Fame



The Recording Academy® revealed the 2024 inducted recordings to the distinguished GRAMMY Hall Of Fame® on its 50th anniversary. This year's additions include four albums and six singles that exhibit qualitative or historical significance and are at least 25 years old. The inducted recordings will be honored at the GRAMMY Museum's inaugural GRAMMY Hall Of Fame Gala and concert presented by City National Bank on May 21, 2024, at the NOVO Theater in Los Angeles.

The 2024 GRAMMY Hall Of Fame inducted recordings range from Lauryn Hill's *Miseducation of Lauryn Hill* to Guns N' Roses' *Appetite For Destruction*. Others include recordings by DeLa Soul, Buena Vista Social Club, Donna Summer, Charley Pride, Wanda Jackson, Kid Ory's Creole Orchestra, Doobie Brothers, and William Bell.

Charley Pride became a trailblazing Country music superstar with an amazing legacy of hit singles including the GRAMMY Hall of Fame inducted, *Kiss An Angel Good Mornin'*. Pride is a multi-award-winner who has sold tens of millions of records. He is a Grand Ole Opry and Country Music Hall of Fame member.

The GRAMMY Hall Of Fame was established by the Recording Academy's National Trustees in 1973. The inducted recordings are selected annually by a special member committee of eminent and knowledgeable professionals from all branches of the recording arts with final ratification by the Recording Academy's National Board of Trustees. With ten new titles, the Hall, now in

its 50th year, currently totals 1,152 inducted recordings in the GRAMMY Hall Of Fame.

This year, the GRAMMY Hall Of Fame Gala will be the first of what will become an annual event and includes a red carpet and VIP reception on the Ray Charles Terrace at the GRAMMY Museum, followed by a one-of-a-kind concert at the NOVO Theater in downtown Los Angeles.

10th Annual Country For a Cause Benefiting The Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt

Country For A Cause celebrates their 10th annual concert event with many iconic artists. Moe Bandy, John Berry, Chad Brock, T. Graham Brown, Chapel Hart, Lacy J. Dalton, Mike Farris, Crystal Gayle, Terri Gibbs, Lee Greenwood, The Kody Norris Show, John McEuen, Makenzie Phipps, Stephanie Gayle, Sister Sadie, Leona Williams, and more will join hosts, T.G. Sheppard and Kelly Lang, along with Devon O'Day

The 10th Annual Country For A Cause will be held at Nashville's 3rd & Lindsley, Wednesday, June 5 at 6:30 PM benefitting Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt. The show is presented by Gus Arrendale and Springer Mountain Farms.



"To say that Kelly and I are honored to host Country For A Cause again is an understatement," shares Sheppard. "It truly amazes us that this year's group of artists is the most diversified we have ever had the pleasure of hosting. We have everything from Country, Bluegrass, Americana, and much more in between. There will be legends and newcomers... and maybe a couple of surprises along the way. This is going to be an incredible show."

Continued on page 28 >>>



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<<< **Cross Country Report, continued from page 25**

"Kicking off what we have officially dubbed the "unofficial" kick-off to CMA Fan Fest, we are excited to bring our Country music fans and friends what is perhaps our biggest show to date - celebrating our tenth anniversary of Country For A Cause," confides board member Roxane Atwood.

"The talent on this show is amazing! We have multiple Grammy Award winners performing for our event, as well as CMA winners, ACM Award winners, IBMA Award winners, artists representing over 50 #1 hits, and some of the best entertainers in the business. The best part about this concert is that 100% of these music icons volunteer their time for the children, with 100% of the money raised by our show going to the Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt. Thousands of dollars are raised every year for the children because of the hard work of our volunteers, artists, musicians, sound crew, 3rd & Lindsley's spectacular listening room environment. It takes a village to produce a show like this, and we have the best!"

"Country for a Cause is one of my favorite annual events," said Meredith "Mamie" Shepherd, Senior Program Manager for Seacrest Studios at Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt. "We are so fortunate to have T.G. Sheppard and Kelly Lang as wonderful hosts and supporters of our patients and families. Huge thanks to the entire team that puts on such a wonderful night of music to make a difference for the children who rely on us for care."

Artists who have performed throughout the years include Crystal Gayle, The Bellamy Brothers, Mark Wills, Collin Raye, Billy Dean, Jeannie Seely, Jan Howard, John Rich, Lulu Roman, and countless others. In 2018, Country For A Cause teamed with Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt as the sole beneficiary of proceeds raised. In total, \$160,000 has been raised!

For more information, visit facebook.com/countryfac. For more about Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt, visit www.ChildrensHospitalVanderbilt.org.

Global Coin and Lee Greenwood Join Forces

In a groundbreaking move that blends the worlds of precious metals and music entertainment, Global Coin is excited to announce a momentous partnership with the legendary Grammy

award winner, Lee Greenwood. This collaboration brings together two icons from different industries, promising a harmonious venture that aims to resonate with audiences far and wide.

An award-winning Country music artist, Lee Greenwood is celebrated for his powerful and patriotic music that has become synonymous with American pride and values. Best known for his hit song *God Bless the USA*, Greenwood's career has spanned decades, and his influence extends beyond the boundaries of the music industry. His dedication to our troops and veterans is unparalleled, and he's been a continually active supporter.



"When I wrote *God Bless The USA* in the back of my bus in 1983, I had no idea it would become one of America's anthems," says Lee Greenwood. "Now, forty years later, I am thrilled to see so many people continuing to enjoy the song. I hear stories daily on how it helped a serviceman or woman get through an operation or how it was played at a retirement or naturalization ceremony. It really is special and now to announce this partnership and to work with Global Coin to create a legacy piece that will last forever. This special anniversary coin is an heirloom that can be passed down from generation to generation to remember what my song and America means to them."

Global Coin has established itself as a prominent player in the precious metals industry, offering a wide range of gold, silver, platinum, and palladium products to investors and collectors. Known for their commitment to quality and customer experience, they've continually adapted to the evolving landscape of the global economy. They relate to Lee's support for our veterans and

troops, and they admire what he's been able to do for them with his popularity and influence.

The partnership between Global Coin and Lee Greenwood is not just a collaboration; it's a synergy that combines the expertise of a precious metal leader with the charisma of a music legend. The two entities share common values, such as dedication to quality, commitment to their craft, and a deep connection with their audience.

One of the exciting aspects of this collaboration is the creation of an exclusive Lee Greenwood commemorative anniversary silver coin. This anniversary coin will showcase the iconic text "God Bless The U.S.A." with stunning imagery and a "40th Anniversary" label to signify the forty years since the song's release, making them not only valuable as precious metal coins but also as collector's items for fans of Lee Greenwood. Global Coin states they are honored and privileged to be in the position to help Lee celebrate the 40th anniversary of his iconic song.

www.shopglobalcoin.com



New Record Label, Country Box Records

Jimmy Adams, CEO of Country Box, "Where Music Meets Boxing," is proud to announce the addition to Country Box with Country Box Records.

Country Music artist, Leon Everette has been assigned to President of the label and Debbie Bennett has accepted the

position as Administrator to the label while remaining CEO of Grace Records Nashville, LLC. Watch for updates as they progress.

Oliver Anthony Releases Much Anticipated Full-Length Studio Album "Hymnal of a Troubled Man's Mind"

Continuing his unique journey, breakout singer-songwriter Oliver Anthony recently announced the release of his first studio album, "Hymnal of a Troubled Man's Mind."

He has been described by some as a voice from a distant era - one who nevertheless has made a stunning impact on the digital age. The native Virginian who first emerged last fall returns now with entirely self-penned stories from an often unseen side of the American experience.

"'Hymnal of a Troubled Man's Mind' is the story of my life, from 2013 until 2023," shares Chris Lunsford, the man and voice

behind Oliver Anthony. "It is intended for the listener to sit down in a quiet place, undistracted and just listen beginning to end. Every lyric, every note - every-everything - is intentionally placed. This album represents the most pure and transparent view inside my heart and soul that I could offer. While *Rich Men North of Richmond* was the song that got my name out in the public, this release represents the true foundation of the music that got me through life up until now."

With little more than acoustic guitar, upright bass, fiddle and expressive vocal, the songs on "Hymnal of a Troubled Man's Mind" speak to personal and universal struggles faced by the modern day working-class.



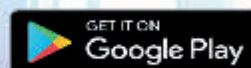
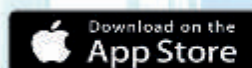
"In sort of a beautiful and crazy way, nearly all the songs that my fans listen to outside of the RadioWV session from August of 2023, are those Android recordings I recorded almost immediately after writing each song in 2022-2023. Think of them like a rough draft: in many cases, I had written the song not even thirty minutes before recording. My motivation for uploading was mainly to create a tangible medium, so the songs were safe for me to play at open mics without worrying about them being stolen. I feel that it was my responsibility to give a handful of my early written songs the completion they deserve. Now, I can begin releasing my most recent work, without feeling like I skipped an important step."

Continued on page 32 >>>



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<<< Cross Country Report, continued from page 29

Following the overnight success of *Rich Men North of Richmond*, which struck a chord with people around the world tallying over 250 Million global streams alone, people wanted to hear more of Oliver Anthony. They listened to what they could find online, and now with the ability to properly capture the songs, Oliver Anthony and Grammy-winner Dave Cobb recorded ten songs in an empty, once-vibrant-but-now-decaying church in Savannah, Georgia that truly captures the stark imagery and sense of loss at the project's core. "Hymnal of a Troubled Man's Mind" is an independent release; with steadfast resolve, Oliver Anthony declined numerous record label offers, a deliberate choice that underscores his commitment to artistic integrity and autonomy.

After a blockbuster European run with a sold-out two-night debut at Nashville's iconic Ryman Auditorium in February, the massive RODEOHOUSTON and the CMC Rocks QLD 2024 festival in Willowbank, Australia, Oliver Anthony will continue with the Out of the Woods World Tour with dozens of headline, festival and fair dates still on tap across the U.S. and beyond.

www.OliverAnthonyMusic.com

Phil Robertson's Book, "I Could Be Wrong, But I Doubt It"

Discover the completely unique qualifications and accomplishments of Jesus Christ - the Creator of everything, the King who will set you free, and the best friend you could ever have.

Over nearly five decades of walking with God, podcaster, author and Duck Dynasty star Phil Robertson has learned a thing or two about why Jesus is the only one worth following. Of all the things we could put our trust in, only Jesus has the answers to our questions and the solutions for our problems.

Plenty of people claim to have the answers for a better life. Politicians claim they can fix our nation. Scientists and technologists trumpet the latest and greatest discoveries that'll make everything right. Self-help gurus offer one pathway to peace after another. But it's no secret that our world is

increasingly divided and broken - and we've got the fear, anxiety, and hopelessness to prove it. Jesus alone can make good on the promise of lasting peace, real freedom, and life eternal.

With his trademark directness, humor, and insight, Phil will help you - experience Jesus as the Creator and all-powerful Sustainer of all creation; reconcile your own brokenness and sinfulness with Jesus' unending well healing, forgiveness, and peace; develop the eyes to see Jesus for who he really is: the friend who will always be there for you, no matter what

mistakes you've made; and look to the Bible to get to know Jesus and better understand His grace and love for you.

The pleasures and joys of this world are fleeting at best, damaging counterfeits at worst. But Phil has good news for you: Jesus offers life, joy, and peace, and he's never more than a prayer away. "I Could Be Wrong, But I Doubt It" was released March 12, 2024 and published by Nelson Books.

Phil Robertson is a professional hunter who invented his own duck call and founded the successful Duck Commander company. He also starred in the popular television series on A&E, *Duck Dynasty*, and is now the co-host of the hugely popular podcast, *Unashamed with Phil & Jase Robertson*. He is a *New York Times* best selling author of *Jesus Politics*; *The Theft of America's Soul*; *Happy, Happy, Happy*; and *UnPHILtered*. He and his wife, Kay, live in West Monroe, Louisiana. He has five children, nineteen grandchildren, and thirteen great-grandchildren.

The Malpass Brothers TV Show Premieres on RFD TV

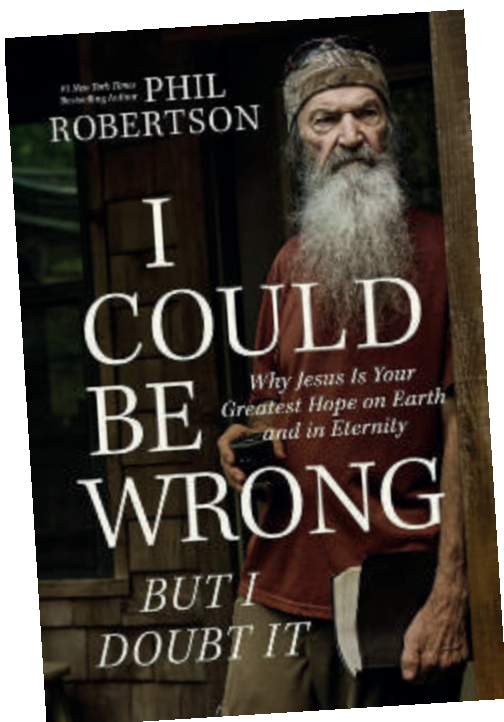
The Malpass Brothers, Chris and Taylor are best known as modern-day troubadours who carry the torch for Traditional Country music. The brothers are bringing their blend of Country music, humor, and Gospel along with legends that influenced them. The Malpass Brothers guests include Gene Watson, Jeff & Sheri Easter, T. Graham Brown, Leroy Van Dyke, Jimmy Fortune and many more. Filmed at the Cowboy Channel Studios in Fort Worth Texas, The Malpass Brothers TV Show premieres in May 2024.



The Malpass Brothers began singing and playing together professionally at a very young age. Alongside their dad, Chris Malpass, Sr., the siblings performed at churches all over the southeast, but they continued to hone their traditional sound by working alongside and amongst the legends.

The Malpass Brothers made their Grand Ole Opry debut in December of 2018 and have been asked to return to the hallowed circle well many times since. The brother duo has headlined international tours and festivals in Ireland, Switzerland, and in Scotland, and been featured on multiple national television shows including TBN's "The Huckabee Show" and RFD's "Country's Family Reunion" and "Larry's Country Diner." The Malpass Brothers currently perform over 150 dates per year to packed houses.

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ARTIST SPOTLIGHT

Randy Wheaton

By Joanne Blakley

Introducing Gospel singer and songwriter from Union County, Illinois... Randy Wheaton.

Randy got his start as a Christian musician at an early age, singing and making music with his family. The Wheaton Family musicians are well known throughout southern Illinois, singing at revivals and other special events. He's sung with other groups as well, including Southern Cross, the Gabriels, Chosen Heart, and the Heartland Boys.

Randy has pastored the New Hope Baptist Church in Willisville, Illinois, and the Oasis of Grace and Casper Churches in Anna. He's frequently invited to other churches as a guest pastor and musician.

Randy has the God-given talent for playing multiple instruments, including keyboard, bass guitar, harmonica, and banjo.

He's written and recorded several songs, including *Final Call*, *Your Love Touches Me*, *Holy Highway Headed Home*, and *One Moment of Time*. Gospel singer Zac Clifton in Texas will be recording several of these with the goal of a CD collection of Randy's songs.

His song, *Peace to Me*, co-written with Linda Frailey, has been chosen by Wilds and Associates to be on this month's compilation disc, and will be played on 1400 radio stations.

Randy is also an author. His books include "Is Anyone Listening" and the "Battlelines Series: Spiritual Warfare."

Randy and his family manage The Closet Ministry in Anna and The Stable Ministry in Ware, Illinois, to win souls and be a blessing though a thrift store type outlet. They offer clothing and food items at no cost - donation only.



Though his family was 'dirt poor' during his childhood, they loved the Lord and made Him the center of their lives. They were rich in love and fellowship, and God always provided, miracle after miracle.

Right before turning 70, Randy had a major stroke. Today there are no signs that it ever happened - his speech, movement, and balance have all returned to normal.

Randy and wife Kathy have been married almost fifty years with five children and a quiver-full of grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Randy's prayer is that his music will touch hearts and save souls.

Randy can be contacted by email: dhce05@gmail.com.



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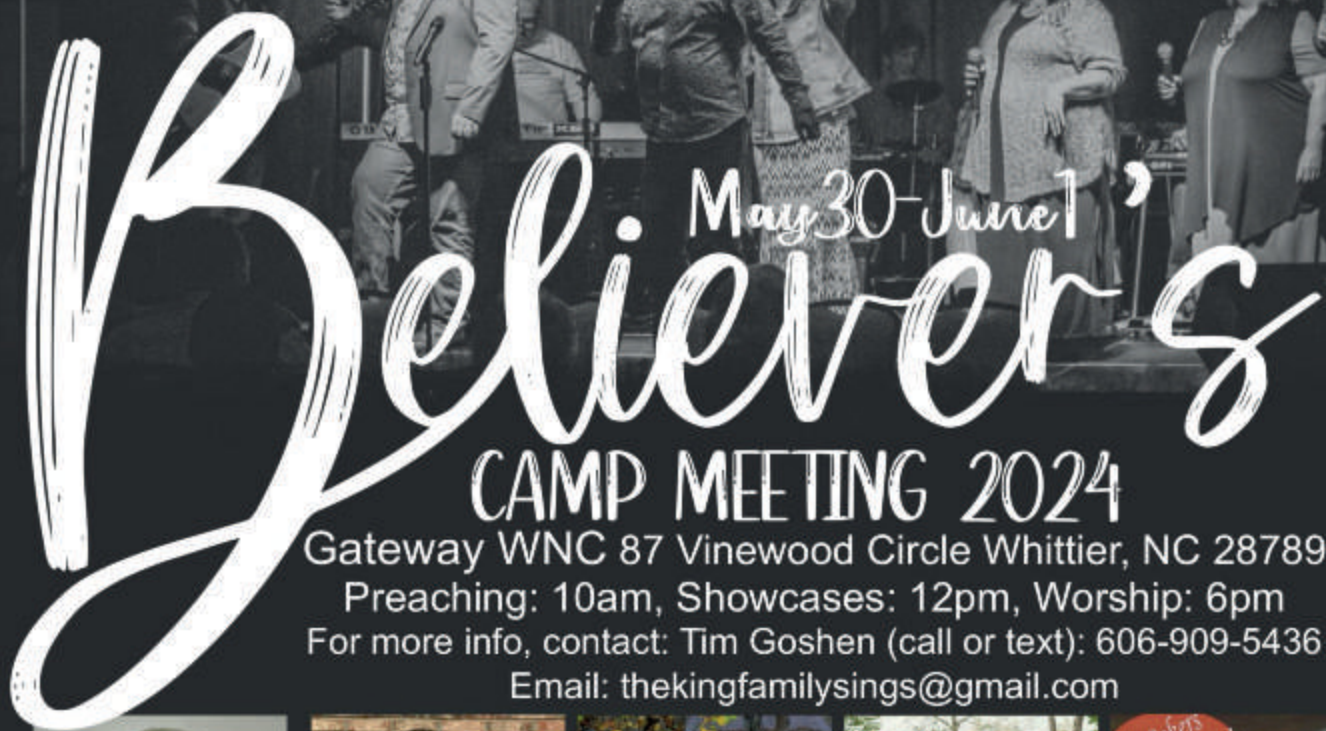
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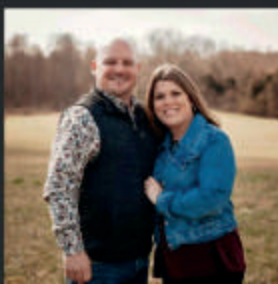
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"Well...Glory!"

Susan Agee Hicks

By Robin Tanner

Susan Agee Hicks has been singing for the Lord for 59 years. She has one main central message. "My message is there is hope for the hurting and salvation for the lost that turn to the Savior."

Susan reflects back to childhood memories of being at the Ryman Auditorium, in Nashville, Tennessee. The Wally Fowler All Night Singing Convention was held every first Friday night of the month. "We were there when it started at 6:00 PM until the last song sung, even if that was 1:00 AM! My love for Gospel music came from my parents. I remember sitting there listening to all the singers thinking how I wish I could do that someday. Now here I am, seventy years old, living that dream!

"Children, if you have a dream, don't give up," she adds. "I am the poster child for 'it's never too late.' It didn't happen for me until I got me out of the way and let God lead me. He will do the same for you in your calling."

Almost twenty years ago the Lord started dealing with Susan to begin a music ministry. She admits, “I gave all the usual excuses, ‘I don’t sing that well’ or ‘can’t remember the words.’ ‘I don’t play an instrument well enough.’” She laughs, “I had stage fright so bad I nearly...well, let’s just say my shoes worried a lot! I weighed 323 lbs., and I couldn’t get out of a chair without help. So, I told the Lord, ‘You know, I’d do that for you Lord, but I just can’t because of all of these reasons.’ Let me tell you, do not challenge God if you’re not willing to do His will!”

In less than two weeks, she was approved for Gastric Bypass surgery, and she lost 187 lbs. A friend taught Susan how to use a sound system and tracks while on stage. She can remember the words to around 160 songs. Susan confessed, “So, all I can say is, ‘Lord, where do you want me to go?’ He also led me to build my own recording studio, Farmhouse Studio. I enjoy creating all the graphics, recording, and helping others spread the Gospel as much as I enjoy working for myself.”

Another way Susan touches lives through her ministry is with comedy. “I have a character, Sockie Sue, that I do from time to time.

She and her husband Muddy came from a monologue that I found on my grandmother’s wall from wallpapering with newspapers back in the Great Depression. She’s a combination of several loved ones right down to my cousin and her ‘Celery (Cell) Phone!’” Her stories and comedy of Sockie Sue bring a smile to audiences everywhere.

After her children were grown with families of their own, Susan finally decided to pursue extending her education. She received her associate degree and discovered she was close to having enough credits for her bachelor’s which is a dual in English and psychology at the tender age of sixty. “I fell in love with studying psychology and was led to complete my Master’s Degree in Marriage and Family Therapy when I was sixty-five.”

Susan admits, “I’ve tried retiring twice but will never completely retire. I love working with my clients, trying to help them find a way to turn their negative life experiences into positive. I’ve lived through some pretty tough times myself and now I count them as a blessing because they prepared me for the work I do now. I can’t say I know exactly how my clients feel, but I’ve got a pretty good idea. I count it a blessing to be able to share my own experiences, trying to help those I work with to know how to move from being a victim to a survivor. After seven years of classes and a whole lot of money later, I’ve found that therapy boils down to one

central truth. By focusing on the positives in your life you can move your focus from the negatives. My parents taught me this truth all my life. We just called it ‘counting your blessings!’”

Last year, Susan was blessed to become an investor in Grace Records Nashville, LLC. She is also an investor in the movie “The Message” and will have a small part.



Susan in character as “Sockie Sue”

Susan has recently recorded three songs in Nashville at Omni Studios and released her version of the Josh Turner hit, *Long Black Train*. The song features a companion video which was filmed with Adams Media and was released on iTube247 and has gone out all over the world. The video has had over 305,000 views and the audio release over 173,000. Susan jokingly mentions, “I’m viral and I don’t even feel sick! I am completely blown away by this. Never in my wildest dreams could I have envisioned a blessing of this size. God has laid this song heavily on my heart because if America and Christians do not get back in an altar somewhere and pray for our nation, we may not survive Satan’s long black train. If you have loved ones you’ve been praying for many years, keep on praying. You never

know when God is going to move, it could be tomorrow, so don’t give up today.”

Susan is very appreciative for all the requests and those that have listened to and watched *Long Black Train*. “My prayer is out of all those people, surely someone, somewhere, has found there is hope or turned to the Lord for salvation.”

Susan’s next single release, *Two Coats* is coming out soon. She produced it and is singing all four parts. “I’ve finally become a group! This song “talks” to me. They all do. If I don’t feel it first, I can’t pass it on to others. I pray my music is a blessing to someone.”

For the past couple of months God has been laying it on Susan’s heart to share with others that when hard times come, they are not necessarily for correction. She states, Sometimes, these times come for our learning and to give us the opportunity to be a witness. It’s all in how you look at it. If we view something as negative, it will be, but turn your thinking around and it can become a positive blessing. If you want to change your life, change your way of thinking.”

In conclusion, Susan mentions, “My parents passed away before this journey began but my daddy was my biggest and only fan. I know he would be proud of me. Sometimes when I’m singing, I can feel his spirit close to me. I’ve come a long way and I can’t wait to see what the Lord has in store for me next. All I can say is well...glory!!”

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BUDDY & INA GORE

By Tina Wakefield



Believing that music is one of the few things in life that can cross all boundaries, Buddy & Ina Gore share the Gospel of Jesus Christ, ministering through Spirit led music. For over 41 years, "Making a Joyful noise unto the Lord" and presenting the Gospel in song and testimony has been their number one priority.

Ina grew up in a musical family from Oklahoma. At the age of five her mother began to teach her to sing harmony, but Ina was very shy. "I was so shy I would hold onto my mother's dress tail as I sang with her. I don't know why holding her dress gave me so much courage, but it did. There are times in my life now that I wish for that dress tail to hold onto."

Reality can be quite different from the picture-perfect life often imagined. Ina found herself as a mother of two young children with two failed marriages, moving back home with her mom and dad to heal. God, in all His grace, reached out to Ina and once again Ina gave her heart to serving the Lord. She and her sisters formed a trio and traveled for several years until she married again and moved to Arkansas.

The move to Arkansas would open new doors for Ina, but also lead her away from serving the Lord. She was introduced to the world of radio where she would work in DeQueen, Nashville, and Arkansas along with singing as part of a Country music show. Eventually, her radio work would relocate her to Paris, Texas, working at KPLT radio where Dewayne Allen of The Oak Ridge Boys was still in college and hosting a one-hour Gospel music show.

As her life took another unexpected turn, she found herself single again and returned to Oklahoma to sing with her sisters. She was serving the Lord once again and it seemed life was good.

Buddy explains, "My life was very different from Ina's in that my family was so very chaotic that I lived mostly with my grandparents on a farm in Campbell, Texas."

In school, Buddy was notoriously known for his mischief as the class clown. "I got sent to the office on a regular basis for disrupting class with my antics" he admits. Ina chimes in adding, "It's probably those antics that endeared him to his teachers as he was and still is the life of the party - which they still reminisce about at class reunions. He has not changed much, if any!"

Unlike Ina, Buddy didn't grow up in a musical family, but music always fascinated him. "I bought a guitar and started learning to play. I used to sit on my little Welsh trick pony on highway 67 when I was little with that old guitar and sing. People would give me money, and I thought that was pretty cool, so I aspired to be a Country music star - which didn't turn out too well!"

Buddy married young and started a family doing whatever it took to make a living. A man of many talents, he worked as a horse trainer, a steer wrestler on the rodeo circuit for fifteen years, and later managed a large ranch. Just as with Ina, life handed him some unexpected circumstances and Buddy found himself divorced with his life going downhill. He says, "I lost everything except two horses, a horse trailer, and the clothes on my back."

One night, Ina and her sister were enjoying dinner with one of her sisters at a little diner when Buddy came walking in. "I walked into that all night café and there sat a dark-haired woman, and I knew my life was about to change," Buddy recalls. Ina adds, "That night I met the man who would become my best friend and ministry partner."

Psalm 100 was originally formed by Ina and four friends in 1979. Over the years, major changes have taken place that eventually evolved as the husband/wife duo of today.

Buddy and Ina count it a privilege to ministry anywhere God opens the door, "We have ministered under interstate overpasses, housing projects where crime and drugs were rampant, homeless shelters, street corners, hot asphalt parking lots at 110 degrees, or a trailer in 30-degree weather, even where the wind blew the speakers over - anywhere God opened the door, we have been there."

Over the years, Buddy and Ina have shared the stage with such greats as the Happy Goodmans, The Blackwoods, The Nelons, Gold City, Wendy Bagwell & The Sunliters, The Perrys, and many more.

Receiving the Joe Paul Nichols Lifetime Achievement Award at ICGMA was one of their most memorable moments. Some of their latest awards include the 2017 Texoma GMA Pioneer Award, 2017 Texoma GMA Hall of Fame, 2018 Gospel Music FanFair 'Favorite Duet,' and 2019 Gospel Music Artist Association 'Duo of the Year,' along with countless others too numerous to mention. Awards and honors are a part of any great ministry and even though Buddy and Ina do not minister for these accolades they are appreciated. Their greatest joy is seeing people saved, restored and broken hearts mended. For this couple, that's what it's all about.

When asked what advice these two seasoned ministers would offer others, they say, "We believe all artists should have a home church no matter if they can only attend occasionally. We need a place to be refueled. Be sure God has called you into the ministry and not just something you want to do. Pray and seek Him for guidance."

The latest single release from Buddy and Ina is *My Bottle of Tears*, distributed by Canyon Creek Records. The duo currently has several projects with several charting songs including *The Sweetest Gift*, *Let It Rain On Me*, *The Price of Freedom*, *30 Brave Men*, *He'll Never Leave Me Alone*, *Just Might Be Going Home Today*, and *Ain't That What It's All About*.

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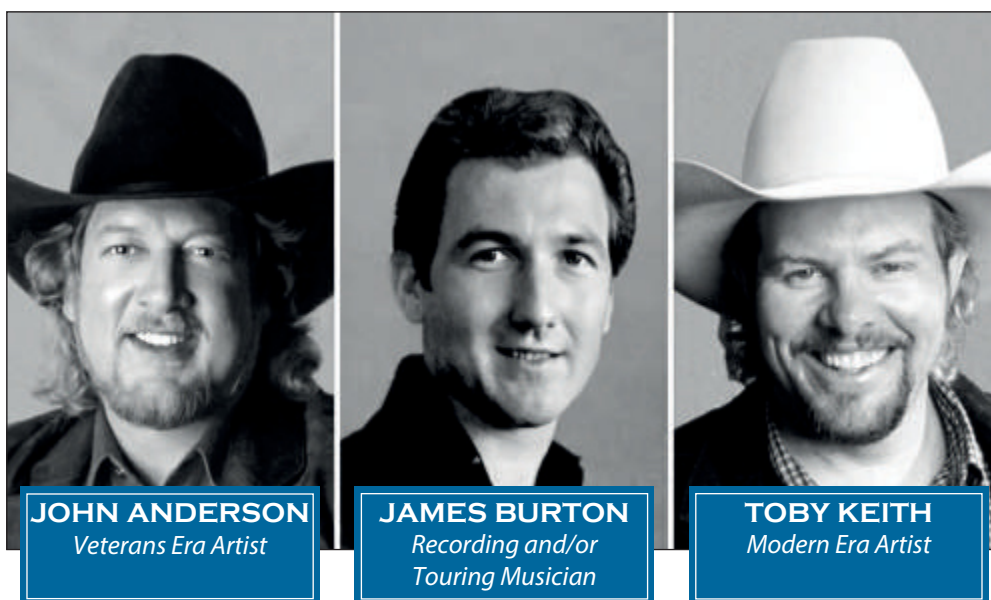
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COUNTRY MUSIC HALL *of* FAME

CMA Announces James Burton, John Anderson and Toby Keith as the Country Music Hall of Fame Class of 2024



Staff, Country Music Association

Three members of the Country music community were announced as the next inductees into the Country Music Hall of Fame on March 18, making up its Class of 2024. The late Toby Keith was named as the Modern Era Artist category inductee. John Anderson will be inducted in the Veterans Era Artist category, and guitarist James Burton will be inducted in the Recording and/or Touring Musician category. They join 152 others who are members and will be formally inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame during the annual medallion ceremony set for this October. The Country Music Association (CMA) created the Country Music Hall of Fame in 1961 to recognize artists and industry professionals with Country music's highest honor.

"Each of these inductees have made an indelible impact on Country music," Country Music Association CEO Sarah Trahern told the audience that gathered at the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum's rotunda.



JOHN ANDERSON

Florida native John Anderson was named to the Veterans Era Artist category. “This is probably the greatest honor I could ever receive, standing on this stage today...still trying to get a grasp on the reality of this happening to me. I’m so very proud and so honored,” Anderson told the crowd in accepting the honor, thanking fans and people at the CMA and Hall of Fame. “Many people to thank along the way. This is an institution that preserves greatness and I know it is, because I have many dear friends who are in the Hall of Fame. The fact that I get a chance to be amongst this kind of greatness, words can’t really explain for me how important it is. Music has been what keeps me driven since I was just a child and I have so much to be thankful for.”

Anderson released several singles in the 1970s, including 1979’s *Your Lying Blue Eyes* and *She Just Started Liking Cheatin’ Songs* before issuing his debut album in 1980. Anderson’s penchant for shuffles, waltzes, and ballads brought him his first top 5 Hot Country Songs hit with a cover of Billy Joe Shaver’s *I’m Just An Old Chunk of Coal (But I’m Gonna Be a Diamond Someday)*. In September 1982, the title track for his album *Wild and Blue* was on point to become his first Hot Country Songs No. 1, Three weeks after *Wild and Blue* hit No. 1, Anderson’s *Swingin’* hit the Hot Country Songs chart and ten weeks later, became Anderson’s second No. 1 hit. *Swingin’* was honored as the ‘Single of the Year’ at the 1983 CMA Awards, the same evening that Anderson took home the ‘Horizon Award’ win. Between 1981 and 1983, Anderson earned six top 10 Hot Country Songs hits and three No. 1s on that chart.

His singles began peaking lower on the chart in subsequent years, until his career came roaring back in the 1990s with songs including the Hot Country Songs No. 1 hits, *Straight Tequila Night* and *Money in the Bank*, as well as the

top 5 Hot Country Songs hit, *I Wish I Could Have Been There*. Another of those ’90s hits, the No. 2 Hot Country Songs hit *Seminole Wind*, had an environmentally conscious bent. While Anderson wasn’t a writer on the song, he recognized its potential. *Seminole Wind* sold three million copies, becoming a career-defining song for Anderson.



JAMES BURTON

Louisiana native and guitarist James Burton, who in the 1950s developed the “chicken pickin” style of guitar playing, was announced as an inductee by hall members Brooks & Dunn. Fellow Louisiana native Brooks called Burton “a hometown hero.” “I’m honored. It’s just amazing. Actually, I’m really surprised. I want to thank all of you guys for your love and support. It’s truly an honor,” Burton told the crowd.

Burton began playing guitar at thirteen years old, inspired by a white 1953 Telecaster electric guitar and the work of his musical heroes including Chet Atkins and Les Paul. Burton developed a hybrid picking style that used a flat pick between his thumb and index finger, as well as a fingerpick on his middle finger. He would mimic the slide of a pedal steel, but also blend in staccato notes - the style became known as chicken pickin’.

Burton quickly became the youngest staff musician on the Country music show, Louisiana Hayride. A few years later, Dale Hawkins set lyrics to a guitar instrumental Burton had written, resulting in the Billboard top 30 hit *Susie-Q* in 1957. Burton soon joined Ricky Nelson’s backing band and went on to play on records by Buck Owens, Merle Haggard, Waylon Jennings, Glen Campbell, the Everly Brothers, the Monkees, and others. His work is heard on soundtracks for movies including *Rio Bravo* and *Viva Las Vegas*.

When Elvis Presley debuted at Las Vegas' International Hotel in 1969, Presley called Burton and asked him to put a band together; the result was Burton becoming band leader and lead guitarist for Presley's "Takin' Care of Business" band. Burton played with Presley for the remainder of Presley's life. He played on Gram Parson's "GB" and "Grievous Angels" albums and was in the first version of Emmylou Harris's Hot Band. After Presley's death in 1977, Burton played in John Denver's band for two decades. Burton was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2001 and the Musicians Hall of Fame in 2007. Burton was so associated with the Fender Telecaster that when Fender launched its first "signature" Telecaster in 1990, it bore Burton's name.



TOBY KEITH

On February 6, it was announced that Toby Keith had passed away after a battle with stomach cancer. CMA CEO Sarah Trahern told the audience gathered in the Hall of Fame's rotunda that she learned that Keith would become one of the newest inductees just a few hours after Keith's passing. Trahern noted that while election rules do not allow someone to be elected into the Country Music Hall of Fame in the year in which they pass away, that doesn't apply, as Keith was elected prior to his passing.

"Nominations were made in the fall of 2023 with the first ballot sent to voters before the holidays, with the final ballot closing on Friday, February 2," Trahern said. "Our professional services partners at Deloitte released the results to us just a few days later. This year, we anticipated receiving the names of our final inductees on Tuesday, February 6. As we know now, we woke up that morning to the heartbreaking news that our friend Toby Keith had lost his long battle with stomach cancer. What's bittersweet is that just a few hours

later, our team received word from Deloitte that he'd been elected in the Modern-Era category. Truly one of the greatest honors of my job is getting to inform these inductees that they are the newest members of the hallowed class. My heart sank that Tuesday afternoon, knowing that we had missed the chance to inform Toby while he was still with us, but I have no doubt that he is smiling down on us, knowing that he will always be 'as good as he once was.'"

Oklahoma native Keith began playing guitar on an instrument his grandmother bought him. He later began touring regionally with his band Easy Money. Keith admired artists such as Merle Haggard and Bob Seger, who also wrote their own songs. Harold Shedd (Mercury Records Nashville head at the time) heard about Keith's music and traveled to Oklahoma City to meet him. The songs Shedd heard on cassette included three of the songs that would become Keith's first four singles, including *Should've Been a Cowboy*, *Wish I Didn't Know Now* and *He Ain't Worth Missing*. The fourth song was *Does that Blue Moon Ever Shine on You*, which became a No. 1 hit from Keith's 1996 album "Blue Moon." *Should've Been a Cowboy* was an immediate hit for Keith.

During his career, Keith earned 20 Billboard Country Airplay hits, and was a writer or co-writer on many of those. When Mercury turned down his fifth album, Keith asked the label to release him from his contract. Keith paid Mercury for the album and took it to DreamWorks Nashville, which was being run by his producer James Stroud. The album's first single, *How Do You Like Me Now?*, spent five weeks at No. 1. His five DreamWorks albums all went multi-Platinum, with 2002's "Unleashed" and 2003's "Shock'n Y'all" reaching 5x Platinum. His songs, including, *You Shouldn't Kiss Me Like This*, *I Love This Bar* and *American Soldier* spent multiple weeks atop the charts, while *As Good As I Once Was* and a duet with Willie Nelson called *Beer for My Horses* each spent six weeks at No. 1.

Keith wrote *Courtesy of the Red, White and Blue (The Angry American)* in the wake of the September 11, 2001 attacks, and following his father's passing in March of that same year. The song became a lightning rod of controversy. Always an ardent supporter of the U.S. military, Keith performed on 11 U.S.O. tours, playing more than 200 shows for members of the U.S. Armed Forces. He also earned the hit *American Soldier*, which details the daily sacrifices and struggles of those in the U.S. armed forces.

In 2005, Keith launched his own label, Show Dog Records, releasing songs including *American Ride*, *Hope on the Rocks*, *Made In America*, *God Love Her* and *Don't Let the Old Man In*, which he wrote after being inspired by Clint Eastwood, who later featured it in his 2018 film *The Mule*.

Keith was inducted into the Oklahoma Hall of Fame in 2007, the all-genre Songwriters Hall of Fame in 2015 and the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame in 2021. Keith was honored with the National Medal of the Arts in 2020 and the BMI Icon Award in 2022.

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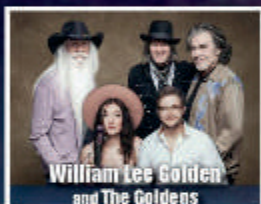
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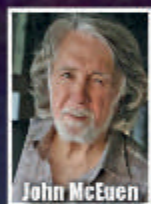
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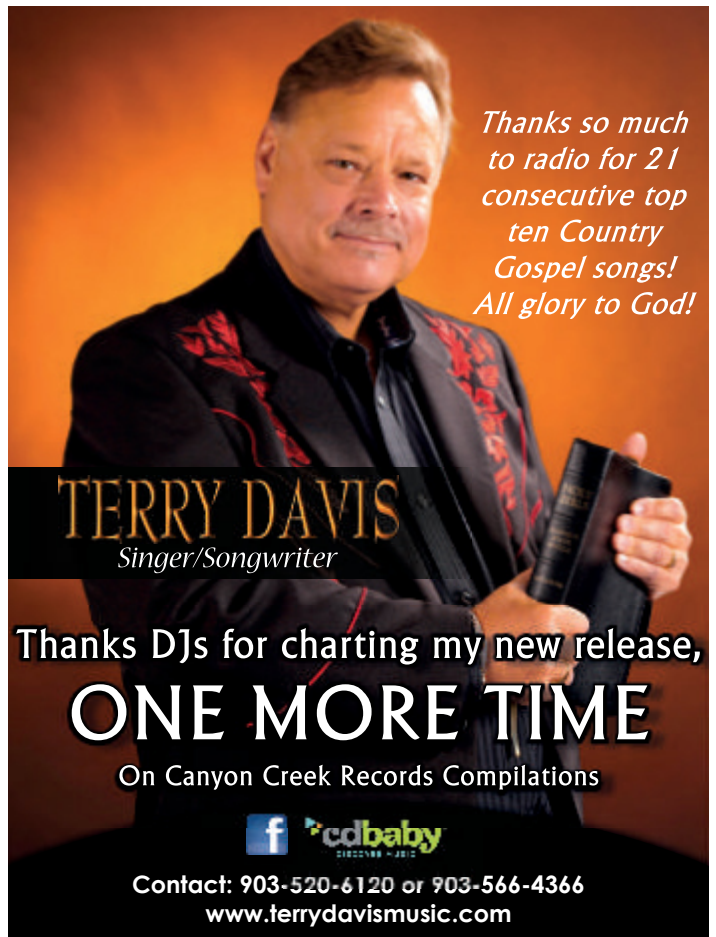
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BARBARA FAIRCHILD

Legendary Entertainer Makes 'Musical Magic!'

Staff, Cross Country USA

'Musical Magic' may best describe the brand-new Barbara Fairchild album produced by Country Music Hall of Fame icon, Don Williams. "All My Cloudy Days Are Gone" was released on 65South Records with ten songs featuring Don Williams, not only behind the scenes, but you can hear the gentle giant harmonizing with one of his favorite singers and longtime friend, Barbara Fairchild.

“**T**he release of this album is a dream come true for me. Produced by the great Don Williams, the circumstances that led to the release of this album are a true miracle. The album truly has Don Williams’ “magic” all over it,” states Fairchild.

These recordings were 38 years in the making. This was a personal project that came to light out of the late Don Williams’ admiration for Fairchild’s singing. The result is powerful with some of the best work from two of the great talents in Country music. So much so, the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum in Nashville, Tennessee has recognized its historical and cultural uniqueness and will add this album to their exclusive archived catalog.

Don Williams’ manager at the time, music industry veteran John Dorris stated, “I don’t recall Don ever producing another artist. He thought that much of Barbara’s talents. I’d say this was truly a labor of love.”

The easy, gentle flow of this collection of music is reminiscent of the ‘Gentle Giant of Country Music’s’ stylings. Don Williams’ stamp is evident right down to the song selection filled with lyrics and arrangements showcasing Barbara Fairchild’s distinct heartfelt delivery.

Amongst the ten tracks is the memorable title track, *All My Cloudy Days Are Gone*. The Country music sweetheart and Christian Music Hall of Fame member recorded a song Kathy Mattea would later have a hit with, *Goin’ Gone*. Plus, another highlight of the album is a song that became familiar with Johnny Cash and June Carter Cash fans along the way but has never been heard like this before. It’s Barbara’s sweet, smooth vocal performance on her version of *Where Did We Go Right*.





Early photo of Barbara and Don

The release of “All of My Cloudy Days Are Gone” comes one year after the 50th anniversary of her signature hit, *Teddy Bear Song*. Barbara also had the number one Christian Country Song on the Cashbox Chart for March 2024, *Once Upon A Cross*. She is also one of the newest members of the North American Country Music Hall of Fame.

Even more extraordinary, Barbara Fairchild will travel to Ireland for the first time since touring the country with Don Williams. Fairchild is filming a television event in June with one of Ireland’s most beloved international entertainers, Daniel O’ Donnell, a special for his own TV show titled “The Opry le Daniel.”

With a singing career spanning over six decades, Barbara Fairchild calls this album a favorite, sharing, “Don was one of a kind, and a

priceless friend to me. What a joy to have worked with him on tours and in the studio.”

Known for her signature hit, *Teddy Bear Song*, Barbara Fairchild is a Grammy Award nominated and Christian Music Hall of Fame entertainer. Fairchild began singing at the age of five, now performing to crowds for over six decades. In total, Fairchild has charted 37 singles in addition to recording numerous albums.

After many years in Country music, Barbara turned her attention to Gospel music. She remembers, “I was pursuing a Country music career at the time and continued on that road for several years. I have made many wonderful life-long friends in that field of music. God allowed me to run that track for a time, but nothing compares to the exceeding greatness of knowing Jesus Christ as my Lord! God had some plans in mind for me that I would never have dreamed of, and that part of my life is still being written every day!”

Today, Barbara and her husband, Roy, travel and perform concert dates and churches all over the United States. Barbara shares, “I feel so blessed in my life to do the things I have done. Especially, this point in my life with celebrating fifty years of *Teddy Bear Song* being number one. I told the Lord I have done far beyond anything I ever dreamed. You blessed me to do what I love. But, if there is more you want me to do,

I will go do them. I am blessed with the honors, but at the end of the day I will take all the thank yous and the recognition and lay them at the feet of Jesus. It’s all about Him.”

Barbara’s sincere love for people and her bubbly personality bring light to why the phrase, “to see her is to love her” best defines Barbara Fairchild.

“All My Cloudy Days Are Gone” is available for download or streaming on all digital platforms. Fans can purchase CDs and flash drives from the website.



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The Legacy & Music of MERLE HAGGARD

Merle Haggard is definitely one of the most influential artists in Country music. He's frequently mentioned by the Traditional Country artists that have followed in this legend's footsteps. Known as "The Poet of the Common Man," he penned songs that spoke to everyone from the working class to the lonely and broken. We honor the man, the music, and the legacy of Merle Haggard.

As stated on his website, Merle was his own documentarian of the challenges he faced in covert autobiographical compositions such as *The Running Kind* and *Rambling Man*, about his restlessness which then led to his incarceration. Born through his experiences were songs such as *Branded Man*, *Sing Me Back Home*, and *Mama Tried*, in which he announced he turned 21 in prison.

Always there was love in his life and he had lots to say on the subject in such songs as *Silver Wings*, *Always Wanting You*, *Today I Started Loving You Again* and *It's Not Love*. Woven in there were the drinking and gambling songs chronicling more of Haggard's troubled times.

All those troubles, though, ultimately led Haggard to forty number ones on the Billboard Country charts, two Grammy Awards and the Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award in 2006, multiple Country Music Association Awards, and many from the Academy of Country Music. Not to mention the Kennedy Center Honor in 2010.

Haggard confirmed in his 1981 autobiography "Sing Me Back Home," that prison became part of the life experience that made him who he was as a person and a creative force. "I believe I survived prison not because it taught me a lesson - though I learned a lot - but because I had to prove I could survive," he said in the book. "I believe I got my life together in spite of prison, maybe even in defiance of it. I will say this now, and it'll sound strange, but prison was an experience I'm glad I had. I could have done without it, but for all it gave me and all it took away, I believe the score was on the plus side."

In Haggard's book, his mother Flossie described Merle as unpredictable, but he was always a music lover. Haggard said his sister Lillian told him their mama said even before he was born, music would be his birthright. She named him Merle after a musician friend of the family.



Merle Haggard was born on April 6, 1937, in Oildale, California. Their first home was a boxcar. His father James passed away when Merle was just nine years old. Once Haggard's daddy was gone, he had no use for discipline or authority and no desire to attend school. The year after his father died, he hopped his first of many freight trains with his schoolmate Billy Thorpe, riding to Fresno. Of course they were caught.

School may not have interested Haggard, but music definitely did. Explaining his relationship with music in his book, Haggard said, "Like a dear friend, it's puzzled me at times, but never disappointed me. Like a good woman, it's given me comfort and pleasure, and asked only respect and attention in return. Like a religion, it has offered me a reason for being when other things have slipped away. But most of all, it has become an extension of my feelings, allowing me that little piece of immortality everybody dreams about."

He learned the fiddle which would serve him well in the future. Then when his older brother Lowell brought a beat-up guitar home when Merle was twelve, he gravitated toward the instrument. As he began to play, he noticed people paid attention, and for a shy boy he found the guitar helped give him a voice.

By age fourteen, Haggard had been in and out of juvenile hall several times. Out mostly, because he had escaped. He was sent to a juvenile detention center in Whittier, California

called the Fred C. Nelles School for Boys, surrounded by barbed wire. After several escapes from Nelles, he was transferred to Preston School of Industry in Stockton, serving his time out there.

By the mid '50s, Haggard was beginning to work the club scene in Bakersfield. He had married his first wife, Leona Hobbs, in 1956 and just when life seemed as if it was fairly normal, Haggard got arrested and landed in the Ventura County Jail for a year. That was 1956 and he lamented that he missed the birth of his first child, Dana.

By January 1958 he had earned a place in San Quentin. It wasn't until Haggard slipped up there and started a beer making and gambling operation with another inmate and was put into isolation that he had an epiphany. "Whatever it was, I came off isolation determined to do something positive for Merle Haggard," he stated in "Sing Me Back Home." He cleaned up his act quickly and applied for the toughest job in the prison – at the textile mill – and he was granted parole the next time.

Released in 1960, Haggard immediately went to work for his brother Lowell, digging ditches and wiring houses. That didn't last very long as Merle's musical talents began to shine through very quickly.

An opportunity to play at one of the premier local clubs, the Lucky Spot, not only liberated Haggard from his day job, but also united him in a band with Fuzzy Owen who co-owned the small record label, Tally Records, along with Lewis Talley. Owen and Haggard would become lifelong associates.

Before Merle knew it, he was performing in Las Vegas, playing bass for Wynn Stewart. Stewart was singing his *Sing a Sad Song* one night in the Nashville Nevada Club and although Stewart had plans to record it, Haggard convinced him to give it to him to record. That first single went to No. 19 on the Billboard Country charts followed by other successful songs in the top 20.

"Thanks to Buck Owens who made the request to cut Haggard's own *Swinging Doors*, Merle took a good look at his own song and thought if Buck Owens wanted to record it, it must have merit. He kept it for himself and sure enough, it reached No. 5, in 1966. He was well on his way.

It was that same year Haggard formed his band, calling them The Strangers, a nod to his hit he had. Between the years 1969 and 1987, they were voted 'Band of the Year' by the Academy of Country Music Awards eight times.

I'm a Lonesome Fugitive by Liz and Casey Anderson hit No. 1 in 1966 and by 1980 he amassed 25 No 1 records, including his very popular 1969 crossover hit *Okie From Muskogee*. By 1989 there were 40 No. 1 hits.

But in 1997, Haggard told Country Weekly it was his pardon from Governor Ronald Reagan on July 7, 1971 that was his greatest accomplishment. For the boy who had taken the wrong path so many times, it was an important symbol of

respect. "Twelve men voted on it and unanimously gave me a pardon – the youngest man to ever receive a pardon in the state of California. I thought it was the greatest thing that could happen to me. You can receive awards, but to have those people – those hard-nosed politicians – vote yes in my favor, says somebody liked what we did," said Haggard. Also in 1971, he returned to San Quentin to perform for the inmates, just as Johnny Cash had when he was one, himself.

Many more hits penned by "The Hag" are *Big City*, *Fightin' Side of Me*, *Mama Tried*, *Workin' Man Blues*, *Mama's Hungry Eyes*, *Sing Me Back Home*, among others.

In Haggard's later years it would be family that he valued most. He doted on the two children he had with his fifth wife Theresa Lane, despite the fact that he continued to perform to sold out audiences in over 100 shows a year. But admitting that in his earlier days he had been so caught up in his troubles and his career that he hadn't always been the father he should have been, he set about to deepen his relationships with his older children from his previous marriages. In the last year of his life, he was also able to enjoy his grandchild Delaney from Jenessa, his daughter with Theresa. Haggard had six children.



Merle Haggard passed away at age 79 on his birthday, April 6, 2016. He had recorded more than 100 albums, had a star on Hollywood Blvd., had been on the cover of Time Magazine and even received an honorary doctorate in fine arts from California State University of Bakersfield. He was one of the most celebrated Country music stars in the world; a true icon.

Thank you, Merle Haggard for the songs and the legacy that will continue to influence many Country music artists for generation to come.

Portions of the article were from the Merle Haggard autobiography, "Sing Me Back Home" and the website, www.merlehaggard.com.



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Darin Kinser ...and Elvis!

How can a Christian Country artist have a relationship with a legend who passed away before he was even born? Darin Kinser's musical journey is intertwined with Elvis, but not in the way you might think. When hearing his entire story, one understands why his new single "Be More Like Elvis" is so fitting for him. Why would someone want to be more like Elvis?

By Teresa Schweinsberg

Darin Kinser grew up in a musical family. His uncle, Paul Butler, was an Elvis Tribute artist, who won the first award given by Lisa Marie Presley in Memphis in tribute to her father. As a teenager, Darin traveled with his uncle to run lights and assist him all over the country for performances. Darin learned a great deal he put to use when he gained his own audience after his cousin invited him to sing at church for the first time. Searching for soundtracks to sing with led him to producer Rick Schweinsberg in his early twenties.

Darin says he will never forget that first recording experience, because on his way home to Indiana, he and his friend, who had recorded with him, ran into a horrible ice storm. Their car did a one hundred and eighty degree turn in the middle of the interstate near Lexington, Kentucky. Upon their return home, his friend decided he did not want to sing anymore, leaving Darin fearful that people would not want to hear him as a soloist. He stopped singing for a while. However, when another friend purchased a karaoke machine, and Darin was able to practice again with soundtracks, his desire to sing in church was rekindled.

Along with his singing, Darin's life took a whole new direction when he became a civil processor to law firms in 2012. Darin began delivering summons to criminals who skipped out on court appearances. In one instance, he helped make the arrest of a heroine dealer in the south, preventing the flow of more drugs northward. He has also taken down a



dealer in possession of 250 grams of fentanyl. Only a small amount of fentanyl will kill someone, so Darin feels that he was a part of possibly saving millions of lives that day.

Darin has a heart for helping people, which shows in everything he does. He moved back home to Heltonville, Indiana, when his mother was diagnosed with stage 4 breast cancer. She passed away, but Darin stayed in his hometown afterward. During that time, he noticed a sign in front of the fire department asking for volunteers. One of the deacons at his church was the fire chief and encouraged him to fill out an application. Darin went to every training offered. He completed EMT courses at his local college, graduated, and passed his exams to become a first responder, along with his civil processing duties. Darin's eyes light up when he speaks about helping people in that position. In only one year, he was voted in as captain. When the fire chief stepped down, Darin was voted in as assistant captain by his fellow firemen, and a year later, became fire chief in May 2022.

Darin says his community has been very supportive in providing new equipment, like new firetrucks, and he has been able to make some very positive changes in the town. "Our motto is 'Saving Lives and Saving Property,'" Darin shares with that same light in his eyes, "and that is what made me so excited to record my first song *Urgent*, about not only saving lives physically, but saving souls. Even in my job as a civil processor, I feel like putting someone in jail can also

save lives. Not only does it keep the community safe, but it gives the criminal time to think about their lives and maybe give them a second chance to start a new one. They can't change their past, but they can certainly change their future."

Darin continues, "Many years ago, a gentleman named James Brown, but not the singer," he laughs, "told me something I have never forgotten. He transported juveniles to a detention center an hour north of the jail. I asked him if he ever got tired of making that trip. He told me no, because it gave him an hour on that drive with those young people to show them Christ, to let them know there is someone who cares and is there to listen to them and lead them in a better direction."

"That was something that really impacted me," Darin says, "and led me to do what I do now. While I am bringing criminals in, it gives me time to minister to them and hopefully change some lives for the better."

Be listening for Darin's new song releasing on May 1, 2024 on all radio stations and streaming platforms to hear how he wants us all to "Be More Like Elvis." And yes, there is a twist you don't see coming!

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CrossCountry **HOT100**

OFFICIAL CHRISTIAN COUNTRY TOP 100 - MAY 2024

TM	LM	SONG TITLE	ARTIST	TM	LM	SONG TITLE	ARTIST
1	15	From Afar	Paula Slow	51	30	Hello Mama	Sherry Dameron
2	3	How Big God Is	Terry and Debra Luna	52	33	Let Him In	Chris Darlington
3	4	One More Time	Terry Davis	53	-	The Cross Says It All	James Payne
4	9	The Prodigal Story	Jonathan Ray Smith	54	56	I'll Be Gone	Jim Huddleston
5	19	Look What I Found	Keith Buchanan	55	41	Victory Song	Russell Gilbert
6	5	Dying To Save Me	Melissa Evans	56	60	It Had To Be God	Tim Livingston
7	8	I'll Send It Up	Mike Haemmerle	57	57	Back Home Again	Johnathan Bond & Young Harmony
8	6	High Above The Midnight Sky	Richard Lynch	58	-	Angel Just For Me	Michael Knight
9	14	Folks Don't Pray Anymore	Kenny Hatcher	59	46	Once Upon A Cross	Barbara Fairchild
10	23	The Day That My Sin Died	Kesha Parish	60	91	Closer Than I've Ever Been	Daniel Crabtree
11	26	Not Just On Sunday	The Pauls	61	29	He Never Really Went Away	Debbie Bennett
12	22	Six Feet Deep	David Timms	62	49	Hallelujah	Eddy Mann
13	2	You Get To Me	Delnora	63	90	Peace Be Still	Melissa Eppes
14	18	My Guilt Was No Match (For Gods Grace)	Chuck Hancock	64	81	Sara Sings	Debbie Mills
15	32	Living In His Glory	Troy Richardson	65	66	Still Waters	Doug DeForest
16	7	Tattoos And Scars	Steve Warren	66	-	Well Run Dry	Mary Janer
17	31	You Carry Me	Joy LaVallee	67	64	The Fingerprint Of Jesus	Carol Barham
18	58	You Get Me	Marty Raybon	68	88	Over And Over Again	Jeremy Abbott
19	28	Old Time Feeling /Soul Fillin' Station	Dale Rochell	69	77	By Your Side	Michael Walsh
20	24	Called	Donna Kilmurray	70	92	I Say The Name	Mike Leichner
21	1	In Jesus' Name We Pray, Amen! Amen!	Melanie Walker	71	70	Little Things	Tina Wakefield
22	25	A Good Place To Turn Around	Ron Hemphill	72	98	Just Receive It	Victoria Steelman
23	10	Rest On The Waters	Wink Kelso	73	62	What'll I Do	Barry McGee
24	61	Mama Used To Pray For Me	Travis Tritt	74	54	Where Time Is No More	Greg Finch
25	12	I'm Heading In A New Direction	Elaine Roy	75	86	I Love You More	Robert Blankenship
26	39	Never Stop Believing	Tim Fulgham	76	79	If I Could Only Touch His Robe	Blaire Stroud
27	11	In His Eyes	Katie Estes	77	78	It Was His Love	Jan Harbuck
28	35	No Prayer Requests	Lorraine Howard	78	95	Heaven	Bev McCann
29	13	The Old Rugged Cross	Carl Ray & Rhonda Vincent	79	-	The Days He Can Believe	Small Town Sunday
30	47	Old Hymns	Cyndi Reynolds	80	-	Tests and Trials	Joe Richard
31	16	I Bleed The Color Free	Deano Graham	81	82	Here Comes Jesus	J'Lee
32	36	I Need Your Grace	Michael Tetrick	82	93	That's The Kind Of Love	Lisa Daggs
33	43	Bethlehem, Virginia 1 BC	Steve Bridgmon	83	100	To You	Corey Farlow
34	27	Between The Pulpit And The Pew	Ken & Kim Stull	84	99	Living Stones	Felicia DeRamus Paul
35	68	Men Like These	Paul Staggs	85	-	My Bottle Of Tears	Ina & Buddy Gore
36	21	A Better Way To Go	David Smith	86	-	Hey Hey	Rachel Taylor
37	17	Child Come Home	Waymasters	87	97	Not Forsaken	Right Side
38	38	Heaven's Grand Tour	Wayne Atkins	88	-	Mama's Endless Love	Steve Anthony
39	94	His Only Son	Michael Ray Fain & Waymasters	89	-	A Hill Called Calvary	Gina White
40	48	That's What Really Matters	Paul Tuttle	90	-	God Save America Again	Linda Lanier
41	20	A Better Place	Stella Parton & Johnathan Bond	91	-	Jesus Cares	Ben Stone
42	44	The Old Sinner	Jamie Coulter	92	-	Wrong Side Of The Cross	Marvin Harrell
43	84	Cancel	Randy Houser	93	-	Instant God	King's Highway
44	45	Don't Take His Job Away	Gena Hamilton	94	-	When The Blood Touched The Dust	The Cupps
45	52	The Sinner And The Saint	Mark Umfleet	95	-	Just Beneath The Cross	Lonnie Hardy
46	50	Get On Out Of Here	Mike Walker	96	-	On My Own	Adam Lee
47	53	Love Won't Let Me Go	Norman Lee Schaffer	97	-	Give 'Em Jesus	Lindy Bryson
48	55	You're Worth It All	Ty Hodges	98	-	Get On Board The Glory Train	Sonshine Road
49	65	Rich Man	Bobby Gibson	99	-	He Wouldn't Stay Dead	The Cooke Brothers
50	74	Gloves	Jim Sheldon	100	-	In The Valley	The Murphys



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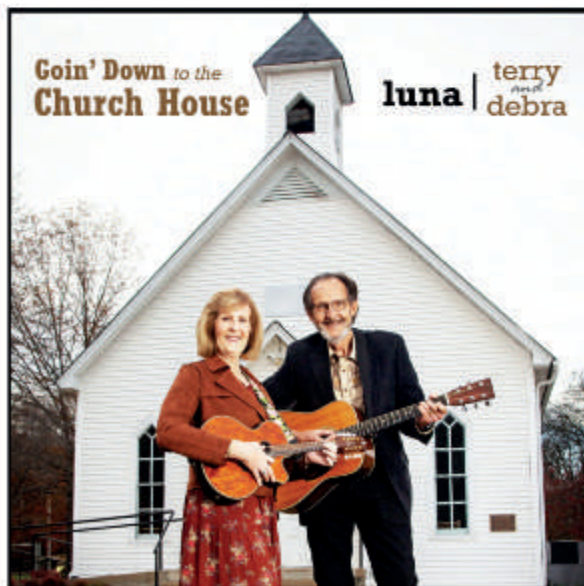
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The Tradition Continues

By Robin Tanner



The tradition continues as the Music City Christian Fellowship presents the 42nd Annual Sunday Mornin' Country on June 9th at the historic Grand Ole Opry House.

Sunday Mornin' Country has become a staple each year, bringing great Country and Gospel artists together to share their faith through stories and songs on Sunday, at the conclusion of CMA Music Fest (which was previously called Fan Fair) each year. This special event leaves fans and guests with an uplifting memory of Nashville that will last a lifetime.

Sunday Mornin' Country is once again hosted by multi-Hall of Fame member, Little Miss Dynamite, Brenda Lee. This year's event brings an impressive lineup that will be a delight to the audience with many highlights during the historic show. These artists will include new and familiar faces.

Joining Sunday Mornin' Country for the first time are Opry members and Grammy and Dove Award winners, the Isaacs. As a special treat, Becky Isaacs will be sharing her new music. The Kody Norris Show is an award-winning Bluegrass band bringing their unique but traditional style to the stage. In addition, the warmup show will feature the young up and coming Bluegrass group Cutter and Cash and the Kentucky Grass.



BRENDA LEE

Country Music Hall of Fame and Grand Ole Opry Member Charlie McCoy will be returning this year. Charlie is a staple in Nashville as part of the A-Team playing on many hit songs. Charlie consistently delivers a moving performance. His harmonica resonates through the Opry House and is always a showstopper.

Other artists include John McEuen, founder of the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, who will present an encore performance of his iconic version of *Will the Circle Be Unbroken*. Grammy winner John Berry, who is becoming a regular at Sunday Mornin' Country, performs once again. His clear voice and expressive delivery is always a powerful moment.

From the Oak Ridge Boys, William Lee Golden & The Goldenes will bring their family harmony to the stage. Grand Ole Opry member Larry Gatlin will also join the show. Other artists include Barbara Fairchild, MaKenzie Phipps, Adam Warner, and Mike Farrows.

Those who have attended Sunday Mornin' Country in the past will be glad to hear that many regulars will be returning. Cowboy Joe and his family, The Babcocks, will grace the stage as they have done since the beginning as the original organizers of Sunday Mornin' Country and one of the founders of the Music City Christian Fellowship. More favorites will perform, including The Fox Brothers, Melanie Walker, Tennessee River Boys, Holly Watson, Music City Quartet, the Sunday Mornin' Country Band and the Country Chorale with more artists gracing the stage.

This event is co-produced by Lynn Fox and Melanie Walker who, along with the board and staff of Music City Christian Fellowship, always go above and beyond to make this production possible. Melanie shares, "Sunday Mornin' Country is an amazing event that is bigger than all of us involved. Country and Gospel artists come together for the One who created the music."



President of MCCF, Lynn Fox stated, “Everyone involved works tirelessly and things really come together. Each year gets better and better.”

This was Cowboy Joe Babcock’s vision over forty years ago for artists in the music industry to share the message of Jesus Christ through song - and it’s still going strong. He stated, “Our main goal is to lead people to Christ. That’s the main thing. I am hoping it has led many to the Lord over the years.”

Many members of Music City Christian Fellowship come from all over the United States and Canada to sing in a ninety-voice choir known as the Country Chorale under the

direction of Mark Thomas. Mark admits, “It’s like having Christmas in June! It’s an awesome experience to lead the Country Chorale. These folks come from all over the Country bringing their own gifts and experiences and we have a fantastic time coming together and praising Him.”

Sunday Mornin’ Country’s past artists and performers have included Connie Smith, The Oak Ridge Boys, Roy Clark, Linda Davis, Jason Crabb, Lulu Roman, Ronnie McDowell, Billy Walker, George Hamilton IV, Marty Raybon, T. Graham Brown, Rhonda Vincent, and many more.

The Music City Christian Fellowship was established in 1980. Their mission statement says, “The MCCF supports Christian values in the entertainment industry. It is our desire to help fulfill the Great Commission given by Christ to reach the world with the message of God’s love and forgiveness.”

In June 1980 - 42 years ago - the tradition began when a group of Country Music artists and musicians wanted to honor God with the talents He had given them by sharing their songs and personal stories of faith. They came together in prayer and fellowship. They decided to have “A singin’, prayin’, get-together” for the Country Music fans during the annual Country Music Fan Fair celebration (currently known as CMA Music Festival). Some 40 - 50 singers, musicians, writers, producers, and promoters were involved in the first Sunday Mornin’ Country.

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From East Liverpool, Ohio, comes brother and sister country duo, Ken & Kim Stull. These siblings were raised by a preaching father and a praying mother, in a household where they learned to harmonize, where Gospel music was at the core of their home.

Their story is not one of perfect living. Kenny and Kim both strayed from God as teenagers and left the church. However, thankfully that was not the end of their story. Proverbs 22:6 says, *“Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”* That proved true for Rev. and Mrs. Harold Stull as Kenny and Kim returned to God. From there, they formed a sibling team to serve Him together in music.

The Kim Stull Story

By Teresa Schweinsberg

In April 2019, Ken and Kim were sidelined as Kim began to have symptoms of a stroke. Doctors found four aneurisms in her brain, three on the left side and one on the right. In July of that year, doctors were able to perform surgery on the three aneurisms on the left; however, they were unable to remove the one on the right due to its inoperable location deep within the brain. Kim began to exhibit difficulty with speech, and with her right arm and leg. The doctors were keeping an eye on the last aneurism through MRIs, but were only able to do physical therapy to assist her on her right side.

Then came 2020, and Kim could not get into the hospital for any of her needs. She struggled through that year as best she could, without access to doctors or hospital care. In 2021, doctors were finally able to check on the aneurism again. It had miraculously moved from the artery inside the brain to the outside of the brain. The doctor shared the good news with Kim, saying, “We don’t have to worry about surgery now, because even if it ruptures, its location means there won’t be any physical side effects.”

As Kenny and Kim tried to pick up where they left off musically in the summer of 2022, Kenny came home one night overwhelmed with Kim’s health setback and a situation at work which left him frustrated. He wondered why he could not serve God full-time in music ministry and preaching,

which was his heart’s desire. He was venting to his wife Patti that he wanted a supernatural event to happen, a sign, for example, he said, “God having someone like Nashville producer Rick Schweinsberg call me and say he wanted to work with us.” Kenny wanted assurance that God had heard his prayers. Within five minutes of making that statement, Kenny’s phone buzzed with a text. The name on the caller ID said “Rick Schweinsberg.” Rick had never met Kenny and Kim, but in a phone conversation the next day, he told Kenny he had been watching some of their videos online and seen their talent. He also liked Kenny’s songwriting. A time was set for the duo to meet him in Nashville, and “a period of songwriting and recording came like a flood,” Kenny says, “with 14 songs written and recorded in 13 months.”

During all the trips south to Nashville, doctors kept check on Kim’s aneurism through MRI’s. In May of 2023, to the amazement of everyone around them, it had not ruptured, but had completely disappeared! Kim notes, “It was an absolute miracle from God! We had been praying for no surgery, and God answered our prayers.”

Ken & Kim Stull were back in full swing, with an abundance of new songs, videos, a table of new products made by Kenny’s wife Patti, and hearts full of praise to share what God had done. Their ministry was rolling with enthusiasm, a new label, and a plan for Nashville Christian

Country to go on tour with concerts featuring them and their label mates, David Timms, and the Fortner Brothers. But then, the bottom fell out once again.

In October 2023, Kim discovered a lump she knew was not normal and was diagnosed with breast cancer. Kim says, "I sat and cried, asking God, why me? That lasted awhile, then suddenly, I got peace about it. God let me know He was doing something and He had a purpose for everything. I decided I would not bend, break, or bow. I would trust and hold on until the end."

Kim's first chemotherapy treatment was in November. Shortly after her second treatment, Kim developed pneumonia and entered the hospital extremely septic. She had to stay there for a while, because she was susceptible to any illnesses around her. During that hospital stay, doctors found the tumor had already shrunk to half the size. Kim states, "The doctor was like a little kid with excitement, jumping up and down, telling everyone on staff. He told me, 'Things like this don't happen! YOU are a miracle! If anyone does not believe in miracles, they need to talk to you!'"

Two weeks later, on the day of her third chemo treatment, the tumor was gone! Kim's bloodwork was perfect. Her red and white cell count was exactly what it should be. "I still don't know why He did this for me, but God really got my attention. He has grown my faith so much during this time."

How has everything Kim has gone through impacted their music ministry? Kenny shares, "Kim's cancer diagnosis came

out of nowhere. With all she had just come through with the aneurisms, she already had a tremendous testimony. We were just starting to gain our momentum again. I whined to God for a good three days after her cancer diagnosis. I was whining to my dad as well."

"My dad looked at me and said, 'Maybe your name came up in a conversation in Heaven just like Job in the Bible. Maybe God said to Satan, 'Have you considered my servants Kenny and Kim?'"

"With Job, God finally said that was enough, and Satan was not allowed to touch Job again. I was wondering, Lord, is it enough yet?" Kenny shares. "We whine and cry, and then we have a God moment and a miracle. That's when we feel our faith start to grow and strengthen. It's one thing to stand and preach and encourage people on Sunday morning, to be *their* cheerleader, but when you are weighed down so much with your own problems, it's hard. Then, you suddenly see God's faithfulness. He brings strength and encouragement back to you and your own ministry. Now, Kim and I are ready to get back out on the road and share her story with others, to give encouragement where needed and pray with those going through something like Kim has."

Ken and Kim's latest single *When Pentecost Came to Town*, is playing on stations all across the U.S., Canada and European countries.

Ken & Kim Stull can be found on all social media and streaming platforms at KKStullMusic.com.



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ANGELA SENG

Dream Big

By Tina Wakefield

She was a little girl with big dreams singing into a (hairbrush) “microphone.” Angela Seng could not have known the doors that would open to her after she accepted Christ at the young age of five. She recalls, “I could feel the emotion of the music long before I could understand the message contained in the song.”

“Music has always spoken to me like nothing else could,” she continues. “God used music and the Gospel group, The Song Masters to impart to me the Gospel message in song in a way that even a child could understand. On a cold December night, I confessed my sin and accepted Christ to be the Lord of my life, and my love for music began to grow.”

Angela’s parents surely recognized the love of music she possessed and, in their desire to foster that anointing, began to purchase albums from her favorite group, The Song Masters. “I loved to hear the lady named Debra sing, I was mesmerized by her voice, and wanted to sing just like her when I grew up. It wasn’t until several years later I learned that Debra became Debra Talley, the wife of Roger Talley, and the mother of Lauren Talley.”

Acting out childhood dreams as most children do, Angela began to hold music concerts in her living room with a hairbrush for a microphone and a barbie doll for her audience. Playing with her barbie dolls, Angela had no idea the plans God had for ministry in her future, but music and barbie dolls would very much play a role in His plans for her.

Angela’s father was called to minister when she was a teenager and, from out of the blue, Angela developed a severe

case of stage fright that would plague her for many years. “I would pray God to take away the stage fright, but I continued to drag the chains of bondage around with me for three decades, until I laid my fear on the altar and left it there.”

Finally set free from the terrible fright that had imprisoned her, God began to open many doors for Angela that would include radio and television. Angela would carry her song to stages in such venues as The Soundstage at Graceland, theatres and events in Branson, and The Christian Music Festival at The Ark Encounter during 40 days and nights of Gospel Music. God has already opened doors in 2024 for her at The Museum of the Bible in Washington D.C. in October, during the Singing News Showcase.

Angela has been blessed to not only sing at various venues but also walk the red carpet appearing in the movie, “The Mayberry Man”, appearing regularly on The Don Frost Family and Friends Show on TCT Network, Season 2 of Ascending Sounds, The Kevin Shorey Show, Morning Moments, and The Edge with Donna Feazell. Such great opportunities do not just happen but are opened by God for those who have given of themselves freely to others by putting God and His plans first in their life.

God’s plans for our lives are sometimes challenging, especially if you have a ministry and still work a full-time job. Angela and husband both hold full time jobs along with a song ministry as well as a Barbie doll ministry. “We find it difficult at times to balance the demands of work, ministry, and touring, but still couldn’t be happier because we know we are fulfilling the calling God placed on us.”

Angela describes that no words can fully proclaim the joy you feel as a tool for God to use so others may receive Christ as their Savior. Who would think that taking an old Barbie doll transforming it from used to nearly new could be used as a missionary tool teaching children around the world about the greatest gift of all, Jesus Christ?

Angela currently has a new single to radio entitled, *Customized Soul Revival*, written by Don Frost. This toe tapping single contains a message that will cause the audience to examine their life and their need for revival. "I know it fanned the flames of revival in my own life!"

Angela is always searching for the opportunity to give and help in the Kingdom of God. While saving money to record her dream project in Nashville, God had different plans. She explains, "I saved my birthday and Christmas money for my future recording when a friend one night shared his first mission trip experience with me. He stated that the church he visited was in dire need of restrooms and the amount needed blew me away! It was the exact amount I had saved for my dream! The Holy Spirit prompted me to give up my dream money and after wrestling with it, I gave up my funds. The Holy Spirit replied, 'I want you to finance a need and I will take care of your dream.' I did finance the need and God has opened the door for me to sing in Branson regularly and to record in Nashville with the greatest musicians."



Too many to list, but a few awards Angela has been honored with include 2023 Top 10 Finalist ICGMA Female Horizon Artist and 2023 CGMNA Eastern Division Children's Ministry of the Year (Barbie Doll Ministry). Awards are great but Angela states, "My utmost goal is to glorify Jesus Christ and point lost souls the Savior."

www.angelasengmusic.org

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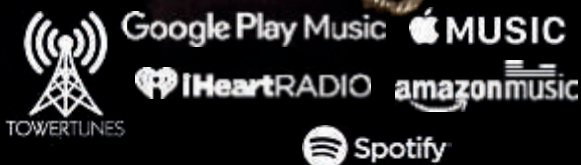
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